

ELITE YOUTH SPORT EVENTS

**National-level Governance of Elite Youth Sport Events in Canada: A Sport Development
Perspective**

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A thesis submitted to the
Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the
Master's of Arts degree in Human Kinetics

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Abstract

The purpose of this dissertation was to understand how Canadian sport system stakeholders select the international youth events in which athletes will take part. The first part looked at the policies and processes consistent among all national sport organizations (NSOs) using a policy-based approach. The second part focused on how NSOs responded to these demands in conjunction with pressures stemming from their specific sport communities and stakeholders, and analyzed the NSOs' governance structures and processes in doing so. A conceptual framework composed of the governance, stakeholder theory and policy diffusion literatures guided the study and a qualitative methodology was used.

Sport Canada and Own the Podium (OTP) played a steering role within the event selection process. NSOs faced numerous pressures such as learning, coercion, imitation, and competition, which they responded to by creating policies and processes for their organization and through selecting events for their athletes that best responded to these pressures. The final findings found the policies and processes were created using a network governance approach, taking into consideration NSOs' sport-specific needs, which included, but were not limited to, the NSO's organizational capacity, the number of athletes competing in the sport, and the depth and field of competition within Canada.

Two key concepts outlined as best practices among successful NSOs and as an area for improvement for the Canadian sport system overall were alignment and communication. Improved accountability practices were also found to be important when implementing policies.

Acknowledgements

This project would not have been possible without the help and support of many mentors, fellow students, faculty and staff at the University of Ottawa, friends and family. I would first like to thank my advisor and mentor, Dr. Milena Parent for her guidance and encouragement from day one. Be it questions about the academic world, my dissertation or professional life, you always provided the direction and encouragement I needed. Thank you for helping me get to where I am today.

To my committee members, Dr. Christine Dallaire and Dr. Eric MacIntosh, your feedback and insight has challenged me to look at research differently. Thank you! I would also like to extend the acknowledgement to other professors at the School of Human Kinetics for their ongoing support.

To the individuals who took time out of their busy days to participate in this study, thank you for sharing your knowledge and perspectives. Without your help, this project would not have been possible.

I must also take a moment to thank my colleagues and mentors with the University of Ottawa Sports Services. Thank you for accommodating my schedule, providing support when needed, and always having an open door.

To my friends, including my fellow Sport Management students, thank you for the laughs, support, and conversation. They will be some of the most cherished moments of graduate school. I look forward to keeping these friendships alive for years to come.

Last but certainly not least, thank you to my family for their unwavering support. Thank you to my parents and sister for teaching me the importance of hard work and perseverance, the value of telling a good story, and always supporting those important to you.

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List of Abbreviations

AAP	Athlete Assistance Program
CAC	Canadian Coaching Association
CIS	Canadian Interuniversity Sports (Now U SPORTS)
COC	Canadian Olympic Committee
CGC	Canada Games Council
CS4L	Canadian Sport for Life
CSP	Canadian Sport Policy
LTAD	Long Term Athlete Development
MSO	Multi-Sport Organizations
NSO	National Sport Organization
OTP	Own the Podium
P/TSO	Provincial/Territorial Sport Organization
RQ	Research Question
SFAF	Sport Funding and Accountability Framework
SSP	Sport Support Program
SPLISS	Sports Policy factors Leading to International Sporting Success
YOG	Youth Olympic Games

Chapter 1 - Introduction

In order to produce “successful” athletes, researchers and practitioners alike argue countries need a sport development system to effectively progress its competitors from grassroots to high performance sport (Green & Oakley, 2001). Hylton and Bramham (2008) defined sport development as the policies and systems that bridge elite sport performance and mass participation.

Sport development systems are created to fit the specific context of a given country or region. In Canada’s case, understanding its geographical and governance structures is imperative before further exploring the country’s event selection and sport development systems. Canada is a decentralized federal democracy consisting of ten provinces and three territories (Kristiansen, Parent, & Houlihan, 2016; Parent, Patterson, & Jurbala, 2016). The geographical size of the country is the second largest in the world behind Russia. The relatively small population of 35 million is 80% urbanized and found mainly along the southern border of the country (Statistics Canada, 2011, 2017). Canada’s geographical considerations are an important factor, as the country spans six time zones and has an unevenly distributed population (Parent et al., 2016). Sport development plans must be created for and accommodated by sport organizations spanning across the country, all of which have different needs based on geography and populations. Focusing on Canada allowed for a more thorough analysis of the country and sport-specific requirements related to competition among organizations facing similar national sport cultures, economic statuses, and political climate.

Within sport development, falls competitions and competition planning. Competitions may be used at all levels to measure the progress of athletes and teams in comparison to their competitors (De Bosscher, Shibil, Westerbeek, & Van Bottenburg, 2015). Therefore, sports

events are arguably a vehicle for sport development, to move participants towards deeper engagement in sport (i.e., elite sport performance). For this dissertation, the level and access of events were thus of interest. Competition structures are an important aspect associated with international sporting success (De Bosscher et al., 2015). Competition structures are the access and alignment, as coordinated by each country respectively, between national and international events with the purpose of developing athletes. This will depend on the competition opportunities available to athletes within a country.

While most sport governing bodies include the summer and winter Olympic Games when deciding which events to send their national level athletes to, most other events have varied, and usually lower, attendance. This discrepancy is most noted among elite youth athletes attending multi-sport events such as the Youth Olympic Games (YOG), Universiade, and Commonwealth Youth Games as direct comparisons for attendance is possible. Given the events of interest within this dissertation, international youth sports events, elite youth athletes are defined as national-level athletes who have not yet participated at the Olympic Games and fall between the ages of 14 and 28. Elite status, in this thesis, is based on the definitions put forth by the respective event rights holders. Also, international events, including single and multi-sport events, were included in the study.

Within a sport development context, elite youth events fall within a grey area between mass participation and high performance. There is no uniform pathway which leads an athlete from the grassroots level to an Olympic podium, competition structures differ not only from country to country but also from sport to sport (Skille & Houlihan, 2014). When the decisions fall between mass participation and elite, the disparity increases. Event rights holders, such as the International Olympic Committee or IOC (i.e., the YOG rights holder), often justify youth

events' existence by arguing these events are the pathway to the "senior" events (Hanstad, Parent, & Kristiansen, 2013; Wong, 2012). As MacIntosh (2017) explained, "Given the rather recent advent of these youth-focused multi-sport events...there remains a great deal to understand regarding how the Games are actually perceived and experienced by their primary and younger stakeholder cohort (e.g., the youth athletes)" (p. 439). These events' roles within the overall sport development model remain poorly defined, however.

In the rest of this chapter, an overview of relevant literature, namely the literature related to sport development and sports events is provided. This is followed by an overview of the context of this study, the Canadian sport system, and associated literature. The purpose and research questions, which derive from the presented literature, are then introduced.

Overview of the Sport Development Literature

Sport development research (e.g., Bloyce, Smith, Mead, & Morris, 2008; Green, 2005; Green, 2004; Green & Oakley, 2001; Taks, Green, Misener, & Chalip, 2014) covers both sport for all, or mass participation, as well as the development of elite athletes. Sport development refers to policies, processes, and practices in place to facilitate involvement in sport, from mass participation to elite performance (Green, 2005; Hylton & Bramham, 2008; Taks et al., 2014). Previous research (e.g., Bloyce et al., 2008; Green, 2005; Green, 2004; Green & Oakley, 2001; Houlihan & Green, 2008; Taks et al., 2014) has notably examined the definition of sport development, constraints in developing countries, optimization of retention, key factors for developmental success, comparisons of sport development practices between countries, as well as bureaucratic barriers. Current research has determined that, although we know the key factors contributing to elite success, there is no single, perfect equation applicable to all (De Bosscher, Bingham, van Bottenburg, & De Knop, 2008). Sport development, therefore, becomes an issue

of maximizing resources in relation to one's context.

Next, as Green (2005) explained, the general sport development pyramid model is composed of three sections: mass participation, competitive sport, and high performance sport. In the model, she elaborated on recruitment, retention, and the transition of athletes throughout the lifespan (Green, 2005). As sport development has two main objectives (increasing sport participation and enhancing the quality of sport performance), Green explored and critiqued the pyramid analogy of sport development. Athlete recruitment, retention, and transition were highlighted as the three salient tasks of an effective pyramid model. Green argued advancement to higher stages of competition requires programs linked vertically from one stage to the next, as well as athlete support when locating and socializing into new/deeper levels of the sport. This dissertation is situated in the middle of Green's pyramid and focuses on the transition from competitive sport to high performance sport.

Each country approaches athlete development differently based on their individual country's context. Canada has a federated sports system, with each national sport organization (NSO) facing different funding models, stakeholders and sport models related to the nature of their athletes and competitions. NSOs address these concerns differently and therefore have individual approaches to elite youth international sports events (Government of Canada, 2017b; Kristiansen et al., 2016).

Differences may also be present based on national funding priorities. Mick Green (2004) analyzed power, policy and political priorities of elite sport development systems in Canada and the United Kingdom. The research examined the governmental and quasi-governmental agencies' use of planning dictates in relations to NSOs. He found high performance became a priority compared to sport for all, as the results in this domain directly influenced governmental

funding. As Canadian NSOs are primarily funded by the government/public sector, governmental planning dictates may be a consideration when NSOs select developmental events, and, as such, are considered in this dissertation.

Individuals within an organization also affect policy decisions. Bloyce et al. (2008) examined how sport development officers experienced and managed organizational change. The study included semi-structured interviews with sixteen sport development officers from England. The organizational change experienced was associated with sport development officers' personal beliefs, a perceived bureaucratization of the role, and external constraints from the government, which planned to use sport to accomplish socio-economic objectives. Such goals included those related to population health and reduced healthcare demands. Sport development officers believed the paperwork required to prove goal achievement reduced the overall efficiency of the organization. Thus, one goal of this dissertation was to determine if similar pressures existed for Canadian NSOs. Requirements, such as those related to Sport Canada's Sport Funding and Accountability Framework (SFAF) and Sport Support Program (SSP) obligations, which will be discussed later, were of interest.

In tandem with other funders' requirements and stakeholder demands, a link was explored between pressures and various international youth event perceptions and attendance decisions. It was important to explore whether national and international stakeholders were equally considered when creating national level sport development plans to gain a better understanding of the situation, given the events of interest. It was also possible to explore the differences between sport organizations, facing different sport-specific needs. Nevertheless, other potential factors of successful elite sport systems found in the literature, and noted below, were also considered.

Green and Oakley (2001) built on Moreland's (1997) work to create criteria for successful elite sport systems:

- (1) a clear understanding of roles and effective communication between the different agencies;
- (2) simple administration with clearly defined roles;
- (3) effective talent identification and monitoring systems;
- (4) provision of sports services that create a culture in which all parties (athletes, coaches, managers, scientists) can interact in formal and informal manners;
- (5) appropriately structured competitive programs with ongoing international exposure;
- (6) comprehensive planning for the needs of each sport;
- (7) targeted resources to a small number of sports with high chances of success at the international level;
- (8) appropriate funding for infrastructure and people;
- (9) well-developed sports facilities with priority access for elite athletes; and
- (10) support and preparation for life after sport.

Of note, facilities and athlete post-career support (points 9 and 10) go beyond the scope of this dissertation and were therefore not included. For this dissertation, points one through six were considered in both data collection and analysis. The seventh point, targeted resources, was accounted for during participant recruitment, as will be seen in the methods section. As such, the amount of funding was considered during the interview process and data analysis, allowing targeted resources to be formally included in the study. Targeted funding also ties closely to Green and Oakley's (2001), eighth point, "appropriate funding for people" as well as links to previous NSO organizational capacity literature (e.g., Millar & Doherty, 2016; Millar & Stevens,

2012). The intention was to gain a better understanding of the links between said factors and determine if and why any differences were exhibited when comparing individual NSOs.

The criteria for successful elite sport development was further expanded in 2008 when Houlihan and Green compared prior lists of ingredients (Digel, 2002a, 2002b; Green & Houlihan, 2005; Oakley & Green, 2001; UK Sport, 2006) and found considerable overlap. The elements were further categorized into three clusters: contextual, processual, and specific (Houlihan & Green, 2008). Contextual factors included items such as funding, excellence culture, sponsorship climate, media support, participation in sport, and scientific research (Houlihan & Green, 2008). Processual factors focused on the system's processes such as a clear understanding of agencies' role, the simplicity of administration, talent identification, development and post-career support, integrated policy development, and coach development (Houlihan & Green, 2008). Specific factors included the structure of competitive programs (i.e., a hierarchy of competitions that prepare for international events), facilities, sport science support services, and international competition. Data collection and analysis for this dissertation were designed to cover all three categories, with the intention of determining which factors were more prominent within the Canadian sport system. As multiple organizations within the same country were included, it became possible to determine if similarities and/or differences existed between sports as well as the relationships between said organizations.

In addition, Houlihan and Green's (2008) multi-national comparative study discussed common pressures for convergence: globalization, commercialization, and governmentalization. Although the authors argued the range of policy instruments used for implementation of elite sport policies are quite similar, they also suggested implementation relies on path dependent relationships. "Relationships irrevocably bound up with, influenced by, processes of policy

transfer, learning and lesson drawing” (Houlihan & Green, 2008, p. 278). As Klein and Marmor explained (2006), cross-national comparative research may be improved by learning why policies appear favourable regarding both impact and feasibility. As this dissertation focused on a single country, it was possible to further evaluate relationships and mechanisms within the country and to determine the overall level of policy implementation. The impact and feasibility of policies and associated processes were therefore analyzed and compared amongst Canadian NSOs.

Next, De Bosscher and colleagues (2006) developed a conceptual framework known as “Sport Policy factors Leading to International Sporting Success” (SPLISS) to compare trans-national elite sport policies. Nine policy factors, known as pillars, were found to have an important effect on international sporting success: financial support, integrated approach to policy development, foundation and participation, talent identification and development system, athletic and post-career support, training facilities, coaching provision and development, national and international competition, as well as scientific research (De Bosscher et al., 2006).

Once the pillars were defined and assigned evaluation criteria, the researchers conducted a comparative study on six countries, including Canada (De Bosscher et al., 2008). This study, known as SPLISS 1.0, found the best practice pathway to international success is not a uniform equation, but a unique combination of processes that result in a variety of approaches (De Bosscher et al., 2008). This study further suggests sport development frameworks must maximize resources within each country’s context. As no quantifiable measurements exist for countries’ pathways to success, the same can be said for the sports within the countries. Contextual differences may account for differences from one Canadian NSO to the next. Thus, the pillars identified in the SPLISS study were considered, with a primary focus on the

organization and structure of sport policies as well as talent and competitions. As previously mentioned, financial support was considered both regarding the overall sport system (i.e., funding eligibility requirements) and the amount allotted to each sport.

When looking at a country's international (elite) success, national and international competitions/events were one of the nine pillars having an important effect on international sporting success (De Bosscher et al., 2006). De Bosscher and colleagues (2015) broke down the pillar into three key areas: 1) the number of international events organised by a country and the presence of national policies related to event hosting; 2) the opportunities for athletes to compete internationally; and 3) the level of and access to national competitions.

A deeper investigation, SPLISS 2.0, was later undertaken by collecting data from additional countries, with more developed research instruments and a larger team (De Bosscher et al., 2015). The aim was to determine which factors and interaction of factors lead to success in 15 nations (De Bosscher et al., 2015). The study identified 22 factors significantly correlated with success in both winter and summer sports (De Bosscher et al., 2015). However, no evidence was found to support a link between success and either prioritising or investing in multiple sports federations within a country (De Bosscher et al., 2015). Data suggested countries with an average elite sport budget usually dispersed funding equally, in comparison to those with small or large budgets, that followed a more targeted funding approach (De Bosscher et al., 2015). Although there is no generic blueprint for success, the authors noted a consensus regarding the ingredients that make up elite sporting success, the nine pillars previously stated in SPLISS 1.0 (De Bosscher et al., 2015).

In summary, prior sport development research (e.g., Bloyce et al., 2008; De Bosscher et al., 2008; De Bosscher et al., 2006; De Bosscher et al., 2015; Green, 2005; Green, 2004; Green

& Oakley, 2001; Taks et al., 2014) has covered the sport development model, recruitment, retention and transition optimization, best practices to support local development, and best practices in sport development systems. Research has shown there should be an alignment between the sport developmental pathway and objectives and the events in which athletes participate. However, gaps remain in our understanding of how international elite youth Games are positioned in the Canadian sport system regarding young athletes' sport development pathway.

Overview of the Sport Event Literature

As noted above, when strategically used, sports events may serve as a vehicle for sport development. Hosting sports events has become a popular approach to attempt to obtain economic, cultural, and political benefits for a host region or country (Leopkey, Mutter, & Parent, 2010). De-industrialization, economic restructuring, and globalization have caused mega-events to become a key strategy to justify major urban renewal and regeneration projects, promote a region, and attract investments (Essex & Chalkley, 2004; Hall, 2006; Leopkey et al., 2010; Roche, 1994). The costs involved in staging such large-scale events are often justified by incorporating them into a larger regeneration and modernization program (Gold & Gold, 2008). However, the effectiveness of this approach to urban renewal is questioned and difficult to measure (Hall, 2006). This dissertation looks at the micro-level, to determine the link between the athletes competing and the events in question.

Event policy looks at macro-level contextualization, policy angles, as well as social, cultural and economic impacts of sports events (Foley, McGillivray, & McPherson, 2012). Governments are developing frameworks to determine which and how many events they will support, the procedures required, as well as the amount of funding they will offer (Leopkey et al.,

2010). In Canada, a maximum of two international multi-sport Games may be held every ten years (Government of Canada, 2016a). Single sport events of larger proportions may be held once every two years, while smaller events may be held over 30 times per year (Government of Canada, 2016a; Leopkey et al., 2010).

Leopkey and colleagues (2010) compared sport event hosting policies within different levels of Canadian and Swiss governments. Similarities and differences in socio-economic, political and historical sport aspects of both countries were noted. The authors explained the existence of sport event policies reduced competition from other similar non-sport events. Event policies may also force tighter connections between event organizing committees and related stakeholders. Negative aspects of sport event policies included the lack of adequate details available to sport event hosts, accountability, and business case preparation requirements, maximum total event funding available, as well as strict criteria and conditions of support (Leopkey et al., 2010). The event hosting policy approach was also shown to be a strategic tool used by the Canadian federal government. As Leopkey and colleagues (2010) explained:

Through the adoption of the Federal Policy for Hosting International Sporting Events, the Canadian federal government believes that, with the ten provinces and three territories whose jurisdiction is sport, it has a tool for coordinated effort to help strengthen Canada's investment and experience in bidding for and hosting sporting events. (p. 125)

This statement explained the coordinating role of the federal government over the provincial jurisdictions, which oversee sport within Canada. Leopkey and colleagues also highlighted the policy implementation constraints within Canada, such as the size and decentralization between provinces and territories (Leopkey et al., 2010); "... the government must support events across the country and not focus funding in one particular region/province" (Leopkey et al., 2010, p.

125). Policies within the Canadian system are not easily implemented due to the breadth and scope of multiple stakeholders. For this dissertation, event policies were included in the document analysis portion as they may show the level of support, financially, in-kind and politically, for sports events. The policies in question demonstrate the targeted level of quality of events within the country. As resources are limited to non-profit organizations, financial support is an important factor to consider when examining the decision making process. In this dissertation, the relationship to provincial-level organizations was also considered during the NSO interviews. These questions were included to further explore the barriers of a decentralized relationship between the federal and provincial levels of the Canadian sport system.

Next, Taks, Green, Misener, and Chalip (2014) analyzed the legacy for local athletes when hosting a medium-sized international event. However, they did not analyze the effects on the participating athletes themselves (i.e., once they return to their own communities). As events may be used for athlete development, athletes become an important stakeholder to consider. Athlete participants were the focus when MacIntosh and Nicol (2012) examined the athlete experience of the XIX Commonwealth Games in Delhi, India. The authors identified key factors of the Games, beyond athletic performance, which affected the athletes' experience. Ancillary areas, sports venues and ceremonies were considered positive aspects of the Games (MacIntosh & Nicol, 2012; Whitson & Macintosh, 1996). The social environment of the Athletes' Village, the hospitality of volunteers, and the chance to meet athletes from other countries also had a positive impact on the athlete experience (MacIntosh & Nicol, 2012). Areas for improvement included accommodations, communication, and security (MacIntosh & Nicol, 2012). Thus, an athlete's experience at a major sport event involves factors beyond the athletic competition itself. The findings also suggested delegations might experience events differently based on their

location within the Athletes' Village or their prior event experience. Although MacIntosh and Nicol's study (2012) focused on the more "senior" elite athletes, the factors noted and critiqued by the athletes could also be present at lower-level events. It is therefore important to consider multiple factors about the events and delegations themselves when researching event selection and participation. This dissertation, therefore, builds on these non-competition factors as well as incorporates the athlete development component of events.

Believing there may be differences between older and younger elite athletes, Parent, Kristiansen, and MacIntosh (2014) used a mixed methods approach to understand the experience of young athletes at the 2012 Winter YOG. Generally, athletes had a positive experience, especially in relation to the Athletes' Village, sports venues, travel, security, medical services and ceremonies. The main stressors of the event were food quality, accommodations, outdoor venues, travel, security, and communications. Once again, the perception of the competition went beyond the playing field, and non-sport factors contributed to the overall perceived quality of the event. Opinions seemed to be affected by the athletes' younger age, country of origin, and Games inexperience in relation to their experience, event perceptions and perceived stressors (Parent et al., 2014). This study showed both nationality and age as factors affecting the perception of Games experience and benefits. Given this, the present dissertation was therefore delimited to Canadian youth athletes, as noted earlier, in part for this reason.

Finally, Parent, Kristiansen, Skille, and Hanstad (2015) explored the potential survival and success of the YOG by analyzing how various actors exert pressures on the event. The authors combined stakeholder, network and institutional theories, and conducted observations and interviews at the 2012 Winter YOG in Innsbruck. Three central stakeholders were highlighted: the IOC, the media, and the athletes' parents. As such, athletes and mission staff

were relatively important stakeholders but were not critical. The network analysis showed all three central stakeholders worked independently, but also in relation to each other. Their importance differed from the parent event, the Olympic Games. The difference is worth noting, as these Games are theoretically created with the youth in mind. This finding suggests the most salient stakeholders may not be the athletes themselves and the event may have priorities beyond athlete development. As such, multiple stakeholders were included in this dissertation. Their views on developmental events were also discussed.

Parent and colleagues (2015) also examined how the three stakeholders exerted institutional pressures on the YOG and/or shifted existing Olympic stakeholder network relationships. As the institutional context changed, the stakeholder, in this case, parents became more salient. As parents are not typically seen as key stakeholders of senior elite events, this suggests a difference between senior elite and youth elite events. As these events have different primary stakeholders, the events should be considered separately. Multiple stakeholders, beyond athletes, should also be considered when analyzing event participation. Thus, senior elite events were omitted from the scope of this dissertation, except in comparative scenarios. Major differences between senior events such as the Olympic Games in comparison to elite youth events were included to explore and better understand elite youth events. The relationship between various stakeholders in relation to event selection was thus of importance for this dissertation.

In summary, sports events may be used as a vehicle for sport development. Previous research has looked at how athletes perceive their event experience (e.g., MacIntosh & Nicol, 2012), why cities host said events (e.g., Essex & Chalkley, 2004; Hall, 2006; Leopkey et al., 2010; Roche, 1994), current hosting policies and frameworks (e.g., Leopkey et al., 2010).

Legacies of events for local communities and their athletes have also been researched (e.g., Taks et al., 2014). The YOG's history, stakeholders, and athletes have been explored (e.g., Parent et al., 2015). Varying opinions on such events from country to country, within the same sport, have also been explored (e.g., Parent et al., 2014). As many stakeholders work together to make decisions and shape the sports system, a governance approach appeared appropriate and was therefore utilized to determine the stakeholders, policies, and processes used to guide the selection of events for elite youth athletes. This dissertation, therefore, built on this existing literature to explore how the Canadian sport system, at the federal level, governed the selection of events attended by elite youth athletes.

The Canadian Context

The Canadian sport system consists of a decentralized federal democracy. State responsibilities are divided among three levels of government: federal, provincial and territorial, and municipal. Bilateral partnerships are created between provincial/territorial governments and the federal government (Government of Canada, 2017c) as well between provincial/territorial governments and their respective municipal governments (Thibault & Harvey, 2013). Regarding national sport policy implementation, there is no direct line of communication between federal and municipal governments. The federal government must go through provincial governments to effect changes at a municipal level (Parent et al., 2016). In cases of cross-national implementation, such as with policies related to sport, a federal-provincial/territorial consultation process often occurs (e.g., Government of Canada, 2012).

Although sport is a provincial/territorial jurisdiction, at the national level, sport is governed by the Physical Activity and Sport Act (Government of Canada, 2003) and falls under Sport Canada, a branch of the Department of Canadian Heritage. Sport is separated from

physical activity, the latter falling under the Minister of Public Health. Neither oversees professional leagues, such as the National Hockey League, which are part of the private sector. There is also no direct governance over other stakeholders including international sport federations, the private sector, media and the community at large. The structure of the Canadian sport system and its organizations are discussed below.

The Canadian sport landscape is built similarly to the country's government. NSOs are above Provincial and Territorial Sport Organizations (P/TSOs), which then oversee local clubs/leagues. While Sport Canada is currently the single largest investor in Canada's amateur sport system (Government of Canada, 2016b), it does not hold sole responsibility for technical direction of Canadian sport (Parent et al., 2016). Other important stakeholders in this endeavour are Own the Podium as well as the Canadian Olympic Committee and Canadian Paralympic Committee (Canadian Olympic Committee, 2017). Sport-specific technical decisions ultimately fall to the NSOs themselves.

Sport Canada supports, financially and through advisors, NSOs, Multi-Sport Organizations (MSOs) and Canadian sport institutes (Parent et al., 2016). The overall budget for Sport Canada has been approximately \$190 million, although, at the time of writing, an 18% increase in the Athlete Assistance Program (AAP) was included in the Liberal Government's 2017 budget (Government of Canada, 2017a).

Own the Podium (OTP) is the organization in Canada responsible for:

Assessing the performance potential of Canadian sport (both individual and team), for providing the technical analysis required to determine Canadian targets for Olympic and Paralympic Games and for making investment recommendations for the allocation of excellence dollars provided by national funding parties. (Own the Podium, 2017)

Limited information is publicly available regarding the organization (e.g., on its website).

However, its advisory role to individual NSOs and its funding recommendations provided to Sport Canada are known. Further details on the role of the organization will be discussed in the results section.

Other non-governmental event rights holders and service organizations, such as Commonwealth Games Canada, Canada Games Council, U SPORTS, AthletesCAN, and the Coaching Association of Canada, are also involved in the system (Government of Canada, 2015; Kristiansen et al., 2016). As Canada is a multi-level, multi-jurisdictional, and federated system with numerous stakeholders involved, proper coordination is imperative for the system's efficiency and effectiveness (Parent et al., 2016). As seen in previous sport development research (Green & Oakley, 2001; Houlihan & Green, 2008), clearly defined roles and open communication channels play an important role in the success of a country's elite sport system.

As Parent and colleagues (2016) explained, the sheer size and configuration of the Canadian sport system lead to unique challenges for the country in terms of talent identification and development. The number of clubs spanning single and multi-sports across the country is compounded by the involvement of the education sector, a provincially regulated area, which oversees physical education in Canada. The multi-stakeholder delivery model becomes a barrier in terms of talent identification but also ensuring consistent sport development practices amongst provinces (Parent et al., 2016). Travel costs due to the size of the country make national competitions a challenge. Talent identification using a single training camp also becomes less feasible due to resource constraints (Parent et al., 2016). There is no single pathway or identification opportunity to find talented athletes, so it becomes a challenge to create a systematic and unified recruitment process (Parent et al., 2016).

Athlete development plans are left to individual sport federations. Based on funding requirements put in place by Sport Canada through the SFAF, Canadian NSOs must follow the Long-Term Athlete Development (LTAD) model (Government of Canada, 2011). Each athlete is put into a developmental category, and Sport Canada funding is distributed accordingly (Government of Canada, 2014). Federal policies are used to guide implementation strategically, but the uneven implementation is seen between provinces and sports (Dowling, 2014; Parent et al., 2016).

As age does not define the developmental categories, there is no specific moment when an athlete moves from the provincial/territorial jurisdiction to the federal jurisdiction. The jurisdiction of an event may change depending on the developmental category of the athlete as well as the competition level of the event itself. Furthermore, elite youth athletes may fall under provincial/territorial and federal jurisdictions simultaneously, based on their age and development level. For example, a provincial-level athlete may represent their country at an international youth event before becoming a senior national team member.

While Sport Canada oversees the overall sport development framework in Canada, their policies do not follow a one-size-fits-all approach. Each NSO is seen as the expert of its sport and thus adheres to the guidelines based on the specific demands of their sport. Sport Canada, therefore, creates a vision and guiding policies for their members. However, the creation of a policy does not guarantee equal implementation across all stakeholders:

The policy process involves many people at different levels within and outside the organisation, and the extent to which different groups are committed to or opposed to the prevailing policy, and the strategies which they adopt in relation to that policy, play an important part in determining its outcome. (Dopson & Waddington, 1996, p. 546)

Having a document suggesting a certain approach to event selection, therefore, does not guarantee unanimous and consistent follow-through amongst all NSOs. When looking at competition pathways, there is no uniform level of competition (i.e., provincial, national or international), size of teams participating, the age of athletes, or the number of competitions available per year. Within a single country, the age and calibre of athletes may differ greatly (Skille & Houlihan, 2014). These differences are especially noted when looking at multi-sport events below the Olympic Games, in which there are varied attendance and results by Canadian NSOs.

Each event has its own mission, vision, demographics and governing body. These differences may change how Canadian NSOs view such events when building their developmental plans. We find multiple national-level stakeholders (i.e., NSOs, Sport Canada, Own the Podium and event rights holders) involved in deciding whether an athlete attends an international elite youth sport event and the degree to which such events are promoted and supported. Moreover, NSOs allocate resources, such as human and financial, to developmental events, with neither consensus nor understanding of what works and what does not in terms of athlete development (Havaris & Danylchuk, 2007). Thus, such, this dissertation includes a determination of the national-level policies and organizations that interact with NSOs and how this affects the events in which elite youth athletes participate.

Overview of Canadian Sport Policy Literature

Canadian sport policy and sport development are not new to the bodies of literature associated with sport management, sport development, and sport policies. Canada has been included in many comparative sport policy studies (e.g., Green, 2004; Green, 2007; Green & Houlihan, 2004). The Canadian sport system, as a whole, has also been explored in detail (e.g.,

Thibault & Harvey, 2013). Of importance for this dissertation is research related to elite youth sport policy as well as LTAD.

In her Masters' dissertation, Misener (2001; Misener & Paraschak, 2005) explored the processes and rationales related to high performance youth sport within Canadian federal policies. Misener used a case study of Gymnastics Canada to analyze three sub-problems: (1) what are the processes, rationales, and strategies of Canadian policies between 1961-2000 in relation to youth, elite athletes, and youth elite athletes?; (2) What structure currently exists within Gymnastics Canada in relation to youth elite athletes; (3) What issues are relevant to those affected by policy (i.e., coaches and athletes)?; and (4) How are the findings reflective of academic/activists approaches concerning youth sport? Misener and Paraschak (2005) employed a four-step methodology consisting of policy analysis, as well as interviews with Gymnastics Canada administrators, national-level athletes, and national-level coaches. She analyzed policies using a critical lens, viewing youth in a position of vulnerability, harm, and exploitation such as competition anxiety, disrupted family life and physiological and psychological stress.

The historical policy analysis and interviews with administrators revealed a lack of policy development or programming used to reduce negative behaviours associated with youth elite sport (Misener, 2001; Misener & Paraschak, 2005). Regarding talent identification and developing athletes, policies related to identifying athletes through junior training camps and increased national and international competitions became apparent as of 1977, after the 1976 Montréal Olympic Games (Misener & Paraschak, 2005). Using children as a source for reaching elite sport objectives materialized with the creation of the Coaching Association of Canada in 1970, which aimed to improve coaches' talent identification skills (Misener & Paraschak, 2005).

No youth-specific policies or programs existed at Gymnastics Canada, but administrators

were aware of concerns such as over-training, lack of socialization, reduced educational opportunities, and harassment associated with high performance gymnastics (Misener & Paraschak, 2005). Since Misener's research, two Canadian sport policies have been introduced (2002 and 2012), as well as the LTAD Model. Given Misener's research covered policies from 1961-2000, the present dissertation will build from this point to the present day (2017) and look beyond a single NSO to a range of NSOs.

Misener and Paraschak (2005) discussed elite youth sport in a broader sense but did not touch upon developmental events. As Games organizers and event owners continue to cite so-called positive legacies resulting from participation in their events (e.g., International Olympic Committee, 2009), it is important to examine support for these claims. If Games are described as developmental, it is important to learn the value-added to the core stakeholders, the athletes themselves (cf. MacIntosh & Nicol, 2012). Moreover, as the policymakers and NSO managers' decisions affect athlete development, it becomes important to examine their outcomes (policies and systems) in relation to developmental events.

Kristiansen, Parent, and Houlihan (2016) examined elite youth sport policy. Their comparative study of 15 countries, one being Canada, analyzed national public policy for elite youth sport. Topics of study included the attitude of selected stakeholders towards the growth of the domain, the management of elite youth athletes by selected NSOs, the development of services for elite youth athletes, and the impact of the growth in elite youth sport on national sport policies and development strategies (Kristiansen et al., 2016). Each country has its own norms and beliefs, creating differences in their approach to elite youth sport development and event selection. This book highlighted the importance of contextual differences in terms of policy creation and implementation. The Canadian section asserted two key policies within

Canadian elite youth sport: CSP 2012 and LTAD (Parent et al., 2016). “Led by governments and developed with significant public engagement, CSP 2012 is the overarching, guiding document for the Canadian sport system” (Parent et al., 2016, p. 117). LTAD, adopted by Sport Canada, is the national framework for sport development (Parent et al., 2016). All NSOs have been mandated by Sport Canada to create sport-specific LTAD models. The principles of LTAD are also included in the “technically sound sport” ideals of CSP 2012 (Parent et al., 2016).

Dowling (2014), as part of his doctoral dissertation, examined the role of Canadian Sport for Life (CS4L), a social movement turned quasi-governmental organization closely tied to LTAD models, within Canadian sport. The dissertation looked at the role of CS4L within sport policy and governance by looking at the events in CS4L’s development, the influence of CS4L on Canadian sport policy, and the extent to which Sport Canada governed CS4L. Dowling explained the waves of LTAD introduction among NSOs as well as LTAD’s relation to the development of CSP 2012. Dowling found a shift from government to governance. However, Sport Canada remained the central actor within Canadian sport. CS4L was, therefore, a tool to achieve governmental objectives. In his dissertation, multiple stakeholders were included, as national-level policies closely tied to external stakeholders, such as CS4L.

In turn, Doherty and Clutterbuck (2013) discussed Canadian sport development, including the role of the P/TSO in the implementation of LTAD models created by NSOs:

Following the establishment of sport-specific models at the national level, PSOs are responsible for the next and perhaps the most critical step towards implementation: aligning community sport clubs, the school system, and parents during the early stages of athlete development. (p. 339)

Doherty and Clutterbuck’s (2013) research looked at the link between sport participation and

LTAD or provincial and local sport organizations. This dissertation looked at the link between LTAD and high performance and therefore included national-level links to provincial organizations. In both cases, alignment of policy objectives and implementation plans, as well as among key stakeholders involved in the process, were critical components for policy implementation.

In summary, Canada has been included in comparative sport policy studies (e.g., Green, 2004; Green, 2007; Green & Houlihan, 2004) as well as Canadian specific policy studies (e.g., Thibault & Harvey, 2013). Research has also explored processes and rationales related to high performance youth sport within Canadian federal policies (Misener, 2001; Misener & Paraschak, 2005). More recently, Canadian elite youth sport policy (Parent et al., 2016) and the implementation of LTAD models (e.g., Doherty & Clutterbuck, 2013; Dowling, 2014) have also been studied.

Purpose and Specific Research Questions

As such, the purpose of this dissertation was to understand how Canadian sport system stakeholders select the international youth events in which athletes will take part. Governance, in the present document, is defined as the “rights, rules, preferences and resources that structure political outcomes” (March & Olsen, 1995, p. 26). This definition of governance was guided by the approach of Bogason and Musso (2006): “Governance can be understood as encompassing both structure and process, both institutional and procedural dimensions” (p. 5). Structures and processes include the who, what, when, where, how/mechanisms, and why. Stakeholder theory and policy diffusion are used in this dissertation to determine the actors, mechanisms, and changes to the selection of events for elite youth athletes within the Canadian sports system. Institutional and procedural dimensions consider “the rights, rules, policies and actions involved”

(Parent, 2016, p. 797). Policies were explored for the institutional and procedural dimensions, including the contents, creation and implementation processes. This framework allows for the inclusion of sport development concepts overall, as well as policy and event components in relation to each NSO.

As (elite) sport development is governed federally, and due to time constraints, only the national-level organizations were included in this study. The dissertation is divided into two main parts: a top-down perspective (part 1) as well as a bottom-up perspective (part 2), which bring together and address the policies and procedures guiding the selection of international events for developing athletes, as well as the governance structures and processes associated with this selection.

Part 1. The first part looked at the policies and processes consistent among all NSOs: (1) What policies have the federal government put in place to guide behaviours relating to youth elite sport and events?; (2) What process is currently used by Canadian sport system stakeholders to create such policies?; and (3) How are such policies implemented? Thus, a policy-based approach – more specifically an analysis of the institutional and procedural dimensions of governance – was taken in this first part of the dissertation.

As Page (2006) explained, “Policies can be considered as *intentions* or *actions* or more likely a mixture of the two. It is possible for a policy to simply be an intention” (p. 210, emphasis in original). Governments may put in place policies which guide related action in a given field (Pal, 2010). Programs, which are specific measures taken to meet the goals of stated policies, may also be in place (Pal, 2010). Control does not lie solely within the hands of the policymakers, so there is a limited extent to which they can achieve formally-stated objectives (Bloyce & Smith, 2010). “Even if a policy is realistic and the requisite resources have been

secured and distributed appropriately, its effectiveness is still dependent on the understanding, skills, and abilities of those who administer it as well as those charged with implementation” (Bloyce & Smith, 2010, p. 19). As such, simply having a policy does not guarantee implementation, and analysis must look further than the existence of a document.

The first part of the dissertation aimed to understand the national level policies and processes governing the selection of events for elite youth athletes. This component included a description of the policies, as well the means by which they are created and implemented by key sport system stakeholders.

Part 2. The second part focused on how the NSOs responded to these demands in conjunction with those put on them by their specific sport communities and stakeholders. This was a more in depth analysis of the governance structures and processes from the viewpoint of the NSOs. The overarching question of part two of this dissertation was: How do NSOs select events for their elite youth athletes? Sub-questions included: (1) How do the NSOs perceive the pressures placed upon them from Canadian sport system stakeholders/policy makers?; (2) How do NSOs respond to the pressures when selecting Games for elite youth?; and (3) Are there differences between sports; if so, what are they and why?

Policy diffusion guided this component as it looked beyond the policies to include the processes and parties involved in the creation and implementation of said policies. Policy diffusion occurs when one government, city, or governmental agency’s decision to adopt a new idea for a program or policy is affected by the decisions of another (cf. Graham, Shipan, & Volden, 2012; Walker, 1969). The diffusion process can be broken down into three stages: 1) discovery of the policy innovation within the organization or group; 2) assessment of the policy innovation; and 3) adoption of the policy (cf. Douglas, Raudla, & Hartley, 2015; Karch, 2007). It

is, therefore, possible to look at the pressures, stages and decision-makers involved in both the creation and implementation of policies, such as those associated with NSO competition selection, athlete development models and athlete selection criteria for events.

In order to determine how NSOs perceived and responded to pressures, semi-structured interviews with NSOs and other key stakeholders within the Canadian sport system's national level were conducted. NSOs were strategically selected (see Stakeholder Sampling in Chapter 3) to include summer and winter sports, team and individual sports, as well as sports receiving varying amounts of government funding. Analysis of documents produced by the NSOs themselves was also included to determine if, and how, policies were implemented within the organizations. As international multi-sport events are available to many sports and varied attendance and levels of competition are observed, they were used as a key point of comparison during data collection and analysis. As these events were shared amongst many NSOs, it was possible to compare and contrast the sport-specific needs of each NSO. The focus of this section was to determine which events, single and multi-sport, are attended by each NSO, who was involved in the decision, what criteria were considered when making this decision, and what, if any, differences exist for the specific sport. Given each NSO must meet the demands from their international sport federation, and sets its Olympic qualification procedures and overall sport format, it was important to acknowledge possible pressures experienced by the NSO.

Having a policy in place does not guarantee all parties involved will implement the changes evenly, if implemented at all. Competitions are a large component of the sport development models within the country (Böhlke & Robinson, 2009). By focusing on elite youth sport competition selection, it was possible to explore in greater depth competition selection practices within Canada as well as strengths and barriers of the sport system. Multiple

viewpoints from NSOs, government officials, event rights holders, and MSOs allowed for triangulation of information.

The next chapter will explain the conceptual framework used to guide the data collection and analysis of this dissertation. After introducing the concepts of governance, policy diffusion and stakeholder theory, the methods for data collection and analysis will be explained. The results and discussion will be presented by research question, moving from national-level policies to the perceptions and responses of the individual NSOs. The dissertation will end with theoretical and managerial implications derived from this dissertation.

