

Research Question: What is the nature of the critical linkages of community sport providers that will increase the “performance, effectiveness, and efficiency of the Canadian sport system” (Canadian Sport Policy, p. 3)?

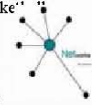
- **Ongoing:** To explore the facilitators of and barriers to increased interaction among community-based providers of physical activity programs, facilities, human resources, or other forms of tangible and intangible resources.
- **Initial phase of research:** To examine the type and quality of existing linkages among providers of one sport (basketball) in one community to determine the level and quality of interaction.



Description of the project

Conceptual Framework

- A *network approach* was selected to explore the level of cooperation and integration among a collection of basketball providers.
 - Density
 - Centrality
 - Types of relationships
 - Quality of relationships
 - Multiplexity of ties



Methods

- **Population:** Basketball providers in the Regional Municipality of Niagara
- **Sampling:** Reputational sampling to identify competitive and recreational providers of basketball programs; web search.
- **Data collection:** 5-page survey to assess the extent and type of network involvement
- **Data analysis:** UCINET 6 network software analysis

Preliminary Results

- Low network density - a fragmented collection of basketball providers with few linkages between organizations;
- Centrality – PSO; lack of local ‘hub’ in the network;
- Quality of the relationships was high - described as good (3) or excellent (4) indicating a high level of trust among linked organizations.
- Weak types of relationships - shared information was the primary reason for links;
- Linkages were more often between the leagues and educational institutions (schools for gyms; university programs) than with other basketball leagues;
- Links to the Ontario Basketball Association were prominent among basketball leagues, university, college, college, (necessity, governance) ;
- Canada Basketball was identified as being linked to 2 respondents (low given Be-One’s national marketing campaign)
- Low multiplexity of ties – only 2 organizations indicating multiple types of links (with each other).



Contribution to knowledge

- **Resource generation:** Inter-organizational relationships are crucial to enhancing the tangible (money, facilities; equipment) and intangible (expertise, social capital) resources available to local sport organizations – explore ways to overcome cognitive and normative scripts that shape the ‘ways of seeing the world’ of autonomous community sport organizations.
- **Triggers for change: Embracing collaborative approaches**
 - Insight is needed to understand at what level a “network champion” or locus for coordination should reside (local, provincial, national);
 - Crisis in the organization resulting from insufficient resources;
 - Focus on resources not available through the sport administrators’ “social capital” (e.g., organizational learning, value creation, leveraging);
 - Mimetic pressures resulting from awareness of ‘successful collaborations’;
 - Archetypical change – Necessitates knowledge of contemporary-collaborative template for organizing, vision of alternative ways of operating (strategy and structure).
- **Professional development:** Local sport administrators need competencies in initiating & managing linkages, leveraging social capital; accessing intangible resources through collaboration; etc.).