

Gender Allyship: Considering the Role of Men in Addressing the Gender-Leadership Gap in
Sport Organizations

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Abstract

Women's underrepresentation in positions of leadership in sport organizations has been a persistent problem for sport organizations (Acosta & Carpenter, 2014; Lapchick, 2015, 2016, 2017a, 2017b). The gender-leadership gap has been extensively researched and has used a variety of frameworks (e.g., leadership/gender trait interaction, organizational culture) (e.g., Burton, Barr, Fink, & Bruening, 2009; Sartore & Cunningham, 2007; Shaw, 2006) to understand why women's underrepresentation persists and have guided interventions to increase women's representations (e.g., gender ratios, diversity strategies) (e.g., Claringbould & Knoppers, 2008, 2012). The current research has yet to inform a substantial change in women's representation across the sport industry. Anecdotal evidence of men acting as allies to women in the sport industry challenges the existing literature, which does not include constructive roles for men in increasing women's representation in leadership positions in the sport industry (e.g., Burton et al., 2009; Shaw & Penney, 2003). Allyship, a framework from the education and social justice literature, is a social change framework that includes members of dominant social groups as critical members in the pursuit of meaningful change (e.g., Bishop, 2002).

The purpose of this study was to explore the existence of gender allyship within the sport industry, and if present, develop a substantive theory for how the process of gender allyship occurs. Given the limited perspectives of how men champion women's leadership and how they work with women to achieve this goal, this was an exploratory study. This study was guided by a combined methodology of grounded theory and critical discourse

analysis (CDA). Semi-structured interviews with 17 men and women in working in different types of sport organizations served as the primary source of data. An interview guide was used to capture allies' insights into hiring processes and how organizational cultures that value gender equity are realized. Data analysis began with open and axial coding to define concepts and develop properties and dimensions (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). Throughout data analysis, constant comparison and memos were utilized to ensure that the integrity of the study (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). Finally, theoretical coding was performed to integrate categories into a substantive theory of gender allyship (Corbin & Strauss, 2015).

Findings indicated the existence of gender allyship in the sport industry, where male and female allies actively consider how to increase women's representation in the sport industry. Three main categories were found that guide the process of gender allyship: awareness, capacity, and ally strategies. The process of gender allyship began with awareness, which is the core category. Awareness is defined as men's and women's understanding women's low representation in leadership positions and their power to influence the hiring of women. Capacity is defined as how gender allies assess individual situations and determine their ability to act as a gender ally. Ally strategies are the intentional strategies that gender allies use to increase women's representations in the sport industry. This study contributed to the allyship literature by demonstrating allyship's application to gender and in professional environments. Additionally, this study contributes to the sport and gender leadership literature by demonstrating men's contributions to the goal of increasing women's representation in positions of power.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements.....	i
Abstract.....	iii
List of Tables	viii
List of Figures	ix
CHAPTER 1	1
Purpose.....	9
<i>Research questions</i>	9
Rationale and Contribution.....	10
Summary.....	14
CHAPTER 2	15
Allyship.....	15
Gender Allyship.....	16
<i>Resistant Discourses</i>	22
Summary.....	29
CHAPTER 3	31
Grounded Theory	31
<i>Epistemology</i>	32
<i>Grounded theory and Ely and Meyerson (2000)</i>	33
Discourse Analysis	34
<i>Epistemology</i>	36
<i>Combining epistemologies</i>	36
Researcher's Role	37

<i>Interpersonal considerations</i>	38
<i>Technical considerations</i>	40
Theoretical Sampling & Data Generation	44
<i>Participants</i>	53
Data Analysis	55
<i>Data preparation and organization</i>	56
<i>Data analysis</i>	56
Trustworthiness	61
<i>Credibility</i>	62
<i>Transferability</i>	63
<i>Dependability</i>	63
<i>Confirmability</i>	64
Summary	65
CHAPTER 4	67
Existence of Gender Allyship	67
Awareness	69
<i>Awareness continuum</i>	72
<i>Self-awareness</i>	77
<i>Organizational awareness</i>	89
<i>Industry awareness</i>	93
Summary	96
CHAPTER 5	98
Capacity	98
<i>Individual capacity</i>	99
<i>Organizational capacity</i>	101
<i>Situational capacity</i>	104

Summary	107
CHAPTER 6.....	109
Ally Strategies.....	109
<i>Hiring processes & creation of opportunities for women</i>	110
<i>Creating organizational cultures that value gender diversity</i>	115
Facilitators	134
<i>Ally experience</i>	134
<i>Strategic use of women’s agency</i>	136
Summary.....	138
CHAPTER 7	139
Summary of Findings.....	139
<i>Existence of Gender Allyship & Awareness</i>	140
<i>Capacity, Ally Strategies & Facilitators</i>	142
A Theory of Gender Allyship	144
<i>Unintentional Gender Allyship</i>	146
Discussion & Theoretical Contributions.....	149
<i>Existence of gender allyship</i>	149
<i>Awareness: A catalyst but insufficient alone</i>	154
Empirical & Practical Contributions.....	160
<i>Limitations</i>	162
<i>Future Research</i>	163
Conclusion	166
REFERENCES.....	168
APPENDIX A	187
APPENDIX B	191

APPENDIX C	192
APPENDIX D	193

List of Tables

<i>Table 1: Overview of participants</i>	55
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List of Figures

<i>Figure 1: Awareness continuum</i>	76
<i>Figure 2: Awareness subcategories</i>	77
<i>Figure 3: Gender allyship model</i>	148

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Women and girls have unprecedented access to sport participation opportunities, yet sport organizations are overwhelmingly led by men and male decision makers (Acosta & Carpenter, 2014; Burton, 2015; Canadian Association for the Advancement of Women and Sport and Physical Activity, 2016; Lapchick, 2015, 2016, 2017a, 2017b). Women's underrepresentation plagues multiple levels and contexts in the sport industry.

Internationally, women hold 26.7% of decision making and voting positions in the International Olympic Committee, 22.5% in the International Association of Athletics Federation, and 5.7% in the International Swimming Federation (Lapchick, 2016). Within North American professional sports, Major League Baseball and the National Basketball Association (NBA) had 29.3% (Lapchick, 2017a) and 38.8% (Lapchick, 2017b), respectively, of their central offices staffed by women. Meanwhile, the United States' Associated Press' sports staff had no category (e.g., editors, columnists, reporters) with greater than 20% of women in decision making positions (Lapchick, 2015). Canadian intercollegiate sport reported 16% female administrators (Canadian Association for the Advancement of Women and Sport and Physical Activity, 2016), whereas in the United States 36.2 % of all administrators were female (Acosta & Carpenter, 2014). These numbers represent the sport industry's persistent issue of women's underrepresentation over the past 30 years, despite critiques from within and outside of the sport industry (e.g., Burton, 2015; Burton & Leberman, 2017b; Theberge, 1987).

As a persistent issue, women's underrepresentation in the sport industry has been extensively researched (Adriaanse & Schofield, 2014; Burton, 2015; Burton & Leberman,

2017a; Claringbould & Knoppers, 2007, 2008, 2012; Kane & LaVoi, 2018; Sagas & Cunningham, 2005; Schull, Shaw, & Kihl, 2012; Shaw & Hoeber, 2003; Shaw & Penney, 2003; Stangl & Kane, 1991; Walker & Sartore-Baldwin, 2013). Research has sought to understand causes of women's underrepresentation and develop strategies to create more opportunities for women in the sport industry (e.g., Burton, 2015; Cunningham & Sagas, 2007a; Kane & LaVoi, 2018; Shaw & Hoeber, 2003). Sport management and related fields have used a variety of theoretical lenses to guide investigations into societal, organizational, and individual forces in limiting women's ascension into leadership positions in sport organizations (Adriaanse & Schofield, 2014; Burton, 2015; Burton, Grappendorf, & Henderson, 2011; Burton & Leberman, 2017a; Claringbould & Knoppers, 2007, 2008, 2012; Kane & LaVoi, 2018; Shaw, 2006; Shaw & Penney, 2003; Stangl & Kane, 1991). Studies identified leadership's association with masculinity (Burton et al., 2009; Burton & Leberman, 2017a; Schull, 2016), how gender manifests in practices and social processes within sport organizations (Hoeber, 2007; Sartore & Cunningham, 2007; Schull et al., 2012; Shaw & Hoeber, 2003; Shaw & Penney, 2003), and how women perceive expectations of leadership and societal gender forces (Cunningham & Sagas, 2007b; Sartore & Cunningham, 2007; Walker & Sartore-Baldwin, 2013). Societal gender stereotypes influence how positions in management and leadership are gender stereotyped, as expectations for jobs are associated with traditionally masculine roles in both business (Schein, 2007) and the sport industry (Burton, 2015; Burton & Leberman, 2017a). Reflecting this idea, Fink (2016) notes that sport distinguishes itself because "it is 'normal' to think that women are not suitable for certain jobs *solely* due to their gender" (e.g., women overseeing men's sports) (emphasis in original, p. 3).

The sport industry's underrepresentation of women in decision making positions is not unique, as this issue is mirrored in other business sectors (McKinsey & Company, 2017). Sport's historical normalization and acceptance of gender difference and segregation (Dunning, 1986; Gruneau, 1983; Messner, 1992; Messner & Sabo, 1990) distinguishes the sport industry from business, as these differences continue to inform how sport organizations have and continue to function (Hoeber, 2007; Shaw, 2006; Shaw & Hoeber, 2003; Shaw & Slack, 2002). Studies examining organizational practices in the sport industry reveal that organizations are gendered (Acker, 1990, 1992b; Adriaanse & Schofield, 2014; Claringbould & Knoppers, 2007, 2008; Dixon & Bruening, 2005; Schull et al., 2012; Shaw, 2006; Shaw & Hoeber, 2003). Acker (1990) explains that gendered organizations have designed practices to be gender neutral, but ultimately impact male and female employees differently. Studies illustrate how organizational structures and substructures establish models of encouraged or accepted behaviors that ultimately advantage men and disadvantage women (Acker, 1990, 1992b, 2006; Ely & Meyerson, 2000; Shaw & Penney, 2003; Shaw & Slack, 2002). Gender in sport organizations informs formal and informal practices and symbols, resulting in gendered discourses (Berti, 2017; Ely & Meyerson, 2000; Shaw & Frisby, 2006; Sunderland, 2004). Using discourse analysis, research has identified how policies and procedures create disparate gendered impacts for women within sport organizations (Claringbould & Knoppers, 2007, 2008, 2012; Cunningham, 2008; Dixon & Bruening, 2005; Shaw, 2006; Shaw & Hoeber, 2003; Shaw & Penney, 2003; Shaw & Slack, 2002). Additionally, informal interactions between coworkers continue to disadvantage women within the organization, through processes like informal networking, a phenomenon known as "the old boys' club" (Burton, 2015; Burton et al., 2011; Cunningham & Sagas, 2007a; Kane & LaVoi, 2018;

Stangl & Kane, 1991). Considering gendered discourses is necessary for organizational change to occur in the sport industry (Ely & Meyerson, 2000; Shaw & Frisby, 2006). Discourses that challenge established forms of knowledge and conventions present and possibly create alternate understandings or perspectives; this type of discourse will be referred to as resistant discourses (Shaw & Hoerber, 2003). Resistant discourses within organizations have the potential to identify gendered practices, shift how organizations approach gender, and develop new strategies to decrease gender's impact to create a more equitable work space and create social change (Ely & Meyerson, 2000).

The wealth of knowledge around the impact of organizational discourses and their impact within the sport industry has not translated into strategies used by sport organizations attempts to increase women's representation in leadership (Acosta & Carpenter, 2014; Canadian Association for the Advancement of Women and Sport and Physical Activity, 2016; Lapchick, 2015, 2016, 2017a, 2017b). A common strategy to diversify sport organizations' leadership positions uses the distributive justice paradigm (Young, 2011), specifically gender ratios or quotas. As an example, the Ireland's Minister of State and Sport recently proposed a "30 [percent] gender quota for sporting bodies aimed at helping women 'break the glass ceiling'" (Clarke, 2016, para. 1). Gender ratios are commonly used as they assumed that access to leadership is the issue not the organizational structure (Young, 2011). Gender ratios assume that granting women access to leadership positions and power enables organizational change, yet these policies only magnify gender difference and make women ineffective in these positions (Adriaanse & Schofield, 2014; Claringbould & Knoppers, 2007, 2008, 2012; Young, 2011).

The research-practice gap has resulted in women in leadership positions experiencing a plateau effect, as previously outlined in this chapter. Given that men hold the majority of leadership and decision making positions in sport organizations (Acosta & Carpenter, 2014; Burton, 2015; Canadian Association for the Advancement of Women and Sport and Physical Activity, 2016; Lapchick, 2015, 2016, 2017a, 2017b) and the negligent impact of gender quotas (Adriaanse & Schofield, 2014; Claringbould & Knoppers, 2007, 2008, 2012; Young, 2011), innovative approaches are necessary to increase women's representation in the sport industry.

Men hold the power to hire, fire, and promote women, but one narrative dominates the gender leadership literature: men are resistant – or at best hesitant – to women's leadership (Burton, 2015; Burton et al., 2009; Burton & Leberman, 2017b; Claringbould & Knoppers, 2012; Hargreaves, 1990; Kane & LaVoi, 2018; Messner, 1988, 1992; Messner & Sabo, 1990; Shaw & Penney, 2003; Shaw & Slack, 2002; Theberge, 1987). The current gender in sport research has failed to consider how (or if) men are using their power to ultimately create change within organizations by advocating for women to fill decision making and leadership positions and working with women to create organizational change. Hackett and Haslanger (2006) acknowledge the existence of multiple feminisms or perspectives within feminism. Intersectionality recognizes that individuals have multiple components that make up an individual's identity (e.g., gender, race, religious affiliation, etc.) (Crenshaw, 1991), yet intersectional work within sport tends to focus on how women's identities vary (e.g., black women, queer women, Muslim women), but not men's identities (Burton & Leberman, 2017b; Melton & Bryant, 2017; Shaw & Frisby, 2006; Walker & Sartore-Baldwin, 2013). The emphasis on diverse women's experiences is not echoed in

considering the diversity in men's experiences. Men's intersectional identities can also include membership to an oppressed or minority group (e.g., black men, queer men, Muslim men), which could impact their perspectives on societal forces, including gender (Crenshaw, 1991; Hackett & Haslanger, 2006). It is assumed within the sport-gender research that men's position as beneficiaries of the power dynamic within sport excludes them as potential allies to women.

The sport-gender leadership literature only acknowledges men's intersectional identities when arguing that more inclusive sport environments would benefit men just as much as women (Hargreaves, 1990; Messner, 1992; Theberge, 1987). However, the current research has yet to include feminist, male voices in decision making positions and how they advocate for and work with women to create more opportunities for women in leadership in the sport industry. Feminist, male voices have not been embraced within gender research, due to the perception that it weakens the argument of women's empowerment. Including men as part of the solution implies that women "need" men and is antithetical to the mission of gender research. However, this study assumes that women's empowerment and male allyship are not mutually exclusive. Rather, this study investigates how women recognizing the sport industry landscape informs their use of certain men to increase women's representation in leadership positions in the sport industry. This study addresses this gap of male feminist voices through interviewing men who have use their power to advocate for women to serve in leadership and/or decision making roles, and women who have worked with these men. To understand the gap around male feminist voices, a conceptual framework that pulls from the allyship, sport feminist, organizational change and discourse analysis literature bases will be

used to serve as the theoretical foundation for how male and female gender allies operate in sport organizations.

The exclusion of male feminist voices in research is not due to the fact that these men are not present. In recent years, the sport industry has made multiple, notable hires of women into prominent positions within the sport industry. In the National Basketball Association, Gregg Popovich, coach of the San Antonio Spurs hired Becky Hammon to be the first female assistant coach of a men's professional team (Davis, 2016). In sport media, ESPN hired Jessica Mendoza to be an analyst for their baseball broadcast (Carfado, 2016). In college athletics, University of Virginia hired Carla Williams to be the first woman of color to be an Athletic Director of a Power 5¹ conference (Wang, 2017). While these cases are certainly anecdotes, the current gender in sport leadership literature does not account for – either intentionally or unintentionally – how these hires occurred. As men in the sport system, male allies have the potential to influence decision making through advocating for women in leadership positions, and ultimately impact the values that manifest in decisions. Education and social justice literature have explored the idea of allyship through a social justice framework, with the focus primarily on white allies for black and African-American communities (Bishop, 2002; Broido, 2000; Patel, 2011; Reason, Millar, & Scales, 2005). Allyship assumes that individuals who are part of dominant social groups align themselves with a marginalized social group to combat systemic oppression and move toward a system where power is equitable (Broido, 2000; Patel, 2011; Reason et al., 2005), and yet to be applied within the gender and sport management context. In practice, a male ally would not

¹ A Power 5 conference refers to the athletic conferences and member institutions within the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) that have legislative autonomy given their financial power within the organization.

only advocate for a woman who is qualified for the position, but also challenge assumptions that perpetuate the idea that women are not fit for management or leadership positions.

Gender allyship is a framework that has the potential to disrupt the dominant gendered social practices and contribute to revision of dominant practices within sport organizations. As Shaw & Hoeber (2003) discuss, the way to create change in sport organizations is through resistant discourses. When the National Basketball Players Association (NBPA) hired Michele Roberts to be NBPA Executive Director, the players challenged the dominant discourse – of male leadership within sport – by electing a woman to be their primary voice in negotiations with the National Basketball Association (Boren, 2014). Discourse analysis is important as discourse forms knowledge, which ultimately become accepted, go unquestioned, and are perpetuated. Discourses ultimately contribute to power as they represent the prevailing source of knowledge which informs the establishment and propagation of dominant practices (Foucault, 1994). It is for this reason that the presence of resistant discourses is critical to challenging and changing sport to improve the hiring of women within sport organizations.

Resistant discourses have the potential to influence discussions about gender allyship by addressing how gender influences and informs the formal and informal policies; narratives, rhetoric, language, and other symbolic expressions; and informal patterns of everyday interaction within organizations (Ely & Meyerson, 2000). Ely & Meyerson's (2000) framework suggests creating organizational and social change by focusing on how and where covert or latent gendered attitudes lie and instilled in a system. Gender is constructed into organizations as it is a key component of society, and organizations serve as units that not only reflect societal values, but also are where everyday interactions are

repeated, reinforced and internalized (Berti, 2017; Scott, 1987, 1995). Gender's role in sport organizations is a key component that continues to inform how sport organizations function that needs to be addressed and explored theoretically, specifically how men create opportunities for women to advance to leadership positions. Generating a theory of gender allyship is presented as a potential solution to sport gender leadership gap, rather than being another study that "admires the problem" (Williams, 2014, p. 96), as it looks to address the system that has created the discrepancy.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was two-fold: first, to explore the existence of gender allyship within sport organizations. Second, assuming the existence of gender allyship, generate a theory of how gender allyship operates within the sport the sport industry. As a starting point, I used Ely & Meyerson's (2000) framework for organizational change to guide data generation of how male and female allies operate in their sport organizations to address women's underrepresentation in decision making positions. The combination of grounded theory and discourse analysis served as the methodological tools to guide the generation of an explanatory theory for gender allyship and understand how gender allies navigate organizational structures in their pursuit of increasing women's representation in leadership in the sport industry. Gender allyship has the potential to encourage resistant discourses that create opportunities for more women to be placed in decision making positions within sport organizations.

Research questions

The following research questions guided this study: (1) does gender allyship exist within sport organizations and if so, where does it exist, in what contexts, and how does it

happen? (2) how do resistant discourses and the person creating the resistance influence decisions about women in the workplace and their potential for advancement? (3) what strategies or ideas do allies use to advocate for women's advancement within their organization? The goal of gender allyship is to not only engage women and men in discussions about sport's gender leadership gap, but create strategies to address women's persistent underrepresentation. Increasing women's representation in leadership positions will be a byproduct of challenging pervasive assumptions in the sport industry to establish the continuing process of creating the organizational process of iteration that yields "incremental change" (Ely & Meyerson, 2000, p. 133). Rather than discussing the problem, the goal of generating a theory of gender allyship is offered as one solution. Through the use of resistant discourses, gender allyship has the potential to contribute to the solution and address the problem of fewer women in decision making positions within sport.

Rationale and Contribution

The study has the potential to make significant theoretical, empirical, and practical contributions to the field of sport management and broader gender studies literature. Theoretically, allyship is a viable framework to empower people within a dominant social group to advocate for social justice issues (Bishop, 2002; Broido, 2000; Brown, 2002; Patel, 2011; Reason et al., 2005), and in particular, include men in the creation of strategies to address the lack of women in positions of power that persist within sport organizations. Male voices can diversify the feminist sport organizational literature that primarily reflect hesitance or resistance towards gender equity policies (Burton, 2015; Burton et al., 2009; Burton & Leberman, 2017b; Claringbould & Knoppers, 2012; Hargreaves, 1990; Kane & LaVoi, 2018; Messner, 1988, 1992; Messner & Sabo, 1990; Shaw & Penney, 2003; Shaw &

Slack, 2002; Theberge, 1987). Male voices overwhelmingly reflect gendered notions of women within the workplace (Claringbould & Knoppers, 2007, 2008; Hoeber, 2007; Knoppers & Anthonissen, 2008; Shaw, 2006). These male views certainly do persist, they do not represent all men (Anderson, 2005; Connell, 2005; Crenshaw, 1991; Messner, 1988a, 1992; Messner & Sabo, 1990), as demonstrated by examples of male allyship (Carfado, 2016; Davis, 2016; Wang, 2017). Gender allyship offers a novel paradigm to not only increase the representation of male, feminist voices, but also demonstrate women's willingness to work with men to increase women's representation in positions of leadership. Representation of male voices (e.g., male allies) in the feminist literature is necessary to challenge the dominant power structures, not through their presence but through their actions of advocating for women to be in leadership positions that they have been historically excluded from (Acosta & Carpenter, 2014; Burton, 2015; Burton et al., 2009, 2011; Hackett & Haslanger, 2006; Lapchick, 2015, 2016, 2017a, 2017b). Inclusion of these male ally voices is also important within the feminist theory (e.g., Messner, 1988b; Messner & Sabo, 1990) as they represent how and when male allies operate, where they can be found, and the necessary conditions for gender allyship. Incorporating male ally voices in feminist theory can expand our understandings of the facilitation of male investment in gender issues to create a framework that accurately depicts the role of gender allies in sport and provide another strategy that can address social behavior.

Noteworthy, women also play an important role in gender allyship. I have previously argued the need to include male gender allies with feminist voices in process of creating organizational change around gender. My argument is not meant to imply that women need men because they are weak or unempowered. Rather, gender allyship understands women's

agency within sport, however realizes their limited access to decision making and leadership positions (Acosta & Carpenter, 2014; Burton, 2015; Canadian Association for the Advancement of Women and Sport and Physical Activity, 2016; Lapchick, 2015, 2016, 2017a, 2017b). Gender allyship is conceived of as a process where women are working *with* men to create organizational change through using the access and power men are afforded within sport. Theories focusing on organizational change around gender do not overtly call for collaboration or coalition building with men and women. The foundation of allyship is to use the power afforded to members of dominant social groups to create change on behalf of a minority or oppressed group, who are playing an active role in shaping how change agenda (Bishop, 2002; Brown, 2002; Edwards, 2006; Reason et al., 2005; Tatum, 1994). Ultimately, gender allyship is a strategy for women to identify male allies and leverage their access to power. Gender allyship offers theoretical implications for how a coalition of men and women can work to create organizational change.

Empirically, existing discussions of allyship focus on creating and examining race or heterosexual allies in an educational setting. Studying gender allyship in a sport context presents three contributions. First, this study contributes by examining allyship in a professional environment. Previous allyship research has focused on interpersonal relationships in educational settings (Bishop, 2002; Broido, 2000; Brown, 2002; Edwards, 2006; Reason et al., 2005; Tatum, 1994), but has not considered its application in professional contexts or its use as an organizational strategy. Second, this study demonstrated empirical evidence of non-traditional masculine discourses produced by men who occupy positions of leadership in sport organizations in the sport management literature. The majority of research has focused on allyship for racial minorities or LGBT+ groups (e.g.,

Broido, 2000; Tatum, 1994). Conceptual articles about allyship (e.g., Edwards, 2006) extend its application to gender, however little evidence exists to substantiate the claim. This study provides empirical evidence of allyship's application to gender.

Third, this study contributes empirically to the gender and feminist sport management literature with gender allyship as a framework to address the dearth of women in decision making positions in the sport industry. Given how gender plays an integral role in how sport organizations are structured, gender allyship – through the use of resistant discourses – can help alter sport organizations' cultures to illuminate understandings of how management and leadership positions are gender stereotyped (Acker, 1992a; Burton et al., 2009; Ely, 1991; Kane & LaVoi, 2018; Schull, 2016, 2017; Shaw & Frisby, 2006; Stangl & Kane, 1991; Theberge, 1993).

Gender allyship was presented as a practical contribution for increasing the number of women in leadership positions within sport organizations. Gender allyship requires the awareness of not only the issue of female underrepresentation, but also an individual perceiving and understanding their role within the problem and system. Awareness of gender in sport organizations played an important role in increasing the number of women in leadership positions within sport organizations. Previous findings identify that low numbers of women in leadership positions was a byproduct of subconscious biases (Acker, 1992a; Burton et al., 2009, 2011; Cunningham & Sagas, 2007a; Kane & LaVoi, 2018; Sagas & Cunningham, 2005; Stangl & Kane, 1991; Theberge, 1993). Specifically, allyship was demonstrated as one strategy to address the problem of unconscious biases, as it is a strategy that requires *intention*. The inclusion of male ally strategies represented *actionable*

approaches that individuals can use – and organizations can encourage – to increase the number of women in leadership positions in sport organizations.

It is my hope that by making gender allyship a conscious strategy that men acknowledge and see their role as gender allies in sport organizations and that women will seek out gender allies. Through men and women working together, gender allyship can create change in organizational hiring policies that can ultimately lower the barriers women face in trying to get hired in sport organizational leadership positions. The following chapter will illustrate the theoretical framework used to examine the phenomenon of gender allyship in the context of the sport industry.

Summary

This chapter provides an overview of the underrepresentation of women observed in leadership positions within sport organizations through focusing on the relevant background research, the purpose and guiding questions for this inquiry, and how this study contributes to the academic literature and sport organizations hiring practices. In the next chapter, an in-depth discussion of the gender, organizational, sport and allyship literature will be used to explain the foundation of gender allyship and its need in sport. From there, the theories used to guide analysis will be discussed.

CHAPTER 2

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

A conceptual framework outlines the key components and theories of the research topic (Marshall & Rossman, 2011; Miles & Huberman, 2014). This section includes a brief introduction to allyship and its foundations in the sport and social justice literature, which will then serve as a foundation for the gender allyship conceptual framework that guided this study. The gender allyship conceptual framework is based in allyship literature (Bishop, 2002; Broido, 2000; Brown, 2002; Edwards, 2006; Patel, 2011; Reason et al., 2005; Tatum, 1994), sport gender and feminist literature (Burton, 2015; Burton et al., 2009, 2011; Burton & Leberman, 2017b; Hoerber, 2007; Kane & LaVoi, 2018; Shaw, 2006; Shaw & Frisby, 2006; Shaw & Penney, 2003; Stangl & Kane, 1991), organizational literature (Acker, 1990, 1992a, 1992b, 2006, 2012; Britton & Logan, 2008; Ely & Meyerson, 2000; Kolb, Fletcher, Meyerson, Merrill-Sands, & Ely, 2003), and discourse literature (Berti, 2017; Foucault, 1994; Mayr, 2015; van Dijk, 2008; Wodak & Meyer, 2016b). The conceptual framework then discusses the means through which gender allies can act through challenging dominant understandings and creating change using Ely and Meyerson's (2000) framework for creating organizational change.

Allyship

“Ally” has multiple meanings depending on its context; generally, it denotes the idea of aligning and fighting with another party to advance their interests (Bishop, 2002; Broido, 2000; Edwards, 2006; Patel, 2011; Reason et al., 2005; Tatum, 1994). The ally is not directly impacted by the fight, however, their choice to support is due to benefitting from the outcome or ideological alignment with the allied party (Bishop, 2002; Broido, 2000;

Edwards, 2006; Patel, 2011; Reason et al., 2005; Tatum, 1994). Examples of allyship are in international and national government (e.g., France and the United States), organizations (e.g., the NBA sponsoring the WNBA), and at the individual level (e.g., straight identified individuals identifying as allies to the LGBTQ+ community). Allyship denotes the phenomenon where individuals who are members of dominant social groups align themselves with a marginalized social group to combat systemic oppression and move toward a system where power is equitable (Bishop, 2002; Broido, 2000; Edwards, 2006; Patel, 2011; Reason et al., 2005; Tatum, 1994). Allyship represents a conscious strategy or set of actions that individuals in a dominant group can take to create social change (Bishop, 2002; Broido, 2000; Edwards, 2006; Reason et al., 2005; Tatum, 1994).

The term “ally” entered the academic literature during the 1990s and has predominately focused on the experience of developing allies to address racism (e.g., Bishop, 2002; Brown, 2002; Reason et al., 2005) or homophobia (e.g., Washington & Evans, 1991). Allyship is explored in the education and social justice literature through a social justice framework (Bishop, 2002; Broido, 2000; Brown, 2002; Reason et al., 2005; Tatum, 1994). While the concept of allyship within the academy is relatively nascent, the concept of being a social justice ally is not. In her book, Brown (2002) documents the stories of four white allies in the Civil Rights Era whose backgrounds vary (e.g., gender, areas raised) but were equally committed to the movement. Brown (2002) illustrates allies’ diverse backgrounds and the lack of a prescriptive formula for becoming an ally.

Gender Allyship

Within the sport literature, the discrepancy observed between the number of men and women in positions of power has been covered extensively (Burton, 2015; Burton et al.,

2009, 2011; Burton & Leberman, 2017a; Claringbould & Knoppers, 2007, 2008, 2012; Hoeber, 2007; Kane & LaVoi, 2018; Shaw, 2006; Shaw & Hoeber, 2003; Shaw & Penney, 2003; Shaw & Slack, 2002; Stangl & Kane, 1991; Theberge, 1987). In these inquiries, men in positions of leadership are illustrated as barriers as they tend to reflect masculine hegemony, where the dominant cultural understanding defines sport as a masculine space and the perpetuation of this knowledge makes the system go unquestioned (Adams, Anderson, & McCormack, 2010; Gruneau, 1983; Hoeber, 2007; Messner, 1988a, 1992). Undergirding masculine hegemony is the conceptualization of gender as a system that categorizes and creates order based on individuals' perceived biological differences (Connell, 2002). In the sociological sense, gender is conceptualized as a system that guides how individuals interact based on perceptions about an individual centered on externally perceived attributes (Acker, 1990; Connell, 2002).