Chapter 2 – Conceptual Framework and Relevant Literature

In this chapter, the conceptual framework used to address the dissertation’s purpose and specific research questions is presented. This chapter introduces key concepts, which were used to guide the collection and analysis of data. Governance was the overarching concept used to frame this dissertation. This was complemented by both policy diffusion and stakeholder theory to incorporate the structures and processes as well as the institutional and procedural dimensions. Each component of the conceptual framework and its links within the dissertation is described below. A summary of the conceptual framework is illustrated in Figure 2-1.

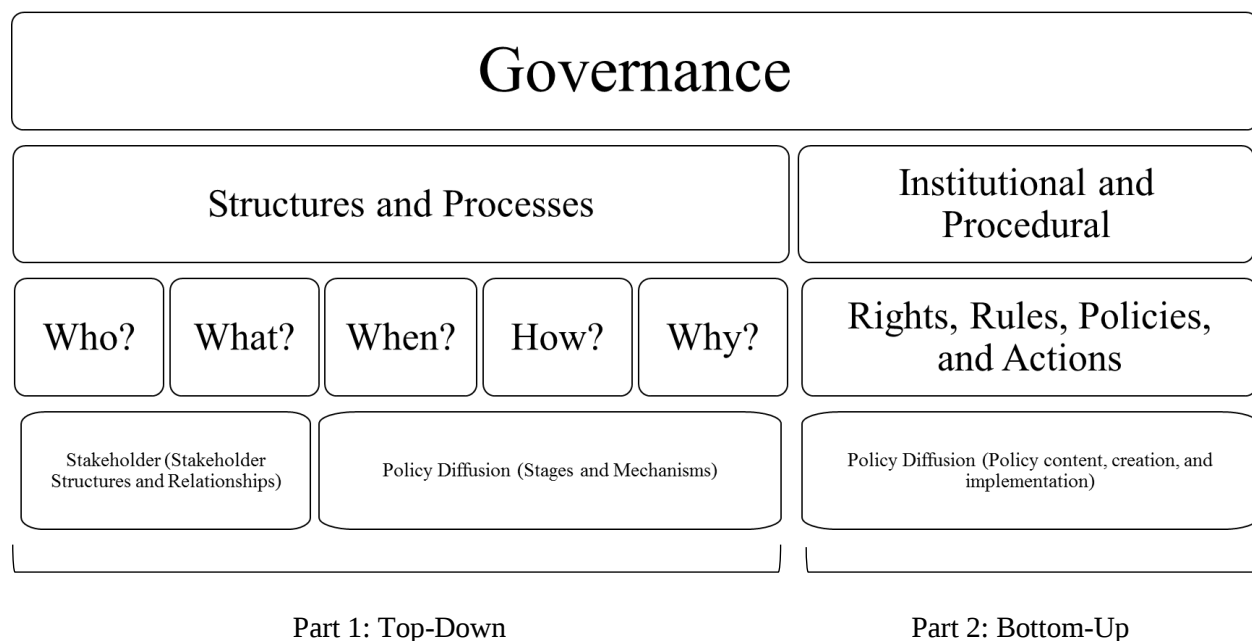


Figure 2-1. Conceptual framework

Governance

As King (2017) explained, governance can be broken down into political and administrative components. In the political sense, governance looks at “how power is exercised, who has influence, who decides and who benefits from decisions and actions” (King, 2017, p. 4). When looking at governance from an administrative perspective, the rules and procedures for

making organizational decisions, effective and prudent management, performance optimization, risk management and ethics are included (King, 2017). This dissertation included both political and administrative aspects of governance through stakeholder participation (political), accountability and compliance (political), organizational processes and decision-making structures (administrative), performance, assessment and compliance measures (administrative).

Governance approaches are narratives, which can exist simultaneously and will change based on the frame of reference. There are three approaches, or narratives, in governance: good governance, steering, and network (King, 2017). As good governance looks at how organizations operate at a micro level and would require in-depth analysis of all organizations in the study, it was beyond the scope of this dissertation. However, both steering and network governance were used. As these approaches may occur simultaneously and change depending on the focal organization, both governance narratives were considered during the dissertation.

Steering involves strategies used to improve performance and accountability (King, 2017; Pierre, 2000). This is closely tied to compliance and adherence measures put in place by central organizations such as governments. Steering is often considered a top-down, legally binding approach to governance. “Although ‘steering’ (as opposed to ‘rowing’) implies a dispersal, rather than a concentration, of power, and therefore increased autonomy and responsibilities for [Non Profit Sport Organizations], this approach to governance is underpinned by a strategy of adherence to the parameters of central government policy” (King, 2017, p. 37). In the Canadian sport context, this could be Sport Canada’s relationship with NSOs through funding agreements. In turn, networks are not legally binding contracts but rather social networks. These relationships are horizontal, formal or informal in nature, and tend to be built around resource dependency (Hoye & Cuskelly, 2007). This could be relationships between NSOs and multi-sport

organizations such as Canadian Sport for Life (e.g., Dowling, 2014). As this dissertation was a qualitative empirical study, a broader governance perspective allowed the entire Canadian sport system to be viewed as a single network governing event selection.

Bogason and Musso (2006) suggested an approach, which considers structure and process as well as institutional and procedural dimensions. This approach includes who, what, why, where, how/mechanism, and why as well as the rights, rules, policies and actions of individuals involved in policy creation and implementation (see also Figure 2-1). Marinetto (2003) suggested scholars interested in policy may use concepts of governance to understand the role of government in the policy process. As Dowling (2014) explained, “The concept of governance is therefore particularly well equipped to examine the researcher’s interest in macro level policy developments and systemic level change within the Canadian sport context” (p. 21).

This approach aligns with policy diffusion as meta-governance may occur through four mechanisms: formal procedures, framing using standards or grants, direct participation or advisory methods, and storytelling to inspire reframing of issues (Sørensen, 2006). These mechanisms are well documented within the Canadian context such as through the SFAF and will be furthered explored in this dissertation, through policy diffusion. As Bogason and Musso (2006) explained, “Activities of metagoverning will increase in importance if the trend toward decentralization of powers to local service operators continues”. The Canadian sport system is decentralized, with each provinces/territories holding the sport file, as well as NSOs governing the technical aspects of their own sports. “Underlying this approach is the assumption that governing is not (as it once was) the sole responsibility of government. Rather, multiple institutions and actors are now increasingly involved in the governing process” (Dowling, 2014, p. 22).

Bogason and Musso (2006) argued network governance may improve flexibility and responsiveness; it raises issues in terms of equity, accountability and democratic legitimacy. As such, these strengths and weaknesses in relation to policy creation and implementation were considered. Each NSO responded differently to their respective stakeholders while creating NSO-specific documents and policies. Understanding the stakeholders involved and the mechanisms used to influence the policies created were concerned. A network governance framework will, therefore, guide a policy diffusion, as discussed below.

Sport governance has become a topic of interest with practitioners and researchers alike. In Canada, the governance of sport organizations is considered a priority as outlined in the Sport Canada funding requirements (Government of Canada, 2011). For scholars, much of the research has examined management-board relationships such as leadership (e.g., O'Boyle & Shilbury, 2016), board capability (e.g., Ferkins, Shilbury, & McDonald, 2005), board motivation (e.g., Doherty & Carron, 2003), board structure, and performance (e.g., Ferkins et al., 2005; Shilbury & Kellett, 2006). Stakeholder relations through the governance process (e.g., Ferkins & Shilbury, 2015), changes to governance in response to policies (Green, 2009) and the governance of mega-events within host nations (Parent, 2016) have also been explored. Much of this research has focused on the organizational or corporate governance of a single organization (Dowling, 2014). This dissertation builds on the broader sport governance literature (e.g., Goodwin & Grix, 2011; Parent, 2016) to include a multiple level, multi-organization structure.

Policy Diffusion

In this dissertation, policy diffusion was used to explore structural and process components of governance. In this case, the questions of who, what, when, where, and how/mechanisms of NSO decisions related to elite youth event selection were answered using

semi-structured interviews and policy analysis.

Policy diffusion occurs when one government, city, or governmental agency's decision to adopt a new idea for a program or policy is affected by the decisions of another (cf. Graham et al., 2012; Shipan & Volden, 2008; Walker, 1969). Policy adoptions can be interdependent, simultaneous or anticipatory (Graham et al., 2012). That is, decisions do not have to be made after another country, state or organization has implemented a policy but rather can occur in conjunction with, at the same time, or prior to policy adoption of another party. The decision remains linked to theirs but does not have to occur after another group's implementation. A country, state, or in this case, an organization, can base its decisions on observations of the decisions of others (Graham et al., 2012). For this dissertation, the agent in question was individual NSOs within the Canadian sport system.

This dissertation aimed to understand how the Canadian sport system stakeholders select the international youth events in which athletes will take part. Key policies of NSOs of interest included the LTAD Model and its associated competition review. As the LTAD model within an NSO is a funding requirement put in place by Sport Canada, it is present within all organizations. Differences are found within the contents of the policy as well as the level of detail included (Dowling, 2014). In order to account for these differences, the policy as a whole and its specific contents were included. The nature and cause of the differences between LTAD models, competition calendars and event attendance may, therefore, be better understood using a policy diffusion framework.

Policy diffusion considers not only if a policy is implemented, but also how and when it takes effect. Policy diffusion takes into consideration the timing, the parties involved, and why the change occurs (Graham et al., 2012). This was particularly valuable for this dissertation as it

was a qualitative empirical study. Although the framework of policy diffusion was used, the typical quantitative methods associated with it (Graham et al., 2012) were not. This was based on the nature of the research and its specific research questions. Quantitative researchers face the challenge of developing indicators, which are often limiting, to match the theoretical concepts; quantitative approaches are also limited to what is happening politically rather than why it is happening (Graham et al., 2012). As an alternative, a qualitative approach before and after quantitative methods can provide a better picture of the policy diffusion process.

As this dissertation was a qualitative study regarding policies, which are equally mandated across all NSOs, a qualitative approach was applied to explore how and why they were implemented. The holistic approach to the framework allowed for rich data without restricting the scope of the findings. This approach encompasses stages of policy implementation, mechanisms that induce change, as well as the stakeholders involved in the process (Graham et al., 2012), it appeared to be appropriate to answer the research questions.

Policy diffusion can be broken down into three stages: discovery of the policy innovation within the organization or group, assessment of the policy innovation, and adoption of the policy (cf. Douglas et al., 2015; Karch, 2007). Mechanisms of diffusion are composed of learning, imitation, competition, and coercion (Füglister, 2012; Graham et al., 2012; Shipan & Volden, 2012). Both policy stages and mechanisms will be discussed in detail later in the chapter. Policy diffusion analysis also accounts for interactions between those adopting the policy at the micro level, as well as the general policy environment at a macro level (Douglas et al., 2015). Two categories of the said environment are the “external actors”, or other governments who have adopted the policy, and “go-betweens”, or actors across multiple jurisdictions (Douglas et al., 2015; Graham et al., 2012). Both were considered in this dissertation.

The study of policy diffusion focuses on the process rather than simply the outcome (Gilardi, 2016). The quality of implementation, such as the amount of adhesion to the requirements as well as the specific details included, are flexible (Graham et al., 2012). As such, it is important to consider the stages of the implementation process. Having a policy in writing does not guarantee it is being followed, nor does it imply implementation adherence will not change over time (Graham et al., 2012). In the case of Canadian sport policies, such as the Canadian Sport Policy 2012 (CSP 2012), the policies are created as strategies, not laws.

A literature review of the policy diffusion field and related subfields was conducted by Graham and colleagues in 2012. They argued policy diffusion research would benefit from a more systematic approach addressing when and how policy diffusion takes place as well as more attention to developments in other sub-fields. The authors suggested there is much to gain by having scholars learn from other sub-fields, such as American politics looking to international relations literature as they aim to learn about decentralization and globalization. Despite an abundance of policy diffusion research, there is a theoretical disconnect between scholars: a lack of a systematic and general understanding of how diffusion works has created a disjointed academic approach to the topic (Graham et al., 2012). Policy diffusion is most often used within the American context, by comparing policies within states. This was brought into the Canadian system by comparing NSOs.

Graham et al. (2012) set out parameters for diffusion research and suggested paths to further the domain. They distinguished four primary categories of policy diffusion literature: American politics, comparative politics, international relations, and other (namely theoretical or methodological studies). Public policy was a common thread of all policy diffusion research. As such, it was deemed relevant for this dissertation. While most research within the sport policy

field had been comparative (e.g., Houlihan & Green, 2008), the focus was international in scope and compared countries. NSOs govern their sport. They compete internationally but must also adhere to federal regulations within Canada. A framework that encompassed both aspects was deemed pertinent for this dissertation. In relation to previous policy diffusion research, this dissertation would be in line with both American politics and comparative politics.

American and comparative politics within the policy diffusion literature were deemed connected but not integrated (Graham et al., 2012). American politics research focused on a small core set of studies. Comparative politics had no central cluster of citations. Similarities included a 'race to the bottom' approach while policy transfer was almost exclusively of interest to comparative politics scholars. Policy transfers, in this case, were those that focused on a single policy in a single country to assess the influence of other countries (Graham et al., 2012). Convergence literature was used to determine if there was a move, through policies, towards similar endpoints. This terminology was almost exclusively found in comparative politics. The term is also often used in international sport policy comparisons (e.g., Houlihan & Green, 2008). This was considered favourable as comparisons can be made to the findings of these previous studies. It is beneficial to consider both national and international influences when analyzing policy diffusion. As Graham and colleagues explained (2012):

There are a number of areas where insights are transferrable across fields and even where similar dynamics are at work. For example, race to the bottom (or top) dynamics operate both domestically and internationally, and international organizations may facilitate policy diffusion across countries just as federal governments do across states. (p. 684)

The present dissertation had a national focus but included international factors within data

collection and analysis. Consideration of prior international sport development research is important to understand the Canadian system better. As such, a qualitative and open-ended approach was used for this research to allow national and international influences to be included in the study, as needed. Policies evolve from the point the idea is conceived through to the moment it is written and implemented. The following subsection introduces the stages of policy diffusion. This will be followed by the mechanisms of policy diffusion or methods of pressures used by stakeholders to influence the creation and implementation of policies. The kinds of stakeholders will then be discussed. Understanding the process of policy adoption, throughout its lifespan, is important when inquiring about the governance processes within the Canadian sport system.

Stages of policy diffusion. Studies have shown diffusion processes change temporally and when comparing policy creation to the adoption itself (Graham et al., 2012). The diffusion process can be broken down into three stages: discovery of the policy innovation within the organization or group, assessment of the policy innovation prior to implementation, and finally adoption of the policy (cf. Douglas et al., 2015; Karch, 2007). This framework allows us to understand better how an organization learns of a possible policy, how it decides which parts should be implemented and if it should be adopted. The pressures from internal and external stakeholders involved in the policy creation and implementation processes and their relative salience change with respect to the stage of the policy diffusion process (Graham et al., 2012). As this research looks at federally mandated policies, understanding the process of adoption is important. For example, the timing of the initial introduction of LTAD models, revisions to the model, as well as changes to the levels of implementation and adhesion to the guidelines, were deemed important facets to the research question. In order to answer why there were differences,

mechanisms of policy diffusion were explored.

Mechanisms of diffusion. Mechanisms of diffusion were used to explore the when, how and why of structures and processes (Bogason & Musso, 2006) linked to event selection for elite youth athletes. The standard definition of policy diffusion is quite broad, stating only a government's policy choices are affected by the choice of others (Graham et al., 2012). The definition does not address why policies spread nor how the diffusion occurs (Graham et al., 2012). Understanding mechanisms of diffusion is a means to explore mechanisms of governance, or structures and processes, as well (cf. Bogason & Musso, 2006). Graham and colleagues (2012) combined a list of 104 terms used within policy diffusion literature and reduced them to four main processes or mechanisms of diffusion: learning, competition, coercion and socialization. The list came from a comprehensive analysis of literature across the fields of American politics, comparative politics and international relations sub-fields (Graham et al., 2012). The list closely resembles those of Simmons, Dobbin and Garrett (2006) and Shipan and Volden (2008). One difference is the inclusion of socialization rather than emulation or imitation.

Learning. Discovering the success of a policy allows others to learn from its implementation process (e.g., Gilardi, Füglistner, & Luyet, 2009; Meseguer, 2006; Volden, 2006). Policy makers may also want to examine public perceptions and political viability (Graham et al., 2012). Graham and colleagues (2012) suggested future research address policy implementation systematically, in addition to considering what is effective in one government may not be applicable elsewhere.

Learning of a policy does not guarantee adoption (Graham et al., 2012). Not only are multiple factors at play, but also learning of a policy from another government may decrease the likelihood of adoption in another (Franzese Jr & Hays, 2006). It is also worth noting some

policies simply do not work. This is not to say that failed policies cannot diffuse despite a lack of success. A failed or unsuccessful policy may also teach other governments not to implement the policy or to implement the policy with radical changes (Mooney, 2001; Sharman, 2010). This is a relatively passive process in comparison to other pressures discussed below, as there are limited interactions between policy adopters during the learning process (Graham et al., 2012).

Competition. Competition is an active process, in which one organization vies to beat out another organization through the implementation of a policy. Government competition may be positive by improving tourist revenue, economic conditions, and tax bases, thus contributing to market discipline through policymaking (Tiebout, 1956). Competition may also be detrimental, such as trade wars and difficult treaty negotiations (Graham et al., 2012). Competition tends to be more robust than policy diffusion through learning and involves strategic interactions among governments (Baybeck, Berry, & Siegel, 2011). Competitive processes are also relevant to sport and sport events as winning sports events are a primary objective of the athletes and their associated organizations as seen by the creation of Own the Podium and a targeted excellence approach within the Canadian sport system.

Coercion. Coercion is also an interactive mechanism of diffusion. Some actors attempt to impose their preferred policy solutions on a government (Graham et al., 2012). Coercive pressures may be applied vertically or horizontally. This could be a governing body or those at a similar level. Vertical pressures, or steering, would be from organizations outside of the governments in question. For example, in the case of the Canadian sport system, the pressures may come from Sport Canada onto NSOs. Pressures may be present in forms such as intergovernmental grants, regulations and the pre-emptive policies of a centralized government (e.g., Allen, Pettus, & Haider-Markel, 2004; Karch, 2006; Walker, 1973; Welch & Thompson,

1980). Horizontal pressures, or network governance, would be from similar organizations applying pressure until their desired change occurs (Schelling, 1963). The objective of coercive pressures is to change governmental policies (Graham et al., 2012). In this case, NSOs, governmental organizations, or other related sports stakeholders may enforce change through pressure on one another to change national sport policies, LTAD models or competition structures.

Socialization. Socialization is a process through which norms and rules, rather than policies, are affected (Checkel, 2005; Graham et al., 2012). Socialization may be used to change preferences and general outlooks on a certain policy. Altered norms and preferences may lead to more stable long-term policy change than coercion alone (Graham et al., 2012). In the context of the present dissertation, changes to the overall outlook on LTAD models or the focus on high performance sport may be seen as socialization pressures within the Canadian sport system.

Interrelation of mechanisms. While four distinct mechanisms do exist, they are not mutually exclusive. Multiple mechanisms may be at play simultaneously. As Graham, Shipan and Volden (2012) suggested, an international organization might use both socialization and learning mechanisms to change beliefs and behaviours simultaneously. This may also apply to Canadian NSOs, which balance the demands with numerous stakeholders.

Actors. Actors, or stakeholders for this dissertation, involved in policy changes answer the who, what and why questions of governance by explaining the stakeholders involved, the nature of the involvement, as well as the purpose of the involvement (cf. Bogason & Musso, 2006). Policy diffusion, when using quantitative methods, often focuses all attention on geographic location in relation to policy introduction (Graham et al., 2012). This is done without taking into consideration the actors involved in bringing the policy to fruition. This is an

important aspect, which needs to be considered within the political landscape (Graham et al., 2012). Understanding the various stakeholders is important when examining the mechanisms of policy diffusion. There is a need to study who the actors are as well as the purpose of their involvement (Graham et al., 2012). Policy diffusion categorises actors into three groupings: internal, external and go-betweens.

Internal Actors. Internal actors are those within the government/organization considering the addition or change to a policy (Graham et al., 2012). Policy makers may be the electorate, elected politicians, appointed bureaucrats, interest groups, or policy advocates (Dolowitz & Marsh, 1996). Policy makers, including their preferences, goals, capabilities, and environment, are critical to understanding policy diffusion (Graham et al., 2012). Individuals within an organization may influence the implementation of a policy. This is based on their personal opinions, experiences or perceptions of the policy change in question (Graham et al., 2012). Despite the preferences of internal stakeholders, policy implementation is not guaranteed. The goals and capabilities of the internal actors must also be considered (Graham et al., 2012).

The goals of internal actors fall into two broad categories: political goals and policy goals (Graham et al., 2012). This is related to budget concerns and legitimacy concerns of the individuals within the organization. As such, some policies may be implemented with political intentions such as re-election while others are for policy goals in which the policy is deemed beneficial.

The capabilities of the internal actors include the level of professionalization, expertise related to the field of change, and the broader political environment (Graham et al., 2012). It is important to consider the constraints and pressures put in place by the stakeholders themselves (Graham et al., 2012). While an organization may want to implement a policy, they may have

limited human or financial resources, which hinder its capabilities. As Canadian NSOs face different financial realities and staff sizes, it is important to consider the environments in which they operate.

External Actors. External actors are from organizations outside of the focal organization, mainly those who have already adopted a policy.

Every new policy idea comes from somewhere, so to the extent that these first adopters acted without information or pressure from outside actors, researchers can be alerted to the causes of policy adoption that exist in the absence of diffusion, thereby minimizing the possibility of a spurious finding of diffusion. (Graham et al., 2012, p. 686)

Features of initial governments may influence chances of others implementing the policies themselves (Graham et al., 2012). That is, a government may compare their traits to those of previous implementers to determine the feasibility of implementing a new policy. This includes the expertise, size, and wealth of the initial government (Graham et al., 2012). Also, earlier adopters are often strategic and proactive, when creating policies (Graham et al., 2012). For example, the NSOs who implemented LTAD models earlier than their counterparts were those that had development pathways planned before the mandate from Sport Canada. As such, these NSOs were proactive and had strategically planned the pathway earlier on. Those later implementers could, therefore, learn from the earlier implementers.

Go-Betweens. Go-between actors act across multiple governments; they are neither the government/organization considering adoption nor the government/organization that has already acted (Graham et al., 2012). Examples of go-between actors influencing policy implementation would be top-down pressures such as the national government on (American) states as they are not directly involved in decision-making but can coordinate and influence decisions made at the

state level. Other examples include bottom-up vertical policy diffusion, such as municipalities to provinces, provinces to the national level, or the national to supranational levels (Graham et al., 2012). Go-between actors may be individuals or groups such as elected officials, policy entrepreneurs, think tanks, academic entrepreneurs, research institutes, media, migrants, intergovernmental organizations (Graham et al., 2012). For this dissertation, MSOs such as Own the Podium, Canadian Sport for Life, the Canadian Olympic Committee and AthletesCAN would be considered Go-Between actors.

Previous applications of policy diffusion. As Douglas and colleagues (2015) explained, previous studies have investigated many characteristics of policy adopters and their environment in relation to policy diffusion. This includes the geographic proximity between American jurisdictions (e.g., Berry & Berry, 1990; Daley & Garand, 2005), attributes of the jurisdiction such as ideology (e.g., Grossback, Nicholson-Crotty, & Peterson, 2004; Volden, 2006), demographic composition (e.g., Godwin & Schroedel, 2000; Martin, 2001), resource capacity (e.g., Berry & Berry, 1990; Bhatti, Olsen, & Pedersen, 2011) and the characteristics of the individual actors leading policy adoption (e.g., Volden, 2006). In Canada, policy diffusion has been used to compare policies such as smoke-free space bylaws in Ontario (Nykiforuk, Eyles, & Campbell, 2008) and ridesharing regulations (Shields, 2016).

Attributes of the policy being diffused have also been explored, such as the policy type (e.g., Mooney & Lee, 1995), policy complexity (e.g., Makse & Volden, 2011; Nicholson-Crotty, 2009), policy success (e.g., Crain, 1966; Volden, 2006), policy salience (e.g., Nicholson-Crotty, 2009), and the cost of implementation (e.g., Allen et al., 2004). The severity of the problem meant to be solved has also been studied (e.g., Daley & Garand, 2005; Sapat, 2004). Patterns of diffusion have been studied over a wide range of areas, including water boiling practices in

Peruvian villages, citrus eating in the British navy, the spread of riots and coups, government types, as well as institutional structures (e.g., Brinks & Coppedge, 2006; Frederickson, Johnson, & Wood, 2004; Hill & Rothchild, 1986; Rogers, 2003). Studies regarding the diffusion of public policies have most often not included important questions such as how the ideas enter the political agenda, how items become laws, or how the ideas are created in the first place (Graham et al., 2012). The focus has been on the first adoption, considering policies in a simple and dichotomous fashion (e.g., Berry & Berry, 1990; Prakash & Potoski, 2006; True & Mintrom, 2001).

As Graham and colleagues (2012) suggested, scholars must look beyond the initial adoptions and move away from labeling policy implementation in two distinct categories. Attention to other stages of the process, such as initial agenda setting and the process of implementation should also be addressed (Graham et al., 2012). Graham et al. (2012) highlighted the importance of analyzing the scope of a policy change, including the evolution and reinvention as the policy spreads. Attributes, such as a policy's complexity, the degree to which it can be tried on a limited basis, and the ability for it to be observed influence whether and how it diffuses (e.g., Nicholson-Crotty, 2009).

Stakeholder Theory

Stakeholder theory was incorporated into the conceptual framework to help determine which individuals or organizations played a role in the governance of elite youth event selection. "A stakeholder is any group or individual that can affect or be affected by the realization of an organization's purpose" (Freeman, Harrison, Wicks, Parmar, & De Colle, 2010, p. 26). The nature of the relationships was important when exploring the "who" of decisions as well as the "how" (cf. Bogason & Musso, 2006). Network governance assumes lateral interactions, as such,

an understanding of the hierarchy and power relations was important, albeit not the priority of the dissertation. Including multiple stakeholders and viewpoints when evaluating a policy, its strengths and weaknesses, as well as its level of implementation, were aided by a grasp of the stakeholders surrounding NSOs and their decisions. Stakeholder descriptions were initially derived from those outlined in the CSP 2012 (Government of Canada, 2012).

Stakeholder theory involves identifying and classifying individuals or groups who have an impact or are affected by a focal organization (Freeman, 1984). For example, Mitchell, Agle, and Wood (1997) developed a framework, which categorized stakeholders based on power, legitimacy, and urgency. The authors proposed the more of the attributes a stakeholder possessed, the more salient the stakeholder became. As explained by Jones and Wicks (1999), the four essential premises of stakeholder theory are: the corporation has a relationship with stakeholders that affect and are affected by decisions (Freeman, 1984); the theory looks at the nature of the relations in terms of processes and outcomes for the firm and its stakeholders; the interests of all legitimate stakeholders have intrinsic value, and no set of interests are assumed to dominate the others (Clarkson, 1995; Donaldson & Preston, 1995); and the theory focuses on managerial decision making (Donaldson & Preston, 1995). In 1999, Jones and Wicks introduced a convergent stakeholder theory, which joined normative and instrumental components of stakeholder theory. That is, a stakeholder theory which includes ethical components as well as business aspects when analyzing relationships among stakeholders. Trevino and Weaver (1999) rebutted the convergent theory proposed by Jones and Wicks in 1999 based on two arguments. The first claim questioned the plausibility of empirical stakeholder theory integrating with normative theory. The second argument stated the new approach did not develop stakeholder research beyond its present level of empirical and normative integration. However, stakeholder

theory is not a “full” theory per se; it is better used in conjunction with other theories or approaches. As explained by Key (1999), theories should be explanatory and predictive. However, Key criticized Freeman’s stakeholder theory, stating the focus is on technique rather than theory. The critique was extended to include four criticisms: an inadequate explanation of the process, incomplete linkages of internal and external variables, insufficient attention to the system within which business operates and the levels of analysis within the system, and inadequate environmental assessment (Key, 1999). Freeman et al. (2010) countered, noting:

That is, rather than being a specific theory used for one purpose (e.g., resource dependence theory in management), seeing stakeholder theory as a “genre” is to recognize the value of the variety of uses one can make of this set of ideas. (p. 64)

Thus, in this dissertation, stakeholder theory was used as part of a framework alongside policy diffusion rather than as a standalone theory. More specifically, in this dissertation, once the stakeholders had been determined through policies and prior literature, the relationships between stakeholders was further explored using policy diffusion. The objective was to determine the mechanisms of change and the nature of the relationships between stakeholders. This addresses recommendations by Key (1999) to provide logic for the process, linking internal and external roles of the stakeholders and addressing the complexity of their relationships, defining the level of system analysis as appropriate for the research question, and incorporating environmental variables.

As outlined by Friedman, Parent, and Mason (2004), stakeholders possess four fundamental qualifications: there is a connection between the stakeholder and the organization (Clarkson, Starik, Cochran, & Jones, 1994); a stakeholder represents definable interests (Clarkson et al., 1994); a stakeholder exists in the organization’s environment based on their

interest in the organization (Donaldson & Preston, 1995); and stakeholders may be present in different configurations such as individuals or organizations. (Clarkson et al., 1994). Once stakeholders have been identified, the interests of the stakeholders are evaluated on a case-by-case basis. At this point, stakeholders are prioritized to determine relative importance. This may be done by looking at internal and external stakeholders, primary (i.e., necessary for survival) and secondary (i.e., not necessary for survival) stakeholders, as well as the attributes of each stakeholder, namely power, legitimacy and urgency. This incorporates not only resource aspects of the relationships but also moral obligations associated with recognizing the claims and legitimacy of primary stakeholders (Clarkson, 1995).

Parent and Deephouse (2007) built on this framework to explore how managers identify and prioritize stakeholders in a sport event context. The authors also investigated the extent the managerial practices fit the framework proposed by Mitchell and colleagues in 1997. The research focused on the individual managers of two major sports events held in Canada in 1999 and 2001 using a multi-method approach. The stakeholders were identified using documents and interviews. Stakeholders were then rated for salience using Likert scales based on interviews with event managers. The study suggested managers favour power over urgency and legitimacy when determining the salience of event stakeholders.

The stakeholder approach has been previously used by MacIntosh and Spence (2012) and by Parent et al. (2015) when analyzing multiple perspectives of similar events. The stakeholders related to events as well as Canadian NSOs were listed prior to interviews. A preliminary document analysis confirmed the relationship amongst stakeholders. This information guided the interview guide creation, which aimed to understand the nature of the relationships to affirm or disprove the content found in documents. The perspective of key stakeholders (here Sport

Canada, NSOs and athletes) in regards to event selection for elite youth sports events attended by Canadian athletes were incorporated. In this dissertation, the following stakeholders were included: event rights holders (Canadian Olympic Committee, Canadian Paralympic Committee, Commonwealth Games Canada, and U SPORTS, formerly Canadian Interuniversity Sport (CIS), NSOs, Sport Canada, and Own the Podium. These stakeholders arguably play the largest roles in selecting and prioritizing sporting events for elite Canadian athletes.

Policy diffusion and stakeholder theory both incorporate the “who” involved in governance (cf. Bogason & Musso, 2006). However, different terminology is used (i.e., actor versus stakeholder, respectively). The term “stakeholder” was chosen in lieu of actor to maintain concept wording consistency throughout the dissertation.

In summary, this dissertation was guided by a conceptual framework, illustrated in Figure 2-1 and led primarily by a governance approach. With policy diffusion and stakeholder theory used as supporting concepts to determine structures and processes as well as institutional and procedural components (cf. Bogason & Musso, 2006). The methods used for data collection and analysis will now be discussed, followed by the findings and implications of the dissertation.

Chapter 3 – Methods

The purpose of this dissertation was to understand how Canadian sport system stakeholders select the international youth events in which athletes will take part. Part 1 determined the policies, processes and implementation strategies of national level policies related to event selection for elite youth, put in place by the federal government and any related MSOs. This section explored the institutional and procedural dimensions of governance (see Bogason & Musso, 2006). Part 2 aimed to understand how Canadian NSOs perceived and responded to the individual components found in the first part of the study. That is, what considerations were taken when selecting events for elite youth athletes and how the decisions were similar or different amongst NSOs. This component focused on the structures and processes of governance (see Bogason & Musso, 2006). Both components were conducted in relation to event selection for elite youth athletes competing at the national level. The research approach, data collection strategies, sources of data, stakeholder sampling, and data analysis techniques employed for this dissertation are presented below.

Qualitative Research Approach

As the purpose of the dissertation was to understand how Canadian sport system stakeholders selected international youth events, through processes, interactions, and policies, which have not yet been explored, a qualitative approach was deemed most suitable. In this case, richer data, through interviews and document analysis were chosen. Semi-structured interviews allowed for further exploration of motivations, nuances to policy content and implementation, and to find underlying themes among all stakeholders. This moved away from “Is there a policy in place?” to “Why is there a policy and how is it being implemented?” Therefore, it was possible to explore the variations and similarities between NSOs in terms of elite youth athlete

policies and event selection practices.

Qualitative research has an emergent design and allows for flexibility in the outcomes as new information became available (Skinner & Edwards, 2009). Before beginning data collection, differences were noted between sports in relation to their elite youth event participation information. Initially, the priority was a comparison of elite youth multi-sport events. As the interviews progressed, information regarding single-sport events became a key recurring theme, with multi-sport events making up a small portion of the findings. As such, the research purpose was adjusted accordingly and broadened to include the governance of all elite youth events rather than solely multi-sport.

Preliminary research into NSOs and their event attendance included competition calendars as well as the amount of details available in relation to the selection criteria of said events. The same federal policies (e.g., CSP 2012) and multi-sport stakeholders (e.g., Own the Podium) are said to guide the Canadian NSOs and to provide strategic direction for the Canadian sport system (Government of Canada, 2016c). Despite these similarities, competition calendars varied amongst sports, including those attended by developing youth athletes. Therefore, direct contact with NSOs was deemed an important component to determine possible sources for the differences. A semi-structured interview strategy allowed new themes to emerge and for policy creation and implementation strategies to be discussed in greater depth.

Qualitative research seeks to observe and interpret meanings within a context, making it difficult to plan research strategies before data collection. In order to design the study, the purpose of the inquiry, the information required to answer the question, and the credibility of sources were taken into consideration (Edwards, Mason, & Washington, 2009). Although a quantitative approach is most commonly used with policy diffusion, the nature of the research

questions, as well as the policies themselves, led to the decision to use a qualitative approach. The question was not whether the policies were created, but how, why and when. Semi-structured interviews offered the flexibility to explore these questions in greater depth.

The data collection methods used for this dissertation are discussed below, followed by data analysis methods.

Data Collection Methods

Data collection was completed using two methods: semi-structured interviews and document analysis. Including multiple data collection strategies and stakeholders allowed for richer and triangulated data. Documents and interviews were used in both part 1 and 2 of the dissertation, with the primary source changing for each section. That is, Part 1 was driven by the policies, using interviews for clarification. Part 2 used interviews with NSOs as the primary source, with internal documents to support findings. As themes or concepts were introduced through document analysis or interviews, it was possible to explore these ideas in later interviews. For instance, once learning about the transition from P/TSOs as the primary board members to elected members, and thus reducing the direction relationship between NSOs and P/TSOs, questions were added to NSO interviews about the members of their boards of directors and committees. As the board and committees may have varying levels of influence based on their member composition, it became important to have the information readily available from all NSOs should the theme be seen as relevant during data analysis. In this case, the information was later deemed irrelevant to the final findings of the dissertation, but the differences among relationships with provinces and clubs was an important finding.

As Abbott, Shaw and Elston (2004) explained, document analysis can be beneficial when conducting comparative studies of policy implementation. Data may not be readily available in

other forms, making documents the only way to gain access to the set of events or processes (Mason, 1996). For public and non-profit organizations, such as those examined in this dissertation, documents were easily accessed through websites at no cost to the researcher (Appleton & Cowley, 1997). Relevant documents from all organizations, with the exception of Own the Podium, were available through the stakeholder's websites in accordance with Canada's Not-for-Profit Corporations Act and Sport Canada guidelines. These included organization by-laws, strategic plans, website pages and eligibility criteria pertaining to governance, athlete selection criteria, LTAD models, and Athlete Assistance Program selection criterion. Internal policies, in tandem with interviews show which documents are self-guided as opposed to government requested. These documents are most often NSO-specific operational plans in response to government-mandated policies. The documents suggest formalization and standardization of decision processes within organizations associated with youth event selection. As all policy documents collected were from comparable organizations, this made it easier to compare and contrast organizational structures, processes and outputs, thus facilitating overall policy analysis (Abbott et al., 2004). These documents guided probes/prompts asked to NSOs and other stakeholders during the interview portion of the dissertation.

Data from public documents are prepared before the research begins and are therefore not influenced by the data collection process (Bryman, 1989). As such, they may be used to triangulate or dispute information obtained through interviews. Documents are a valuable collection tool as they may also provide supplementary data to contextualize or clarify information from other methods (Abbott et al., 2004). Document analysis can also help inform stages of the research process such as participant selection (Shaw et al., 2002). Documents from each stakeholder and NSO were analyzed prior to the individual interviews. The documents were

analyzed once more during the final analysis process.

Ethical concerns are prominent in research studies. Reducing impacts on participants is another notable benefit of document analysis (Abbott et al., 2004). Document analysis limits privacy, anonymity, and confidentiality issues, as the organizations are identified in publicly available (Hodder, 1994). As interviewees were representing their organizations, speaking to documents, which were available online through their own organization's website or others (e.g., International Federations or Sport Canada), reduced confidentiality concerns. The information discussed could not be directly tied to a single individual but rather to the organization as a whole.

Although document analysis is commonly used within academia, its reliability as a stand-alone method has been a concern (Abbott et al., 2004). Documents may contain limited details, thus providing partial or superficial accounts of reality (Abbott et al., 2004). This was a notable concern when considering LTAD models and their implementation, for instance. Although some events were explicitly listed in the LTAD model, participation records at these events showed the NSO had not attended. As such, interviews were important to understand why variance had occurred.

Documents by nature are a summary of a complex issues or information that is difficult to interpret. A document may not paint a full picture for the sake of being concise. An example would be the CSP 2012. For this reason, interviews were conducted in this study to enrich and contextualize information found within documents. The interviews included questions about the creation process of said documents, barriers to implementation, and the process of reviewing the documents over time.

Documents are also not, "transparent representations of organisational routines, decision-

making processes" (Atkinson & Coffey, 2004, p. 79). There have been many changes to the Canadian sport system in recent years, including leadership positions within the government, new employees within NSOs, and the inclusion of multiple MSOs with ever-changing roles (Dowling, 2014). As policy diffusion explains, there are multiple stages and actors involved in the creation and implementation of policies. For this study, not only were the authors of the documents interviewed but also other stakeholders affected by the policies and processes in question. Including multiple stakeholders related to the policies in question made it more likely to determine if the documents were implemented according to how they were initially intended as well as explore barriers to implementation across the NSOs.

As Abbott and colleagues (2004, p. 261) explained, "documents which embody plans for the future represent aspirations to a possible future reality rather than one that actually exists, and it is usually difficult to test the realism of such aspirations by documentary analysis alone." However, the authors further explained aspirational documents are deliberate and conscious statements of policies and strategies at a point in time. The documents may influence action and outline roles of stakeholders. For example, the CSP 2012 outlines a strategy and the role of stakeholders in the Canadian sport system. The policy does not guarantee implementation but rather introduced a sport development framework to be used as a roadmap for the years 2012 to 2022. Information from both interviews and document analysis were relevant and complementary when considering Canadian sport policies, their implementation, and their effects on NSOs' decisions related to elite youth event selection.

Sources of Data

A detailed description of the data sources in relation to the sub-questions can be found in Table 3-1. While document analysis and interviews were used in tandem to answer each

question, their prominence changed depending on the sub-question. The document analysis led Part 1 of the research. The interviewees were asked questions directly related to these documents and their creation. Table 3-1 includes the research questions addressed, the conceptual framework, as well as the data collection methods, sources and analysis methods. Part 2 was a bottom-up approach principally led by interviews with NSOs. This was completed after the initial document analysis during the creation stage of the interview guide. The interviews with stakeholders were completed for both Part 1 and 2 simultaneously. Interviews included those with MSOs, government representatives, consultants, and event right owners. The methods used can be seen in Table 3-2. The notable difference from Part 1 is the inclusion of policy diffusion in the analysis of the results.

Table 3-1

Part 1 - Methods

RQ 1: What policies have the federal government put in place to guide behaviours relating to youth elite sport?	
RQ 2: What process is currently used by Canadian sport system stakeholders to create such policies?	
RQ 3: How are such policies implemented?	
Aspects of the Conceptual Framework	Governance and Stakeholder Theory
Data Collection Methods	Documents and interviews
Data Sources	Interviews with MSOs, NSOs, federal government, consultants related to sport development and/or high performance of elite youth athletes and their event selection; Related documents from all interviewed organizations
Data Analysis Methods	Inductive and deductive, thematic analysis

Table 3-2

Part 2 - Methods

RQ 4: How do the NSOs perceive the pressures placed upon them from Canadian sport system stakeholders/policy makers?	
RQ 5: How do NSOs respond to the pressures when selecting Games for elite youth?	
RQ 6: Are there differences between sports, if so, what are they and why?	
Aspects of the Conceptual Framework	Governance, Stakeholder Framework and Policy Diffusion
Data Collection Methods	Interviews and documents
Data Sources	Interviews with MSOs, NSOs, Federal Government, Consultants related to sport development and/or high performance of elite youth athletes and their event selection; Related documents from the organizations
Data Analysis Methods	Policy Diffusion; inductive/deductive approach, thematic analysis

Sampling

The scope of the research is the Canadian, national-level sport system, as this level contains the organizations, which create sport policies, thus providing sport development strategies for organizations in the sport system. As noted earlier, only national-level stakeholders were included in the study, namely NSOs, government, MSOs, and event rights owners. The interviewees were chosen to represent their organizations and were best suited, based on the organization's selection, to answer questions related to this category of events, or to the organizations as a whole. All questions were given prior to the interview as to provide an opportunity to the interviewees to discuss with other members of their organization. The selection of interviewees was organization-driven, and information was complemented by information found in documents, when needed.

NSOs. NSOs are the national governing bodies for their respective sports within Canada. Among other functions, NSOs manage high performance programs, select and manage national

teams, implement national development and promotion initiatives as well as sanction, propose and bid national and international competitions (Sportweb, 2017). Attempts were made to include the widest variety of sports. The first two criteria included the season of the sport (i.e., summer versus winter) and the nature of competition (i.e., individual versus team). Thus, four categories were created: Summer/Individual, Summer/Team, Winter/Individual, and Winter/Team. Sport Canada's list of NSOs was used to create the initial list of NSOs in the country. This table (See Appendix A) was then expanded to determine the sports available at each event and thus the elite youth sport events in which the NSOs could participate. Participation opportunities were determined using YOG, Universiade, and Commonwealth Youth Games competition descriptions. The matrix created stated only if the sport was available in the event but not if a Canadian team was sent. NSOs were then highlighted if receiving the top six funding amounts as suggested by Own the Podium. This step was done to include a varying amount of government funding across NSOs involved in the study, which will be discussed below.

As the availability of an event does not guarantee the presence or calibre of a team attending, this information was not used when selecting participants for the study. Instead, a purposive sampling method was used to include the four categories listed above, without considering event attendance or event options. Event options were, however, included during the interview process to determine if or why NSOs attended events available to them. In cases where the elite youth multi-sport event was not available to the sport in question, such as broomball, the NSO was asked the value they would see in having their sport added to the event.

Once all NSOs were categorized, NSOs deemed easier to contact through proximity (i.e., located in Ottawa), prior contacts of my own or my thesis supervisor were listed at the top of

each category (convenience sampling). However, most winter sport NSOs are located in Calgary. As such, the location limitation was not included for winter sport NSOs. Previous contacts were still taken into account and were placed at the top of the list for their respective categories. Those included in the study are listed in Table 3-3.

Table 3-3

NSO Matrix

	Summer		
Team	Athletics Badminton Canoe Kayak Rowing Swimming Tennis	Cycling Rugby Soccer Volleyball Water Polo	Individual
	Figure Skating Freestyle Skiing Ski Cross Speed Skating	Broomball Curling Ice Hockey Ringette	
	Winter		

As most NSOs are publicly funded and have limited financial resources, it was worth noting the more resource-rich ones. As international competitions can be costly, including NSOs with more resources as well those with limited resources allowed for comparison. This allowed for an exploration of barriers to the selection of competitions beyond a lack of monetary resources. As Séguin, Teed and O'Reilly (2005) explained, there were six NSOs known as the "Big Six". These NSOs were those that had the largest budgets and included: Tennis, Soccer, Rugby, Alpine Skiing, Figure Skating, and (Ice) Hockey. All were included in this study. Although alpine skiing was included in the study, due to the availability of staff within the organization at the time of data collection, only a single discipline was represented, ski cross.

As the "Big Six" study was conducted over a decade ago, the current funding list

provided by OTP was cross-referenced. As Canada's targeted high performance sport funding, through OTP recommendations, as well as Sport Canada operational funding changes with each quadrennial, the top six highest funded sports through Own the Podium during the year 2016-2017 were also listed (Own the Podium, 2016a, 2016b, 2016c). These NSOs were Athletics, Rowing, Swimming, Canoe and Kayak, Cycling, and Soccer. A total of 11 sports, given the overlap of soccer in both criteria, were listed as primary NSOs to contact, regardless of their assigned category.

Table 3-4 outlines sports, which are Olympic sports as well as which are recipients of Own the Podium recommend funding. Sports that are both Olympic participants and OTP recommended funding recipients will have access to the most funding and must also consider Olympic qualification processes when selecting competitions.

Eleven additional interviews with other NSOs were conducted to meet theoretical saturation, defined as the point when information redundancy amongst stakeholders is reached, but also to include the perspectives of a range of experiences (Mason, 2010), such as lesser-funded organizations. Data collection through interviews ended once no new elements or patterns were being found (Glaser, 2001). Appendix A provides the NSO matrix developed with the initial list of targeted NSOs per category. A more detailed description of relevant factors of each NSO is found below.

Current employees responsible for policy creation and/or implementation or related to youth sport development were interviewed. As the project fell between the realms of grassroots and high performance, initial recruitment was done with positions related to domestic development, high performance as well as the Chief Executive Officer. Recruitment of all relevant employees was done simultaneously. The recruitment email was shared and discussed

by the initial contact person within the NSOs to find the employee best suited to answer the questions. In some cases, multiple interviewees represented a given organization.

Table 3-4

NSO Status – Olympic Sports and Recipients of OTP Recommended Funding

Stakeholder Category	Stakeholder	Olympic Sport?	Recipient of OTP Recommended Funding?
NSO: Summer/Individual	Athletics Canada	Yes	Yes
	Badminton Canada	Yes	No
	Canoe Kayak Canada	Yes	Yes
	Rowing Canada	Yes	Yes
	Swimming Canada	Yes	Yes
	Tennis Canada	Yes	Yes
NSO: Summer/Team	Cycling Canada	Yes	Yes
	Rugby Canada	Yes	Yes (Women's Only)
	Canadian Soccer Association	Yes	Yes (Women's Only)
	Volleyball Canada	Yes	Yes (Beach and Men's)
	Water Polo	Yes	Yes
NSO: Winter/Individual	Skate Canada	Yes	Yes
	Freestyle Canada	Yes	Yes
	Alpine Canada (Ski Cross)	Yes	Yes (Yes)
	Speed Skating Canada	Yes	Yes
NSO: Winter/Team	Broomball Canada	No	No
	Curling Canada	Yes	Yes
	Hockey Canada	Yes	Yes
	Ringette Canada	No	No

Government. Sport Canada is the branch of the Canadian federal government that oversees the national sport system and its organizations. Sport Canada plays a role in the Canadian sport system primarily through three funding programs (Government of Canada, 2016b). The government branch also provides leadership through policies, collaboration, and strategic positioning (Government of Canada, 2016b). Two government representatives from Sport Canada were included in this study. This purposive sampling was based on expertise in

sport development and high performance. These particular interviewees were included to further understand the creation of national-level sport policies, the monitoring process of said policies, and the interactions between Sport Canada and its members.

MSOs. MSOs play a collaborative role in the Canadian sport system and oversee technical direction within their scope of the Canadian sport system. Canadian Sport for Life consists of consultants specializing in long-term athlete development and played a critical role in the creation of LTAD models as well as the movement overall. AthletesCAN served as a proxy for athlete perspectives at the national level. OTP was included for their high performance focus. As the dissertation fell between both mass participation and high performance and affected athletes along the spectrum, including all three organizations provided a holistic view beyond government and NSO perspectives alone. Those that have a role in event selection through coach training, athlete advocacy, elite development, or development planning were approached. The MSOs included in this study were AthletesCAN, Canadian Sport for Life, and Own the Podium. Although multiple attempts to arrange an interview with the Coaching Association of Canada were unsuccessful, all other relevant MSOs participated in the study.

AthletesCAN acted as a proxy to obtain the perspective of national-level athletes. Contact was made via email through the main webpage. A consultant from Canadian Sport for Life with experience in LTAD planning was also included. Own the Podium, which provides funding recommendations to Sport Canada, the Canadian Olympic and Paralympic Committees was included in the study. Own the Podium has an active role in guiding NSOs, athletes and sport institutes through analyses and technical advice. Topics of guidance include training plans, competition calendars, athlete selection processes, and coaching. OTP recruitment began with the organization's general information line. The information was passed on to the employee

deemed by Own the Podium to be best suited for the questions.

Event Rights Owners. Event right owners of elite youth events, or their Canadian representative organization, were included in the study. The purpose was to determine the objectives and scope of their event, the breadth of their influence on NSOs, as well as the scope of the influence on the event itself. The Canadian Olympic Committee, U SPORTS, Commonwealth Games Canada, and Canada Games Council were included in this research. During the time of the interviews, U SPORTS was undergoing a rebranding. As such, some interviews included its former name, CIS. The organization title used in the interview was included in any quotations. Organization recruitment was conducted based on those that had a prominent role in the NSO's relationships related to the event.

Data Collection Process

Data collection comprised of gathering documents followed by conducting interviews. Table 3-5 outlines the interview method (in person vs over the phone), the date and length of the interview, as well as the associated organizational documents related to the interviewed stakeholder.

Table 3-5

Data Collection by Stakeholder

Stakeholder Category	Organization	Method	Date	Length	Number of documents analyzed	Total Pages
NSO: Summer/ Individual	Athletics Canada	Phone	Mar 1, 2017	0:43:50	53	883
	Badminton Canada	Phone	Dec 2, 2016	1:29:00	36	340
	Canoe Kayak Canada	In Person (2)	Dec 16, 2016	1:08:00	32	540
	Rowing Canada	Phone	Nov 29, 2016	0:52:24	26	318

	Swimming Canada	Phone	Dec 3, 2016	1:16:00	46	337
	Tennis Canada	Phone	Feb 23, 2017	0:42:00	3	148
NSO: Summer/ Team	Cycling Canada	In Person	Mar 10, 2017	1:00:00	112	1446
	Rugby Canada	Phone	Mar 2, 2017	0:20:02	34	625
	Canadian Soccer Association	Phone	Dec 14, 2016	0:43:24	33	437
	Volleyball Canada	Phone	Mar 8, 2017	0:52:37	34	616
	Water Polo	In Person (1) Phone (1)	Mar 7, 2017	0:48:00	52	364
NSO: Winter/ Individual	Skate Canada	Phone	Feb 1, 2017	0:57:09	30	486
	Freestyle Canada	Phone	Dec 8, 2016	0:50:46	30	260
	Alpine Canada (Ski Cross)	Phone	Dec 20, 2016	0:44:00	37	563
	Speed Skating Canada	Phone	Dec 2, 2017	0:56:54	135	1747
NSO: Winter/ Team	Broomball Canada	Phone	Feb 15, 2017	0:52:16	21	192
	Curling Canada	Phone	Dec 20, 2016	0:50:21	48	381
	Hockey Canada	Phone	Feb 24, 2017	0:59:50	30	684
	Ringette Canada	In Person	Dec 22, 2016	1:00:28	31	234
Government	Sport Canada	In Person (2)	Dec 20, 2016	2:07:32	51	2117
MSO	Own the Podium	Phone	Mar 14, 2017	0:58:12	18	105
	Sport for Life	Phone	Dec 19, 2016	1:02:59	40	973
	AthletesCAN	Phone	Feb 24, 2017	0:48:41	37	546
Event Rights Owner	Canadian Olympic Committee	Phone	Mar 10, 2017	0:46:21	29	956
	U SPORTS	Phone	Mar 22, 2017	0:30:01	23	584
	Commonwealth	In Person	Feb 24, 2017	0:42:41	29	128

Games Canada		2017				
Canada Games	Electronic	Feb 24, 2017	N/A	22	232	

Documents. Prior to conducting the interviews, a document review was conducted for both national stakeholders and NSOs. Documents perceived as relevant were included in the semi-structured interview guide through the addition of questions pertaining to said documents. Organizational-specific documents analyzed included: athlete selection criteria, governance documents, coaching certification requirements, LTAD models, and other internal policies found on the organization's website. Table 3-5 provides information by stakeholder related to documents gathered for analysis. NSOs with more documents analyzed was most often directly proportional to the number of distinct disciplines within the sport. That is, a policy for event selection and competition calendars were created for each respective discipline. While not all information from the Table was included in the results, all were included in the data analysis component of the dissertation.

The purpose of this approach was to understand if the documents were followed and if the role they played within the system was as prominent as listed in the document themselves. As well, any notable differences with respect to other stakeholders were listed to add to the interview discussion. Key documents of interest influencing the Canadian sport system in regards to elite youth multi-sport Games include the CSP 2012, LTAD, SSP and the Hosting Policy (Government of Canada, 2011, 2012, 2016a; Sport for Life, 2017). Other documents included but were not limited to, strategic planning documents, websites, press releases, and technical documents. Any document related to national team selection, funding, competition reviews, long-term athlete or coach development plans, competition calendars, governance of the organization and budgets were all saved using NCapture. The document list was further

expanded if suggested by the stakeholder during the interview. An example would be Athlete Assistance Program criteria or team selection criteria. A total of 1,072 documents consisting of 16,242 pages were reviewed.

Interviews. A preliminary semi-structured interview guide was created taking the documents as well as the relevant research questions and conceptual framework into consideration. The interview guide was adapted to include specific questions for each stakeholder, notably NSOs, Sport Canada, and athlete representatives. The interview guide was then translated by the primary researcher and approved by both the thesis supervisor and committee. Once ethics approval was obtained (see Appendix B), two pilot interviews were conducted. The purpose of the pilot interviews was to test the researcher as an interviewer, to confirm question order, the content of the answers in relation to the questions asked, and determine if any questions should be added.

The first pilot interview was conducted with a former event rights holder employee with a current understanding of the Canadian sport system. The interview lasted approximately 60 minutes. A few factors were flagged as being important and were therefore added to the guide. These include the need to consider the role of the event within the international sport community and the amount of control over the event as seen by the event right holders and its related stakeholders.

The second pilot interview was conducted with a former employee of an NSO. Word choice was changed based on questions, which were deemed confusing. For example, the definition of elite youth developmental events was given at the start of the interview to frame the scope of the study and provide clarity. Developmental appropriateness of events was a key point highlighted during this interview. Prompts were added to each interview to ensure an

understanding of sport-specific differences were understood by the end of the interview. This was done to allow for better comparison with other sports. The interview lasted approximately 60 minutes. The importance of the number of disciplines per sport as well as the Olympic qualification process was brought up. Questions were adjusted to ensure the information would be gleaned from subsequent interviews. See Appendices C and D for the final English and French interview guides.

Once the interview guides were finalized, NSOs were contacted. Interview participants were initially contacted through an electronic letter of intent (see Appendix E), outlining the research, requesting an interview and ensuring confidentiality for all those who participate. When no online contact information was provided, the initial contact was through the phone. An email was then sent including the electronic letter of intent. When multiple options were available, the highest staff members, as well as those related to Sport Development and High Performance, were contacted. At this point, the decision was made based on who responded with interest. Prior to the interview, a consent form (see Appendix F) was signed. The interview guide was also sent to participants. Questions about the research were answered prior to beginning the interview.

The participants covered both domestic development and high performance. All but one of the interviewees, a competitions coordinator, were managers or directors. Seven of those interviewed were at the highest management level within their organization. Titles included Chief Executive Officer, Executive Director, and General Secretary. Those interviewed were in positions related to event operations, sport development, technical direction, Next Generation, and High Performance. Job titles included Director – [Sport] Operations, Director of Development Programs, Domestic Development Director, Games Manager, High Performance

Director, Manager High Performance, Partnerships and Services, Acting Manager, Manager Domestic Programs, Manager International Programs, National Program Manager, National Team Manager, Sport Development Manager, and Technical Director. One national development coach was included. Two interviewees had experience as past elite youth athletes and had participated at multi-sport events of interest.

Twenty-one interviews were conducted over the phone. Eight were done in person. One participant submitted their responses electronically. In two instances, joint interviews with two participants each were conducted. Two interviews were conducted in French. The analysis was done in the interview language by the bilingual author, and French was kept until the dissertation was written.

All NSOs were asked about the involvement of athletes within their organization. Two interviews conducted were with former Olympic athletes. Athlete-specific questions were asked of these participants in relation to the perceptions of these events as tools for development during their athletic careers. Due to the ethics certificate, the sport associated with these athletes is not reported in this dissertation.

A total of 27 interviews were conducted, including the two joint interviews. The NSOs included in the study comprised summer and winter sports, as well as team and individual sports. The breakdown of the NSOs included in the study can be seen in Table 3-4. The interviews were recorded with a digital recorder as well as a second recording device, either phone or laptop. At the end of each interview, a summary of key points from the interview was provided to the interviewee. Any clarification needed was given at this time. Throughout the interviews, clarification was sought to confirm interpretations. The interviews were professionally transcribed. This amounted to a total transcription of just over 24 hours of interview content and

452 pages of transcription in Times New Roman, 12-point font, double-spaced. The interviewee was also given the option to add any supplementary information. This helped increase data trustworthiness.

Data Analysis

Document analysis was conducted in tandem with the interview component of the dissertation. Inductive and deductive codes were used to complete a thematic analysis of documents and interviews. This dissertation followed the steps outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006): familiarization with data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing a final report. The analysis process for documents and interviews is presented simultaneously below.

The first step of data analysis was to become familiar with the data. Documents were read before interviews to have a better idea of sport-specific documents and content. Following the interviews, documents were re-read along with the transcriptions of the interviews. Key messages and new themes were noted manually during the interviews themselves as well as during the analysis component. Initial notes included: difficulties aligning with stakeholders, the varying number of disciplines within each sport, Olympic qualification criteria affecting decisions, and reporting of information to stakeholders. This was an inductive component of the analysis. The deductive codes were based on mechanisms of policy diffusion noted in the previous chapter.

When conducting the document analysis, the process began with a preliminary overview of the document. Documents containing organizational information relevant to the overall scope of the project were noted and added to an organizational information table. Documents containing more in-depth information regarding elite youth sport policies, support, event

selection and team selection were subject to a deeper analysis (see below). Key points were then noted by hand on the interview guide in preparation for the interviews with the respective stakeholders.

The organization-specific documents were sorted by stakeholder in NVivo 11 as a means to determine the kinds of documents created by the respective NSOs and how they related to the national-level policies. The major categories of documents, such as LTAD, competition calendars and Podium Pathways, were later supplemented by interviews with policy creators to answer Part 2 questions.

The next step was to generate initial codes or meaningful groups. The initial inductive and deductive codes were expanded. Green and Oakley's (2001) criteria for elite sport development was introduced to encompass sources of influence through deductive codes. Inductive codes were introduced to analyze competition specifics including staffing, youth focus, calibre of Canadian athletes. Other codes included provincial differences, NextGEN, OTP, Sport Canada, access to facilities and equipment, funding, staff knowledge and experience and measures of success. In relation to policy diffusion, codes included advisors, content, design, national NSO, international NSO, provinces, and funding.

The following phases including creating higher-order themes by combining codes and creating diagrams, or mind maps, for each research question. For the first three research questions, the themes were policy content, policy creation process, and policy implementation. A stakeholder map was also created at this time to ensure relevant stakeholders and their associated documents and policies had been included. A chart dividing sources of influences in relation to the policy diffusion mechanism was created to answer the fourth research question. Higher-order themes to answer question five, the NSOs' responses to pressures, included: development

opportunities for athletes, competitors, the timing of the event, support from IF, location, human resources, costs, eligibility criteria, support from Sport Canada and Own the Podium, and single vs. multi-sport. Higher-order themes for question six, the differences among sports, included the number of events available, Olympic qualification process, organizational capacity, team vs individual, depth and field of competition within Canada, participation requirements, and late vs early entry.

At this point, all themes were created as figures and presented in a PowerPoint presentation to the research lab and thesis supervisor. The themes were defined, explained, and refined. Once the higher-order themes were finalized, documents and interviews were further examined to elaborate on finer details within the themes and to provide context and examples for reporting purposes.

As the findings in this dissertation will be submitted to English language sport policy and management journals, the final dissertation is written in English. In two instances, the interviews were in French. For efficiency, data analysis was conducted by the researcher and translated at the point of writing. This was then back-translated by the thesis supervisor to ensure the accuracy of the translation.

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness consists of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). Credibility aims to show the research was conducted in a manner that correctly identifies and describes the subject (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). As outlined by Shenton (2004), the parameters of the study were outlined to include the number of organizations taking part, the recruitment criterion, the number of participants, data collection methods, length of sessions and timeline of data collection. Semi-structured interviews allowed for changes to the

interview questions throughout the process, to ensure the research objectives were adequately met. Transferability aims to ensure the research methods and findings be useful when applied to similar projects (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). Comparing multiple NSOs and athletes from varying backgrounds, thus creating a larger representation of the phenomenon, will increase the potential for transferability. Dependability attempts to account for changing conditions. An audit trail was kept following Lincoln and Guba's (1985) description based on Halpern's work in 1983. Raw data including transcripts, documents, and notes from during interviews were kept in a notebook. Each week, the data was reduced and analyzed in order to present current findings at weekly meetings with fellow researchers. At this time, the process, including interview procedures, changes to questions, and current findings, were presented to independent peers and the thesis supervisor, and noted in a journal. Personal notes taken during this time included timelines and future directions for the research project. Summary emails were also sent to the thesis supervisor, creating a time-stamped record of changes to the dissertation. All earlier versions of the dissertation were also saved and catalogued by date.

Peer scrutiny and frequent debriefing sessions are said to increase the trustworthiness of qualitative data (Shenton, 2004). An understanding and familiarity of the participating organizations, through the document and preliminary analysis also increased the credibility of the findings (Shenton, 2004). Having coding systems, help from other researchers and a systematic analysis method helped improve the integrity of the research. Open discussions regarding new policies, changes to organizations or the Canadian system facilitated increased dependability. Triangulation was done through subsequent interviews as well as policy analysis of documents. The contents of the transcription were compared to other documents for triangulation and trustworthiness of the information. For example, if a mention was made

regarding International Federation requirements, their policies were compared. In summary, member checking, a flexible interview guide, audit trail, contextual information, exploration of multiple reasoning and triangulation will improve the integrity of the research project. The findings were also compared to previous research to increase credibility (Shenton, 2004).

The results of the dissertation are presented in the next chapter.

Chapter 4 – Results Part 1

The results section will be broken down into Part 1 and Part 2, and further reduced to each research question. The two parts will be divided into separate chapters. Part 1, the national-level top-down component, consists of the first three RQs: (1) What policies have the federal government put in place to guide behaviours relating to youth elite sport and events?; (2) What process is currently used by Canadian sport system stakeholders to create such policies?; and (3) How are such policies implemented? The overarching national policies and processes that affect all NSOs regarding event selection will now be discussed. The three RQs will be answered to create a single policy diffusion analysis of the Canadian sport system at the national level in relation to youth elite sport event selection.

This chapter consists of a top-down approach, with the national overarching stakeholders as the focal point of analysis in relation to elite youth event selection. Policies and pressures, which affect all NSOs were investigated to better understand the Canadian sport system as a whole. A description of the policies, as well as the creation and implementation processes will be discussed. This chapter explains the content of policies in relation to event selection, any systematic changes to views on event selection through national-level policies, and the roles of NSOs in terms of event selection policy implementation.

In Canada, many documents regulate high performance and elite sport at the national level. In this section, national policies created by Sport Canada and MSOs used to govern NSOs and event selection, are introduced. The key policies and federal government contributions, as seen in Figure 4-1, were the Canadian Sport Policy 2012, Sport Canada Contribution Guidelines, Federal Policy for Hosting International Sport Events, Athlete Assistance Program, Long Term Athlete Development Model, and Committees/Advisors. The relation between the documents

and event selection are also outlined in Figure 4-1. This figure was created to summarize the contents of the documents analyzed in relation to event selection.

Sport Canada policies implemented individually by NSOs were also included in the dissertation and will be discussed in relation to the aforementioned federal government policies and contributions. NSO policies including their specific LTAD models, competition structures and Athlete Assistance Program qualification criteria were analyzed. The analysis of each policy/contribution will include a description of the document and the rationale of the policy and its relation to elite youth sport selection. The impact of these policies/contributions on specific NSOs' decisions, including their perceived purpose and salience of the directions given, will be discussed in sub-questions four through six in Chapter 5. Additional guiding factors from Sport Canada, MSOs, and other pertinent stakeholders will also be introduced.

Canadian Sport Policy 2012	• Overall direction for sport in Canada & key stakeholders involved
Sport Canada Contribution Guidelines	• Requires LTAD model & relates to funding if creation, maintenance and changes to LTAD documents
Federal Policy for Hosting International Sport Events	• Reduces costs of attending event but does not alter which events are attended
Athlete Assistance Program	• Athletes without AAP are self-funded; event options become limited (e.g., Badminton)
Long Term Athlete Development Model	• Outlines the objectives as well as which events are developmentally appropriate along the development pathway
Committees/ Advisors	• Regular interactions and feedback from major funding partners

Figure 4-1. Sport Canada Policies and Contributions – Impact on Event Selection by Canadian NSOs

Canadian policies, at the national level, will now be discussed. Each policy section will include the purpose and contents of the policies as well as the policy creation process. The

creation process will include which stakeholders are involved in decision-making, and the nature of feedback received (i.e., through which policies or advisors the feedback is received). An overview of the findings is outlined in Tables 4-1 and 4-2. National level policies are created as a strategic framework to guide the sport-specific policies created by NSOs. The policies apply to all sports and are created using feedback received from NSOs through advisor interactions, surveys, conferences, workshops and committees. Evaluations and policy validation is conducted through the PIM group. NSO policies act as operational plans for the strategic initiatives set forth by funding partners and sport-specific requirements.

Following the introduction of policies, the implementation practices of the policy will be explained: the minimum requirements, governing bodies, tools, and methods for implementation and any conflicting policies in place. A description of the links between the policy, the selection of elite youth events by Canadian NSOs, and governance will also be included. A summary of the primary means of NSO policy creation is outlined in Figure 4-2. This figure demonstrates the link between NSOs, the policy implementers, and national-level policies, which provide strategies and guidance.

Before the analysis of documents, it is important to mention no specific youth sport policies exist within Canada. Some population-specific policies have been created in relation to marginalised populations. These include women and girls, persons with disabilities and Aboriginal peoples (Government of Canada, 2017e).

Table 4-1.

Policies and Contributions to the Creation of Canadian National Level Sport Policies

National Level Policies (All Sports)	MSO and Government advisors	e.g., OTP and SC advisors within NSOs
	Online Surveys	e.g., High Performance Targeted Excellence Review
	Conferences and Workshops	e.g., LTAD Creation and CSP2012 intergovernmental conference
	Evaluations and Policy Validation	e.g., PIM Work Group
	Sport Committees	e.g., Summer Sport Committee

Table 4-2.

Policies and Contributions to the Creation of Canadian NSO Specific Sport Policies

NSO Policies	Funding Requirements Sport Canada	e.g., SFAF & Hosting Policy
	Sport Canada Policies (i.e., Vision)	e.g., Collaboration amongst stakeholders
	Funding requirements OTP (if applicable)	e.g., Podium Pathway
	Sport Specific Requirements	e.g., IF guidelines

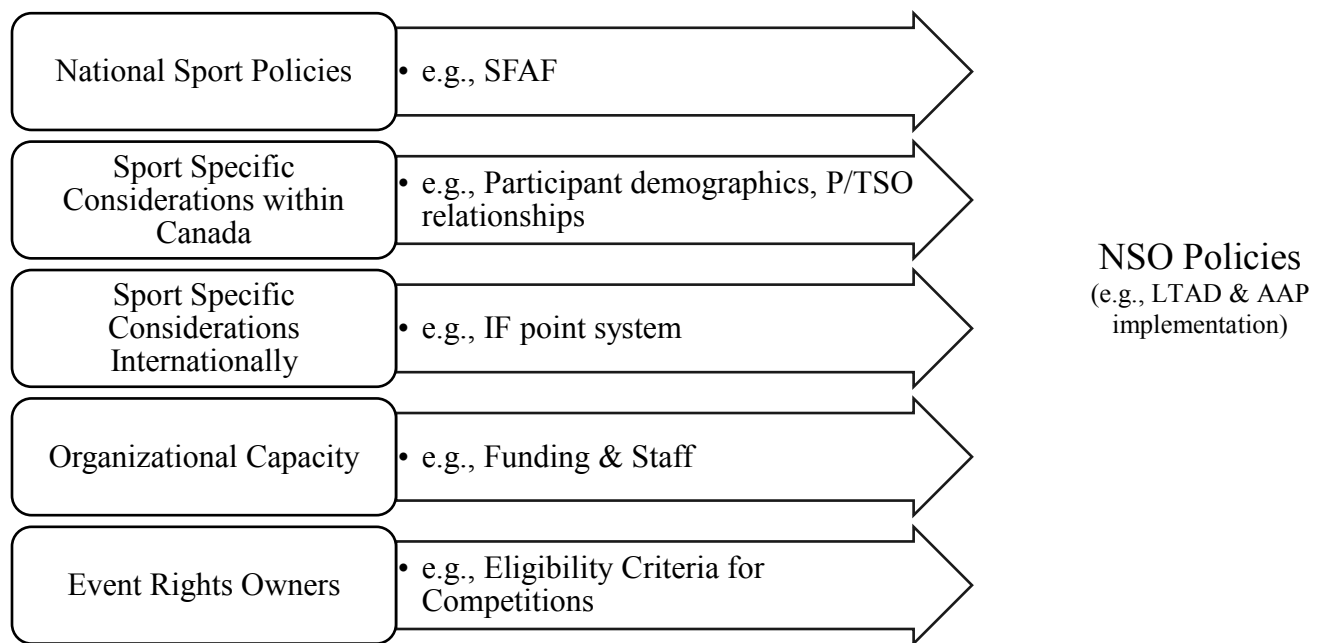


Figure 4-2. Summary of the NSO Policy Creation Process.

Canadian Sport Policy 2012 (CSP 2012)

The policy. The CSP 2012 provides direction to governments, institutions, and organizations related to sport in Canada (Government of Canada, 2012). The document is a follow-up to its 2002 counterpart. “The vision of the 2002 policy reflected governments’ desire for increased effectiveness of the sport system and for Canadian athletes to move to the forefront of international sport” (Government of Canada, 2012, p. 4). CSP 2012 “sets direction for all governments, institutions and organizations that are committed to realizing the positive impacts of sport on individuals, communities and society.” (Government of Canada, 2012, p. 4). CSP 2012 is designed as a roadmap to provide direction and to outline desired outcomes. An overarching message of the document is the value of sport in Canada:

Canadians from diverse backgrounds, sectors and communities sent a clear message that sport is an essential part of life in Canada. The accomplishments of our athletes give Canadians a source of pride, as does the vibrant sport practised in communities from

coast to coast to coast. Sport provides a means for personal and social development, as well as being an end in itself. (Government of Canada, 2012, p. 2)

CSP 2012 encompasses both mass participation and elite sport with a vision to create “A dynamic and innovative culture that promotes and celebrates participation and excellence in sport” (Government of Canada, 2012, p. 4). As CSP 2012 indicates, “Fundamental to the Policy is the assumption that quality sport is dependent on seven principles appropriately integrated into all sport-related policies and programs” (Government of Canada, 2012, p. 4). These principles are values-based, inclusive, technically sound, collaborative, intentional, effective, and sustainable (Government of Canada, 2012). In relation to elite youth sport events and athlete development, five of the principles are of particular interest: technically sound, collaborative, intentional, effective, and sustainable. It should be noted these words are meant to guide; they are not contractual terms. They provide a vision for the sport system rather than outline expectations for those affected.

The principle “Technically Sound” explains the importance of a methodical treatment of athlete development. As CSP 2012 specifies, “Principles of long-term participant development inform sports programs in all contexts of sport participation, recognizing that different participant pathway models exist across jurisdictions” (Government of Canada, 2012, p. 2). This point also brings to light the issue of differences across the country. A single pathway does not exist for all athletes across the nation. The emphasis on technique also iterates the perceived importance, from the viewpoint of the initial creators of the document, of a methodological approach to athlete development.

The creation of CSP 2012 was collaboration between governments and Canadian sport system stakeholders. The prominence of the support was noted in the newest policy, as it is

“Endorsed by Federal, Provincial and Territorial Ministers responsible for sport, physical activity and recreation” (Government of Canada, 2012, p. ii). This is further highlighted through the “Collaborative” principle. “Sport is built on partnerships with other sectors – most importantly with Education and Recreation – and is fostered through linkages with community organizations, service providers, and the private sector” (Government of Canada, 2012, p. 2).

Effectiveness and sustainability were also principles found in CSP 2012 (Government of Canada, 2012). Effectiveness related to the monitoring and evaluation of programs and policies to further advance the sport system while maintaining accountability (Government of Canada, 2012). Sustainability relates to the organizational capacity, partnerships, and the diversification and sharing of resources such as funding (Government of Canada, 2012). In turn, these principles relate to event selection through the methodological approach to policy creation and implementation in tandem with sustainable resources.

The CSP 2012 outlines four contexts of sport participation: introduction to sport, recreational sport, competitive sport, and high performance sport, as well as a fifth context entitled sport for development (Government of Canada, 2012). It states each context has its own needs, stakeholders, motivations, and ability levels (Government of Canada, 2012). It also recognizes sport participation in all its forms is interconnected and interdependent rather than sequential and polarized (Government of Canada, 2012). A change to a policy or evaluation process may affect another level of participation in the same sport.

The addition of a sport development model answered the demand for consistent vocabulary between CS4L’s LTAD models and the Canadian Sport Policy; this approach had not been undertaken in the 2002 Policy (Groupe Intersol Group, 2011). During the renewal process, respondents saw the new model as a holistic and harmonized, rather than a silo approach to sport

delivery (Groupe Intersol Group, 2011). A sport development lens added to the policy supports the progression to High Performance, helps identify elite athletes, harmonizes athlete support, and helps share information amongst stakeholders (Groupe Intersol Group, 2011). Although the policy explains these contexts, it does not offer a specified pathway between them (Government of Canada, 2012). LTAD models are acknowledged as the documents which outline the technical specifics of each sport participation category but are not explored further (Government of Canada, 2012).

The Canadian federal government supports high performance athletes, coaches, and sport systems at the national level through financial and technical resources to governing bodies and athletes (Government of Canada, 2012). Under provincial and territorial governments' jurisdictions, the focus is athlete development, coaching and coach education, as well as high performance through P/TSOs and national and regional sports centres located within their provinces (Government of Canada, 2012). In terms of this research, this is noteworthy, as elite youth sport falls under multiple jurisdictions. National-level high performance sport does not fall under the jurisdiction of the provinces and territories (Government of Canada, 2012). However, elite youth athletes are in a transition period from provincial jurisdiction to federal. An athlete may represent their province at the Canada Games while also representing their country internationally at the Youth Olympic Games.

Elite youth athletes, based on this model, would fall between the competitive sport and high performance sports contexts. Within the policy, the competitive sport context covers programming focused on competitive goals (Government of Canada, 2012). CSP 2012 states improvements in programming are related to an effort to base athlete development programs on long-term development principles. This component of the policy would be directly linked to the

implementation of the LTAD model, which encompasses Train to Train, Train to Compete and Train to Win categories, all of which fall under competitive sport (Government of Canada, 2012).

In turn, the high performance sport context refers to athletes competing at the highest level of the sport, thus requiring specialized coaching, facilities, and athlete services (Government of Canada, 2012). To perform effectively at this level, the CSP 2012 suggests improving: communication and coordination between governments and stakeholders, athlete support, coaching, research innovation, officials, as well as athlete talent identification, recruitment, and development (Government of Canada, 2012).

During the policy renewal process, suggested objectives included: consistent podium performances at the highest level for single and multi-sport Games; pursuit of excellence, a progressive high performance system that recognizes for the need for coaches and athletes alike to “Learn to Win” on the pathway to podium performances; and achieving high standards while maintaining Canadian values (Groupe Intersol Group, 2011). These objectives were addressed through CSP 2012 objectives as well as an increased targeted high performance approach such as is seen with Own the Podium. Once again, these are strategic guiding principles as opposed to contractual directions with clearly stated implementation strategies.

Suggested factors that may influence high performance athletes and supporting stakeholders included: the need for better alignment, the professionalization of coaching, a clear pathway for talent identification, development and implementation of LTAD models for all sports, and strengthening support along the athlete development pathway (Groupe Intersol Group, 2011). Though worded differently, all factors were addressed as objectives in the high performance section of CSP 2012 (Government of Canada, 2012). The implementation of these

stated objectives and responses to barriers will be discussed in the policy implementation section below.

Creation process. As previously mentioned, CSP 2012 was a collaborative effort between provincial, territorial and federal government representatives. This document is a follow-up to the 2002 version of the Canadian Sport Policy. In 2010, the 2002 version of the Canadian Sport Policy was reviewed (Groupe Intersol Group, 2011).

As CSP 2012 is a continuation of the initial CSP 2002 policy, it is important to understand its origins as well. Over 1000 individuals including athletes, coaches, parents, officials, volunteers, paid staff, municipal, provincial and national sports organizations, school boards, as well as public and private sector representatives were consulted through six regional conferences (Government of Canada, 2002). Discussion papers and surveys were used to create themes regarding resources, ethics and values, leadership and partnership, participation, promotion, and development (Government of Canada, 2002). Discussions were held with specific stakeholder groups including Athletes CAN, the Aboriginal Sport Circle, sports officials, NSOs, and MSOs (Government of Canada, 2002). At the request of AthletesCAN, an athlete-specific forum also took place (AthletesCAN, 2001).

Of importance to note for this dissertation are points related to athlete development, international competitive success, the Canada Games, and enhanced collaboration. In terms of athlete development, the policy brought into question funding levels and structures, government organization and athlete development pathways, which take into account age, maturity, and skill development needs (Government of Canada, 2002). International success through an athlete development system was also a call to action: “The Canadian Sport Policy calls for the collaborative setting of performance targets to guide the design, monitoring, and evaluation of an

effective athlete development system” (Government of Canada, 2002, p. 10). Canada Games were included as an important opportunity for athlete development: “For many athletes, the Canada Games provide the first exposure to a multi-sport competitive environment above the provincial/territorial level. The Games also play an important role in the specific development of young athletes, coaches, and officials” (Government of Canada, 2002, p. 10).

The renewal stage leading to the creation of CSP 2012 began in 2011. The process included evaluations, workshops, consultations, and policy validation (Groupe Intersol Group, 2011). An analysis of the data from April to August 2011, including the results of 796 organizational e-survey respondents, 2,500 individual e-survey respondents, and over 500 respondents present at in-person consultations, was conducted (The Conference Board of Canada, 2011). During this survey, major themes were highlighted including Sport Participation; Sport Development; High Performance Sport; Capacity and Resources; Linkages, Partnerships, and Collaborations; Community Building, and International Involvement (The Conference Board of Canada, 2011). The sections of the policy relating to elite youth event selection will now be discussed, namely Sport Development and High Performance Sport.

Both the competitive and high performance contexts alluded to required improvements to coaches and technical leadership; organizational capacity and sustainability; and athlete identification, recruitment, and development (Canadian Sport Policy Workshop, 2011). These three factors were also listed as the top three priorities for virtually every renewal consultation (Groupe Intersol Group, 2011; Sport Canada, 2011; The Conference Board of Canada, 2011). All three can also be seen throughout the CSP 2012 (Government of Canada, 2012).

CSP 2012 provides a roadmap with no forceful language. The passive nature of the document allows NSOs to cater the policy to their individual needs (i.e. Olympic or non-

Olympic, team or individual, etc.). The purpose of this document is to align stakeholders, create conversations, and promote an overarching athlete development framework. A key piece here is the inclusion of provinces and territories. As sport delivery falls onto the provincial organizations, decisions made at the federal level must be passed down to the provincial sport organizations, it is important to keep this line of communication open.

Policy implementation. CSP 2002 was an attempt at collaboration and creation of vision and goals amongst 14 governmental jurisdictions (Government of Canada, 2002). All governments, through CSP 2002, committed to setting targets for enhanced participation and high performance sport through collaboration with their respective sports communities (Government of Canada, 2002). Governments also committed to strengthening regular and informal communications (Government of Canada, 2002). The action plans for all stated changes were to “be implemented by complementary Action Plans developed by the governments collectively and individually, bi-laterally and multi-laterally, and by each sport community” (Government of Canada, 2002, p. 20). A very similar line was included in the 2012 version of the Canadian sport policy with the exception of the inclusion of “non-government organizations (NGOs) in the sport and related sectors” (Government of Canada, 2012, p. 3). This suggests further collaboration amongst stakeholders with fewer decisions being made by individual communities. Overarching organizations such as Own the Podium (OTP) and the Coaching Association of Canada (CAC) would play a role throughout communities, which suggests a steering (governance) approach from higher-level organizations. However, each jurisdiction ultimately maintains control of their purviews:

Note: The Policy must be interpreted in respect of the jurisdiction of each government.

Nothing should be interpreted in such a way as to override the jurisdiction of the

respective governments. Furthermore, each government will determine which of the goals and objectives of the Policy they plan to pursue, taking into account their relevance to jurisdictional mandate and priorities. (Government of Canada, 2012, p. 3).

This suggests a network governance approach when looking at each jurisdiction individually.

A group, known as the Policy Implementation and Monitoring Working Group (PIM) created measurements to track the implementation of CSP 2012 as well as a thematic review of physical literacy and LTAD (The Sutcliffe Group Incorporated, 2016). A Performance Measurement Strategy, completed in 2014, included a matrix of results, outcomes, and performance indicators. The purpose of the formative evaluation was to determine what progress had been made in implementing the CSP both overall and in relation to its goals and objectives. The evaluation also aimed to determine lessons learned, barriers and gaps within CSP 2012's implementation as well as future directions needed to enhance CSP 2012 implementation. The thematic review of physical literacy and LTAD aimed to determine what had been done by Canadian sport system stakeholders to change policies and programs in relation to LTAD principles. Lessons, as well as future directions related to LTAD principles within the Canadian sport system, were also discussed.

Data for the PIM review came from documents, databases and surveys, online surveys of sport organizations, online consultations with provincial and territorial governments, reviews of existing public opinion research, approximately 50 interviews and a panel of experts who reviewed working papers and preliminary findings. The findings covered the overall implementation of CSP 2012 as well as implementation per goal. As this dissertation covers competitive and high performance sport, only findings pertaining to these categories as well as the overall policy will be discussed.