Societal understandings of gender are built into organizations, and strategies to limit gender's role have been ineffective, as women are seen as not having earned their position (Claringbould & Knoppers, 2007, 2008, 2012; Knoppers & Anthonissen, 2008). These strategies have focused on increasing women's representation with the assumption of the mere presence of women – both in sport and in the workplace – the system would adapt and adjust; however, presence alone is not enough. Rather to create change within an organization, a series of incremental strategies are necessary to “disrupt... gendered social practices in organizations and revise them” (Ely & Meyerson, 2000, p. 132).

Overwhelmingly, the sport feminist literature has positioned men as the barrier to women being hired at higher rates for positions of leadership (Burton et al., 2009, 2011; Burton & Leberman, 2017b; Claringbould & Knoppers, 2007, 2008, 2012; Hoeber, 2007; Kane &

LaVoi, 2018; Shaw & Frisby, 2006; Shaw & Hoeber, 2003; Shaw & Penney, 2003; Stangl & Kane, 1991; Theberge, 1987), whereas, gender allyship considers men as part of the solution as they are the gatekeepers, through whom organizational change can occur. Men's access to power affords them the ability to introduce initiatives designed to "disrupt" and "revise" gendered social practices in sport organizations (Ely & Meyerson, 2000, p. 132).

The sport feminist literature also discusses the ways in which the sport organizations, themselves, are barriers to women entering leadership positions (Acker, 1990, 1992a, 2006, 2012; Britton & Logan, 2008; Ely & Meyerson, 2000; Hoeber, 2007; Hoeber & Frisby, 2001; Martin & Meyerson, 1998; Meyerson & Kolb, 2000; Shaw, 2006; Shaw & Frisby, 2006; Shaw & Penney, 2003; Shaw & Slack, 2002). Sport organizations have historically been male institutions, dominated by masculine understandings that is institutionalized, causing gendered discourses to be adopted and formalized into policies and procedures that govern many sport institutions to this day (Acker, 1992b, 2006, 2012; Britton & Logan, 2008; Burton et al., 2009, 2011; Claringbould & Knoppers, 2007; Dunning, 1986; Ely, 1991; Ely & Meyerson, 2000; Knoppers & Anthonissen, 2008; Lapchick, 2013; Shaw, 2006; Shaw & Frisby, 2006; Shaw & Slack, 2002; Stangl & Kane, 1991; Theberge, 1985, 1987, 1993). For example, workplaces that mandate set work hours may seem gender neutral, yet create increased work-family tension for female coaches with children, as women still handle the majority of childcare (Bruening & Dixon, 2008; Dixon & Bruening, 2005). Discourses represent the understandings that guide and govern an organization and ultimately communicate, reflect, and reproduce power, as they represent organizational values (Berti, 2017; Hoeber, 2007; Shaw, 2006; Sunderland, 2004; van Dijk, 2008). Discourses come in multiple forms, such as formal organizational practices and policies or informal interactions

between individuals (Berti, 2017; Mayr, 2015) that reinforce each other and make up a discursive regime (Foucault, 1994). This study used critical discourse analysis (CDA), which is a subset of discourse analysis that specifically looks at how discourses can challenge power structures (van Dijk, 2008, 2015; Wodak & Meyer, 2016b). As discussed, discourse analysis investigates how power is created and perpetuated, whereas CDA focuses on the impact and role of language on oppressed groups. CDA aims to make power more equitable through breaking down how power is maintained (van Dijk, 2008). Therefore, CDA is an ideal framework for this inquiry as gender allyship strategically seeks to acquire and distribute power and thereby create social change.

Within sport organizations, one discursive regime dominates, which maximizes difference between men and women, and through doing so devalues women (Hargreaves, 1986, 2002; Kidd, 1990; Messner, 1988, 1992; Messner & Sabo, 1990; Theberge, 1985, 1987; Whitson, 1990; Willis, 1982). For example, a discursive regime devalues women through how they conceptualize roles that are appropriate for women as they align with gender stereotypes, whereas men who hold the same role are seen as having leadership potential (Shaw & Hoerber, 2003). This type of discrepancy in perception of an individual's potential based solely on their gender creates the understanding that there is only one truth (where men are capable of leadership and women are not), when in reality there are multiple truths based on an individual's position within a power structure (Hackett & Haslanger, 2006; Hoerber, 2007). However, the dominance of men as barriers within the sport literature is only perpetuating this stereotype, when there is clear evidence of men acting as allies to women within sport. Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 was proposed by Senator Birch Bayh, enacted by an overwhelmingly male Congress and signed into law by

President Richard Nixon (Boutilier & SanGiovanni, 1983; Buchanan, 2012). While its application to sport was unintentional and passionately challenged (Boutilier & SanGiovanni, 1983; Buchanan, 2012), it has changed the institution by allowing women and girls access to sport participation at an unprecedented level (Acosta & Carpenter, 2014; Buchanan, 2012).

While Senator Bayh did not work within the sport industry, he represents a male ally to women through proposing Title IX, which created structural change across education in the United States that ultimately led to increased participation in sport for women and girls (Acosta & Carpenter, 2014; Boutilier & SanGiovanni, 1981, 1983). Bayh represents a gender ally as he is in a position of power (federal government, elected official) where the system grants him the authority to create or adapt laws (Title IX) that create change within a system (education and intercollegiate sports). Bayh was not enrolled in college at the time, he did not stand to personally benefit from the situation, but aligned himself with a cause – educating women – that ultimately created, systemic change within both education and intercollegiate sports. While there was pushback on the implications and meaning of Title IX (Boutilier & SanGiovanni, 1983; Buchanan, 2012), the opportunities for women and girls in sport created by the law ultimately changed the discourse around their sport participation. Prior to Title IX, women and girls were deemed too fragile to participate in sports (Dunning, 1986; Hargreaves, 2002; Kidd, 1990; Theberge, 1987; Whitson, 1990; Willis, 1982), whilst contemporary women and girls are considered strong and encouraged to participate in sport. Title IX serves as a powerful example of a male ally using his power within a system to create change.

Gender allyship recognizes that men occupy the majority in positions of power within sport organizations (Acosta & Carpenter, 2014; Lapchick, 2015, 2016, 2017a, 2017b) and

aims to leverage the access male allies have – through occupying these positions – to create change within organizations by advocating for women to be hired in positions of leadership. Allies advocating serves to create change, as individuals within leadership positions often have access to conversations that form, shape, or alter organizational discourses (e.g., policies and procedures) (Berti, 2017; Mayr, 2015) and create new understandings or discursive regimes, with different power distributions (Foucault, 1994). Male allies have the opportunity to create additional allies (Broido, 2000; Brown, 2002; Reason et al., 2005; Tatum, 1994) through challenging existing discourses about how gender operates to enable men and constrain women within the status quo of their organization; gender allyship can be used to encourage men to assist in addressing the lack of representation of women in sport organizations. Shifting from a negative framing, where men are seen as the barrier, to a positive framing, where men are part of the solution, empowers men to address issues through the use of resistant discourses, and allows them to contribute in the role of male allies (Brown, 2002; Tatum, 1994). Including men as part of the solution to the gender leadership gap has the potential to create more allies, by giving men an awareness and means to contribute to building a coalition that can ultimately affect change.

Conceptually, allyship is a paradigm that can be applied to all socially constructed categories (Edwards, 2006), yet there remains limited application of allyship to socially constructed categories outside of racial minorities and LGBTQ+ populations (Bishop, 2002; Broido, 2000; Reason et al., 2005; Tatum, 1994). Allyship's application has been limited to considering race *or* LGBTQ+ issues with limited understanding of the connection, while simultaneously highlighting the importance of intersectional identities in creating allies. More broadly, research around socially constructed issues remains siloed (e.g., gender

studies, Africana studies), as oppressions are not all equal and feature distinct forces (Bishop, 2002; Edwards, 2006). Gender allyship applies the framework of allyship to understand how gender creates oppressions within the sport community. Gender allyship, therefore, assumes that gender allyship is distinct from other forms of allyship.

An important caveat to this discussion of allyship is the acknowledgment that an individual ally cannot nor will not solve the issue (Bishop, 2002; Brown, 2002). Rather male allies play a crucial role in building a coalition that can produce a chorus of calls for reform that can ultimately create change (Bishop, 2002; Brown, 2002). This happens through allies leveraging their positions (as men in decision making positions within sport organizations) to create a strategic effort in advancing social justice issues through collaboration, for the direct advantage of the women who aspire to be in leadership positions within sport organizations (Bishop, 2002).

Resistant Discourses

Resistant discourses are a medium through which gender allies illustrate their positioning as invested and advocate for women to be hired into positions of leadership within sport organizations. Foucault's (1994) conceptions of discourse and its relationship to power are crucial to discourse analysis, and the dominance of one discursive regime produces the understanding that there is only one truth, when in reality there are multiple truths based on one's position within a power structure (Hoerber, 2007). When discourses challenge the system, there is not a smooth transition, because these discourses are actively challenging the existing power and knowledge structures within a society (Foucault, 1994) and are known as "resistant discourses" (Shaw & Hoerber, 2003, p. 354). Within sport organizations, leadership positions are associated with masculine traits (e.g., authoritative), that according

to Shaw and Hoeber (2003) illustrate different conceptions of men's and women's perceived strength, which influences how organizations are legitimized and ultimately limit women's ability to be hired or move into positions of leadership. Such understandings allow for men's strength to be unquestioned, and ultimately limits women's ability to act alone. Gender allyship leverages the societal understanding of masculine traits to create an opportunity for male allies to advocate for women to be considered and hired for leadership positions.

Male allies, then, can leverage their undoubted power to resist the dominant understanding within sport organizations – women are weak and are not fit to be leaders – and present examples of women who either have been successful within leadership positions or at similar organizations or advocate for a woman who is the best fit for the position (Bishop, 2002; Broido, 2000; Brown, 2002; Tatum, 1994). By challenging the dominant understanding of sport and its masculine hegemony, resistant discourses – employed by male allies – seek to bring different insights and perspectives that will appear incremental, but ultimately increase the likelihood of creating social change (Ely & Meyerson, 2000; Shaw & Hoeber, 2003). The ultimate goal of resistant discourses is for ideas to evolve into and become the dominant discourse (Ely & Meyerson, 2000; Meyerson & Kolb, 2000; Shaw & Frisby, 2006). For this goal to be achieved however, gender allies need to be persistent in using resistant discourses. Resistant discourse is not presented as an instant solution, but is part of a change process (Acker, 2006; Ely & Meyerson, 2000; Frisby, Reid, Millar, & Hoeber, 2005; Kolb et al., 2003; Meyerson & Kolb, 2000). Resistant discourses fit within the scope of gender allyship, as their use does not call for a change in how male allies operate; resistant discourses are both an accessible and manageable way to challenge pervasive

attitudes that permeate sport organizations that it can be presumed that male allies are already using (Shaw & Hoeber, 2003).

Resistant discourses have the potential to create change within an organization, as they levy challenges from inside the organization through changes in its response and adaptation of organizational philosophy and policies (Acker, 2006; Ely & Meyerson, 2000; Kolb et al., 2003; Shaw, 2006; Shaw & Hoeber, 2003; Shaw & Penney, 2003). Resistant discourses are in CDA's tradition, as their role is to see how to challenge the existing power structure and develop a more equitable one (Shaw & Hoeber, 2003; van Dijk, 2008; Wodak & Meyer, 2016a). An internal, organizational challenge approach is advantageous as it looks to not only critique and change existing discourses, but also experiment and adapt the organization's approach toward gender (Ely & Meyerson, 2000). Having constant experimenting and adapting creates an ongoing conversation about the role gender is playing within the workplace (Ely & Meyerson, 2000). Discourse analysis is with how individuals construct gender within organizational contexts, based on the framework provided by Ely & Meyerson (2000) presented in the following sections.

Impact of resistant discourses on organizational discourses. Ely and Meyerson's (2000) framework explicates a means to create gender equity within organizations and served as an initial framework for the study and guided initial data generation. Ely and Meyerson's (2000) framework suits this research, as it has been used to examine how gendered discourses occur within sport organizations (Shaw, 2006; Shaw & Hoeber, 2003). Given that gender allyship extends Ely and Meyerson's (2000) framework is a prudent guide that can ensure that discourses of each type are understood, and specifically how and/or in what instances gender allies use resistant discourses. The recommended areas to address were:

“(1) formal policies and procedures; (2) informal work practices, norms, and patterns of work; (3) narratives, rhetoric, language, and other symbolic expressions; and (4) informal patterns of everyday social interaction” (Ely & Meyerson, 2000, p. 114).² Ely and Meyerson’s (2000) approach is a byproduct of examining the unsuccessful strategies, yet commonly deployed by organizations to manage gender in the workplace, but have only perpetuated gender difference within the organization (Ely & Meyerson, 2000). Ineffective strategies included: “fix the women”, “value the feminine”, and “create equal opportunities” (Ely & Meyerson, 2000, p. 106). All of these ineffective strategies failed through being reluctant to address the undergirding structures, which support and perpetuate the existing organizational norms where male employees embody the “standard” and failing to consider how gender difference plays a key role in creating different experiences and expectations for female employees (Ely & Meyerson, 2000; Kolb et al., 2003; Meyerson & Kolb, 2000).

Failing to critique the supporting structures has limited women’s ability to advance within an organization (Acker, 2006, 2012; Britton & Logan, 2008; Shaw & Frisby, 2006; Shaw & Hoerber, 2003). As discussed previously, the sport management literature advocates for quotas to increase opportunities for women’s leadership (Claringbould & Knoppers, 2007, 2008; Knoppers & Anthonissen, 2008). However, Martin and Meyerson (1998) found that women who advance to reach positions of *formal* power within organizations that have not effectively addressed gender in the workplace, did not perceive themselves to have influence within the organization. Ely and Meyerson’s (2000) framework aims to remove the structures that are vestiges of when women’s roles within organizations were more limited.

² For the purposes of this investigation, formal policies and procedures was combined with informal work practices, as the relationship between these two concepts is common within the gender and organizational literature (Acker, 1990, 1992a, 1992b).

Examining how the discourse that guides the organization is gendered and only represents masculine understandings (Acker, 1990, 1992a, 1992b, 1999, 2006; Britton & Logan, 2008; Ely & Meyerson, 2000; Hoerber, 2007; Hoerber & Frisby, 2001; Kolb et al., 2003; Martin & Meyerson, 1998; Shaw, 2006; Shaw & Frisby, 2006; Shaw & Hoerber, 2003; Shaw & Penney, 2003; Shaw & Slack, 2002) allows for organizations to understand the impact of the discourses on individuals who do not conform to a traditional masculinity. The impact of these gendered discourses is paramount as they ultimately constrain women's and men's agency by setting parameters that do not allow for individual's to respond dynamically to situations and problems within their organization (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998).

An important component of looking at gendered discourses is to assess individuals' agency and the desired outcome of the discourse, as discourses can be used to encourage conforming or challenging (Kendall & Tannen, 2015). Agency is the “[sociocultural] mediated capacity to act” (Ahern, 2001, p. 112), where Hayhurst (2013) notes, that a sense of agency is limited by the context it is applied in, specifically, by the organizational structure and their organizational culture. It is for this reason that examining the impact of organizational discourses and male allies influence on them is paramount to understanding gender allyship.

Formal and informal practices. The role gender plays in organizations' formal policies and procedures is crucial to examine, as these are the concrete guidelines that act as the skeleton of the organization and represent its foundation (Acker, 1992b, 2006; Berti, 2017). Gendering within formal policies and procedures can be overt – where gender is explicitly stated within it – or covert – where gender is not mentioned, yet is coded and thus creates gendered effects (Acker, 1990, 1992b). An example of overt policies within a sport

management context is the use of quotas to ensure the presence of women on an oversight or governing board; however, explicit guidelines around female representation often has deleterious effects and undermines these women, as they are seen as not having earned the spot through the same process as men (Claringbould & Knoppers, 2007, 2008).

Covert gendered policies often represent the informal practices within an organization (e.g., rules defining appropriate work behavior, expectations of work-life balance), but can be just as concerning and constructive as overt policies (Acker, 1992b, 2006). Covert gendered policies are often created with the goal of being gender-neutral, but truly reflects a masculine understanding, where men are considered the standard worker (Acker, 1990, 1992a; Cashman, 2006). Such policies illustrate how women's positions and work within organizations are understood, examined and evaluated through a male understanding, which ultimately limits female workers' ability to succeed (Acker, 1990, 2006). As discussed earlier, organizations have not fundamentally changed since the inclusion of women within the workplace, rather they maintain their history as male-established and male-dominated and have merely included women, by applying the same standards to women and claiming that the expectations are non-gendered (Acker, 1990, 1992a, 1992b; Kolb et al., 2003). An example of "non-gendered" expectations observed in sport is when female coaches are expected to exhibit similar leadership traits and coaching styles as their male counterparts (e.g., authoritative or punitive), however, simultaneously get evaluated on their ability to conform to traditional gender norms (Schull, 2016). Whether overt or covert gendered practices and policies are present within organizations, their impact creates disparate impacts between male and female workers (Acker, 1990, 1992b, 2006, 2012; Britton & Logan, 2008),

which ultimately creates the underrepresentation of women in positions of leadership within sport organizations.

Narratives, rhetoric, language, and other symbolic expressions. Gender manifests in narratives, rhetoric, language and symbolic expressions to “explain, express, reinforce, or sometimes oppose” the formal organizational policies (Acker, 1990, p. 146). While narratives, rhetoric, language, and symbols are not technically pieces of an organization's chosen discourse, they serve as buttresses that reinforce it (Acker, 1992b; Collinson & Hearn, 1996). Non-spoken discourses are capable of delivering or supporting gendered messages implicitly, by linking socially appropriate forms of masculine or feminine behaviors and the individuals’ ability to conform; an example of a non-spoken discourse is a facial expression of approval when a woman exhibits feminine behavior, and one of disapproval when the same woman exhibits masculine behavior (Acker, 1990, 1992b; Collinson & Hearn, 1996). An important gendered portrayal in sport is the ability to appear competitive, which is a trait most commonly associated with masculinity (Acker, 1992b; Schull, 2016, 2017; Theberge, 1993). The role that narratives, rhetoric, language and symbols play in gendered messaging is incredibly common, where sport competence or mastery is associated with masculinity (Anderson, 2005; Kidd, 1990; Messner, 1988a, 1992; Theberge, 1987). Expressions as forms of discourses have gone unchallenged and have created a sporting culture that has been perpetuated through the creation of sport organizations, even as they have included female athletes and women within their organizational structure (Shaw, 2006; Shaw & Hoerber, 2003; Shaw & Penney, 2003; Shaw & Slack, 2002).

Informal patterns of everyday interaction. Everyday interactions are gendered, as gender is “so familiar, that [it] can seem part of the order of nature (Connell, 2002, p. 3).

Individuals have a gender identity (male, female, non-binary) and that identity influences their interactions with others due to how pervasive gender is in society as a means of sorting or creating meaning (Acker, 1992b; Connell, 2002). Creating organizational divisions influences individual behavior and can encourage or discourage individual actions (Acker, 1992b; Connell, 2002).

While every individual interaction cannot be regulated, organizations set a precedent for what is deemed appropriate or acceptable through their own explicit culture and policies. The precedent guides how people understand organization membership, specifically the implicit ways of how the organization is gendered, which impacts or reinforces the role of gender in interactions between coworkers (Acker, 1992a; Connell, 2002). An example of the role of gender in everyday interactions in sport is the understanding that men's and boys' competition should be separate from those of women and girls', despite physical performance being able to be recorded in distinct measurements that create a continuum (Kane, 1995). Through dividing performance by gender, it creates and perpetuates the idea that female athletes are different, and can color how men perceive female athleticism (Fink, LaVoi, & Newhall, 2015; Hall, 1985; Hargreaves, 1990; Messner, 1988, 1992; Messner & Sabo, 1990; Theberge, 1985, 1987) Considering how everyday interactions impact employees is important, as employees are the vehicles that allow an organization to function and are true reflections of the organizations (Acker, 1992b).

Summary

In this section, the gender allyship theoretical framework was presented through combining the relevant findings from the allyship, sport feminist, gender and organizational and discourse literature bases (Acker, 1992a, 1992b, 2006; Berti, 2017; Bishop, 2002; Britton

& Logan, 2008; Broido, 2000; Brown, 2002; Burton et al., 2009, 2011; Ely & Meyerson, 2000; Kane & LaVoi, 2018; Shaw, 2006; Shaw & Hoeber, 2003; Shaw & Penney, 2003; Shaw & Slack, 2002; Tatum, 1994). Gender allyship is a framework that looks to empower men to be part of addressing the underrepresentation of women seen in decision making positions in sport organizations. The sport feminist and gender and organizational literatures have both correctly identified that men hold the power within organizations; however, they often present men as the barrier, when in actuality the organizational structure serves as a barrier as well (Acker, 1990, 1992a; Ely & Meyerson, 2000; Hoeber, 2007; Hoeber & Frisby, 2001; Martin & Meyerson, 1998; Meyerson & Kolb, 2000; Shaw, 2006; Shaw & Frisby, 2006; Shaw & Penney, 2003; Shaw & Slack, 2002). Therefore, to allow for women to ascend to positions of leadership within sport organizations, male allies need to use their positions of power within sport organizations to actively challenge the discourses that govern and support the status quo. Ely and Meyerson's (2000) framework illustrates four components of organizational systems that need to be challenged for change to happen within organizations, of which male allies can play a crucial role. The frame work highlights how the social construction of gender within organizations, has been operationalized into organizational culture and structure, therefore prompting the need to examine: formal and informal practices; narratives, rhetoric, language, and other symbolic expressions; and informal patterns of everyday interaction (Acker, 1990, 1992b; Collinson & Hearn, 1996; Connell, 2002; Ely & Meyerson, 2000). The following chapter discusses the research design that was used to guide this inquiry to answer the research questions relevant to gender allyship.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN

The purpose of this section is to outline how the inquiry of gender allyship was conducted. Given the exploratory nature of this study, a combination of grounded theory and CDA was used to determine the existence of gender allyship and its forms in a sport management context. First, the methodologies of grounded theory and CDA are reviewed and discussed in relation to the study's purpose and research questions. Then I situate myself as the researcher in relation to the nature of the inquiry and the ethical considerations in carrying out the study. Sampling procedures, data generation, and data analysis are next outlined. Finally, this section concludes with an overview of how I met standards of trustworthiness in conducting this research.

Grounded Theory

Grounded theory aims to “[construct] theory grounded in data” (Corbin & Strauss, 2015, p. 6). Grounded theory is a bottom-up approach to research, where the data drives theory creation (Burck, 2005; Charmaz, 2014; Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). As data is the driving factor of grounded theory, the approach is characterized as offering “systematic, yet flexible guidelines for collecting and analyzing qualitative data” (Charmaz, 2014, p. 1), which aligns with the purpose of my study in creating an explanatory theory of the existence and how gender allies work in sport organizations. In order to generate a theory from the data necessitates a comparative analysis process that generates conceptual categories and their properties and dimensions through theoretical abstraction (Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Researchers’ abstractions of the data represent their “impressionistic understandings of what is being described in experiences,

spoken words, actions, interactions ... by the participants” (Corbin & Strauss, 2015, p. 51). Grounded theory therefore emphasizes theory generation as process (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The researcher continually develops and refines categories until a point of saturation is reached and ultimately generates a substantive theory (Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Glaser & Strauss, 1967) – in this study – a theory of gender allyship in sport management. The emphasis placed on the role of data in grounded theory makes it a “particularly appropriate [methodology] for discovery-oriented research in areas which are under-theorized” (Burck, 2005, p. 244). Extensive research exists investigating the gender leadership gap and predominately represents a resistant or hesitant male perspective toward female leadership (e.g., Burton et al., 2009, 2011; Shaw & Hoerber, 2003; Shaw & Slack, 2002; Stangl & Kane, 1991). A theory of gender allyship in sport management represents a novel paradigm, which aligns with grounded theory as it able to offer new perspectives to well-researched areas (Burck, 2005; Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Grounded theory enables substantive theory generation, which aligns with the purpose of this inquiry to create an explanatory theory of the existence of gender allyship and how men and women act as allies within sport organizations to increase the number of women in positions of leadership.

Epistemology

Grounded theory assumes that knowledge is generated by pragmatism, symbolic interactionism, and constructivism (Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Thornberg & Charmaz, 2014). Pragmatism accepts that the external world is dynamic and evolving, and sees “knowledge [creation as a byproduct of] action and interaction” (Corbin & Strauss, 2015, p. 19). Crucial, therefore, is the role of individuals’ experiences and how they have the potential to create new meanings or understandings. Symbolic interactionism is an

extension of pragmatism as it focuses on how language and symbols inform and shape individuals' actions and understandings of the world in which we operate (Charmaz, 2014; Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Symbolic interactionism assumes that the existence of a preceding cultural or societal life that informs meaning and action, to which individuals ascribe significance and influences their future action (Charmaz, 2014; Corbin & Strauss, 2015). Therefore, all actions “[occur] within social, cultural and historical contexts that shape but do not determine [them]” (Charmaz, 2014, p. 266). Symbolic interactionism pairs well with pragmatism, as it also considers the evolving nature of an individual's interpretation, where as he/she is continually exposed to new language and symbols – which could alter their understandings (Charmaz, 2014).

The final tenet of grounded theory, constructivism, assumes that individuals' understanding of the world is subjective – based on their own experiences and the meaning they ascribe to them, as well as social, cultural and historical contexts (Creswell, 2013; Crotty, 1998). Constructivism reflects how the data in grounded theory is generated, as it is not merely discovered; rather it is *produced* as the result of interactions between the participants and researchers (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Data are *co-constructed* through the interaction of the participant and the researcher, where each individual has their own constructions and perceptions of the “truth” (Corbin & Strauss, 2015).

Grounded theory and Ely and Meyerson (2000)

Ely and Meyerson's (2000) framework for addressing gender in organizations was included in the conceptual framework, which appears to contradict the tenets of grounded theory (Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Glaser & Strauss, 1967), and my purpose of generating a theory of gender allyship in sport management. However, theories included in related

research can “provide insight, direction, and an initial set of concepts to use as a starting point” (Corbin & Strauss, 2015, pp. 52–53). It bears noting that the inclusion of an existing theory is not intended to constrain or force the data to fit concept development. This study was predominately guided by the process of grounded theory. Including Ely and Meyerson’s (2000) framework was intentional based on its use in other studies (e.g., Shaw, 2006; Shaw & Hoerber, 2003) to explain how formal and informal practices, organizational narratives and rhetoric, and informal interactions operate together within a sport organization. Given Ely and Meyerson’s (2000) framework theorizes change creation around gender in organizations and its utilization in sport organization contexts, it was deemed prudent to use as a *guide* (starting point) for developing my respective research questions, initial interview questions and analysis. Ely and Meyerson’s (2000) framework is therefore not perceived as a constraint in theory generation but was a helpful starting block in making initial research design decisions (Corbin & Strauss, 2015).

Discourse Analysis

Discourse analysis focuses on how discourse creates and influences individuals’ experiences (Sunderland, 2004; van Dijk, 2008). CDA is distinguished from discourse analysis based on its willingness to challenge existing power structures through questioning with the goal of making power more equitable (Meyer, 2001; van Dijk, 2008, 2015). Within discourse analysis and CDA there are multiple paradigms that vary from looking at the minutiae of language (e.g., grammar) to looking at the sociological meaning of the text (Meyer, 2001). Critical to CDA is the relationship between texts and society; this is assessed through intertextuality (Meyer, 2001; van Dijk, 2008, 2015). Intertextuality is understood as the relationships that exists between texts and how language is not independent (Hodges,

2015). Language is dualistic in nature, as its production is based on past exposure to language (Alvesson & Sköldbberg, 2009), meaning that how individuals use and understand language is based on past experiences. How and when language is used allows individuals to create meaning of the discourse, and intertextuality, and specifically focuses on relationships and how meaning is created through contextualization (Hodges, 2015). In other words, discourses do not exist within a vacuum, but rather reflect an infinite number of inputs that coalesce within a single discursive event (Hodges, 2015).

As discussed, CDA focuses on the relationship between micro and macro discourses, as these discourses reinforce each other and give power to the discursive regime (Foucault, 1994). The procedures focus on how “one part...in the context of the whole” (Meyer, 2001, p. 16). CDA attempts identify how discourse at a micro (individual) level and how daily productions of power either reinforce or – ideally – challenge power at a meso (organizational) or macro (societal) level (van Dijk, 2008). This flexibility makes discourse analysis an adaptable tool to fit the guiding research questions. CDA is methodologically guided more by grounded theory understandings, as to understand one component, there needs to be understanding of the broad intention (Meyer, 2001; Wodak & Meyer, 2016b). As grounded theory is driven by data and data interpretation, the process of theory generation is iterative, where the researcher is cycling between the data collected, the insights generated from that data, and confirming the data through further data generation, until no new concepts are presented (Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Meyer, 2001).

Within the text produced from interviews, the focus was on identifying the relevant and appropriate discourses to address the research questions (Jäger, 2001; Wodak & Meyer, 2016b). To align the analysis with the focus of the research, allies were asked to discuss their

roles from within their respective organizations and how they discussed women in leadership. The analysis focused on both gendered themes (e.g., masculine or feminine traits or qualities), the location of ally behaviors (e.g., interpersonal interactions, meetings, departments), and what allyship looks like (e.g., mentorship or advocating). Additionally, the role of resistant discourses and the contexts (e.g., likeminded or hesitant audiences) in which allies used them were noted.

Epistemology

The epistemological underpinning of discourse analysis converge on the constructionist understanding, where the purpose is to understand how people construct knowledge (through language) and determine the ways in which it may differ and the meaning created through the difference (Willig, 2012, 2014a). Constructionism assumes that language plays a role in all human interactions and that individuals intentionally use language in different ways to describe different phenomenon and that situations are created through the use of language (Willig, 2014a, 2014b). The use of language, therefore, is not a clear indication of an individual's "true" attitudes or beliefs (Willig, 2014a); specifically, discourse is not a tool that is reliable, as an individual can manipulate words to match what their goals or intended outcome. CDA has the same epistemological underpinnings as discourse analysis, where it views language as a way of constructing meaning and knowledge, but is focused on how discourse is used to express, legitimize and perpetuate power (van Dijk, 2015; Wodak & Meyer, 2016a). Similar to the dualistic understanding of discourse analysis (Alvesson & Sköldbberg, 2009; Willig, 2014a), where discourse is able to create power, while simultaneously challenging power (Wodak & Meyer, 2016a).