The formal evaluation of CSP 2012 implementation determined “progress has been good on implementing initiatives related to the goals and objectives of the CSP” (The Sutcliffe Group Incorporated, 2016, p. 5). Moderate to intermediate progress within the competitive sport goals was seen; a minimal review was done in relation to High Performance sport. The high performance review was done separately and will be discussed in further detail below.

The findings for the competitive sport goals of CSP 2012 found that “All NSOs and almost all MSOs and P/TSOs reported in the survey that they had incorporated the principles of LTAD and Physical Literacy into their organizations in several ways” (The Sutcliffe Group Incorporated, 2016, p. 7). The implementation of content following LTAD guidelines was seen to vary across the country:

Key informants and the national level sport organizations reported that the extent to which P/TSOs are implementing developmentally appropriate programs varies across the country, with the capacity of the P/TSO, where some P/TSOs are doing well, whereas others are “floundering”. However, implementation is indeed happening, and examples were provided by respondents. (The Sutcliffe Group Incorporated, 2016, p. 8)

Gaps and barriers to the implementation of both CSP 2012 and physical literacy/LTAD were very similar (The Sutcliffe Group Incorporated, 2016). Many of the lessons learned were related to data gaps. That is, data collection mechanisms are not in place for all results/outcomes, do not address the target groups outlined in the performance indicators, or are not collected frequently enough. “When data are not collected, then it is difficult, if not impossible, to determine the extent of the impact of programs designed to achieve the goals and objectives of the CSP” (The Sutcliffe Group Incorporated, 2016, p. 8). Alignment between P/TSOs with their NSOs as well as implementing LTAD were seen as a challenge based on human resources, staff, and monetary

resources. Another barrier to implementation of CSP-related programs was the volunteer nature of the Canadian sport system.

The PIM group provided recommendations to improve the implementation of CSP-related programs. Suggestions included increasing alignment between governments, clarifying definitions of key terms, developing and delivering public education resource materials relating to LTAD, and investing in data collection strategies.

The development model in CSP 2012, though similar, consists of a different vocabulary than LTAD models. The shared vocabulary was said to align values while having two models (one that includes introduction to sport), allowing for a fuller picture to be presented (Groupe Intersol Group, 2011; Sport Canada, 2011). However, having three overlapping vocabularies between Sport Canada in CSP 2012, CS4L in LTAD models, and OTP's Gold Medal pathways increases confusion for those in the Canadian sport system.

I think four maybe even five years ago, at that time, the director of Sport Canada got up and gave a presentation... that showed three different systems with different names and things overlaid on one another sort of like a Rosetta stone... It's infuriating for the NSOs to have and they also said it's about the funding processes and the grant application and reporting processes in general. (CS4L representative)

Relation to NSO event selection and governance. Both CSP 2002 and CSP 2012 are ultimately frameworks, not laws. CSP 2002 was a response to realities and challenges facing the Canadian sport system during the creation of the policy (Government of Canada, 2002). Ultimately, the document was a call to action for increased communication and collaboration amongst stakeholders.

The CSP 2012 outlined the overall direction for sport in Canada as well as the key

stakeholders involved. The push for LTAD and collaboration amongst stakeholders was the key addition to this policy. The policy listed the respective responsibilities of each stakeholder. As such, the role of each NSO in relation to event selection was included in the CSP 2012. The document also suggested national government support for sport within the country, thus showing the value of sport within Canada. However, CSP 2012 acted as a roadmap and vision, which was to be implemented in accordance with the needs of the individual NSOs. This document suggested a steering rather than rowing relationship between the federal government and NSOs. There was no direct link between event selection and the contents found in CSP 2012. This document also did not directly outline which events elite youth athletes should attend. The policy acted as an outline of the overall vision and role of stakeholders involved in the Canadian sport system but did not dictate decisions made by organizations under its purview.

Sport Canada Contribution Guidelines

The policy. The Sport Support Program (SSP) is the primary funding initiative linked directly to the goals outlined in the CSP 2012 (Government of Canada, 2016d). The purpose of the funding is to support the development of athletes and coaches (Government of Canada, 2016d). Monetary support is available for training and competition needs of athletes participating in events such as the Olympic Games and world championships and is related to commitments outlined in CSP 2012 (Government of Canada, 2016d). The Sport Support Program funds 55 NSOs, 20 NSOs, and seven Canadian Sport Institutes. This funding is separate from the supplementary and targeted high performance funds provided by Sport Canada in relation to recommendations from Own the Podium.

The SFAF is a tool used by Sport Canada to identify which organizations are eligible for such support (Government of Canada, 2011, 2017d). The framework determines funding

eligibility and the scope of programs. It was created to determine the funding amount, and also as a form of accountability. Three major themes within this framework were governance and management; programs and services; and engagement and communication (Government of Canada, 2011, 2017d).

This document is a more structured tool than the CSP 2012, as it outlines specific requirements, which must be met by NSOs to receive funding. While the CSP 2012 provides a roadmap, the SFAF outlines the associated requirements from the federal government's perspective. NSOs, MSOs, and sport institutes must meet certain standards in order to receive and maintain funding from Sport Canada:

I would say our influence is much more at the level of the allocation of our funds because we don't integrate ourselves in the operations of the NSOs, we really want them to be the team leaders, so we put markers in place with our funding criteria, which we call SFAF.
(Sport Canada representative)

One such requirement is the presence of an LTAD model. With that said, the SSP requirements listed in SFAF state NSOs should have an LTAD model, not necessarily to have a pre-determined level of detail. Technical guidance comes from Sport Canada advisors and other related NSOs such as those with similar physical requirements. The LTAD models themselves are to be created by the NSOs to meet their individual needs, which will be discussed further in the next chapter.

Creation process. The SSP was created by Sport Canada and outlines general requirements for NSOs to receive funding. Feedback about the guidelines listed in the SFAF is provided by NSOs through online surveys, conferences, workshops, and sports committees as it pertains to the overall sport system in Canada. The feedback would primarily alter the monetary

amounts associated with each category, rather than whether or not a section should exist.

However, such major changes to the funding requirements may be addressed during changes to the Canadian Sport Policy, for instance.

The primary contact between Sport Canada and NSOs is with Sport Canada advisors assigned to individual NSOs. The contact may be formal as well as informal in nature, such as planned meetings or phone conversations. For example, if the head offices of the NSOs are located in different cities, the main method of interaction adjusts accordingly: “Sport Canada and Own the Podium are based in Ottawa. So it’s more by phone or by e-mail” (Tennis Canada representative) because Tennis Canada is headquartered in Toronto and Montreal. The purpose of these relationships is to help guide but also understand the individual requirements of each sport. SFAF lists requirements for the funding, but the quantities are altered by Sport Canada per section depending on the NSO. At Tennis Canada, the main interaction regarding the SFAF revolves around the High Performance dossier: “Anything to do with Sport Canada or Own the Podium or the [Canadian Coaching Association], all those organizations [the High Performance Director] deals with.” (Tennis Canada representative). For other NSOs, the contact is divided amongst multiple individuals and departments.

The quality of conversation would depend on the relationship between the NSO and its advisor as well as other NSOs or Sport Canada counterparts. For instance, one interviewee explained interactions the CEO of the organization has through conferences and other meetings with Sport Canada:

As an example, [the CEO] actually sits on the summer sports conferences where she reports to them. She represents us in the summer sport, and so they’re dealing with a lot of policies, and one is infrastructure for sports with the influence of sport communities.

So a lot of us think that she deals with it in terms of it. She obviously takes a direction from her staff and myself, but she deals with them directly. (Rowing Canada representative)

Others commented on reduced quality when there is a transition to a new Sport Canada advisor, such as Broomball and Ringette:

Depending on who you have — this is our fifth person in four years — the continuity is hard to keep up. And then, every one of them interprets things or asks us things differently...And again, we're going back and forth. We're submitting something we think is what they want, and they're coming back to us saying, "No, we need something different. So this doesn't fit our checkbox." (Ringette Canada representative)

The NSOs represented by their leaders on committees or through regular interactions with other Canadian sport stakeholders, such as Sport Canada or Own the Podium, felt they were heard more and policies had been adjusted to meet their individual needs:

We've done a lot of research in terms of where the Sport Canada and government policy. It's a system and it's a system that we'd like to have a voice in and are getting that voice through consultation and whatnot, but to be able to sit down with the top sports people in the country and just sort of describe what these issues, what in particular do they mean to our sport is really important and then to get some perspective about what would we possibly do about them is also equally as important. (Curling Canada representative)

At the time of the interviews for this dissertation, recent changes to the SFAF for summer sports had included consultations between key leadership within Sport Canada and NSOs:

Most recently, for example, they're redoing their Sport Funding and Accountability Framework for summer sports or if there is a new sport for us or new discipline or better

terminology for us, and so we spoke about how that framework or any framework is going to impact us with senior management (Badminton Canada representative).

Policy implementation. The SFAF is tied directly to the funding received by NSOs. As the Skate Canada representative explained, the use of funding relies greatly on decisions made by Sport Canada, in this case through the SFAF:

We are requesting money from them, right. It is at the end of the day the people's money, and the government has to make the decisions on where the money is being used. So, you know, it's not an entitlement that we have as an NSO. I greatly respect that we are allowed and afforded the opportunity to provide our feedback, but I greatly respect the fact that, at the end of the day, it's their decision how they set those policies.

Should the funds not be used as listed, NSOs risk the chance of losing that portion of the funding:

I have to give back the difference to Sport Canada at the end of the fiscal year. A lot of it is moving ahead and doing things we said we would do just so they don't call back money or resources. (Badminton Canada representative)

The allocation of funds is negotiated through the advisors and the NSOs. Thus implementation specifics will vary from sport to sport. Overall, the primary contact with Sport Canada would be in relation to SFAF, as it is funding-based: "It's funding, it's forums, it could be dealing with the sport minister directly. It's a conduit for us in dealing with Sport Canada, but principally it's our funding" (Canadian Soccer Association representative).

Relation to NSO event selection and governance. Event selection, as previously mentioned, is closely tied to the creation and implementation of an LTAD model. The LTAD was created to guide Canadian sport development. Competitions make up a key component of

athlete development. The SFAF would force NSOs to have an LTAD model but would not dictate the specific details aside from required content such as the developmental categories for the athletes and information needed for coaches. It is through this document that all NSOs have been mandated to create an LTAD plan. The funding allocated to the creation, maintenance and alterations to the LTAD documents would have been outlined in reports filed to Sport Canada, and directly pertaining to the funding associated with the SFAF. NSOs aim to select events for their athletes, which are deemed to be developmentally appropriate. All NSOs within Canada created, as either part of their LTAD model directly or as an adjoining document, a competition pathway for athletes moving through the development pathway. As such, the LTAD closely ties to the kinds of events NSOs select for their athletes. Once again, this shows a steering rather than rowing approach on the part of Sport Canada. From the NSO perspective, the creator and implementer of sport-specific LTAD, a network governance approach is used, as will be discussed later.

Federal Policy for Hosting International Sport Events

The policy. In 2008, the Federal Policy for Hosting International Sport Events (Hosting Policy) was introduced (Government of Canada, 2016a). The document, a collaboration between Canadian Heritage/Sport Canada, the provinces/territories, and the sport community, provides a framework for Sport Canada's hosting program (Government of Canada, 2016a). The Strategic Framework for Hosting International Sport Events, explained in the Federal-Provincial/Territorial Priorities for Collaborative Action 2002-2005, served as the starting point for the Hosting Policy (Government of Canada, 2016a). The focus on national events suggests more funding may be available to NSOs wishing to compete within Canada, rather than at international events.

I can't say if we didn't get that funding if we wouldn't host it, but we'd find other ways to do it, but I know that it's tough and that hosting opportunity from Sport Canada helps out a lot... So for Nor-Am, the host country normally gets a certain amount of spots, so if you do host, you get more athletes into it and therefore providing them more opportunities to play at this point and have that experience. (Freestyle Canada representative)

If financial resources are limited, this could become a deciding factor when determining if athletes are to be sent to an international youth development event versus attending the Canada Games, for example.

The Hosting Policy identifies the requirements for federal funding and coordinated approaches required to implement the Government of Canada's strategic goals for hosting international sport events (Government of Canada, 2016a). The Hosting Policy aims to provide a framework and strategic approach for bidding and hosting international sport events, thus identifying priority and target events; promote effective bidding and hosting decision-making coordinated with all government levels; target investment to projects that advance the government's objectives; and manage the type and number of bids supported by the government. The Government of Canada supports the hosting of two international major multi-sport Games every ten years, one large international single sport event every two years, 30 or more small international single sport events each year, and international multi-sport Games for Aboriginal Peoples and persons with a disability (Government of Canada, 2016a).

Event funding is dependent on available resources, the government's priorities and necessary approvals (Government of Canada, 2016a). Projects must respect all federal policies, bidding and hosting processes, federal funding limitations, as well as promote sport development

objectives while acknowledging the Government of Canada as an event contributor (Government of Canada, 2016a). Larger events, which require additional resources, may apply.

In relation to elite youth events, it should be noted that working documents do exist within Sport Canada, such as Sport Canada's stance on the Youth Olympic Games (Sport Canada, 2015b). These documents outline the developmental appropriateness, by sport, for each event. That is, the ages at which athletes are most likely to peak are listed, and events along the sport development pathway are listed accordingly. A university-level event would fit a developmental pathway quite differently based on the lower peak age for a sport such as gymnastics.

Creation process. The creation of this policy as well as the ranking of events falls under Sport Canada. As it is governmental sport policy, interactions between Sport Canada advisors and NSOs, as well as surveys and annual meetings, played a role in the development of the policies. NSOs applying for the funding provide a rationale for hosting the event:

[Sport Canada] accepts the application for what we need and then they regulate based on those requests. They don't really have a suggestion or any regulations on what we can do. They just strongly monitor how the funds are spent and for what purpose and then they guide us into those proper, but it is our application, and we follow certain guidelines on those applications, and if we are successful, then we receive funding from them.

(Freestyle Canada representative)

In turn, Sport Canada may suggest more leveraging while hosting events:

And the other thing we often do is we encourage, along with an event like a [single sport events], is an international training camp, which allows many Canadian athletes to be exposed to international talent. So, effectively investing is a great leveraging opportunity

for sport development, which is one of the reasons we have this program [Hosting Policy].

For multi-sport events, it always depends on the requirements imposed by the event rights owners. (Sport Canada Representative)

Again, the overarching principles are applied to all NSOs; the specifics and implementation directives would change based on the sport. Sport development remains a key priority for events hosted within Canada. As outlined in the policy, events must demonstrate a contribution to sport development, including links between the event and LTAD, strategic and operational plans building capacity and increasing interaction for organizations eligible for SFAF, and realization of the goals of sport excellence objectives (Government of Canada, 2016a).

Policy implementation. The Federal Policy for Hosting International Events outlines the number of events to be supported. Implementation occurs through NSO applications, which aim to receive funding to host events. The events are ranked based on the developmental appropriateness of the event in relation to the sports development pathway (Sport Canada, 2015b). That is, the peak age of the sport is compared to the age of the athlete in question. The objective of the event, such as its political underpins in the case of YOG's link to the IOC, are also considered (Sport Canada, 2015b). The selection criterion for each event, however, still falls under the NSO's jurisdiction. It remains possible for the NSO to rebut these requests if adequate support is given to the Sport Canada advisor. One event that was notably supported across all NSOs, as well as Sport Canada, was the Canada Games.

The Hosting Policy also supports other events, which align with Sport Canada objectives, such as the Canada Games. Support for the Canada Games is based on its ability to adapt to the developmental requirements of respective sports and even provinces within sports. As this event falls into an elite youth athlete demographic, the strengths and weaknesses of the Canada Games

are closely tied to the characteristics of interest in other events. Canada Games, an event for P/TSOs, is strongly supported by many NSOs, such as volleyball. The age of participating athletes is a decision made by NSOs to best fit the needs of their sport and even individual disciplines:

There's that advantage of exposing some of our athletes to that environment. It's a national tournament, and for our development model, we placed 18 for indoor and 24 for beach. It's a good culminating event for high performance athletes where they're at the stage where they're competing nationally and maybe not internationally just yet.

(Volleyball Canada representative)

Relation to NSO event selection and governance. As funding is generally limited within Canada, any funding which reduces the cost to the NSO would play a role in event selection. Hosting an event often increases the number of entries Canada may have, thus increasing the number of athletes participating in the event. It is worth noting event hosting often falls under requirements put in place by continental or international sport federations. As such, the Hosting Policy simply reduces costs for the NSOs but does not affect the event hosted or attended.

I believe that there may be some limitations from Sport Canada down, and so performance is they're going to consider to be a part of that, and if we're going to be prioritizing the competitions, so now a change in the last 20 years is the importance of priority in the Commonwealth Games and the Pan-American Games compared to the World Championships. They have dropped this priority for consideration for performance, and the World Championships has gained. (Swimming Canada representative)

This quotation shows hosting policies and priorities play a role in the decisions made by NSOs when selecting events. Thus, Sport Canada governs, through steering and financial support, in relation to event financing and thus event selection.

Athlete Assistance Program (AAP)

The policy. The AAP, more commonly known as carding, provides direct funding to elite athletes in Canada. 1,800 athletes are carded in Canada across over 80 sports disciplines (Sport Canada, 2015a). The funding was increased during the 2017 budget proposal for the first time since 2004 (Government of Canada, 2017a). The criterion for athlete eligibility is determined by the individual NSOs.

Each NSO, which has been allotted AAP funding for its athletes, receives a given amount and may allocate them to various levels of athletes. The athletes must meet certain standards to qualify, and if an athlete is looking for carding, they must also attend certain events. As such, this counts as coercive language.

Creation process. AAP is a Sport Canada policy created based on Sport Canada criteria, and since the creation of Own the Podium, priority is given to those targeted by OTP. Carding is only available to sport organizations competing at the Olympic Games. The overall criterion does not change from one NSO to the next. With that said, the level of athletes and, as a result, the amount of funding provided to the athletes are at the discretion of the NSO:

The nomination of athletes to the AAP is the responsibility of the [Freestyle Canada's] Chief Executive Officer, acting on the recommendations of the [High Performance Program] Selection Committees. Sport Canada is responsible for the final approval of nominations to the AAP... Sport Canada's general policies and procedures governing AAP can be found on the Sport Canada website. (Freestyle Canada, 2016)

The NSO must simply remain within their allotted carding budget. Typically, the NSOs that receive carding allocations are for the sports targeted by Own the Podium. Therefore, carding allocation decisions would not only be affected by Sport Canada guidelines but also input from Own the Podium.

Policy implementation. Once allocated funds, each NSO may then determine the selection criteria and allocate the funds accordingly. NSOs also receiving OTP-recommended funding often receive the most cards for athletes. Carding criteria may change as the sport develops, especially in relation to sport development information:

They are published on our website, and we used both international performance and world rankings at certain levels and the on-track times as we go down the chart, so we're investing perhaps in the 15- and the 16-year-olds rather than 25-year-olds who have a quicker performance time at this point in time, but doesn't, by the profile we defined, look as though they're going to come in to a medal position or a finals position in an international meet. (Swimming Canada representative)

As such, the implementation relies mainly on the NSO themselves, putting Sport Canada and Own the Podium in a steering position. Network governance also occurs at the NSO level, as seen in the next section.

Relation to NSO event selection and governance. Carding provides monetary support for competing athletes. This offsets the costs paid by NSOs, PSOs, or athletes themselves. Self-funded athletes struggle to afford competitions and are thus limited in terms of the events they can attend. This was most noted with Badminton, which only has five cards as well as Broomball and Ringette, which has no carding available. The policy is used to steer decisions but does not dictate the use of the funding, which falls under the NSO's jurisdiction. The decisions within the

NSO would fall under network governance, as discussed in Chapter 5.

Long-Term Athlete Development (LTAD)

The policy. Canadian Sport for Life (CS4L) is a movement in Canada in which the LTAD is the pathway for elite athlete development and increased mass participation in sport and physical activity (Sport for Life, 2017). LTAD includes guidelines for training, competition, and recovery based on human development and maturation, or, more simply, developmental age. Ten key factors lie at the root of the LTAD model: physical literacy, specialization, developmental age, sensitive periods, mental, cognitive and emotional development; periodization, competition, excellence takes time, system alignment and integration, as well as continuous improvement (Sport for Life, 2017). “Our position is that the competition model really determines much of everything else. The coaches will always coach to the competition model” (CS4L representative).

The LTAD model is made up of seven stages: Active Start, FUNdamental, Learn to Train, Train to Train, Train to Compete, Train to Win, and Active for Life (Sport for Life, 2017). The first three stages develop physical literacy and a foundation for either a generally active lifestyle or elite sport training after age 12 (Sport for Life, 2017). Stages four through six provide elite training for athletes specializing in one sport and focus on the physical, mental, and emotional development of the athlete. Stage seven looks to have athletes continue their active lifestyle throughout their lifespan (Sport for Life, 2017). Elite youth Games would fall under the Train to Compete and Train to Win categories, depending on the NSO. NSO LTAD models were introduced in waves based on previous content and readiness to adopt. In summary, LTAD is a graduated system, which shows the progressive steps during athlete development pathway:

And much like if you had a driver’s licence, so now we have a graduated driver’s licence

system, so you start with your permit and then you have – then you're allowed to drive with another driver in a vehicle, eventually you can drive on your own and then the final stage is that you do a road test and all that. So it's very similar to the system in sport.

(Athletics Canada representative)

The funded athletes normally fall into the Train to Train, Train to Compete, and Train to Win LTAD stages (Government of Canada, 2014). A key point of the LTAD movement is the implementation of the LTAD model (Government of Canada, 2014). Provinces also provide support individuals, teams, and community clubs that are members of these sport organizations. Expenses may include provincial championships, coach and athlete training camps, as well as insurance.

As this dissertation looks at event selection and there is a close tie between NSO LTAD models and competition selections, both will be considered for this section. Should the documents be physically distinct in an NSO, both will be included in this dissertation. The competition calendar is simply an implementation measure for the LTAD model.

Creation process. Officially, LTAD models were funding requirements for NSOs in 2005. The creation of the documents occurred in waves, however. Some NSOs, such as Rowing Canada, had LTAD models in place before 2005, as seen in the following quotation: "I think we've been in this game for more than 20 years, so we've been working at our LTAD, and it has changed through the years as well, and I think that we're well advanced in it" (Rowing Canada representative). The quality of the document initially produced by each NSO varied depending on the wave of creation:

There's a difference in how complete their original framework document was, what depth of work went into it, the first wave of sports, to your earlier question, the first wave didn't

produce as sophisticated documents as the third and fourth waves, because the third and fourth waves meant looking at the first couple of waves going oh, okay, we'll start with that and then we'll build more. (CS4L representative)

Sport Canada played a large role in the initial creation of the LTAD model for NSOs. The LTAD approach came from a desire to unify the country through sport and to systematically improve the quality of Canadian athletes:

I think it came out of the decision of the... federal government of that time that placed importance on the level of nationalism, pride and country and performing at the highest level as well as the fact that we were hosting home Games in Canada. At that point, there was no unified or master guide in many sports on how to take an athlete from a very early stage or very young age to making them into a world champion or an Olympic medalist. I think LTAD allowed members different measurement tools of sports organizations to come out of that to see how they are doing, how they should be funded, guiding their decision making at how they invest on energy and resources. (Badminton Canada Representative)

During the Sport Policy renewal process, the CS4L LTAD models were discussed (Groupe Intersol Group, 2011). Barriers to implementation included: a lack of qualified coaches and resources to design and implement plans, bureaucracies, and limited information sharing amongst stakeholders (Groupe Intersol Group, 2011). During the creation process, terminology for LTAD Models was different from terminology used by Canadian Sport for Life:

It brought us to a common language in terms of principles, in terms of stages of development. Quebec removed itself a little from that language, but it is quite similar, the rest of Canada has still stuck with that pattern, so overall I would say the biggest factor

that helped the sport system was just at the language level. (Sport Canada representative)

Within the NSOs, multiple steps were taken during the LTAD creation process, often breaking the process down into an LTAD model, skill development plan, and competition review. For example, the Broomball LTAD Implementation plan included many steps such as the creation of LTAD committees, distribution of materials to provinces and territories, the creation of implementation plans, a skill development plan that was tested in schools, and a competition review committee. A new program was also created “to fill the gap between the skill development program and Provincial/Territorial broomball championships; the gap between Fundamentals/Learn to Train Stages and Training to Win/ Broomball for Life Stages.” (Broomball Canada, 2013, p. 2). Other sources of influence to the LTAD creation process will be discussed in RQ 4.

Policy implementation. As previously mentioned, the PIM group evaluated the implementation of LTAD principles across the Canadian sport system. In relation to LTAD, almost everyone interviewed or surveyed was aware of physical literacy and LTAD principles (The Sutcliffe Group Incorporated, 2016). Sport organization respondents believed in the principles of both physical literacy and LTAD, although P/TSOs and LSOs were less aware of physical literacy principles than those of LTAD. “While the key informants were all supportive, organizational support for both physical literacy and LTAD declined the closer the enquiry was to the community level” (The Sutcliffe Group Incorporated, 2016, p. 9). This shows an issue of alignment between national, provincial/territorial and local levels of government. Key informants suggested at the community level, volunteers, parents and coaches were more resistant, especially based on their prior experiences in sport prior to the LTAD implementation.

Many sport organizations had made changes to their policies or had created positions to

support the implementation of LTAD and physical literacy (The Sutcliffe Group Incorporated, 2016). “The systems of competition had been changed in many organizations, again more so at the national and provincial/territorial level than the local level. The greatest challenge at all levels was in implementation of the stage versus age LTAD principle” (The Sutcliffe Group Incorporated, 2016, p. 10). Impacts of the LTAD principles on the organizations were said to be “the provision of a structured pathway, increased membership numbers and athlete retention, and increased enjoyment and fun for all sport organization participants” (The Sutcliffe Group Incorporated, 2016, p. 10).

Enablers related to LTAD and physical literacy included enhanced communication, educated and supportive parents, teacher and coach resources, access to facilities and equipment, alignment between schools and P/TSOs, willing partners, and national leadership (The Sutcliffe Group Incorporated, 2016). Gaps and barriers to effective implementation of LTAD and physical literacy principles included a lack of sport system capacity at all levels; a lack of resources for training, staffing and materials development; the volunteer nature of the sport system; lack of knowledge and alignment amongst those delivering the sports; and a lack of commitment and clarity in relation to physical literacy and LTAD (The Sutcliffe Group Incorporated, 2016). One respondent explained the challenges of implementing a policy when little accountability exists between those creating the policy and those delivering programs:

The piece that the LTAD is missing is in its implementation... It's similar to what we're doing with NCCP... So we have to do similar things with LTAD and say, "If you're not doing this, then you're off the bench or your program is not going to be valid or you're not going to get points towards provincial championships"... Some kind of a thing where there's that requirement and accountability, where they expect to do it where they're

going to fall in line or they're out. (Ringette Canada representative)

The implementation of LTAD models were also said to be tough to measure (Sport Research Intelligence sportive, 2011). Although NSOs create the LTAD model, they are not the implementers of the policy: “I'd say we're, again, middle of the pack or below average because we don't have a ton of control, especially on a high school program.” (Volleyball Canada representative). Each sport also faces their own barriers based on the specific requirements of the sport, as the following quotation highlights:

I think there has to be differences just by the nature of the sport and the differences between sports, so I think there has to be differences in how you implement that. I think that we don't get it. For rowing, because of the size of the equipment and agility, it gives a very difficult challenge. So a lot of our LTAD models is going to be different than what you will find from other sports. (Rowing Canada representative)

As LTAD models tie directly to MSO requirements, accountability to stakeholders such as Sport Canada and Own the Podium have been and will likely remain an important step in the LTAD implementation process. For Sport Canada, the focus is more the inclusion of a document, as opposed to the contents of the LTAD: “I would say if you don't have an LTAD don't show up and ask for money, but if you do have one that's probably sufficient” (Skate Canada representative). For Own the Podium, the alignment between high performance plans, in this case the Podium Pathway, is a critical component:

The long-term athlete development strategy is an overarching strategy for athletes within the sports system. They really are interconnected, but they really have different roles and objectives between the two of them. As I said before the sports that really are quite sophisticated you will see that the alignment is absolutely essential. (OTP representative)

A major component to the implementation of LTAD remains the stakeholders who implement the policies, the coaches and athletes themselves. NSOs may have a guiding role but cannot directly influence those implanting the policies:

If any club signs up for [the Club Accreditation Program], then we know that club is meeting our LTAD guidelines. That program is relatively new and we've only got 80 clubs in all of Canada who are accredited... That's kind of an influence side of things, same thing with high school, we can only influence them. Same thing with universities, we can only influence them. And we try to do that through a number of different ways, whether it's through meetings or through partnerships or through accreditation or different layers. But in general, it's an extremely frustrating task. (Volleyball Canada representative)

Many, if not all NSOs, actively revisit their LTAD models and adjust the contents based on new information:

I think we are at a point now where we try to look at it every year to see whether it's up to date, is there anything we want to change. I think it's kind of a living document now, so it's not necessarily something that we kind of sit and put it on our shelf, don't look at it for five years. We actually look at it much more regularly now... Because of the age, the digital age, it makes that much easier as well in terms of it used to be you produce a document, and there will be a hard copy, and if you change it, it would be quite an expensive challenge, so now, because we do it mostly digitally, it could be modified, put on to whatever digital format you're using and relatively with a lot of cost-effectiveness. (Rowing Canada representative)

Beyond the club level, implementation of LTAD may also vary by athlete:

The document itself would be how to bake a cake, what coaches will do is ... depending on their level of experiences is tweak the ingredients. So, instead of one cup of sugar, they may use a half a cup of sugar. So, the basic foundation is there, but it's tweaking the variables inside of that. (Tennis Canada representative)

In terms of barriers to LTAD implementation, the PIM group provided suggestions to enhance the impact of physical literacy and LTAD. The suggestions included communication and knowledge transfer within sports across different levels, alignment within sports and additional resources (The Sutcliffe Group Incorporated, 2016). All stakeholders agreed education and awareness of staff, coaches and parents should be a priority (The Sutcliffe Group Incorporated, 2016). The measurement of LTAD implementation is also seen as difficult due to limited control over those at the grassroots level:

We had no idea in terms of how it was being implemented. We had no idea of the success of it or lack of, and so it's just a good time frame for us to re-educate ourselves with the actual concept for LTAD, and if it's been successful or not, do we continue to put our resources towards it or not, you know, so there are many questions we didn't have the answers to, so it's time to get the answers. (Canadian Soccer Association representative)

Sport organizations suggested a clear unifying policy vision on physical literacy for sport, recreation, physical activity and education sectors along with resources to support the initiative would be an effective approach (The Sutcliffe Group Incorporated, 2016). The sport organizations also reported a need for increased alignment as they reported: "Governments should focus efforts on training in the sport and recreation sectors; on clarifying the intersection among the three national policy/framework documents in sport, recreation, physical activity (a view shared with municipalities)" (The Sutcliffe Group Incorporated, 2016, p. 11)

In summary, the implementation of LTAD varies by NSO, province, club, and athlete. Despite having a document created, ensuring alignment and implementation is a challenging task.

Relation to NSO event selection and governance. LTAD models are closely tied to NSO event selection as well as athlete selection criterion. For example, “National competitions harmonized with HP requirements” (Speed Skating Canada, 2013, p. 1). The document outlines, for each NSO, the skills and challenge level required throughout the development pathway. As such, events are selected in accordance with the developmental requirements for the athletes. LTAD has also facilitated alignment among key sport stakeholders, which all play some role in event selection: “So the national and provincial sport organizations, the provincial and federal governments now have a common language that was brought by LTAD. So it makes it easier to communicate and exchange information on many levels” (Sport Canada representative).

At the elite youth level, LTAD models are directly linked to competition calendars:

I think it works. In principle, the model worked, and it works for everyone in the system.

And sometimes, it just serves as a reminder, because in my daily work, sometimes I have to remind athletes and coaches that young athletes they should be doing events that are age appropriate. (Athletics Canada representative)

Thus, LTAD models link directly to events deemed developmentally appropriate for the competing athletes: “what we do in our LTAD model is list a menu of competitions... I think the events that we list, really, by stage of development, reflects the level of players” (Tennis Canada representative).

Other Methods of Influence

Other methods of influence include more regular interactions, such as through

committees and advisors. These include advisors from Own the Podium, the CAC, and CS4L:

Some [High Performance Advisors or] HPA's clearly conveyed the message that if their recommendations for program or staffing changes were not followed, then funding recommendations would not be made. This led some key informants to report that OTP is in a perceived or real conflict of interest. That is, that OTP is the de facto decider of funding (as Sport Canada does not have the high performance capacity to review OTP's recommendations critically) and OTP also provides sport consulting advice to NSOs.

Some NSOs believe if the advice is not followed, punitive OTP measures (lower funding levels) against the NSOs will result. This puts the NSOs in the position where they feel they must implement the HPA's recommendations, even if the sport does not agree.

(Goss Gilroy Inc., 2017, p. 38)

This finding suggests a lack of clarity of roles between NSOs and OTP when making sport-specific technical decisions.

For Rowing Canada, direct dealing, primarily in relation to funding, with Sport Canada is done through the CEO: "[The CEO] actually sits on the summer sports conferences where she reports to them. She represents us in the summer sport, and so they're dealing with a lot of policies, and one is infrastructure for sports with the influence of sport communities."

The voice of athletes is included in considerations through three primary means: through representation on NSO boards of directors, through feedback provided by national level athletes at the point of retirement, and through AthletesCAN:

There is some mechanism in the NSO, so we will advocate for athletes having a voice in the NSO, whether that's in the boards of directors or not. So, when you get an athlete in a

position, say on a national sport organization's board, they can have some impact, but it's kind of less direct than through us. (AthletesCAN representative)

Partnerships for specific projects, such as NextGEN, are also a platform for interaction amongst stakeholders. For example, Athletics Canada works with P/TSOs, OTP, and other national stakeholders to develop athletes targeting the Olympic Games taking place within the next five to ten years:

The NextGen Program is an NSO-led, systematic, evidence-based program which identifies and subsequently through partnerships with Provincial Sport Organizations, Own the Podium and the CSI Network provides opportunities to develop athletes to sustainable and repeatable podium performances at World Championships and Olympic Games 2024 and beyond. Athletics Canada is very pleased to release the new NextGen list of "identified" NextGen athletes for 2016-2027 year. (Athletics Canada, 2016, p. 1)

Relation to NSO event selection and governance. Influence beyond policies, such as through advisors, funding reporting interactions, and athlete input, affect the creation process and content of NSO policies. As this pressure is from horizontal actors, both external and in-between, network governance is at play.

Summary

This chapter provided an overview of the policies put in place at a federal level to guide behaviour related to elite youth sport. The creation and implementation of the policies were also discussed. From these findings, numerous policies are found within the system; however, these are used with a steering governance approach. That is, the federal government provides strategic direction to NSOs to guide decisions made but have limited direct impact on decisions and behaviours. The national level policies are overarching and must cover the vast demands and

differences of the sport organizations. These documents are therefore created with insight from NSOs through interactions with funding partner advisors and NSOs, conferences, workshops, committees, as well as policy evaluation and validation methods. The national-level policies become operationalized through NSO-specific policies, which are created in response to specific needs of each organization within the own sport contexts.

The NSO policies are created in response to needs as well as the strategic guidelines put in place but the government and other funding partners. The quantity of stakeholders as well as the amount of coordination required becomes a barrier to policy implementation, especially when limited measurement tools are in place to determine if the policies are being followed. NSOs take into consideration funding requirements, Sport Canada policies, as well as sport specific requirements. The policies are then disseminated to P/TSOs and local organizations which then implemented the policies. Because elite youth fall between these jurisdictions, the quality assurance measures related to policy implementation become weakened, as each P/TSO creates their own plans and responds to its respective government requirements. The contents of the NSO policies also vary depending on the sport specific considerations in Canada and abroad and may change depending on the event in question, when event selection occurs. These findings suggest limited ability to control from the federal government, as policies are created and implemented at the NSO level to address sport-specific needs. The sport-specific requirements vary and are impacted most often by guidelines set out by the International Federations.

The next chapter will focus on the differences between NSOs by looking at event selection processes for elite youth athletes from a bottom-up approach. The NSOs, in this case, act as the focal organization. As such, the importance and relevance of the documents in relation to NSO decisions will be discussed.

Chapter 5 – Results Part 2

This chapter uses a bottom-up approach, with the NSO as the focal organization to determine how NSOs perceive pressures placed upon them. The intent was to determine which factors NSOs take into consideration when making event selection decisions, as well as to determine if differences existed among sports.

In theory, the same types of pressures are put on each Canadian NSO. However, in practice, there remains a difference between the events selected by each NSO. Each NSO was asked about their event selection process for elite youth. The national-level policies, their creation process, and sport-specific attributes were also discussed. This was done to answer research questions four and five:

RQ 4: How do the NSOs perceive the pressures placed upon them from Canadian sport system stakeholders/policy makers?

RQ 5: How do they respond to the pressures when selecting Games for elite youth?

Question six, looking at the differences amongst sports, will be discussed at the end of the chapter.

NSO Perception of Canadian Sport system pressures

This section will cover how NSOs perceived the pressures placed upon them by Canadian sport system stakeholders. This will be done using the policy diffusion model. As noted in Chapter 2, four mechanisms of policy diffusion exist: learning, imitation, coercion and competition (Graham et al., 2012). Each form of pressure is exercised on NSOs during the creation and implementation of all policies and decisions related to event selection. The present analysis encompasses the creation, implementation and adjustments to any policies or decisions related to event selection for elite youth athletes. As NSOs regularly update their internal policies, the pressures in question are continuous and change throughout the document updating

process, as the following quotation highlights:

We're about 90% complete, and we've pretty much taken our first LTAD model, which was created in 2007-2008, and thrown 80% of it out of the door, and there are aspects of the LTAD that we have in there, but just as the national organizations competing on the international scene, it does not work for us at all. (Badminton Canada representative)

As event selection is affected by multiple policies, the stakeholders, which impact NSOs, were also impacted. The individual policies, discussed in the previous chapter, were included within their respective stakeholder groups. As such, this chapter will look at the pressures in relation to event selection as a whole. The principal stakeholders included in this analysis can be seen in Figure 5.1.

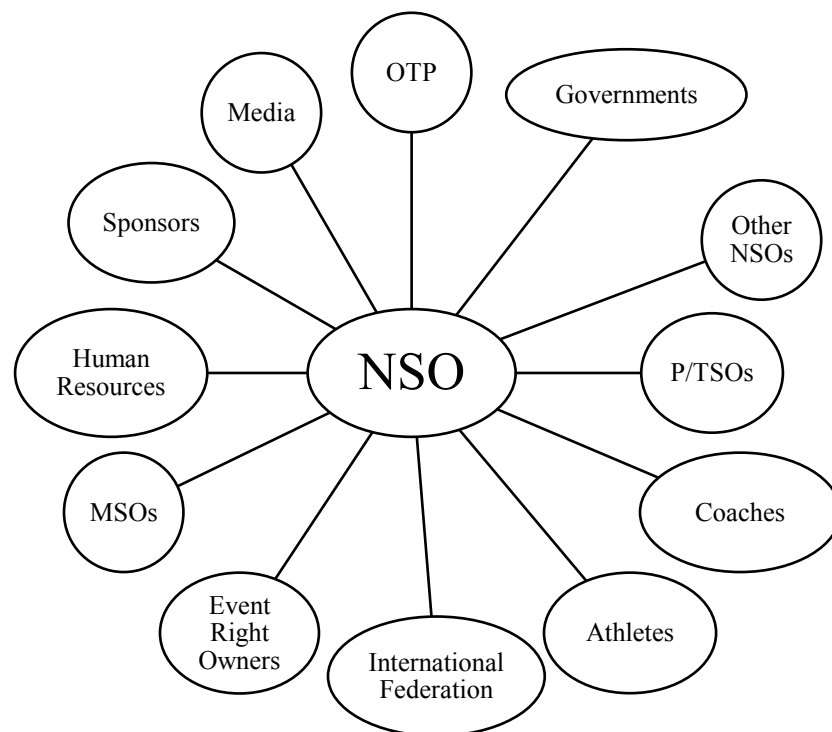


Figure 5-1. Stakeholder Map – NSO as Focal Organization

Mechanisms of Policy Diffusion.

The four mechanisms of policy diffusion, learning, imitation, coercion, and competition, in relation to Canadian NSO event selection will now be discussed. The purpose of the fourth

RQ was to determine the nature of the relationship between the pressure and the NSO. A summary of the key pressures can be seen in Figure 5-2.

Learning. Learning is defined as discovering the success of a policy, allowing others to learn from its implementation process (Graham et al., 2012). As all Canadian NSOs are implementing LTAD models, it is possible for them to learn from one another. This may be through formal or informal interactions:

I think there were probably 200 people involved in all [LTAD] projects; it took two, three to four years to actually make that first manual. We got some consensus on it, and we just put forward. When I'm usually with other NSOs, we chat about that kind of off the line or indirectly but nothing formal. (Volleyball Canada representative)

Other countries are vying to compete for international medals within the sport. By learning from other countries within their networks, Canadian NSOs may adjust their decisions and policies in relation to athlete development. International Federations guide decisions made by their national counterparts. An example for both would be decisions regarding event attendance:

Usually, I pull some of my compatriots in other countries to see if they're about to send their teams, and as an example, I'll talk to my counterpart in Great Britain or New Zealand or Australia or Netherlands or USA and say, "What are you doing to that?" And if we have just common consensus out of them, then we will make our decision. If I found out, I'll go back to the committee and say, "This is what I know what the other countries are doing," and that helps in making their decision. (Rowing Canada representative)

Canadian NSOs may learn from policies implemented at the international level and adjust accordingly. This is not coercion, as they have not been "forced" to implement the changes.

Therefore, it falls under the learning mechanism of diffusion.

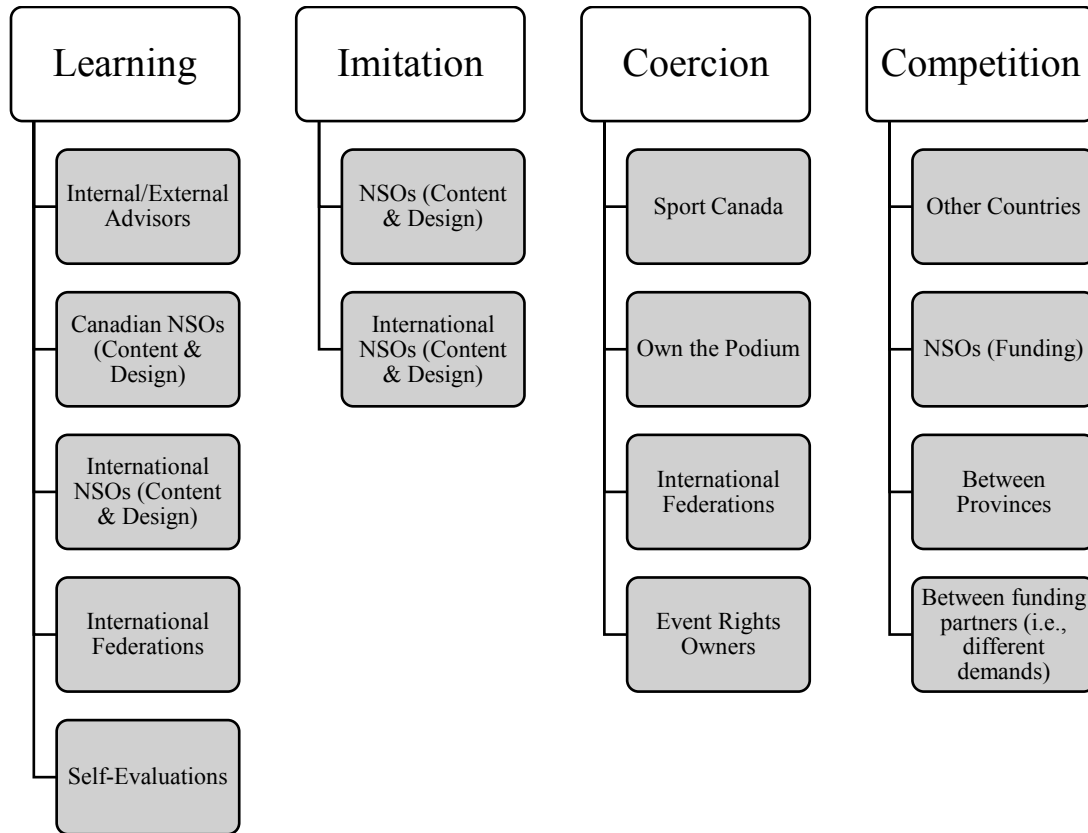


Figure 5-2. Mechanisms of Diffusion – the Perception of Pressures

Internal/External Advisors. Advisors from these organizations play a large role in educating about the policy and its role within an organization. Internal and external advisors, notably those from CS4L and major funding partners, provide formal and informal feedback to NSOs in regards to their event selection. CS4L was involved and credited with the creation of all NSO LTAD models. For example, during the creation of their Long Term Player Development (LTPD), a sport specific acronym for LTAD, CS4L was a driving force in the creation of the Canadian Soccer Association's policy, as noted in the following quotation: "[Our advisor,] he's kind of the main driving force behind it, Sport for Life, and we had structured a committee back then to generate a document that spoke to integration of LTPD across the country."

For those who receive funding recommended by OTP, supplementary guidance comes

from OTP. This is also related to event selection, as the quotation from the OTP representative indicates: “The next area that we look at is the competition structure to make sure it is appropriate and it is strategic so that as athletes move through the podium pathway they actually are accessing the appropriate competitions.” Guidance also covers components such as talent identification and development practices, talent transfer, coaching and technical leadership, professional development, training models (i.e., centralized, decentralized and hybrid training models), competition structures, sports science and sports medicine, NextGen initiatives and NSO governance (Own the Podium representative)

Those who do not receive funding from OTP may still receive guidance for developing athletes, through NextGen initiatives, which focus on athletes eight years away from competing at the Olympic Games:

OTP only really invites you to the table once you’ve got sort of into that level of international success and you are in a position and in a place that you can really stick a medal, and as much as we want to attempt... we’re not there. And we’ll be invited to the table around NextGen because they understand the potential for our sport with the changing demographics and the work we’ve been doing around next gen, but we’re not on the table for OTP. (Badminton Canada representative)

Canadian NSOs. Canadian NSOs may look to one another for inspiration during the creation of their own documents, such as LTAD documents, or other internal policies, such competition calendars and selection criteria.

...we look at [other NSOs] when we read [LTAD models] because we always get some ideas from reading what they’re doing and how they’re approaching it and then saying, “Can that be applied to our sport?” So the people we have within our sport who are

working on the LTAD model spend a lot of time just reading what other sports are doing because some of it is very applicable to our sport, some of it not, but some of it is.

(Rowing Canada representative)

International NSOs. Learning also occurs through informal conversations with NSOs in other countries, as the following quotation from the Swimming Canada representative noted:

I have counterparts in other countries, and I don't necessarily work with them a lot, but certainly I exchange ideas whenever possible, go to people for information and for visiting the country, letting them know our plans, see everything we could do together, but there's not a whole lot of planning together. They're more or less a form of discussion.

Thus, the interactions are not competitive or coercive, but rather a means of comparing travel plans, competition schedules, and working together at events to negotiate with local organizing committees. Therefore, NSOs work together to create and implement their LTAD models, such as through competition selection and improving development opportunities at events.

International Federations. The International Federations decide the overall competition structure within their respective sports. Policies created by NSOs build upon the general structure of the sport:

The International Federations are also the technical leaders of their own sports, determining Olympic qualification criteria for their respective athletes. For example,

The Olympic [International Ski Federation] Points List is calculated using the average of five (5) best competition results in the respective event for Slalom and Giant Slalom, and the average of two (2) best results in the respective event for Downhill, Super-G and Alpine Combined during the qualification period of 1 July 2016 to 21 January 2018.

(International Ski Federation, 2017, p. 2)

NSOs based the standards for their athlete selection on those outlined by the International Federation. For some sports, such as Athletics, the sanctioning of the event is important in order to qualify for other events:

Technically, you can qualify as long as the events are sanctioned. Because the criteria to make an Olympic team, it's performance based. So you have to have a performance in your event and then your placing at the championships or the trials for the event.

(Athletics Canada representative)

Self-Evaluations. NSOs are continually looking to improve, and thus, internal reviews are commonplace during LTAD development and revisions. CS4L consultants are often facilitators of these internal reviews:

Canadian Sport for Life has been a big help, but they still were involved in our last review, which was last year, so mainly through them, and then also a lot of literature reading and just trying to interpret what's right and being practical about the approach we were taking too our model for long term athlete development. (Rowing Canada representative)

One source of feedback, largely related to event selection, is from athletes and staff that participate in previous events:

What happens to feedback when they come back, we usually have an independent person putting together all of that and summarizes it all for us and then sent back to the athletes and the coaches and the administration, and then we use that to make and affect changing moving forward... "What about the competition? What would you have done better? What about the competition level? What about our transportation there? What about your

coaches? What about the delegation quarter and the other staff we have there? What about the decisions we made?” So all sorts of questions, some hard questions that the athletes provide really critical feedback on, but the important part of it is just being able to ask those hard questions that the athletes can give feedback and then use that to hopefully better yourself for next year. (Rowing Canada representative)

NSOs have also undergone reviews of their LTAD implementation strategies and provided suggestions, such as the creation of Memorandums of Understanding with member branches as well as ensuring proper accountability measures, training to staff, and efficient governance structures (Charest, Duncan, & Dowling, 2013)

Imitation. NSOs look within Canada and abroad to further develop their LTAD models, based on what is seen by other implementers. This may range from the look of the document to the content within.

Canadian NSOs. Canadian NSOs are required to create documents containing the same kinds of information. As one interviewee explained, information about athlete profiles could overlap amongst most other sports:

Our gold medal profile, 40% of it is stuff that I’m sure that would be found at every other sport. Maybe 60% would be taken from the physical casting, maybe. I would say 50% of the work we did in part developing our Podium Pathway Gold Medal Profile. It was probably already done and sitting down the road. We just then get it. (Badminton Canada representative)

As sports may have overlapping physiological demands, there is guidance for the sport-specific skills required. This was especially important for later implementers, who could learn from previously-created documents.

Sports that have similar type physiological demands; we definitely look at them, So most of the ones now, most of the ones I mentioned earlier, they're Tier 1 sports with the LTAD structure. They actually have put a lot of thought and effort into producing their LTAD model. With some of them, if they're not Tier 1, they might not have the resources to develop them as much. (Rowing Canada representative)

As LTAD models were introduced in waves, NSOs, which were later adopters of the policies, could learn from prior implementers. Some NSOs made a point to explore the documents of other organizations, beyond the contents. For example, Canoe and Kayak Canada built its own model on the formatting and design of Baseball Canada:

For me, there's two aspects to the LTAD; it's the reliability, validity and usefulness, and then it's how it's presented and consumable... This is a lot of text that no one's going to read, right, so what I thought Baseball Canada did a great job was, if I'm a coach of a U11 team, it's a one-pager, and I know that by the end of my season with my eleven year olds, this is what they should be doing – this is what they should be doing, these are ways that I can get them to do it. So I thought they did a great job. (Canoe Kayak Canada representative)

International NSOs. International counterparts are also used as a source of knowledge by Canadian NSOs. This was especially notable when selecting events for athletes:

We look at them for feedback and ideas in like in an informal discussion, so what are you doing around this one, what it should be coming up, how are you preparing for it, how do you see that fit in your plans, and just get a general feel and bring that to the table back with our performance planning group so that everyone is aware. If we find a good idea and we like it, we will steal it in a heartbeat. (Swimming Canada representative)

Coercion. Coercion involves some actors attempting to impose their preferred policy solutions on a government. For Canadian NSOs, these pressures come mainly from Sport Canada, Own the Podium, their International Federation, and Event Rights Owners.

Sport Canada. Overall, the Canadian sport policies are seen as an overarching vision meant to be adapted by each NSO. The creation of Sport Canada policies was often seen as a consultative process. The idea of a “one size fits all” was a common theme, as the following quotation from the Canoe Kayak Canada representative highlights:

Their policies are applied ... There’s flexibility – it’s the same with the Own the Podium, right – there’s flexibility – we’re the experts of the sport, they could create the overarching principles; we apply our expertise to those overarching principles, right, keeping in mind those overarching principles. So it may seem that there’s differences within the NSOs, but at the end of the day, we all have to be accountable to that overarching principle.

Sport Canada is a prominent stakeholder, especially for those who receive the majority of their funding from the government, as the Badminton Canada representative noted:

They are our largest funding partner, but as we diversify, because of the lack of revenue from them, the reporting requirements are still there, and I know that other sports, it took much more “life or death” type of situation if they don’t do it correctly... The demands are seen as a checklist: “I do a lot of “Have I done this for Sport Canada? Have I done this for COC? Have I done this for OTP? Have I done this CAC? Have I done this for my provincial sport organizations?”

In terms of event selection, Sport Canada was the leading force in the creation of LTAD models amongst NSOs:

I think when we were mandated to get our LTAD act together. It's just a matter of formalizing things. I think it existed; it's just kind of there. And so, when we had our hands tapped a little bit, it forced us to formalize a lot of what we had sitting on shelves.

(Athletics Canada representative)

As Sport Canada is a major funding partner, some NSOs expressed concerns directly related to funding applications. The details required during the application, which often went against the flexibility required for appropriate athlete development. Badminton Canada viewed policies and reporting as an onerous checklist that reduces the role of the NSO, the sport expert, within the overall sport delivery model in Canada. If funding is not spent as initially planned, the NSO must then return the funds to Sport Canada at the end of the fiscal year. The Badminton Canada representative admitted: "A lot of it is moving ahead and doing things we said we would do just so they don't call back money or resources." With limited funding, coercive pressures in relation to decision-making often relate to the amount of funding associated with the required reporting:

It's a factor of resource availability and capacity, it's a fact of – if you need to see an urgency of what's available in terms of funding opportunities and other types of opportunities from the sport, it can factor in the individuals concerned, their background and their beliefs. (CS4L representative)

This is often done without a true understanding of how or why the policies are implemented: "But for us, it always feels like a checkmark. Do you have this done? Yes. Okay. Check. If not it's funding for an expert who will help you make sure that your pathway actually is successful" (Ringette Canada representative).

Sport Canada, through the criteria outlined in the SFAF and through interactions between Sport Canada advisors and NSOs, exercise coercive pressures on NSOs. NSOs are required to

report annually, adhere to budgets approved by Sport Canada, and implement policies dictated by the SFAF.

Own the Podium. OTP plays a large technical role within NSOs. “OTP introduced high-performance to Canada, and I think without OTP we were struggling as a nation in the high-performance stream” (Canadian Soccer Association representative).

Each year, NSOs receiving funding from OTP go through an evaluation:

So you really do need world-class coaches, you really do need a world-class daily performance environment, you need appropriate sport science and sports medicine that's based on appropriate gap analysis with very comprehensive mitigating strategies. Those are all the things that we evaluate very thoroughly on an annual basis, and for the targeted sports, we actually do three assessments per year. (Own the Podium representative)

Similar to the interactions with Sport Canada, the funding link between NSOs and Own the Podium creates a coercive effect on the relationship. In contrast to Sport Canada, Own the Podium does not directly provide the funding to the NSOs. Rather, OTP provides funding recommendations to Sport Canada. However, there is a strong OTP presence on the technical components of the documents created by the NSOs. As a result, attention to details within the NSO policies and documents is more apparent in policies created by OTP supported NSOs.

In terms of event selection, OTP plays a significant role in the high performance component of all development plans, as the Rowing Canada representative noted:

Part of their responsibility from the Own the Podium side is to ensure that we have a targeted post to our development...Every year we go to Own the Podium saying, “This is what we’re going to do for the following year or two years,” and then we follow that plan. So they know in advance what we’re going to do and that helps them make a

decision on the funding level and to oversee for every sport we seek.

For Own the Podium, there is a close link between both funding and technical decisions made by NSOs:

The funding partners would be Sport Canada, the COC, and the CPC. We make funding recommendations based on the evidence that is provided to us by the national sport organizations. Obviously, we do some level of validation on the information that is provided. That's our first mandate. The second mandate, which is probably the more important of the two, is to provide technical feedback, technical counsel to those targeted, and to a smaller degree to some non-targeted sports so that they can maximize podium potential. (Own the Podium representative)

Canoe Kayak Canada expressed concerns about the level of detail required to receive funding, which in itself often required funding to create: "If you want me to come back and show you progression against a profile, you need to help me support that development of that profile" (Canoe Kayak Canada representative). Much of this comes down to communication between stakeholders. The preferred method of communication with Sport Canada varied depending on the issue at hand:

It depends on what the issue is and where the issue is coming from, right. If the issue is coming from a policy place, I'm not necessarily sure that our sport consultant is at the table either. So, you know, for me having the survey works well. Although I'm by nature a consultative person, I like to actually have a conversation because having a conversation I feel allows growth of an idea rather than just give me the answer to the question, right. (Skate Canada representative)

As a majority of the high performance funding comes from Own the Podium, it is considered a

coercive pressure when altering LTAD details in response to their requests. There is strong incentive to follow the directives given. Development plans and funding are closely related. Past international success breeds more funding from OTP:

What we have in our funding is a reward system, so we're getting an increased amount of funding if you have a successful performance in Rio going forward and I know that they do a lot of work in submission to look at future planning and such; however, it seems a little bit like anguish to me that they will be based on past performance rather than investing in future performance. (Swimming Canada representative)

In summary, Own the Podium has heavy involvement in the sport and technical components of NSO decision-making at the high performance level. NSOs are expected to create plans and to adhere to the outlined development strategies.

International Federations. The pressures placed on Canadian NSOs go beyond Canadian stakeholders. All NSOs are a part of international, single sport federations. International Federations play a prominent role in the rules and qualification process for the Olympic Games as well as the creation of rules for the sport:

As part of the International Ice Hockey Federation... we're kind of required to attend [the World Juniors], but we also believe that there's a huge amount of public interest in that event because of where the players are in their [careers]... They're going to be the future NHL [National Hockey League] players in most cases. (Hockey Canada representative)

As many sports depend on point systems to qualify for the Olympic Games, events not sanctioned by International Federations are perceived as less important. That is, resources are seen as better utilized for an event that would directly advance the athlete or team towards the Olympic Games. For sports that are performance-based, so long as the event is sanctioned, as

previously discussed with Athletics Canada (see page 111), the competition is taken into consideration.

In summary, International Federations exert coercive pressures through the sanctioning of events, ranking of events, and outlining the Olympic qualification processes. International Federations also create the sport guidelines, setting the event standards worldwide.

Event rights owners. Event rights owners play a role in the event selection process through the eligibility criteria but also the political underpinnings of the stakeholder relationships. The athlete eligibility criteria in relation to the athlete development pathway are a key consideration. For example, the 18 to 22 age range of the Universiade were deemed beneficial for rugby athletes: “They’re both critical parts of the pathway to assess athletes, so it is a good time for those Age Grade athletes to be seen in that specific window for them” (Rugby Canada representative).

The dates and kind of competition are also factors considered, especially for events, which go beyond the competition calendar set out by the International Federation. Other factors, such as the number of athletes that can be brought and the kind of competition vary as a result of the changes made by event rights owners:

I would say even the Youth Commonwealth Games was not ever attended because of the dates they choose, the course of pool they offer, and the time of the season and the limit on the funding. So it’s always on the limitation on the athletes, so you can’t really compare. With Canada Games, you can bring a full team from each province, so you’ve got 24 swimmers from ten provinces and two territories who are capable of competing, it’s pretty meaningful. (Swimming Canada representative)

Competition decisions are often circumstantial in relation to the local organizing committee. For example, a World Junior Athletics team was not sent for 2017 but rather for the 2017

Commonwealth Youth Games. This was due to the competition location of the World Juniors, Kenya, and experiencing political unrest: “The World Juniors will still go on with the exception of this year, it won’t happen because it’s just a political things. It’s going to be held in Kenya, and it’s just not a good place to be” (Athletics Canada representative).

The amount of control held by the NSO in relation to the event was most noted when comparing the Canada Games and the Youth Olympic Games. The Canada Games is held in Canada and is strongly supported by Sport Canada. Fitting within the overall Canadian sport development system is a priority. As such, there is no single age requirement for all sports. Each sport can dictate their own selection criteria to best fit the development pathway of their sport. Having the ability to make these changes, albeit two years in advance, makes the Games an ideal fit for most, if not all, sports.

The Canada Summer Games is a really important event for us. It fits a need for us. It is really important, which is basically under 21, and so in terms of our development pathway, we find that’s a really important event. In fact, we really encourage, and these events are going to the Under 23 World Championships to participate still in the Canada Summer Games. (Rowing Canada representative)

When there is an unclear role of either the event rights holder or the franchise holder within Canada, alongside a disconnect between the developmental priorities of the event, NSOs are less inclined to participate in the said event:

...so maybe the CIS [U SPORTS] is looking to say to the world that, “Yes, look, this is a CIS athlete. We can also be successful internationally,” which we absolutely agree with

as long as the technical decisions are made correctly and the coaches' preparation of the athletes, but if it becomes an all or nothing CIS championship within the short course pool in February and that the selection trials in long course in April are secondary, then that's not going to contribute to the long course performance at August. That's not going to contribute to our success internationally. (Swimming Canada representative)

From the U SPORTS perspective, high performance is not the only objective of the Universiade:

It would be difficult to turn away athletes like that because it's still as a participation opportunity that they might not have participated if we wouldn't have opened it up to them. We are trying; we're having a hard time with that balancing, high performance versus a participation opportunity because one of our mandates as U SPORTS at least is to enhance the athlete experience. (U SPORTS representative)

The events rights owner of the Youth Olympic Games, the IOC, holds a significant amount of power in comparison to NSOs and even their International Federations. This power has an impact on the participants of the event and thus NSOs' inclination to participate, as the Athletics Canada representative noted:

They [International Federation] control the bid process for the location, so we know that there will be at least a base standard for the actual venue ... facility, but they don't – we can't control the participation, so that's where we have to do our research and talk to our colleagues in other countries to figure out the depth of field and assess whether that will be a valuable competition for us to attend, especially because the majority of our competitions are in Europe, and there's a huge cost associated to going to Europe.

Competition. For elite sport, competition and its associated planning often come down to the desire to win. Canadian NSOs look to other countries and other Canadian NSOs, but also to

differences between provinces and between funding partners.

Other Countries. International competition involves comparing a Canadian team to competitors from other countries. NSOs within Canada often look abroad in order to compete against their international counterparts:

Because we'd like to win, and we never settle. I would think that we're always trying to be innovative and provide our athletes and our coaches with the most up to date tools so they can perform to their best... As more information becomes available as we're validating the reliability of some of the information we have, as we research what internationally people are doing. You're always looking at the countries that are doing better than we are, and what are they doing and how do we implement this in a Canadian fashion into our models. (Canoe Kayak Canada representative)

Funding. Due to the limited funding and increasing costs, Canadian NSOs are competing against one another to receive targeted high performance funding, as the Swimming Canada representative highlighted:

I don't think that's a bad thing, but resources are just finite, and they're part of the game, so we have less and less resources to compete. With an ever-rising competitive world, it makes it pretty hard to move forward with this type of funding situation. And I will say at the same time with that, if you are succeeding and receiving good funding and increased funding, as a matter of fact, a lot of the input being requested by Own the Podium is about future planning, so they are taking it into consideration, they're just not rewarding based on that vibe.

There was also disconnect between the requirements of the varying funding partners. These were highlighted when speaking with a Canadian Sport for Life representative, who provided context

to the implementation of LTAD within NSOs. For example, changes to national coaching requirements and plans occurred during the same period as LTAD requirements:

Many NSOs saw it as competitive, do I put my staff on this NCCP [coaching] accreditation, or do I put my staff on this whole LTAD thing, or do we try a little bit of both, or how do we manage this because we don't have the resources to do both. (CS4L representative)

On other occasions, such as when comparing OTP and Sport Canada requirements, there was a disconnect between the terminology used for the same concepts:

When Own the Podium kind of got rolling they created something called gold medal profile, which is a list of the attributes of that athlete, and then they created something called Podium Pathway to describe the pathway of an athlete to reach that, and we said well, why isn't gold medal profile the same as Train to Win and why isn't the Podium Pathway the same as the high performance stages through Train to Train and Train to Compete leading to Train to Win? (CS4L representative)

Differences between Provinces. Canadian geography and the division amongst provinces is another competition factor to consider within the country. "Canada has probably greater challenges than a lot of other countries just by the breadth of the geography of the country" (Rowing Canada representative). This was a common theme across all NSOs. For example, geography was seen as a barrier to implementing LTAD according to the Rugby Canada representative:

I do think that it's an attempt, but I don't think that there's enough time and, honestly with geography, to fully understand all the idiosyncrasies that's in every single sport that they deal with. Some are easier to do because they're like when they have sports, I'm

sure, such as hockey and athletics, that even people within those see things different from other people who aren't working in those sports.

The alignment between P/TSOs and all related stakeholders are also a consideration when creating and implementing and NSOs policy, as the Tennis Canada representative noted:

It becomes difficult when you have provincial associations that have their own governmental structure and reporting structure. And then, NSO's, and then, below that, you could have individual club or sporting organizations... So, ideally, yes, if there was a complete alignment between ... going from the individual tennis club right up to the International Tennis Federation it would be great. How you get that alignment, especially when a lot of those organizations have volunteer staff and every one, or two or three years, you know, all the staff is rotating, you know, different reporting structures between the P/TSOs and the NSOs, it's a complicated puzzle. And it's even more complicated because of the size of our country.

Two barriers to policy implementation were the lack of clarity of roles amongst P/TSOs and limited accountability measures from the P/TSOs to the NSOs:

I don't know that they really fully often understand what their role is in terms of feeding into a national level sport. So their idea of what high performance is or what they should be concentrating on in terms of their development towards high performance is not always on-par with what we need them to be doing. So they had their own little agendas, and then they obviously have not a very comprehensive understanding of what the NSO should be doing with high performance and how much money it actually costs, right?... So this is the structural issue with Canada is that we, we're accountable to the provinces.

So the provinces, both in terms of our by-laws and things like that, but there's no accountability the other way. (Ringette Canada representative)

As such, the experience of an athlete would vary depending on their home province, as they would fall under the scope and rules of different P/TSOs and provincial governments. Within NSOs, differences for athletes may be noted depending on funding for both the athletes and training centres within the provinces. “If you’re a national team athlete and you’re a carded athlete, you’re not excluded from the provincial excellence funding, and that to me seems really positive” (Swimming Canada representative). The funding also changes the experience within high performance training facilities shared amongst multiple sports:

[The high performance training facilities] all have a different structure and fee structure and service structure, that allows athletes to access different things, which we are trying to help try and get them aligned, so that our athletes, regardless of what province they're in, have access to the same services. So, if you train in Montreal in the summer, but you train in Halifax in the fall, you get the same thing. (Canoe Kayak Canada representative)

Differences between Funding Partners. Many NSOs perceived a lack of clarity regarding the roles of Sport Canada and Own the Podium. The dual coercive pressures were seen as a barrier to the NSOs:

In an ideal world, Sport Canada, the SFAF, would cover everything – high performance through domestic – but what they first need to do is to find their clear priority for sport across the nation... And so, essentially through the SFAF process, let the NSO decide what it is that their strategic priority is, with an accountability to that, so reporting and a submission the same way we do with Own the Podium currently, but not just high performance focused. The entire sport system for your sport’s focus. (Canoe Kayak

Canada representative)

Overall, there was an understanding of the complexity of the system, thus making it difficult to truly accommodate all NSOs' needs within a single document:

I think it's difficult to find one system that's going to address the gamut of sports in this country. You know, team sports, individual sports, professional sports, amateur sports, winter sports, summer sports, multi-discipline sports. It's such a wide variety. I don't think there would be any sport organization that says that it fits their sport perfectly.

(Tennis Canada representative)

The division of labour also decreases accountability, ease of communication, and alignment between stakeholders:

I think one of the problems right now is there are too many organizations, too many departments if you will, and there's not enough communication back and forth. I don't think people know exactly where to go to get information, there's so many organizations and groups out there that your average mom or dad who is looking for activities for their kids and different things like that, I'm not sure they know where to go except to their minor or local sports association. (Hockey Canada representative)

Another competition between funding partners is between professional leagues, which are major considerations for sports such as hockey:

Probably the biggest thing that makes it different when we go to, you know, say for example the Olympics, we're dealing with professional coaches and professional athletes. They're all participating in, you know, the NHL for the most part, they are making a lot of money, and they have their jobs, so they come back to this for I think a different reason than why some other athletes would be there. They're not in it for financial

reasons; they're in it because they want to represent their country and do it that way.

(Hockey Canada representative)

In summary, there is discordance between the demands of provincial governments, provincial sport organizations, and funding partners, which NSOs have to manage. Coercive pressures are the most prevalent forms of interaction through funding partners and IFs. These components set the framework within which NSOs can create their internal policies and make NSO-specific operational plans. Due to the nature of competitive sport, competition among NSOs, imitation of successful practices and a desire to learn from other NSOs increases as athletes progress to high performance. This was most apparent during policy implementation phases as documents were refined and adjusted to the needs of the organization. During the creation process, though coercion was the instigator of change, passive processes such as learning and imitation were most noted in terms of policy content.

Response to Pressures

Despite the vast amount of policies and stakeholders related to event selection, NSOs ultimately look at events on a case-by-case basis, altering their own selection criteria for the event to best suit the needs of their developing athletes. The factors considered by NSOs, in relation to event selection, are listed in Figure 5-3. The considerations can be broken down into three categories: event considerations, organization considerations, and athlete considerations. NSOs first consider the event itself, including the competitors, timing of the event, support from the International Federation, eligibility criteria, event rights owners, and whether the event is single or multi-sport. This step determines if the NSO is interested in sending athletes to the event. The NSO then looks to the event in relation to its own organization: the human resources, costs, and the support for the event from Sport Canada and OTP. This step determines if sending

athletes from their organization is feasible. Finally, the NSO considers the individual athletes in relation to the event, to determine if the athlete attending the event would be beneficial, and if so, which athletes would attend. At this point, the selection criteria would be formulated for athletes within the NSO.

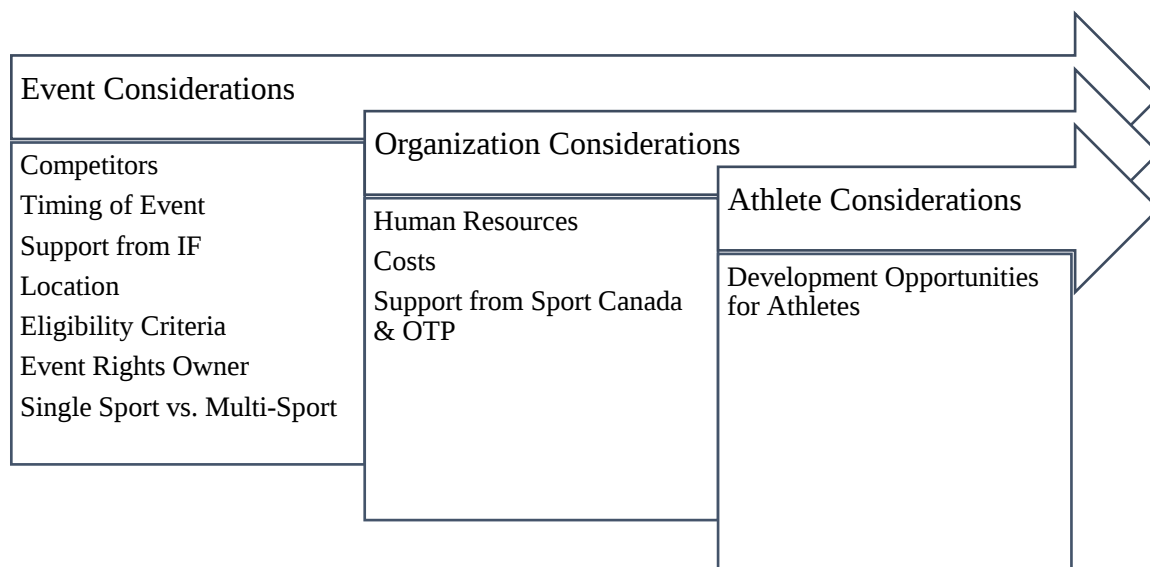


Figure 5-3. Event Selection – NSO Considerations

Event Considerations. When selecting events for elite youth athletes, NSOs first consider the specifics of the competitions offered internationally. Considerations include the competitors, timing of the event, support from the IF, location of the event, eligibility criteria, event rights owner, and whether the event is single or multi-sport.

Competitors. As discussed in the previous section, NSOs will consider the depth of competition based on which countries and athletes will be attending the event in question: “It’s the calibre of the athlete, the calibre of the competition, the timing of the competition. So you want to compete in events that lends to your preparation and your plans for that year” (Athletics Canada representative).

Events serve as a practice round for larger events. Events with the highest level of competitors, within the development level of the athlete in question, are chosen:

We don't use it as a competition for experience for our athletes, but it's not a stepping stone or qualification to another event, and we're focusing on obviously our medal potential, so they're going to the World Cup circuit or a World Championship. With [the International University Sport Federation or] FISU Games, if there's an athlete that qualifies for FISU, but also qualifies at the World Cup or Championship, they're going to go to the World Cup or the World Championship. (Speed Skating Canada representative)

Timing of the event. The timing of the event in relation to other events will also be considered, "where it fits in in the competition schedule whether or not it would be a priority in that given year" (Tennis Canada representative). The timing may change within the competition calendar and thus cause a trickle-down effect for other events. NSOs may consider the priority events based on points allotted:

We have our circuit, and we certainly... attend those that's top priority. That is their program, because Olympic spots, that's how they're measured, but then you get these multi-sport games like the Youth Olympics, the Junior World pops up every now and then. The Junior World event is a very inconsistent event. It doesn't happen every year. Actually, it takes three years off and then it pops up in Italy or somewhere, so it's pretty hard to plan around an event like that, but it's still a very prestigious event for athletes to attend so it's not ignored... Those that may never make it in the Olympic Games, that will be the top competition that they attend. So it's not ignored, but it's secondary to kind of the regular tour that coaches and athletes attend. (Freestyle Canada representative)

Schedules may also be created in relation to travel requirements:

We also design our competition schedules to not conflict with the international schedule, so our national championships that coincide with international events like so much into international events, it's spaced out appropriately to qualify to that international event and it would go that end. (Speed Skating Canada representative)

The schedule of events are also affected by the availability of athletes, such as with league sports like hockey:

The main thing is the availability of the athletes. So there's an under-18 world championship coming up in April. The only players that we have access to are the ones who are CHL [Canadian Hockey League] players who, for example, aren't in playoffs. So that makes a big difference, you know sometimes we can send a really, really strong team if there's good players on bad teams. In other instances, we take the top 20 players that are available. World Juniors is a little bit different because each of the teams in the CHL are basically in agreement they're going to release their top players. (Hockey Canada representative)

Support for the event from International Federation. The Olympic qualification process and associated points systems will affect a sport's perception of events. The points allotted to an event, or the ability for the event to qualify an athlete to the Olympic Games, will change its importance. If there is no support, through points or sanctioning, NSOs are less likely to prioritize the event when creating a competition calendar:

It's a competition that has no end or no reward, I guess, in the sense of like we go to X number of World Cups in order to get points to go to the World Cup Final. The Youth Olympics is competition, then stop. It's not a stepping stone to something else. If you win

something at the Youth Olympics, it really doesn't mean anything for like more money or anything. (Speed Skating Canada representative)

Pressure may also come from the International Federation to send athletes to a specific event. This was most notable with Youth Olympic Games, as the IOC is a prominent stakeholder in the international sport system.

Another example that I can give is our figure skating team wasn't going to send anyone for these last [Youth Olympic Games]. But because they got pressure from their international federation to like, "Why is Canada not going to the Games?" They eventually turned around and decided to send someone. I would say the [Canadian Olympic Committee] won't necessarily push, but sometimes, the international federation might put in a little bit more push than we would. (Canadian Olympic Committee representative)

Location. The location of the event would be considered primarily if safety concerns were a factor. For example, the Athletics team did not participate in the World Junior Games as it was in an unsafe country:

So most of these decisions are not etched in stone. It's circumstantial. So ordinarily, we probably would've sent a bigger team of athletes going to the World Juniors, but because it's not an opportunity that's available this year, then we look for other competitive opportunities for these athletes. (Athletics Canada representative)

On other occasions, the staff attending the event would be adjusted to ensure the athletes received increased support at the event: "It makes a huge difference and it takes the pressure and the burden off the athlete. And because you can't have staff that are going to panic, so if the staff panic, what are the athletes expected to do?" (Athletics Canada representative).

For the most part, however, the competition calendar is based on the international calendar created by the International Federation:

We have a pretty standard schedule of “This year, this is where the competition will be and this year is a leap year, this is where the competitions will be or around this time.” So we have a pretty good guess of where things will fall with our international calendar.

(Speed Skating Canada representative)

However, the decision ultimately comes down to the development opportunities involved and not the stakeholders related to the event:

It mostly is based on performance, basically. We would not make a decision if we can't stand dealing with that particular group and we wouldn't make that kind of decision. It's all based on the performance, and there's also the level of satisfaction, the act that you're going to get if the event is well organized. Is it well thought through in terms of how it's done? So we look at those types of things as well. So we make a point to research on the event before we actually make a decision on it. (Rowing Canada representative)

Eligibility criteria. The eligibility criteria of the athlete is considered in relation to the developmental age of the athlete, as the Rugby Canada representative highlighted:

Multi-sport Games are different because of the atmosphere. The younger we can get athletes understanding that, the better it is for them to move forward. The one other thing I did mention was FISU. We always attend FISU, because it's a good part of the pathway to get university-aged kids who haven't already been identified to have more opportunity to play to get into the national program.

The developmental age in relation to the event's eligibility criteria may also deter an NSO's participation:

Because of the international federation or the FISU's decision on the age categories, and a 28-year-old might qualify, or a 27-year-old might qualify to go at Universiade, at that point, according to our high performance plan or Podium profile, they have almost zero chance of ever adding any level of international success. It's a nice finish to their playing career, but it doesn't really like part of our high performance program. (Badminton Canada representative)

The ability to adjust the criteria to match the individual needs of the NSO and its development pathway, such as is the option with the Canada Games, is seen as beneficial:

So in the bigger provinces, you know, you can send younger high-level athletes to the Games. And in the smaller provinces, you can send older athletes to the Games... we're I think the only sport in the Games maybe that has the split age category. And we've stuck with that simply because, you know, we want to try to ensure that it ... 'a', I think it helps, you know, the field of the Canada Games and, 'b', I think it, you know, allows us to capture, you know, good players. (Tennis Canada representative)

The eligibility requirements of the event, from the event right owners or local organizing committees, are also an important consideration for event selection. For example, the FISU Universiade requires participants to be under the age of 28 and have attended a post-secondary institution within the last year. For sports which develop earlier, the athletes attending the event would no longer be on a podium pathway. On the opposite side of the spectrum, a sport like Athletics would still have potential to reach international success at the Olympic Games. As such, "As long as they meet the criteria and – because I think in almost all cases we always want to ensure that we're sending our best athletes. So the best athletes – and sometimes it's based on their availability or their training plans" (Athletics Canada representative).

Event rights owner. As discussed in the previous research question, on page 119, the event rights owner may have coercive powers based on not only eligibility criteria but also other political affiliations. For example, the IOC is the event rights owner for the Youth Olympic Games:

As the Olympic Committee for Canada, we work with the IOC for any of the Games that they support. If the IOC were to create this new — I'm trying to think — what kind of Games does the current — Let's say, they were — the IOC was going to start doing an Arctic Game-type event, the [Canadian Olympic Committee] would definitely fund it as part of their responsibility to ensure that we have representation at those Games.

(Canadian Olympic Committee representative)

The values of the Games are also taken into consideration, such as: “The Youth Olympic Games (YOG) vision is to inspire young people around the world to participate in sport and encourage them to adopt and live by the Olympic values and become ambassadors of Olympism” (International Olympic Committee, 2015, p. 1). However, for many events, the key visions do not relate to athlete development explicitly:

A key vision for the Youth Games is to enable smaller nations and cities, unable to host a Commonwealth Games, to enjoy the socio-cultural, tourism and other legacy benefits of hosting a major international sporting event. Samoa, for example, is a Small Island Developing State with a population of less than 200,000 people, 53% of whom are 25 and under... A key vision for the Youth Games is to enable smaller nations and cities, unable to host a Commonwealth Games, to enjoy the socio-cultural, tourism and other legacy benefits of hosting a major international sporting event. Samoa, for example, is a Small Island Developing State with a population of less than 200,000 people, 53% of whom are

25 and under... Off the field of play, the Youth Games experience focuses on friendship, integrity and cross-Commonwealth inter-cultural exchange – learning and living the Commonwealth Games Federation values of Humanity, Equality, Destiny. (Bahamas 2017 Commonwealth Youth Games, n.d.)

Events, which prioritize athlete development, are evident through mandatory participation clauses such as: “All National Team athletes are required to attend the Canadian Sprint Canoe Kayak Championships unless they have received written permission from the HPC indicating otherwise.” (Canoe Kayak Canada, 2009, p. 1). Or, for Games such as the Canada Games, the athlete eligibility criteria tie directly to LTAD plans: “Eligibility restrictions are aligned to the ‘Train to Compete’ phase of the sport’s Long Term Athlete Development Model, or other suitable phase of LTAD, as justified by NSO and approved by the Canada Games Council.” (Canada Games, 2017, p. 1). It should be noted, however, the sport specific differences do affect an organization’s interest in sending a team. For example, Freestyle Canada has individual challenges when planning for the Canada Winter Games:

Now, from Freestyle Canada’s perspective, it’s a challenge the Canada Winter Games because they have their own sets of rules and regulations that we have to follow so we find ourselves adjusting our standard practices once every four years. We have to adjust our own rules to accommodate teams devoted to Canada Winter Games and the feedback from coaches who travel and compete to try to get to the next level like national team in those days, the Canada Winter Games doesn’t quite fit. They’re quite detached to it and to qualify them with training for Nor-Am spots or anything like that. So strictly tactically, it is a bit of a challenge for our sport. (Freestyle Canada representative)

Single Sport vs. Multi-Sport. Multi-sport events are often viewed as a preparatory event

for the non-competition distractions experienced at the Olympic Games. Athletes are exposed to new foods, cultures, and different languages for starter signals, for instance:

I think it's the learning experience, learning what to expect, so that when you get to the big show, you know, you're not star struck, you don't get distracted, and so you're learning little things along the way. It's like when you have pop quizzes as school. It's training you for the big exam so that when you get to the big exam you're not anxious and you do all the things that you've done preparing to the big event. (Athletics Canada representative)

However, these considerations are lesser than those related to the quality of the competition:

There's also the challenge of opening ceremonies and closing ceremonies and how you deal with that, living in proximity when you're not really used to living with because you're in a multi-sport place. We do look at those, but they're minor relative to how we look at it in terms of the performance of the event itself at the event itself. (Rowing Canada representative)

The multi-sport events bring a festival quality, which is considerably different from single-sport events: "Major Games means Olympic Games, Paralympics, Pan Am Games, Para Pan Am Games and Commonwealth Games" (Cycling Canada, 2013, p. 3).