Combining epistemologies

When combining methodologies, it is necessary to join *complementary* approaches – with similar epistemological foundations (Lal, Suto & Ungar, 2012). The root word of the epistemologies for both grounded theory (constructivism) and discourse analysis (constructionism) is “construct”, with the acknowledgment of a constructed reality through the existence of multiple truths and consider the role of language and action in aiding in construction (Charmaz, 2008; Creswell, 2013; Willig, 2014b). Where the epistemologies diverge is the agent in construction. Constructivism, the epistemology of grounded theory, emphasizes that each individual has their own experience, through which provides meaning within the world (Patton, 2014). Constructionism, the epistemology of discourse analysis, stresses how an individual’s culture acts as a control and a prism through which all understandings are shaped (Patton, 2014). These two epistemologies align well with the purpose and research questions of the study. The constructivist understanding acknowledges the roles and experiences of the individual ally in creating change, while the constructionist understanding acknowledges the role of the institution of sport, specifically how traditional understandings of masculinity have been incorporated into sport organizations and influence constructions of leadership (Boutilier & SanGiovanni, 1981; Hovden & Pfister, 2006; Knoppers & Anthonissen, 2008; Messner & Sabo, 1990; Shaw, 2006; Theberge, 1985, 1987) and has led to the low numbers of women in positions of leadership in sport organizations (Acosta & Carpenter, 2014; Lapchick, 2013).

Researcher’s Role

Due to the role the researcher plays in qualitative research as the analytical tool, it is necessary to disclose the researcher’s position that may influence analysis (Creswell, 2014; Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Acknowledging this role involves considering how the

researcher plans to gain access to participants and how personal connections will be fostered, how reciprocity was gained, the researcher's "identity...perspectives, assumptions and sensitives", and finally any anticipated ethical considerations participants faced from participating in the study (Marshall & Rossman, 2011, p. 96). The goal of disclosing the researcher's role and ethical considerations served to decrease the burden participants faced, thus encouraging their participation (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Disclosing my identity and positioning to participants and readers allowed for my identity to be managed in the data generation and analysis process. Field notes were an additional source of researcher reflection, which occurs within the data generation process (Marshall & Rossman, 2011; Patton, 2014). Within discourse analysis, researcher bias is an important consideration as every individual has their own understandings of discourse that will influence the "[reconstruction of] the text as a system of meanings" (Fowler, 1996, p. 7). While my biases were never fully removed from the data generation and analysis process, the goal was to demystify the analytical process through disclosure of my predispositions.

Interpersonal considerations

Interpersonal considerations are crucial for the successful completion of a qualitative study, as the relationship between the participant and the researcher is the foundation of the data generation and the resulting theory (Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Interpersonal considerations for conducting my research included discussing trust, reciprocity and ethical considerations (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). By anticipating these areas, I was able to determine strategies that considered participants prior to the interview being conducted, ideally, ensuring participant respect and the credibility of the information gathered (Marshall & Rossman, 2011).

Trust. Establishing trust between the participant and myself served as the starting point for the inquiry, as it ensures the information gathered through interviews was credible (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). To establish trust with my interviewees, I shared the interview guide with participants prior to the interview. Sharing the interview guide allowed for participants to review the questions prior to being interviewed and be aware of primary interview questions. I used probing questions as necessary. The interview transcriptions were also shared with participants to allow for review and verify that the information captured was accurate. Any participant who did not feel as though the transcription captured their opinions was allowed to clarify points during a follow up phone call.

Reciprocity. Reciprocity illustrates the researchers' understanding the crucial role of the participant in the research process, and ultimately respects the commitment to be involved (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). In this study, reciprocity was maintained through ensuring interviews were limited to the scheduled timeframe and limiting the burden put on the participant and by scheduling the interview in a space that was accessible and convenient for them, which most often occurred via telephone. Additionally, all participants received a thank you note to illustrate my appreciation for participation in the study.

Ethical considerations. Researchers need to consider and demonstrate sensitivity to the ethical considerations of the project (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). This study received approval from the University of Minnesota's Institutional Review Board (IRB) (# 1611P00564) in December 2016, which ensured that the protocols presented complied with standard research practices. A pilot test was conducted in February 2017 and data generation was completed in February 2018. Prior to any data generation, informed consent was obtained. In this process, the participants were informed of their voluntary participation and

of their rights. Participant rights included: understanding the research purpose, procedure, and their right to anonymity (Creswell, 2014).

Technical considerations

Technical considerations focus on obtaining access to possible participants and considering the role and time of the researcher (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). By anticipating technical considerations before the research process began, a protocol was in place for anticipated issues (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). The technical constraints were negotiating entry, maintaining access, and disclosing the researcher bias.

Negotiating entry and maintaining access. Critical to the success of this inquiry was the ability to gain access to and develop a rapport with participants that allowed for honest reflection (Marshall & Rossman, 2011) on their experiences as male and female gender allies in sport organizations. As discussed, gender in sport can be a contentious subject given that men are often positioned as barriers to women's success. I acknowledged the sensitivity of gender in sport, yet as gender allyship is a positively framed—where men are part of the solution and gender allyship is a strategy for women—contributed to my ability to gain access to these allies. The positive framing has been an important feature in allyship research, which researchers have highlighted makes people more willing to engage in discussion of sensitive issues (Brown, 2002; Tatum, 1994).

I gained access to people, initially, through my personal connections within the sport industry, and expanded the inquiry based on individuals' abilities to contribute to the development of an explanatory theory. Marshall and Rossman (2011) encourage researchers to be authentic about the research interest when trying to gain access. I accomplished access through disclosing to potential participants the reason they were being contacted. In

participant recruitment, I disclosed the nature and intended outcome of my research. Initial disclosure allowed for the positive framing of men around gender in sport, which is atypical, to engage men and women in a new way around discussing the issue. Sharing my interview guide prior to the interview also served to disclose the research topic and also ensured transparency throughout the research process.

Maintaining access to participants was crucial for the success of my project. In some instances, I interviewed people multiple times with the objective of getting a complete, explanatory theory of gender allyship (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). Maintaining access is generally a manifestation of the trust built between the participant and the researcher (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). To accomplish this, I respected the time limit of the scheduled interview, followed up with each interview with a thank you note, and conducted myself professionally during each interview. Following the completion of the study, all participants received an executive summary of the findings and recommendations for how to encourage gender allyship in their organizations (Appendix D). My goal was to have participants leave interviews feeling respected and willing to engage in future conversations. Participants indicated this was achieved through indicating future availability if I had outstanding questions and responding to my thank you emails positively.

One concrete strategy I used to ensure participants right to anonymity was met by removing – or adapting (e.g., “WORKPLACE”, “REDACTED”) – all identifying information from the transcription files and notes. This strategy was crucial as the interview guide focused around their current and previous workplace experiences. An example of sensitive information that was disclosed interviews included: insight into hiring processes and the evaluation process and perspectives on current or previous leadership. It was my

responsibility to reassure participants that any information remained private and all identifying information was removed. Interview transcripts demonstrated that all identifying information was removed and provided evidence to participants of their anonymity. When quotations were shared, I numbered participants, and generalized their position and workplace in efforts to keep their identity and information private. Ensuring their anonymity in the transcription was a concrete strategy illustrating my interest in understanding their experience as gender allies, rather than linking them to specific information.

Situating self. The process of situating the researcher constructs the predominant perspectives and experiences that influence and guide the researcher's analysis toward a topic (Marshall & Rossman, 2011; Patton, 2014). Given the nature of the inquiry investigated the role of gender allies within the sport industry, this section will focus primarily on how my personal experience with the concepts of feminism and women in sport organization, and allies influenced the discussion.

I have been a life-long member of sport organizations – primarily from the perspective of an athlete of team sports-- where the idea of working together to achieve a goal reigned. One of the most formative of these experiences was being a college athlete at a women's college, where my identity as a college athlete and feminist merged. Within our athletic department, women composed 66% of the department staff, which illustrated the potential for women to have a career in sports; however, this high representation of women is atypical from the general sport organization composition (Acosta & Carpenter, 2014; Lapchick, 2013).

Within my intercollegiate athletic experience, I saw the development and embracing of a feminist identity. The feminine perspective at a women's college is ubiquitous and

female leaders are standard. This part of my undergraduate experience continues to be the most valuable part of my collegiate experience, as it provided me with a powerful counter-narrative to societal expectations of women, grounded in feminism. Seeing the successful implementation of feminism – where women and men were equal contributors – within a sport context established my commitment to seeing more women within positions of leadership in sport organizations.

An additional component of my identity is sexual orientation. As a lesbian who came of age during the tail end of the 2000's. I witnessed the power of straight allies in creating social and political change. Recalling the definition of social justice allies, allies are members of dominant social groups who align themselves with a marginalized social group to combat systemic oppression and move toward a system where power is equitable (Bishop, 2002; Broido, 2000; Patel, 2011; Reason et al., 2005). The trend in the late 2000s was a continuing increase in the number of Americans aligning with the LGBTQ+ community on issues over sexual orientation and identity discrimination. The increased aligning with the LGBTQ+ community was driven primarily by straight allies and ultimately created momentum to have increased perceived societal acceptance by LGBTQ+ individuals (Pew Research Center, 2013).

As a developing scholar focused on gender issues, I witnessed this trend in one aspect of my life, while there was still overwhelming cultural hesitancy to identify as a feminist. Additionally, within the sport feminist literature, I noticed the absence of male, feminist perspectives. Increasingly, more men are beginning to not only voice feminist opinions and values, but also identify as a feminist; however, this perspective is drastically underrepresented within the sport literature (Burton, 2015; Burton et al., 2009, 2011; Burton

& Leberman, 2017a; Cunningham & Sagas, 2007a; Kane & LaVoi, 2018; Sartore & Cunningham, 2007; Schull et al., 2012; Shaw, 2006; Shaw & Slack, 2002; Walker & Sartore-Baldwin, 2013). Understanding that men occupy the majority of positions of power within sport, I believe these voices are crucial to creating opportunity for women to advance into leadership positions and change within sport organizations, as they readily have access to power. It is the confluence of these experiences that led me to pursue this research, as I believe that to truly create social change, there needs to be alignment on a cause by the dominant social group.

Theoretical Sampling & Data Generation

Sampling, data generation, and data analysis are an interrelated process in grounded theory and CDA methodologies (Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Wodak & Meyer, 2016b). In grounded theory, sampling is informed by theoretical sampling, where participant recruitment is guided by their ability to provide information about concepts within the emerging theory rather than sampling based on participant characteristics (Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The focus on concepts in theoretical sampling aims to “maximize opportunities to develop concepts in terms of their properties and dimensions, uncover variations, and identify relationships between concepts” (Corbin & Strauss, 2015, p. 134). The concepts in question were developed from data analysis, which created new questions that needed to be answered by future sampling and data generation (Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Draucker, Martsolf, Ross, & Rusk, 2007; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Lal et al., 2012; Starks & Trinidad, 2007; Thornberg & Charmaz, 2014).

Data generation was connected to the process of theoretical sampling, and the data sources that were used to develop the theory is also discussed in this section. Given that the

purpose of this research is was to create a substantive theory of gender allyship in sport organizations, semi-structured interviews were the primary mode of data generation (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). Interviews were conducted using an interview guide, as it allowed for the conversation to flow with the participant, while also allowing flexibility to probe using additional questions based on participant answers to questions (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). As these processes are interrelated, theoretical sampling and data generation will be discussed together. This section will close with an overview of the final sample.

Theoretical sampling. Theoretical sampling creates flexibility for the researcher (Draucker et al., 2007), as sampling occurs within a specific population, yet is open to people within that population who can best discuss the concepts (Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Draucker et al., 2007; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). In this research, the group of interest were men who work in or with sport organizations. Specifically, male sport administrators who could discuss the process of hiring and inform how gender allies act outside of hiring (e.g., interactions with coworkers, mentoring). The sampling criteria for initial sample selection included: 1) men who were working for a sport organization, 2) working in positions of leadership and input over hiring procedures and decisions, and 3) used resistant discourses to advocate for the hiring of women into leadership positions. Assessing these criteria was performed through secondary data, specifically focusing on how men discuss gender and identifying concrete cases of hiring women into nontraditional positions. From there, sampling was guided based on individuals' abilities to discuss the concepts and expand on properties and dimensions in the emergent gender allyship theory (Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

As discussed, grounded theory is a flexible methodology and allows for adaptation to the sampling criteria and data generation criteria during the study (Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Draucker et al., 2007; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). As the study evolved, it became clear that a complete understanding of gender allyship required including women's perspectives about gender allyship. The decision to include women in the sample was based on feedback that gender allyship had the potential to be perceived as patriarchal. The core of this issue was the idea of women "needing men" to advance into leadership positions implied to some that gender allyship positioned women as weak or not empowered. While this criticism was not taken lightly, it does not reflect the intention of gender allyship. Gender allyship was conceived as a strategy for women and men to work together to create more opportunities for women. Specifically, women could use their male allies *strategically* to possibly be hired into a higher position or reach a different audience of men about the importance of gender in sport.

The sampling criteria were updated in summer 2017 to address these concerns and include women in shaping the understanding of gender allyship. Grounded theory allows for this type of sampling adaptation, as it prioritizes concepts over population characteristics (Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The resulting sampling criteria sought to include women who could 1) provide perspectives on gender allyship, 2) how they operate in sport organizations, and 3) how they identified potential male allies. Sampling criteria further evolved to include individuals' ability to discuss how organizational change occurs, specifically considering organizational change around gender diversity, and how women were utilizing their power and acting as allies within their organization. As with the initial theoretical sampling criteria, further sampling was guided based on individuals' abilities to

discuss the concepts in the emergent theory (Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

Interview guide. Data was gathered using in-depth semi-structured interviews focusing on understanding the experience of being a gender ally within the sport industry (Rubin & Rubin, 2012) with the goal of creating an explanatory theory of gender allyship in sport organizations. The purpose of an interview guide was to standardize the initial questions asked to each interview participant; therefore, the interview guide lists the questions in the *intended* order, as determined by the researcher (Patton, 2014). As a semi-structured interview, I was not limited to a prescribed set of questions and could ask probing or follow up questions as I saw fit. Therefore, the interview guide was not prescriptive in its order, I deviated in order of questions; however, the interview guide ensured that all questions were asked (Patton, 2014). Given that this study was guided by grounded theory, the interview guide changed as new concepts emerged or required more clarification (Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Draucker et al., 2007; Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

The initial interview guide (Appendix A) developed for this inquiry was organized into three sections. The first section consists of demographic questions about the participants' occupational history, including: length of time in employer and in current position, their recruitment process, their work environment, and mentorship within the organization. These questions served to make participants comfortable and understand how gender allyship occurs (RQ 1). The second section asked questions about their experiences and behaviors during the hiring processes of women within sport organizations (Patton, 2014). Questions were focused on the process of making recent hires in their current position, specifically asking, the type of position, how the position was advertised, if applicants were

recruited, and how applicants were evaluated. Hiring process questions aimed to illuminate how allies advocated for women in the past (RQ 1 & 3) and if or how they have used resistant discourses (RQ 2).

The last section included scenario questions written based on prominent examples within the sport industry around men advocating for and hiring women in leadership positions (e.g., Gregg Popovich and Becky Hammon of the NBA's San Antonio Spurs, and DeMaurice Smith and Michelle Roberts of the National Basketball Players' Association). Scenario questions are a tool that researchers use to ask charged questions in a less threatening way; through the use of situations, the interviewee is an observer and is not forced into a position where they may feel the need to be defensive (Patton, 2014). This strategy was based on understanding the prominence and sensitivity of the issue of hiring women in sport organizations. While allies were expected to be more inclined to advocating on behalf of women, the use of situations neutralizes the role through making the context being discussed part of the discussion (Patton, 2014). The scenario cases were selected to be part of the interview guide, as they were extensively covered in the media due to the historical significance of being a first female hire for the respective positions. It was assumed that even though the interview guide included a summary and quotations of male allies, that the interview participant would be familiar with and have their own knowledge of the hiring. Questions focused on the role of gender in the situation, the impact of the male allies' quotations and the likelihood a similar situation could happen within their organization or department. The changes that were made to the interview guide will be discussed after the adapted structure section.

Pilot test. Pilot testing allowed the interview guide to be assessed and to ensure that the desired outcomes were elicited (Creswell, 2014). The interview guide was pilot tested prior to carrying out the study. I conducted pilot testing by interviewing two men, one of whom had experience working in the sport industry but has since retired or transitioned jobs. The other participant currently works in the sport industry and has held varying roles. Both individuals were involved in hiring processes and could speak to how they occur. The participants were selected as their background could provide meaningful insight into the field and can offer advice as to questions that men might not be willing to answer due to the sensitivity of the topic or how the question is presented. In addition to evaluating the outcomes of the discussion, I asked for the participants' feedback on the set-up, content, and length of the interview. Neither individual recommended changes to the interview guide.

After pilot data was collected and transcribed, I evaluated the responses to see which questions produced in-depth answers with categories consistent in gender allyship (e.g., men using their power or position to advocate for women). The findings of the pilot study indicated that the interview guide elicited the desired responses from participants. However, the major revision that came from the pilot study was the removal of the scenario questions. As discussed, scenario questions were included to allow gender allies, specifically men, to be able to examine gender from an impersonal position, which contrasted with the preceding interview questions. The participants in the pilot did not suggest the removal of the question, but the men were more forthcoming with information about their experiences and perspectives on gender than anticipated. In response to the scenario question, participants did not reveal any ideas that were not already offered throughout the preceding questions. Therefore, the decision was made to remove the scenario questions as it was not serving its

intended purpose of revealing additional information or answering specific research questions.

Updated interview guide. As is standard in grounded theory, the interview guide adapted as the inquiry evolved (Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). In addition to the changes made to the interview guide after the pilot study, the interview guide evolved to examine emerging concepts in varying contexts. An example of how the interview guide evolved is adapting questions to address how hiring related to how gender allies try to create organizational cultures. These revisions were the result of how initial interviews discussed hiring in terms of attempting to find “fits” for their organization and how they assessed candidates’ potential to align with organizational culture. To fully understand this idea in the terms of gender allyship, the interview guide evolved to understand how gender allies in leadership positions create organizational cultures that enable women to advance. Again, the flexibility of grounded theory provided the latitude necessary for the inquiry to evolve in pursuit of a substantive theory (Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

A notable revision that was made to the interview guide was guided by the decision to include women in the sample. This resulted in the creation of two interview guides, one for women and one for men. The women’s interview guide was differentiated from the men’s interview guide as it asked women to state their opinions on gender allyship, the role of male allies in their career, and whether prominent male allies matter in the sport industry. Sample men’s and women’s interview guides can be seen in Appendix B and Appendix C, respectively.

Data generation. Theoretical sampling focused on individuals that worked in the sport industry. Initial sampling criteria for data generation were: participants identified

through recommendation as gender allies or were featured in media articles. These individuals were contacted via email or LinkedIn messaging to gauge their interest in participation. The majority of participants responded to initial interview requests, and interviews were scheduled via email. Once an individual agreed to participate, a consent form was digitally sent to them via email, which included return instructions. Three days prior to the scheduled interview, the interview guide was shared with participants to review. Most interviews were conducted by telephone; two were conducted face-to-face, and one via Skype. The goal was to conduct all long-distance interviews via Skype or Google Hangouts, technology proved to be a bigger issue than originally anticipated for participants. Given this hurdle, the decision was made to conduct the remaining long-distance interviews by telephone. At the beginning of every scheduled interview, verbal consent was obtained prior to proceeding with the interview.

All interviews were digitally audio recorded and saved with no identifying information. Interviews lasted between 30-75 minutes. Interviews were transcribed verbatim and returned to the participants within two weeks of the interview. Each participant was offered the opportunity to ensure the accuracy of the information captured within the transcription, a process known as member checking. Member checking is common within qualitative research to ensure the information reflected in the final document is accurate prior to analysis (Miles & Huberman, 2014). One participant requested to clarify points they felt were not communicated clearly. In this instance, we scheduled a brief follow up interview where the participant was given the opportunity to clarify their points, which was done through adding addendums to the original transcript. The updated version of this transcript was again shared with the participant, who confirmed the transcript for accuracy.

Secondary data sources. The interviews served as the primary form of data collection in this study, however secondary data in the form of field notes, media articles, and podcasts were also collected. Secondary data collection was based on theoretical sampling and on expanding properties and dimensions from the data analysis.

Field notes. Field notes contributed to data generation and data analysis through identifying potential participants, but also served as a source for initial data analysis. Field notes also served to document insights not captured within the transcription, highlighting sections within the transcription to attend to during analysis, and act as back up in the event the recording is damaged (Patton, 2014). Field notes, therefore, were used to guide the interview (e.g., probing questions), the transcription, and during data analysis. I used field notes to identify follow up questions that were asked during the interview and supplement the interview transcriptions after its completion. Field notes were written up after the interview to allow for interviewer reactions and insights based on non-verbal behaviors (e.g., sighs, pauses) (Patton, 2014). Field notes totaled 20 pages when organized and typed out. Additionally, field notes served as an important factor in determining when the study had reached saturation (Creswell, 2014; Jäger, 2001). As field notes were recorded after interviews, I noted new insights provided by that respective interview and informed the following data analysis by indicating sections of the transcript that were related to the existing concepts. Field notes served as an informal, initial round of data analysis or highlight ideas that need further clarification to guide future sampling (Corbin & Strauss, 2015).

Media articles. Popular press media articles served to guide theoretical sampling through the identification of individuals who were not recommended by a study participant, yet illustrated perspectives that could contribute to the theory of gender allyship. Articles

were sought that related to men's or women's perspectives on or organizational initiatives about gender in sport. Seven articles were used and were the byproduct of Google searches of the individual's or the organization's name and sometimes search terms relating to gender (e.g., "gender", "women"). These media articles were collected prior to participants being contacted to participate in the study.

Podcasts. Podcasts served as supplementary data that contributed to data analysis. Podcasts are digital audio files that are available via download to individuals' computers or smartphones (Day et al., 2017; Newberry, 2016). Podcasts are a flexible medium that often are unrestricted by radio time and are welcomed for providing "a greater diversity of voices and perspectives to public audiences" (Day et al., 2017, p. 206). Podcasts come in a variety of formats, one being an interview (Day et al., 2017). The use of publicly available interviews is an accepted procedure in qualitative research (Corti & Thompson, 2004) and served as the precedent to use podcasts in this study. Podcasts are a relatively newer medium, so their use as a source of data is limited. Rookward and Miller (2011) used podcast as data in their analysis of fans' responses to soccer players. Podcasts featuring sport industry professionals that contained sections or interviews where men or women discussed the importance of gender allyship – or related topics– in the sport industry were considered in data generation. The specific podcasts used in this study were chosen because they offered complete interviews with sport industry professionals (e.g., Sports Illustrated's Media Podcast with Richard Deitsch). Three podcasts were used; the total podcast length was an hour. If the podcast addressed topics related to gender allyship, those sections were transcribed and included in data analysis or used to guide theoretical sampling.

Participants

Creswell's (2013) range for number of participants is between 20 – 60 people; however grounded theory studies have had smaller numbers of participants (e.g., Kihl, Richardson & Campisi, 2008). Seventeen individuals who worked in a variety of sport institutions participated in the study (see table 1). The sample consisted of 11 men and 6 women, and represented non-profit sport (n = 10), professional sport (n = 3), and sport media (n = 4) organizations. Non-profit sport organizations included youth sport organizations (n = 1), coaches' organizations (n = 1), and intercollegiate sport organizations, Division I³ administrators and athletic directors⁴ (n = 2), Division III administrators and athletic directors (n = 3), and conference officials (n = 3) comprised the sample. Senior leadership refers to individuals who held the highest position in their organization (e.g., founder, athletic director), or members of executive committees (e.g., directors, vice presidents, associate athletic directors). Administrators refer to positions where individuals oversee their own department, yet may not be part of senior leadership teams.

³ The National Collegiate Athletic Association has different tiers of membership: Division I, Division II and Division III. Division I is comprised of schools that have the greatest power within the organization's membership. Division III is comprised of schools that make up the majority of the organization's membership.

⁴ Athletic directors and associate athletic directors are referred to as senior leadership in Table 1.

Table 1: Overview of participants

	<u>Gender</u>	<u>Sport Organization Type</u>	<u>Position</u>
Participant 1	Male	Non-profit (College)	Senior Leadership
Participant 2	Male	Non-profit (College)	Administrator
Participant 3	Male	Non-profit (College)	Senior Leadership
Participant 4	Male	Non-profit (College)	Commissioner
Participant 5	Male	Non-profit (College)	Commissioner
Participant 6	Male	Media	Senior Production
Participant 7	Female	Professional	Manager
Participant 8	Female	Non-profit (College)	Senior Leadership
Participant 9	Male	Non-profit	Programming Director
Participant 10	Female	Media	Senior Leadership
Participant 11	Female	Professional	Senior Leadership
Participant 12	Male	Nonprofit	Senior Leadership
Participant 13	Male	Professional	Senior Leadership
Participant 14	Male	Non-profit (College)	Administrator
Participant 15	Female	Non-profit (College)	Senior Leadership
Participant 16	Male	Media	Reporter
Participant 17	Female	Media	Commentator

In theoretical sampling, the data analysis is not a distinct phase of the research process; rather, it is embedded in the sampling process as it informs the need for future sampling. Sampling continued until saturation was achieved, or “when no new concepts or relevant themes are emerging” and all categories were developed and their properties and dimensions were defined (Corbin & Strauss, 2015, p. 139).

Data Analysis

Data analysis is the process where raw data is interpreted and assigned meaning (Creswell, 2014; Patton, 2014). The data analysis process was guided by the understandings of grounded theory and CDA, specifically a meso-level analysis, as gender allyship is a specific social phenomenon within a specific supporting institution – sport – that is being analyzed (Meyer, 2001). The data analysis followed the process as discussed within the grounded theory and CDA methodological literature (Meyer, 2001; Wodak & Meyer, 2016b) and focused on producing a substantive theory for gender allyship (Corbin & Strauss, 2015).

Given this understanding, it should be noted that data analysis happened concurrently with data generation, as data analysis produced the questions that needed to be explained and guide sampling (Corbin & Strauss, 2015).

Data preparation and organization

Participant identifying information was recorded in a password protected file, to which only I had access. All consent forms were printed and stored in a locked file cabinet. This procedure was followed to ensure the protection of individuals' identities and information provided to the researcher. However, no transcriptions contained identifying information (e.g., name, age, name of employer). All such identifying information was adapted to keep participant information private (e.g., "WORKPLACE" to replace the name of their employer). Prior to coding, all transcription data was member checked to ensure the accuracy of the information. All transcriptions, field notes, and documents were read post-transcription, to reacquaint myself with the data prior to coding (Miles & Huberman, 2014). All data was then prepared and imported to NVivo 11 for data analysis (QSR International, 2016). NVivo is a qualitative software that allowed for data organization and analysis by creating different methods to examine relationships between data (QSR International, 2016).

Data analysis

Data analysis involved a systematic process combining grounded theory and CDA analysis techniques, which focused on conceptualization through using assorted coding and memoing procedures, and the constant comparative method (Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). As mentioned prior to coding, transcripts and their associated field notes were re-read to familiarize myself with the data and ensure all insights from the field notes would be included in data analysis.

Coding began with open coding, which entailed the process of identifying themes that emerged in the data and represented the concepts of gender allyship (Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The creation of codes served to sort related data and begin to develop preliminary code definitions, their properties or characteristics, and dimensions. Codes were created to concisely explain the idea being communicated by the participant. Examples of open codes were: data, equity mentorship, organizational awareness, and recruitment of female candidates. “Data” referred to gender allies using descriptive data to illustrate the underrepresentation of women in their organization or sector. “Equity mentorship” referred to the process where male allies learned the importance of treating women equally in their organizations. “Organizational awareness” referenced gender allies recognizing their organization’s mission or values. “Recruitment of female candidates” referred to encouraging specific women to apply to open job postings. The codes created through open coding included quotations representing gender allyship in varying contexts (e.g., non-profit sport organizations, professional sport organizations) that shared similar meaning or similar processes (Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Open coding guided theoretical sampling and data generation through identifying holes that were not represented in the data (e.g., identifying concepts in different contexts, or understanding concepts at differing organizational levels). The process of open coding also included developing in vivo codes from participants’ words (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). Examples of in vivo codes are: “differentiates product”, “evolution/growth”, and “right person/Jackie Robinson”. “Differentiates product” referred to gender allies understanding that women in positions of leadership serves to distinguish their product in a crowded sport landscape. “Evolution/growth” referred to gender allies sighting their personal growth into becoming

gender allies. “Right person/Jackie Robinson” referenced the need for women in leadership positions need to have a thick skin and not react to the negative scrutiny, in the way that Jackie Robinson was deemed the “right person” to break the color barrier in baseball.

The process of open coding was iterative, whereas new data was introduced and concepts were compared across contexts (e.g., non-profit sport, professional sport), resulting in more refined and robust codes. The constant comparison method was utilized to compare concepts with similar foundations, but differing contexts. Constant comparison investigated how gender allies act in differing contexts; this process facilitated determining properties and dimensions. Comparing the data enabled the development of inclusive codes that went beyond the contextual variables and resulted in codes that included allies referencing aspects of their experience that were transferrable across contexts. An example of how constant comparison assisted the process of coding is with the concept of organizational awareness. This study included participants from different sectors of the sport industry. However, constant comparison enabled the process for athletic director’s understanding their fit within their college/university and professional sport organization’s understanding how mission relates to their creation of specialized positions for women. Utilizing constant comparison, these experiences could be contextualized into understanding how their organizations function and represent different aspects of organizational awareness.

The process of open coding also included memoing, which is discussed in the next section. Memoing was used to develop the codes’ properties, or characteristics, and allowed for codes’ definitions, properties and dimensions throughout the inquiry (Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Through the open coding process, higher level codes – known as categories and subcategories– emerged that serve to group related lower-level concepts

together (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). An example of a higher level code that became a category was “organizational culture”, which focused on how gender allies act to create organizational cultures that support gender allyship. An example of a subcategory within organizational culture was “creating more male allies”, where gender allies realize the importance of getting more male allies within their organization. All of the concepts/categories – and their properties and dimensions – were provisional and changed based on the inclusion of new data (Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

Axial coding is the process of linking related concepts and categories with the goal of creating an explanatory theory of gender allyship in sport organizations (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). In axial coding, data was compared to further defining the properties and dimensions established in open coding – and serve as a means to guide future theoretical sampling (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). Axial coding facilitated a conceptual development of gender allyship that superseded the specific experiences where the concepts originated (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). Through axial coding, parent categories were developed with supporting codes. An example of a parent code is “capacity” with the supporting codes of “individual capacity”, “organizational capacity”, and “situational capacity”. When every concept and category explained the process of gender allyship that included all of the experiences represented in the data, with defined and distinct properties and dimensions, conceptual saturation was achieved (Corbin & Strauss, 2015).

Theoretical integration is the process of identifying the core category, integrating the concepts, and creating an explanatory theory (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). A core category is defined as “a concept that is sufficiently broad and abstract that summarizes in a few words the main idea expressed in the study” (Corbin & Strauss, 2015, p. 187). Core categories,

therefore, is drive the theory and research findings and are play a significant role in explaining the process of gender allyship. The core category for the theory of gender allyship is awareness, which is discussed in Chapter 4. With the core category defined, the specific relationships between the categories were identified and their relationship to the core category that explained the phenomenon of gender allyship (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). The process of theoretical integration coding was assisted by the use of drawing figures that sought to define the relationships between concepts (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). Initially the concepts were linked through a tree model, where relationships between concepts were linear. In comparing concepts and their properties, it became clear that concepts were more integrated than a linear model. Additionally, a linear model would imply a top-down approach for how gender allyship occurs. The model then shifted to representing a cog, where movement in the system can start from different inputs, but the greatest amount of movement comes from the largest cog.

Throughout open and axial coding and theoretical integration, regular meetings with a grounded theory expert (Dr. Kihl) were held to discuss the process and advise on conceptual development. These meetings occurred regularly (about 2-4 times a month) and were instrumental in discussing codes and category development, identification of holes in the codes or outstanding questions to guide theoretical sampling, and oversee the process of generating a substantive theory for gender allyship.

As discussed, coding was an on-going process that occurred concurrently with data generation and guided theoretical sampling (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). When every concept and category was fully explained with elaboration on the properties and dimensions and all

research questions were answered, conceptual saturation was achieved (Corbin & Strauss, 2015).

Memoing. Memos were used throughout the generation of open and axial codes. Memos illuminated relationships between concepts and/or direct theoretical sampling through capturing remaining questions that are left unanswered with the existing data (Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Additionally, memos captured my thoughts and reflections as I went through theoretical sampling and data generation process and served to mark emerging concepts to specific sections of data (Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). In the memoing process, I primarily utilized the traditional written memos and then supplemented those with recorded voice memos throughout the research process. I merged the insights from the voice recorded memos into the written memos to ensure the same information was represented when it guided the theoretical sampling and data generation. In short, memos were used to “mark” where the data analysis left off, so that process continued from that point based on the project’s overall coding and memoing. Additionally, memos assisted in differentiating between lower level concepts and overarching categories (Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness is a feature of qualitative research that aims to answer the question regarding the value of the inquiry; value in this sense is seen in its ability to contribute new knowledge to the literature (Guba, 1981; Lincoln, 1985; Shenton, 2004). Trustworthiness is an approach consistent within a constructivist perspective that is comparable to validity, reliability and generalizability within a positivistic perspective, where the focus is on to have accurate representations that are capable of application to other situations (Shenton, 2004).

Trustworthiness is assessed on four standards which are credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Guba, 1981; Lincoln, 1985; Shenton, 2004). Each of these will be discussed more in the following sections with the strategies this inquiry used to ensure that each standard of trustworthiness is achieved.

Credibility

The focus of credibility is to ensure that the purpose and research questions are truly being addressed (Lincoln, 1985; Shenton, 2004). A multitude of strategies were used to achieve credibility within an inquiry. The strategies used in this inquiry included: the adoption of established research methods, iterative questioning, reflective commentary, member checking and peer scrutiny of the research project (Shenton, 2004). While gender allyship as a strategy is a new concept, the use of discourse analysis to look at the underrepresentation of women in leadership positions within sport organizations is not; discourse is consistently used by scholars who are looking to address this issue (e.g., Shaw & Hoerber, 2003; Shaw & Penney, 2003). To further establish credibility, iterative questioning was used, as the interviewing was semi-structured, which allowed me to ask probing questions and ensure the true experience of gender allies was being captured (Patton, 2014). Probing questions allowed me to adapt the interview based on the initial information provided by the interview guide to assist in categorical development and theory saturation. Credibility was further ensured through the use of field notes and reflective commentary. Taking field notes allowed me to be aware of “developing constructions” of the concepts and limit the ability to influence further data generation (Shenton, 2004, p. 68). Member checking was an additional strategy used to ensure credibility through participants ensuring their interview transcript is an accurate representation (Miles & Huberman, 2014; Shenton,

2004). Finally, credibility was ensured through the guidance and oversight of the research committee. The committee comprised of a combination of sport management, sport and gender and community scholars and scholars with experience in grounded theory, who represent the areas of literature that this inquiry stems from. Additionally, regular meetings were held with Dr. Kihl, who has experience with grounded theory, throughout data generation and analysis process. These meetings provided guidance, oversight of the process, and scrutiny of the data and findings. Together these four pieces will ensure the credibility of this inquiry.

Transferability

The focus on transferability ensures the applicability of findings to other contexts (Lincoln, 1985; Shenton, 2004). Given that the focus of qualitative research is on breadth and depth of the phenomenon or experience of gender allyship, transferability is not always achievable as these two pieces are likely related to the context. For these reasons, transferability could not be as prescriptive as credibility. However, a strategy to achieve transferability within a study is to examine the experience within multiple contexts (Shenton, 2004). This study interviewed men and women from varying types of sport organizations (e.g., professional, non-profit) and at multiple levels within sport organizations. By interviewing gender allies from different levels within an organization and different types of organizations within the sport industry, it was designed to represent the majority of organizational types within the sport industry.

Dependability

Dependability aims to ensure a similar process is performed during the data generation process (Lincoln, 1985; Shenton, 2004). Discussions around dependability focus

on creating *similar* processes rather than recreating *the same* process as the interactions that create qualitative data generation do not always *allow* for the same process to occur every time (Shenton, 2004). Therefore, to achieve dependability in this study, the methods of data generation and data analysis have been extensively documented in this section. An interview guide was used to create a structure for the interviewing that allowed for flexibility to adapt to generate theory on gender allyship. The same procedure of data generation was followed, which involved the interview guide being shared with participants within 24 hours prior to data generation. Additionally, field notes were used to allow reflection on data generated and assisted in the adaptation of the interview guide, specifically of the removal of the scenario question (Shenton, 2004).

Confirmability

The rationale of confirmability is to make certain that the phenomenon being observed is a true phenomenon, and not part of the researcher's bias (Lincoln, 1985; Shenton, 2004). To ensure the ability to confirm findings, two strategies were used within this inquiry: disclosure of researcher biases and detailed data generation procedures that ultimately allowed for external individuals to arrive at similar outcomes based on the data collected by the researcher (Miles & Huberman, 2014; Shenton, 2004). Disclosure of the researcher biases occurred earlier in this manuscript and identified my general framing in issues related to gender allyship, where I have seen and value the contribution of allies in my own life. Together these strategies not only communicated my starting point, but also help trace the path taken during data generation, which ultimately helped determine if the findings of the inquiry are accurate based on the collected data.

Establishing confirmability was not achieved through the use of an independent or second coder, where a second party codes the data and performs data analysis to affirm the researcher's findings (Miles & Huberman, 2014). An independent coder is a vestige of adapting qualitative research to fit the standards of quantitative research, and further is not in the tradition of qualitative research (Shaw, 2016). Grounded theory requires "measured involvement" in the data and requires the pursuit of questions or holes as determined by the researcher (Kihl, 2016, p. 35), which precludes the need for an independent coder. I intentionally designed the research process to confirm findings by building "rigor...into the research process", which included having a clear purpose and using strategies within the research process that checked findings throughout data generation and analysis (e.g., self-awareness, member checking, constant comparison), and regular data analysis meetings with Dr. Kihl (Corbin & Strauss, 2015, p. 346).

Summary

This section discussed the research design, which utilized a combined grounded theory and CDA design, where in-depth interviews served as the primary data source. The initial and adapted procedures for theoretical sampling and data generation were outlined. Theoretical sampling procedures were adapted from discourse, social justice ally, and sport feminist literatures. The data generation procedures explained considered the steps of research from participant recruitment, data capture procedures, and the types and roles supplementary data in this study. The data analysis procedure was discussed, which was guided by the earlier discussion of grounded theory and discourse analysis, but also included specifically how data was prepared and coded to create the explanatory theory of gender

allyship. To conclude this section, the strategies utilized to ensure trustworthiness of the inquiry were reviewed.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

The purpose of this dissertation was to explore the existence of gender allyship within the sport industry and generate a substantive theory for how gender allyship occurs within sport organizations. This chapter focuses on discussing the first research question and conceptualizes the existence of gender allyship within the sport industry, the contexts of where gender allyship is most likely to occur, and the initiation of gender allyship is also theorized. Specifically, the chapter explains the theoretical category of awareness and its role in the process of initiating gender allyship. Development of the category resulted from participants' reflections on their career path and experiences within the sport industry and how their understandings or thought processes on gender equity issues. Findings demonstrated how men's and women's awareness was informed by their experiences. The following section will first explain the theoretical category of awareness and the supporting properties and dimensions that contribute to and shape individuals' awareness of gender allyship.

Existence of Gender Allyship

Gender allyship exists within the sport industry in a variety of environments and contexts. The existence of gender allyship occurred in non-profit, professional sport and sport media. Specifically, gender allyship was performed during 1) hiring processes, 2) leadership transitions that caused a shift in organizational narrative or positioning (e.g., creating opportunities for minorities; greater allocation of resources to minority-based committees/groups), and 3) in everyday interactions between coworkers (e.g., challenging a gendered statement from a coworker). These three contexts were identified as they served to

increase women's representation and change women's experiences within sport organizations. Gender allies focus on these processes as they represent situations where change can occur. The strategies that gender allies use during these processes will be discussed more at length in Chapter 6.

Gender allyship's existence is deeply tied to allies' awareness and how it is translated into action. While the specific action depends on the situation (e.g., hiring processes consider hiring criteria, everyday processes consider language), gender allyship occurs when individuals or organizations commit to creating more opportunities for women or explicitly hire more women within the sport industry. Commitment to gender allyship encompasses several dispositions across industry contexts including: "having an eye to try and create opportunities and give a close look to create opportunities for women in coaching and women in administration" (Participant 3); in aiming to break the cycle employing "a degree of intentionality"... "there are men who were qualified, but I was giving the opportunities to women" (Participant 9); and in corporate organization, a female member of senior leadership and the CEO "brainstormed and built out what [a program specifically designed] to increase the amount of female talent in our organization and within sports" (Participant 11). Individual gender allies recognize the need to "start somewhere" (Participant 11) for change to occur and are invested in using their positional power to affect change around women's representation in their organization and the sport industry.

Gender allies exist in both non-profit and for-profit organizations and exhibit similar levels of awareness and desire to act intentionally by using their positional power to create change within the organization. Gender allies operate at executive leadership levels (e.g., senior leadership, directors) and within organizational ranks (e.g., administrators, producers).

Gender allies in executive leadership organizations are capable of creating initiatives that impact their entire organization, as demonstrated by Participant 9 and 11. Gender allies within the organizational hierarchy recognize their power to affect change in their arena, including: recognizing positions where women's presence create "a noteworthy impact" due to their underrepresentation (Participant 6), but also their ability to "contribute just like a guy can contribute" (Participant 14). Individual gender allies within the organizational hierarchy demonstrate their commitment to gender allyship by challenging the status quo with their staff. Gender allies recognize women's "*occasional* [emphasis in original]" presence as a member of an announcing booth in sport broadcast (Participant 6) or how women "wouldn't be seen 10 years ago or 20 years ago" in officiating (Participant 14), yet are not limited by tradition as they recognize the need for change. However, gender allies also acknowledge that hiring women into non-traditional positions represents a "risk" (Participant 14), yet does not deter their decision or willingness to act as a gender ally. Rather the lack of precedence further demonstrates the need for gender allyship and their willingness to act intentionally and strategically to "break the cycle" (Participant 9).

Gender allies' commitment to hire women is based in their awareness of women's underrepresentation in positions of power in the sport industry. This awareness was displayed by both men and women in different types of sport organizations and positions within their organization's hierarchy. The following section explores how gender allies' understandings of women's underrepresentation developed and informed their commitment.

Awareness

Awareness is the core category in this substantive theory of gender allyship. Awareness denotes men's and women's understandings of not only the low representation of

women in decision making and leadership positions within the sport industry, but also their power to influence the hiring of women. The existence of gender allyship is predicated off of gender allies' awareness. Male and female gender allies' awareness manifests differently, due to the different experiences men and women encounter within the sport industry.

Male allies demonstrate awareness by recognizing that men's and women's experiences in the sport industry differ (e.g., men eligible for men's and women's coaching positions, women eligible for women's coaching positions) and identify how societal understandings of gender have been interpreted and manifest in sport organizations. Individual male allies cannot remove societal gender roles from the sport industry, however their awareness allows for: identification of societal gender roles, recognition of their negative impact on women, and reinterpretation to limit disparate experiences for men and women in the sport industry. Male allies' abilities to recognize, understand, and reinterpret societal gender roles illustrates their awareness because they are not limited by their personal experiences, which have benefitted them. The sport industry perpetuates the notion that "women want to nurture more" and "women are less competitive", and male allies recognize how these ideas manifest in other ways, such as women's underrepresentation in leadership. Rather than being beholden to these gendered ideas, male allies understand their role in creating inclusive work environments, such as offering seminars that create a "safe and comfortable" environment for women (Participant 9). Such environments stray away from the gendered ideas, but also "avoiding condescension and being patronizing" to women (Participant 9). Male allies' awareness accepts women's leadership, and therefore, male allies do not want to be perceived as thinking less of or being patronizing women. Rather, male allies' awareness serves to demonstrate how structural forces within the sport industry, which

are based in societal gender roles, have resulted in women's underrepresentation across the industry.

Male allies utilize direct and indirect strategies to try and create more opportunities for women in the sport industry, which are all based in and illustrate their awareness. Direct action involves actions that directly impact women's experiences in the sport industry (e.g., hiring women creating, "safe and comfortable environments" for women) where male allies have positional power to create change. Male allies use indirect actions to facilitate more opportunities for women when they lack positional power to create direct change, but recognize their sphere of influence. Male allies utilize indirect actions to facilitate more gender diverse pools by contacting organizations with lists of candidates to "invite to apply for an [open] position" (Participant 5) and recognizing the power of representation in media and having a guest list that is "more representational of the country at large as opposed to the [sport industry]" (Participant 16). Male allies utilize indirect strategies to change perceptions of women in the sport industry by demonstrating women's qualifications and/or fit for positions or highlighting women's experiences. Ally strategies will be discussed more at length in Chapter 6, however these strategies illustrate how awareness is a catalyst and informs the process of gender allyship.

Female allies' awareness also shares a desire to increase the number of women in positions of power or leadership and is influenced by a variety of career experiences in the sport industry. Female allies' awareness, therefore, is directly related to the experiences women have had throughout their careers where their gender served to "other" them from their male colleagues. Specifically, women's persistent underrepresentation in the sport industry has created a set of norms and understandings about women within the sport

industry, (e.g., “women are less competitive than men”) that have impacted women’s experiences. Women’s experiences in the sport industry include tolerating men “making [gendered] jokes and comments on the air or in the office” and demonstrated their “preference [that women] weren’t [there]” (Participant 17). Despite this awareness, female allies recognize that men in sports are not a monolith. Rather, there are men who are interested in working with women and believe in women’s abilities to lead. Female allies have a network of male allies that they can rely on and they use in combination with their positional power to create change within the sport industry. A female member of senior leadership in professional sport discusses how her experiences in the industry informed how she worked with a male ally in her organization to create more opportunities for women:

...just going through the [hiring] process, they weren’t used to having HR and the sports industry is male dominated. I don’t know they [knew that] they shouldn’t be asking [those questions] (e.g., asking about kids). It really was, it was an idea between myself and [name- male]... I just thought by starting with one person, we could start building [a program to increase women’s representation]. (Participant 11)

Positional power affords female allies the possibility to create change within their organization; however their desire to make change is informed by their experiences where gender had a pronounced role and continues to inform how they think about and utilize power. Due to the way that societal gender roles are tied into sport organizations, female allies’ awareness is more deeply connected to their personal experiences than their male counterparts. Both male and female allies are able to recognize the role of gender and how it impacts their positions from their different perspectives within the sport industry.

Awareness continuum

Gender allies' awareness develops through an evolutionary process and exists along a continuum [Figure 1]. The awareness continuum outlines three classifications: low, intermediate and high awareness. These classifications are meant to serve as markers to create meaning, but are not prescriptive nor represent discrete categories. Through presenting awareness as existing along a continuum, individuals' awareness is not stagnant. The evolutionary process that develops gender allies' awareness is distinct for each individual. Each individual's evolution results from the interaction of their self-awareness, where their personal experiences impact their understandings of gender, and their environmental context, or the situations in their life where gender's role was pronounced. Self-awareness develops consciously (e.g., through mentorship) and unconsciously (e.g., witnessing to female leadership) that results in a desire to address women's underrepresentation in decision making positions in the sport industry. (Self-awareness will be discussed thoroughly in the next section.) An ally's environmental context refers to the unique situations in an ally's life that have informed their understanding about women's leadership, and gender's role in society and sport.

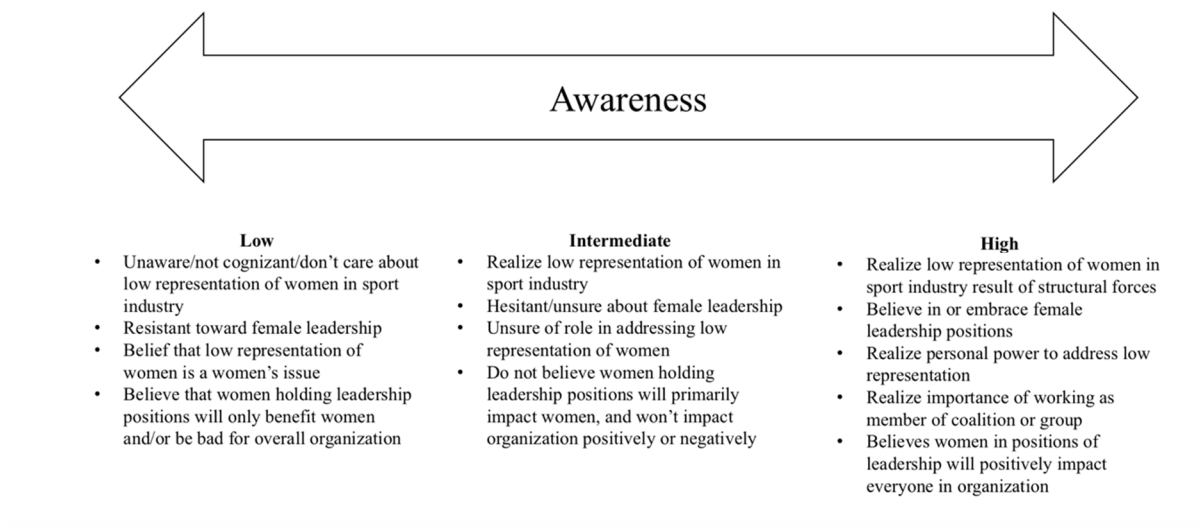
Allies highlight experiences in childhood (e.g., parents, sport participation), education, or work environments inside and outside of in the sport industry (e.g., serving as a coach, coworkers, bosses ensuring representation) as crucial spaces that shaped their understandings of gender and has translated to informing their gender allyship. Different contexts influence similar conceptual foundations for allies' awareness and their understanding of gender, which translates to their professions within the sport industry. Allies' experiences or interactions frame gender issues and impacts their ability to value "broad inclusive perspectives" and impacts their desire to create more opportunities for

women in the sport industry. For example, a male intercollegiate athletic director shares how his “growth in this area has really been significant” and is the byproduct of working with “people who have these perspectives and gave examples” and is “challenged every day” to ensure his actions align with his perspectives (Participant 3). Meanwhile, a female member of senior leadership at a sport media organization has learned how to frame gender issues, specifically noting that “there’s a real art and nuance to how you position [gender issues]” to ensure the message reaches men and does not “put guys on their heels...[and would not] know how to get involved” (Participant 10). Male and female allies’ awareness differs because of gender’s covert or overt role, respectively, in the lives of men and women in the sport industry. As men, gender’s overt role in the sport industry is not prominent because it did not directly impact them, whereas, gender played a bigger role in women’s day to day interactions and impacted how women frame gender in discussions with men. Gender’s day-to-day presence for female allies’ awareness undergoes a different evolution, where they understand different framing to discuss gender and build their coalition of male allies.

Awareness is the basis for action in gender allyship, however successfully hiring women into leadership positions is not part of the awareness continuum. The continuum represents an individual’s thought process or comprehension of the problem. Low awareness represents perspectives that align with traditional gender roles and do not believe that systemic change is necessary. This study did not include participants who hold these positions, as it is focused on individuals looking to create change. However, creating a continuum requires representing the possible range of perspectives. As outlined in the conceptual framework, low awareness perspectives are highly represented in the sport industry in explaining women’s underrepresentation.

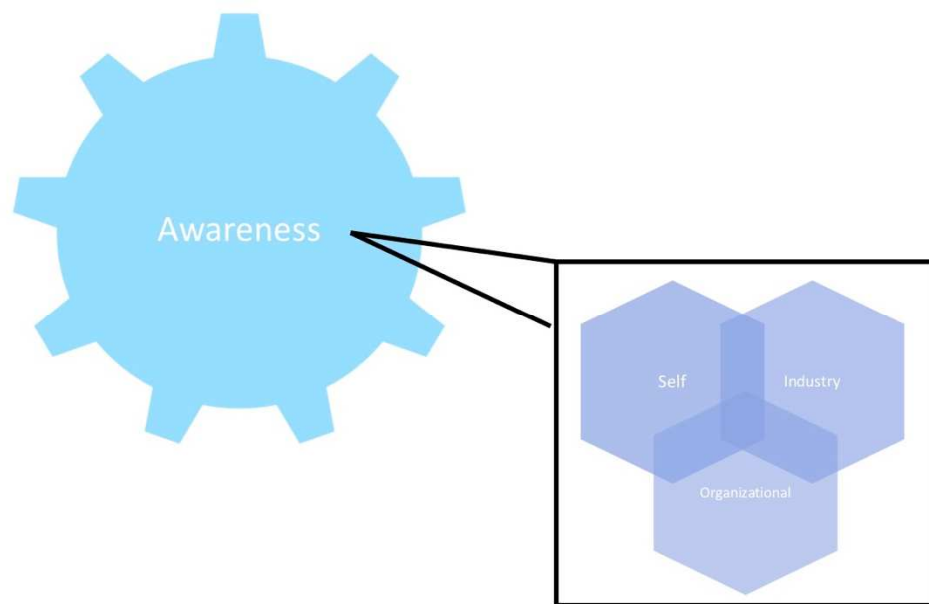
Gender allies tend to exhibit intermediate to high awareness. Throughout this dissertation, this will be referred to as heightened or high awareness. It is for this reason that heightened or high awareness is the catalyst for action in gender allyship. Awareness includes both the recognition of the problem – women’s underrepresentation – and allies’ power to affect change. Awareness informs actions, such as hiring processes, where allies consider the gender breakdown of their organization to inform their hiring. For example, a male conference commissioner in intercollegiate athletics is “[committed to hiring] an intern who is female” because he “wants to train people [and] give them those experiences...make change” in the sport industry (Participant 5). While hiring an intern is not going to make dramatic change in the sport industry, male allies recognize the impact of individual decisions within the broad landscape and creating organizational diversity and build cultures where men and women are working together. Female allies also exhibit high or heightened awareness as a byproduct of their personal experiences and understanding how to frame issues to demonstrate “how [men can be] involved” (Participant 10). Male and female allies focus on creating coalitions based in male allies’ understanding the need for greater diversity and female allies’ illustrating men’s roles in the process. Both male and female allies’ ability to see understand both their role and how it contributes illustrates their awareness and is critical in creating change in sport organizations.

Figure 1. Awareness Continuum



Awareness manifests in different forms, which includes: self-awareness, organizational and industry awareness [Figure 2]. Both male and female allies have self-awareness, organizational and industry awareness. Each of these components will be examined in the following sections, however only individuals who have intermediate to high awareness – as illustrated on the awareness continuum – will be discussed. The combination of these specific forms of awareness ultimately inform gender allies' awareness.

Figure 2. Components of Awareness.



Self-awareness

Self-awareness influences gender allies' awareness evolution as it comprises allies' personal experiences that inform their allyship. Gender allies express self-awareness through recognizing gender's role in shaping personal experiences within the sport industry. Gender allies are attuned to the gender's role in society as a category that influences opportunities. Often, the determining factor for which sport participation is played is the child's gender, as a male intercollegiate conference commissioner notes how his high school "we didn't even have girls' soccer" even though they sponsored a boys' team (Participant 5). Gender serves as a distinguishing factor in self-awareness and create different types of self-awareness for male and female gender allies, which will be examined in the following sections. Male allies recognize their limited ability to "appreciate how difficult [being a woman in the sport industry]" because men will never have the first-hand experience of gendered treatment;

however male allies seek to understand the issue to the best of their ability, while “[knowing] that full empathy is completely impossible” (Participant 9). Female allies benefit from first-hand experience and recognize that their mere presence in positions of leadership represents “a dramatic change that has an impact” by itself (Participant 8). Male allies and female allies’ different presentations of self-awareness is discussed in the following sections.

Male allies. Male allies illustrate self-awareness through recognizing how their gender has impacted their personal experiences (e.g., sport participation, work experience) within the sport industry. Self-awareness is communicated through acknowledging how their personal experiences have impacted their understandings, perspectives, and/or opportunities. For example, some male allies saw girls participate in sport throughout their childhood and “assumed all girls at all schools had sport opportunities” (Participant 4), whereas others were not “shaped by [witnessing] female athletics” (Participant 5). Male allies are distinguished by recognizing their male privilege and how those experiences limit their inability to understand, experience, and/or “fully empathize” with women’s experiences in the sport industry (Participant 9), yet informing a “keen eye to providing opportunities for women to be decision makers” (Participant 3). Male allies attribute their self-awareness to their personal life (e.g., single mother), education (e.g., formal), exposure to female athletes, and their employment experiences within the sport industry.

Role of personal experiences. Male allies recognize the impact of their identities and personal life experiences in shaping their understanding, perspectives and/or opportunities. Experiences that demonstrate male identities in their job responsibilities, such as “finding a role in [advising college women]...as a middle aged white dude” (Participant 2), creating safe work spaces, such as “[a women’s only space] from demand” but not being “qualified,

not being a woman, to know [if it is necessary]" (Participant 9), or having to respond to "hard questions from gender equity leaders" (Participant 13). Personal experiences within the sport industry demonstrate male allies' privilege as members of the sport industry because "the whole business essentially is for the most part white males" (Participant 16), which either as a limitation or as a consideration in their allyship. Male allies clearly acknowledge their gender identity in developing their understanding of gender from the privileged perspective and limiting their potential allyship.

Male allies' self-awareness develops through observation or interaction with women in the sport industry as it grants them access to women's experiences and informs their perspectives. Male allies in intercollegiate sport specifically demonstrate the impact of seeing gender dynamics, such as the difference between "a co-ed room and when it was just women" (Participant 2), which are distinctions that men "never really thought about" (Participant 3) due to their male privilege. Exposure to these truths is "unnerving" for male allies as it demonstrates evidence of gender dynamics in sport. These observations both served as seminal moments for these male allies as they accessed the lives and experiences of female athletes through a different lens.

Male allies' self-awareness continues to evolve throughout their career, as new assignments, departments, and leadership impact men's tolerance and understanding of female leadership. For example, a male reporter notes the impact of his assignments early in his career, which included "either covering women's sports or working on staff that was majority women [and the direct supervisor was a woman]" and ultimately "shaped a lot of [his] thinking on sports media, including [around] gender roles" (Participant 16). Working in a team of predominately women illustrates that women's ability to perform multiple roles,

which are more expansive than the “ghettoized roles” (e.g., administrative positions, sport broadcast) for women in sport. Men working closely with women in varying contexts provides insight into women’s experience within the sport industry, which shaped and continues to inform how male allies operate.

Men’s self-awareness develops through mentorship around gender issues, a process known as equity mentorship. Equity mentorship is similar to standard mentorship, however, the purpose of the mentorship is to help develop young men into understanding gender’s disparate impact within the sport industry. For example, a male conference commissioner reflected about the importance of his mentorship in demonstrating how to “treat sports the same” (Participant 5). Equity mentorship can be performed by both men and women, however male allies are the targets to “transform” men and “understandings more broadly about [equity in] athletics” (Participant 3). Equity mentorship is common in intercollegiate athletic contexts, due to organizations sponsoring both men’s and women’s sports.

Mentorship around the importance of equity and different perspectives were demonstrated in other contexts in the sport industry, yet not as explicitly. For example, a male member of senior leadership in non-profit sport learned the importance of having “women’s voices in the room” no matter their organizational rank (Participant 12). Equity mentorship differs depending on the context; however, male and female leaders’ explicit commitment and communication about the importance of gender equity impacts male allies and their understanding of gender. Equity mentorship serves as a powerful strategy that impacts how men perceive and understand how gender operates and develops men’s understanding of gender issues within sport that work to increase their self-awareness, and specifically how gender influences personal experiences in the sport industry.

Male allies' self-awareness can develop in non-sport contexts and influences their global perspectives about gender, which transfers to sport contexts. Male allies' personal experiences provide "seminal experiences", such as a male member of senior leadership having his "gender bias" revealed blind spots (Participant 12). Personal experiences also limit men's development of gender biases. For example, a male reporter recognizes how being "raised by a single mother" who was "socially aware and into women empowerment [movement]" shaped his perspectives on gender and seeing women as capable leaders (Participant 16). Gender allies' ability to develop nuanced understandings about gender outside of sport informs their desire and ability to act as gender allies in sport. As illustrated, how men come to high or heightened awareness varies for each individual, with some individuals having overlapping personal sport and non-sport experiences that lead to developing self-awareness.

Recognizing bias. Male allies' self-awareness includes the recognition people, including themselves, operate with conscious or unconscious biases. As gender allyship is focused on creating more opportunities for women, male allies may still hold biases or "blind spots, no matter how enlightened [they] might be" (Participant 12). Male allies recognize their potential for holding biases, which illustrates their self-awareness and recognition of being incapable of "full empathy" with women's experiences in the sport industry. As discussed in ally experiences, biases are not stagnant and can change over time. For example, a male producer at a sport media organization recognizes the need to challenge the assumption that "the way you're used to hearing things or doing things is always the best [way]" and realize that "different isn't bad or worse" (Participant 6). Familiarity or conventions can serve as a barrier for some men in sport media and represents a form of

unconscious bias. Women's historic exclusion from positions of power has created accepted practices and created a barrier and burden that women must overcome when they do get opportunities.

Recognizing biases allows for male allies to utilize strategies that are designed to identify, reduce or even eliminate bias. For example, a male athletic director utilizes programs that reduce gender bias by removing "the gender variable of the equation", where a female candidate is not preferred specifically "because she's a woman" (Participant 3). Processes that identify bias are "difficult" for male allies, but play a crucial role in informing how "to formulate [hiring] criteria...without having to use the gender variable [as a determining factor]" (Participant 3). Male allies' willingness to confront their own biases – despite making them personally uncomfortable - ultimately illustrates their self-awareness and facilitates their gender allyship. Identifying their weaknesses allows them to act as gender allies through limiting the impact of biases in decision making.