Well, it was neat, because we also sent an official to the Youth Olympic Games. We had an official, a coach and two athletes there, which was really neat. Speaking to the two athletes, they had an incredible – like there was an opening ceremony, it was like huge, like absolutely huge, and they were just overwhelmed and in awe of the whole process, and thought it was really fascinating and interesting. Very different than most of our

regattas, as we fly in a couple of days ahead of time, train, race, go home, whereas this had more of a festive atmosphere to it for them. (Canoe Kayak Canada representative)

The event rights owners are also a consideration specifically in relation to the power differences between the NSOs and the event right owners:

With FISU, you're dealing with a certain group in Canada, you're dealing with like U SPORTS. If you're dealing with the Youth Olympic Games, you're dealing with the COC, and of course, you also have some factors that you'd be in, the International Sport Federation itself because they control a lot of how that operates, who gets to go, how this process works. So you're dealing with a number of multi-agencies as you get into these multi-sport games because of the nature of them. (Rowing Canada representative)

Organization Considerations. Each NSO faces a different reality in terms of funding, personnel, and support from external funding partners. The quality of policies also depends on the organizational capacity of the NSO (human resources, finances, relationships and networks, infrastructure and processes, and planning and development) (Hall et al., 2003). With increased administrative holdup through reporting demands of funding partners, organization considerations become a critical component of the event selection process. Furthermore, a have-not situation exists within the Canadian system based on the funding, human resources and processes within the organization. This will be further discussed in the following research question. NSOs must be mindful of resource demands related to events.

Human resources. The human resource demands in relation to other events will also be considered, as will the support at the event itself.

We'll have that experience this year with the Olympic Games and a week after was the World Championships for the Under 23s, the seniors and the juniors, all at one time, and

then a week after that was or at the same time actually was the Paralympic Games, so we're involved in all three events. We're stretched to the max, but we have to make sure it happens. Because it's important for the athlete's pathway too, we just couldn't let that problem just because the Olympics is going on or the Paralympics is going on.... We do look at what kind of support they would get there when they have exposure to other teams and see how they operate. Do they have exposures to some therapy support?

(Rowing Canada representative)

Costs. Another cost consideration in relation to geography is the cost of creating single training or selection meetings, as the Rugby Canada representative noted:

In general, there are a lot of challenges that we have in the Canadian sport system. That has a lot to do with just geography. We were looking at our internal competition model today. Just the reality of getting all the provinces in one location, which is the perfect model. In reality, it's way too difficult. It's so cost prohibitive with flights and travel... it's hard for people to get from one place to the other without either a big investment of money or actually relocating. That's a challenge for all sports in Canada.

This also extends to the cost of international travel. This is most notable with self-funded athletes, who are paying out of pocket to participate in events.

It's, unfortunately, a decision that we have to make, and then it falls back to them, the bank of mom and dad, and the bank of mom and dad have certain expectations, so a kid should, maybe a 20-year-old should be better at this sport to go up in an age group. He has to go out and go to events that are sort of odd places that are lower-level events and has to accept that for a year or two they're going to get their butt kicked, for lack of better terms, as they sort of catch up to the senior level of play, but I'd be quite honest with you,

to do that properly, that's an investment of \$30,000 to \$50,000 by the bank of mom and dad. (Badminton Canada representative)

Event rights holders are aware of the varied level of competition from Canadian athletes due to the funding required to participate:

Sometimes we are not going to have the best athlete there because they might not be able to pay for the participation. That's really difficult for us and, of course, we would wish that we could provide more funding for it, but at the time, at the moment we don't have any other sources of revenue. (U SPORTS representative)

Support from Sport Canada and Own the Podium. The amount of funding provided based on the perception of the event would also be considered. For example, "One thing that I can note though is that Sport Canada does not directly fund the Youth Olympic Games. They don't support the Youth Olympic Games in the same way as they would for an Olympic Games" (Canadian Olympic Committee representative). Due to the influx of events in recent years, prioritization is important, especially considering the financial implications:

[Youth events] are relatively new. I think this is like the third edition of the Commonwealth Youth Games. There's no funding from federal government for any Youth Games, Olympic Youth Games, Commonwealth Youth Games... Back in 1978, Alberta University basically took a few interns for the summer and said, "Count all the summer – international summer sports events across this globe. Single sport Games doesn't matter. Just count them all up that are international level." And they counted just under 200. They did the same study again in 2013, 2013, and there were over 2000. So the marketplace – and I'm just strictly talking business, not athlete development – the

marketplace internationally has exploded. (Commonwealth Games Canada representative)

Athlete Considerations. Once an NSO has decided which events athletes will attend, they must also select the individual athletes that will represent the organization. This step of the processes focuses on the individual athlete in relation to what the event offers. That is, the developmental opportunities are considered and expressed through athlete selection criteria created by the NSO.

Developmental opportunities for athletes. The developmental opportunities for athletes were a prominent concern of all NSOs. For example, Rowing Canada outlined the importance of athlete development and selecting the appropriate event level for each competitor:

The purpose of a progression system is: to create high quality, exciting races for spectators and competitors; to have close, “meaningful” races for athletes where they are challenged by their competitors (i.e. minimal gaps between placings); to promote advancement to high divisions throughout the season based on improved speed.

(Rowing Canada, n.d., p. 11)

As another example, Alpine Canada created a selection committee for the 2017 Winter Universiade, composed of the Alpine Director, Domestic Director and the Team Leader/Head Coach. The selection criteria for the event was based on international federation points, past experience, consideration taken towards the country of study, and a minimum of two regional International Ski Federation events the previous season.

The alpine team will be composed of 6 males and 6 females and 4 male and 4 female athletes will make the ski cross team, however, the Selection Committee reserves the right not to fill the quota if not enough athletes are qualified for this level of

competition. (Alpine Canada, 2016, p. 1)

This suggests developmental opportunity/benefits is deemed more important than simply sending an athlete to represent Canada. The priority then becomes finding events that meet the needs of the athletes in question, as the Rowing Canada representative noted:

...we look at those performance requirements for that event to make sure it's a high enough competitive opportunity for the athlete. We love to make sure that they are going to be getting some good racing in... Is going to the Games really good competitive experience by going into that event? But what I mean by that, are they going to be having an opportunity to perform well?

Comparison between Sports (Research Question 6)

The manner in which an NSO selects events for their developing elite athletes depends on numerous sport-specific criteria. Although Canadian NSOs must all respond and adapt to the same Canadian sport policies, their individual contexts result in different interpretations of these pressures. The nature of the sport in terms of accessibility, team makeup, international competition calendar, and funding all play a role in determining how an NSO will select events for their athletes. A summary of the sport-specific differences as well as the questions asked by the NSO during the event selection process are outlined in Figure 6-1.

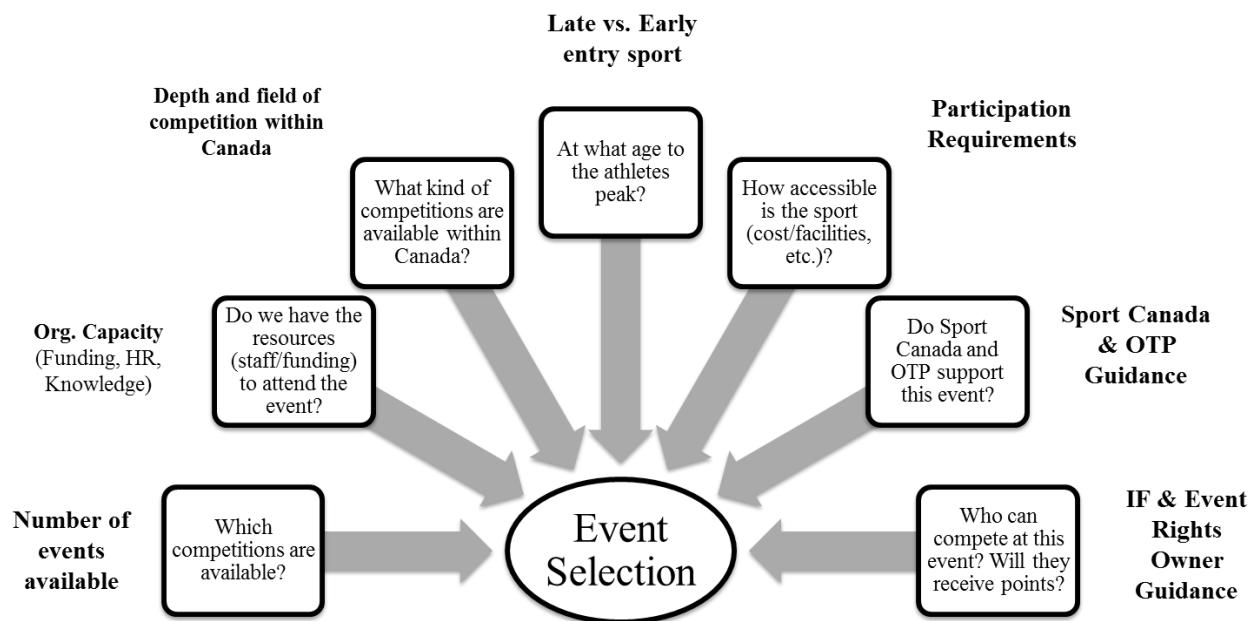


Figure 5-4. Sport Specific Criteria Related to Elite Youth Event Selection

Number of events available throughout the competition calendar. The number of events available for a sport within a calendar/competition year determines the decision-making process within an NSO. Those with fewer options are limited in their selection process. An example of a sport with limited events available to the NSO and thus limited flexibility is Rowing Canada:

There are very limited events you can go to anyway. This is not like you can pick and choose where you go. One of the things that troubles Rowing is that we have very limited competition or performance events that we could go to, so what comes up, we look at it really carefully because we think that this is an opportunity and we have to take advantage of it. (Rowing Canada representative)

At this point, the priority becomes the selection criteria for the athletes who may attend. However, it should be noted, both are most often created simultaneously: “so for us, from programming and selection criteria, I was in a meeting as early as possible, the senior

competition is pretty well documented, and I think if you look at our calendar, we pretty much got everything through to 2020 or 2021” (Swimming Canada representative)

Sports with competition circuits have flexibility in terms of which sports they can attend. This includes sports such as Ski Cross, Freestyle, and Tennis. Another consideration is the amount of disciplines each NSO must plan, through event selection but also the selection criteria once the events have been selected:

Each cycling category and national team program has its own specific selection criteria to nominate a Pool of eligible riders and then choose the final Team from within that Pool. These criteria are laid out in separate documents. In the interest of simplicity and clarity, those documents refer back to this one for general conditions and criteria. Unless expressly stated otherwise in the Specific Selection Criteria document, the policies and criteria below apply to all national team selections. (Cycling Canada, 2013, p. 2)

Organizational capacity. Human and financial resources are a major consideration when selecting events and when an NSO creates policies. This was most noted with smaller organizations: “It’s very small. In all of Canada, there are three paid Broomball employees.” (Broomball Canada representative). An organization’s ability to generate funding is also a notable difference among NSOs:

Some NSOs have the ability to generate more funds than others so in some are successful and some aren’t. For instance, if you’re a sport that has a good TV following like tennis as the following example, they put on the Rogers Cup I believe, both male and female, and do sticks in it and it’s got each TV rights. They’re pretty good at raising their own funding. Other sports like the typical amateur sports, and we could use swimming and track as an example, are only popular every four years when the Olympic comes around.

There's not a lot of other generation of funds in those 3-1/2 years between, so it's less limited to providing their own administrative support. (Swimming Canada representative)

There is, therefore, a divide among NSOs based on capacity to create and implement policies such as LTAD models:

I think that the sports that are already larger, more sophisticated and have more capacity – typically more human resource capacity are the ones who have both that are LTAD frameworks and who are higher reflected by Own the Podium and those are both driven to an extent by their capacities or their capacity. (CS4L representative)

NSOs may identify gaps in knowledge or policies, which, if not addressed, hinder the developmental opportunities for athletes. As explained in the 2016 Strategic Plan produced in 2015, “Badminton Canada must continue to develop and align our activities according to the IDEAL NSO principal developed by CS4L” (Badminton Canada, 2015, p. 25). For example, in Badminton Canada's strategic plan of 2016, gaps in knowledge related to their Canada Games competition technical package were outlined. The gaps included information in the technical package, competition policies, and the alignment of age groups between the competition and the sport's LTAD model (Badminton Canada, 2015). A competition review was suggested at this time.

Creating, revising, and implementing policies requires human resources and financial support to find the necessary information to further sport development documents:

...because of the nature of [ice] hockey in this country with the resources and access to finances and things that we can...we have the ability to probably go in more depth and spend more time on it overall. There's other sports that don't have a lot of time so they're much more generic in what their LTAD model would be. We've incorporated ours into

everything we do, and we were fortunate again because we have people who can spend more time on it. (Hockey Canada representative)

Policy creation and implementation becomes a challenge when the organizations have limited human resources or volunteer-based personnel:

So when you deal with volunteers, and I think Sport Canada misses that piece, is it takes longer than we always expect. Being able to spend a certain amount of money sometimes in a fiscal year is really hard because I could do the work [but] I'm not an expert. I'm not a technical, high performance expert in Ringette... So I rely on them, and it takes longer than we expect. (Ringette Canada representative)

Thus, human resources are also a limiting factor, especially for volunteer-driven organizations.

Team vs individual. Team and individual sports differ in the amount of funding required to compete at an event. That is, individual sports have the option to send a single athlete to an event. Team sports must send an entire team as well as support staff. Funding these events becomes a challenge and flexibility in terms of numbers of athletes and staff sent is limited.

Team sports are just much more difficult to organize financially; administratively, technically, almost everything is just much more massive when you talk team sports. It's just a much more greater investment, and it's easier to do individual sports...we would wish that team sport would be recognized to a greater value because we believe that team sport generates tremendous value to our country, and currently, it's not as recognized as individual sports are within the sport system. Individual sports are a favourite to a greater extent than team sports, unfortunately. (Canadian Soccer Association representative)

This is also a policy consideration, as it is difficult to plan a team's members four years in advance (Goss Gilroy Inc., 2017). The team size is also a major consideration, even for individual sports such as swimming:

Maybe the team size. I mean, we're talking about bringing teams of up to 30 athletes and then with the support team of 45 to 50 in total, so you're getting up there in terms of the team size. I think even the soccer team, which is a fairly big team and a team sport is probably a third of that. (Swimming Canada representative)

Regarding athlete development, team sports have an added barrier to creating a plan that meets the needs of different positions, rather than a single skillset:

It just seems like a lot of stuff is geared towards individual sports. And then, you have to kind of see, well, how do we fit in? Because, again, we're having to do a checkmark on submitting like a seasonal plan for one athlete. Well, that's fine for that one athlete. But that's just an example of let's say a forward versus a defensive player versus a goalie, right? Like, we have all these different positions on the team. So those are just some of the examples. And it just feels like, yeah, just, here you go. We have our template done, and everything has to fit in that box. (Ringette Canada representative)

Depth and field of competition within Canada. To develop athletes to an elite level, sports must recruit and retain from the grassroots level. This will greatly depend on the number of participants, as well as the level of competition, within Canada. For example, hockey within Canada has many leagues, which provide competition opportunities to athletes regularly. Much of this depends on partnerships developed between organizations within Canada. For example, Canada's soccer system works with provincial organizations and clubs:

As part of the Canada Soccer Pathway, the Men's EXCEL stream—led by Canada Soccer

in collaboration with our provincial partners as well as the country's professional clubs and private academies—will ensure more of Canada's exceptional young players find their way into the best competitive environments. Together, we are creating a new national structure to channel talent into professional clubs, and, ultimately, to our National Teams. (Canadian Soccer Association, 2017, p. 1)

Other sports, such as Ice Hockey, work closely with organizations that, in essence, run their own development programs, which facilitates player development and identification.

Yeah, I would say coordinating when it comes to, you know, the international events that their players participate in, but we're fairly lucky in that the infrastructure that's in place across hockey in various leagues across the country is very well done. So, you know, just in our current structure we allow them, or leave a lot of that up to them... Nowadays, the hockey system is fairly efficient in player identification, so it's not like we have to have three guys going from rink to rink, you know, crisscrossing the country all the time. We have a network of people in a region, and then from there they go to a province, and from the province, we go into three kinds of regions in Canada. So it's fairly efficient in how that is. (Hockey Canada representative)

When competition levels are higher in Canada, it is possible to compete regularly within the country, for example, Curling Canada runs nine major events to rate teams:

Canadian team ranking system: "The CTRS/OOM points model will determine the points awarded for all events using a combination of size and strength of field, size of purse, and relative importance of large events. Teams are still allowed to count their best 8 events each season." (Curling Canada, 2014, p. 1)

For Rugby Canada, however, the higher level of competition is found abroad, as there is a

limited competition base within Canada.

Unlike most other sports, especially on the men's side, the largest professional competitions are overseas, so that's where you'd have to place athletes as opposed to domestically, like our hockey, baseball or any of those types of things. Other things probably are too it's a niche sport, so numbers aren't nearly as high as basketball, soccer and hockey, so that's another thing you have to deal with... There's not that much domestic competition. There are not that many international tournaments that you can go to at the U18 sevens specifically. When you're presented with the opportunity to compete, we will go. We know the US, we know that for the Youth Commonwealth Games, there will be good teams there. That's really what matters. (Rugby Canada representative)

The demands on athletes and organizations to progress through the development pathways are also a difference among sports. For some sports, moving up to a high performance level is more demanding and requires changes in lifestyles. There are increased numbers of developmental considerations beyond the sport-specific requirements:

Our athletes transition into a national team at around 18, 19 years of age. Some are still just finishing high school, or are in the Quebec system, where they've still got, you know, two more years of CEGEP to do, so financially it's very expensive all of sudden to say, you've got to move and your mum's not going to make your meals anymore, and you know, that sort of thing. And they've got to change schools – language barriers as well. We're asking Quebec athletes to move into Ontario or Nova Scotia, or Nova Scotia athletes to move into Quebec, making sure that they have that sort of social economic support as well for them. So our work moving forward is to make sure that wherever we end up, that those are very well-supported in all aspects, not just the coaching and the

training environment, but that they have social, economic and pedagogical support available to them as well. And that's everything we're working on right now. (Canoe Kayak Canada representative)

For Hockey Canada, however, the onus falls on leagues to develop athletes rather than on the NSO:

So we basically evaluate and assemble a team for a short-term competition versus, you know, other athletes where they may be dealing with their national sport organization on a daily basis on training and that type of thing, so we're different in that respect, and it's because the athletes aren't under our umbrella, you know, 365 days a year. (Hockey Canada representative)

Late vs early entry sport. Age of peak performance is an important element when comparing the realities of LTAD model creation and implementation. It is especially important when taking into account international competitions:

As a sport that is age driven, it's really hard for us to take someone who's out of an age group, for example, a 20-year-old might be the absolute best. The best competition stream might be U-19 age a bit. If you're on pathway with some corrective measures, that could get him back on sort of the Podium Pathway, and to a level of international success, except because of the age group, that individual is now forced to play against adults who are eight or ten years or somewhat experienced at that level and they're going out and getting absolutely crushed. (Badminton Canada representative)

For other sports, such as Rowing, the peak age is older: "The Under 23 team is a critical program for rowers wanting to become members of the senior team and ultimately Olympic team members." (Rowing Canada, 2016, p. 1). The late entry nature of the sport is a key consideration,

including while creating development plans. “Many rowers start rowing relatively late, often in University. In fact, Canada has been quite successful at recruiting and developing “late entry” athletes. (About 45% of National Team athletes responded that they started rowing at 18 or older)” (Rowing Canada, n.d., p. 19).

Participation requirements. Participation requirements encompass sport-specific considerations related to the competition choices within Canada. Mass participation sports have more athletes from which to choose. It is easier to recruit elite athletes when there is a large pool of athletes. Water Polo addressed this concern during the creation of their LTAD model:

The current competition structure for water polo in Canada is dysfunctional. This is largely because Water Polo Canada does not consistently offer quality games and training opportunities at low cost and close proximity to participants. Consequently, clubs must travel across the country to find quality opposition. It should not be necessary to travel great distances (at a significant cost to participants) to find competitive opportunities... While one of the ultimate goals of the Long-Term Athlete Development program is stronger performance in international competition, for the sport to grow in Canada, our focus cannot be on the high-performance (excellence) stream alone. To grow the sport across the country, we must concentrate on developing community and regional networks. By focusing on club development, we will build a stronger base of athletes, clubs and teams that will eventually produce better athletes capable of competing at the national and international levels. (Water Polo Canada, 2010, p. 73)

For other sports, the professional leagues or circuits also play a role in the sport. Each component specific to the NSO will affect how it implements national-level sport policies:

It's an individual sport and some sports are team sports. It's a professional sport. And other sports aren't a professional sport... It becomes an international sport at a very young age where other sports... it's not really based that much in Canada at all at the highest levels where, you know, other sports can be entirely based in Canada or North America. I mean there are a lot of differences. (Tennis Canada representation)

The number of disciplines an athlete is required to learn is also a difference among sports, such as short and long track speed skating:

They are basically two different sports. When athletes are younger, they're doing both sports for that exposure, and really kind of like a necessity in our climate is fixing that, so most clubs or branches operate on short track/long track/short track season. However, clubs, like in Calgary, there are athletes there that could only skate long track, they never skate in short track because they don't have to switch back and forth. They just choose to pick one or the other. So I mean, it does make for a bit of I think a more rounded athletes being exposed to both and then as they progress, they discover that they might have a better skill set for short track versus long track or vice versa. (Speed Skating Canada representative)

And, once again, this experience may vary depending on the Canadian province in which the athlete lives:

Every province is different, but once you get a card saying you are a national team athlete, you are eligible for funding and programming support. Below that, when you're on a provincial team, every province is different, and they support their provincial teams differently. (Freestyle Canada representative)

Sport Canada and OTP guidance and support. The amount of funding available to an

NSO will play a prominent role during the event selection process, especially for lesser-funded sports. Sports who were not receiving OTP funded sport were more prone to cite a “have, have not” environment within the Canadian sport system. While sports with funding may choose not to attend events for reasons related to athlete development pathways or an overall competition calendar, those with less funding had limited options. This may also be linked to the funding being directly linked to detailed and successful athlete development plans. Those who have less funding may also be less aware of what is most efficient for athlete development.

The added knowledge from interactions with consultants from Own the Podium are seen as a valuable asset, especially for the smaller organizations:

And I think Own the Podium has indicated generally that they would be open to working with non-Olympic sports on something similar to these pathways. We definitely need help. We don't really know how to go about building these pathways. So it's something that we need and we've identified, but we didn't have to do that with respect to Sport Canada. (Ringette Canada representative)

The quality of the interactions with the advisors from Sport Canada further increases the disparity among sport organizations:

We have troubles with our advisors, both with Sport Canada and the Canadian Coaching Association [CAC]. It changes. I think we are up to fifteen different advisors from the CAC and seven or eight from Sport Canada. So it's a little difficult to have a continuous follow-up. That's a critique. (Broomball Canada representative)

The amount of dependence on Sport Canada for funding of the organization and their athletes is also a notable difference:

In some other sports, where athletes don't have the ability to make the same kind of

living in the sport that they do, the Olympics can be a huge opportunity for them in the financial reason. We are a little bit different as well in that we're not necessarily responsible for what those athletes are doing on a day-to-day basis because they are at a professional level. (Hockey Canada representative)

However, the introduction of OTP has also created a divide amongst NSOs:

The problem with OTP and all this targeted excellent funding is that it's absolutely created a have and have not scenario. So either you're targeted and you are somehow able to access millions and millions of dollars a year in funding or you're a have not and you're not even invited to sort of basic consultation with OTP. So for example, we're a have not. (Badminton Canada representative)

Own the Podium guidance appears extensive, and interactions with NSOs are frequent throughout the policy creation processes:

Sports all too often... look very much into a silo approach and you need sometimes a sounding board to force yourself to look outside of that, your particular view of what high performance might be. When sports come on their annual review meeting with us, which lasts three hours, it's based on their high performance plan. It's not an application. It's nothing like that. It's actually more like, "What are you doing? Where is your plan? Let's actually speak about each component of your high performance plan", and then our assessment and our funding recommendations are made up. That, with the HPA, High Performance Advisor has been lockstepped with the sports all the way through. (Own the Podium representative)

Being an Olympic sport opens the door to more events as well. Ringette and Broomball are not Olympic sports and struggle to find enough competition for their athletes. "I think the

relationship between Sport Canada and the Olympic sports, who perform well, is completely different” (Broomball Canada representative). Thus, those who receive support understand there is a difference based on the Olympic status:

I mean it’s beneficial to us that we are because you can leverage that in terms of recruiting athletes but being in the Olympics is a positive, I mean there’s unintended consequences of having that because we do also play 15s which is largely how athletes are introduced to the sport, it’s still a big part of what we do. It’s just a balancing act I guess you would say especially when you don’t have the largest pipeline of athletes compared to other major sports in Canada. (Rugby Canada representative)

International Federation and event rights owners’ guidance. Not only do IFs create the guidelines for the qualification processes, but event rights owners also dictate policies within NSOs, such as staff selection for Olympic Games:

So when we go to the World Championships, which is just swimming or the four major aquatic sports, we’re able to bring in and pay for the full staff size that we need, that we see is going to be best for performance, but when you go with the Olympics, then we’re going into a picking and choosing who’s getting an A accreditation, who’s getting a B or daily accreditation, who is in the Village, who’s not in the Village, so that’s really, really tough and restrictive. It’s all about morale and staff. It’s pretty hard on us, but we just try to make those decisions. It’s not fun. (Swimming Canada representative)

Occasionally, participation is based on expectations or understandings among organizations rather than the development of its own athletes:

In general big picture stuff, it’s the promotion of the game, Canada’s reputation worldwide. It means a lot to the sport when Team Canada participates in events in other

countries, you know, that it creates a lot of interest. It's good for us, for our players, to get that experience. You know, obviously, we have a pool of players come into the system that are probably going to play in the NHL and then hopefully end up making., you know, maybe the opportunity to play for our Olympic team in Olympic competition. And all those experiences along the way make the players better, so there is definitely a benefit to that. (Hockey Canada representative)

In summary, sport-specific needs are taken into consideration alongside the pressures from key sport system stakeholders. The pressures include the number of events available, the organizational capacity of the NSO, whether the sport is team or individual based, the depth and field of competition within Canada, whether the sport is late or early entry, the participation requirements, guidance and support from OTP and Sport Canada, and guidance from the NSO's International Federation and the rights owners of the events in question. Ultimately, each NSO implements its own policies in a manner deemed most suitable for their developing athletes while also maintaining relationships with funding and political partners.

Summary

NSOs implement sport-specific policies in accordance to national and international pressures placed upon them by internal and external stakeholders. While Sport Canada oversees the national sport system, NSOs are also influenced by other NSOs, P/TSOs, coaches and athletes, their IF, event rights owners, sponsors, media, and MSOs within Canada. From these stakeholders, the NSOs may learn, imitate, be coerced or compete. The importance of the stakeholders and the relationship will vary depending on the policy or issue in question, the event being considered, or the stage of a policy's implementation.

Despite the prevalence of pressures placed upon NSOs, not all are taken into consideration when selecting events for elite youth athletes. Three categories of considerations exist, with limited scope of influence within the Canadian system and its stakeholders. The first consideration when selecting an event is the event itself. The competitors attending the event will affect the level of competition, as will the eligibility criteria. The timing of the event as well as the location in relation to other events will be considered. The event rights owner as well as whether the event is single or multi-sport will also be considered. These components affect the overall vision and purpose of the event. The event rights owner, in the case of the Youth Olympic Games, also has an increased coercive pressure compared to other organizations, as they are also the rights owners of the Olympic Games. This portion of the event selection process is most often done once per quadrennial.

Once the NSO has determined their level of interest in the event, the feasibility of attendance is considered. To do so, organization considerations are taken into account including human resources, costs as well as support from Sport Canada and OTP. The organizational capacity is a critical component in the decision-making process as it determines if the organization can successfully prepare for events as well as provide support during the event. This component of the event selection process is more flexible than the event considerations and may change within each fiscal year, depending on staff and athlete needs.

NSO event selection policies have the most flexibility at the athlete level. In this case, athlete selection criteria. While events being offered and funding available changes based on decisions made by external stakeholders, NSOs adjust their internal policies to match these demands. Athlete considerations are rooted in the development opportunities for athletes. As such, NSOs may select the calibre of athlete and level of human and financial support when

creating internal NSO athlete selection criteria for events. It is at this step of event selection that differences among sports are most prevalent. Differences include the number of events available, organizational capacity, depth and field of competition within Canada, peak age (i.e., late vs. early entry), participation requirements, Sport Canada and OTP guidance, and guidance from the IFs and event rights owners. Organizations with increased event opportunities and athlete pools have increased decision-making flexibility compared to organizations with limited options. The resources available also affect the amount of possible support, be it human or financial, for athletes attending events. It is at the NSO level, through the selection criteria, that the level of support is communicated to athletes. As such, there are notable differences among NSOs and it is unrealistic to view the Canadian sport system as a single entity with equal policy creation and implementation strategies across all organizations.

Chapter 6 – Discussion and Conclusion

The dissertation results were divided into two parts. Part 1 took a top-down look at the federal policies in Canada, which are in place to guide and direct the selection of events attended by elite youth athletes. Part 2 looked at how NSOs, the technical leaders of their respective sports, viewed and responded to the pressures related to event selection for elite youth athletes. The discussion section is divided similarly fashion, first summarizing the results of Part 1 before connecting the findings to previous literature and discussing implications of the findings. This is followed by a summary of results and discussion of Part 2. Parts 1 and 2 are then brought together to answer the overall purpose of the dissertation.

In Part 1, this chapter includes a discussion of the findings in relation to the previously-noted bodies of literature, namely youth sport policy, sport development, governance, and elite youth events. Part 2 will then look at policy diffusion as it relates to the elite youth event selection practices of Canadian NSOs. Limitations and future directions complete this discussion chapter.

Part 1: Summary of Results

RQ 1. The first RQ asked: What policies have the federal government put in place to guide behaviour relating to youth elite sport? Five policies were discussed: the CSP 2012, Sport Canada Contribution Guidelines, the Federal Policy for Hosting International Sport Events, the AAP and the LTAD Models. CSP 2012 provides overall direction for sport in Canada and outlines the key stakeholders involved. The Sport Canada Contribution Guidelines, otherwise known as SFAF, lists the components required by nationally funded sport organizations in order to receive their stipend. The SFAF requires NSOs to possess an LTAD model and provides the funding needed to create, maintain, and adjust all LTAD documents. The Federal Policy for

Hosting International Sport Events reduces costs of attending events but does not alter which events are attended. The policy does, however, state the events must be developmentally appropriate and provide sport development opportunities to those participating. The AAP provides funding for nationally ranked athletes, which have been selected by their NSO. Athletes without said funding often struggle to attend international events, as they are self-funded and thus have limited choices. The LTAD model, created by NSOs, outline the objectives as well as which events are developmentally appropriate for their athletes. A primary source of federal government influence was found to be committees on which NSO representatives sat together with government officials, as well as advisors from Sport Canada and Own the Podium, which gathered formal and informal feedback from the sport organizations.

In relation the event selection, CSP 2012 provides an overall direction for sport in Canada and outlines the stakeholders involved. SFAF states NSOs require an LTAD model, and relates to the funding of the creation, maintenance, and implementation of the LTAD documents. The Federal Policy for Hosting International Sport Events is a means of reducing costs for NSOs attending events but does not affect which events are selected by NSOs. The AAP provides more opportunities for athletes to compete at events as those not receiving carding are self-funded for most events attended. LTAD models outline the objectives as well as which events are developmentally appropriate for athletes. Committees and advisors from Sport Canada, OTP, and CS4L provide regular feedback in regards to event selection and funding requirements.

RQ 2. The second RQ asked: What processes do Canadian sport system stakeholders use to create such policies? The policies were divided into two categories: national-level policies, which are created at the federal level to mandate all sports, and NSO policies, which are mandated by the federal level but are sport-specific. Feedback used to create national-level

policies is gathered in many formal and informal settings. MSO and government advisors, such as OTP or Sport Canada advisors, regularly interact with NSOs to learn about the sport-specific needs, which need to be considered with new national policies. Online surveys, such as the High Performance Targeted Excellence Review, are often sent out to NSOs and other sport organizations and affected parties. Conferences and workshops, such as those held for the creation of LTAD models and to receive feedback during the creation process of CSP 2012. Working groups, such as PIM, may be used to evaluate and validate current policies in order to provide feedback about future policies and their implementation. Sport committees, such as Summer Sport Committees, are another means of gathering feedback regarding Canadian sport policies.

NSO policies, such as LTAD models, are sport-specific, though present in each NSO. Many are created to follow funding requirements outlined in federal policies, such as SFAF or the Hosting Policy. NSO policies may also be created to follow the vision outlined in Sport Canada policies, such as the collaboration amongst key stakeholders outlined in CSP 2012. Funding requirements from OTP is another prominent source of influence, such as the inclusion of a Podium Pathway. Sport-specific requirements, as detailed by the International Federation, are also a source of influence as NSOs create and update policies.

As sport development ties closely to athlete development, the LTAD model is a key policy, which affects event selection. LTAD models were officially mandated in 2005, although many NSOs had components in place prior to this time. The adoption of the policy occurred in waves, as many were given a longer assessment period prior to the creation of the document. It should be noted that some NSOs are only truly adopting the LTAD model now, as information required to implement the policy has only recently become available to them.

RQ 3. The third RQ asked: How are such policies implemented? Ultimately, event selection for national-level athletes falls under the scope of the NSO. As such, the implementation of NSO policies was discussed. Numerous factors guide NSO policies and decisions, be it policies or stakeholders. These can be broken down into five main categories. The first source of influence is national sport-related policies. As mentioned in the prior two research questions, funding frameworks, national sport visions, and guidance from funding partners are taken into consideration as NSOs create their sport-specific policies. Sport-specific considerations within Canada are also considered. This includes factors such as participant demographics of their sport, relationships with their P/TSOs, athletes, and clubs, and geographical considerations related to participation and competition. Sports differ internationally as well, such as the Olympic qualification criteria, the structure of the competition calendar, and the depth and breadth of the main competitors within the sport. NSOs must also consider their organizational capacity, as human and financial resources, are required to create, maintain and implement any policy. As policies, such as athlete selection criteria for athletes, are event-specific, the event rights owner's requirements are also considered.

Part 1: Discussion

Hylton and Bramham (2008) defined sport development as the policies and systems that bridge elite sport performance and mass participation. This dissertation looked at the policies and systems in place within Canada to bridge elite youth athletes to high performance, in this case, through the governance of international youth event selection. Canadian youth sport policies is first examined, followed by sport development, elite youth event selection, governance structure, stakeholder relationships, talent identification and monitoring, and sport-specific considerations.

Canadian youth sport policies. The findings of this dissertation built on the elite youth policy research by Misener and Parashak (2005). Misener and Parashak's research had been conducted before the creation of CSP 2012 as well as the introduction of LTAD models across all NSOs. The historical policy analysis and interviews with administrators revealed a lack of policy development or programming used to reduce negative behaviours associated with youth elite sport (Misener, 2001; Misener & Parashak, 2005). This thesis demonstrated youth are now included in the policy and consideration is taken for the developmental differences between ages. However, there is still no single policy related to elite youth and the specific considerations needed for this demographic.

Regarding talent identification and developing athletes, policies related to identifying athletes through junior training camps and increased national and international competitions became apparent as of 1977, after the 1976 Montréal Olympic Games (Misener & Parashak, 2005). Many policies now work in tandem to shape the Canadian national sport system. A large component of this change to youth-related policies, as this thesis showed, was the implementation of LTAD models and related changes to other decision-making practices within NSOs. Misener and Parashak (2005) discussed elite youth sport in a broader sense, but did not touch upon developmental events. This dissertation looked beyond policies within Canada to event selection practices for elite youth athletes. Each policy and NSO-specific decision was found to play a role in event selection, and, ultimately, in sport development.

At the time of data collection, the policies playing the largest role in guiding NSO behaviours were the Sport Canada Contribution Guidelines, which directly influenced financial decisions of NSOs. This included the creation of LTAD models across all sports. Committees and advisors, especially those from OTP at the high performance level and CS4L at the

grassroots level, played a role in guiding the content of the NSO-specific documents. Guidance from OTP, through funding reporting processes, were especially influential at the higher levels of competition. Green (2004) found high performance became a priority compared to sport for all, as the results in this domain directly influenced governmental funding. When looking at the findings in the present thesis, this has not changed in recent years, with a more notable divide based on OTP support, and competition among NSOs to receive said support, in relation to high performance.

Sport development. Green and Oakley (2001) developed criteria for evaluating elite sport systems. Based on emergent themes from this dissertation, Green and Oakley's criteria were compared to the governance of elite youth event selection. Data analysis in this thesis indicated comprehensive planning for the needs of each sport as well as targeted resources for a small number of sports, and appropriate funding for infrastructure and people, were emergent themes, both as strengths and weaknesses, of the Canadian model. There was a notable divide among NSOs, based on their sport-specific needs as well as access to resources. This list was used to guide analysis. However, Houlihan and Green's (2008) components were also considered.

Elements of elite sport development were categorized into three clusters: contextual, processual, and specific (Houlihan & Green, 2008). Contextual factors included items such as funding, excellence culture, sponsorship climate, media support, participation in sport, and scientific research (Houlihan & Green, 2008). Processual factors focused on the system's processes such as a clear understanding of agencies' role, the simplicity of administration, talent identification, development and post-career support, integrated policy development, and coach development (Houlihan & Green, 2008). Specific factors included the structure of competitive

programs (i.e., a hierarchy of competitions that prepare for international events), facilities, sport science support services, and international competition (Houlihan & Green, 2008).

This dissertation's findings were clear regarding Canada's contextual factors, such as funding, sponsorship climate, media support and participation, varying from sport to sport. Professional sports as well as those with cultural importance (i.e., Hockey in Canada) had different event governance practices and considerations based on the amount of human resources and athletes participating in the sport, as well as the coordinated athlete identification and retention networks in place. The processual factors were more consistent nationwide through MSOs' coordinated attempts, which from a governance and policy diffusion standpoint are good between organizations. Despite a consistency among the practices, there was also a consistent lack of clarity of roles and inadequate simplicity of administration. The talent identification and development practices varied by sport, once again based on human and financial resources available as well as the number of participating athletes and the competition pool internationally. Specific factors varied greatly among sports, once again depending on the human and financial resources as well as the participation base within the sport, thereby creating have and have not NSOs.

Elite youth event selection. Previous research has considered the role of national and international competitions along the sport development pathway (De Bosscher et al., 2015). This was done at a country level using the SPLISS model. While Canada does possess national policies related to event hosting and hosts international events, the findings in this dissertation highlight the opportunities for international and national competition vary by sport. Event selection remains an NSO decision, as it is a sport-specific implementation strategy of national-level documents put in place by federal stakeholders. When looking at the international sport

event pillar in De Bosscher and colleagues' (2015) SPLISS model, the countries are evaluated as a whole. However, there are many sport-specific differences within Canada, such as those related to the number of international events hosted within Canada, the opportunities for athletes to compete internationally, and the level of and access to national competitions. This dissertation adds to the literature by noting the importance of sport-specific differences, which should be considered when evaluating a country's sport development system. National policies, such as those found in Canada, are open-ended to cover multiple sports; the sports remain the experts in their own fields. This is why we see a difference in the level of detail in the NSO-specific documents, with differences in the levels of competition, as well as level and access to national and international competitions.

Governance structure. In relation to elite youth event selection, this thesis demonstrated Sport Canada's national-level policies are in place to steer NSOs, rather than for "rowing." The policies provide general directives to stakeholders, namely NSOs, but do not dictate the specific actions taken by the affected organizations. The policies, therefore, guide the direction of sport and objectives of the Canadian sport system, attempt to mediate a consistent approach to sport from within the NSOs, but ultimately do not dictate all decisions. The number of stakeholders involved in the decision-making process of NSOs shows the Canadian sport system is built using a network governance principle. The policies implemented at the federal level, however, are used for steering purposes, to build and maintain relationships with stakeholders through contractual agreements. These are mainly in relation to funding, and not the technical components, which remain sport-specific. Thus, there is a distinction to be made between the strategic (policy) and operational (sport/technical) levels.

Findings also indicated that, despite the presence of national sport policies, NSOs are

ultimately the implementers of policies, through sport-specific policies. NSOs are seen as the technical leaders within their sports, creating guidelines, policies and processes to fit under the visions created by national, go-between, sport system stakeholders. When creating policies, NSOs take great consideration regarding funding partners and international federation requirements. Both monetary resources and international podium success are closely intertwined and a pressing concern for all NSOs. However, despite each NSO being the creator of its own policy, the impact and views of external stakeholders varies amongst organizations. Thus, his thesis adds to the literature by demonstrating that the stakeholder network is a critical part of NSOs' event selection process; in other words, NSOs do not make such decisions in isolation.

Stakeholder relationships. The findings of this dissertation also bring to light communication, alignment, reporting and accountability, and nature and understanding of roles issues within the Canadian sport system governance network.

Communication. As shown in this thesis, national-level policies are created with the involvement of many stakeholders. The degree to which a stakeholder feels heard within the process depends on the method, frequency, and the person involved in the communication. Regular communication in both formal and informal settings was perceived to be important and more valued than generic electronic communication strategies, such as online surveys. Those who felt most heard had face-to-face, phone or video conferencing calls. These findings therefore show the importance of verbal communication as opposed to written communication not only for NSO event selection but also for NSO-funder relations more broadly.