Investment or charge. Male allies communicate self-awareness by stating their personal desire to create more opportunities for women in the sport industry and recognize their personal potential to affect change. The investment or charge, in this instance, is more than just feeling as though there should be more women in decision making positions within sport organizations, but that they as men in the industry with some degree of power are *responsible* for creating the change. For example, a male intercollegiate conference commissioner values gender diversity in his organization "because [he] feels [strongly about having] females in leadership positions" because of the possibility to create "influence" on member schools. (Participant 5). Male allies see the impact of individual hire or decision, and therefore are invested in trying to hire women in leadership positions. This investment in

creating opportunities for women also extends to male allies' personal investment in women's careers. For example, a male conference administrator who oversees officiating does not "want [women he oversees] to fail because if they fail, I personally feel I failed them" (Participant 14). Male allies' personal investment in creating more opportunities for women in positions of leadership does not guarantee success. Male allies' self-awareness recognizes the potential for failure and the implications of failure, where women in leadership is viewed as an "experiment" and impacts future opportunities for women in leadership (Participant 14). Male allies' investment or charge informs their self-awareness as it seeks to overcome their limitations as not understanding or "fully empathizing" with the women's experience in the sport industry and their potential for bias to affect change, to ultimately create better experience for women in the sport industry.

Female allies. Similar to male allies, female allies recognize the role that gender plays within the sport industry, yet their awareness is informed by firsthand experience with how gender creates disadvantages. Female allies illustrate self-awareness recognizing how experiences within their personal career are influenced by gender and directly impacts their desire to create a better experience for other women in the sport industry. Female allies exhibit self-awareness through several means including: recognizing the impact of having women's voices in decision making process, investment in increasing women's presence throughout the sport industry, exhibiting a willingness to speak on gender issues, recognizing that men in sport operate with gender bias (but not always out of malice), investing in coalition or team building by working with women and men, and creating better experiences for current/future women in the sport industry. Female allies' self-awareness differs based on

the length of their tenure within the sport industry, the type of sport organization they work in, the amount of positional power they have, and the previous positions they have held.

Female allies' high to heightened awareness is a byproduct of their experiences in the sport industry and results in their passion to create change. Being a member of an underrepresented group, women understand that their organizations "can do better for women" (Participant 11) and see persistent underrepresentation "reflects poorly on us" (Participant 17). Female allies' justification for allyship is based in their desire to "make the industry better" for women, which female allies specifically relate to greater representation of women. Female allies recognize the impact of gendered ideas (e.g., "women are less competitive") in maintaining women's underrepresentation, and specifically attempt to use their influence to create change. The push to increase the representation of women in the sport industry by women is not novel, as the existing gender and sport leadership literature extensively addresses this idea. These findings primarily focus on how female allies' self-awareness relates to their use of gender allyship as a strategy and working *with* men to increase the representation of women in sport organizations.

Female allies recognize the importance of having women in decision making positions due to their leadership positions' access and impact. Specifically, women holding these positions have the ability to shape decisions that have greater impact, as the scope of positions increases as women move up in an organization's hierarchy. For example, a female member of senior leadership in a sport media organization recognizes how her position working directly for the organization's president afforded her the "capacity to helped launch [a business line]" that considered "the possibilities at [organization]" (Participant 10). Leadership positions create impact due to their access to information and resources, and

female allies recognize that as women advance within the organizational hierarchy, they are afforded greater access to information, leadership, and potentially resources that can create change within the organization. Given women's underrepresentation, women's access – and potential impact – is therefore limited. Female allies see women's potential impact within the industry and try to create opportunities through demonstrating that the disparate experiences women and men have in the sport industry can be reduced.

Female allies recognize that to decrease the impact gender has within the sport industry, gender needs to be talked about by both women and men. Their willingness is shaped not only by their experiences, but also by their hope that their male coworkers – and potential allies – will realize how seemingly benign policies create spaces that are more welcoming for women. For example, a female member of senior leadership for a professional sport organization recognizes how “a culture shift with flexible scheduling” creates a culture that benefits all employees, but “especially women” (Participant 11). Female allies with positional power can create change by leveraging their power and their willingness to discuss gender. Female allies are attuned to how policies that benefit men and women (e.g., parental leave policies), specifically benefit women enabling their organization to retain women by sending the message: “you can be a mother and work for us” (Participant 11). Access to positional power affords female allies impact to create change by including women's voices in discussions and providing nuance about how policies may have unintended gendered effects, such as work culture. Female allies not only recognize of that for women to advance into leadership positions, the organization needs to retain women, but also demonstrate the unintended impact for their male colleagues. Retaining women is enabled by policies that allow women to balance work and family responsibilities that do not force women to choose.

Female allies work with male allies to demonstrate how women are affected by organizational decisions allow for gender to be addressed in the organization – rather than create unintentional, differing effects for women.

Female allies' experiences within the sport industry have developed their understanding of the climate, where “it’s un-PC [politically correct] to say [men aren’t] supportive of women” (Participant 10). The climate within the sport industry does not tolerate explicit obstructive behavior or unsupportive comments about women; however, female allies recognize a distinction between male colleagues not expressing lack of support and “really doing the work that is really pushing women forward?” (Participant 10). Female allies have developed skills to identify potential male allies within their organization that allows them to understand if men are being “PC” or potential allies. Female allies specifically attune to how men talk about gender in sport, specifically during hiring processes by “probing” in different contexts and focus on men’s “ability to articulate” nuance about gender demonstrate potential allyship by recognizing gender’s complexity (Participant 8) or noticing “the things that [men] say in casual conversation around the office”, such as “yeah, he scream like a little girl” (Participant 17). Focusing on men’s language about gender helps female allies determine the difference between genuine responses based on nuance or being “PC”. The use of gendered language – in formal and informal contexts – is crucial for female allies’ identification of men who aren’t just being politically correct, as it illustrates that men do not accept – or at least perpetuate – dominant gender norms.

Differentiating men’s perspectives on gender is a crucial skill for female allies to identify potential allies within their organization. Female allies also understand that while men may not believe they hold gender biases, they may still have unconscious biases due to

the privilege being male in the sport industry affords them. For example, a female member of senior leadership was asked “questions they shouldn’t be asking [e.g., balancing work and family]” during her interviews because it was men who “weren’t used to having HR” (Participant 11). Again, female allies rely on language in revealing men’s gender biases. Focusing on the use of language may seem captious, however, assessing men’s use of language is crucial for women to identify male allies. Men’s discourses are the primary tool that female allies use to assess a man’s level of awareness; specifically, the use of non-gendered language or speaking on gender with nuance reveals men’s high or heightened awareness. Women’s recognition of the existence of unconscious male biases, yet do not attribute the bias as malice towards women. Rather, female allies interpret the bias as being uninformed as to how their actions indicate unconscious gender bias or perpetuate gendered ideas. This attribution allows for female allies to approach men with the goal of educating them about gendered stereotypes, allowing women and men to work together.

Female allies focus on identifying male allies as they recognize gender allyship as an opportunity for strategic networking within their organization to build coalitions, teams of men and women, to work toward achieving organizational goals of gender equity. Female allies understand that due to women’s underrepresentation, change cannot occur within sport organizations as the “power structure is not built to help [women]” (Participant 17). Creating change, therefore, needs to involve “finding allies and finding common ground” who use “their power or use on [women’s] behalf” (Participant 17). Female allies’ recognition of how the power structure within the sport industry operates does not mean that the system is destined to stay the same. Rather, if change is going to happen, it needs to involve people with power in the sport industry – specifically, men. Female allies recognize that women

alone cannot create change as they will continually hit “dead ends” due to their lack of power within the industry. Female allies’ recognition of power structures – and how they operate – does not yield complacency; rather female allies acknowledge the landscape and choose to act strategically within sport organizations. Gender allyship is necessary for true change to occur in the sport industry because the current system does not afford women the power to change it. Female allies foster coalitions with men to gauge men’s interest, support or perspectives on projects to ensure that initiatives proposed by women are going to garner support and ensure that the best decision is made for the organization. A female member of senior leadership discusses how she used male allyship when launching her business:

[Nothing was handed] to me on a silver platter. He definitely – even though he was supportive, he definitely made me earn it too... [Working with him gave me access to] executives around the company who I felt like had influence, were smart and could really give me advice and feedback. I probably met with between 20 and 30 executives. I really had a good sense of where we stood... and in the process got really good feedback to make the pitch better. (Participant 10)

Women are not looking for handouts from their male allies; they want to leverage their access to effectively contribute to their organization, which Participant 10 felt her idea would. The process of meeting with executives throughout the company, as facilitated by her male ally, was inclusive as it sought the feedback from multiple stakeholders and decision makers within the organization.

Female allies’ ability to foster an inclusive and collaborative approach allows for women to work both women and men as they’re able to “build teams around certain [organizational] priorities...that were important to them” and impacted the organization

(Participant 8). Female allies at different levels of the organizational hierarchy are able to demonstrate their contributions by including multiple – and possibly differing – perspectives. The ability to foster an inclusive and collaborative approach creates open discussions and welcomed feedback from employees. Female allies' facilitation of inclusive collaborative approaches results in create organizational impact by creating environments that allow employees to be “pretty open with each other” and being open to feedback (Participant 11). Open communication style allows female allies to foster coalitions or work as a member of their team communicates their self-awareness. Female allies demonstrate self-awareness through recognizing their limited impact, as they are only one voice and hold one position. Coalition building amplifies their impact by fostering and training individuals who understand how gender creates differing experiences within the sport industry. Working collectively allows for coalitions to have a greater impact throughout their organization because they are more people working toward a common goal. The next section will consider how both male and female gender allies illustrate organizational awareness.

Organizational awareness

Organizational awareness involves gender allies knowing the organization's mission, values and culture and understanding how the organization's daily operations facilitate organizational success. Organizational awareness is illustrated in gender allies' understanding of: how organizational culture and values manifest in daily practices, organizational demographics and programs designed to increase gender diversity, their individual power within the organization, leadership's demographics, and/or leadership's vision and support of gender diversity. Organizational awareness is similar for both male and female gender allies. Organizational awareness varies depending on the length of an

individual's tenure at the organization, their positional power within the organization, and the extent of leadership's ability to communicate their vision for the organization.

Gender allies recognize the connection between the organization's stated mission, values, and culture and the day-to-day practices, which represents the forces that sustain the organization. Gender allies recognize when the organization's stated values are merely symbolic or "superficial" – where they are stated, but not put into practice – versus serving as a foundation for how the organization functions (Participant 13). It is crucial for gender allies to understand how the stated values manifest in daily practices as it serves to measure leadership's commitment to their values, specifically when organization claim to value diversity. It is common for sport organizations to claim to value gender diversity. However, the ability to communicate the values in organizational decisions is distinct from claiming it as a value, as policies that "to make sure that everybody feels united [around the mission of gender equity]" and demonstrate commitment to their values. (Participant 13). An organization's commitment to realizing their values serves to create the intended organizational culture and is supported by decisions that align with values and the desired culture. Creating an organizational culture that values gender diversity requires gender allies recognizing the impact of their decisions. For example, a male member of senior leadership at a non-profit sport organization with a strong organizational culture does not "hire [anyone] from one person interviewing them" because the organization wants to ensure the person's fit (Participant 12). Aligning decisions – including hiring decisions – with the organizational culture includes intensive processes that ensures multiple people within the organization are involved in the decision, as gender allies see decisions impact throughout the entire organization. Gender allies – no matter whether they are developing or maintaining

organizational cultures – understand the importance of acting intentionally to ensure that the decision reflects the values of the organization.

Organizations that illustrate intentionality about how gender diversity is operationalized into organizational practices create effective cultures that value gender diversity. Individual allies consciously construct organizational structures to limit or control gendered effects, which makes for less gendered daily operations. Gender allies' awareness of how their organizations value gender diversity does not make them beholden explicitly to this idea. For example, a male ally at a professional sport organization discusses how organizational efficiency does not allow “having a male and a female” for every position, but due to how his organization structures hiring processes to include a “gender equity check” that ensures the “decision is based off of the core values” (Participant 13). Gender allies design processes that align with organizational values of gender diversity allows decisions to uphold the desired organizational culture. Gender allies are attuned to how these values are constructed and supported, as it illustrates an organization's willingness and capacity to support a gender allyship decision.

Organizational culture is highly influenced by employees, as there are more employees than people in leadership who establish organizational cultures. Given women's historical underrepresentation within the sport industry, employees are predominately men. Gender allies at different levels of their organizational hierarchy are cognizant of their organizational demographics, and specifically women's representation. Gender allies recognize the organization's demographics, as it signals if gender diversity is a “superficial” value or embedded into the organization. Even in situations where women are underrepresented within the organization, gender allies are aware of programs and initiatives

that are “pushing towards [elevating women]” in the organizational hierarchy or increase women’s representation (Participant 9). For example, a female member of senior leadership in a professional sport team designed a program where the explicit “goal is to increase the amount of female talent in our organization and within sports” (Participant 11). Gender allies recognize opportunities to act on organizational values by creating specialized positions or reducing “the [financial] burden” of having a larger, more diverse candidate pool for positions (Participant 4). Gender allies leverage existing organizational policies or introduce initiatives to increase women’s representation in the organization and understand that women’s representation in an organization demonstrate a commitment to gender diversity.

While employees maintain organizational cultures, organizational cultures are ultimately set by and stems from senior leadership and their vision – and support of gender diversity. Leadership’s embracing “the importance of inclusivity” in their organization is noticed by gender allies and influences their willingness and ability to act as gender allies (Participant 11). For example, a male producer at a sport media organization recognizes the “impetus is at the highest level of the company” and recognizes the commitment in decisions that “sticks out” (Participant 6). Gender allies – at all levels of an organization – are attuned to how leadership talks about, constructs, and manage their programs and initiatives designed to increase the women in their organization. These programs and initiatives represents the organization’s investment in gender equity – and therefore support of gender allyship.

Gender allies are also aware of leadership’s demographics and whether or not women are present in decision making positions in their organization. Women’s presence – or not – in leadership positions serves as “an example” for gender allies to assess the degree of organizational investment in gender diversity. For example, a female member of senior

leadership at a sport media organization recognized a female vice president as “being a magnet for [female] talent” (Participant 10). Having a visible female role model in leadership demonstrates organizational culture and willingness to support women in leadership. Gender allies recognize that female leaders serve as “a magnet for female talent” and recognize the need for sport organizations to develop their female employees to serve in varying leadership roles within the organization to “build for what’s next” (Participant 11). Gender allies understand that development of female leaders is a long term strategy for their organizations to prepare for “what’s next”. Women holding leadership positions illustrates how sport organizations implement their values of gender diversity by ensuring that women are represented at multiple levels within the organization. Gender allies’ awareness of leadership’s investment in gender equity communicates the level of support that they have within the organization to act as a gender ally. Organizational awareness relates to gender allies’ industry awareness, which is concerned with how the entire sport industry approaches gender. Industry awareness will be addressed in the following section.

Industry awareness

Gender allies communicate industry awareness by understanding historical and current hiring and demographic trends within the sport industry. Industry awareness is demonstrated through recognizing: how sport’s gendered history created the current underrepresentation of women in sport organizations, sport’s gendered history manifests in sport organizations current operations, how societal gender roles manifest within the sport industry, identifying peer organizations that successfully hire and retain women, and/or identifying gender allies in other sport organizations - or organizations where gender allyship is institutionalized. Both male and female allies demonstrate similar properties of industry

awareness. Gender allies' industry awareness depends on the type of sport organization the ally works for, the degree to which an individual's position requires them to monitor the organization's internal or external environment, and/or their age or experience within the industry.

Gender allies' recognition of historical and current hiring trends within the sport industry is related to understanding how societal gender roles manifest within the sport industry. Gender allies connect sport's long history, where gender has been an organizing factor in both competition and organizations, to current underrepresentation of women in leadership positions. Specifically, Title IX was a seminal moment in sport history that made "women's sports become more important and paid better", which caused a decrease in the number of female coaches of women's sport (Participant 12). Gender allies understanding sport's history illustrates a nuanced interpretation of women's underrepresentation, including the connection between sport's historical and its present, societal context. The sport industry does not operate in vacuum. Gender allies recognizing how nuanced forces operate in the industry demonstrates that gender allies understand that there is not a simple solution to women's underrepresentation and that to create true systemic change, comprehensive strategies that address gender in sport – and society as well – in different ways are necessary to truly manifest change.

As sport's history has an important role in the current sport industry landscape, gender allies also recognize current trends and are able to capitalize on them to try to increase women's representation within the current sport industry. Recognizing trends and how the industry "has changed" of the industry allows gender allies to leverage their positions and build more opportunities for women in their sport organizations (Participant 14). For

example, a male member of senior leadership in a professional sport organization capitalizing on the trend of “a mixed division, [which has existed] for the past almost 20 years”, where the community has continually noted “the lack of opportunity for essentially half of the players [women]” (Participant 13). Understanding both the trends within the industry and the holes, gender allies recognize opportunities that impact women’s opportunities and their perception within the sport industry as “women are taking on [more non-traditional] roles” (Participant 14). The sport industry’s evolution of greater acceptance of women in non-traditional roles, such as officiating, has allowed for greater opportunity for women in other positions (e.g., coaching and training).

Recognizing trends is not unique to gender allies as all organizations should be attune to their environments; however, gender allies are aware of trends that specifically relate to gender and how gender allies can leverage trends to increase women’s representation in their organization. Gender allies in senior leadership are particularly attuned to these trends create more opportunities for women in sport organizations and integrating “gender equity in the entire organization” (Participant 13). For example, a female member of senior leadership in a sport media organization notes how the company “thinking about women as an audience” has translated into greater opportunity for female talent’s opportunities “across the [company]” (Participant 10). Gender allies are utilizing the industry awareness as a catalyst of for action through, realizing how sport is evolving on gender and how organizations respond.

Gender allies also illustrate industry awareness through being able to identify other individuals or organizations within the sport industry who are acting as gender allies. Recognizing other individuals or organizations that act as gender allies is a form of industry awareness as it offers an opportunity to see how gender allyship is performed in different

contexts and acts as a model. Popovich's decision to hire Hammon impacts the sport industry and directly challenges "the presupposed bias that a woman can't coach men" and demonstrates that "there are plenty of coaches who are women, who could be coaching men and should be coaching men (Participant 3). Popovich's impact is not limited to the professional sport industry, and his allyship is an example of the importance of "clean perspectives" when evaluating candidates in the hiring process. Gender allies' ability to take examples from different sport organizations and see their application in their organization illustrates how industry awareness impacts individuals' perceived ability to act as gender allies in their own organizations. Examples of gender allyship are not limited to individual gender allies. Gender allies also utilize their industry awareness to build partnerships between organizations, specifically ones that focus on gender equity to leverage their core competencies to have gender allyship values integrated into the structures of the organization through "educational series...[that demonstrates] the core values" (Participant 13). Identifying exemplars in the sport industry serves to inform allyship through observing, learning and applying examples of gender allyship to their own organization demonstrates how their industry awareness informs their desire to make change within the sport industry by hiring more women.

Summary

This section focused on the existence of gender allyship and the core category of awareness. Awareness is demonstrated by male and female gender allies illustrating their understanding of the underrepresentation of women in the sport industry, specifically in decision making positions. The awareness continuum was introduced and illustrated the range of perspectives that gender allies have. The subcategories of self-awareness,

organizational, and industry awareness were introduced and explained. Self-awareness is the process by which individuals in the sport industry recognize gender's role in shaping personal experiences within the sport industry. Organizational awareness is the process where organizations understand their organization's mission and culture, and how the organization functions in daily operation and their position within their sector of the sport industry. Industry awareness is when gender allies illustrate an understanding of the sport industry's historical and current hiring and demographic trends. The next chapter will discuss how gender allies translate their awareness into action through their assessment of their capacity in a given situation.

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS

This chapter focuses on the process gender allies use to translate their awareness into action in sport organizations. This chapter addresses the first research question and further illuminates the process of how gender allyship occurs within sport organizations. The concept of “capacity” is introduced and theorizes how allies utilize their awareness to recognize situations where allyship could occur, which is referred to as capacity. Capacity has three different forms: individual, organizational, and situational capacity.

Capacity

Capacity is the process by which individual allies assess situations and determine their ability and power to act as a gender ally. Examples of situations where gender allies choose to act include: hiring processes, when organizational gender dynamics present themselves organically (e.g., in everyday organizational interactions) or during a period of organizational change (e.g., new leadership, revising organizational policies). Capacity also extends to allies’ understandings of their individual, organizational, and situational capacity. Individual capacity is determined by allies recognizing their power to affect change. Organization’s capacity is determined through understanding how decisions informed by gender allyship align with the organization, and the organization’s history with gender allyship decision. Situational capacity is determined through an understanding of how women are evaluated differently in the context of performing their job, assessing the alignment of the timing for a gender allyship decision for the organization and the woman being advocated for, and the potential for the decision to be scrutinized.

Capacity is the byproduct of awareness, wherein allies utilize their understandings of their self-awareness, organizational and industry awareness when evaluating situations to determine their ability to act as gender allies. Awareness serves as the foundation of gender allies' action, as gender allies need to recognize situations and their potential for change. Situations where gender allies have capacity include: hiring processes due to their "potential [to hire female] leaders" (Participant 3) or recognizing gendered language in "their company [that] can be controlled" or addressed (Participant 17). Gender allies' determining their capacity begins with recognizing their sphere of influence, impact, or potential to create change, then the assessment based on the situation. The impact gender allies envision demonstrates their awareness, as it represents women's underrepresentation within the sport industry; however, gender allies recognizing their capacity in given situations transforms awareness into potential action.

Gender allies' capacity to create opportunities for women through the positions being created or becoming available, the lack of familiarity with certain procedures, and how positional power influence their response to the ways that gender is perceived or valued within an organization. Allies' recognition of situations, their distinct properties, and the desired outcome within the workplace is a crucial step in the process of gender allyship, as it translates their awareness into actions within their organization that create an organizational culture where gender diversity is valued. The next section overviews individual capacity, followed by overviews of organizational and situational capacity, respectively.

Individual capacity

Individual gender allies determine their capacity within a situation by assessing their power, which can be in the form of positional or personal power. The most common form of

positional power is holding a position within the organization that grants power to make changes to how the organization functions or to hire people. Examples of positional power include: CEO, president, executive team member, directors (e.g., athletic director, director of department), etc. Gender allies utilize their positional power to create new positions, such as “a board member...Director of Gender Equity” (Participant 13), develop and “pitch new lines of business” (Participant 10), “building out processes” that integrate gender diversity into the organization (Participant 11). They start “frank conversations” about gender equity (Participant 5) and “give full notice” of women in the pipeline (Participant 14). Gender allies’ positional power not only affords them the ability to “break the cycle” of women’s underrepresentation within the sport industry, but also leverage their positional power to create new processes to increase women’s representation (Participant 9). Positional power enables gender allies’ capacity as their ideas are presented to other organizational decision makers by someone with equal power status. The access afforded by these positions is crucial as gender allyship can become part of the organization’s identity.

Positional power is not a requirement for gender allyship. Successful gender allies without positional power utilize their personal or relational power to affect change. Personal or relational power is defined as gender allies who leverage their relationships within the organization to increase or magnify their impact by creating conversations and building coalitions within the organization. For example, a female member of senior leadership at a sport media organization was able to use her position close to the organization’s present to “meet with anybody I needed to meet with” and have a “forum with the executive committee” (Participant 10). Gender allies leveraging their relationships with people with power in their organizations illustrates personal power to increase their access or “creating

space for [female voices]” (Participant 8). Recognizing the potential power of personal relationships is an effective means of creating change in organizations by demonstrating women’s impact “beyond formal work [responsibilities]” (Participant 8). By leveraging their professional or personal access, gender allies engage more people in discussions about how gender manifests in sport organizations.

An equally important aspect of realizing an individual’s capacity is recognizing the limitations of an individual’s power. Not all gender allies hold positions that afford them positional or personal power. Even when lacking those forms of power, gender allies recognize *where* they have impact, which can be built into their job responsibilities. For example, a male reporter recognizes how his impact is limited because he lacks “the economic power to [make] change” (Participant 16). Recognizing the limitations of one’s power is crucial as gender allies understand what type of change they are capable of making. However, realizing the limitations of their power does not render them unable to act, as gender allies will seek to create change within their sphere of influence. The next section discusses how gender allies assess their organization’s capacity for accepting or supporting a gender allyship decision.

Organizational capacity

Another feature that gender allies consider when assessing their capacity to act is how their respective organization, and more importantly its leadership, will respond to gender allyship. Gender allies understand that their ability to act is greatly influenced by the degree to which the organization – and its leadership – values diversity and how that value is translated into organizational practices. Gender allies recognize that their bosses’ perceptions of gender allyship enables their capacity. For example, a female member of senior leadership

in a sport media organization knows that her boss “is constantly thinking about how to put women in positions of power and talking about it openly” (Participant 10). Leadership’s transparency enables gender allyship throughout the organization as the ideas “trickle down” (Participant 6) because allies know if “ideas [that create more opportunities for women] are supported” (Participant 11). Organizations “talking about [gender equity] openly” signals to employees that leadership is “willing to take risk [with gender allyship decisions] and be an instrument of change” (Participant 6). Leadership establishing a clear culture and set of guiding values enables employees to understand not only the vision of the organization, but also how their decisions align – or not – with leadership’s goals.

Gender allies in senior leadership recognize the organizational impact of elucidating their positions and vision for the organization to empower their employees. For example, a male member of senior leadership is transparent about their “values... [and having] gender equity in leadership” to demonstrate their values (Participant 13). Gender allies in leadership positions recognize the importance of transparency and having women represented in leadership positions to demonstrate the organization’s support of gender equity, and therefore gender allyship. Understanding leadership’s perceptions of gender equity empowers gender allies by knowing their decisions will be supported by their organization and its leadership.

In addition to understanding the leadership’s investment in gender allyship, another important consideration for gender allies is the existence of male allies within the organization. The presence of male allies is particularly important for female allies, as they recognize if their organization supports women and their male allies. Individuals with history of allyship or experiences working with women demonstrate men’s “thinking on [the sport industry], including gender roles” (Participant 16) that informs potential allyship within their

organization. Male allies have long tenures at their organizations have figured out how to navigate the organization and can relate their allyship to the organizational mission. For example, a male athletic director considers his allyship in relation to “the college’s philosophy to create opportunity for [students] to gain cultural competency” (Participant 3). Gender allies recognize how their actions relate to organizational goals and can use their knowledge of their organization to enable their capacity to act as allies. Additionally, a gender ally’s tenure with an organization or in a certain position enables their capacity, as they understand the organizational culture and know how the organization functions, where change needs to occur, and the “pipeline” of talent that could facilitate change (Participant 14). Organizational capacity involves leveraging an organization’s history, enables gender allies to understand *how* to navigate their organization.

Another aspect of organizational capacity is the organization’s history with gender allyship, which includes having women in visible leadership positions. An organization’s history with gender allyship serves as an important metric, specifically for women in the sport industry. Organizational history of women in positions of leadership “serves as a beacon to women in the industry” (Participant 10) and demonstrate their capacity to develop and support female leadership through “subtle messaging” (Participant 15). An organizational history that illustrates women holding visible leadership positions illustrates a willingness to develop, train, and support female leadership. This covert message illustrates an organizational capacity of gender allyship and indicates that the organization consists of male and female allies. Organizational history of manifesting equity illustrates to women the commitment to facilitating similar experiences for women and men. Together, these pieces

combine to create “subtle messaging” to women in the industry about a willingness to engage in and support of gender allyship.

Past actions do not necessarily predict future behavior, therefore, an organization with a history of gender allyship does not guarantee future allyship. Organizational capacity also includes an organization’s willingness to act as gender ally in the future. Gender allies can leverage their organizational awareness to gauge if their organization is interested in or primed toward acting as an ally. Gender allyship decisions can “[spark] cultural shifts” that change the “dynamics of meetings” and see “the rest of the company embrace these ideas” (Participant 10). Gender allies recognize that allyship can act as an organizational catalyst through leveraging their knowledge of how the organization functions to ensure that the catalyst translates into momentum. The next section will discuss some of the unique attributes for each situation, which build on individual and organizational capacity

Situational capacity

The last feature gender allies consider when assessing their capacity is the unique set of circumstances and its features. Situational capacity differs from individual capacity and organizational capacity as these other two aspects can develop over time. For example, an individual gender ally can have more positional power due to a promotion, or an organization’s capacity could change with the leadership teams and their priorities for the organization. Situational capacity, however, does not allow for the same development as the set of circumstances vary. Situational capacity incorporates individual and organizational capacity to determine potential impediments to potential a decision of gender allyship.

A feature that gender allies must consider is that women face increased levels of scrutiny when placed in positions of leadership compared to male counterparts. While

scrutiny can be relatively consistent, each position will bring different levels of scrutiny. Gender allies recognize for positions that are prominent (e.g., CEO) or where women's presence is novel (e.g., head coach of a men's team) women are expected to "[succeed] and do everything right immediately" because "*most* [emphasis in original] people think [a woman in such a position is] not going to work" (Participant 1). Due to women's underrepresentation, it is common for women to face higher expectations or heightened scrutiny when they hold non-traditional positions than men would. Gender allies recognize the double standard within the sport industry that women need "to be so impressive at her job [and better] than men at the same job" (Participant 2). Gender allies recognize that women in non-traditional positions face scrutiny because "the first reaction isn't always positive" (Participant 6). Situational capacity includes determining organizational support and how to develop a woman's skills to "ensure their success" in positions that are highly scrutinized (Participant 14). Gender allies' situational capacity includes preparing their responses to external scrutiny and potential "to be [labeled] a social justice warrior" (Participant 16). Situational capacity requires gender allies' awareness to be utilized in assessing the feasibility and likelihood of success given the double standard that women do face.

Gender allies also recognize that scrutiny about women holding non-traditional positions can come from within their organization. Similar to external scrutiny, internal scrutiny dissects a gender allyship decision attempting to understand women were placed in non-traditional positions. For example, a male administrator in charge of intercollegiate officiating recognizes how including one "woman into the room of 250 male officials" may cause questions like: "Who is she? Who does she know?" (Participant 14). Internal scrutiny insinuates that women breaking into positions that have historically been occupied by men is

due to nepotism, and not based on merit. As with external scrutiny, the idea of women facing heightened scrutiny is not novel and is a key feature of gender allies navigate during the process of gender allyship. Gender allies' recognition of the role of external and internal scrutiny informs situational capacity by demonstrating their commitment to helping women in non-traditional roles succeed.

Situational capacity includes gender allies' determining how a woman's qualifications aligns with the organization's readiness or willingness for supporting gender allyship. This aspect of capacity is most commonly seen when the position is considered a high-profile position. For example, a male athletic director evokes the legacy of Jackie Robinson and demonstrates "it can't be any woman" because she has to be "ready for that position [and the scrutiny]" (Participant 1). Considering alignment between the organization and employees is not novel during a hiring process, however, it bears noting that the Jackie Robinson comparison illustrates an additional layer of scrutiny that women face even with people are working in their favor or in their best interest. Recognizing the need for fit, especially in high profile positions, does not limit their allyship, but rather demonstrates their awareness because they recognize that "first impressions last for a long time" (Participant 14).

One reason that the alignment between the organization and woman's qualifications is a feature of assessing a gender ally's situational capacity is due to the potential for scrutiny in the wake of a gender allyship decision. Earlier in this section, both internal and external scrutiny were discussed, which are a result of women's underrepresentation within the sport industry. Gender allies will acknowledge scrutiny, however they are not stopped by scrutiny. Gender allies recognize that they only way that the scrutiny faced by women holding

leadership positions will change is by having *more* women in leadership positions and have women be successful in the positions they currently hold. Facilitating women's success is a delicate balance, as gender allies want to "avoid condescension or be patronizing" (Participant 9), but also want to limit the backlash women face in leadership positions. For example, a male media produce in a sport media organization recognizes the tension where male employees are careful to not put their female coworker "in a difficult position" because of the scrutiny she faces (Participant 6). While benevolent in nature, gender allies are attuned to "avoid condescension or be patronizing" to their female coworkers. Gender allies – and the women holding the positions – need to work together to manage this tightrope. Assessing this aspect of situational capacity is necessary in gender allyship as its purpose is to enable women rather than handicapping them.

Summary

This chapter focused on how gender allies translate their awareness into action by assessing their capacity to act in given situations. Gender allies' awareness is the foundation, but capacity translates their awareness based on the unique features of every situation. Gender allies' capacity is based on an amalgamation of individual, organizational, and situational capacity. Individual capacity is determined by their power. Organization's capacity is determined through understanding how the organization will respond to a gender allyship decision, which can be based on the organization's history with gender allyship. Situational capacity is based in how women are scrutinized differently within sport, and the gender allies' assessment of the match between the organization and the particular woman being advocated for, and the potential for a gender allyship decision to be scrutinized. Individual, organizational and situational capacity are categorized as independent entities; however, they

influence each other during the process of assessing an ally's overall capacity. The next section will explore the specific strategies that gender allies use based on the assessment of their capacity.

CHAPTER 6

FINDINGS

This chapter considers how gender allyship occurs in sport organizations, specifically gender allies' actions. The first, second, and third research questions that relate to how gender allyship is performed within sport organizations are addressed. The chapter concentrates on how gender allies mobilize their awareness – and its translation in determining their capacity – into action. Two classifications of ally strategies are discussed: creating opportunities and focusing on organizational culture. Included in ally strategies is the role of resistant discourses in gender allyship and how gender allies strategically use them. The chapter concludes by conceptualizing facilitators to gender allyship, comprising of two subcategories – ally experience and the strategic use of women's agency.

Ally Strategies

Ally strategies are the specific, intentional actions used by male and female gender allies to create more opportunities for women in sport organizations. Ally strategies are classified into two categories: focusing on creating positions for women and creating an organizational culture that values gender equity. These two categories are targeted as hiring processes embody opportunities to *increase* the number of women in their sport organizations, while focusing on organizational cultures allow organizations to *retain* women already in their organization. Ally strategies vary based on the unique attributes of a situation (as determined in capacity), the positions allies occupy within the organization, the intended outcome (e.g., advocating on behalf of a specific woman, addressing gender within organizational structures). In the following sections, the strategies discussed create opportunities for women or contribute to an organizational culture that values gender equity.

Resistant discourses will be discussed in how it contributes to an organizational culture that values gender diversity, which addressed the second research question.

Hiring processes & creation of opportunities for women

Hiring processes represent the opportunity to hire women and increase their representation in an organization. It is for this reason, that hiring processes are a focal point of ally strategies. Therefore, hiring processes produce capacity for gender allies, as the potential to translate their awareness into action, specifically because hiring is *how* individuals join an organization. Gender allies recognize the importance of hiring processes due to the ability as it represents a space for tangible change. Gender allies' awareness is a key component and serves as the justification for why hiring processes are so important because of the opportunity to "change the constitution" of an organization in terms of *who* is in their organization (Participant 16). Gender allies recognize the need for allies in hiring positions because it is "impossible to reach a certain level without being hired by a man" (Participant 17) and that notable hires like Becky Hammon does not "happen without allies" (Participant 8). Awareness *informs* why gender allies prioritize hiring processes because women's underrepresentation is a persistent problem within the sport industry. Gender allies focus on general hiring processes as a way to create more opportunities for women. Gender allies utilize strategies in general hiring processes, but also create specialized positions designed to increase the representation of women in their organization. General hiring process strategies will be discussed first, followed by specialized hiring processes.

General hiring processes. As mentioned, hiring processes represent opportunities for gender allies to increase women's representation within their organization, which is how gender allies recognize their capacity during hiring processes. Gender allies translate their

capacity into action by monitoring the applicant pools – and recruit women when necessary, examining their hiring criteria to illuminate bias, and identifying ways to facilitate women’s advancement in hiring processes by limiting the impact of barriers (e.g., financial impacts of traveling).

The process of acting as a gender ally begins with the identification of an opportunity (as determined in capacity). The decision to act as an ally in hiring processes begins with how the position is advertised and if female applicants are identified and recruited. Gender allies illustrate their awareness that ensuring women are in candidate pool is not guaranteed and therefore “use as many sites for positions [general and specific hiring sites for women]” (Participant 3) *and* be “more active” recruiters to ensure a diverse hiring pool (Participant 11). Recruitment entails identifying and encouraging women to apply for positions. Gender allies specifically highlight the importance of recruiting talent. For example, a male athletic director notes:

“You don’t just post the job and expect to have diversity... If it’s important to you, you have to go out and get the candidates.” (Participant 1)

Gender allies’ awareness recognizes the need for intentional action, and results in prioritizing diversity during a hiring process. The specific recruitment strategies vary, including:

“making lists and asking [them to apply]” (Participant 5), utilizing “fulltime recruiters” (Participant 11), “seminars for development and exposure” (Participant 14). Gender allies consistently recognize the need for applicant recruitment to ensure a diverse candidate pool. Gender allies prioritize having a diverse candidate pool – in terms of gender – because it increases the likelihood of hiring a woman into a position. Ally strategies represent tangible actions that are based in their awareness of understanding women’s underrepresentation,

assessing their capacity to make change, *and* their intentional strategies designed to increase women's representation.

As ally strategies are intentional strategies to create more opportunities for women, it could be perceived that utilizing these strategies create “advantages for female candidates” and disadvantages men during hiring processes (Participant 3). Gender allies acknowledge this criticism, however their high or heightened awareness acknowledges that the system as currently constructed is unfair to women. Ally strategies represent how gender allies hope “break the cycle” of mostly hiring men. Gender allies note the difference between processes being the *same* versus being *similar*. For example, a male ally in a nonprofit sport organization notes that:

You may have to change some things and break down some barriers. It should be fair for everybody, *and right now it's not* [emphasis added]. But it needs to be fair for everybody, but it might be different as well. It might be different for a female coach or a first time coach or a coach that comes from college as opposed to a coach that comes from high school. It might be different for them, but it's got to be fair for everyone. Where I determine that it hasn't been fair, I would always try to level the playing field. But that doesn't mean it looks the same. (Participant 9)

Gender allies use their intentional strategies to “level the playing field” and increase women's representation in the sport industry. These intentional strategies, however, do not privilege or guarantee women jobs. Gender allies still look to hire the best candidate – male or female. Ally strategies are designed to create *similar* experiences for male and female candidates and decrease barriers to women's applying and demonstrating their qualifications,

as the system as currently constructed has created different experiences due to women's underrepresentation.

Gender allies also ensure women are evaluated fairly during hiring processes by creating flexible criteria that are designed to allow women to advance past initial screenings. Recognizing the need for adapting criteria to allow women to advance illustrates high or heightened awareness as it recognizes that female candidates might not have the same experiences as male candidates. Hiring processes that utilize hiring criteria as a checklist for applicants limits their number of female candidates that advance because discrete hiring criteria causes the female candidates in the pools to be seen as less qualified due "there's not enough opportunity" to develop female candidates (Participant 2). Women's underrepresentation within the industry translates to a lack of experience by female candidates which creates the challenge of finding a diverse, qualified pool.

Gender allies' high or heightened awareness and acknowledgement of the lack of opportunities for women in the sport industry informs how gender allies create the applicant evaluation criteria. Gender allies use a variety of strategies including: establishing a criteria range to "investigate the opportunities female candidates have" (Participant 3), creating a "Rooney Rule equivalent" (e.g., requiring a female candidate to be interviewed for all positions) (Participant 4), assigning "writing assignments" or other tasks related to the job responsibilities (Participant 5), consider their alignment or "adoption of core [organizational] values" (Participant 11), and providing financial assistance or "scholarships...to cover their expenses for attendance" (Participant 14). Gender allies utilize these strategies are designed to "evaluate potential" (Participant 3) and provide opportunities to demonstrate their qualifications or fit "beyond their resume" (Participant 11). It bears noting that even though

gender allies design hiring processes holistically, the final hire is not always a woman. Through considering how hiring processes are structured gender allies focus on creating *equal* opportunities, which is not always the same process.

Development through hiring procedures. As mentioned in Chapter 4, while gender allies are interested in hiring women, they recognize hiring as an opportunity for development. When female candidates with potential but lack sufficient qualifications for the position, gender allies include these women in pools. Gender allies include these women with potential because they've evaluated that that they are not ready for the position, but aim to "provide any opportunity to show what they have" and "give them experience [with hiring processes]" to use "for the next position" (Participant 2). Gender allies' awareness is exhibited in such situations, as they understand know the fit is not right, while also recognizing their capacity. Their awareness informs creating opportunities to develop female candidates through the hiring process, with the goal of giving a female candidate experience that will allow her to get another job in the future.

Specialized positions. Gender allies design specialized programs or create specific positions that are limited to women. Programs are designed to overcome women's underrepresentation *and* provide experiences within the sport industry to enhance their qualifications for future positions or ongoing resume development. By creating positions or opportunities exclusively for women, gender allies are intentionally act to simultaneously "increase the amount of female talent" within their organization (Participant 11) and develop women's resumes by providing experiences by allowing women to "observe from a staff perspective" (Participant 9). It bears noting to create such programs, gender allies need to have capacity, specifically individual capacity where they utilize their positional power to

suggest, implement, and oversee initiatives designed at increasing women's representation within the organization.

Creating organizational cultures that value gender diversity

Gender allies utilize intentional strategies designed to create organizational cultures that value gender diversity. Organizational cultures that value gender diversity involve allies strategically creating more male allies, creating coalitions within their organization, ensuring equal treatment of men and women, and using resistant discourses. An explanation of these for categories is next.

Creating more male allies. Gender allies, both men and women, recognize the importance of male allies within the organization, as men occupy the majority of positions within sport organizations (Acosta & Carpenter, 2014; Canadian Association for the Advancement of Women and Sport and Physical Activity, 2016; Lapchick, 2015, 2016, 2017a, 2017b). As mentioned, leadership establishes the organizational culture, but the employees ultimately cultivate the day-to-day experience of the organization. Gender allies that strive to create organizational cultures, specifically allies in leadership, need to cultivate male gender allyship throughout their organization to ensure that the culture is realized. These strategies are modelling gender allyship (specifically performed by male allies), framing gendered issues in familiar terminology, equity mentorship, and recognizing their audience.

Modelling gender allyship. Male allies' capacity differs from female allies in terms of modelling because they benefit from being perceived as not impacted by gender. Modelling gender allyship is performed by male allies and aims to provide examples of how men can serve as gender allies. Modelling gender allyship is the process of demonstrating

how men can be gender allies through demonstrating ways to support women (e.g., hiring or promoting women into leadership positions, discouraging gendered comments) within sport organizations. The goal of modelling is to encourage imitation or consider their possible role to address gender within other sport contexts. Modelling gender allyship involves men embracing their role as a gender ally and discussing the role of male allyship in their sport organization. For example, a female member of senior leadership notes how Popovich's role as "the first guy to [hire] and to really embrace a woman...and say she's equal...speaks volumes" (Participant 10). She continues:

[Through modelling gender allyship] he's creating a safe space, not only for Becky Hammon, but for any other guy to do that – particularly within basketball and certainly for the rest of the industry. (Participant 10)

Popovich's stature, as a prominent and successful coach in the NBA, creates an industry-wide platform for modelling gender allyship. Popovich is deemed a believable gender ally due to his consistency – in action and his language. Consistency is crucial for male allies, as it builds credibility with women and other potential male allies that communicates their awareness by aligning their actions and language. Male allies recognize their responsibility to create more opportunities for women in the sport industry, which includes addressing gendered language. Male allies have access to gendered discourses between coworkers that female allies might not solely due to their gender, and women "trust [that male allies] will say and do the same things out in the workspace surrounded by only men [and] in the room with you" (Participant 17). Modelling gender allyship includes male allies recognizing their capacity in the moment and capitalizing to demonstrate *how* such language manifests into women's underrepresentation in the sport industry. Male allies consistently recognizing their

capacity and acting as a gender ally serves to model gender allyship to other men. Modelling demonstrates men's role as an active participant to increase women's representation in the sport industry.

Framing gendered issues. Gender allies recognize for some men, gender can be an uncomfortable topic and potentially cause them to disengage or shut down in conversations. Creating more male allies requires gender allies to utilize strategies to overcome this discomfort. Gender allies consciously frame gender issues in sport to engage men in a paradigm they understand – sport. Leveraging the concepts of “sportsmanship” (Participant 4) and “team” (or teamwork) (Participant 8) demonstrates how both men and women have roles in addressing gender in sport organizations and the need for collective effort. By reframing a gendered issue into familiar concepts within sport, gender allies effectively engage and sustain more men in conversation, as the concept is intuitive and appealing to sport professionals.

Equity mentorship. Equity mentorship was discussed in Chapter 4 as a means of developing male allies' understanding of gender's role in the sport industry. Given equity mentorship's ability to effectively develop male allies' awareness, gender allies perform equity mentorship to develop future male allies in the sport industry. Gender allies may be overt or covert about their equity mentorship, meaning they may or may not make it clear to the man receiving the mentorship the intended outcome. Equity mentorship is performed explicitly or implicitly through a close professional relationship that is designed to move men further along the awareness continuum. Equity mentorship is performed by both women and men who hold higher positions in an organization and have greater industry experience than the man being mentored. Equity mentorship is “strong” and aims to transform men's

“understandings more broadly about athletics” (Participant 3) ...specifically, teaching “about equality and treating sports the same. If we did something for one sport, such as a male sport, we better do something just as special for a women’s sport, because if not we’re going to hear about it and it’s wrong” (Participant 5). It means possessing the awareness of valuing diverse perspectives in decision making where if there is a meeting and “there’s no women’s voice in the room, I will invite a woman in, whether she’s a manager or not, just to have [a woman’s voice in the room]” (Participant 12). With high or heightened awareness, men, who may lack personal experience in understanding how gender operates to limit women within sport, can be better sport professionals through seeing a more complete picture of the sport industry– and ultimately act as gender allies.

Recognizing their audience. As mentioned in Chapter 4, not all men are capable of being allies, as some men fall on the lower end of the awareness continuum. Gender allies recognize that not all men are interested in becoming allies to women. Gender allies, both men and women, effectively use the aforementioned strategies to create more male allies when they identify receptive individuals. A population of potential male allies is defined as individuals in “the thoughtful middle” (e.g., represent intermediate awareness along awareness continuum) (Participant 16). Gender allies are strategic in understanding their power and invest their time and effort into recruiting individuals at the intermediate or higher end of the awareness continuum. However, identifying men who possess intermediate awareness can be precarious. For example, the context of senior leadership in a sport media organization, “It’s almost un-PC to say you’re not supportive of women” (Participant 10). Yet male and female allies assess potential allyship through observing in if individuals “are they really doing the work that is really pushing women forward” (Participant 10).

Gender allies recognize that men's awareness is not stagnant and can evolve into high or heightened awareness, as discussed in Chapter 4. Gender allies' ability to create an organizational culture that values gender equity assumes that men can evolve into recognizing their role as gender allies. The process toward realizing an organizational culture that values gender equity is instantaneous:

Patience not so much with her, but all the people around her and all the responses...I think just being patiently supportive rather than forcing it on people – letting people work through their own process on it. I've seen a lot of people hesitate at the outset and kind of grow over time. I don't know that I ever had to tell anyone "hey, you better get with the program" like that – I've had people who express concern at the outset, but with patience have come around pretty well. (Participant 6)

People with low awareness can evolve into high or heightened awareness by one gender allyship decision's success, however, it illustrates an example of how gender allies recognize their audience can impact individuals who fall in the "thoughtful middle" (Participant 16) to be "patiently supportive" (Participant 6) as their awareness develops. Gender allies recognize the power the "thoughtful middle" holds (Participant 16). Through supporting their awareness development, gender allies increase the likelihood of achieving an organizational culture that values gender diversity improves.

Creating coalitions. Both male and female allies highlight that gender allyship's success is fostered through relationships between men and women to ultimately work toward creating change within the sport industry. Fostering relationships is referred to coalition building. Coalition building involves gender allies, both women and men, working with women who may not yet be allies (e.g., less access to positional power, less experience

within the industry) to ensure actions taken to address gender do so effectively. Coalitions can serve to spark an organizational culture that values gender equity, and ultimately offer an internal case of how men and women are working together to achieve an organizational goal of addressing gendered attitudes in the organization. Working as members of coalitions, gender allies incorporate strategies that are designed to engage non-allies in discussions about gender to create momentum for organizational change. Ultimately, many of these strategies also work to develop potential allies' awareness. Gender allies' strategic use of coalitions effectively foster discussion (where listening is paramount), the use of data to illustrate disparate impact, and ensuring that women are represented at various levels of and meetings within the organization. Gender allies specifically seek women's opinions in those settings. As coalitions include both women, these strategies are designed to engage both women and men.

Fostering discussion & listening. The importance of fostering discussion and listening is a key strategy for gender allies. Discussion is a tool that allows for gender allies – both men and women – to learn about other people's perspectives and experiences and develop male and female allies' awareness. Gender allies are clear that effective allyship involves deliberations, where individuals recognize “opportunities to listen” (Participant 5) and “ask questions” (Participant 9) (e.g., experience of balancing work and family as a woman). Fostering discussion and listening within sport organizations creates organizational environments from coalitions by engaging potential allies in conversations about gender and its impact within organizations and could facilitate the development of potential allies' awareness. Creating spaces for discussion develop gender allies' awareness because they realize the limited extent of their knowledge, which is usually informed by their own

experiences. These strategies ultimately ensure that “voices are being heard” and develop “active listeners...[which] makes [the organization] better” (Participant 11).

Utilizing data. To create more allies, gender allies strategically utilize data to reinforce their position and starting a conversation. Data is used two ways to create more allies. First, demographic data serves as a barometer for organizations in measuring their female hiring progress over time and their standings in relation to competitors. For example, a male intercollegiate conference commissioner and a female member of senior leadership of a professional sport organization note the impact of demographic data on tracking its female hiring progress:

If you see last fall’s numbers, we improved. We’re still not great, but we improved.

And that shows signs that I think our presidents, our schools are listening. (Participant 5)

We got our data back from the (affiliate organization), and we’re 9th or 10th [among peers]... [but] we rate pretty high. (Participant 11)

Gender allies can leverage data to demonstrate the need for their organization to increase their representation of women. Comparing peer data illustrates that peer sport organizations demonstrates gender allyship among similar organizations, and thereby creates conversations within underperforming organizations on how to improve.

Second, data is strategically used by gender allies to demonstrate the effectiveness of their hiring initiatives. Specifically, gender allies utilize data to support and advocate for organizational decisions that address gender within the organizations, as illustrated by a female member of senior leadership at a sport media organization:

Using a lot of research to continue to share that message. We actually just wrapped up – in the middle of this year, a whole case study we did around women in sport...we've been really aggressive in sharing this data [throughout the organization]. (Participant 10)

Data buttresses gender allies' argument through being able to argue their point in metrics that business value – numbers. Data also benefits from being perceived as balanced and unbiased, and gender allies' inclusion of data adds credibility to the argument around the importance of hiring more women or making organizational decisions that benefit women.

Ensuring women's representation in decision making. Gender allies are committed to ensuring women's representation within organizations because they understand women's contributions to sport organizations. Gender allies recognize women's contribution during decision making processes and are not limited by organizational hierarchy. For example, it was important for yield athletic directors to yield power and “given an opportunity for female voices (e.g., SWAs) to help shape the conference” (Participant 5). Gender allies recognize how women's “[differing] points of views can add” (Participant 6) or offer a “different [level of] nuance” to a conversation (Participant 9), or “look at a problem differently than men” (Participant 14). Women's presence in decision making brings in results in perspectives and provides a unique, diverse skillset. Gender allies recognize women's ability to “think, act and express themselves differently” as organizational contributions (Participant 14). Valuing women in the decision making process ultimately creates coalitions as it ensures that women's voices are being heard and that they are valuable members of coalitions that aim to create organizational cultures that value gender diversity. Gender allies recognize the

connection between women's presence in decision making and realizing an organizational culture that values gender diversity.

Managing perceptions of gender allyship. Gender allies utilize strategies to reduce or eliminate the appearance of bias within the workplace. Gender allies perceive that gender allyship may appear biased. Utilizing strategies to break the cycle of women's underrepresentation can be perceived as disadvantaging men. When assessing capacity, gender allies are acutely aware of the heightened scrutiny – both internal and external – that women face when they are advancing into positions of power. Gender allies utilize strategies to manage how gender allyship is perceived, both internally and externally, to limit how negative assessments of gender allyship influence organizational cultures. Gender allies recognize that negative perceptions of gender allyship would not only limit women's ability to perform in positions of leadership, but also on realizing an organizational culture that values gender diversity.

Managing internal perceptions. Gender allies perceive that an act of allyship can be interpreted as favoritism within their organization. Given that gender allies use strategies designed to increase women's representation in sport organizations, perceptions of favoritism limit their potential of realizing that goal. Counteracting these perceptions require gender allies to act “discretely”, as a female member of senior leadership in a sport media organization discusses her male allies actions:

He did not always put [me] front and center because he didn't want it to seem like favoritism in kind of a traditional way, but he thought so highly of me and was always talking about me, that obviously that helped. (Participant 10)

Gender allies recognize their capacity to act as gender allies in the future could be limited by the perception of favoritism. Therefore, gender allies are acutely aware of the need to manage their behavior, which ultimately serves to manage *other people's perceptions* because how people respond to gender allyship is not always as expected:

You get all kinds of responses. You get people who surprise you by being completely supportive right out of the gate that you didn't think would be, and you get people who you think would be supportive are hesitant or difficult at the outset. (Participant 6)

The unpredictability of responses to gender allyship demonstrates the need for strategies that manage perceptions of gender allyship. Two ways that gender allies manage other individuals' expectations are to structure women's opportunities "to ensure success" and facilitate access or a platform for women.

First, gender allies attempt to structure women's opportunities to ensure their success by 1) consciously facilitating women's success, and 2) shielding them from external scrutiny, and ensuring women do not feel denigrated. Gender allies facilitate women's success through considering their role and the environment. For example, female member of senior leadership specifically created opportunities for female candidates where women were "involved in a project" that was developed with "a team lead...[whose position in the organization] was a director or above" (Participant 11). Gender allies leverage the organizational structure to ensure that the end goal is achieved, which allows women to succeed. Monitoring extends to considering whether workspaces provide a "safe and comfortable environment", while avoiding "condescension and being patronizing" (Participant 9). Through considering women's roles and environment, gender allies demonstrate the intention behind the strategies

of: ensuring women's success to increase their representation in their organization.

Awareness informs gender allies that women's experiences in the sport industry are different than males and may include "harassment and abuse" (Participant 9). Gender allies are attuned to creating programs or experiences for women that are free from "harassment and abuse".

Gender allies also facilitate women's success through monitoring their progress, which includes providing feedback to aid their development, and promoting when they're ready. Intentionally, gender allies identify opportunities for "experience and [skill development]" to ensure women's foundation (Participant 6). Due to the complexity of women's underrepresentation in sport industry, gender allies recognize that individual hires or promotion have impact, but greater impact comes from long tenured careers. Therefore, gender allies facilitate success by not promoting women "too soon" or for publicity (Participant 14). Creating change within the sport industry will come from women's sustained success in non-traditional positions, which is secured through a solid foundation. Gender allies' awareness extends to understanding that gender allyship can be perceived as "[condescending] or being patronizing" (Participant 9). Gender allies' awareness limits the likelihood of being patronizing as they support women's leadership and are trying to aid in women's ascension to leadership positions. Gender allies' concern about being perceived as condescending is based in their belief that women are equal to men, not inferior.

Second, gender allies extend women's access within their organization through leveraging their network to facilitate success, but do not micromanage women. Women want to earn their success. Women's success is facilitated by "getting the green light", where their allies position them for success (Participant 10); however, success is ultimately determined by the work women produce. This strategy reduces or eliminates the perception that women

are receiving preferential treatment by allies by ensuring that women's success is determined through organizational metrics (e.g., sales, impressions). If women's success were guaranteed due to their proximity to their gender allies, it would clearly indicate favoritism and preferential treatment. Gender allies, therefore, utilize their access and power to "give a runway" to women, where women's ultimate ability to succeed is based on their skills and ideas (Participant 10).

Managing external perceptions. As mentioned, gender allies are aware of the increased external scrutiny organizations are confronted with when women advance into leadership positions. Gender allies recognize that certain positions (e.g., coach of a men's team, "C" level positions, broadcast analyst) attract more external scrutiny than others (e.g., coach of women's team, sideline reporter). Gender allies' strategies for managing external scrutiny involves positioning women to succeed. For example, this strategy is illustrated by media organizations considering how to maximize women's strengths during a broadcast:

...try to find her strengths and make sure we structure [the broadcast] in a way that is not exactly like we would do with everyone else, but put her in a position to succeed.

(Participant 6)

Managing external scrutiny is very similar to managing internal scrutiny, as the only difference is the visibility of the gender allyship. Participant 6's strategy is influenced by the fact that a broadcast is an inherently public product and that a woman in the broadcast booth represents a different role for women within sport broadcast. External scrutiny is the byproduct of women's underrepresentation within the sport industry, and women's presence in non-traditional positions is considered news. Gender allies' awareness informs the strategy of "putting [women in a position to succeed]" as they realize the heightened stakes for

women. A male administrator who oversees officiating discusses how he recognizes the scrutiny is not just for an individual woman, but is applied to all women in non-traditional positions

...if [a woman does] fail, first impressions last for a long time. It [ends up hurting] the next five women that want to come up the ladder. (Participant 14)

As the goal of gender allyship is to increase women's representation in the sport industry, it is imperative that women succeed in highly visible positions as it demonstrates women's abilities to hold such positions. Gender allies recognize the repercussions of failure on women they are developing in their organizations because "first impressions last for a long time" (Participant 14). Similar to the internal scrutiny, gender allies recognize the tightrope or possible overcorrection that is possible perception of structuring for women's success.

Managing external perceptions also includes positive reactions celebrating the advancement of women into non-traditional positions, as it represents the sport industry's evolution on gender issues. While external, positive reactions from individuals may be more a more welcome type of external perception, gender allies recognize that positive reactions do not always serve the best interest of the woman in the non-traditional position, as it illustrates their difference from their male peers:

...[from the media and press releases, there's a lot of people that are curious [about women in these officiating]. I try to keep my female officials out of the press – even in the off season. I say, "you're no different, no better than anybody else" ...I'm trying to treat them the same as I treat the guys. (Participant 14)

By anticipating the positive reaction to women in non-traditional positions face, gender allies avoid treating their male and female employees differently. Gender allies recognize that

while it may be newsworthy, it may have adverse effects in male peers' response to women and the increased attention. Participant 14 recognizes that media availability is not a traditional aspect of being an official, and highlighting a female official emphasizes her difference. Gender allies recognize that to create organizational cultures that value gender diversity women and men needed to be treated similarly. Gender allies foster similar treatment between male and female employees within their organization, and therefore illustrate the way that the woman is the *similar* to the other men who hold similar positions.

Resistant discourses. A specific type of ally strategy used to challenge latent gendered attitudes within sport organizations is resistant discourses. As mentioned, resistant discourses were a feature of the conceptual framework for gender allyship, that challenge established knowledge, conventions or practices designed to create different understandings or perspectives. In this section, the second research question is examined, which considers the role of resistant discourses in gender allyship. Findings showed two types of resistant discourses, explicit and implicit. Explicit resistant discourses can be performed by both women and men, and actively aim to address the unspoken association between leadership and masculinity. Implicit resistant discourses are performed by both male and female allies. Female allies possess a distinct type of implicit resistant discourses, which is referred to as women's agency. These two types of resistant discourses are examined in the following sections.

Gender allies strategically use resistant discourses to create an organizational culture that values gender diversity. Resistant discourses challenge how sport organizations have gendered ideas built into how organizations function. Resistant discourses challenge accepted knowledge and practices through exposing how they represent gendered ideas.

Explicit resistant discourses. Explicit resistant discourses, as mentioned, are the specific ways that both male and female gender allies challenge the association of leadership with masculinity and male traits. Explicit resistant discourses, therefore, are overt and intentional actions that gender allies undertake that are designed to make either other individuals question their own held beliefs about gender or their organizations question decisions or policies that create a disparate gendered impact (e.g., required work hours, family leave policies).

First, gender allies use explicit resistant discourses to question individuals' beliefs about gender often varies depending upon the gender allies' relationship with the individual and their general demeanor. Meaning, gender allies recognize the situation, who is involved, and determine their capacity by evaluating how to illustrate gender's role – which is usually covert. Explicit resistant discourses reflect gender allies' high or heightened awareness, as they are trying to reveal gender bias by choosing to speak rather than stay silent to “get people to be frank and honest” (Participant 4). Gender allies' use explicit resistant discourses when they recognize their capacity for change or impact. Specifically gender allies use explicit resistant discourses by “asking questions anytime something doesn't align with your core values” (Participant 13) and putting “the onus back on [the person who made a gendered comment]” to elaborate and clarify their points (Participant 15). Gender allies also use resistant discourses to challenge gendered ideas by questioning the foundation of the idea. Effective use of explicit resistant discourses enables “frank” discussions about women's roles in the organization are not antithetical to the organizational mission or goals.

Gender allies' use of explicit resistant discourses is to expose gender's role in sport organizations. Gender allies consistently highlight the importance of using resistant

discourses as a means of creating more male allies and forming coalitions within their organizations, where discussions and listening were paramount. Therefore, explicit resistant discourses are critical to realizing organizational cultures that value gender diversity. Explicit resistant discourses both serve to ignite discussions through their exposure of gender bias and to sustain discussions to ensure gender bias is addressed. Gender allies' primary goal of using explicit resistant discourses is to educate and move other individuals further along the awareness continuum to high or heightened awareness.