The amount of external stakeholder influence will depend on the financial need of the organization, the personal rapport between the NSO and its Sport Canada and OTP advisors, the length of the relationship between the NSO and its advisors, as well as the nature of the sport

(i.e. team, individual, Olympic, non-Olympic, and funding). Organizations and staff members who understand why policies or reports are being created, due to the relationship with the advisor as well as the clarity of the demands, have less push back towards those asking for reports. When there is confusion, NSOs struggled to understand why the document is in place. As such, the NSOs were more willing to create or update documents, often yielding a better quality and more detailed final product. Implementation may also be increased, as clear and detailed documents facilitate the dissemination of information to appropriate stakeholders. Findings also highlight advisors should work closely with the NSOs during the reporting process, ensuring the rationale of the documents are understood in relation to the individual NSOs and their needs.

OTP, through regular interaction and technical guidance, was seen as a helpful ally in the policy creation process. However, according to the Targeted Excellence Review (Goss Gilroy Inc., 2017), OTP advisors may also be seen as a hindrance when the advisor second-guesses decisions. Due to the limited nature of publicly available information and transparency from the organization, the role of the organization in relation to others remains unclear. This dissertation therefore adds qualitative evidence to previously quantitative findings found in government reports, as well as further develop the literature's understanding of the Canadian sport system through the presentation of the benefits and barriers of OTP advisors and information within the Canadian sport system.

Alignment and reporting. When comparing documents and policies within the Canadian sport system, it is worth noting a lack of consistency among similar terminologies. Specifically, the sport development pathway language choice differs between the CSP 2012 and the CS4L's chosen vocabulary. Although, the same concepts are presented, there is a difference in word choice. This creates confusion amongst stakeholders. In addition, some sports further specialize

their LTAD model with names such as Learn to Skate for Skate Canada. Although all stakeholders agreed with the principles of LTAD, the province of Quebec did not want a federally-regulated sport development structure (Dowling, 2014). This becomes a barrier when it comes to reporting to funding partners, and other MSOs, as each document must be adapted to address the terminology used by the organization, thereby adding additional administrative pressures and time away from other organizational activities and decisions.

Accountability. This thesis found the level of implementation of national-level policies varied depending on the accountability standards put in place. This was most notable when comparing LTAD models, which have differing levels of detail, implementation among stakeholders and overall adherence within their sport. The present thesis's findings, therefore, support previous research (e.g., Bloyce et al., 2008), which found funding and personal beliefs of policy implementers to impact decisions made by the organizations directly. Also in support of Bloyce et al. (2008), reporting was perceived to reduce overall efficiency of the organization. However, when there was a clear understanding of the purpose of the documents, this thesis found negative perceptions decreased. Organizations supporting the documents in question allocated resources to the creation and appropriate dissemination of the policies, thereby increasing the effectiveness of their reporting practices. Organizations requesting the reports should, therefore, work with the NSOs to ensure there is a clear understanding of not only the expectations of the reports but also the rationale.

Nature and understanding of roles. When considering a clear understanding of roles and effective communication between agencies, there was a notable disconnect between stakeholders. The quality of the interactions varied, with the lowest quality seen for non-Olympic sports followed by those with lesser funding. The inclusion of OTP as a stakeholder facilitated

conversation between stakeholders, with more face-to-face conversations as national policies and sport-specific decisions were made. However, the role of the organization remains poorly defined based on publicly available information. Increased transparency and clearly defined division of responsibilities may facilitate interactions between organizations and improve the development and implementation of future policies. In terms of simple administration with clearly defined roles, the reporting process to multiple stakeholders, all with varying vocabulary and requirements, was a barrier within the Canadian sport system. The findings in this dissertation suggest a lack of clarity regarding the roles and relationships of multi-sport organizations should be clarified to reduce confusion for NSOs. Reducing confusion will facilitate an increased implementation of national-level policies through cooperation between organizations, by decreasing the resources (e.g., time) required to report to the organizations requesting said policies. A roadmap of the roles and responsibilities of the organizations and provided to all organizations may facilitate this practice.

Talent identification and monitoring. When comparing talent identification and monitoring systems, each sport faces different realities based on the participation requirements, depth and field of competition within Canada, the location of participation base, and the networks available to monitor athletes throughout the country. Green and Oakley (2001) also highlighted the importance of a culture in which all sport stakeholders could interact in formal and informal settings. The findings of this dissertation added to this component by unveiling differences in the quality of interactions for Canadian NSOs. Those without the face-to-face and regular guidance from OTP had a notably decreased perception of their interactions with national-level sport system stakeholders. The degree to which NSO leadership lobbied for their organization nationally and internationally also affected the quality of interactions. Appropriately

structured competitive programs with ongoing international exposure were the primary focus of this dissertation. As such, multi-sport organizations and their associated policies should continue to work with NSOs to accommodate the individual needs of the sports, and have the flexibility to adapt should competition demands change. This may be facilitated by having Sport Canada and OTP advisors working more closely with NSOs while completing reports and adjusting the reporting requirements as needed to accommodate the individual sport needs.

Sport-specific considerations. Previous research addressed Canada's federated sport system (e.g., Leopkey et al., 2010), as well as differences among NSO funding models, stakeholders and sports models related to the nature of their athletes and competitions (e.g., Parent et al., 2016). However, sport development research has usually focused on the country as a whole, rather than evaluating the sport-specific needs in greater depth. The equipment requirements, depth and field of competition within Canada, and structure of international competitions are some of the components leading to differences among sports. The barriers to policy implementation across multiple organizations and jurisdictions has been included in previous research; Leopkey and colleagues (2010) highlighted the policy implementation constraints within Canada, such as the size and decentralization between provinces and territories. This dissertation adds to these findings by noting the sport-specific restraints. Future research should consider, therefore, multiple organizations and sports, as well as their interactions, when describing sport development structures within countries. Differences among the sports, in relation to the country, should also be considered, for example, in Canada, the significant differences among NSOs receiving financial and technical support through OTP in comparison to those receiving only Sport Canada funding.

Summary. The current Canadian sport model addresses the criteria for successful elite sport development as outlined by Green and Oakley (2001). However, findings in this dissertation highlight there is a notable divide among NSOs, creating a have and have not situation. The current structure increases the divide by increasing reporting demands without appropriate financial and, even more so, human resources. By providing more guidance from the MSOs for the lesser-funded NSOs, the quality of programs and national and international success are more likely to increase. As it currently stands, guidance is given by OTP when developing high performance pathways. This support is not readily available for lesser-funded NSOs, who in turn cannot reach the standards needed to become targeted sports. Regular interactions, clear expectations and efforts to align objectives of NSOs with those of MSOs and the government would allow for the more efficient use of resources, improving the sport system overall.

As such, the policy implementation process is not rigid and operates through a network governance system. There is no single policy creation and implementation process across all affected parties. Rather, steering occurs by Sport Canada with all NSOs creating their own policies through guidance nationally and internationally. Thus, network governance occurs at the NSO level.

Within NSOs, the policies may change by year depending on the funding, the timing of key events, or the eligibility criteria put in place by event rights owners. Within a single year, there may also be differences amongst athletes. Event-specific decisions fall to the athlete and coaches related to the event. The decision to participate, and the disciplines within the event, ultimately falls to the coach and athlete, considering the developmental needs of the athlete at the time.

There are limited evaluation practices, especially in a formal nature, making it difficult to monitor and adjust the implementation of Canadian policies. As few organizations at lower levels follow the outlined rules and regulations of their policies, it is difficult to know what is truly being implemented. The provincial differences and those who implement the LTAD models further hinder this. Green (2005) argued advancement to higher stages of competition requires programs linked vertically from one stage to the next, as well as athlete support when locating and socializing into new/deeper levels of the sport. This dissertation adds to this debate by exploring some of the differences among sports as well as the challenges faced by each sport, as they attempt to recruit and retain athletes through the development pathway. The dissertation compared Canada's system to previously determined sport development criteria for successful countries, highlighting current shortcomings to current practices and providing suggestions or recommendations for improvement.

Part 2: Summary of Results

The second part of the dissertation looked at NSOs' perceptions and responses to pressures when selecting events to be attended by their elite youth athletes. This was followed by a comparison of sport-specific needs.

RQ 4. This section of the dissertation aimed to answer: How do the NSOs perceive the pressures placed upon them from Canadian sport system stakeholders/policy makers? Four types of pressures appeared to exist when NSOs create their sport-specific policies. In this case, policies may include LTAD models, AAP requirements, or athlete selection criteria for events. The first type of pressure was Learning, a passive process through which one organization learns from another who is implementing a similar policy (Graham et al., 2012). Internal and external advisors, such as those from Sport Canada, CS4L, OTP or the NSO's technical director were

found to be a source of influence. NSOs may also look outwards to other Canadian NSOs and international NSOs for both the content of their policies as well as how the information is disseminated. International Federations outline requirements and provide suggestions to their national representatives. This may also be a source of learning for Canadian NSOs during policy creation, especially when considering the sport-specific criteria related to Olympic qualification or points systems. NSOs may also learn from prior experience through self-evaluations or input from athletes and staff to develop further their policies.

Imitation involves following leaders and learning from those experiencing success (Graham et al., 2012). Once again, Canadian NSOs may look to national and international NSOs for the content and methods of dissemination of information. Regarding content, this may be related to event selection practices of the leading countries within the NSO's field of competition.

Coercion is a pressure related to power differences, and most often funding (Graham et al., 2012). As Sport Canada and OTP are the primary funding sources, through financial contributions and recommendations, their interactions are rather political. Fulfilling their requirements is imperative in order to receive public funding. Findings showed International Federations demonstrating coercive pressures through technical specific requirements related to the sport, the ranking of international events, and through negotiations regarding the attendance of events.

Competition is the fourth mechanism of policy diffusion and relates to the competitive nature among organizations (Graham et al., 2012). In terms of NSO policy creation, Canadian NSOs are in competition with other countries, vying for international success at events. Within Canada, there is competition among NSOs for limited funding sources from public funding as

well as between the demands of said funding partners, namely Sport Canada and OTP. There is also competition among P/TSOs implementing the NSO policies and are also competing amongst each other for sporting success.

In summary, NSOs face multiple pressures when creating and implementing their policies and processes. Decisions made by NSOs affect and are affected by internal and external stakeholders through various means. Pressures exist nationally and internationally. Some are sport-specific, others can be seen across all sports. NSOs therefore do not make decisions autonomously; they consider these stakeholder pressures and multiple factors. The nature of the pressures may also change depending on the focal organization in question. As such, it is important to consider not only the perceptions, but also the responses to said pressures.

RQ 5. The fifth RQ aimed to answer: How do the NSOs respond to the pressures when selecting Games for elite youth? In order to answer this question, the considerations taken by NSOs when selecting events for elite youth athletes were compared and contrasted to determine which stakeholders and demands were deemed most salient. The considerations taken, that is whether or not the NSO sees a factor as relevant, and the level of consideration taken to that factor are the responses to the said pressures. When selecting events, NSOs appeared to consider: the developmental opportunities for the athletes, the competitors at the event, the timing of the event in relation to each other, support of the event from the International Federation, the location of the event, human resources within the NSO available to plan for the event and for the event itself, costs associated with the event and travel, eligibility criteria of the event in relation to their own athletes and needs, the event rights owner, support from Sport Canada and Own the Podium, and finally whether the event was single sport or multi-sport. These aspects were all considered when responding to stakeholder pressures. Primary responses were to those from the

International Federation, be it through sport-specific requirements or eligibility criteria for the Olympic Games. In this case, the developmental appropriateness and resources available to the event were also major considerations. Strong support was seen for the Canada Games model, in which NSOs were strongly involved in the eligibility criteria selection. This allowed for flexibility among provinces, creating a more evenly distributed playing field based on the competition levels of the respective provinces. The eligibility criteria was also aligned with other events offered within the respective sports. National-level policies were, however, not a salient pressure at the elite youth sport level. Therefore, international sport organizations and event rights holders appear to have a greater impact on NSO event selection practices than the national government.

RQ 6. The final RQ aimed to answer: Are there differences between sports, if so, what are they and why? This dissertation's findings indicated there were differences between sports. The primary differences found among sports in relation to event selection practices were: the number of events available throughout the competition calendar; the organizational capacity of the NSO including the level of funding, human resources, staff knowledge and expertise; the team or individual nature of the sport; the depth and field of competition within Canada; whether the sport is late or early entry; and participation requirements of the sport including cost, access to facilities and equipment.

Part 2: Discussion

Policy diffusion. Within the Canadian sport system and in regards to NSOs, policy diffusion is constantly at play and evolving, as NSOs create, maintain and change their policies. Policy diffusion research introduced three types of actors: internal, external and go-between (Graham et al., 2012). This dissertation found each type of actor is present and influences NSOs.

Internal actors were those within the organization, such the High Performance Directors, who use their personal knowledge and experience to determine the contents of policies. External actors were from other organizations, be it Canadian or international NSOs, from which the focal NSO learns content or design practices for their own policies. Go-between actors, in this case, would be Sport Canada, OTP and CS4L, acting as intermediaries to assist with the development of documents and plans and to ensure implementation of NSO policies.

All kinds of organizations were found to be involved in NSO policy creation related to event selection for elite youth. However, go-betweens and internal actors were more present during the creation of the documents themselves as they were steered by Sport Canada and OTP guidelines. During the implementation process, funding and international guidelines from the International Federation were major considerations. Therefore, Sport Canada and OTP became funding partners with their International Federation and international NSOs consulted for sport-specific competition decisions.

Previous research (e.g., Doherty & Clutterbuck, 2013) has considered event policies as well as the links between LTAD models and community organizations. This dissertation took a national-level perspective to explore LTAD implementation in relation to NSOs. By considering elite youth as the primary component, it was possible to explore the transition of the athlete between organizations within their own sport, but also between Sport Canada and OTP when the athlete fell under the elite status. Barriers to implementation of policies during the transition from grassroots to high performance are contributions to the sport development literature. This dissertation also added a new approach, which is policy diffusion, to determine stakeholders and pressures affecting Canadian NSOs, while linking the event literature to Canadian policy. The dissertation, therefore, considered policy creation and implementation, noting changes to key

stakeholders over time. Findings of this dissertation provided empirical evidence to previous anecdotal information regarding the interactions of NSOs with OTP and Sport Canada, specifically in relation to the creation of policies and processes, which are primarily dictated by NSOs. The dissertation also highlights the importance of considering the different levels of NSOs based on Olympic status as well as funding and resources available, as each face distinct challenges to policy creation and implementation.

National and international pressures. When looking at NSOs individually, most guidance came from the International Federations. This shows a limited amount of governmental control within the country, as the NSOs must align their competitions and development plans in line with the International Federation schedules, competition guidelines, and scoring systems. As such, network governance became prominent during implementation phases, with steering more apparent during the policy creation phase. Previous research (e.g., De Bosscher et al., 2008; De Bosscher et al., 2006; De Bosscher et al., 2015; Green & Oakley, 2001; Houlihan & Green, 2008) has considered sport development at a national level. This dissertation suggests sports/NSOs should be considered separately, as international pressures greatly affect competition related decisions – more so, it seems, than the Canadian government.

Event rights owners were found to exhibit coercive pressures and, in the case of the IOC and the Youth Olympic Games, a political hold. However, the eligibility criteria in relation to the developmental needs of the athletes proved to be a greater consideration for Canadian NSOs when selecting events for their athletes. According to the findings in this dissertation, within the Canadian sport system, the organization holding the most ability to influence event selection and associated decision-making is OTP.

OTP was found to provide technical guidance as well as funding recommendations. As such, NSOs receiving funding recommended by OTP had increased financial means but also more stringent reporting demands. This dissertation's findings highlight how OTP has created a divide due to the level of detail required. While Sport Canada requires an LTAD and competition structure, the NSOs themselves are viewed as the technical leaders. There is no push to change the details of their documents. As for OTP, it appears to have a heavier hand in finding gaps within the technical content. The higher level of attention to detail required, as well as a different name for the documents and its components, has caused a divide, such as through the creation of two similar but often disconnected NSO documents: the LTAD models and Podium Pathways. That is, LTAD models are created in line with Sport Canada demands to oversee athlete development at the grassroots level. More detailed and thorough documents are then created to outline the athlete development pathways at a high-performance level in line with OTP demands. These documents are titled Podium Pathways and are not always directly tied to the LTAD models.

Stakeholder relationships. Regular interactions between NSOs and Sport Canada or MSOs increase the feeling of being heard, as other stakeholders become familiar with daily struggles, which run deeper than pre-set questions found in national-level surveys. This is also reliant on having an open and regular communication channel, in which both parties are heard and have the ability to influence decision-making process. If the NSO does not feel as though its concerns are being passed on to those in charge of the decision-making process, the communication channel becomes irrelevant. As such, findings in this dissertation suggest sport-specific education, efficient communication and empathy are valuable attributes for those in advisory roles.

The regular interactions were mainly seen with OTP and with the Coaching Association of Canada. This may be in part due to the clarity of their roles within the Canadian sport system. One example of a lack of clarity of Sport Canada's role is apparent through the colloquial name for supplementary high performance funding in Canada. "OTP Funding" is the name given to money provided by Sport Canada. Many organizations were surprised to know this funding came from Sport Canada through direction of OTP and not directly from the organization. The role and relationships between OTP and NSOs remains unclear when evaluating the overall sport system. Due to the limited nature of the publicly available information, organizations and individuals within the sport system that do not deal directly with OTP struggle to understand the role of OTP and its objectives in relation to other organizations.

Communication and understanding of roles. The clarity of roles and purpose also improves the level and quality of policy adherence. Reports, which are seen as burdensome paperwork, are also those without a clear direction or purpose. This was especially noted when similar reports were filed to multiple funding partners without an understanding of how they interacted. The process was more troubling when the NSO did not know how to fill out the form. This did not mean they had less support for its ideals. Rather, they did not understand how to meet the requirements. Similar reporting demands, when placed in tandem with education and support, posed fewer issues on the NSOs. Therefore, clarity in questions, support while creating reports for external organizations, and an overall understanding of the purpose of the documents would help mitigate adherence issues.

These findings support previous sport development system evaluation criteria (e.g., Houlihan & Green, 2008) and add empirical evidence for the Canadian sport system. The dissertation also provides insights into communication and role clarity barriers when athletes

transition to elite sport at a high-performance level from a policy perspective. This level of competition is an important component of the sport development pathway, and involves multiple organizations. Policy implementation efficiency was seen to decrease when stakeholders were unclear of expectations. As such, governments should ensure they are not only outlining reporting criteria but also rationales when attempting to implement new policies effectively.

Organizational capacity. The quality of policies also depends on the organizational capacity of the NSO, here defined as the human resources, finances, relationships and networks, infrastructure and processes, and planning and development (Hall et al., 2003). For instance, findings in this dissertation suggest a clear and technical understanding of the sport specific needs is imperative to creating a sound LTAD policy. The creator should understand the sport's participants, physiological and psychological demands, competition structure, and coaching demands. The LTAD model can only be created and followed if a thorough understanding of the sport-specific needs in relation to the country-specific context are well understood. This supports the policy diffusion literature (e.g., Graham et al., 2012), as well as research by Bloyce and colleagues (2008), which suggests those within organizations have a direct impact on the creation and implementation of policies. Organizational capacity in relation to organizational problems has been explored in Canada and internationally (e.g., Amis, Slack, & Hinings, 2004). This dissertation provides additional insights into the link between organizational capacity, staff knowledge and interests (i.e., their understanding of the sport, sport system, and communication strategies), and the implementation of national-level policies.

Thus, internal actors and their perception of policies during the creation, maintenance and implementation of the policies depend on:

- the organizational capacity: do they have time and content needed to create the

- documents?;
- understanding of roles of organizations: do they understand the purpose of the documents they are creating; and
- information available: is the information required readily available within their sport?

There is currently a disconnect between policies and organizations in terms of the vocabulary used, level of detail required, and event selection strategies. This highlights the importance of communication among stakeholders who need clearly defined roles and regular interactions as well as senior staff actively advocating for the NSO. This provides empirical evidence focusing Canada's system previously created criteria for elite youth development.

Alignment. Next, when looking at how NSOs respond to pressures placed upon them, two key concepts were found: alignment and developmental appropriateness. Findings in this thesis highlight that, to effectively develop athletes, NSOs must have an understanding and partnership with the P/TSOs, local clubs and the federal government. Policies and implementation strategies must align and work with the developmental needs of the athletes. However, in order for this to occur, human resources and funding are required to create and disseminate the information to the appropriate parties. Doherty and Clutterbuck's (2013) research looked at the link between sport participation and LTAD or provincial and local sport organizations. The present dissertation looked at the link between LTAD and high performance, and therefore included national-level links to provincial organizations. In both cases, alignment of policy objectives and implementation plans, as well as among key stakeholders involved in the process, were critical components for policy implementation. As the present thesis demonstrated, the most successful NSOs were found to have increased and maintained alignment between all organizations implementing their policies. That is, the NSOs had a clear

understanding of the differences between their P/TSOs, had created a system to maintain quality control, and ensured athlete needs and event selection were aligned. A clear technical direction and appropriate communication strategies are imperative in order to meet these objectives.

Green (2005) argued advancement to higher stages of competition requires programs linked vertically from one stage to the next, as well as athlete support when locating and socializing into new/deeper levels of the sport. In this dissertation, the national-level sport organizations needed to effectively progress athletes through the sport development pathway are outlined in CSP 2012. However, these partnerships must be strengthened with clearly defined roles monitored through transparent accountability practices and regular communication among stakeholders. At the elite youth level, this component includes NSOs, P/TSOs, and local clubs and coaches. These relationships vary among sports. It is, therefore, unrealistic to consider one sport's success at this component a nationwide reality. As such, this dissertation found sport-specific systems should be evaluated individually, leading to questions regarding the findings from SPLISS-like general/national analyses.

Developmental of athletes. This dissertation's findings also noted how NSOs focus on the developmental opportunities for athletes rather than the community or festival-type components of the events. This appears to go against the beliefs of the event rights holders. The exception to this finding was the Canada Games, as participants viewed it as beneficial for Canadian sport development overall. It should be noted, however, NSOs within Canada dictate the eligibility criteria for athletes within their sports, thus decreasing concerns of the event not being developmentally appropriate for their athletes.

Event rights owners. Findings were clear in this thesis: an NSO's decision to attend an event is largely dependent on the funding and planning capabilities of the organization.

Organizations receiving OTP-recommended funding have the means to produce results at international events prior to receiving the funding. Once the funding is received, the organization's capacity and required reporting increase the planning and research into the developmental needs of the sport. Travel costs are also alleviated through the increased funding.

Funding considerations. Organizations without OTP-recommended funding are operating with lesser financial resources, fewer human resources, and do not have the means to further develop LTAD plans without technical guidance or increased resources. This furthers the divide between those receiving funding and those not receiving funding from OTP. Bloyce (2008) demonstrated how British sport development officers believed the paperwork required to prove goal achievement reduced the overall efficiency of British sport organizations. The present dissertation noted similar pressures exist within Canada, especially related to reporting to funding partners, such as through the SFAF and SSP, and adds OTP as a key stakeholder to consider when examining this issue.

Parent, Kristiansen, Skille, and Hanstad (2015) explored the potential survival and success of the YOG by analyzing how various actors exert pressures on the event. Three central stakeholders were highlighted: the IOC, the media, and the athletes' parents. Their importance differed from the parent event, the Olympic Games. The difference is worth noting, as these Games are theoretically created with the youth in mind. This finding suggests the most salient stakeholders may not be the athletes themselves and the event may have priorities beyond athlete development. This finding was supported in this dissertation, as many NSOs attended the YOG due to coercive or political pressures from the Canadian Olympic Committee or their International Federation rather than for developmental opportunities for their athletes.

Event selection and athlete development. When comparing the findings of this dissertation to previous event research (e.g., Hanstad et al., 2013; MacIntosh & Nicol, 2012; Skille & Houlihan, 2014; Wong, 2012), this dissertation contributes to building two newer fields of study, namely the athlete-centered and Youth Olympic Games bodies of literature. In the present dissertation, international multi-sport events were found, by Canadian NSOs, to be of lower competition level than international single-sport events. Consideration was taken for competitors attending the event and the developmental appropriateness of the event. Event rights holders often justify youth events' existence by arguing these events are the pathway to the "senior" events, highlighting the high competition levels at their events (Hanstad et al., 2013; Wong, 2012). For most, multi-sport events at the youth level were not attended for international celebration of sporting success as one would attend the Olympic Games. Rather, this was a preparation for non-sport distractions, such as multiple sports living within a village as well as opening and closing ceremonies seen at the large-scale multi-sport events. Once again, this network governance came from outside Canada and had limited impact from Sport Canada and OTP. The International Federation and sport-specific requirements were a larger consideration for NSOs in terms of athlete development.

As MacIntosh (2017) explained, "Given the rather recent advent of these youth-focused multi-sport events...there remains a great deal to understand regarding how the Games are actually perceived and experienced by their primary and younger stakeholder cohort (e.g., the youth athletes)" (p. 439). This dissertation answered this call to action by comparing the perception of elite youth single and multi-sport events. Multi-sport events were found to be a lower level of competition compared to single sport events, but were an opportunity for athletes to prepare for non-sport distractions. Multi-sport events were only viable options should the

event as a whole be developmentally appropriate for the athletes and fit within the competition calendar of the athlete.

Athlete participants were the focus when MacIntosh and Nicol (2012) examined the athlete experience of the XIX Commonwealth Games in Delhi, India. The authors identified key factors of the Games, beyond athletic performance, which affected the athletes' experience. Ancillary areas, sports venues and ceremonies were considered positive aspects of the Games (MacIntosh & Nicol, 2012; Whitson & Macintosh, 1996). These factors were considered by NSOs when selecting events but were deemed less important than the developmental opportunities for athletes when selecting events. However, multi-sport events were considered a preparation opportunity for athletes as they exposed young competitors to out of competition stressors. This is consistent with previous findings from Parent and colleagues (2014) who determine main stressors for young athletes at YOG to be food quality, accommodations, outdoor venues, travel, security, and communications. Taks, Green, Misener, and Chalip (2014) analyzed the legacy for local athletes when hosting a medium-sized international event. The costs involved in staging such large-scale events are also often justified by incorporating them into a larger regeneration and modernization program (Gold & Gold, 2008). Although Taks et al. (2014) saw no effect on sport participation at a local level when hosting a sport event, given the international nature of these events, it is important to understand the sport development role these events play for athletes from other countries. As such, event hosting policies should closely monitor the support of events from International Federations when evaluating bids to host within a country. Thus, this dissertation's findings help build the sport development and event literatures by looking at the impact of these events on international athletes' development.

Sport development at a national level. Sport development research often focuses on countries as a whole (e.g., De Bosscher et al., 2015), noting some differences among sports. However, Skille and Houlihan (2014) had highlighted competition structures differ not only from country to country but also from sport to sport. This dissertation aimed to understand how competition structures fit into elite sport development models. For example, when looking at the nine pillar-SPLISS model (De Bosscher et al., 2006) in comparison to the findings of this dissertation, a notable divide among NSOs can be seen. That is, only the first two pillars (financial support and governance, organization and structure of sport policies) appear among all sports. All sports report to the same policies and overall pool of funding from Sport Canada. A limited number of NSOs receive supplementary guidance from OTP, as well. However, the remaining seven pillars vary depending on the NSO, as well as the related P/TSO and even the local clubs. These seven pillars include initiation, talent identification and development, athletic and post career support, training facilities, coaching and coaching development, international competition, and scientific research and innovation (De Bosscher et al., 2015).

Moreover, within Canada, the differences among sports and disparity amongst the have and have not NSOs must be considered both when evaluating Canada's sport development system and when creating sport policies for all NSOs. Although research supports a targeted excellence approach, efforts should be made to decrease the divide among NSOs. Changes still need to be made to accommodate the individual needs of NSOs, such as improving the alignment between policy demands and the reality of team sport development practices.

NSOs address these concerns differently and therefore have individual approaches to elite youth international sports events (Government of Canada, 2017b; Kristiansen et al., 2016). This dissertation supports these findings and adds the perspective of national level stakeholders as

well as looks at the development opportunities for athletes participating in the events. There is disconnect, most notably between the YOG and the perception of Canadian sport organizations, including NSOs and governments. Multi-sport event rights holders must collaborate with sport leaders, be it NSOs or International Federations, to determine the developmental needs of the respective sports. This is a successful model currently used by Canada Games, in which the sport organizations dictate the age and level of competition. For most other competitions, the participants are limited to selecting their selection criteria rather than the eligibility criteria. If events want to be seen as a high-level sport event, alignment between the eligibility criteria and level of competition with support from the International Federation are imperative should event rights holders promote the highest level of competition.

Summary. Multiple stakeholders affect decisions made by Canadian NSOs. These pressures are found at the national and international levels. The amount of influence is affected by the individual realities of the NSOs in question. Key factors found to affect the varying levels of stakeholder relationships included the quality of communication, understanding of roles, organizational capacity and alignment between the needs of organizations.

Discussion Summary

In summary, the purpose of this dissertation was to understand how Canadian sport system stakeholders select the international youth events in which athletes will take part. The selection of events ultimately falls to the NSOs, the technical leaders of their own sport. Sport Canada dictates, through steering, which policies and practices should be present within an NSO but has limited control over the content and implementation of said policies as NSO decisions are made through network governance, considering other stakeholders' pressures. OTP has a stronger control, through a more stringent accountability system. However, international

considerations, through International Federations and discussions with international NSOs remain a larger deciding factor when selecting international events. A varied level of organizational capacity, due to a seeming have/have not divide, has created a notable discrepancy between NSOs. NSOs with lower capacities have a reduced ability to create, maintain and implement NSO-specific policies, as resources are required to find the information to create the documents as well as to disseminate the information to appropriate parties.

Two key concepts outlined as best practices among successful NSOs and as an area for improvement for the Canadian sport system overall were alignment and communication. This includes within the sports themselves but also among stakeholders:

Without the alignment between the National Sport Organization and the 10 provincial sport organization, the territorial sport organization, obviously we are diminishing the potential of long-term success... One of the things that we find is the sport that have the greatest success has the greatest alignment. (OTP representative)

For NSOs to be successful with this alignment and communication, accountability measures must be in place to track the success of decisions made throughout the process and adjust as needed.

Contributions to Literature and Practice

This dissertation contributes to the literature and practice in sport policy/development and events. Each area is described below.

Sport policy and development. This research provides insights into a seemingly disjointed sport policy area within Canada, that is, the transition into the elite youth national level of competition.

Contributions to the literature. As research often focuses on grassroots or high

performance (e.g., Doherty & Clutterbuck, 2013; Green & Oakley, 2001), understanding the transition from provincial to national is an important component of the Canadian sport system. Understanding the middle of the so-called sport development pathway is important if researchers are to effectively evaluate and suggest improvements for an effective and efficient system from the grassroots to high performance. Key components for an effective and efficient transition of athletes from grassroots to high-performance sport included communication and alignment among stakeholders, as well as accountability measures directly related to desired outcomes. These aspects should be integrated into future studies on the matter.

As sport development includes both grassroots and high performance, efforts must be made to bridge the gap between have/have nots at all levels of sport participation. This dissertation bridged the research gap between the sport policy literature and a new field, youth event literature, as well event selection overall. This thesis offered a more in depth look at a policies and processes in play at the Canadian level to determine if all sports were affected equally by national level policies.

By including a governance and policy diffusion approach when exploring policy creation and implementation in this dissertation, policies were found to be used to steer the system, rather than explicitly directing it. Network governance is a more prominent approach within the system. Thus, using a network governance lens is recommended for future studies in this area.

This thesis also found the implementation level of national-level policies varied depending on the accountability standards put in place. This was most notable when comparing LTAD models, which have differing levels of detail, implementation among stakeholders, and overall adherence within their sport. Therefore, future research should consider the limited scope of impact that may be held by federal governments and include international stakeholders, which

affect NSOs' decision-making. Sport organizations directly implementing policies should be included in studies to determine the level of sport policy implementation as well as the varied tiers of resource access for NSOs. That is, the national evaluation of a sport policy appears incomplete if only considering international success of targeted sport organizations (c.f. De Bosscher et al., 2015); both levels need to be analyzed.

This dissertation built on previous elite youth policy research (e.g., Misener & Parashak, 2005). Youth are now included in national-level Canadian sport policies with special consideration to developmental needs of athletes. However, no single policy or practices target this demographic. This dissertation focused on elite youth event selection practices, finding a significant role of sport development considerations within these decisions.

Financial pressures, namely through funding partners, were a significant factor considered by NSOs when creating policies, such as those related to event selection. Green (2004) found high performance became a priority compared to grassroots sports, as the elite competition results directly affected funding received. When looking at the findings in the present thesis, this has not changed in recent years, with a more notable divide based on OTP support, and competition among NSOs to receive said support, in relation to high performance.

Contributions to practice. An alignment between sport events and a country's sport development framework will help improve the quality of development, be it medals or other. As the Canadian system is federated and different from one NSO to the next, an understanding of similarities and differences may also be beneficial for the policy makers and decision makers involved. As it currently stands, provincial and territorial governments are a part of a signed agreement with Sport Canada and NSOs, through CSP 2012. However, each government lays out different requirements for their P/TSOs who report directly to the governments. Alignment

between Sport Canada's demands to NSOs with the demands of provincial and territorial governments would facilitate the implementation of policies such as LTAD. While the policies and organizations are in place, an understanding of how they fit together is an issue. This comes down to communication. Findings in this dissertation support the fact stakeholders want to be heard and to have their questions answered. Face-to-face as opposed to online interactions are most appreciated. This was a notable divide among Sport Canada and its NSOs, as Sport Canada felt all NSOs were included in policy creation while the NSOs felt the questions were not broad enough for them to include their sport-specific concerns. Regular and informal interactions are deemed most beneficial. Stakeholders felt most heard since the other stakeholders were more aware of day-to-day struggles and had a better understanding of their role(s) within the system. A coordinated effort would improve alignment, coordination, and accountability among Canadian sport stakeholders.

Although national-level policies aim to be a "one-size-fits-all" (e.g., Government of Canada, 2011, 2012), disconnects were found in this dissertation between individual and team sports, resource access, amount of competitions available as well as the pool of athletes within Canada. Further efforts should be made by Sport Canada to work with NSOs when not only creating policies but when implementing them, such as the annual reports for SFAF. Assistance from Sport Canada and OTP advisors, during the reporting process to funding partners may also improve the quality of documents produced, such as developmental plans in the LTAD. NSOs must work with their P/TSOs, local clubs and coaches in a similar fashion to ensure the objectives and strategies are aligned at all levels. Once again, improved alignment, communication, and accountability are evermore important as Canada continues to build their multi-tiered, non-centralized sport system.

Events.

Contributions to the literature. This dissertation supports previous YOG research (e.g., Parent et al., 2015), which suggested athletes were not the primary stakeholder of elite youth events. This dissertation provides insight into the importance of communication and alignment between event rights owners and those participating in the event. A connection between the development needs of the athlete and the eligibility criteria of the event, along with support from the International Federation of the sport in question yields a higher competition level at events. This is supported through the example of the Canada Games, in which NSOs work directly with the event rights owner to create eligibility criteria in line with not only the individual sport but also the individual provinces to ensure an even and high-level playing field.

In terms of the event literature, this dissertation contributed to the YOG research by including the NSO perspective when evaluating the role of elite youth multi-sport events. A disconnect was found between the event rights owner perspectives and those selecting athletes to attend the event. As seen with Canadian policy, sport-specific factors create differences among the needs of each sport, and furthermore, each athlete. By working together with International Federations, event rights owners may work to better align the eligibility criteria with the needs of each sport. That is, in a similar manner to the Canada Games, varying the age of those competing may allow for a better coherence between the expected competition level and the level of athletes attending the event.

To the athlete-centered body of literature, this dissertation adds an understanding of the involvement of athletes throughout the policy creation process, namely event selection. Athletes partake in eligibility criteria creation rather than event selection itself. The limited scope of influence falls mainly on the International Federations, who create the Olympic qualification

criteria and event selection calendars. This dissertation also connects athlete-centered literature to event research by exploring the connection between athlete development and international events. The dissertation also supports findings from MacIntosh and Nicol (2012), which suggested non-sport factors are major considerations at events. To this information, the present dissertation adds the role of multi-sport events throughout the development pathway. Namely, multi-sport events prior to the Olympic Games are seen as a means to prepare for the Olympic Games through exposure to non-sport factors outlined by MacIntosh and Nicol (2012).

This dissertation therefore highlights the limited involvement of athletes in the event selection process. As many components of the event selection decision-making process have limited flexibility, such as the competition calendar for the quadrennial, the host nations for events, or the Olympic qualification process, Canadian athletes have a limited scope of influence. Therefore, athlete involvement occurs primarily through the athlete selection criteria. That is, the NSO policy, which aids in the selection of athletes to compete at the pre-determined event.

Contributions to practice. When considering developmental Games, Canadian NSOs aim to find developmentally appropriate events for their athletes according to this dissertation. However, there is a notable difference between higher and lesser-funded NSOs, as there is differing access to the information required to determine and attend events deemed developmentally appropriate. There is also a disconnect between NSOs who create LTAD models for their individual sport systems and those who implement the policies (i.e., P/TSOs, local clubs and coaches). Resources are required to disseminate the information and improve accountability of all those implementing national level policies. Once again, priorities for Canadian sport system stakeholders should be improved communication, accountability and alignment.

The largest disconnect was between the views of event rights owners and those of Canadian NSOs. YOG and the Universiade owners often report a high level of competition for their event. However, according the findings in this dissertation, Canadian sport system stakeholders do not see the relevance of these events unless the event is held for a developmentally appropriate age of their athletes and Olympic success remains a possibility for the athlete. If the event falls outside this scope, athletes attend either through coercive pressure, in the case of YOG, or as a self-funded event, in the case of the Universiade. To improve the calibre of the event, event rights owners must work with International Federations to best cater the event to each sport. This must go beyond sanctioning the event and become an effort to include the event in the international competition calendar. This is a system currently in place with the Canada Games and Canadian NSOs. Allowing NSOs to pick the competition eligibility requirements based on sport-specific needs but also the needs of the participating members (here provinces, but countries for international events), may allow for even strength and higher levels of competition for all. As there is limited control, in terms of event selection, at the national level, international organizations play a large role in the sport development systems of each sport. Improving the benefit of international events, if any, may help managers and policy makers determine if further resources should be allocated to these events or if they are redundant/superfluous and should be removed from Canada's sport development pathway (cf. Government of Canada, 2014).

Additional Implications for Future Research

Despite a single group of policies existing at the national level, each NSO in this dissertation implemented its contents differently. A disconnect was found through interviews and an evaluation of NSO-specific policies. Future research should include interviews and policies

when evaluating a national sport system, as the policy component alone does not take into account sport-specific realities.

Multiple organizations should also be included in future research on this topic, including MSOs and go-betweens, as well as other sport organizations, in order to elucidate discordances between the views and understanding of roles of each organization, a major component of successful elite sport development systems. In a similar fashion, discrepancies were found between resource rich and lesser funded organizations. Future research should include multiple levels and types of organizations to best determine how national policies address the concerns of the differing organizations.

Discussion Summary

In summary, the purpose of this dissertation was to understand how Canadian sport system stakeholders select the international youth events in which athletes will take part. This dissertation explored the transition to elite national and international sport in terms of both event selection and Canadian sport policy. In terms of governance, the Canadian sport system does not dictate through one-size fits all policies; rather, it directs through strategic plans and frameworks, which are implemented by NSOs. As such, from a national perspective, the Canadian sport system operates using steering governance. From an NSO perspective, event selection for elite youth occurs through network governance, taking into consideration external pressures from stakeholders. Due to the grey area between mass participation and high performance, with multiple stakeholders and differing organizational objectives, efforts needs to be made to simplify, clarify, align and improve communication channels in order to improve efficiency. Other barriers to policy implementation include the size of the country, limited organizational capacity, and high levels of reporting requirements. Nevertheless, each sport faces a different

reality and requires flexibility in policy implementation practices to meet the needs of the individual athletes. As such, sport-specific considerations become imperative when evaluating national sport systems and success factors.

Thus, findings suggest both network and steering governance occur, and varies depending on the focal organization. The national-level stakeholders oversee the system through strategic policies, using a steering approach. Policies are then implemented by NSOs in relation to their sport-specific needs, using a network governance approach. Primary considerations for events include the event itself, such as the competitors and timing of the event, the organizational considerations such as human resources and funding available, and the needs of the individual athletes in relation to the event.

General Limitations of the Study and Future Directions

This study was delimited to the Canadian context. While a more detailed understanding of the Canadian system was provided, the findings may not apply internationally, such as those related to the geographical barriers to policy implementation within Canada. Future research may look to apply the sport-specific criteria and policy implementation barriers within other nations to determine the extent of transferability of the findings in this thesis.

Nineteen of a possible 58 NSOs were included. As each organization faced different realities, it is important to understand the individual contexts of each NSO. Future research may move to a quantitative approach to include more NSOs. This topic may also be explored with the International Federation as the focal organization, in order to determine how elite youth events are prioritized within their own sport models. The relationships between multi-sport event rights owners and International Federations also warrants further research because International Federations ultimately decide the developmental importance of each event. With an influx of

multi-sport events, event rights owners aiming for high attendance rates with high levels of competition must work closely with the International Federations to hope to achieve such goals.

Next, this research looked at a national level, although the scope of those affected spans across provincial and municipal levels as well. Future studies should further research the role of provincial governments and P/TSOs within the Canadian sport development model. Best practices to ensure alignment between all levels of sport organizations should also be explored to offer a more detailed picture of the situation.

Future research should also explore best practices to ensure alignment between all levels of sport organizations. This research can be broadened internationally to determine if the competing values between International Federations and national sport systems. The general process International Federations use to determine event salience would also be valuable as it relates to national decision-making processes at the NSO levels and may also be beneficial to event rights owners as they aim to increase the perceived importance of their events. Within Canada, the varying languages and cultures also warrant exploration, as it relates to creating sport policies that must accommodate the needs and interests of multiple cultures. A better understanding of these differences may facilitate future policy implementation as well as general information dissemination practices.