Second, gender allies use explicit resistant discourses to strategically reduce or eliminate gender bias within organizations by considering gendered policies, procedures and practices. Overt gendered policies have been eliminated from the majority of sport organizations, but policies and procedures with gendered impact persist. Gender allies' use of explicit resistant discourses around organizational practices target organizational leadership, as individual gender allies may lack the capacity to change the supporting structure. Gender allies' awareness identifies policies that create gendered impact within their organization and utilize their explicit resistant discourses to "say 'we have a problem here'" (Participant 3). For example, a male athletic director used explicit resistant discourses to demonstrate how policies "[treated] three women's programs differently than men's programs" (Participant 3). Gender allies recognize the role that policies, procedures and practices have in maintaining the organization's culture. Women's underrepresentation in the sport industry is a byproduct of these policies and procedures and realize to addressing these organizational structures is necessary to increasing the number of women and creating organizational cultures that value gender diversity. Additionally, explicit resistant discourses can be utilized when allies lack positional power. For example, a male reporter used explicit resistant discourses to tell his

“bosses know exactly how [he] feels” about the number of women in his organization, as his role to “comment about other organizations”, effectively grants him power to advocate for change within his organization (Participant 16). Gender allies utilize explicit resistant discourses to create organizational cultures that value gender diversity by leveraging their capacity to strategically identify disparate gendered impacts to leadership.

Implicit resistant discourses. Implicit resistant discourses also challenge the association between leadership and masculinity yet does not involve the use of language. Implicit resistant discourses demonstrate women holding leadership positions in the sport industry and organizational initiatives that champion women in non-traditional positions. Gender allies use implicit resistant discourses through recognizing their platform and the value of symbolism, specifically when women hold leadership positions. Both male and female allies perform this type of resistant discourses. Male allies and female allies strategically leverage their platform and use it to highlight women’s representation in leadership, which demonstrates their abilities and creating more opportunities for opportunities. Female allies additionally perform implicit resistant discourses through holding leadership positions, which is known as women’s agency. First implicit resistant discourses that highlight women’s representation in the sport industry by both male and female gender allies’ is discussed, followed by a discussion of women’s agency.

Male and female gender allies perform implicit resistant discourses to act as a counteract attitudes about female leadership in the sport industry. Highlighting women’s representation in leadership serves as a symbolic counternarrative “by the virtue of [women] being in positions of power” (Participant 10). Women’s representation in leadership positions matter because of its symbolic power. Women’s representation matters in as it creates “role

models” (Participant 5) and the ability to “expand people’s minds” about gender roles (Participant 16). Gender allies’ use of implicit resistant discourses demonstrate gender allies’ awareness through recognizing the power of a counternarrative to demonstrate women’s capable leadership. Effective use of implicit resistant discourses enables gender allies to provide evidence of women’s leadership and can cause people to question their existing assumptions about gender in the sport industry. Implicit resistant discourses have an important role in increasing individual’s awareness, as they present an argument that might not be “[listened to or taken] to heart, but [it can’t] help but hear it” (Participant 10).

Women’s agency. Women’s agency is defined as the power individual women or women as a group, currently or historically, wield within a specific sport organization. Women’s agency can be in the forms of personal, interpersonal, or positional power. Their power is influenced by how organizational structures enable (or constrain) women, value women (e.g., women make meaningful contributions rather than being tokenized), and/or women holding visible leadership positions. Referring to women’s agency as an implicit resistant discourse does not imply less power than other the forms of resistant discourses; rather, women’s success and presence in leadership positions in the sport industry serve as *active* resistant discourses.

The existence of women’s agency facilitates the process of gender allyship by “aggressively” demonstrating women’s contributions to sport organizations. For example, a female member of senior leadership has leveraged “the research [her group did and have] been presenting it more forcefully in staff meetings” to demonstrate its relevance to organizational outcomes (Participant 10). Women explicitly tie how they contribute to organizational growth. Women recognize that illustrating their contributions simultaneously

demonstrates their value and investment in the success of the organization, which is no different than male employees. Women's contributions enable women's agency through exhibiting that women's leadership would not radically alter the organization's goals or plans.

Women's agency also serves as a resistant discourse by women holding leadership positions. Women occupying and succeeding in leadership positions within sport organizations as a counternarrative. Women's underrepresentation in the sport industry prohibit women to prove their leadership ability. Women holding these positions represents "a dramatic change" that creates "an impact" solely through their presence (Participant 8). Women's presence in these positions serves a powerful message for potential growth to other women within the organization at lower levels as to their organization's perspectives on women. For example, a female commentator feels that "having [women in leadership in her] company has been powerful" and enabled her voice to speak on other issues (Participant 17). Women's agency within the whole organization is influenced by women with formal power, despite few women hold positional power. Women with positional power recognize the need to develop other women in the organization's skills and leadership by leveraging their own agency. Women with positional power to create opportunities for develop their female staff. For example, a female member of senior leadership at a professional sport team created an opportunity for a "hiring decision [to be] made by female executives" and enabled professional development (Participant 11). Female allies are invested in creating more opportunities for women within their organization, and by identifying holes, they are able to use their positional power to develop their female staff's skills. Women's agency includes the

power that women as a group wield within their organization, which female allies cultivate by providing informal or formal “growth opportunities”.

Women’s agency enables gender allyship through its ability to foster engagement and guidance of initiatives through using the access their gender allies have. Despite women’s agency varying forms, women holding decision making positions within sport organizations serves as an implicit resistant discourse that creates a ripple effect throughout the sport organization and enables gender allyship. The following section will introduce the facilitators of gender allyship, which assist in the process.

Facilitators

Facilitators are defined as individual or organizational features that ease the process of gender allyship. Facilitators are not needed for gender allyship to occur, however they reduce potential friction gender allies face. Given gender allyship’s purpose is to address latent gendered attitudes within sport organizations, facilitators reduce the potential friction a gender ally may face within their organization when they choose to act as allies. The greater the presence of facilitators enables gender allyship as it reduces barriers for gender allies. The two facilitators of gender allyship are ally experience and the strategic use of women’s agency. Both will be defined and further explained in the following section.

Ally experience

Ally experience is the knowledgebase and skillset an ally develops through their experiences working in a sport organization or the sport industry. Ally experience is different from women’s agency as it is distinct for each male and female ally. Gender allies’ tenure within the sport industry varies, leading to different distinct experiences to leverage during their allyship. Gender allies use their knowledge and skills to inform their allyship.

Specifically, gender allies cultivate an understanding of how their organization and the sport industry function and confidence in their instincts and decision making; these aspects of their experience later inform their allyship. Every allies' experiences will vary based on their tenure and experiences within the industry, the tenure within their current organization, their prior positions, and past experiences as an ally. Greater experience within the sport industry bolsters confidence in decision making, specifically in handling "negative critiques" as discussed by a male ally in a sport media organization:

"Probably 20 years ago, the negative comments would have kept me from [putting women into broadcast booth]. I just don't look at it that way [anymore]. I don't do something unless I think it's going to make us better...I don't worry if a lot of people disagree with that anymore. I kind of see her [a female analyst] through that lens to a degree" (Participant 6).

Ally experience informs gender allyship by recognizing the need for allyship and being someone "willing to take risk and be an instrument of change" (Participant 6). Gender allies' experience within the industry concede that change will not happen on its own, which can make gender allyship a risk depending on their organization. However, their inclination to create change is informed by their knowledge of the industry and what will differentiate their organization.

Ally experience also facilitates gender allyship from the individual allies' reputation, which is the byproduct of their tenure, accomplishments, or past experiences as an ally. Allies' reputations causes them to be "well-respected", which enables allyship by shielding their "decisions...[from questioning]" (Participant 8). Allies' reputations serve as a boon for

gender allyship, as a decision of gender allyship removes or reduces scrutiny on women because the respect held for these individuals.

Strategic use of women's agency

Women's agency is a specific type of resistant discourse, however, women's use of their agency is distinguished as a facilitator in the process of gender allyship. As mentioned, facilitators enable the process of gender allyship through their ability to decrease the friction an individual may face in when making gender allyship decision. Women's choices to utilize their agency serves to facilitate the process of gender allyship by flexing their network to create change within their sport organization. Women's strategic use of agency refers specifically to the ways in which they leverage their male allies' access or power. Women's strategic use of agency occurs in situations where they identify a need to act, however seek to utilize their gender allies to either exert their leverage or serve as a sounding board. Women's desire to use their male allies results from their high or heightened awareness, specifically on the demographics of the sport industry:

I think we can do a ton for ourselves and we can push for change and we can be our biggest advocates and the biggest voices, but you know, that that only goes so far because you're going to keep running up against the same blockade of the traditionally high-powered positions all being mostly held by men and until they opened the doors until they offer a hand up, there's only so much that can be done. Now, that's certainly not to say that we wait around for them to help. We push and push and push and push and demand it, but we need [help] for sure. (Participant 17)

Women's acknowledgment of the need for gender allyship does not make women passive within this process. Rather, women strategically identify male allies to create coalitions and

act on their behalf and increase their individual reach. Situations where women feel they need to utilize their agency can occur when women's career paths develop (e.g., switching departments) or women are making major decisions that will impact their career (e.g., taking on new positions). A female manager in a sport organization and a female commentator explain:

...they needed a liaison between licensing and finance and I had expressed that I wanted to explore other opportunities [within the organization] and they also had this position. (Participant 7)

[I] reached out [to male allies] saying, "I got this job offer. What are you think?" Right. When I need to raise, "what should I say?" And [them] being more than willing to help me. (Participant 17)

By acknowledging and utilizing their agency, women facilitate the process of gender allyship by being explicit about how their gender allies can act on their behalf. Women's strategic use of their agency facilitates the process of gender allyship by "leveraging" power through directing male allies' actions to create more opportunities for women within the sport industry. Additionally, strategic use of women's agency enables gender allyship through navigating the system as currently constructed to create change throughout the industry. Gender allies need to still determine their capacity and if they can act, yet women are directing the behaviors of the male allies. Women's strategic use of their agency plays a crucial role in fostering a coalition and the ability to provide women's experience and insight, which can embolden specifically male allies to know that their actions ensure meaningful and necessary change within the organization.

Summary

This section illustrated how gender allies translate their awareness into action. Once gender allies assess their capacity to act, gender allies implement ally strategies, which are the intentional strategies allies use to increase women's representation within the sport industry, either directly or indirectly. Ally strategies can manifest 1) during general or specialized hiring processes, 2) creating more allies, 3) creating coalitions of women and men, 4) ensuring equity between women and men, and 5) resistant discourses. Resistant discourses are the explicit and implicit ways that men and women look to challenge the association of masculinity with leadership. Finally, the facilitators of gender allyship were discussed, which are ally experience and the strategic use of women's agency. In the next section, the theory of gender allyship will integrate the categories presented in this and the preceding chapter, compare the findings of this study in relation to the existing literature, and discuss the contributions of gender allyship.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

This chapter starts with an overview of the findings discussed in Chapters 4, 5, and 6, which are integrated into presenting a theory of gender allyship in sport. The chapter will then transition into discussing the theoretical, empirical, and practical contributions of gender allyship. The chapter will conclude with discussing the limitations of this research and recommendations for future research.

Summary of Findings

The purpose of this dissertation was to determine the existence of gender allyship in the sport industry and build an explanatory theory of the process of gender allyship. Women remain underrepresented in positions of leadership in sport organizations (Acosta & Carpenter, 2014; Lapchick, 2015, 2016, 2017a, 2017b), despite extensive research designed to not only understand the problem, but also address it (e.g., Adriaanse & Schofield, 2014; Burton & Leberman, 2017a; Kane & LaVoi, 2018; Shaw, 2006). The existing literature has investigated the gender-leadership gap through the following lenses: leadership's association with masculinity (e.g., Burton & Leberman, 2017a), organizational practices revealing gender bias and social processes (e.g., Hoerber, 2007; Shaw, 2006), and women's perceptions of leadership (e.g., Cunningham & Sagas, 2007b). These lenses are primarily informed by post-structuralist feminist theory, which assumes that knowledge is gendered and is used to "maintain and reinforce the [existing] power relationships" between men and women (Fletcher, 1999). Interventions, meanwhile, have been primarily informed by the distributive justice paradigm, which focuses on increasing women's representation by creating positions that can only be held by women (Young, 2011). These interventions have failed to

dramatically increase women's representation in the sport industry (e.g., gender ratios), due to their inability to address the gender substructure of the organization, making women in leadership ineffective (e.g., Adriaanse & Schofield, 2014). I noted anecdotal evidence from the sport industry that presented an interesting counternarrative to men's portrayal as barriers to women's leadership (e.g., Boren, 2014; Davis, 2016; Wang, 2017).

I wanted to approach this well-researched problem of women's underrepresentation in leadership from the education and social justice framework of allyship. Allyship is a paradigm that establishes members of dominant social groups as important members of social justice initiatives to work with minority and oppressed groups (Bishop, 2002; Broido, 2000; Brown, 2002; Reason et al., 2005; Tatum, 1994). This decision was based in my own experiences with allyship and the belief that change only occurs when members of dominant social groups are also invested in change. Given the lack of understanding on how allyship works to address gender issues and its application in organizational settings, a combined grounded theory and CDA methodology was used to examine the existence of gender allyship and determine how the process occurred. The primary source of data was 17 semi-structured interviews, which were conducted with participants in differing types of sport organizations (non-profit, professional, and sport media) who held different positions within their organizational hierarchy (e.g., senior leadership, managers). The following sections summarize the findings of this study.

Existence of Gender Allyship & Awareness

Findings indicated the existence of gender allyship in the sport industry in varying organizational types and contexts. The existence of gender allyship occurred in non-profit sport (including intercollegiate sport), professional sport, and sport media organizations.

Gender allyship occurs during 1) hiring processes, 2) leadership transitions that alter organizational narrative or position, and 3) every day interactions between coworkers.

Gender allies focus on these three contexts as they identify their ability to create change throughout the organization.

As depicted in Figure 3, awareness is the core category and served as the catalyst for gender allyship. Awareness exists along a continuum that considers individual's: understanding of women's underrepresentation in the sport industry, attitudes towards women's leadership and organizational impact, and belief about who should be involved in addressing the issue. Awareness is the byproduct and combined of self-awareness, organizational awareness, and industry awareness.

Self-awareness is the process by which individuals in the sport industry recognize gender's role in shaping personal experiences within the sport industry and recognize their power to address women's underrepresentation. Male and female allies demonstrate self-awareness differently, as the presence of gender is less pronounced for male allies during their experiences in the sport industry. Male allies' awareness is the result of recognizing how their gender privilege has impacted their experiences in the sport industry. Male allies' awareness is characterized as: recognizing impact of their personal experiences shaping perspectives, inability to "fully empathize" with women's experience in sport industry, potential for biases, and have personal "charge" to create more opportunities for women in the sport industry. Female allies' self-awareness is the byproduct of their experience as a woman in the sport industry. Female allies' self-awareness is characterized as: recognizing the impact of women in decision making positions, a willingness to speak on gender issues,

invested in working with male allies as part of a coalition and interested in addressing gender bias in sport organizations to make better experiences for women in the future.

The second subcategory of awareness was organizational awareness, which is the process where gender allies understand their organization's mission and culture, and how the organization functions in daily operation and their position within their sector of the sport industry. Organizational awareness is characterized as: recognizing how an organization's mission translates into everyday practices, organization's and leadership's demographics, individual's power in the organization, and leadership's vision and support of gender equity. The final subcategory of awareness is industry awareness. Gender allies illustrate industry awareness through understanding the sport industry's historical and current hiring and demographic trends. Industry awareness is characterized as: understanding the current and historical forces that have shaped women's underrepresentation and how sport organizations function, how societal gender roles manifest in the sport industry, and recognizing peer organizations that have higher rates of women's representation. Awareness serves as the catalyst as these three components impact gender allies' recognition of the covert, yet powerful role gender plays in the sport industry and results in their resolve to use their power to create change.

Capacity, Ally Strategies & Facilitators

Capacity and ally strategies represent how gender allies translate their awareness into action. Capacity is the process of assessing a potential situation for allyship and determining their ability to act as a gender ally. Capacity is comprised of three subcategories: individual, organizational, and situational capacity. Gender allies determine their individual capacity through assessing their power, which can be positional or personal. Individual capacity,

therefore, is the ability to directly or indirectly influence the situation. Organizational capacity is determined through gender allies assessing their organization's – specifically leadership's – support of gender allyship. Lastly, gender allies determine the situational capacity, which is the unique set of characteristics and circumstances for gender allyship. Individual and organizational capacity are relatively consistent between situations, however situational capacity varies more due to differing conditions (e.g., different levels of scrutiny for positions). Gender allies' overall capacity is based on a combination of these three subcategories and influences their decision to act – or not – as a gender ally.

Ally strategies are the intentional actions used by gender allies to create more opportunities for women in the sport industry. Gender allies utilize strategies designed to increase women's representation in their organization and create organizational cultures that value gender diversity. Ally strategies that are specifically used in a hiring process are: encouraging and recruiting female candidates to apply, creating flexible hiring criteria, recognizing potential and development opportunities, and creating specialized positions for women. Ally strategies that are designed to create organizational cultures that value gender diversity include: creating more male allies (e.g., modeling gender allyship), creating coalitions of women and men working together (e.g., fostering discussions and listening), and resistant discourses. Resistant discourses are a specific type of ally strategy that explicitly or implicitly questions leadership's association with masculinity. A specific type of implicit resistant discourse is women's agency, or women holding positions of power in sport organizations.

Facilitators enable the process of gender allyship by reducing the pushback or friction gender allies may face. The facilitators to gender allyship are ally experience and strategic

use of women's agency. Ally experience is the knowledgebase and skillset allies cultivate during their careers that enable allyship through instilling confidence in their decision making skills. Strategic use of women's agency is distinct from women's agency, as women's agency focuses on women holding positions and the symbolic message conveyed through the position. Strategic use of women's agency involves women utilizing their power as beneficiaries of allyship and as allies. Strategic use of women's agency includes women directing their male allies how to act (e.g., advocating on their behalf) and acting as allies to other women in their organization (e.g., creating professional development opportunities. Gender allyship can occur without the facilitators, but the process is more difficult when they are not present. The next section will integrate the categories overviewed in this section and present a theory of gender allyship.

A Theory of Gender Allyship

The core category of awareness catalyzes gender allyship because gender allies want to increase women's representation in the sport industry. Awareness' subcategories (self-awareness, organizational and industry awareness) are independent entities that unite to inform gender allies' awareness (Figure 2). The greater the integration of these concepts – where allies see a connection between themselves, their organization and the sport industry – the stronger an ally's awareness is. The greater alignment of these three subcategories represents an individual having heightened awareness or representing the higher end of the awareness continuum. Gender allies who have less overlap between self-awareness, organizational awareness, and industry awareness represent intermediate to high awareness; these individuals are still act as gender allies, but do not create as much movement in the system as heightened or high awareness.

Within awareness, self-awareness serves as the crank, or where movement in the system originates. An important component of self-awareness is the recognition of their power to create change, which results in feeling a personal investment or charge to use their position to act as a gender ally. Once a personal investment occurs, gender allies utilize their organizational and industry awareness to gauge where and how to use that energy to create change within their organization and the industry at large. It is important to note that this assessment occurs in the absence of a *specific* situation that an ally is presented with, which allows the ally to develop their awareness further by talking to women or existing gender allies within the sport organization. The investment or charge results in the desire to act, which is why self-awareness is the specific type of awareness that is crucial to get the process of gender allyship initiated.

The catalyst of awareness creates movement in the rest of the system. Awareness directly impacts and is transformed in capacity. As mentioned, capacity is how gender allies assess an *individual* situation and its unique characteristics and ultimately decide if the situation enables their allyship. Capacity transforms awareness as it moves it from a persisting mental state into potential action. Capacity transforms awareness into action to examine situational features that, if favorable, enable an individual to act as a gender ally. Capacity, therefore, is the transformational process that takes the input of awareness and translates the mental state into action.

The actions that result from capacity are ally strategies. Ally strategies are the intentional actions used by allies that look to either create opportunities for women or create organizational cultures that values gender diversity. The specific strategies selected are based on the assessment that occurs in capacity, as a gender ally who has relational power would

choose a different strategy than a gender ally with positional power possibly to affect a similar outcome.

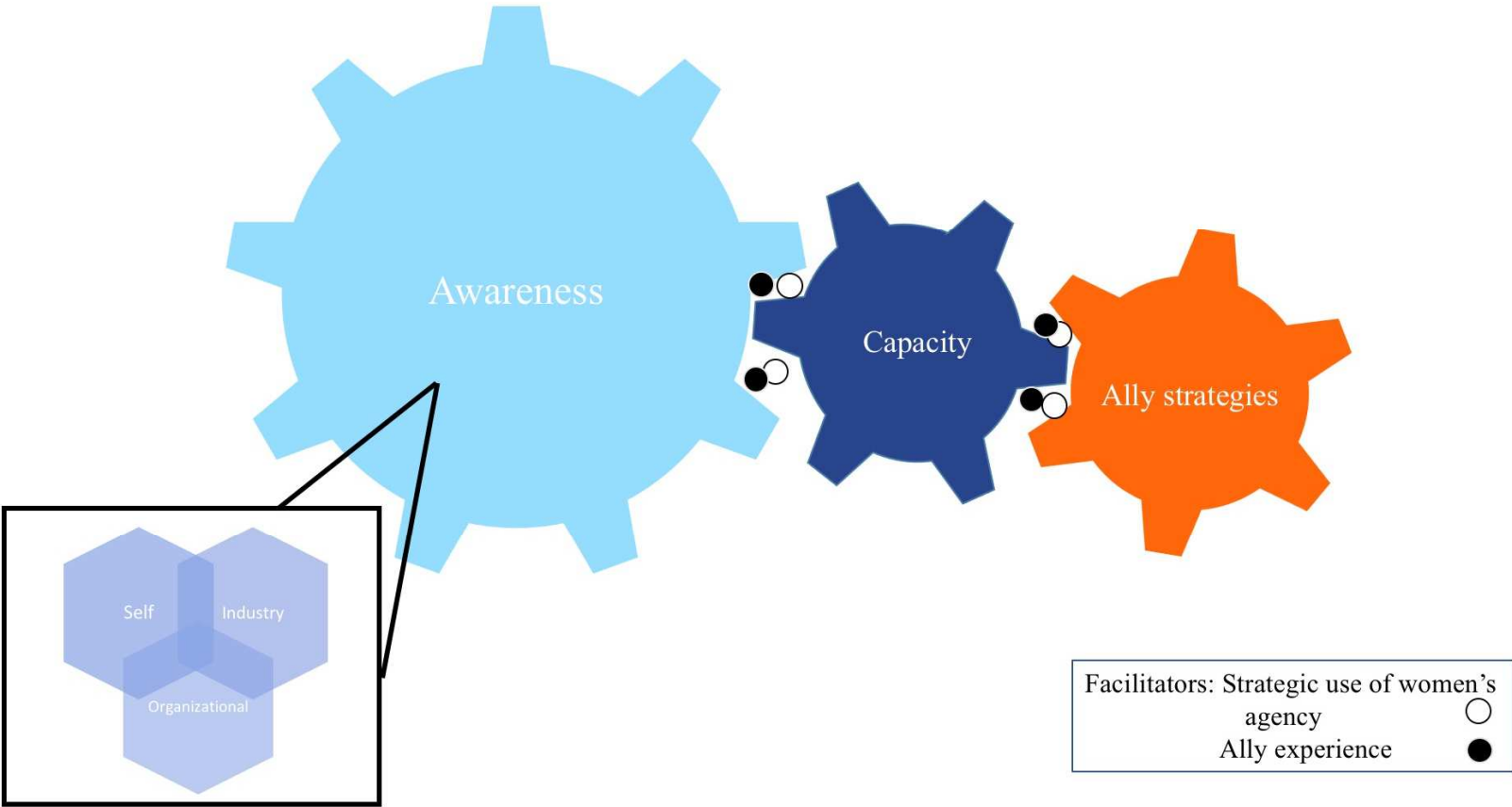
In gender allyship, the role of facilitators is to ease decrease the friction within an organization that may occur when someone chooses to act as a gender ally. As discussed earlier in this chapter, the facilitators are ally experience and strategic use of women's agency. The greater the presence of these facilitators, the less friction an ally would face. These facilitators can be found at the junction of awareness, capacity, and ally strategies. However, it is important to note that gender allyship *can* occur in the absence of these facilitators, but there will be greater friction in response to the allyship. The model for gender allyship can be seen in Figure 3.

Unintentional Gender Allyship

The core category of awareness is the site that the majority of gender allyship occurs. The theory previously outlined begins with awareness, specifically noting the charge or investment gender allies feel that informs their actions that are designed to increase women's representation in the sport industry. However, there are some occasions where gender allyship occurs, yet awareness is not the ignitor. These cases of unintentional gender allyship occur when individuals – typically men – perform ally strategies, such as hiring women into non-traditional positions, yet the decision is not informed by personal investment. Rather, these unintentional allies act either out of necessity or recognizing an opportunity that *is* an act of allyship. These cases of unintentional allyship, however, increase allies' awareness as the scrutiny and responses to an act of gender allyship varies. These unintentional allies' awareness is influenced by the positive and negative responses to gender allyship, causing it

to increase. Unintentional allyship does not have the same amount of force or movement as intentional allyship, however still affects change within the sport industry.

Figure 3. Gender Allyship Model



Discussion & Theoretical Contributions

The existence of gender allyship offers an alternative perspective to bolster the discussion of the gender leadership gap within the sport industry, specifically highlighting the role of men and male allies. The findings presented in the preceding chapters will be compared to the relevant literature with the goal of illustrating the extensions of gender allyship to the existing sport management and allyship research. In addition to the theoretical contributions, gender allyship offers interesting empirical and practical contributions that will be discussed. This dissertation will conclude with a discussion of limitations of this inquiry and suggestions for future research.

Existence of gender allyship

Gender allyship's existence within the sport industry produced valuable insights for the sport industry that determined gender allyship's existence and how it functions as a social process. As an observed phenomenon in sport media (e.g., Popovich/Hammon) (Davis, 2016), gender allyship's existence was anticipated despite the limited portrayal of feminist male perspectives within the sport and gender leadership literature (e.g., Burton et al., 2009, 2011; Schull et al., 2012; Shaw & Hoeber, 2003). Male positional power has been predominately documented as being forces of resistance to female leadership (e.g., Burton et al., 2009; Claringbould & Knoppers, 2007; Shaw, 2006), yet men utilizing their power to work with women to create change within sport organizations expands the current sport and gender leadership literature. Women's presence as allies who work *with* men in positions of power and value their commitment to creating more opportunities for women within the sport industry was an unexpected finding. The majority of the sport and gender leadership literature presents women as working independently or against men in positions of power

(Adriaanse & Schofield, 2014; Burton, 2015; Burton & Leberman, 2017a; Claringbould & Knoppers, 2007, 2008, 2012; Cunningham, 2008; Shaw, 2006; Shaw & Penney, 2003).

Organizational change research documents the importance of working collaboratively to consider gender's role within an organization (Ely & Meyerson, 2000), which is enabled by gender allyship.

The existence of gender allyship substantiates allyship as a viable framework for considering dominant social groups' roles in working to address systemic oppression and disperse power (Bishop, 2002; Edwards, 2006; Reason et al., 2005). The extensive allyship literature considers gender as a social construction that could benefit from an allyship approach, (e.g., Edwards, 2006; Reason et al., 2005), yet little evidence exists within the literature to substantiate those claims. The majority of inquiries into allyship focus on its application in interpersonal relationships (e.g., Bishop, 2002; Brown, 2002) to either create inclusive educational environments (e.g., Broido, 2000; Tatum, 1994) or create social change through coalition building (Bishop, 2002; Broido, 2000; Edwards, 2006; Reason et al., 2005). Lowndes and Press (2016) illustrated allyship's application in an organization for mediation or conflict resolution; however, allyship is presented as a strategy for managing social relationships rather than a tool for social justice or social change. My study is distinct from the existing allyship literature, as gender allyship offers allyship as a framework that can be used in organizational settings with an eye towards overcoming how organizations have translated societal gendered structures into organizational practices (Acker, 1990, 2006; Burton & Leberman, 2017a; Claringbould & Knoppers, 2007, 2008, 2012; Hoeber & Shaw, 2017; Shaw & Frisby, 2006; Shaw & Hoeber, 2003; Shaw & Penney, 2003). Therefore, it maintains the integrity of allyship as a framework for creating social change, but does so by

considering gender in organizational settings where gendered substructures have existed and persisted (Acker, 1990, 1992b, 2006, 2012; Britton & Logan, 2008; Hoerber, 2007; Shaw & Hoerber, 2003; Shaw & Penney, 2003; Shaw & Slack, 2002). Together, gender allyship presents an alternate theoretical framing for the extensive gender leadership literature base within sport organizations (Adriaanse & Schofield, 2014; Burton et al., 2009, 2011; Burton & Leberman, 2017a; Claringbould & Knoppers, 2007, 2008, 2012; Cunningham & Sagas, 2007a; Kane & LaVoi, 2018; Sagas & Cunningham, 2005; Sartore & Cunningham, 2007; Shaw, 2006; Shaw & Slack, 2002).

The existence of gender allyship in sport organizations offers an alternative theoretical paradigm for how sport organizations perceive and attempt to create gender equity that includes all members of the organization to be part of organizational change. Ely and Meyerson's (2000) framework for organizational change suggests that organizations with cultures where gender is consistently assessed and revised allow for gender's power in organizations to be reduced substantially. Gender's power is revealed in how organizations manage social processes, specifically in formal and informal policies, an organization's narrative and symbolism, and the everyday informal interactions between coworkers (Acker, 1992b, 2006, 2012; Britton & Logan, 2008; Ely & Meyerson, 2000). Gender allyship addresses social processes in hiring practices, where formal and informal policies influence how candidates progress; revising organizational culture, which impacts the organizational vision and narrative; and in challenging employees' use of gendered discourses, which characterize the everyday interactions between coworkers. Therefore, gender allyship exemplifies a strategy that aligns with Ely and Meyerson's (2000) framework for organizational change.

However, gender allies most frequently utilize formal and informal organizational policies to create greater organizational diversity, which is consistent with Reskin and McBrier (2000). Ely and Meyerson's (2000) framework for organizational change considers the varying ways that gender reinforces the gendered substructure, which influences women's current representation in leadership positions but does not change it. Through using formal and informal policies, which are frequently used during hiring processes, gender allies can specifically address women's underrepresentation hiring more women (Britton & Logan, 2008; Reskin & McBrier, 2000).

Gender allyship offers a paradigm that encourages an organizational culture where gender's role is consistently interrogated and revised, and extends the understanding for how men, specifically, contribute to the process (Acker, 2006; Ely & Meyerson, 2000). Gender allyship – or allyship more broadly – is not a framework offered by Ely and Meyerson (2000) to encourage moving to a system where gender is questioned, yet gender allyship's underlying mechanisms and goals align with the framework for organizational change. Gender allyship leverages the traditional allocation of power of gender in sport organizations, through male allies redistributing power and access that are afforded to them by their gender to advocate for women and undermine the privileges that are afforded to masculinity (Ely & Meyerson, 2000; Shaw & Frisby, 2006). Gender allyship encourages allies to disrupt how power is allotted to men within the sport organization, which by doing so creates change collaboratively (Acker, 2006, 2012; Britton & Logan, 2008; Ely & Meyerson, 2000). Additionally, a feature of gender allyship is coalition building that includes men and women working toward achieving a goal that directly benefits women within the organization, but indirectly benefits men (Bishop, 2002; Brown, 2002; Tatum, 1994). The process of

collaborating and coalition building is time intensive, which results in organizational change occurring at an incremental rate (Acker, 2006, 2012; Britton & Logan, 2008; Ely & Meyerson, 2000). Meanwhile, everyday interactions between coworkers can evolve at a faster rate, as they are based on individual's personal experiences (Brown, 2002), which could influence rate of change within the organization (Ely & Meyerson, 2000).

The paradigm of allyship embraces intersectional identities, as it recognizes that individuals' identities are the result of multiple components (e.g., gender, race, religious affiliation, etc.) (Crenshaw, 1991), yet each component has different levels of salience for each person (Bishop, 2002). Acknowledging individual's differing identities simultaneously acknowledges that differing aspects of individuals' identities are privileged or not; this feature of allyship creates better allies, because even though oppressions are not equal, understanding oppression in one context allows for empathy between oppressed groups (Bishop, 2002; Edwards, 2006). While not directly within the scope of this study, it was common for both male and female gender allies to discuss the need for greater representation of women within leadership positions along with the need for greater racial diversity within leadership positions. As gender allyship is an extension of allyship, gender allyship represents an innovative paradigm for how sport organizations can fostering intersectionality within sport organizations inherent inclusion of intersectionality (Shaw & Frisby, 2006).

Gender allyship's embracing of intersectionality holds important theoretical implications for sport feminist literature. Since Crenshaw (1991) introduced intersectionality, there have been calls for intersectional lenses within management literature (e.g., Acker, 2006, 2012; Britton & Logan, 2008) and the sport management literature (e.g., Burton & Leberman, 2017b; Melton, 2015; Walker & Sartore-Baldwin, 2013). Both literatures bases

have indicated that men have intersectional identities, but have not investigated their intersectional identities or sought to develop how men's varying identities allow for men to be more than a dominant social group with power. The existence of gender allyship presents theoretical evidence that challenges the sport management and management feminist literature by illustrating the existence of male allies within the sport industry. As illustrated in Chapter 1, the existing feminist literature has developed our understanding of how gender operates in sport organizations, while also calling for the need for greater representation of women in decision making and leadership positions to occur (Burton, 2015; Burton et al., 2009, 2011; Burton & Leberman, 2017a; Claringbould & Knoppers, 2007, 2008, 2012; Hoeber, 2007; Kane & LaVoi, 2018; Melton & Bryant, 2017; Shaw & Hoeber, 2003; Walker & Sartore-Baldwin, 2013), however the lenses utilized to investigate these issues have not continued to evolve. This continued evolution is critical, for as Collins (2009) notes, no critical theory can be stagnant, for "as social conditions change, so must the knowledges and practices designed to resist them" (p. 42). Gender allyship should be part of critical sport feminist research's evolution, as it identifies the existence of men within the sport industry who are interested and invested in working with women to develop the sport industry and create more positions in leadership for women. Additionally, critical sport feminist research should evolve to allow women to embrace male allies – and their help – without viewing these women as weak or un-empowered. Women are deliberate and understand which men are invested in acting as allies and accepting the help of these men is strategic and reflects their empowerment by working within the established system to reach positions of power and leadership.

Awareness: A catalyst but insufficient alone

This study found that awareness is the core category of gender allyship and serves a critical force in gender allyship, as it serves as the catalyst for action, as well as the foundation as the actions gender allies use are based in awareness. Both male and female gender allies expressed an understanding of gender's role within the sport industry, and how that has manifested in women's underrepresentation in decision making and leadership positions.

As presented in the literature, awareness is a theme within the allyship literature, as it triggers action within members of dominant social groups (Bishop, 2002; Broido, 2000; Brown, 2002; Edwards, 2006; Reason et al., 2005; Tatum, 1994). Awareness is demonstrated as a member of a dominant or privileged social group's ability to understand how structural forces limited an oppressed/minority groups' opportunities and results in inequity (Bishop, 2002; Brown, 2002; Edwards, 2006; Reason et al., 2005; Tatum, 1994). However, possessing awareness does not make a member of a dominant social group an ally; developing higher or heightened awareness is a crucial first step that results in a dominant social group's member's desire to act as an ally (Bishop, 2002; Broido, 2000; Edwards, 2006; Reason et al., 2005). Understanding that individuals have intersectional identities means that individuals can have an identify from a dominant social group and another from a minority social group (e.g., black men, Jewish men, white women). Individuals who have identities from majority and minority social groups may have heightened or high levels of awareness due to their experiences as being a member of a minority social group (Bishop, 2002; Edwards, 2006). This does not preclude individuals with dominant social groups membership, white men, from developing their awareness, which occurs primarily through education.

The development of allies' awareness is presented within the allyship literature as dominant social group member's profiles or categories ("backlashers", "people who feel guilty", "ally") rather than existing along a continuum (Bishop, 2002), while simultaneously allows for individuals to evolve or perspectives to change through education or experiences (Bishop, 2002; Broido, 2000; Brown, 2002; Tatum, 1994). As an example, Tatum (1994) discussed how illustrating white allyship to a predominately white student population during civil rights discussions affected her white students' reflections and ability to see their potential contributions. The reflection that was prompted by illustrating white allyship provided white students with a potential role and heightened their awareness and investment. The existing allyship literature therefore provides a conundrum through presenting discrete profiles or categories for dominant social groups, which implies stagnation, while simultaneously allowing for individual evolution. Lowndes and Press (2016) introduced an allyship continuum, but did so by presenting a range of behaviors for organizational conflict resolution or mediation. This continuum also limits the idea of growth or evolution as the behavior selected is based on the situation presented (Lowndes & Press, 2016). My gender allyship awareness continuum, therefore, is a theoretical contribution to the allyship literature, as it illustrates how someone who is resistant or hesitant to female leadership can move further along the continuum to be moved to act as a gender ally.

In this study, gender allies' awareness serves the catalyst to the process of gender allyship, which offers interesting insight into how gender allies perceive the issue of women's underrepresentation within the sport industry and decision to act. This idea aligns with Blum's (1994) interpretation of moral perceptions, where an individual's ability to recognize a situation and its moral features is independent of their decision to act. Therefore,

before an individual decides to act, they first must recognize the situation as a moral dilemma and its features (Blum, 1994). Extending this idea to gender allyship, gender allies separate themselves through not only their recognition of women's underrepresentation, but their ability to translate their awareness by recognizing their capacity and ultimately their decision to act – and thereby address – women's underrepresentation (Blum, 1994; Kekes, 1989).

Other individuals within the sport industry may understand that women are underrepresented in the sport industry, however either do not realize the features that have created the situation or their own ability to affect the problem. Gender allies recognize a desired future of greater representation of women in leadership roles in the sport industry; this recognition is the byproduct of their personal perspectives and ultimately guides their actions to manifest the desired reality (Kekes, 1989). The awareness continuum illustrates that individual's understanding of the issue of women's underrepresentation exists at varying levels, however is capable of being developed. The awareness continuum combines the insights documenting men's resistance and hesitance toward female leadership (e.g., Burton, 2015; Burton & Leberman, 2017a; Claringbould & Knoppers, 2007; Kane & LaVoi, 2018; Schull et al., 2012; Shaw, 2006; Shaw & Hoeber, 2003) with the insights from this dissertation. As conceptualized, the awareness continuum allows for attitudes toward female leadership in sport to develop and change into intermediate or high awareness through education or experiences. As demonstrated in this paper, the majority of ally strategies were designed to increase others' awareness and create coalitions for more effective allyship within sport organizations. It is promising that by presenting the range of awareness towards female leadership in the sport industry demonstrates greater potential for gender allyship and the ability to engage more individuals towards the lower end of the continuum.

This study delineated awareness's subcategories, specifically self-awareness, organizational and industry awareness. The existing allyship literature primarily focused on developing allyship in interpersonal contexts (Bishop, 2002; Broido, 2000; Brown, 2002; Edwards, 2006; Reason et al., 2005; Tatum, 1994), therefore the awareness that is illustrated aligns closely with self-awareness. Self-awareness in gender allyship, however, is just one component of what constitutes awareness. Gender allies need self-awareness, organizational and industry awareness to be successful. Organizational awareness allows gender allies to navigate their organization, while industry awareness allows gender allies to understand the trends within the industry. For a gender ally to be successful at creating change, they need to understand their own lens, position and/or privilege (self-awareness); understanding of the goals for their employer and how the organization functions (organizational awareness); and the trends and peer organizations within industry (industry awareness). Together gender allies can utilize these three forms of awareness to inform how they navigate their organization and create coalitions to create change.

Despite gender allyship's inclusive framing, this dissertation has been clear that not everyone is capable of being a gender ally (Blum, 1994; Kekes, 1989). Gender allies are clear that their ability to reach certain men, specifically, is limited depending on men's *existing* perspectives on gender and the degree to which they align with traditional gender norms. While allyship is a framework that allows for the members of dominant social groups perspectives on minority groups to develop, allyship development begins with a recognition of the issues facing the minority or oppressed group (Bishop, 2002; Broido, 2000; Brown, 2002; Tatum, 1994). If a man in the sport industry does not recognize or care about the underrepresentation of women in leadership positions, then a gender ally "[can] not

transform an uncaring person into a caring one” (Coombs, 1998, p. 568). However, individuals who may care, but may not have personal experiences that have caused them to evolve are not destined to be stagnant. Gender allies’ personal experience and the varying ally strategies that result in high or heightened awareness of women’s roles within the sport industry result in empathy and purpose to act with and on behalf of others. This combination, as indicated by Collins (2009), is a key piece of coalition building, as “recognition of one’s own group position and seeing how the social location of groups has been constructed in conjunction with one another. Empathy, not sympathy becomes the basis of coalition” (p. 266). What mobilizes gender allies, therefore, is not pitying or tokenizing women. Gender allies understand that a system that privileges men, ultimately privileges them at the expense of women (Acker, 2006, 2012; Britton & Logan, 2008; Hoeber, 2007; Kidd, 1990; Messner & Sabo, 1990; Theberge, 1985) and to truly create change, coalitions must utilize their high or heightened awareness to inform how and when they choose to work within the existing sport systems. Coalitions create change because they are able to transform individuals’ awareness into collective action through building consensus and providing clarity around the impact of individual actions (Kekes, 1989). Gender allyship’s strength as a paradigm is a byproduct of its ability to transform the desired future of greater representation of women in leadership positions in the sport industry into a more attainable goal by dismantling gender’s disparate impact through combining men’s and women’s power and leveraging their collective power to affect change.

Gender allyship presents important theoretical, empirical, and practical considerations for sport organizations in considering how men can leverage their power to create change. Throughout this paper, a consistent theme has been the importance of translating awareness

into action, specifically through coalitions. Coalitions are vital to the success of gender allyship because they provide a space where women have agency in the form of steering and directing the coalition on important issues (Ahern, 2001; Bishop, 2002; Brown, 2002). Thus, it bears noting that while gender allyship is a framework where men and women with power leverage their power to create change, but women are not passive in this process. Women are active, engaged, and *strategic* in realizing their limitations, yet choose to not be contained by them. Gender allyship is a mechanism that allows for women to work within the existing structure, identify men who are invested in women's leadership, and work together to create systems that limit gender's impact. Coalitions, ultimately, serve as a model of men and women working together where gender plays a minimal, and both bring and utilize their power to accomplish a goal, and can serve as an example of how gender can be minimized in the workplace.

Empirical & Practical Contributions

This study offered a variety of empirical and practical contributions. Empirically, this study provided evidence of allyship's application in organizational settings. Lowndes and Press' (2016) study found allyship in organizations, yet their investigation to allyship did not seek to create organizational change. My study investigated allyship's ability to operate in a professional environment and operate as a force for organizational change through addressing gender, a socially constructed issue. Using allyship to address socially constructed issues aligns with the majority of allyship literature (Bishop, 2002; Broido, 2000; Edwards, 2006; Reason et al., 2005; Tatum, 1994). Documenting allyship's occurrence in an organizational setting extends the allyship literature, as their empirical evidence focused on allyship in interpersonal relationships. Second, this study offers empirical evidence of

allyship's application to gender. The majority of allyship literature focused on racial allyship and allyship to LGBT populations. Conceptual articles (e.g., Edwards, 2006) present allyship as a flexible framework that can be applied to gender, yet evidence was lacking. This study contributes empirical evidence to substantiate men act as allies to women.

Third, this study contributed empirical evidence to the sport-gender literature. As discussed, the sport-feminist literature overwhelmingly presents men as resistant or hesitant to female leadership (Burton, 2015; Burton et al., 2009; Burton & Leberman, 2017b; Claringbould & Knoppers, 2012; Hargreaves, 1990; Kane & LaVoi, 2018; Messner, 1988, 1992; Messner & Sabo, 1990; Shaw & Penney, 2003; Shaw & Slack, 2002; Theberge, 1987). This study challenged the sport-gender literature by extending the representation of men's perspectives by demonstrating male allyship. Gender allyship does not argue that *all* men are allies, but the existence of gender allyship offers an empirical contribution.

Gender allyship holds important practical considerations for sport organizations, which build off of Shaw and Frisby's (2006) extension of Ely and Meyerson's framework. For sport organizations to evolve, they need to deconstruct the "equity-effectiveness discourse" and acknowledge intersectionality in sport organizations (Shaw & Frisby, 2006, p. 501). According to Shaw and Frisby (2006), the "equity-effectiveness discourse" embodies the notion that an organization's decision to be equitable comes at the expense of achieving its goals and being effective. The equity-effectiveness discourse is the result of traditional masculine understandings being translated into the how organizations function and operate (Shaw & Frisby, 2006). Gender allyship serves as a framework that can illustrate that pursuit of equity does not mean an organization sacrifices pursuit of effectiveness. In gender allyship, gender allies utilize their awareness, recognize their capacity in a given situation,

and determine the best course of action to address gender in their organizations. Gender allies specifically can utilize their organizational and industry awareness, while also leveraging their experience as an ally to illustrate that organizational equity *does* align with organizational effectiveness; this process enacts the tenets of Ely and Meyerson's (2000) framework for organizational change. Gender allyship cannot reframe measurement of organizational effectiveness, however it could be utilized to decontextualize discussions from focusing just on organizational effectiveness to illustrate the organization's mission and goals and illustrate their potential impact as a business *and* social entity in the sport industry (Burton & Leberman, 2017b; Shaw & Frisby, 2006) Gender allyship has the potential to allow both men and women to play equally important – yet different roles – in helping organizations evolve and ensure that they are serving their dual purpose.

Limitations

This study makes several contributions to the literature, there are some limitations that should be disclosed. As discussed in Chapter 3, my personal experiences with allyship and bias toward allyship must be accounted for given that this is a qualitative study that impacted the selection of this topic, sampling, data generation and the development of codes and a theory of gender allyship. In designing my study, I used a methodology that was rigorous and chose to include additional methods that would ensure the credibility of the data being collected (e.g., member checking) and the dependability of the data analysis (e.g., memoing). However, no work is free from bias and certainly this project is a reflection of the researcher (Shaw & Hoeber, 2016).

This study is an initial investigation into 1) male feminist perspectives within the sport industry, 2) allyship's application to gender, and 3) allyship's application within an

organizational context. Because of these features, the findings of this study are preliminary and need to be developed further to understand the scope of gender allyship within the sport industry. Additionally, the resulting theory for gender allyship is a result of interviews with 17 participants, which is a similar sample for grounded theory work in sport management (Kihl et al., 2008). However, additional voices, experiences and contexts will continue to add further depth to the theory of gender allyship.

Finally, this study focused on identifying the process by which gender allyship occurs within sport organizations, yet, little understanding exists about the prevalence of gender allyship within the sport industry. It is unlikely that every organization in the sport industry will have gender allies. Gender allyship is a framework that can produce organization change, but gender allies must be present to ignite the change. Therefore, the scale by which change can occur through gender allyship is smaller than is needed.

Future Research

This study sought to identify the existence of gender allyship and define the process and the locations where it occurs within the sport industry. The scope of this study was broad as it looked to identify gender allies in multiple different organizations and contexts to generate an explanatory theory of how the process of gender allyship occurs; however, future research is necessary to understand the extent or prevalence of gender allyship within the sport industry. This study has never sought to claim that all men within the sport industry can be gender allies, but this is one study that looks to identify the existence of men acting on behalf of women in sport organizations. To truly create change within the sport industry, there needs to be a better understanding of male allies' representation within the sport industry.

Future research into gender allyship's existence outside of the sport industry is an important and necessary extension of this work. Sport served as a fitting context to test the existence of this framework due to the ways that gender is a fixture of and has been built into the structures of many sport organizations (Claringbould & Knoppers, 2007, 2008, 2012; Shaw, 2006; Shaw & Hoeber, 2003; Shaw & Penney, 2003); however, these phenomena are not without parallel within the broader business world. McKinely & Co. (2017) have consistently documented women's underrepresentation in decision making and leadership positions across the business world, and Acker (1990) and Ely & Meyerson (2000) have consistently highlighted the ways in which organizations themselves are gendered. The gender and management literature base, too, is sparse in its representation of male allyship or even illustrating men as being open to women's leadership (Adriaanse & Schofield, 2014; Burton, 2015; Burton et al., 2009, 2011, Burton & Leberman, 2017a, 2017b, Claringbould & Knoppers, 2007, 2008, 2012; Cunningham & Sagas, 2007a; Hoeber, 2007; Kane & LaVoi, 2018; Sartore & Cunningham, 2007; Schull et al., 2012; Shaw & Hoeber, 2003; Shaw & Penney, 2003; Shaw & Slack, 2002). Ely and Meyerson's (2000) framework for addressing gender within organizations offers suggestions on how to approach gender through a culture of experimentation; an organization that has gender allies would be an organization that would allow for such a culture to exist. Future research should investigate gender allyship's contribution outside of the sport industry, specifically in other male dominated industries.

Given gender allies' associations between gender underrepresentation and racial and ethnic minority underrepresentation, allyship – the overall construct – should be investigated in the sport industry. Gender allyship serves as one extension of allyship research, however, the strategies used by gender allies could be adapted to address the underrepresentation of

racial and ethnic and other minority groups within the sport industry. Allyship as an organizational strategy to address racial minority underrepresentation would be a fitting extension of this work, as the foundation of the allyship literature is built from understandings around racial allyship (Bishop, 2002; Broido, 2000; Brown, 2002; Tatum, 1994). Using the insights garnered from this study, an investigation into racial allyship within the sport industry would be a worthwhile undertaking to develop the understandings of allyship in organizations within the sport industry. Additionally, allyship is a framework that could aid the development of intersectional research within the sport management literature (Fink, 2016; Melton & Bryant, 2017; Shaw & Frisby, 2006; Walker & Sartore-Baldwin, 2013).

This study also identified that women can be resistant to the idea of gender allyship. This perspective is well-represented in the existing sport gender leadership literature, as the absence of male ally voices has been noted (e.g., Burton, 2015; Burton & Leberman, 2017a, 2017b; Hurst, Leberman, & Edwards, 2016; Shaw, 2006). Limited explanations of this phenomenon are represented in the allyship literature (e.g., Bishop, 2002; Reason et al., 2005). This discrepancy needs to be investigated further into understanding *why* women resist the idea of gender allyship.

This study identified that awareness is an evolutionary process that is distinct for each individual yet serves as a powerful force in igniting the gender allyship process within sport organizations. The next logical question, which remains unanswered in this study is: can gender allyship can be taught? Future research into gender allyship should look to see how gender allyship can be taught to women and men within sport organizations and see the impact their understandings, decisions, and interactions with coworkers.

Conclusion

Women's historical and current underrepresentation in positions of leadership in the sport industry has perplexed both scholars and practitioners. The existing research developed our understandings of how and why the problem persists, however had not led to a substantial increase in women's representation in leadership and decision making positions in sport organizations, as gender is a covert, yet powerful force in sport organizations' structures. Addressing this well-researched problem required an approach; allyship offered a novel paradigm that considers how dominant members of social groups are key contributors in making power more equitable with minority or oppressed groups. Gender allyship is a phenomenon where men and women work together to address latent gendered attitudes in sport organizations and increase women's representation in leadership positions.

The purpose of this dissertation was to determine the existence of gender allyship, and if present, the process by which it occurs. Determining the existence and process of gender allyship was guided by a combination of grounded theory and CDA. This dissertation found the existence of gender allyship within the sport industry, where both men and women work as allies. The process of gender allyship begins with awareness, where male and female allies recognize the gender's role in the sport industry, in shaping their experiences, and how it relates to women's historical and current underrepresentation. Awareness exists along a continuum, where high or heightened awareness inspires action in gender allies. Gender allies' awareness is translated into action, where they determine their capacity given their power, their organization, and the situation itself. Finally, gender allies utilize a series of strategies designed to create opportunities for women in the sport industry or create organizational cultures that value gender equity. This dissertation contributes the extensive

sport gender leadership literature by demonstrating the existence of gender allyship, where men and women work together to consider gender's role in sport organizations. The findings of this dissertation extend the findings of the sport gender literature by recognizing that men can act as allies to women. Additionally, this study extends the allyship literature to consider allyship's application to gender and as an organizational strategy. Future research should investigate if gender allyship can be taught, the existence of gender allyship outside of sport contexts, and attempt to understand women's hesitancy toward gender allyship.

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APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW GUIDE - ORIGINAL

INTRODUCTION & OPENING

1. As this study is about how individuals achieve their leadership positions, would you mind sharing how you got your current position?

Probe as necessary

- a. How long have you worked for your current organization?
 - b. How long they've been in their current position?
 - c. Has anyone shared any information with you about the hiring process surrounding your position?
 - d. Did someone encourage you to apply?
 - e. Do you know if someone served as your advocate?
 - f. Who do you work with?
 - g. Can you tell me about the working environment? Are employees encouraged to challenge how things are done?
 - h. Do you have a someone you've identified as a mentor within the organization? Can you tell me about how that relationship developed?
2. Would you mind sharing the process and the work that went into completing one of your most recent hires? (From process of job description to deciding on a candidate)

Probe as necessary

- a. What was the position?
- b. Was position posted? (Where?)
- c. Were specific candidates identified or recruited to apply? When and how?
- d. Were internal candidates encouraged to apply? By whom?
 - i. Recruiting strategies?
- e. How were external candidates informed of the position?
- f. How were candidates evaluated?
- g. What kinds of discussions did you have about who should be short listed for an interview and who should be offered the position?

I'm going to use some recent examples from the sport industry about hiring decisions and the role that gender plays in it. After reading through the situation, please comment on:

- 1. The role gender plays in the situation*
- 2. The impact of the men's quotes on the viability of the decision*
- 3. The likelihood that a similar situation could happen at your organization, in your department or within your work team.*

SCENARIO 1

The San Antonio Spurs hired Becky Hammon as the first full-time, female assistant coach of a NBA or professional sports team in the United States in 2014. Hammon was previously a WNBA player and had previously attended Spurs' practices and film sessions before being hired. Head Coach Gregg Popovich was quoted as saying "she talks the game, she understands the game, so in that respect, I have no doubts she's going to be one heck of a coach" (National Basketball Association, 2016).

Hammon served as the Head Coach of the Spurs during the NBA's Summer League in 2015, and ultimately led the team to winning the Summer League.

ESPN news service. (2014, August 5). Becky Hammon hired to Spurs' staff. *ESPN*.

Retrieved from, http://espn.go.com/nba/story/_/id/11312366/becky-hammon-hired-san-antonio-spurs

National Basketball Association [NBA]. (2016, March 24). *Becky Hammon on her head coach's support of her NBA coaching* [Video file]. Retrieved from, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=heycw8rdLII>

Probe as necessary

- a. What do you think Gregg Popovich's quote accomplishes?
- b. Would this be possible in your organization? Why?

After reading through the situation, please comment on:

- 1. The role gender plays in the situation*
- 2. The impact of the men's quotes on the viability of the decision*
- 3. The likelihood that a similar situation could happen at your organization, in your department or within your work team.*

SCENARIO 2

Michele Roberts was hired in July 2014 to be the National Basketball Players' Association (NBAPA) Executive Director (Boren, 2014; Campo, 2014). In her new position, she will be responsible for representing the NBA players' interest in collective bargaining with the NBA.

DeMaurice Smith, Executive Director of the National Football Players' Association, said of Roberts:

“Michele is a tremendously skilled lawyer, a very talented trial attorney who is formidable in a very measured way. She excelled as a public defender and in private practice at one of the world's largest and best law firms. To people who think she's an unknown quantity, she's quite well-known in legal circles and has represented the biggest and best-known clients in America.” (Boren, 2014).

NBAPA President Chris Paul was quoted as saying:

"One particular member from our search committee ... asked her a very tough question in the interviews and [vice president] Roger [Mason Jr.] almost fell out of his seat after she finished giving her answer," Paul said. "Even though she's a female, she's very relatable to a lot of our players. I think that's what really hit home for not only myself but some of these other guys as well." (Campo, 2014).

Campo, C. (2014, July 29). Chris Paul praises hiring of Michele Roberts: “It's an unbelievable feeling”. *TheScore.com*. Retrieved from, <http://www.thescore.com/nba/news/545221>

CLOSING

3. Are there any points that you would like share that I haven't specifically addressed?
4. Can you recommend any other people I should contact who might be willing to participate in this study?

APPENDIX B

REVISED INTERVIEW GUIDE – FOR MEN

INTRO: ME & TOPIC

1. Can you tell me about your career and ultimately what led to the founding of PCA?
Probe as necessary

2. What was your vision for the organization? How has it changed?
Probe as necessary
 - a. As growth has happened?
 - b. Managing organizational culture
 - i. where you're not there?
 - c. Process of vetting people?

3. Handling the pushback from allyship decision?
Probe as necessary
 - a. Impact on work team
 - b. Buy in on work team?
 - c. Buy in from leadership

4. How do you approach trying to talk to other men about gender?
Probe as necessary
 - a. How do you approach trying to create more male allies?
 - b. Do you think prominent examples of allyship like Gregg Popovich and Becky Hammon matter or ease conversation?
 - c. What do Popovich or Silver do for men within the sport industry?

CLOSING

4. What do you hope to accomplish as an ally?
5. What do you think is the most important thing that male allies can do?

6. Are there any points that you would like share that I haven't specifically addressed?
7. Can you recommend any other people I should contact who might be willing to participate in this study?

APPENDIX C

REVISED INTERVIEW GUIDE – FOR WOMEN

INTRO: ME & TOPIC

1. Can you tell me how you got your current position?
 - a. *Probe as necessary*

2. Importance of/impact from working w/ male allies?
 - Probe as necessary*

5. What do you think about the idea of male allyship?
 - Probe as necessary*

 - a. What about the idea of women needing men in order to advance? How does that make you feel?
 - b. Do you think prominent examples of allyship like Gregg Popovich and Becky Hammon matter?

6. How do you identify a male ally or read a man's openness to gender equity?

7. How does having women in notable leadership positions impact your agency within day to day interactions with coworkers?

CLOSING

8. As a woman in the sport industry, what do you think is the most important thing that male allies can do?

9. Are there any points that you would like share that I haven't specifically addressed?
10. Can you recommend any other people I should contact who might be willing to participate in this study?

APPENDIX D

BEST PRACTICES FOR GENDER ALLYSHIP IN SPORT ORGANIZATIONS

Thank you for the valuable ideas and insights that you provided for my dissertation, *Gender Allyship: Considering the Role of Men in Addressing the Gender-Leadership Gap in Sport Organizations*. Through this research, I spoke to 17 women and men in the sport industry in intercollegiate sport, professional sport, non-profit sport, and sport media organizations. Thanks to such robust participation, I have been able to compile the following summary of key strategies and practices of how gender allyship is performed in the sport industry. Gender allyship is the process where men in positions of power are seen as key contributors and work with women in positions of power to increase the number of women in sport organizations. As these are *your* strategies, I wanted to follow up with the findings from my dissertation to allow you to learn from each other and further your individual allyship within your organization.

Ally strategies represent the intentional actions allies utilize to increase the representation and retention of women within their sport organization. Within each strategy, I have outlined specific practices provided by your peers. Based on my research, selecting and enacting a gender allyship strategy is dependent upon an assessment of: the situation's features, your organization's support of allyship, and your individual capacity to act.⁵

Strategy: Hiring Processes & Creating Opportunities for Women

Goal: Increase women's representation within organization

Practices:

1. Create flexible criteria
 - a. Consider a range of accepted qualifications rather than discrete qualification
 - b. Assign job-related responsibilities within hiring process
 - i. Standardized writing assignments for PR position, marketing campaign for certain demographic
 - c. Focus hiring process around assessing match between organizational culture and candidates' values
2. "Rooney Rule"
 - a. Require female candidates to be part of final hiring pool
 - b. Financial assistance/scholarships to lower financial burden and ensure diverse hiring pools
3. Recognize hiring processes as development opportunities
 - a. Candidate might not be fit for your organization now, but could learn from hiring process and join other sport organization in the future
4. Create specialized positions for women
 - a. Only women are eligible to apply
 - b. Structured experience/mentorship throughout duration of position

⁵ Individual capacity is informed by the power afforded to your position within the organization (e.g., involvement in hiring committees, member of executive team) or your network within the organization and how you strategically utilize it.

Strategy: Creating Organizational Cultures that Value Gender Diversity

Goal: Retain women in organization

Practices:

1. Create more male allies
 - a. Men model gender allyship for other men
 - i. Acting as allies (e.g., hiring women)
 - ii. Recognizing the impact of gendered language (language that magnifies differences between men and women) and limiting its use
 - b. Frame gender issues in sport context
 - i. “Teamwork” or “sportsmanship”
 - c. Equity mentorship
 - i. Mentor young male professionals about the impact and importance of gender equity in sport
 - ii. Demonstrate how to act equitably
 - d. Recognize audience: not all men are interested in being allies.
 - i. Focus efforts on men who have potential to develop into allies
2. Create opportunities for men and women working together on gender equity issues
 - a. Foster discussions between men and women
 - i. Women are demonstrating need or discussing their experiences as women in sport industry
 - ii. Men are listening to experiences and developing awareness
 - Bring those insights into other conversations to magnify women’s voices
 - b. Using data/research to demonstrate women’s underrepresentation and its impact in industry
3. Managing others’ perceptions of allyship: Allyship can be perceived as preferential treatment.
 - a. Avoiding or minimizing others’ perceptions:
 - i. Assessing need for discretion⁶
 - b. Patience with others in organization
4. Recognizing women may face a heightened scrutiny in certain positions than men
 - a. Think about how you can structure success, while also not being condescending or patronizing
5. Recognize opportunities to demonstrate women’s leadership ability
 - a. Ask questions/address statements that perpetuate gender norms (e.g., women aren’t competitive or good leaders)
 - b. Identify and address organizational policies/practices that impact men and women differently
 - c. Women holding leadership/decision making positions

⁶ Discretion is *not always* the right choice. Sport organizations should recognize progress when more women are represented in leadership positions. You should make the decision that feels appropriate given the situation. Weigh the significance against the potential for female employees to be ostracized by their coworkers.