Other emergent findings from this dissertation, which were not discussed due to them being outside the specific scope of the research questions, related 1) the role of the new Canada Not-for-profit Act and the changes it has caused to the sport development system in Canada; and 2) the method of input for policy-making in era of increased technology. These emergent findings also warrant further exploration, as technology becomes present in modern day work places. The effectiveness of these cyber communication practices remain unclear.

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Appendix A – NSO Matrix

	NSO ¹	Season	Format	CYG ²	UG ³	YOG ⁵	Head Office Location
	Summer/Individual						
1	Athletics	Summer	Individual	Yes	Yes	Yes	Ottawa, ON
2	Rowing	Summer	Individual	No	*	Yes	Victoria, BC/London, ON
3	Tennis	Summer	Individual	Yes	Yes	Yes	Toronto, ON
4	Swimming	Summer	Individual	Yes	Yes	Yes	Ottawa, ON
5	Canoe and Kayak	Summer	Individual	No	*	Yes	Ottawa, ON
6	Badminton	Summer	Individual	No	*	Yes	Ottawa, ON
7	Diving	Summer	Individual	No	Yes	Yes	Ottawa, ON
8	Shooting	Summer	Individual	No	*	Yes	Ottawa, ON
9	Water Ski and Wakeboard	Summer	Individual	No	*	No	Ottawa, ON
10	Taekwondo	Summer	Individual	No	*	Yes	Toronto/Ottawa, ON
	Archery	Summer	Individual	Yes	*	Yes	Ottawa, ON
	Boccia	Summer	Individual	No	No	No	Ottawa, ON
	Bowling - 5 & 10 Pin	Summer	Individual	No	No	No	Ottawa, ON
	Boxing	Summer	Individual	Yes	*	Yes	Montreal, QC
	Bridge ⁴	Summer	Individual	No	*	No	Maple, ON
	Chess ⁴	Summer	Individual	No	*	No	Burlington, ON
	Climbing ⁴	Summer	Individual	No	*	No	?
	Cricket	Summer	Individual	No	No	No	Woodbridge, ON
	Equestrian	Summer	Individual	No	*	Yes	Ottawa, ON
	Fencing	Summer	Individual	No	Yes	Yes	St Catharines, ON
	Golf	Summer	Individual	No	*	Yes	Oakville, ON
	Gymnastics	Summer	Individual	No	Yes	Yes	Ottawa, ON
	Judo	Summer	Individual	No	Yes	Yes	Ottawa/Montreal
	Karate	Summer	Individual	No	*	No	Montreal, QC
	Lawn Bowls	Summer	Individual	Yes	No	No	Ottawa, ON
	Orienteering ⁴	Summer	Individual	No	*	No	Calgary, AB
	Pentathlon ⁴	Summer	Individual	No	*	Yes	Amaranth, ON
	Racquetball	Summer	Individual	No	No	No	Varied
	Roller Sport ⁴	Summer	Individual	No	*	No	Whitby, ON
	Sambo ⁴	Summer	Individual	No	*	No	Toronto, ON
	Squash	Summer	Individual	Yes	*	No	Ottawa, ON
	Table Tennis	Summer	Individual	No	Yes	Yes	Ottawa, ON
	Triathlon	Summer	Individual	No	*	Yes	Victoria, BC
	Weightlifting	Summer	Individual	Yes	*	Yes	Online

	Wrestling	Summer	Individual	No	*	Yes	Ottawa, ON
	Wushu ⁴	Summer	Individual	No	*		Scarborough, ON
	Summer/Team						
1	Volleyball	Summer	Team	No	Yes	Yes	Ottawa, ON
2	Cycling	Summer	Team	No	*	Yes	Ottawa, ON
3	Soccer	Summer	Team	No	Yes	Yes	Ottawa, ON
4	Rugby	Summer	Team	Yes	*	Yes	Richmond Hill, ON
5	Baseball	Summer	Team	No	*	No	Ottawa, ON
6	Synchronized Swimming	Summer	Team	No	No	No	Ottawa, ON
7	Water Polo	Summer	Team	No	Yes	No	Ottawa, ON
8	Softball	Summer	Team	No	No	No	Ottawa, ON
9	Basketball	Summer	Team	No	Yes	Yes	Etobicoke, ON
10	Sailing	Summer	Team	No	*	Yes	Kingston, ON
	Cheerleading ⁴	Summer	Team	No	*	No	Oakville, ON
	Field Hockey	Summer	Team	No	No	Yes	Ottawa, ON
	Floorball ⁴	Summer	Team	No	*	No	Longueuil, QC
	Football	Summer	Team	No	*	No	Ottawa, ON
	Futsal ⁴	Summer	Team	No	*	No	Toronto, ON
	Goalball	Summer	Team	No		No	Vancouver, BC
	Handball ⁴	Summer	Team	No	*	Yes	Varied
	Korfball ⁴	Summer	Team	No	*	No	Email Only
	Lacrosse	Summer	Team	No	No	No	Ottawa, ON
	Netball ⁴	Summer	Team	No	*	No	Email Only
	Wheelchair Rugby	Summer	Team	No		No	Ottawa, ON
	Winter/Individual						
1	Biathlon	Winter	Individual	No	Yes	Yes	Ottawa, ON
2	Speedskating	Winter	Individual	No	Yes	Yes	Ottawa, ON
3	Alpine Skiing	Winter	Individual	No	Yes	Yes	Calgary, AB
4	Figure Skating	Winter	Individual	No	Yes	Yes	Ottawa, ON
5	Freestyle Skiing	Winter	Individual	No	No	Yes	Vancouver, BC
6	Bobsleigh	Winter	Individual	No	No	Yes	Calgary, AB
7	Nordic Combined⁴	Winter	Individual	No	Yes	Yes	Calgary, AB
8	Skeleton	Winter	Individual	No	No	Yes	Calgary, AB
9	Ski Jumping⁴	Winter	Individual	No	Yes	Yes	Calgary, AB
10	Luge	Winter	Individual	No	No	Yes	Calgary/Whistler
	Cross Country Skiing	Winter	Individual	No	Yes	Yes	Canmore, AB
	Snowboard	Winter	Individual	No	Yes	Yes	Vancouver, BC
	Winter/Team						
1	Curling	Winter	Team	No	Yes	Yes	Ottawa, ON

Appendix B – Interview Guide English

Interview Guides

Paper 1

RQ 2: What processes are currently used by Canadian sport system stakeholders to create such policies? How are such policies implemented?

Interviews with: All Canadian sport system stakeholders

- What is your role with the organization?
- Do you have a role in the development of policies by Sport Canada? Why or why not?
 - If yes, what kind of role
- What do you think of Sport Canada's policies? Are they successful?
- How would you describe the spectrum of LTAD models and their implementation across Canadian NSOs?
 - What might affect an NSO's placement on this spectrum?
- Where would you place your organization, or NSOs in general, in terms of being an LTAD leader?
 - At the forefront? Average? Later to join the movement?
- To the best of your knowledge, how would you say an NSO's LTAD model affects financial decisions?
 - External funding?
 - Allocation of funds?
 - Systems in place?
 - If so, how? If not, why not?

- What role does your organization play in the selection and/or support of international youth multi-sport Games attended by Canadian athletes?
- How does your organization select which international events it will fund and/or support?
 - What factors are considered when making this decision?
 - Who is in charge of this decision?
 - Are multiple individuals involved in this decision?
 - Are they from within your organization or outside?
 - Who has the biggest impact on the decision?
 - Why?
- How would you define successful implementation of such policies?
 - In your opinion, has Canada (or your NSO) been successful? Why or why not?
- What role do coaches play in event selection?
 - How might this change from one coach to the next, within the same sport?
 - From one sport to the next?
 - As NCCP changes their policies?
- Are NSOs involved in the creation of sport policies?
 - Why or why not?
 - If so, how?
- Are athletes involved in the creation of sport policies?
 - Why or why not?
 - If so, how?
- Do you account for differences from sport to sport when creating new policies?
 - If so, how?

- In your opinion, could national multi-sport events, like the Canada Games, produce the same benefits as international elite youth Games?
 - Why or why not?
 - How?
- Are similar approaches used for national events?
- Is there anything else you would like to say about international developmental youth multi-sport events?
 - And their value in athlete development?

Sport Canada specific

- What policies are in place in relation to funding and/or support for elite multi-sport events for youth?
- What are their main purposes?
- What factors are taken into consideration when creating these policies?
- How would you define successful implementation of such policies?
 - In your opinion, has Canada been successful? Why or why not?

Athlete Representative specific

- Have you ever participated in an elite international multi-sport Games geared towards youth, such as the Youth Olympic Games, Universiade or Commonwealth Games?
 - If so, which ones?
 - Why or why not?
- What do you think of elite international multi-sport Games geared towards youth?
 - Do you see value in them? Why or why not?
 - Do you think they are important to develop as an elite athlete? Why or why not?

- Do you feel participating (or not participating) affected your performance later as an elite athlete?
 - How so?
- Based on your experience, could national multi-sport events, like the Canada Games, produce the same benefits as international Games?
 - Why or why not?
 - If so, how?
- Is there anything else you would like to say about elite international developmental youth multi-sport events?
 - And their value in athlete development?

NSO Specific

- When was an LTAD model first implemented at your NSO?
- What pushed the creation of this document?
- Did any stakeholders or documents guide the LTAD creation process?
 - A document?
 - An expert?
 - Another NSO?
 - Another sport organization?
 - Someone within your organization?
 - Someone external?
- Has your LTAD model changed over time?
 - If so, how would you say it has changed?
 - When were these changes apparent?

- What processes guided this change (or lack thereof)?
 - Refinement through your own testing?
 - More information available?
 - New leader within your organization?
 - New external guidance?
 - New findings about LTAD in general?

Events Rights Holders Specific

- What support do you receive from other stakeholders when athletes are attending your Games?
 - Is this similar to other events?
 - Why or why not?
- Which stakeholders do you work with when making decisions about your own event?
 - Why?
- Do you receive funding from Sport Canada? If so, for what?
 - Does your organization receive funding for these Games? If so, for what?
- Do you receive funding from other stakeholders? If so, for what?
 - Does your organization receive funding for these Games? If so, for what?

Paper 2

How do NSOs prioritize international youth multi-sport events within their LTAD model?

- How do the NSOs perceive the pressures placed upon them from Canadian sport system stakeholders/policy makers?
- How do they respond to the pressures when selecting Games for elite youth?
- Are there differences between sports, if so, what are they and why?

Stakeholder approach and Institutional Theory*Sport Canada Specific Background Information*

- What policies are in place in relation to funding and/or support for elite multi-sport events for youth?
- What are their main purposes?
- When evaluating how NSOs adhere to these policies, what are the main priorities?
- Can you please elaborate on why the LTAD model was implemented?
 - What roles do NSOs have in their creation?
 - What roles do NSOs have in their implementation?
 - What roles do athletes have in their creation?
 - What roles do athletes have in their implementation?
 - What differences do you see amongst NSOs?

Interviews with: National Sport Organizations

- How does your NSO select the international events your athletes will attend?
 - What factors come into play when making this decision?
 - Are national developmental events viewed the same way? Why or why not?
 - Who is in charge of this decision?
 - Are multiple individuals involved in this decision? If so, who and why?
 - Does this change from year to year?
 - Why or why not?
 - Are the events explicitly listed in the LTAD model?
 - Why or why not?

- How does your NSO select the youth multi-sport international events your athletes will attend?
 - What factors come into play when making this decision?
 - Are national developmental events viewed the same way?
 - Who is in charge of this decision?
 - Are multiple individuals involved in this decision?
 - Does this change from year to year?
 - Why?
- What makes your elite international youth multi-sport event selection different from other sports?
 - What factors contribute to these differences?
- How far in advance do you plan your competition schedule?
- What factors are taken into consideration when choosing your youth elite/junior national team competition calendar?
 - Is there guidance from your international federation? Sport Canada? Own the Podium? SFAF? Other policies?
 - Are athletes involved in this selection?
 - Why or why not?
 - If so, how are they involved?
- When looking at the last cycle of Games, did your sport send athletes to each of the following:
 - Universiade?
 - Youth Olympic Games?

- Commonwealth Youth Games?
 - Olympic Games?
- Do you receive athlete feedback about event selection?
 - Before? What kind of feedback? How?
 - What do you do with this feedback?
 - During the events? What kind of feedback? How?
 - What do you do with this feedback?
 - After the events? What kind of feedback? How?
 - What do you do with this feedback?
- What value do you see in international multi-sport Games for youth?
 - Has the role of these Games changed in the past?
 - Are other sectors of your sport affecting this decision? If so, how?
 - What value do you see in international developmental Games in athlete development? (as opposed to general value)? Why?
 - Has this changed in the past? If so, how?
- Do you see the same value in national developmental Games as you do international ones? Why or why not?
 - In your opinion, what is the difference between the two?
 - What value do you see specifically related to athlete development in national developmental Games compared to international ones? (as opposed to general value)?
- How do policies put in place by Sport Canada affect your NSO's decisions in terms of event selection?

- Which ones?
 - How?
- Does Own the Podium funding play a role in event selection for athletes who have not yet reached the highest competitive level?
 - How would a change in funding from one quadrennial to the next affect this decision?
 - Does Own the Podium have a greater, similar or lesser influence than Sport Canada?
- Is there anything else you would like to say about international developmental youth multi-sport events?
 - And their value or impact on youth athlete development?

Appendix C – Interview Guide French

Partie 1

QR 2 : Quels processus sont présentement utilisés par les parties prenantes du système de sport canadien pour créer ces politiques ? Comment sont-elles mises en œuvre?

Entrevues avec : Toutes parties prenantes canadiennes

- Quel est votre rôle dans votre organisation?
- Avez-vous un rôle dans le développement de politiques créées par Sport Canada?
Pourquoi ou pourquoi pas?
 - Si oui, quelle sorte de rôle?
- Que pensez-vous des politiques de Sport Canada? Sont-elles réussies?
 - Si oui, comment? Si non, pourquoi pas?
- Comment décririez-vous le spectre des modèles du DLTA et leur mise en œuvre à travers les ONS du Canada?
 - Qu'est-ce qui pourrait affecter le placement d'un ONS sur ce spectre?
- Où placeriez-vous votre organisation (ou les ONS en général) en tant que leader du DLTA?
 - À l'avant-garde?
 - Moyenne?
 - Plus tard à se joindre?
- Selon vous, comment est-ce un modèle DLTA influe sur les décisions financières?
 - Financement externe?
 - Allocation de fonds?
 - Systèmes en place?

- Quel rôle votre organisation, joue-t-il dans la sélection et/ou le soutien des événements multisports internationaux de jeunesse assistés par les athlètes canadiens?
- Comment est-ce que votre organisation choisit les événements internationaux auxquels vos athlètes participeront?
 - Quels facteurs sont pris en considération en prenant la décision?
 - Qui est en charge de la décision?
 - Est-ce que plusieurs individus sont impliqués dans cette prise de décision?
 - Sont-ils de votre organisation ou un autre?
 - Qui a le plus grand impact sur la décision?
 - Pourquoi?
- Comment définiriez-vous la mise en œuvre réussie de ces politiques?
 - Selon vous, le Canada (ou votre OSN) a-t-il réussi? Pourquoi ou pourquoi pas?
- Quel rôle jouent les entraîneurs dans la sélection des événements?
 - Comment pourrait-il se changer d'un entraîneur à l'autre, dans le même sport?
 - D'un sport à l'autre?
 - Avec les changements de politiques de PNCE?
- Les ONS, sont-elles impliqués dans la création de politiques sportives?
 - Pourquoi ou pourquoi pas?
 - Si oui, comment?
- Les athlètes, sont-ils impliqués dans la création de politiques sportives?
 - Pourquoi ou pourquoi pas?
 - Si oui, comment?

- Y-a-t-il d'autres informations que vous voudriez ajouter à propos des événements internationaux de développement pour la jeunesse?
- Prenez-vous en considération les différences d'un sport à l'autre en créant les nouvelles politiques?
 - Si oui, comment?
- Selon vous, les événements multisports nationaux, tel que les Jeux du Canada, produisent-ils les mêmes bénéfices que les Jeux internationaux pour la jeunesse élite?
 - Pourquoi ou pourquoi pas?
 - Comment?
- Des approches semblables, sont-elles utilisées pour les événements nationaux?
- Y-a-t-il d'autres informations que vous voudriez ajouter à propos des événements internationaux de développement pour la jeunesse?
 - Et leur valeur pour le développement des athlètes?

Sport Canada spécifique

- Quelles politiques sont en place en ce qui concerne le financement et/ou de soutien des événements multisports de jeunesse?
- Quels sont leurs objectifs principaux?
- Quels facteurs sont pris en considération en créant ces politiques?
- Comment définiriez-vous la mise en œuvre réussie de ces politiques?
 - Selon vous, Sport Canada a-t-il réussi? Pourquoi ou pourquoi pas?

Représentants d'athlètes

- Avez-vous déjà participé à un événement multisport international axé sur les jeunes, tels que les Jeux olympiques de la jeunesse, les Universiades ou les Jeux du Commonwealth?

- Si oui, lesquels?
 - Pourquoi ou pourquoi pas?
- Que pensez-vous des Jeux multisports internationaux axés sur les jeunes?
 - Est-ce que vous voyez de la valeur en eux? Pourquoi ou pourquoi pas?
 - Pensez-vous qu'ils sont importants pour se développer comme un athlète de niveau élite? Pourquoi ou pourquoi pas?
- Croyez-vous que participer (ou ne pas participer) dans de tels événements, vous a affecté plus tard dans votre performance au niveau élite sénior?
 - Comment?
- À votre avis, les événements multisports nationaux, comme les Jeux du Canada, pourraient-ils produire les mêmes avantages que les Jeux internationaux?
 - Pourquoi ou pourquoi pas?
 - Si oui, comment?
- Y-a-t-il d'autres informations que vous voudriez ajouter à propos des événements internationaux de développement pour la jeunesse?
 - Et leur valeur pour le développement des athlètes?

ONS spécifique

- Quand est-ce un modèle de DLTA a-t-il été créé pour la première fois par votre ONS?
- Qu'est-ce qui a poussé la création de ce document?
 - Des intervenants ou documents, ont-ils guidé le processus de création du DLTA?
 - Un document?
 - Un expert?
 - Un autre ONS?

- Une autre organisation sportive?
 - Quelqu'un au sein de votre organisation?
 - Quelqu'un externe?
- Votre modèle DLTA a-t-il changé au cours des années?
 - Si oui, comment diriez-vous qu'il a changé?
 - Quand ces changements se sont-ils manifestés?
- Quels processus ont guidé ce changement (ou l'absence de changement)?
 - Précisions à travers vos propres tests?
 - Plus d'informations disponibles?
 - Un nouveau leader au sein de votre organisation?
 - Nouvelles directives externes?
 - De nouvelles découvertes sur le DLTA en général?

Droits de détenteurs d'événements spécifiques

- Quel soutien recevez-vous d'autres parties prenantes quand les athlètes participent à vos Jeux?
 - Est-ce semblable aux autres événements?
 - Pourquoi ou pourquoi pas?
- Avec quelles parties prenantes travaillez-vous en prenant des décisions à propos de votre événement?
 - Pourquoi?
- Recevez-vous du financement de Sport Canada? Si oui, pour quoi?
 - Votre organisation, reçoit-elle du financement pour ces Jeux? Si oui, pour quoi?
- Recevez-vous du financement d'autres parties prenantes? Si oui, pour quoi?

- Votre organisation, reçoit-elle du financement pour ces Jeux? Si oui, pour quoi?

Partie 2

Comment les ONS donnent-elles la priorité aux événements multisports internationaux de jeunesse?

- Comment les ONS perçoivent-elles les pressions exercées sur eux par les parties prenantes responsables de l'élaboration des politiques?
- Comment réagissent-ils aux pressions lors de la sélection des Jeux pour leurs jeunes élites?
- Y a-t-il des différences entre les sports, si oui, que sont-ils et pourquoi?

Démarche des parties prenantes et la théorie institutionnelle

Informations générales sur le Sport Canada

- Quelles politiques sont en place en ce qui concerne le financement et/ou de soutien des événements multisports de jeunesse?
- Quels sont leurs objectifs principaux?
- Quand vous évaluez comment les ONS suivent ces politiques, quelles sont vos priorités?
- Pourriez-vous élaborer sur les raisons pour lesquelles le modèle DLTA a été mis en œuvre?
 - Quels rôles les ONS ont-elles dans la création des plans DLTA?
 - Quels rôles les ONS ont-elles dans la mise en œuvre des plans DLTA?
 - Quels rôles les athlètes ont-ils dans la création des plans DLTA?
 - Quels rôles les athlètes ont-ils dans la mise en œuvre des plans DLTA?
 - Quelles différences voyez-vous parmi les ONS?

Entrevues avec : Organismes nationaux de sport

- Comment est-ce que votre ONS choisit les événements internationaux auxquels vos athlètes participeront?
 - Quels facteurs sont pris en considération en prenant cette décision?
 - Est-ce que les événements nationaux sont traités de la même manière?
 - Qui est en charge de la décision?
 - Est-ce que plusieurs individus sont impliqués dans cette prise de décision?
 - Est-ce que cela change d'une année à l'autre?
 - Pourquoi ou pourquoi pas?
 - Les événements sont-elles énumérés par nom dans le modèle DLTA?
 - Pourquoi or pourquoi pas?
- Comment est-ce que votre ONS choisit les événements multisports de jeunesse auxquels vos athlètes participeront?
 - Quels facteurs sont pris en considération en prenant cette décision?
 - Est-ce que les événements nationaux sont traités de la même manière?
 - Qui est en charge de la décision?
 - Est-ce que plusieurs individus sont impliqués dans cette prise de décision?
 - Est-ce que cela change d'une année à l'autre?
 - Pourquoi ou pourquoi pas?
- Qu'est-ce qui rend votre sélection d'événements internationaux différente des autres sports?
 - Quels facteurs contribuent à ces différences?
- Combien de temps à l'avance planifiez-vous votre calendrier compétitif?

- Quels facteurs sont pris en considération en choisissant votre calendrier compétitif pour vos athlètes juniors élités de niveau national?
 - Y-a-t-il de la direction de la part de votre fédération internationale? De Sport Canada? À nous le podium? Du Cadre de financement et de responsabilité en matière de sport? Autres politiques?
 - Les athlètes, participent-ils dans cette sélection?
 - Pourquoi ou pourquoi pas?
 - Si oui, comment participent-ils?
- En considérant le dernier cycle des Jeux, votre sport, a-t-il envoyé des athlètes aux Jeux suivants :
 - Universiade?
 - Jeux Olympiques de la Jeunesse?
 - Jeux de la Jeunesse du Commonwealth?
 - Jeux Olympiques?
- Recevez-vous de la rétroaction (feedback) des athlètes auprès de cette sélection d'événements?
 - Avant? Quelle sorte de rétroaction (feedback)? Comment?
 - Que faites-vous avec cette rétroaction?
 - Durant les événements? Quelle sorte de rétroaction (feedback)? Comment?
 - Que faites-vous avec cette rétroaction?
 - Après? Quelle sorte de rétroaction (feedback)? Comment?
 - Que faites-vous avec cette rétroaction?
- Quelle valeur voyez-vous dans les Jeux multisports de jeunesse?

- Est-ce que le rôle de ces Jeux a changé dans le passé?
- Est-ce que d'autres secteurs de votre sport ont influencé vos décisions?
- Quelle valeur voyez-vous dans les Jeux internationaux de développement en terme de développement d'athlète (plutôt que valeur générale)? Pourquoi?
 - Est-ce que cela a changé dans le passé? Si oui, comment?
- Voyez-vous la même valeur dans les Jeux nationaux de développement comparativement aux Jeux internationaux? Pourquoi ou pourquoi pas?
 - Selon vous, quelle est la différence entre les deux?
 - Quelle valeur voyez-vous relié spécifiquement au développement des athlètes aux Jeux nationaux comparativement aux Jeux internationaux (plutôt que valeur générale)?
- Comment est-ce que les politiques de Sport Canada affectent les décisions de votre ONS en termes de sélection d'événements?
 - Lesquelles?
 - Comment?
- En considérant les athlètes qui n'ont pas encore atteint le plus haut niveau de compétition, le financement d'À Nous le Podium, joue-t-il un rôle en choisissant les événements?
 - Comment un changement de financement d'une quadriennale à l'autre affectera-t-il cette décision?
 - À Nous le Podium, a-t-il une influence plus grande, semblable, ou moindre que Sport Canada?

- Y-a-t-il d'autres informations que vous voudriez ajouter à propos des événements internationaux de développement pour la jeunesse?
 - Et leur valeur ou impact sur le développement des jeunes athlètes?

Appendix C – Reviewed NSO Interview Guide

Part 1

RQ 2: What processes are currently used by Canadian sport system stakeholders to create such policies? How are such policies implemented?

Organization Structure

- What is your role with the organization?
- Structure of organization – Board vs. Staff
 - Job titles?
 - Is there an Athletes' Committee? If so, what is their role?
 - On what aspects do they have a say?
 - Why?

Sport Canada Relations

- Do you have a role in the development of policies by Sport Canada? Why or why not?
 - If yes, what kind of role?
- Do you have any regular interactions with Sport Canada?
 - If so, what kind?
 - Between whom is the interaction?
- In an ideal world, what would the Canadian sport system look like to you?
- How would you define successful implementation of such policies?
 - In your opinion, has Canada (or your NSO) been successful? Why or why not?
- Are NSOs involved in the creation of national sport policies?
 - Why or why not?
 - If so, how?

- Are athletes from your NSO involved in the creation of national sport policies?
 - Why or why not?
 - If so, how?
 - Does the same apply for policies within your NSO?
- Do you believe differences from sport to sport are accounted for when creating new policies?
 - If so, how?

NSO Specific

LTAD

- When was an LTAD model first implemented at your NSO?
- What pushed the creation of this document?
- Does this apply to both sport for all and high performance?
- Did any stakeholders or documents guide the LTAD/high performance stream creation process?
 - A document?
 - An expert?
 - Another NSO?
 - Another sport organization?
 - Someone within your organization?
 - Someone external?
- Has your LTAD model changed over time?
 - If so, how would you say it has changed?
 - When were these changes apparent?

- What processes guided this change (or lack thereof) (Creation of survey)?
 - Refinement through your own testing?
 - More information available?
 - New leader within your organization?
 - New external guidance?
 - New findings about LTAD in general?
- How would you describe the spectrum of LTAD models and their implementation across Canadian NSOs?
 - What might affect an NSO's placement on this spectrum?
- Where would you place your organization, or NSOs in general, in terms of being an LTAD leader?
 - At the forefront? Average? Later to join the movement?
- To the best of your knowledge, how would you say an NSO's LTAD model affects financial decisions?
 - External funding?
 - Allocation of funds?
 - Systems in place?

If so, how? If not, why not?

Provincial Differences

- Do you notice a major difference in LTAD models from province to province?
 - Does this affect the competition level?
- Are certain provinces known to be powerhouses?
 - Does this affect national competitions?

- Why do you think these differences exist?
- What is the relationship and structure of clubs, provinces, and the national level?
 - How would you describe the roles and relationships?
 - When does one play a larger role over another?
 - Who coordinates these relationships?
 - Do you see them as being effective?
 - Why?
- How does an athlete transition from provincial athlete to a national level one?
 - By age? By skill?
- What resources are available for younger athletes?

Competition Structure

- What factors are taken into consideration when choosing your youth elite/junior national team competition calendar?
 - Is there guidance from your international federation?
 - How do policies put in place by Sport Canada affect your NSO's decisions in terms of event selection?
 - Which ones?
 - How?
 - Does Own the Podium funding play a role in event selection for athletes who have not yet reached the highest competitive level?
 - How would a change in funding from one quadrennial to the next affect this decision?

- Does Own the Podium have a greater, similar or lesser influence than Sport Canada?
 - SFAF or other policies?
- How far in advance do you plan your competition schedule?

International Events

- How does your organization select which international events it will fund and/or support?
 - What factors are considered when making this decision?
 - Who is in charge of this decision?
 - Are multiple individuals involved in this decision?
 - Are they from within your organization or outside?
 - Who has the biggest impact on the decision?
 - Why?

Single vs. Multi-sport

- When looking at the last cycle of Games, did your sport send athletes to each of the following:
 - Universiade?
 - Youth Olympic Games?
 - Commonwealth Youth Games?
 - Olympic Games?
- How are single and multi-sport events different from one another?
- What makes your elite international youth multi-sport event selection different from other sports?
 - What factors contribute to these differences?

- In your opinion, could national multi-sport events, like the Canada Games, produce the same benefits as international elite youth Games?
 - Why or why not?
 - How?
 - Are similar approaches used for national events?
- What value do you see in international multi-sport Games for youth?
 - Has the role of these Games changed in the past?
 - Are other sectors of your sport affecting this decision? If so, how?
 - What value do you see in international developmental Games in athlete development? (as opposed to general value)? Why?
 - Has this changed in the past? If so, how?
- Do you see the same value in national developmental Games as you do international ones? Why or why not?
 - In your opinion, what is the difference between the two?
 - What value do you see specifically related to athlete development in national developmental Games compared to international ones? (as opposed to general value)?

Closing

- Is there anything else you would like to say about international developmental youth multi-sport events?
 - And their value or impact on youth athlete development?

Appendix D – Letter of Intent

****Message en français suivra****

Dear [INSERT PARTICIPANT’S NAME],

My name is Natalie Marcotte. I am a master’s student in the School of Human Kinetics at the University of Ottawa. With my supervisor, Dr. Milena Parent, I am currently conducting a research study titled, “International Youth Multi-Sport Events as a Vehicle for Sport Development in Canada?”

This research aims to explore how Canadian sport system stakeholders use international elite youth multi-sport events in their sport development framework. To do this, we are conducting interviews with key individuals from each of these groups.

I am contacting you because you are [INSERT ROLE of a leader of a Canadian sport system stakeholder]. Your participation is important for this study so I can understand the complexity of selecting which events youth athletes participate in at the international level, so resources can be maximized, and athlete progression through the sport development pathway can be optimized.

The interview is scheduled to last no more than one hour. The interview can be done in person at a location convenient for you, by phone, or over Skype at a time of your choosing. You will receive a pseudonym to protect your identity, but the organization you represent may be identified in the study. As such, anonymity cannot be guaranteed in this study, but there is no risk to you in terms of physical or social harm.

Your involvement is completely voluntary and no compensation will be offered. However, the findings of the study will be made available to you should you so wish.

This study, conducted independently of your sport organization, has received ethics approval by the University of Ottawa Research Ethics Board (REB) (#H06-16-07). If you have any questions, comments or concerns, please contact the supervisor, Dr. Milena M. Parent at _____, or the Office of Research Ethics and Integrity at ethics@uottawa.ca.

To participate in the interview, simply e-mail me back or call me at the number below.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours in sport,

Natalie Marcotte (_____)
School of Human Kinetics

University of Ottawa
125 University Pvt (Montpetit Hall,)
Ottawa, Ontario K1N 6N5

.....

Cher/Chère [INSÉRER le nom du participant/de la participante],

Mon nom est Natalie Marcotte. Je suis une étudiante de maîtrise à l'École des sciences de l'activité physique de l'Université d'Ottawa. Avec ma directrice de thèse, Professeure Milena Parent, je mène présentement un projet de recherche intitulé « Événements multisports internationaux de jeunesse comme véhicule de développement du sport au Canada ».

Cette recherche a pour but d'expliquer comment les parties prenantes du système sportif canadien utilisent les événements multisports internationaux de jeunesse dans leurs cadres de développement du sport. Pour ce faire, je mène des entrevus avec des individus clés de chacun de ces groupes.

Je communique avec vous car vous êtes un [INSÉRER individu clé actuel d'une les partie prenante du système de sport canadien]. Votre participation est essentielle dans cette étude pour que nous puissions comprendre le degré de complexité relative à la sélection des compétitions internationales pour la jeunesse afin que les ressources puissent être maximisées et que la progression des athlètes à travers le système de développement d'un sport soit optimisée.

L'entrevue ne prendra pas plus d'une heure. L'entrevue peut se faire en personne à un endroit qui vous convient, par téléphone ou par Skype à l'heure qui vous convient. Vous recevrez un pseudonyme pour protéger votre identité, mais l'organisation que vous représentez sera possiblement identifiée dans l'étude. Ainsi, l'anonymat ne peut être garanti dans cette étude, mais il n'y a pas de risques physiques ou sociaux pour vous.

Votre implication est complètement volontaire et aucune compensation ne sera offerte. Par contre, les résultats de l'étude vous seront rendu disponibles si vous le désirez.

Cette étude, entreprise indépendamment de votre organisation sportive, a reçu approbation éthique par le Comité de déontologie de l'Université d'Ottawa (#H06-16-07). Si vous avez des questions, commentaires ou inquiétudes, veuillez communiquer avec la directrice de thèse, Prof. Milena M. Parent à , ou le Responsable de l'éthique en recherche, à ethics@uottawa.ca.

Pour participer à l'entrevue, veuillez répondre à ce courriel ou m'appeler au numéro ci-dessous.

Merci et bonne journée,

Natalie Marcotte ()

École des sciences de l'activité physique
Université d'Ottawa

| 125, Université (Pavillon Montpetit,)
| Ottawa (Ontario) K1N 6N5



Université d'Ottawa | University of Ottawa

École des sciences de l'activité physique | School of Human Kinetics

125 Université | 125 University Private
Ottawa, Ontario, K1N 6N5

Appendix E

Multi-Sport Events as a vehicle for Sport Development in Canada?

Consent Form

Investigator: Natalie Marcotte, University of Ottawa (School of Human Kinetics, Faculty of Health Sciences), 125 University Pvt., Ottawa, ON, K1N 6N5, Canada. Tel:
, Email:

Supervisor: Milena M. Parent, University of Ottawa (School of Human Kinetics, Faculty of Health Sciences), 125 University Pvt., Ottawa, ON, K1N 6N5, Canada. Tel:
, Email:

Invitation to Participate: I am invited to participate in the above mentioned research study conducted by Natalie Marcotte, in the context of a Master's thesis, and supervised by Milena Parent. This study is funded by the University of Ottawa.

Purpose of the Study: The purpose of this research is to understand how Canadian sport system stakeholders use international elite youth multi-sport events in their sport development framework.

Participation: My participation will consist of taking part in one phone or face-to-face interview of 30 minutes to 1 hour, during which I will be asked questions relating to the above purpose. As this research may be related to other staff members or athlete representatives within my sport federation, I or someone else in my organization will facilitate the recruitment. With my permission, the interview will be audio recorded. Otherwise, the researchers will simply take notes during the interview.

Risks: My participation in this study will not entail any foreseeable risks.

Benefits: My participation in this study will allow the researchers to provide recommendations to the government policy makers and National Sport Organizations for future event participation selection, as well as allow me to reflect on my organization's activities in relation to sport development and elite youth.

Confidentiality and anonymity: I have received assurance from the researchers that the information I will share will remain strictly confidential. I understand that the contents will be used only for academic purposes (publications, technical reports) and that my confidentiality will be protected. I understand that my name will not appear in the research findings; only a broad title such as "NSO Representative 1" will be used. However, the study will be reporting which organizations have participated, as well as the general criteria for staff inclusion in the study.

Given that some organizations do not have an extensive staff, it may be possible to determine the participant based on the organization's website directory. Therefore, full anonymity cannot be guaranteed. However, confidentiality of the information will remain of utmost importance. It is understood that only the researchers will have access to the data. The data will be transcribed and then analysed using the software programs NVivo. I will be given the chance to review my transcript to ensure the accuracy of the information. If I choose to have my transcript sent to me via email, I understand the potential security risks (i.e., the everyday risk of interference associated with this mode of communication). I will be able to add, delete or modify the information given. The results will be pooled and made available in the form of technical reports, presentations, dissertation, and articles submitted to scientific journals.

Conservation of data: The data collected (archival material, audio recordings of interviews, transcripts, notes, and data analysis files) will be kept in a locked file cabinet in the supervisor's office for five years post-publication. Only the researchers will have access to this information.

Voluntary Participation: I am under no obligation to participate and if I choose to participate, I can withdraw from the study at any time and/or refuse to answer any questions, without suffering any negative consequences. If I withdraw from the study, I will decide at that point if I want the researchers to use my data or if I want them to destroy it and not use it.

Acceptance:

I, _____, agree to participate in the above research study conducted by Ms. Natalie Marcotte and Dr. Milena Parent (School of Human Kinetics, Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Ottawa). I understand that by accepting to participate I am in no way waiving my right to withdraw from the study.

If I have any questions about the study, I may contact the researchers. If I have any ethical concerns regarding my participation in this study, I may contact the University of Ottawa's Protocol Officer for Ethics in Research, Tabaret Hall, 550 Cumberland Street, Room 154, Ottawa, ON, K1N 6N5, tel.: 613.562.5387, email: ethics@uottawa.ca.

There are two copies of the consent form, one of which is mine to keep.

Participant's signature:

Date:

Researcher's signature:

Date:



Université d'Ottawa | University of Ottawa

École des sciences de l'activité physique | School of Human Kinetics

125 Université | 125 University Private
Ottawa, Ontario, K1N 6N5

Événements multisports internationaux de jeunesse comme véhicule de développement du sport au Canada

Formulaire de consentement

Chercheuse: Natalie Marcotte, Université d'Ottawa (École des sciences de l'activité physique, Faculté des sciences de la santé), 125 rue Université, Ottawa, ON, K1N 6N5, Canada. Tél: , Courriel:

Directrice de thèse: Milena M. Parent, Université d'Ottawa (École des sciences de l'activité physique, Faculté des sciences de la santé), 125, rue Université, Ottawa, ON, K1N 6N5, Canada. Tél: , Courriel:

Invitation à participer: Je suis invité(e) à participer à la recherche nommée ci-haut menée par Natalie Marcotte, dans le cadre de la thèse de maîtrise, et supervisée par Milena Parent. Cette étude est supportée par l'Université d'Ottawa.

But de l'étude: Le but de l'étude est de comprendre comment les parties prenantes du système de sport canadien utilisent les événements multisports internationaux de jeunesse dans leurs cadres de développement du sport.

Participation: Ma participation consistera à participer à une entrevue par téléphone ou en personne qui durera entre 30 minutes et 1 heure, pendant laquelle je serais demandé des questions par rapport au but décrit ci-haut. Comme cette recherche peut être liée à d'autres membres du personnel ou un représentant des athlètes au sein de ma fédération sportive, soit moi-même ou une autre personne de mon organisation aidera avec le recrutement. Avec ma permission, l'entrevue sera enregistrée par audio. Sinon, la chercheuse prendra simplement des notes durant l'entrevue.

Risques: Ma participation cette recherche ne consiste en aucun risque prévisible.

Bienfaits: Ma participation à cette recherche aura pour effet de fournir des recommandations aux créateurs de politiques et aux organismes nationaux de sport pour les futures sélections d'événements. De plus, je pourrais réfléchir sur les activités de mon organisation en relation au développement du sport et de la jeunesse élite.

Confidentialité et anonymat: J'ai l'assurance de la chercheuse que l'information que je partagerai avec elle restera strictement confidentielle. Je m'attends à ce que le contenu ne soit utilisé que pour des raisons académiques (publications, rapports techniques) et que ma confidentialité soit protégée. Je comprends que mon nom n'apparaîtra pas dans les résultats de la

recherche; seulement un titre général comme «Organisme national de sport 1» sera utilisé. Cependant, l'étude inclura le nom des organisations qui ont participé ainsi que les critères pour inclusion du personnel dans l'étude. Étant donné que certaines organisations ont un personnel limité, il peut être possible de déterminer le participant basé sur le répertoire du site web de l'organisation. Par conséquent, l'anonymat complet ne peut pas être garanti. Toutefois, la confidentialité de l'information restera d'une importance capitale. Il est entendu que seules les chercheuses auront accès aux données. Les données seront transcrites puis analysées en utilisant les logiciels NVivo. J'aurai la chance de lire ma transcription d'entrevue pour m'assurer de son exactitude. Si je choisis de me faire envoyer ma transcription par courriel, je comprends les risques potentiels de sécurité (à savoir, le risque quotidien d'interférence associé à ce mode de communication). Je serai en mesure d'ajouter, supprimer ou modifier les informations dans la transcription. Les résultats de l'étude seront regroupés et mis à disposition sous la forme de rapports techniques, présentations, dissertation, et les articles soumis à des revues scientifiques.

Conservation des données: Les données recueillies (les documents, enregistrements audio des entrevues, transcriptions, notes et fichiers d'analyse de données) seront conservées dans une armoire à dossiers barrée dans le bureau de la directrice de thèse pendant cinq ans après la publication. Seules les chercheuses auront accès à ces informations.

Participation volontaire: Ma participation à la recherche est volontaire et je suis libre de me retirer en tout temps, et/ou refuser de répondre à certaines questions, sans subir de conséquences négatives. Si je choisis de me retirer de l'étude, les données recueillies jusqu'à ce moment seront soit utilisées par les chercheuses ou détruites, selon ma décision.

Acceptation:

Je, _____, accepte de participer à cette étude menée par Mlle. Natalie Marcotte (École des sciences de l'activité physique, Faculté des sciences de la santé), laquelle recherche est supervisée par Prof. Milena Parent (École des sciences de l'activité physique, Faculté des sciences de la santé). Je comprends qu'en acceptant de participer à cette étude, je ne renonce pas mon droit de me retirer de la recherche.

Pour tout renseignement additionnel concernant cette étude, je peux communiquer avec la chercheuse ou sa directrice de thèse.

Pour tout renseignement sur les aspects éthiques de cette recherche, je peux m'adresser au Responsable de l'éthique en recherche, Université d'Ottawa, Pavillon Tabaret, 550, rue Cumberland, pièce 154, (613) 562-5387 ou ethics@uottawa.ca.

Il y a deux copies du formulaire de consentement, dont une copie que je peux garder.

Signature du participant:

Date:

Signature de la chercheuse:

Date: