

THE IMPACT OF STRUCTURAL SYSTEMS ON PERCEPTIONS OF LEGITIMACY AND
THE EXPERIENCES OF FEMALE HOCKEY PLAYERS

BY

ERIN LEAH MORRIS

DISSERTATION

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Recreation, Sport and Tourism
in the Graduate College of the
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2016

Urbana, Illinois

Doctoral Committee:

Professor B. Christine Green, Chair
Assistant Professor Jacqueline McDowell, George Mason University
Professor Kim Shiner
Associate Professor Monica McDermott
Assistant Professor Jonathon Edwards, University of New Brunswick

Abstract

Women's participation in ice hockey has grown exponentially in the last 25 years. In 1991 there were only 5,500 female players registered with USA Hockey (USA Hockey, 2012; the governing body of hockey in the United States), in 2014 there were 67,230 (USA Hockey, 2014). Despite the exponential growth of female participation, it is still well below male participation which is currently at 452,187. With only 67,000 girls and women participating in the entire United States, it is not feasible for girls to play on girls only teams or in girls-only leagues in many regions of the country. As a result, girls often play in one of three different gendered organizational structures: girls on predominantly boy's teams, girls only teams within coed organizations (organizations with both boys-only and girls-only teams), and girls-only teams in girls-only organizations. All three of the organizational structures are currently used as mechanisms to support girls' participation in hockey. However, the different participation structures may impact the experiences of the players and their perceptions of the organizational legitimacy of girls' hockey. The purpose of this study was to understand impact of gendered structure type on perceptions of organizational legitimacy and playing experience. This study also sought to understand the experiences of the participants in these structures, as those experiences would be expected to shape their perceptions of legitimacy.

This project utilized mixed method to consider the perceptions of organizational legitimacy of girls' hockey. Study one utilized survey research to understand youth (ages 14U-19U) hockey players' perceptions of organizational legitimacy. Study two utilized interviews with administrators involved in girls' hockey and female players (ages 14U-19) to understand what actions were important threats or supports to the organizational legitimacy of associations supporting girls' hockey. Organizational context is important for perceptions of legitimacy and

for understanding the diversity of experiences that impact those perceptions. Those who had participated in associations with girls' teams were more likely to perceive their association as supporting girls' hockey. Additionally, lacking appropriate structures, including but not limited to, girls' teams, girls' locker-rooms, and equitable ice time were seen as significant threats to perceptions of legitimacy by both players and administrators. Gender and context needs to be considered in all aspects of sport development, particularly for sports that are newer or non-traditional.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my committee for all of their help and support throughout this process. In particular I would like to thank my advisor, Dr. B. Christine Green, for taking me on half way through my PhD and helping me shape my research ideas into what they are today. Her guidance allowed me to find my place within women's sport development and her whiteboard words of wisdom were invaluable. I also want to thank Dr. Jacqueline McDowell for taking me on as her student at Illinois and her continued support of my work. Her mentorship allowed me to explore my interests, find my passion for non-traditional sport, and gain valuable experience and knowledge as a researcher. Thank you as well to Drs. Kim Shinew, Monica McDermott, and Jonathon Edwards, without their respective help, guidance and mentorship, this project would not have been possible.

My previous mentors also played a large role in my ability to arrive at this point. I want to thank Dr. Michelle Janning for her support and mentorship from the beginning of my academic career. Allowing me to write all my sociology papers about sport, conducting an independent study on sport sociology, and all of her support in my first thesis about women in sport served as the starting point for my academic journey that has gotten me here. I also want to thank Dr. Skye Arthur-Banning for supporting all my work and interests during my masters and beyond, including allowing me to follow my passion even when that meant conducting qualitative, feminist research.

Most importantly I would like to thank my family for all of their support over the years in everything I have done, from playing every sport under the sun to pursuing my education all over the country. From an early age my parents instilled the importance of sport and physical activity, for the love of the game, not notoriety or scholarship. This perspective has translated from my

life playing sports to my research in participatory sport. In tenth grade my mom suggested I write my English term paper on Title IX (what's Title IX I asked at the time); 15 years later I am still writing about women's participation in sport.

Thank you Katie for the unwavering support and putting up with all of the dissertation related stress. A big thank you also goes to all my friends who kept me sane during the last four years. In particular Natalie Smith and Megan Owens who served as great friends to bounce ideas off of, compare notes with, complain about the process as we went through the dissertation together. The hockey girls, Angela Kouris, Whitney England, and Maria Bautista, thank you for always being there to keep me sane, play and watch hockey with me, and celebrate all of the milestones (even when you did not know what the milestone was because Biology does it differently). Finally, thank you Cordelia McGehee for being there over the last 20 years. The support through our awkward middle school years, college, and now our terminal degrees is invaluable.

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION	1
SPORT DEVELOPMENT	2
GENDERED STRUCTURES FOR GIRLS HOCKEY	7
HEGEMONIC MASCULINITY WITHIN HOCKEY.....	16
HEGEMONIC MASCULINITY AND LEGITIMACY	17
LEGITIMACY OF INDIVIDUAL ORGANIZATIONS	20
LITERATURE REVIEW	24
IMPORTANCE OF LEGITIMACY TO ORGANIZATIONS.....	24
ORGANIZATIONAL LEGITIMACY.....	27
STRATEGIC AND INSTITUTIONAL LEGITIMACY.....	28
LEGITIMACY AS SOCIALLY CONSTRUCTED	30
SUCHMAN’S LEGITIMACY FRAMEWORK	33
THREE TYPES OF LEGITIMACY	35
LEGITIMACY AND PLAYING EXPERIENCE.....	39
METHOD	44
STUDY 1.....	48
PARTICIPANTS.....	48
DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES	49
RESEARCH QUESTIONS	49
MEASUREMENT.....	51
STUDY 2.....	57
PARTICIPANTS.....	57
DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE.....	59
DATA ANALYSIS	61
RESEARCHER POSITIONALITY	62
RESEARCH EXPECTATIONS.....	63
COMBINING METHODS.....	64
STUDY 1 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION.....	65
SAMPLE.....	65
EFFECTS OF STRUCTURE ON PERCEIVED LEGITIMACY	66
PLAYER EXPERIENCE	71
EXPERIENCE AND PERCEPTIONS OF LEGITIMACY	82
DISCUSSION	84
STUDY 2 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION.....	92
ADMINISTRATOR PERCEPTIONS OF LEGITIMACY	92
PLAYERS’ PERCEPTIONS OF LEGITIMACY.....	135
FACTORS IMPACTING PLAYING EXPERIENCE	166
DISCUSSION.....	184
THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS	197
PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS	201
LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH	202

CONCLUSION	204
REFERENCES.....	207
APPENDIX A: SURVEY MEASURES.....	216
APPENDIX B: PLAYER INTERVIEW.....	221
APPENDIX C: ADMINISTRATOR INTERVIEW	223
APPENDIX D: QUALITATIVE FINDINGS.....	225

Introduction

Women's participation in ice hockey has grown exponentially in the last 25 years. In 1991 there were only 5,500 female players registered with USA Hockey (USA Hockey, 2012; the governing body of hockey in the United States), in 2014 there were 67,230 (USA Hockey, 2014). Despite the exponential growth of female participation, it is still well below male participation which is currently at 452,187. With only 67,000 girls and women participating in the entire United States, it is not feasible for girls to play on girls only teams or in girls-only leagues in many regions of the country. As a result, girls often play in one of three different gendered organizational structures: girls on predominantly boy's teams, girls only teams within coed organizations (organizations with both boys-only and girls-only teams), and girls-only teams in girls-only organizations. All three of the organizational structures are currently used as mechanisms to support girls' participation in hockey. However, the different participation structures may impact the experiences of the players and their perceptions of the organizational legitimacy of girls' hockey. With low participation levels and the various structures supporting girls' hockey, it is important to understand how people perceive girls' hockey as a sport. The effects of these gendered structures may impact the development of girls' hockey in terms of recruitment retention and development. There is a real need to increase the number of athletes participating in hockey in order to further the development of the sport. In order for a sport to continue to grow and develop, it is important that the sport organizations are perceived as legitimate and providing stable, credible and valuable services. This is particularly necessary for growing sports that are attempting to attract more participants to their sport. Due to the fact that hockey is a traditionally masculine sport (Messner, 2002), and that women are still relatively new to the sport, it is important to determine the perceptions of legitimacy of hockey for girls'

and women when considering girls' hockey specific sport development. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to understand impact of gendered structure type on perceptions of organizational legitimacy and playing experience. This study also seeks to understand the experiences of the participants in these structures, as those experiences would be expected to shape their perceptions of legitimacy.

Sport Development

While participation is a significant aspect of sport development, it is not the only focus. For sport development, there is also a need for participant recruitment, retention, training, and transition. Sport development is defined as “a process whereby effective opportunities, processes, systems, and structures are set up to enable people in all or particular groups and areas to take part in sport and recreation or to improve their performance to whatever level they desire” (Collins, cited in Eady, 1993, p. 8). In order for a sport, or a sport organization to develop, it must recruit new participants at the broadest level, keep them interested and active in the sport, and continue player development in a way that allows them to transition through developmental stages (Sotiriadou, Shilbury, & Quick, 2008). However, in order for sports, particularly new sports, to recruit new players, the organizations and the sport itself must be viewed as legitimate. In a sport landscape with a multiplicity of options, parents will be unlikely to enroll their child in a sport or organization that they do not perceive as fitting in within the local, socially constructed norms, values and beliefs. Similarly, children will be unlikely to want to play or to continue playing, if they do not perceive that the sport is appropriate or fits within socially constructed norms. For instance, female athletes might be less likely to continue to play a sport that they perceive as being a male centered sport. Thus, perceptions of organizational legitimacy are particularly important to new sport development.

Sport can have a myriad of benefits for its participants that affect their mental and physical health (Coakley, 2014). Athletes can learn teamwork, leadership, and sportsmanship. The athletes have also been found to be less likely to drink and smoke. In general, female athletes are less likely to have eating disorders and unplanned teen pregnancies than their non-athlete peers. They are more likely to have a positive body image, to have high self-esteem, and to go to college than are non-athletes (Coakley, 2014; Fraser-Thomas, Côté, & Deakin, 2005). However, these benefits are only accrued if the sport program is implemented appropriately. Without proper development principles, sport programming can lead to burnout, injury, dropout, and other unhealthy behaviors such as eating disorders (Coakley, 2014; Fraser-Thomas et al., 2005). Having a sport development model that respects the physiological and developmental needs of the athletes is of key importance, beginning with initial recruitment and continuing with retention methods.

However, there is a dual imperative within sport development; a desire for both mass participation as well as for elite performance success (Green, 2005). While these can work together and support each other, they can also be viewed as disparate models competing for the same, limited resources. Many sport organizations' development systems are characterized by the pyramid analogy, where the organization starts with a broad participation base and many participants. This base begins to shrink as players reach the competitive stages of sport, and it becomes a quite small and selective group of participants by the time they reach high performance sport (Green, 2005). This leaves little consideration for participants who do not make it to the elite level but wish to continue playing, those that wish to join past the typical entry time frame, and those that seek to continue participating throughout the lifespan, past elite performance.

Recruitment. Successful sport development can be looked at in terms of participation numbers or development toward elite sport. Recruitment is generally thought of as occurring at the broad base of the pyramid and is of utmost importance as it brings in athletes at a young age. At this level, having fun is the most important goal because young kids will not keep participating if they are not having fun since they do not have the commitment or discipline for alternative motivations (Balyi, 2001; Côté, 1999). Players need to enjoy and feel welcome in the sport by the organization from the beginning. Players also need to perceive that the organizations legitimately have their best interests at heart and are supportive of their participation. At the youth recruitment level, gender may not appear to be highly salient; in fact some argue that at this level, organizational structures should encourage coed play (Cohen, Melton, & Welty Peachey, 2014; Messner, 2002). However, there may still be gendered considerations that should be taken into account. In the case of traditionally masculine sports such as ice hockey or football, girls may be afraid of the stereotypes or assumptions associated with the sport, or simply think that they cannot play the sport because it is a boys' sport (Coakley, 2014; Schmalz & Kerstetter, 2006). A sport organization trying to recruit female hockey players, for instance, may need to use different tactics than those utilized to recruit male players due to the associations and stigmas attached to the sport.

Retention and development. Moving beyond initial recruitment, sport development is concerned with the retention and development of athletes. Sport organizations must understand how to retain athletes and continue to positively develop the participants, whether in high performance models or recreational settings (Green, 2005; Sotiriadou et al., 2008). Most of the research, particularly in the high performance setting, has been based on male sport programming. Balyi (2001) analyzed the Long Term Athlete Development (LTAD) model. This

model has seven steps from sport introduction to retirement from sport: active start, FUNdamentals, learning to train, training to train, training to compete, training to win, active for life (See figure 1; Canadian Sport for Life, 2011). While the seven stage model suggested by Balyi is commonly used in elite sport in Canada, other athlete development models exist. Côté (1999) suggests a three stage model for transitions from introduction to elite competition. The three stages are sampling, specialization, and investment. Regardless of the model used, smooth transitions and appropriate time spent at each level are important for the successful retention and development of athletes. For instance, Fraser-Thomas, Côté, & Deakin (2008) found that athletes who dropped out of competitive swimming began competing and training at a highly competitive level and engaged in fewer outside activities at a younger age, than those who remained in the sport. These athletes likely skipped, or progressed too quickly through, early stages of participation.

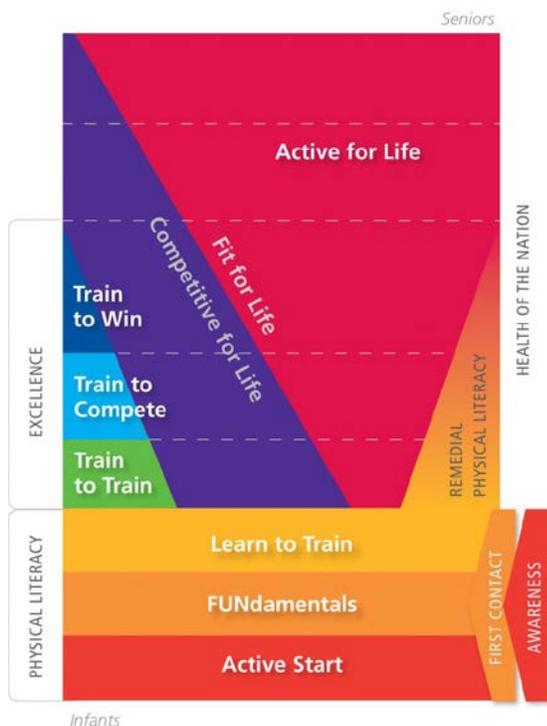


Figure 1: Long Term Athlete Development Model (Canadian Sport for Life, 2011).

These athlete development models are based on sport structures developed to meet the needs of male athletes and then unquestioningly applied to female programs (Balyi, 2001). While the LTAD model does have slight age adjustments for male and female athletes based on generalized psychological and physiological developmental differences, this is the only alteration made to the model. For example, the learn to train stage is for ages 8-11 for girls and 8-12 for boys and train to train is for girls age 11-15 and boys age 12-16 (Canadian Sport for Life, 2011). The model was created for high performance athletes. Hockey Canada used the LTAD model to create its Long Term Player Development (LTPD) model which was created for the men's Program of Excellence. This is being applied to the women's program, despite differences in participation and structure. Similarly, USA Hockey used the LTAD model to inform the American Development Model (ADM) which lays out an eight step development progression (USA Hockey, n.d.).

Côté's (1999) model makes no adjustment for athlete gender. Sampling occurs from age 6-13. Athletes are encouraged to participate in multiple sports and fun is the most important concept. Specialization occurs from age 13-15. Athletes begin to focus on one to three sports and to put more time into skill development. Finally, investment occurs from age 16 and older with elite performance as the focus. However, this is applied to all athletes regardless of gender. The LTAD programs were often created for the elite programs, which were historically male dominated. They were then directly applied to female high performance sport with little consideration of the physical, psychological, and societal differences, between male and female athletes. It is likely that female athletes might benefit from a different or adjusted structure (Balyi, 2001).

Sport attrition rates in all sports peak around age 14 for both boys and girls. However, girls are twice as likely as boys to drop out and often drop out at younger ages than boys (Tucker Center for Research on Girls & Women in Sport, 2007). Perhaps altering the sport development model to better suit the needs of female participants could help to retain more female athletes. I argue that this blind application of a sport structure designed to support male athletes coupled with the rate of female dropout from sport, shows the need for a critical feminist analysis of the sport structures and how sport development can better serve female participants. Creating sport structures and development models that center on the experiences and the needs of female athletes may help to improve the retention of female athletes and promote further development of women's sports.

Gendered Structures for Girls Hockey

Girls' hockey development and the organizational structures associated with girls' participation in hockey are embedded within hegemonically masculine sport frameworks. Organized hockey structures have traditionally been male-focused and organized predominantly as boys' teams and boys' leagues. Female players have faced structural, cultural, and interpersonal constraints to participating in hockey as they have in other predominantly male typed sports (Adams, 2006; Coakley & Donnelly, 2009; Theberge, 2000). However, as girls' participation has grown in the United States, organizations have had to find ways to either integrate girls into the team structures that already exist or create new team structures for girls' participation. At the youth level, girls have often been integrated into hockey structures in one of three ways: individual girls on predominantly boys' teams, single sex teams within coed organizations, and girls' only teams (Theberge, 2000; USA Hockey, 2011b). Each of these

gendered association structures is likely to impact the recruitment, retention, and transition of girl hockey players within the individual organizations.

Girls on predominantly boys' teams. One way to include girls in hockey structures is to have individual girls play on primarily boys' teams in primarily boys' leagues (USA Hockey, 2011b). This is most common in areas of the country where girls' hockey participation is low and there are not enough girls to form their own team at an age group within a reasonable travel region. In this situation there are often only one or two girls on a team and they may be the only girls in the entire league. This puts the girls within male-centric development models as the teams and leagues they are in are catering to the development of the primarily male players. Most development models have been constructed with male athletes in mind due to who has historically played elite sport when the models were created (Balyi, 2001). This is particularly true when the sport is organized around male participation. By participating within primarily male teams and organizations, there is an expectation of participating within and abiding by hegemonically masculine norms of the sport in order to fit in. Hegemonically masculine norms of sport include displays of aggression, physical power, intimidation, and ability to dominate others (Coakley, 2014).

In terms of recruitment, when girls play on predominantly boys' teams, most of the team and the organization's recruitment efforts likely go toward recruiting male players. These organizations may or may not actively recruit girls. If girls are not being actively recruited but are simply the girls that find the organization or the teams themselves out of a desire to play, the support the organization is giving to female players and the recruitment of them is minimal. This makes it challenging for an organization to have more girls on a team or to create a girls' only team. If they are not actively recruiting girls, it is doubtful that participation will grow for them.

Retention of girls in these organizations also faces several challenges. If there are only one or two girls on a team, they face structural and interpersonal issues to staying in the sport. The organization can help with retention but must do so purposively. Structurally, it is a challenge for ice arenas and teams to accommodate teams with boys and girls on them. Many teams, especially as players get older, do not allow the few girls on the team to change in the same locker-room as the boys. However, very few arenas have enough facility space to provide a team with two locker rooms. This often means that the girls change in bathrooms, broom closets, meeting rooms, secluded hallways, or whatever other excess space an arena may have. None of these options offer all the amenities of a locker room such as restrooms, showers, bench space, or clothing hooks. This creates a structural inequity that puts the girls in the position of being second class players. The lack of facility space and sufficient accommodations implicitly tells the female players that they are not worthy of the same space and amenities of their male teammates.

This separation of space also serves to create an interpersonal constraint as it isolates female players from their teammates. An important aspect of team sports is the camaraderie and friendship with other players (Coakley, 2014; Warner & Dixon, 2013). This is commonly built not only on the ice, but also in the locker rooms before and after practices and games. If the girls are segregated, they are missing this bonding time with their male teammates and often have a very solitary experience off of the ice. They may not feel as close with their team as their male counterparts and may not gain some of the friendship and socialization benefits. This structural limitation adds additional work in retaining girls' participation. If they feel as though they are segregated from the team and are not being included or do not have the friendship and community they desire on the team, they may be more likely to leave the team. Research on girls and women's participation in sport has shown that community and support is particularly

important to women's continued participation (Cronan & Scott, 2008; Warner & Dixon, 2013). If there are no other options for them to play, such as a local or regional girls' team, they may end up quitting. An organization that wants to retain girls within this model needs to make sure that despite structural constraints, the girls on the team feel included, welcome, and part of a community.

This structure faces other retention problems. In the United States it is often assumed that male athletes are inherently better than female athletes in power and performance sport (Coakley, 2014). This can cause interpersonal contention and problems for girls' participation, particularly as players move up in age and skill. Highly skilled girls can be seen as a threat to roster spots for boys, particularly by parents. This has manifested itself in harassment of players (Cribb, 2010). Parents, coaches, and administrators questioning the place of girls on a boys' hockey team puts an undue burden on female players as well as making the team an uncomfortable place for them. This shows the cultural value placed on male athletics. If a player is being framed as inferior, primarily because of her gender rather than her skill or the skill of the league, then it places girls' participation as secondary to that of boys' participation. Beyond this, there have been instances of girls facing harassment from opposing teams, coaches, and parents simply for playing on boys' teams (Chimelis, 2012; Cribb, 2010). They face taunts and verbal and physical harassment, which can impinge on their experience playing the sport and make the experience less fun. As such, organizations who maintain girls on boys' teams must make sure that their policies, procedures, and actions speak to inclusion of the girls in order to combat some of the interpersonal issues that girls in this situation face.

Female players on primarily boys' teams face several issues in terms of development and transitions. Girls in this structure are developing within the male-centered development model

and are learning how to play the sport within boys' rules. However, beginning at the 14U/Bantam age level, body checking is allowed in boys' hockey but remains illegal in girls' hockey. If girls continue to play on boys' teams beyond 12U/Peewee, they learn to play check hockey. Body checking is defined as "using his hip or body from the front, diagonally from the front or straight from the side [...] for the purpose of separating the opponent from the puck" (USA Hockey, 2011a). While girls are not allowed body checking at any competitive level, they are allowed body contact. Body contact is "contact that occurs between opponents during the normal process of playing the puck, provided there is no overt hip, shoulder, or arm contact to physically force the opponent off of the puck" (USA Hockey, 2011a). This is a substantial rule difference that changes the style of play and key actions during the game (Poniatowski & Hardin, 2012; Weaving & Roberts, 2012). This rule change makes transitions challenging. Due to the introduction of checking, many girls choose to switch to regional girls' teams at 14U. However, this means leaving a team where the players have already formed friendships and bonds. It also often means joining a regional girls' team, increasing the travel time and commitment level for these players and their families. This transition happens at a key time for player retention and development. Ages 12-14 is the peak time for athlete drop out, particularly for girls (Tucker Center for Research on Girls & Women in Sport, 2007). If they are encouraged to switch teams, they may no longer have the ability to play due to the location of a regional team, causing them to drop out. Players are transitioning to new teams and new rules at an age that is very important to retention but also to athlete development. At this age, athletes start entering the more elite and focused aspects of sport development systems.

In terms of development, girls that choose to stay on boys' teams above the 12U level will learn how to check and play check hockey. While this develops their skills as a hockey

player, it adds a challenge to the development process when they do switch to girls' hockey. The style of play and amount of physicality in check hockey is significantly different than non-check hockey (Poniatowski, 2011; Theberge, 2000). When these players switch to girls' hockey, which will happen at college if they continue to play elite hockey, if not before then, they have to relearn a major aspect of the game. This can be challenging and frustrating for the players. It may lead to more penalties for them and a less safe game for players who are not expecting that level of physicality. Thus, girls develop skills in one system and then have to relearn and develop within a different system when and if they switch over to girls' hockey. This rule difference makes for a complicated player development challenge in areas of the country where it is common for girls to participate on predominantly boys' teams.

Single sex teams in coed organizations. The next way of integrating girls into hockey is single sex teams within coed clubs or organizations. In this structure there is often a hockey club that historically fielded male teams, but as girls' hockey participation grew in their area, the organization gained enough female players to form girls' teams. Girls-only teams usually play other girls teams in a girls' league. Occasionally there is one organization that is able to form a girls' team but they are the only one in a large region so they play within a boys' league. While girls-only teams allow for a stronger focus on girls' hockey and provide more support for the girls they are still faced with issues of recruitment, retention, and development.

Recruitment for these teams is facilitated by the fact that the organizations can advertise specifically for the girls' teams and target girls in their communities. Girls, and their parents, may be more willing to play on a girls-only team than to be one of the only girls on a primarily boys' team. However, the stereotypically male nature of the sport (Coakley, 2014) might still make recruitment more challenging for the girls teams. Organizations may have to work harder

and use different methods to recruit girls to the sport than they do to recruit boys. For this reason, national organizations including USA Hockey, Hockey Canada, and the International Ice Hockey Federation, have started organizing “Girls Hockey Weekends” and encouraging organizations to offer “Girls Try Hockey for Free” events in order to expose more girls to the sport without a financial commitment (International Ice Hockey Federation, 2015).

Retention of girls may also be challenging for these coed organization structures. Many of the organizations started out as boys’ hockey organizations and girls had to fight to gain access to the organizations. Girls have frequently been given less access to ice time, off-prime ice times, and inadequate support (e.g. to coaching, funding and uniforms) (Adams, 2006). Girls’ access to facility space has been problematic in many sports. Girls have often received less facility space and at less ideal times than boys’ teams (Adams, 2006). Girls will be given either very early or very late times; for games they may have weeknight instead of weekend times or they will have earlier games, which are less attractive to spectators than prime time game slots, which are often given to the boys teams (Adams, 2006). With hockey organizations having been traditionally organized for male teams, this is often the case. This creates an environment where girls are treated as less valued than boys because they are not given the same resources. If girls are not given the resources to develop, or if they feel like they are being treated as a secondary priority, the organization may have trouble retaining the players.

An additional structural challenge to girls’ hockey retention is the availability of these teams. While it is common for girls to seek out girls-only teams, especially beginning at the 14U level, the participation numbers often require these to be regional teams (USA Hockey, 2011b). As such, girls may have to drive long distances, sometimes more than an hour, just to be able to play on an all-girls team. The opponents are then even further away. This takes a large

commitment of time by the players, as well as their parents, to get to and from hockey as well as a large financial commitment, beyond the normal cost of participating due to transportation costs. As such, organizations must consider the extra time and commitment families must make in order for girls to play on regional teams. They need to factor this in to the time and location of practices in order to retain the girls who have further distances to travel.

In terms of development of female players, girls-only teams ease some of the issues faced by developing girls' within boys' teams as they are within a girls' hockey structure and playing according to girls' rules. However, organizations should realize that there will likely be girls that join their teams from boys' teams and will need to re-learn some aspects of the game to fit within the rules of the girls' game. However, most organizations are still set up to use development pathways and models created predominantly around male participation. These models may work for some girls, but there may be models that may help develop and retain girls' participation more effectively. Girls and women may experience some aspects of sport, such as community building and competition differently than men (Warner & Dixon, 2013). If teams and association structures are created in ways that have traditionally been used for boys' development, they may not be best for girls' development. There is a need to consider development models specifically designed to facilitate girls' participation and development.

Girls-only organizations. The final common type of association structure is the girls-only club or organization that participate in girls-only leagues. These organizations are often created to get away from the coed organizations with single-sex team structures. They can be formed by parents who see a disparity in the treatment of boys' and girls' hockey players within the same organization and want to create a better atmosphere for their daughters, in response to a difference in philosophy and ethos of the sport (Stevens & Adams, 2013), or to provide a

cohesive program dedicated to growing girls hockey (Robinson, 2014). The latter was exemplified by an organization within the Ontario Women's Hockey Association that valued a participatory ethos over a high performance ethos (Stevens & Adams, 2013). Parents and players may also split off from a coed organization to create a girls-only organization with the sole mission of serving the needs of female hockey players. Often these teams play in the same girls' only leagues as the single sex teams from coed organizations, but there are instances where these organizations spur the creation of entire leagues devoted to girls hockey and helping other organizations create girls'-centered teams and clubs (Adams & Stevens, 2007).

The Ontario Women's Hockey Association is an example of such an organization. It was started in the 1970's to serve the development of girls' hockey as a separate institution. It has since helped many regional groups start their own girls-only clubs, including creating guidelines for the development of those organizations (Adams & Stevens, 2007). Girls' specific organizations fight the hegemonically masculine norms of hockey to promote inclusion and serve the specific needs of girls' hockey. Girls-only leagues are only feasible in areas with high levels of girls' participation and require a critical mass of female players in a regional area. While the existence of girls-only organizations facilitates the inclusion of female players and works to support girls' sport development by centering on the needs of female players, they still face structural and cultural issues to recruitment, retention, and development.

In terms of player recruitment, girls-only organizations have the advantage of being able to say they are focused on girls' participation and focus their resources only on recruiting girls. However, they face the same cultural stigma that the sport is a traditionally male domain that the other two structures face. They still need to fight the stereotypes and stigmas around girls' participation in hockey in order to recruit players.

Player retention may be easier for girls-only associations due to the resource focus on girls' hockey. The girls in this organization type may also be more likely to see hockey as acceptable for them to play once they are in the organization. If they are surrounded by other girls playing and have the community of support for girls' hockey, they might not be faced with as much of the stereotypes of playing. At the very least, they would have other female teammates to help them deal with any stereotypes or issues that do come up.

Structural constraints, similar to those faced by girls' only teams within coed organizations, still hinder player retention and development. The organizations still must have access to adequate facility space, such as ice time. As these are generally newer organizations than local boys' organizations, some arenas will give scheduling preference to the teams and leagues that have been customers for a longer time. This means that even though there is an organization devoted to advocating for girls' hockey, they still may have to fight to obtain adequate, prime-time ice slots. However, unlike the coed organizations, girls-only organizations may have more political capital, or be more interested in utilizing their resources to fight for the girls' teams to get appropriate ice allocations. For a coed organization, that difference might be institutionalized and controlled by the organization's power structure.

Hegemonic Masculinity within Hockey

Underpinning all of the constraints to the recruitment, retention, and development of girls' hockey players is the concept of hegemonic masculinity. At the societal level, hockey has been constructed as a masculine typed sport (Coakley, 2014), the norms of which thus fit within cultural norms of masculinity. The norms of masculine hegemony dictate that male athletes are inherently superior to female athletes (Coakley, 2014). This leads to the issue of acceptability of girls on boys' teams as well as boys' teams getting preferential ice scheduling. If boys' skills are

more valued by society as well as their future success (ability to play in the NHL) then they are likely to be provided with more resources than their female counter parts. In this way the societal construction of masculinity positions girls' hockey as less important than boys' hockey.

Hegemonic masculinity also dictates the norms of behavior within the sport. Male hockey is constructed as part of the hegemonic center of sport, adhering to traditional masculinity which includes aggression, physicality and violence (Messner, 2002). As such, hockey embraces aspects of physicality such as body checking as a mainstay within boys hockey (Poniatowski & Hardin, 2012; Theberge, 2000; Weaving & Roberts, 2012). Because the cultural norms of femininity do not include aggression and physicality, girls must struggle to reconcile such a physical sport with their femininity, and participation can challenge the acceptability of their femininity (Coakley, 2014; Ezzell, 2009). The ban on checking in girls' hockey can also be viewed as a form of altering the sport in a way that makes female participation more femininely appropriate by banning one of the most physical aspects of the game. At the same time, it may be seen to lessen the legitimacy of the girls' game.

The traditional sport development models were based out of sport structures aimed at supporting male participation. This means that the models were created in a way that is beneficial for the mainstream male athlete and the hegemony of male dominance in sport. However, with more girls and women participating in sport at all levels there is a need to assess whether these models fit the needs of female athletes.

Hegemonic Masculinity and Legitimacy

Mainstream sport, including hockey, is constructed with the male version of the sport as the norm and the form of the sport that is viewed as the ideal form. In this way male hockey is often viewed as the legitimate form of the sport, and male hockey organizations as the legitimate

association structures. Organizational legitimacy is important to youth sport organizations in terms of being respected as a sport and gaining the trust and allegiance of players and their parents. Organizational legitimacy considers whether an organization and its actions are deemed to be appropriate, desirable, or proper within the local, socially constructed set of norms, values, and beliefs (Suchman, 1995). Stakeholders, which in the case of hockey can include players, parents, fans, or even youth organizations, judge whether hockey as a greater institution, or an individual organization is legitimate. A legitimate organization acts according to social norms and values (Suchman, 1995). It is important for the development of new or growing sports to be perceived as legitimate in order to facilitate their continued development. Athletes or their parents will be less likely to participate if they do not perceive the sport or sport organization to be legitimate or normatively acceptable for their population.

For hockey, those norms, values, and beliefs come from the social world of masculine, aggressive sport. Men's hockey fits Messner's (2002) definition of the masculine center of sport where the money, media, fame, and attention falls to the male athletes and mainstream media, television, and fans all follow the men's professional league. In terms of hockey, the popular form of the sport that most of society and most stakeholders are aware of, is the male professional model seen within the National Hockey League (NHL). This model of the sport regularly includes high levels of violence, which is an aspect of the masculine center of the sport that is used to maintain dominance through fighting and body checking on the ice. It is a high paced game that uses physically aggressive actions that are considered a mainstay in the game (Poniatowski & Hardin, 2012; Poniatowski, 2011; Theberge, 2000). As this is the legitimized version of the sport, women's hockey as an institution is judged on the standards set by men's hockey.

Perceptions of legitimacy impact the allocation of resources. If those involved with the sport do not view an aspect of the sport as legitimate, resources may not be allocated. For instance, if an arena or a club does not view women's hockey as legitimate, or as legitimate as men's hockey, then may not consider it an issue to give girls' programs less ice time or inferior time slots. Similarly, if those involved in the administration of a coed organization do not view girls' hockey as legitimate, they may not give the girls' teams the same resources as are provided to boys' teams. In terms of recruiting, retaining, and developing girls' hockey players, it is important to understand how the legitimacy of the sport is perceived.

Women's hockey faces several threats to legitimacy. The first threat relates directly to the masculine hegemony of sport. The fact that women's hockey is played by women means that it may not be valued as highly. Women have traditionally been viewed as less skilled at sports in general, and as lesser athletes (Coakley, 2014). This translates into their sports being viewed as lesser than men's sports. Due to physical differences, women's teams can rarely compete on a level field with men's professional teams, particularly with respect to power and performance sports such as hockey. This allows mainstream sport culture to deem women's sport as inferior to men's sport. Women's sports thus struggle to be taken seriously by fans, media, and male players (Coakley, 2014). Consequently, stakeholders may not view women's hockey as a completely legitimate form of the sport.

Women's hockey as an institution also faces a threat to its legitimacy due to the body checking rule. If men's hockey, with checking included, is perceived as the legitimate form of the sport then perceiving women's hockey as legitimate may be problematic due to the ban on checking at all levels. The checking ban in women's hockey signals to the media, fans, and players that the women's game is inferior or less legitimate because it does not include a key

aspect of the game. There is reason to believe that many people hold checking as an important facet of the game in determining the legitimacy of the sport. The importance of checking in the game of hockey was exemplified when USA Hockey and Hockey Canada raised the age at which body checking became legal in boys hockey from Pee wee (12U) to Bantam (14U) in the 2011-2012 season (USA Hockey, 2011c). This change in age was in response to youth development research showing that players were not prepared to adequately learn and to safely execute and receive body checks. Research on pilot leagues showed a dramatic drop in injury rates at the Pee wee level with this rule change (USA Hockey, 2011c). It was supported by top administrators as well as by current and former professional hockey players. However, some still believed that increasing the age at which checking is introduced would alter the game, make it softer, or put players behind in development for the elite levels (Milbury, 2015). Checking is an aspect of the construction of masculinity within hockey and a legitimating factor for organizations within the sport. Delaying checking by one age group raised questions regarding the legitimacy of the sport at the Pee wee age level. Thus, it is likely that the lack of checking at any level of women's hockey leads some stakeholders to perceive women's hockey as lacking legitimacy as an institution. The hegemonic masculinity of sport culture and the ban on checking in women's hockey challenge the legitimacy of women's hockey as an institution. However, within the institution of women's hockey, these threats, as well as others, may impact the legitimacy of individual programs differently, depending on the unique structures and stakeholders.

Legitimacy of Individual Organizations

The delivery of girls' hockey within the three different gendered association structures may differentially impact perceptions of legitimacy for individual hockey organizations. Within boys' teams, even with a few girls on the team, legitimacy is likely to be judged based on the

male hockey model. Teams and organizations will be judged against other boy's teams and organizations, with success measured based on male participation and retention. Perceptions of legitimacy may be based on player retention and development, participation, resources provided to boys' teams and players' ability to move through the standard development progressions. Girls' hockey within this association structure is likely to be legitimized using these same metrics. For girls' hockey to be seen as legitimate they will have to keep up with the boys and be able to successfully transition through the same development model as the boys. Failure to do so might be evidence that girls' hockey is not as legitimate as boys' hockey.

For a coed organization with single sex teams, organizational legitimacy of girls' hockey can be judged against the legitimacy of boys' programs. However, it can also be judged against other girls' programs within the structure of women's hockey. Factors that could influence the perceptions of legitimacy include equitable allocation of ice time, coaches and other resources, and administrative support. Participation levels, retention, and development of players may also be factored into perceptions of legitimacy. If the players are not adequately progressing through development systems and are either leaving the sport or not improving, the organization may not be viewed as legitimate, relating to some of the structural provisions within the organization in support of girls' hockey.

Girls-only organizations are more likely to be judged within the structure of women's hockey. While they may be assessed by some within the greater context of hockey and held to male standards, their separation from the male structures of hockey is likely to allow judgements of legitimacy to be primarily made in accordance to their actions within the women's hockey institution. They may be judged based on their ability to recruit players to this organization

structure, their ability to get sufficient ice and facility time, and their players' progression through the girls' hockey system and development model.

These different gendered association structures existing to support girls' hockey participation could impact perceptions of legitimacy. Those involved in girls-only structures may have different perceptions of the legitimacy of girls' hockey than those participating in either a coed club or on a primarily boys' team. Participants may experience the hegemonically masculine norms of sport differently in these situations as they may face some of the social norms associated with masculine typed sport at different levels. As such, it is important to examine how girls experience the different association structures that support their participation and how these structures may influence perceptions of sport legitimacy. While men's hockey may be the cultural center of the sport, there are a growing number of girls' hockey organizations and several women's professional hockey leagues. As such it is also important to consider the perceptions of legitimacy of the different association structures within the institution of women's hockey itself. There is a need to better understand the development of legitimacy both of women's hockey as an institution, as well as the programs that operate to support girls' hockey participation. By understanding the aspects of an organizing that are important to the perceptions of legitimacy of women's hockey, recommendations can be made to best support the continued growth of girls' hockey and to support girls in the sport within each type of association structure. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to understand the impact of association structure type on perceptions of organizational legitimacy. This study also seeks to understand the experiences of the participants in these structures, as those experiences would be expected to shape their perceptions of legitimacy. The study will address the following research questions:

RQ1: Does structure affect players' perceptions of legitimacy?

RQ1a: If so, which aspects of legitimacy are affected by structure?

RQ1b: In what ways does structure affect legitimacy?

RQ2: Does structure affect players' experience of hockey?

RQ2a: If so, which aspects of experience are affected by structure?

RQ2b: In what ways does structure affect experience?

RQ3: How are experiences related to dimensions of legitimacy?

RQ4: What aspects of the organization and playing experience are important to players' perceptions of women's hockey as legitimate?

RQ5: What is important to the players in terms of having a positive playing experience and a desire for continued participation?

RQ6: What issues do the players perceive as problematic to their participation, and how would they solve these issues?

RQ7: What do administrators view as important to the legitimacy of their organization and why?

RQ8: What issues do administrators perceive as being present for girls' participation in their organization and how would they ideally solve these issues?

Literature Review

The purpose of this study was to consider stakeholders' perceptions of the organizational legitimacy of girls' hockey. This section is a review of the relevant literature regarding organizational legitimacy. It will address the importance of legitimacy to organization, the difference between strategic and institutional legitimacy, Suchman's construct of legitimacy, which is the definition of legitimacy used in this paper, his three types of legitimacy, and the intersection of legitimacy and playing experience.

Importance of Legitimacy to Organizations

Organizations seek to be perceived as legitimate by those in their community. Legitimacy lends credibility to the organization. An organization that is viewed as legitimate has an easier time recruiting and retaining participants. Legitimacy enhances the perceptions of stability and clarity of an organization because constituents are more likely pay attention to organizations that appear appropriate and proper. Thus, the organization is able to persist in a stable manner (Suchman, 1995). This in return allows stakeholders to perceive the organization as desirable and appropriate within the social context. It is important for sport organizations to be viewed as legitimate and provide a stable, credible, and valuable service for its participants in order to gain the trust of their community and stakeholders. If it does not do this, participants may find other organizations that they perceive as more legitimate and leave the organization. There has been some consideration in the context of sport of how organizations gain legitimacy.

Organizational legitimacy has been applied to sport organizations primarily in order to consider the legitimizing nature of collaborations (Babiak, 2007; Hayhurst & Frisby, 2010; Lock, Filo, Kunkel, & Skinner, 2013; Macris & Sam, 2014; Sam, 2011). Many sport organizations are linked to central governing bodies, as these governing bodies are generally organizing the

structure of sport in their country. As such, they are well established, have structure, and at times have funding for other sport organizations (Macris & Sam, 2014). Collaborating with governing bodies can help a sport organization gain legitimacy, particularly if the sport organization is in need of funding or structural supports. However, this relationship can also be limiting to the sport organization if it perceives the governing organization's regulations to be too stringent or to provide too little support in return for their membership (Macris & Sam, 2014).

At times, the perceptions of sport organization legitimacy can be impacted by the differing values of the sport organizations. Sport development focuses both on the elite and mass participation sport. However, these two streams of sport have different needs and values. If the two collaborating organizations have different foci, the collaboration can cause tension. This tension can lead to disparate interpretations of legitimacy and the organizations may seek different legitimizing factors and actions because of their disparate goals (Sam, 2011).

Organizational legitimacy has also been considered in the context of community sport organizations (CSO). Important factors influence the perceived legitimacy of CSO's are shared community values, treatment of local players, and organizational practices (Lock et al., 2013). In addition, individual perceptions of organizational image impact an individual's perception of whether or not an organization is legitimate in terms of community values, treatment of players and organizational practices. The more positively individuals' perceive the organization overall, the more likely they are to see the actions as legitimate (Lock et al., 2013). Measuring individuals' perceptions of organizational legitimacy is important in understanding which factors are important to stakeholders of community sport organizations.

While most of the sport literature on organization legitimacy has been theoretical in nature, Lock, Filo, Kunkel, & Skinner (2015) sought to create a framework to capture

constituents perceptions of a sport organization's legitimacy. They examined an Australian Football Club in order to understand the perceptions of the stakeholders and the differences between the different stakeholders involved in the club. They found that role in community, staff and organizational behavior, valuing community, development approach, local players, and tailing procedures were all important factors in perceptions of organizational legitimacy. However, due to the socially constructed nature of legitimacy, the authors found that "constituents do not evaluate the actions of sport organizations homogeneously. Rather, constituents judge the organizations that they observe based on unique experiences, and specific contextual understanding" (Lock et al., 2015, p. 374).

Despite the frequent application of legitimacy frameworks to sport organization research (e.g., Babiak, 2007; Hayhurst & Frisby, 2010; Lock et al., 2013, 2015; Macris & Sam, 2014; Sam, 2011), Lock et al.'s (2015) article creating a framework to assess perceptions of legitimacy was the first to attempt to rigorously apply and assess the legitimacy framework to sport organizations. Most of the literature has either vaguely referenced organizational desires for legitimacy or discussed theoretical applications of legitimacy. The literature has primarily considered legitimacy broadly and has not critically examined organizational legitimacy using the detailed frameworks presented by Suchman (1995) or Bitektine (2011). This holds true for research outside of sport as well (Deephouse & Carter, 2005; Deephouse, 1996; Ruef & Scott, 1998).

The previous studies outside of sport that have measured legitimacy come from highly regulated sectors with easily measurable outcomes such as banking and healthcare (Deephouse & Carter, 2005; Deephouse, 1996; Ruef & Scott, 1998). These studies have used measures such as financial reputation, media reports, asset quality, organization accreditation, longevity of

institution, and institutional memberships to assess organizational legitimacy. However, these exclude the social aspects of legitimacy which are an important aspects of the organizational legitimacy framework. By excluding the social context and stakeholder perceptions of legitimacy, these studies only measure one aspect of legitimacy. This also creates issues of measurement validity as they are not measuring the entirety of the framework.

Organizational Legitimacy

Organizations seek legitimacy from their constituents as it enhances continuity, credibility, and comprehensibility of organizations. Organizational legitimacy is gained when the actions of an organization meet the expectations or needs of their constituents or stakeholders (Bitektine, 2011). Suchman (1995) defines legitimacy as “a generalized perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs, and definitions” (p. 574). Organizations often mimic the actions of organizations that are already perceived as legitimate as a way to achieve legitimacy. Actions that are already accepted as legitimate are more likely to be viewed as adhering to the locally accepted norms, values or beliefs. Legitimacy allows organizations to gain the support of constituents and necessary resources. If an organization lacks legitimacy, potential constituents may choose not to work with them because they will not be viewed as reliable organizations or organizations providing the appropriate services desired by the stakeholders. In sport, this could manifest in the form of parents not enrolling their child with an organization that they do not perceive as being legitimate. Thus, obtaining legitimacy is very important for organizations. However, legitimacy is based upon the perceptions of stakeholders or constituents invested in the organization.

Constituents or stakeholders are considered to be those who have a vested interest in the organization. It is the perceptions of different stakeholder groups that judge the legitimacy of an institution or organization. Within sport, a stakeholder can take many forms including players, parents, coaches, other teams, fans, sponsors and the media.

Strategic and Institutional Legitimacy

There are two main traditions that divide the literature on legitimacy: strategic legitimacy and institutional legitimacy (Suchman, 1995). These two traditions are primarily a matter of perspective with strategic theorists focusing on the views of managers looking out from the organization and institutional theorists focusing on the views of society looking into the organization. Strategic legitimacy focuses on the individual organization and its attempts at gaining legitimacy, while institutional legitimacy is more focused on the structure and values of entire sectors, or fields. However, Suchman (1995) calls for an integration of both perspectives in order to take into account the ways in which legitimacy is a manipulable resource as well as a normative belief system.

Strategic legitimacy takes a managerial perspective to analyze an organization's use of symbols to gain societal support (Suchman, 1995). Managers within this tradition construct legitimacy as an operational resource that organizations obtain from their environment and use in the pursuit of their goals. Meanwhile, institutional legitimacy asserts legitimacy as a set of constitutive beliefs that are co-created between institutions and organizations. In this way, institutional legitimacy examines the ways in which dynamics that span across an entire sector create cultural pressures that surpass the control of a single organization. The overarching societal beliefs and values influence how an individual organization functions and how they gain legitimacy.

Both strategic and institutional legitimacy are useful in considering girls' hockey. In terms of strategic legitimacy, organizations may seek to use symbols such as former athletes from their organizations who have played either collegiate or international hockey to display their legitimacy. It is an operational resource to be gained and used. Organizations may seek to gain strategic legitimacy by producing elite players who move on to the next level of hockey, or by providing resources such as high level coaching and sufficient ice time in the prime time slots. These aspects of the organization can then be leveraged to gain support and reach their organizational goals. Institutional legitimacy is based on cultural definitions and the co-creation of beliefs between organizations and institutions. This pertains more to the institution of hockey and of women's hockey and how culture defines hockey as legitimate. Therefore, it is important to consider which aspects of girls' hockey are required for the institution to be considered legitimate. For instance, if checking is culturally required to be considered a legitimate form of hockey, then the institution of girls' hockey and the organizations with girls-only teams will struggle to be perceived by those in the hockey community as legitimate.

While organizations and institutions are at times used interchangeably, this project makes a distinction between the two, based on sociological definitions. Organizations have been defined as "technical instruments, designed as means to definite goals" (Selznick, 1957, p. 21-22). Organizations are expendable and are judged by their function. Social institutions are macro level, normative systems (Martin, 2004; Selznick, 1957). Institutions persist across space and time. They are characteristic of groups and contain practices that are repeated by group members. Institutions have social positions and relations to other institutions which are differentiated by expectations, norms and procedures and they are permeated by and organized in congruence with power. Group members internalize identities based on their membership within institutions.

Institutions are embodied in that they consist of practices and interactions of real people who talk and act (Martin, 2004).

In terms of this study, “institution” will be used to refer to the overall institution of hockey and of women’s hockey. These are social entities that have persisted across many years and across space. Stakeholders (e.g. players, fans, supporters, and administrators) are embodied actors within the intuitions of hockey and women’s hockey and the interactions of these people are dictated by the expectations and norms of the institution. These norms and expectations include hegemonic masculinity and norms of aggressive sport in the case of the institution of hockey.

“Organizations” will refer to the physical organizations that provide playing opportunities to youth hockey players. They are the associations that provide hockey teams for players nationwide. Youth hockey associations fit Selznick's (1957) definition in that they are expendable. If the organization is not providing the appropriate resources, it may cease to exist as players move to other associations. Youth hockey associations have the definite goal of providing opportunities for youth hockey players and must recruit, retain, and develop these players. For the purpose of this study, “organizations” will refer to the youth hockey associations that provide teams and opportunities for hockey participation. These organizations all operate, to some extent, within the institution of hockey and possibly of women’s’ hockey.

Legitimacy as Socially Constructed

Organizational legitimacy is socially constructed (Bitektine, 2011; Suchman, 1995). Legitimacy reflects the connections between the actions of the legitimated organizations and the shared values and beliefs to the community of stakeholders judging the organization. Due to this, legitimacy relies on the views of a collective group (Suchman, 1995). Legitimacy is based on

norms and beliefs of the social group which exists around the organization or institution that is being legitimated. It is based on the collective belief of the stakeholders or social group rather than the beliefs of one individual that judges the legitimacy of an organization. When stakeholders are judging the legitimacy of an organization, it is based on a set of constitutive beliefs and cultural definitions of the social group regarding how an organization should be built and run and thus how it should be understood and evaluated (Bitektine, 2011; Suchman, 1995). The subculture around an organization or institution determines what is required to legitimate the institution or organization based on their local beliefs, norms, and views.

Due to the socially constructed nature of legitimacy, the relative power of different stakeholder groups is important (Lister, 2003). If different stakeholder groups place importance on different aspects of an organization in judging legitimacy, the organization may consider the power of the groups in determining how to act in order to gain legitimacy from the stakeholders that they see as more powerful or important to them. As such, it is important to consider how legitimacy relates to societal constructs of power, hegemony, and dominant discourses.

Organizations that carry more power, or are part of the dominant discourse, are more likely to be viewed as legitimate and hold more influence in legitimizing other organizations with whom they are associated (Lister, 2003). Due to disparate levels of power held by stakeholder groups, organizations seeking legitimacy may value their relationships with groups with more power and may attempt to mimic the hegemonic constructs in order to be viewed as legitimate. The hegemonic masculinity present in mainstream sport, often creates a power differential in the influence given to male sports and male stakeholders within sport compared to female sports and female stakeholders (Coakley, 2014; Messner, 1988). Understanding this power differential and its impact on perceptions of legitimacy supports the need to use a feminist

frame in analyzing girls' hockey, as feminist research attempts to question, analyze, and disrupt hegemonic power structures (Hesse-Biber, 2014). In mainstream sport culture, the men's game is often viewed as the legitimate form of sport (Coakley, 2014; Messner, 2002) by which all others are judged. Feminist research often seeks to disrupt the hegemonic, masculine narrative by focusing on the voices of women and other marginalized populations (Hesse-Biber, 2014). A feminist frame allows a focus on how girls' and women judge the legitimacy of women's hockey as well as how other key stakeholder groups involved in the institution of women's hockey judge the game. It can disrupt the hegemonic narrative of masculine dominance in sport by considering women's hockey as an institution separate from men's hockey, which may be legitimated on its own merits rather than in comparison to men's hockey.

It is particularly important to consider the influence of power differentials of stakeholder groups and different constructions of what is important to legitimizing hockey organizations due to the different gendered association structures of girls' hockey participation. Different gendered association structures may place higher value, or perceive the power of stakeholder groups, differently. This difference in perceptions of power may influence actions related to organizational legitimacy. Predominantly boys' teams may identify different stakeholder groups, such as scouts for professional or junior hockey scouts, that are not present within the institution of girls' hockey. They may judge their legitimacy based against different organizations, then do coed groups with single sex teams, or girls-only organizations. For instance, a primarily boys' organization will likely seek legitimization within the mainstream male model of the sport and the hegemonic, masculine norms of sport will likely be important to a primarily boys' team. A girls-only organization may seek legitimacy within the mainstream institution of hockey, however; the girls-only organization may also be willing, or even prefer, to be legitimized solely

within the institution of women's hockey and actively seek to be judged by stakeholders within an alternate model of legitimacy.

Suchman's Legitimacy Framework

This study will use Suchman's (1995) construction of organizational legitimacy. Organizational legitimacy is the perception that the actions of an organization or institution are proper and appropriate within the norms, values and beliefs that have been socially constructed by the stakeholder groups judging the organization. According to Suchman (1995), there are three types of organizational legitimacy, pragmatic, moral, and cognitive. Within each of these types, organizational legitimacy is judged based on different actions or on different standards. As such, an organization can be perceived as having one type of legitimacy without having the two other types of legitimacy. For instance, an organization may be perceived as having pragmatic legitimacy without being perceived as having legitimacy based on the moral or cognitive standards. Pragmatic legitimacy is judged based on whether a stakeholder group perceives the organization to be responsive to their broader interests, is willing to relinquish some authority to the constituents, or is believed to act according to the best interests of the stakeholders (Suchman, 1995). Moral legitimacy is based on whether the actions of the organization are perceived as the right thing to do by the stakeholder group. Finally, cognitive legitimacy is determined by whether the values and views of the organization match with those of the stakeholders both within a larger social belief system as well as with the experienced reality of the stakeholders. Cognitive legitimacy can also be gained if the activities of the organization are so ingrained within social norms that alternatives would be unthinkable (Suchman, 1995).

Suchman's (1995) framework of legitimacy defines multiple types of legitimacy and ways of achieving organizational legitimacy. The three gendered association structures that

support girls' participation in hockey may be able to attain different aspects of legitimacy more easily than others. Similarly, organizations may be seeking to be perceived as legitimate within different institutions, such as within the greater institution of hockey versus the institution of women's hockey specifically. As such, the cultural and social contexts in which the organization exists, and is trying to gain legitimacy within, is of key importance. Suchman's (1995) definition of legitimacy stresses the social context of legitimacy and the concept that it is based within local norms, values, and beliefs. This social aspect of legitimacy is important in this study due to the different contexts of the organizations supporting girl's hockey and the growing and changing nature of the sport. It also works well within a feminist framework that centers the voices of women and seeks to understand the views of women within the context (Hesse-Biber, 2014). Perceptions of legitimacy may change based on the organizational structure and may also be different for female versus male hockey participants. Therefore, it is important to understand the context and who is constructing the norms and values on which legitimacy is being judged.

Stakeholders. Organizational legitimacy is determined based on the perceptions of stakeholders. The perceptions and ideas of how an organization should act, are based off of the norms, values, and beliefs of the local community (Bitektine, 2011; Suchman, 1995). The norms and values of the community could be as local of a community as a neighborhood or city, or as broad as the community involved in hockey in the United States. There are often multiple different stakeholder groups who judge the legitimacy of each organization or institution. Based on the needs, desires, and norms of each stakeholder group, each group may judge legitimacy on different standards and thus may have varying perceptions of legitimacy (Bitektine, 2011; Lister, 2003; Suchman, 1995). In considering what actions and behaviors to take, an organization may place more value on the perceptions and desires of certain stakeholder groups than others based

on the power or value of that stakeholder group to the organization (Lister, 2003). In considering the stakeholders in youth hockey organizations, and the institution of hockey, the different groups could include players, parents, coaches, referees, organization administrators, fans, and the media.

Three Types of Legitimacy

Pragmatic legitimacy. Pragmatic legitimacy relies on the most immediate stakeholders and considers the self-interest of the organizations (Suchman, 1995). It is often the most immediate audiences who scrutinize the organizational behaviors in order to determine the practical consequences of the organizations actions. There are three kinds of pragmatic legitimacy: exchange, influence, and dispositional (Suchman, 1995). Exchange legitimacy considers whether there is support for a specific organizational policy based on the expected value of that policy for the audience. Influence legitimacy considers whether constituents of an organization believe that the organization is responsive to their broader interests. This type of legitimacy often occurs when an organization includes constituents into its policy-making structures (Suchman, 1995). An organization's willingness to relinquish some aspects of authority to their constituents is an indicator of the organization's commitment to the constituents' well-being. The third level of pragmatic legitimacy is dispositional legitimacy. This type of legitimacy is dependent on whether an organization is judged to have the best interests or shared values of its audience and/or if they are perceived as trustworthy, decent, honest, and wise (Suchman, 1995).

Application. In terms of pragmatic legitimacy, the different youth hockey organizations may be perceived as being more or less supportive of girls' hockey which could influence perceptions of legitimacy both as an organization and for the institution of girls' hockey by

players. The primary stakeholders judging the pragmatic legitimacy of youth hockey organizations are participants. The gendered organizational structure could impact whether participants perceive the organization as valuing the sport of girls' hockey, if it is willing to give authority to those invested in girls' hockey, or if the organization is perceived as honestly having the best interest of all the organization participants at heart. For instance, having a girls' hockey director within the organization, could signify a relinquishing of authority to people with a vested interest in the sport. This would lend the organization's influence legitimacy. Similarly, providing opportunities for girls to try the sport, to attend camps, or to provide girls with adequate locker-room facilities, could lend dispositional legitimacy to an organization as it could be perceived as having the best interest of all the players at heart.

Moral legitimacy. Moral legitimacy indicates "a positive normative evaluation of the organization and its activities" (Suchman, 1995, p. 579). Judgments of moral legitimacy are based on whether the activity is perceived as the right thing to do. There are four types of moral legitimacy: consequential, procedural, structural/categorical, and personal (Suchman, 1995). For consequential legitimacy, an organization is judged by what they accomplish. However, some organizational outputs are hard to measure, and all must be socially defined in order to be empirically measured. This makes consequential legitimacy challenging to ascertain in certain organizations. Procedural legitimacy is useful in situations where clear outcome measures do not exist but where sound practices can demonstrate that an organization is attempting to achieve valued ends in good faith (Suchman, 1995). These organizations gain moral legitimacy through utilizing socially accepted procedures and techniques in their efforts to produce socially valued consequences. Sport organizations could be a site where procedural legitimacy is more easily assessed than consequential legitimacy as the outcomes of a sport organization are not easily

quantified and measured. For structural/categorical legitimacy the audience views an organization as valuable based on structural characteristics that place it within categories that are viewed as morally favorable (Suchman, 1995). Organizations must be viewed as acting on purposes that are perceived to be socially proper. The focus is on organizational features that occur within entire systems of activity. This form of legitimacy considers an overall view that an organization is the correct organization for the job or activity that is linked to organizational identity more so than to organizational competence. Finally, personal legitimacy is based on the charisma of the leaders of an organization. This type of legitimacy is transitory and idiosyncratic as it is based on the current leader rather than the organization itself (Suchman, 1995).

Application. In terms of moral legitimacy, the normative behaviors of an organization and its activities may vary depending on its structure. Stakeholders for moral legitimacy of organizations would primarily be players and organization administrators. For instance, different gendered organization structures may differ in player retention both in comparison to boys' and girls' within their own organization as well as across gendered organization structures. This could influence perceptions of consequential legitimacy. In terms of procedural legitimacy, gendered organization structures may provide different resources for participants, such as adequate locker-room facilities, or advice regarding what types of organizations would provide the best support of players as they advance in skill level, which could influence their perceptions of the organization's legitimacy. The structure may also influence how willing the organization is to provide new structural resources such as a girls' hockey director or adding a girls' team if there are more girls interested in participating than other types. This could influence perceptions of structural legitimacy.

Cognitive legitimacy. Cognitive legitimacy considers cognition rather than interest or evaluation as pragmatic and moral legitimacy do. There are two variants of cognitive legitimacy, comprehensibility, and taken-for-grantedness. “Theorists who focus on the role of comprehensibility in legitimation generally portray the social world as a chaotic cognitive environment, in which participants must struggle to arrange their experience’s into coherent, understandable accounts” (Suchman, 1995, p. 582). In order to gain legitimacy from this perspective there must be cultural models that provide plausible explanations for an organization and its activities. Not all explanations for an organization are equally viable. To have legitimacy, an explanation of the organization must mesh with both the larger social belief systems as well as with the experienced reality of the daily life of the organization’s audience. For legitimacy based in taken-for-grantedness, other options are unimaginable (Suchman, 1995). In this setting the activities of an organization are so ingrained within social norms that alternatives, or the removal of an aspect of the social structure, would be unthinkable. As such, if alternatives are unthinkable, challenges to this structure are impossible. However, this level of legitimacy is not attainable for most organizations (Suchman, 1995).

Application. When considering cognitive legitimacy in the context of youth hockey the gendered organization structure may impact how the participants are able to make sense of the social world they are part of and how well their lived realities of inclusion mesh with the espoused organization’s beliefs of inclusion practices. Stakeholders for cognitive legitimacy would be the players. For instance, do organizations adequately inform participants about what the development pathways available to them are and the benefits and consequences of the different pathways? If different structures disparately inform participants about the social world they are a part of, that could influence the participants’ perceptions of comprehensibility

legitimacy of the organization. The issue at play within taken-for-granted legitimacy in terms of youth hockey is regarding the ban on checking in girls' hockey. Taken-for-granted legitimacy focuses on legitimacy of the institution of hockey and women's hockey instead of the legitimacy of the organizations. Stakeholders would include players, organization administrators and others involved with the sport. Whether participants view the rule as a taken-for-granted aspect of the legitimate form of hockey could influence their perception of legitimacy of the sport of girls' hockey in the absence checking.

Legitimacy and Playing Experience

Perceptions of legitimacy are based off of the congruence between the actions of an organization or institution and the values, beliefs, norms, and experiences of the stakeholders (Suchman, 1995). The experience of the players, both within their specific organizations as well as within the greater institution of hockey or women's hockey, may significantly impact their perceptions of legitimacy. For example, an athlete who has played for an organization that is very inclusive and supportive of girls in hockey may perceive both her organization and the institution of women's hockey as more legitimate than a player that plays for an organization that gives girls inferior ice time and insufficient locker room space compared to the boys. As such it is important to consider the experience of the players within the sport in understanding their perceptions of legitimacy.

Legitimacy of hockey. In considering the legitimacy of hockey, both mainstream, male dominated hockey as well as women's hockey, as a separate institution are important. The perceptions of other people of an individual's participation in sport may impact the individuals' experience within in sport. This is particularly true for those who may be stigmatized or stereotyped for their participation in sport, such as girls who participate in traditionally male

dominated sports or boys who participate in traditionally female dominated sports (Coakley, 2014; Schmalz & Kerstetter, 2006). If those around the player, including family, friends, and even the media present hockey as a boys' sport that is unwelcoming or unfit for girls to participate in, then those girls may not perceive the sport as a welcoming place for them. This could harm the retention of female athletes in the sport. Community support and having friends and a social life within sport helps retain players, particularly for female sport participants (Cronan & Scott, 2008; J. Fraser-Thomas et al., 2008; Warner & Dixon, 2013). It could also impact the players' perceptions of legitimacy of the institution of women's hockey. If all those around them construct hockey as a masculine domain, players may perceive the hegemonically masculine nature of mainstream hockey as taken-for-granted, which impacts perceptions of cognitive legitimacy (Suchman, 1995). Due to this it is necessary to assess how the participants experience support from those around them for participating in hockey as well as assess the stigma consciousness of youth hockey players. These aspects of their experience in hockey could influence their perceptions of legitimacy of the sport.

It is also important to take into account the differences between girls' hockey and boys' hockey and how that might impact players' experiences and their perceptions of the legitimacy of the institution of hockey and women's hockey. In this, the main difference is the checking rule. The legality of checking may disparately impact the playing experience of girls in hockey depending on the gendered structure in which they participate. How players perceive the role of checking in the sport of hockey – whether or not it is an integral or taken-for-granted part of sport or not – may impact how a player perceives the cognitive legitimacy of the institution of women's hockey in comparison to the institution of men's hockey. As such, it is important to understand the players' experiences with checking and their views on the inclusion of checking

in both girls' and boys' hockey and how this may impact their perceptions of the legitimacy of the sport as an institution.

Legitimacy of the organization. The players' perceptions of the legitimacy of the organization may differ based on their experiences playing in the organization. Factors that could impact this are the players' experience of sense of community and inclusion within the subculture. Creating community and feeling like a part of a greater community is a key aspect to team sports and serve to help retain youth participation (Côté, 2002). Sense of community has been defined as characteristics of a community that leads members to perceive a sense of social support and belonging from the group they are part of (Sarason, 1974; Warner, Kerwin, & Walker, 2013). Factors that influence feelings of sense of community in sport include administrative consideration, common interest, competition, equity of administrative decisions, leadership opportunities, and social spaces (Warner, Dixon, & Chalip, 2012; Warner et al., 2013). Administrative consideration, equity of decisions, and leadership opportunities all could impact pragmatic legitimacy which is concerned with the policies of an organization and the influence the stakeholders have on the organization (Suchman, 1995). As such, if female players do not perceive that they are included as part of the community in terms of the administration's decision making and consideration, they may not feel a sense of community. This may interfere with players' perceptions of the organization as legitimate. If players don't feel included and valued within the community, they are unlikely to feel good about the organization.

Another aspect of inclusion that could impact players' perceptions of organizational legitimacy is subcultural fit. Socialization into a subculture of a sport can play a large role in forming the players' identity within their sport (Donnelly & Young, 1988; Green & Chalip, 1998). Through initiation into the subculture, participants learn from others, and help to co-

construct with other members, the meanings, values, and knowledge around the sport and their participation (Green & Chalip, 1998; Light, 2006). As they become more embedded in the subculture, they assume the attitudes, values, and norms shared within the sport. Since perceptions of legitimacy rely on the actions of an organization matching with the norms values and beliefs of participating community (Suchman, 1995), participants' fit and agreement with the subculture are important aspects of their perceptions of legitimacy.

Finding community within sport and recreational activity as well as fitting into the subculture have frequently been found to impact women's participation in sport and leisure activities (Green & Chalip, 1998; Light, 2006; Warner et al., 2012, 2013). Agreement with the beliefs and values of the stakeholders and the actions of the organization, along with the perception that the organization has the best interest of, and lends authority to, the stakeholders, are important aspects of perceived legitimacy. As such, it is important to consider the subcultural fit and sense of community of the players within their organizations.

Girls' hockey is a growing sport. The multiple types of association structures present in supporting girls' hockey mean that organizational legitimacy may be achieved in different ways by each of the different structures. It is important to understand how the organizations seek legitimacy and what the various stakeholder groups seek in terms of viewing an organization as legitimate. This may be different based on which association structure the stakeholder is considering. For instance, a player may view the actions of a primarily boys' organization differently than those of a girls-only organization and thus judge organizational legitimacy differently. It is also important to understand what aspects of the institutions of hockey and women's hockey are perceived by stakeholders as critical aspects of legitimacy. Due to this, it is important to be able to measure stakeholders' perceptions of legitimacy and to be able to

compare the factors and perceptions of legitimacy across structure types. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to understand impact of association structure type on perceptions of organizational legitimacy and playing experience. This study also seeks to understand the experiences of the participants in these structures, as those experiences would be expected to shape their perceptions of legitimacy.

Method

In order to address the purpose of this study and all of the research questions, this project was composed of two studies. This section will discuss the mixed methods approach used to conduct and combine the two studies. Subsequently, the data collection methods, participants, and analyses will be presented, first for study one and then for study two. Finally, there will be a discussion of how the two studies are used to inform one another.

This project used additional coverage mixed method design with qualitative interviews and a quantitative survey to address the research questions across two studies. Additional coverage allows different methods to serve different purposes and allows a research project to cover a larger range of research goals than a single method (Morgan, 2014). According to Morgan (2014), “the defining feature of additional coverage is a *division of labor* that assigns each method to a separate purpose that matches the strength of that particular method” (p. 73). Additional coverage promotes the combining of methods to add depth and breadth to a study (Fielding & Fielding, 1986; Morgan, 2014).

Mixed method research is appropriate for this study as mixed method studies are particularly useful in pragmatic and practice-oriented research (Greene, 2008; Hesse-Biber, 2014; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2009; Morgan, 2014; Small, 2011). The pragmatic method “implies that we should ‘consider what effects, that might conceivably have practical bearings, we conceive the object of our conception to have’” (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2009, p. 17). The pragmatic approach allows researchers to link purposes and procedures at every step and to choose the appropriate procedures to match the purpose. In terms of this study, pragmatic mixed methods allow for the perceptions of organizational legitimacy to be measured while understanding how players within different gendered structures perceive legitimacy.

Subsequently, it allows for a more in-depth analysis of which aspects of the organization the players value when judging legitimacy, and which aspects of their experience as players affect their overall experience and participation in the sport. Using survey research along with in-depth interviews allows for more generalizable assertions to be made regarding perceptions of legitimacy of girls' hockey as well as deeper understandings and examples of the lived experiences of players in the different gendered contexts.

Pragmatic mixed methods research can be particularly useful in approaching the social justice goals of feminist scholarship as the breadth and depth of knowledge gained from mixed methods approaches can provide the necessary types of data to argue for social action and social justice-based policy change. "Mixed methods studies can generate the knowledge feminist researchers need to pursue social justice goals for women and other oppressed groups. For those social policy decision makers who expect researchers to have both numbers and words in their data, mixed methods projects are powerful tools for social change" (Hesse-Biber, 2014, p. 382). The quantitative aspect of this study can help make policy recommendations and suggestions of best practices for organizations within each of the gendered structures. The interviews allowed for a human face to be put on the results and to underscore the importance in terms of lived experiences of players for improving the structures that support girls' hockey participation. Mixed methods were useful in determining the factors that contributed to perceptions of organizational legitimacy of women's hockey and can enhance recommendations for organizational practices that support girls' participation in hockey. The mixed methods provide the in-depth understanding of girls' hockey necessary to begin forming a women-centered sport development model.

Study one used a survey research method to examine the perceptions of organizational legitimacy of the gendered structures supporting girls' hockey in the United States, addressing the following research questions:

RQ1: Does structure affect players' perceptions of legitimacy?

RQ1a: If so, which aspects of legitimacy are affected by structure?

RQ1b: In what ways does structure affect legitimacy?

RQ2: Does structure affect players' experience of hockey?

RQ2a: If so, which aspects of experience are affected by structure?

RQ2b: In what ways does structure affect experience?

RQ3: How are experiences related to dimensions of legitimacy?

It considered different aspects of the participants including, age, gender, and experience in hockey, as well as the association structure that they are part of in considering perceptions of organizational legitimacy. Experience variables included professionalization of attitude, sense of community, involvement, perceived support, and perceptions of girls' hockey.

Study two used semi-structured interviews to more fully understand players' perceptions of threats and supports to organizational legitimacy and the experiences of female youth hockey players, addressing the following research questions:

RQ4: What aspects of the organization and playing experience are important to players' perceptions of women's hockey as legitimate?

RQ5: What is important to the players in terms of having a positive playing experience and a desire for continued participation?

RQ6: What issues do the players perceive as problematic to their participation, and how would they solve these issues?

RQ7: What do administrators view as important to the legitimacy of their organization and why?

RQ8: What issues do administrators perceive as being present for girls' participation in their organization and how would they ideally solve these issues?

It also examined administrators' perceptions of threats and supports to organizational legitimacy and their beliefs about the impact of gendered structures on the experiences of female youth hockey players.

Study 1

Study one consisted of the quantitative survey and addressed research questions one through three. This section addresses the methodology used for study one including the participants, data collection techniques, measures, and method of analysis.

Participants

Participants for this study were male and female youth hockey players in the United States, ages 13-19. An online survey was sent nationwide using a combination of USA Hockey databases, emails sent to individual associations, and personal contacts within hockey. This age group was selected as Bantam/14U is the age group when checking is introduced into the sport for boys, creating a difference in the girls' and boys' games. This is also the age level when many girls who have grown up playing on predominantly boys' teams switch to regional girls-only teams. Above age 19, players are no longer playing in youth organizations, instead, playing on college or adult league teams. Thus, the 13-19 range represents a cross-section of players that are currently playing for organizations in one of the three gendered structures and have experiences within the different association structures. Players have been exposed to the gendered rule difference in the game at this point. Participants were drawn from all competitive levels, including Tier 1, Tier 2, Tier 3, and recreational hockey. Tier 1 or AAA is considered the highest skill level of hockey. Many of these players go on to play varsity hockey in college. Tier 2 is the next step down. This is still highly competitive, travel hockey but players are slightly less skilled and play a more regional schedule. They are less likely to play varsity level hockey in college. Tier 3 is generally house league or travel-lite (only travel within a small radius) and is primarily made up of newer players or those with a low commitment level to the sport. Recreational hockey is the lowest skill and commitment level.

Data Collection Procedures

An online survey was sent to parents of players participating on 14U/Bantam teams through 19U/Midget Major teams. Emails were sent to parents requesting that they pass the link on their child (See Appendix A). These emails were sent to teams and parents in a variety of states and associations, with the goal of obtaining geographic diversity, and used several recruitment methods. Emails were sent by USA Hockey to their listserv in two USA Hockey districts, Atlantic and California; to the parents of players with 1997, 1999, and 2001 birth year (the upper age of each age group). The Amateur Hockey Association of Illinois included the recruitment letter with the survey link in their electronic newsletter twice (two weeks apart). I emailed personal contacts in hockey with children in the target age group and asked them to have their children take the survey and to pass it on to the parents of their child's teammates. Finally, an introductory email with the recruitment script included was sent to team managers and association administrators of teams in Michigan, Texas, New York, and Florida requesting that the administrators send the emails to members of the appropriate teams. Follow up emails were not sent, with the exception of the two posts to the AHAI newsletter, due to limited access to organization listservs. The parent was asked to pass the link on to their child. Passing the link on to the child served as parental consent for the child to participate in the study. The purpose of study one was to understand which aspects of organizational legitimacy were important to players' perceptions of girls' hockey and how different gendered association structures influenced their perceptions.

Research Questions

This study addressed the first three research questions:

RQ1: Does structure affect players' perceptions of legitimacy?

RQ1a: If so, which aspects of legitimacy are affected by structure?

RQ1b: In what ways does structure affect legitimacy?

Hypothesis 1: Those who participate in coed or girls-only associations will have more positive perceptions of the organizational legitimacy of girls' hockey than will those who participate in all-boys associations.

RQ2: Does structure affect players' experience of hockey?

RQ2a: If so, which aspects of experience are affected by structure?

RQ2b: In what ways does structure affect experience?

Hypothesis 2: Girls who participate on girls-only teams will have a greater sense of community than girls on predominantly boys' teams.

Hypothesis 3: Girls who participate on girls-only teams will have a greater sense of involvement with their teams than girls on predominantly boys' teams.

Hypothesis 4: Players in coed and girls-only associations will have higher perceptions of girls who play hockey than players in all boys' associations

Hypothesis 5: Girls in girls-only associations will have higher professionalization of attitude scores than girls in coed and boys-only associations

RQ3: How are experiences related to dimensions of legitimacy?

Hypothesis 6: Girls and boys who participate in coed or girls only associations will have more positive perceptions of the organizational legitimacy of girls' hockey than will players in all boys' associations.

Hypothesis 7: Girls' who report higher levels of sense of community will have more positive perceptions of organizational legitimacy than those with low levels of sense of community.

Hypothesis 8: Those who have higher perceptions of girls' hockey will have more positive perceptions of organizational legitimacy than will those who have low perceptions of girls' hockey.

Based on these research questions, study one sought to test whether gender and structure impact players' experiences and perceptions of legitimacy.

Measurement

In order to investigate the research questions of this study, previously developed instruments measuring stigma consciousness, sense of community, subculture, involvement, community support, and legitimacy were used. A measure of the importance of checking was created for use in this study.

Professionalization of attitude. The Webb Scale measures the professionalization of attitude of athletes (Webb, 1969). It asks respondents to rank the importance of the following statements: to have fun; to play as well as you can; and to win. Winning is considered to be the most professionalized response with having fun the least professionalized response. The rank order of the three items results in six possible permutations, ranging from most professionalized (1= to win; 2= to play as well as you can; 3= to have fun) to least professionalized (1= to have fun; 2 = to play as well as you can; 3= to win). The Webb Scale has internal reliability coefficients ranging from 0.90 to 0.96 (Webb, 1969).

Sense of community. In order to assess sense of community, this study used Warner, Kerwin, & Walker's (2013) sense of community in sport scale. This scale is composed of 28 items and six factors. The six factors are: administrative concern, common interest, competition, equity of administrative decisions, leadership opportunities, and social spaces. The items were measured on a six-point scale ranging from not at all true to completely true. Subscales were

shown to be internally consistent, with Cronbach’s alpha ranging from 0.76 to 0.87 (Warner et al., 2013).

Involvement. To assess involvement in hockey, the modified involvement scale (MIS) was used (Kyle, Absher, Norman, Hammitt, & Jodice, 2007). The MIS includes five, 3-item subscales of involvement: attraction, centrality, social bonding, identity affirmation, and identity expression, (see Table 1). All items were measured on a six-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Subscale items were averaged to form an overall indicator for each subscale. Kyle et al. (2007) reported that all subscales were reliable, with Cronbach’s alphas above 0.70 and composite reliabilities above 0.60.

Table 1

Modified Involvement Scale

Dimension	Item
Attraction	Hockey is one of the most enjoyable things I do Hockey is very important to me Hockey is one of the most satisfying things I do
Centrality	I find a lot of my life is organized around Hockey Hockey occupies a central role in my life To change my preference from hockey to another sport would require major rethinking
Social Bonding	I enjoy discussing hockey with my friends Most of my friends are in some way connected with hockey Participating in hockey provides me with an opportunity to be with friends

Table 1 (Cont.)

Identity Affirmation	<p>When I participate in hockey, I can really be myself</p> <p>I identify with the people and image associated with hockey</p> <p>When I'm playing hockey, I don't have to be concerned with the way I look</p>
Identity Expression	<p>You can tell a lot about a person by seeing them play</p> <p>Participating in hockey says a lot about whom I am</p> <p>When I participate in hockey, others see me the way I want them to see me</p>

Perceived support. Support by those in the participant's social network was assessed using a scale developed for a youth football study (Green & Dixon, 2012). The scale has two dimensions: family support and other support. Four items are used to measure immediate family support (e.g., how supportive is your father/mother/brother/sister of your hockey participation?). Six items are used to measure other support (male friends, female friends, other males at school, other females at school, other male adults, other female adults). Items were measured on a six-point scale ranging from 'against me playing' to 'very supportive', and were averaged to form an overall indicator of perceived support. Both dimensions are reliable, with Cronbach's alpha of 0.82 for family and 0.77 for social support.

Legitimacy. Perceptions of organizational legitimacy were measured with Lock et al.'s (2015) measure, Capture Perceptions of Organizational Legitimacy (CPOL). The 32-item scale measures seven dimensions of perceived legitimacy: role in community (5), staff and organizational behavior (5), valuing community (6), development approach (5), local players (5), and trialing procedures (6). Items were measured using five-point scales on oppositional

statements. The dimensions have been shown to be reliable, with Cronbach's alpha for each dimension ranging from 0.86 to 0.95 (Lock et al., 2015).

Perceptions of girls' hockey. Perceptions of girls' hockey was assessed using six items considering perceptions of checking and perceptions of girls who play hockey. All items were measured on six-point Likert scales ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Two dimensions were found to measure perceptions of girls'. This measure was created by sending out a pre-test survey of fourteen items. This survey was sent out to two youth associations in Illinois and one collegiate club team. After factor analysis on the initial scale, six items, forming two dimensions were used in the survey for this study.

Factor analysis. Fourteen items were created for a pre-test of perceptions of girls' hockey. They were subjected to principal component analysis with varimax (orthogonal) rotation. Factor analysis was performed to assure that the dimensions were independent. In iterative analyses, eight items were deleted based on weak loadings. After deleting these eight items, two factors with eigenvalues greater than one were extracted, explaining a total variance of 77.55% (See Table 2). The first factor consisted of three items and was labeled, "Checking". It explained 42.15% of the variance. The second factor was labeled, "Perceptions of Girls' Who Play Hockey" and consisted of three items. It explained 35.40% of the variance. Items in each factor were averaged to create an overall measure for each dimension. Both dimensions were internally consistent, with Cronbach's alpha ranging from .85 for Checking to .82 for Perceptions of Girls' Who Play Hockey.

Table 2

Factor Analysis of Perceptions of Girls' Hockey Measure

	Checking	Perceptions of Girls' Who Play Hockey
Girls' hockey players would enjoy body checking in their games	.95	-.03
Checking should be allowed in competitive girls' hockey like it is in boys' hockey	.92	-.01
Checking should be banned in boys' hockey like it is in girls' hockey	-.79	-.07
Even if they don't say so; people think girls should act like girls, not try to be hockey players	-.11	.88
If a girl plays hockey, people treat her differently	.02	.88
People have strong beliefs about girls who play hockey	-.03	.84
% of Total Variance Explained	42.15	35.40
Cronbach's α	.85	.82

Demographics

Demographics were also gathered. Respondents were asked to provide their age, gender, and ethnicity. In addition, they provided the following information about their hockey participation: club/hockey organization, team age group, competitive level, current association, and team structure type. They were asked to provide the number of years they participated in each type of association structure. Finally, they were asked to provide their total years of organized hockey experience, an assessment of their own competence as a hockey player, their interest in playing at more advanced levels of the sport, and the likelihood that they would continue playing hockey next season, and in the future.

Data Analysis

The survey data were analyzed using SPSS. The first set of research questions was answered via a MANOVA with the seven dimensions of legitimacy as the dependent variables and the team structure as the independent variable. A significant F for the overall MANOVA indicates that structure impacts legitimacy (RQ1). Univariate tests were then examined to determine which types of legitimacy were impacted by structure (RQ1a). Marginal means were examined to determine the ways in which structure affect legitimacy (RQ1b). The second series of research questions were analyzed via a second MANOVA with the experience variables as the dependent variables and team structure type as the independent variable. A significant F for the overall MANOVA indicates that structure impacts experience (RQ2). Univariate tests were then examined to determine which experiences were impacted by structure (RQ2a). Marginal means were examined to determine the ways in which structure affects experience (RQ2b). Last, Pearson product-moment correlations were examined to determine the specific ways in which experiences were (and were not) related to the seven dimensions of legitimacy.

Study 2

Study two consisted of the qualitative section of this study, and included both player and administrator interviews. It addressed questions four through eight which are:

RQ4: Which aspects of the organization and playing experience is important for players to view women's hockey as legitimate?

RQ5: What is important to players in terms of having a positive playing experience and a desire for continued participation?

RQ6: What issues do players perceive to be problematic for their participation, and how would they solve these issues?

RQ7: What do administrators view as important aspects of the legitimacy of their organization and why?

RQ8: What issues do administrators perceive to be present for girls' participation in their organization and how would they ideally

These questions sought to consider what organizational actions impact stakeholders' perceptions of organizational legitimacy of organizations supporting girls' hockey and how gendered association structures impact players' experiences in the sport. This section will discuss participants, data collection methods, data analysis, data trustworthiness, and researcher positionality.

Participants

Female, youth players, ages 13-18 from around the state of Illinois participated in semi-structured interviews. These players were purposively selected from teams to maximize the range of age and team type (cf. Weiss, 1995). Twenty-four youth players were interviewed. Interviews averaged 20 minutes in length. Twelve participants were on 14U teams, 16 were on

16U teams, and six were on 19U teams (See Table 3). All participants were assigned pseudonyms. Study two only conducted interviews with female players. The focus of the study was to understand the factors important to perceptions of legitimacy of girls' hockey. It was decided that focusing on the voices of female players was of utmost importance in order to understand how they are perceiving their participation and inclusion in the sport. In order to fully understand girls' participation in sport and their lived experiences in this environment, it was important to hear the voices of the female players themselves, as well as those directly involved at the organizational levels of girls' hockey.

Table 3

Youth Interview Participants

Team skill level	Age group	N
AA	14U	14
	16U	5
	19U	4
AAA	14U	0
	16U	1
	19U	2

Administrators participated in qualitative, semi-structured interviews. The administrators included association presidents, association hockey directors, association women's hockey directors, state level administrators, and youth and girls' team coaches. They were purposively selected to maximize their range of experiences (cf. Weiss, 1995) with respect to the type of gendered organizational structure for whom they work. Organization websites were used to find

and contact administrators followed by snowball sampling. Nineteen coaches and administrators were interviewed, averaging 45 minutes. Some administrators held multiple positions (e.g. coach and hockey director or association president and state level administrator). Four participants were state level administrators, three were associations presidents, two were hockey directors, six were girls' directors, eight were girls' team coaches, and two were boys' team coaches (See Table 4). All administrators were assigned pseudonyms and their positions were given as coach, association administrator, and state administrator, rather than their specific position title to make it harder to identify specific individuals.

Table 4

Adult Interview Participants

Participant gender	Position	N
Male	Boys' team coaches	2
	Girls' team coaches	5
	Association admin	5
	State admin	3
Female	Boys' team coaches	0
	Girls' team coaches	4
	Association admin	2
	State admin	2

Data Collection Procedure

Female youth players were purposively sampled based on their age level and team level. A recruitment email was sent to team managers of all 14U-19U teams participating in one of two

end-of-season tournaments. Managers were asked to pass the email to parents who then contacted me to set up the interviews. The interviews were conducted in person at the ice arenas during the end-of-season tournaments. As the interviews took place during the tournaments between games, additional participants were gained as parents and teammates heard about the project. Parental consent was obtained prior the interview along with player assent. Interviews were audio recorded with the permission of the participant. The interviews covered the following topics: player history, perceptions of girls' hockey, perceptions of organizational legitimacy, views on the checking rule, perceptions of community and inclusion of girls in hockey in Illinois, problems faced in participating in hockey, and potential solutions to common problems faced by girls in hockey (See Appendix B for full list of interview questions). Interviews were conducted until saturation was reached (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

Administrators were solicited from organizations representing the three types of gendered structures in the state. Emails were sent to administrators of associations that reflected the three association types available to request their participation. Administrators included association presidents, hockey directors, women's hockey directors and state administrators. All administrators responding to the email were interviewed. Informed consent was gained prior to the interview and the interviews were audio recorded with the permission of the participant. Interviews were conducted in person or over the phone. Interviews were semi-structured in nature and covered the following topics: their experiences with girls' hockey, their perceptions of girls' hockey, issues their organization has faced in including girls in hockey, perceptions of organizational legitimacy, possible solutions to common problems faced by girls' participation, and views on the checking rule (See Appendix C for full list of interview questions). Saturation had been reached by the completion of the 19 interviews (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

The researcher took notes regarding the important points, emerging research ideas, and commonalities and differences that the researcher noticed after a set of interviews was completed. This allowed the researcher to easily compare the main ideas in each interview during the data collection process (Creswell, 2007). Pseudonyms were given to all participants.

Data Analysis

All interviews were transcribed verbatim. The interviews were coded using the tenets of qualitative content analysis (Schreier, 2013). Qualitative content analysis focuses on meaning, particularly as it relates to aspects of the research questions. The focus on meaning during the coding process aligns with the emphasis of feminist research on listening to and understanding the perspectives of women. The interviews were read for initial ideas that emerged across the data. Subsequently, focused coding occurred to identify the most important codes. These codes were assigned to concept driven categories based on the types of organizational legitimacy (Suchman, 2011) along with a category of other codes important to player experiences that did not relate to legitimacy. The categories were further analyzed for relationships between and within categories (Schreier, 2013). Finally, quotes representative of the categories were elected.

Data trustworthiness. Throughout the data collection and analysis process, I wrote regular memos regarding my views and beliefs throughout the process. I also engaged in debriefing during data collection and analysis to ensure that my views and insider perspective were not influencing my interpretation. This debriefing occurred with a researcher unfamiliar with the subculture of hockey. This allowed the second researcher to provide an outsider perspective on girls hockey participation (Green & Chalip, 1998). Debriefing also served to establish trustworthiness as I discussed my findings with somebody who was not invested in the

outcomes. This allowed them to ask questions about the study and findings and whether my interpretations made sense.

Researcher Positionality

I have insider status in this study due to my position as a female hockey player and a certified hockey coach. Consequently, I had an easy time establishing rapport with most of the participants. As a young female hockey player, I spoke the language of the players and they perceived me as understanding the game. I am a Level 3 USA Hockey certified coach, and I coached youth hockey for four years. This helped me gain credibility and rapport with the parents and administrators. I was able use my positionality to improve my access to the participants as aspects of my hockey experiences were more helpful in gaining access than my position as a graduate student at the University of Illinois. My positionality presented an image that I cared about the overall health of the sport and was genuinely interested in doing what was best for the sport. Gaining rapport with both the players and the administrators was a very smooth process. The players saw me primarily as another hockey player and were willing to talk about their experiences. Administrators were exceedingly willing to discuss the state of women's hockey with me. I believe this was due to my vested interest and commitment to growing girls' hockey and their views that my research was an avenue to continue to develop the sport.

While the insider status helped me gain access and rapport, I realized that insider status may have had negative implications as well, as an insider may have taken some comments or actions for granted (Emerson, 2001; Hesse-Biber, 2014). I added definitions of terms and dialogue concerning what was observed to my field notes to elicit some of my biases. I regularly discussed what I observed with other researchers, and I wrote memos regarding my biases and perspectives.

Research Expectations

It is expected that there will be differences in perceptions of legitimacy based on the different gendered association structures. The researcher expects that those involved in girls-only teams will perceive women's hockey as more legitimate than those on primarily boys' teams. Additionally, it is anticipated that girls who play on girls-only teams will experience more sense of community within the sport. Based on the hegemonic masculine center of sports and the inclusion of checking in boys' hockey, it is expected that most players, boys and girls, will believe that checking is an integral part of the game and would like to see it included in the competitive girls' game with very little support for banning checking from the boys' game. It is expected that players in coed and girls-only programs will have higher perceptions of girls who play hockey than those in all boys' programs. Players who see girls playing on a regular basis, particularly full teams and leagues of girls, will be more likely to see hockey as an acceptable sport for girls to play. As such they will be less likely to negatively judge girls who play hockey. Girls' who play on girls' only teams are expected to have more professionalized attitudes than those that play on predominantly male teams. Predominantly boys' teams are more likely to prepare their players for the male hockey pathways and discuss future hockey options for male players which are different than those available for female players. Girls-only teams can focus on the development of and future of female athletes and focus on the needs and desires of female athletes. Additionally, girls who report high levels of sense of community will have more positive perceptions of organizational legitimacy than those with low levels of sense of community. If an individual feels that they are included and belong within the organization, it can be expected that they will be more likely to perceive the organization as legitimate as the sense of community can be encouraged through the support of the organization.

In terms of qualitative findings, it is expected that girls on predominantly boys' teams will face constraints to finding community within the sport. Additionally, girls on predominantly boys' teams will likely face more structural challenges to participating such as inadequate access to locker-room facilities and lack of acceptance from opposing players and parents, along with some lack of acceptance by members of their own organization.

Combining Methods

Mixed methods research is most useful when each method can be used to inform the other in the research process and in the analysis and presentation of the findings (Hesse-Biber, 2014). While the two studies approach organizational legitimacy from different perspectives, they still inform one another. Study two was able to address the factors of organizational legitimacy important to those currently involved in the sport, while study one addressed the perceptions of organizational legitimacy at an association level. By including different populations and different stakeholders in the two studies, the findings gave a more complete analysis of the topic. Additionally, the information regarding factors that players and administrators perceive as important to organizational legitimacy can be used to create context specific quantitative measures that can build upon the Lock et al.'s (2015) measure of organizational legitimacy. The findings inform each other to build a complex picture of the perceptions of legitimacy of girls' hockey and to further the research on organizational legitimacy of girls' hockey and women's sport development.

Study 1 Results and Discussion

Study one consisted of the quantitative survey sent to youth players in eight states. This chapter will report the findings of the survey with respect to the first three research questions:

RQ1: Does structure affect players' perceptions of legitimacy?

RQ1a: If so, which aspects of legitimacy are affected by structure?

RQ1b: In what ways does structure affect legitimacy?

RQ2: Does structure affect players' experience of hockey?

RQ2a: If so, which aspects of experience are affected by structure?

RQ2b: In what ways does structure affect experience?

RQ3: How are experiences related to dimensions

Sample

One hundred and eleven players completed the survey. There were 55 girls, 41 boys, and 15 who either chose not to identify or did not answer the question. Players represented eight states across the US: California, Florida, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Missouri, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania. Girls are allowed to double roster on a girls' and a boys' team and in some states players are allowed to play on their high school team and an association team. Double rostering is playing on two sanctioned teams during the same season. Boys are generally not allowed to do this. However, girls are allowed to be on both a girls' team and a boys' team at the same time. At the high school level, it is up to the state, but some states allow both boys and girls to play on their association team as well as their high school team. Thirty-four players in this study played on two teams this season. Respondents included players across multiple age and skill levels (See Table 5). Forty players were playing in associations with only boys' teams, 51 were in associations with boys' and girls' teams, and five were in associations with only girls' teams.

Table 5

Team Types and Age Groups of Survey Participants

	Tier 1		Tier 2		Tier 3		High School Varsity		High School Junior Varsity		Recreation/ House	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
14U / Bantam	5	9	16	16	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	3
16U / Midget Minor	2	6	6	5	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2
19U / Midget Major	1	4	2	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
High School Varsity	0	0	1	0	0	0	4	17	0	0	0	0
High School JV	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	5	0	0

Effects of Structure on Perceived Legitimacy

When examining the impact of structure on perceptions of legitimacy (RQ1), a one-way MANOVA (Multivariate Analysis of Variance) with the dimensions of legitimacy was conducted. The dependent variables were the dimensions of perceived legitimacy: role in community, staff and organizational behavior, valuing community, development approach, local players, and tryout procedures (Lock et al., 2015). Structure type was the independent variable. The structure variable included five structure types. The first structure was All Girls; this consists of girls who play on girls’ teams in all girls’ associations. The second structure was All Boys which consists of boys who play on boys’ teams in all boys’ associations. The third structure was Girls in All Boys which consists of girls who play on boys’ teams in all boys’ associations. The fourth type was Girls in Coed which consists of girls who play on girls’ teams in coed associations. The final structure type was Boys in Coed which consists of boys who play

on boys' teams in coed associations. Prior to the analysis, factor analysis was conducted on the legitimacy items to determine whether the results from this study were consistent with the dimensions extracted by Lock et al. (2015). The factor structure in this study was inconsistent with Lock et al.'s dimensions.

Factor analysis. Nineteen items of the Perceptions of Sport Organization Legitimacy Scale (Lock et al., 2015) were subjected to principal component analysis with varimax (orthogonal) rotation. Iterative factor analyses were performed to assure that the dimensions were independent and internally consistent. Three items (association gives opportunities to girls, staff listens to female players, and encourages technical development of players) loaded on multiple dimensions and were deleted. After deleting these three items, three factors with eigenvalues greater than one were extracted, explaining a total variance of 75.857% (See Table 6). The first factor consisted of seven items and was labeled "Association Engagement with Women's Hockey". It explained 33.932% of the variance. The second factor was labeled "Culture of Association" and explained 24.024% of the variance. The third factor was labeled "Fairness of Tryout" and explained 17.901% of the variance. Items within each factor were averaged to create an overall measure for each dimension. All dimensions were internally consistent with Cronbach's alpha ranging from .96 for Association Engagement with Women's Hockey to .85 for Fairness of Tryouts.

Table 6

Factor Loadings of Perceived Legitimacy Items

	Association Engagement with Women's Hockey	Culture of Association	Fairness of Tryouts
Association value to women's hockey	.89	.24	.18

Table 6 (cont.)

Association engagement with women's hockey	.87	.26	.22
Association serving a purpose within girls' hockey	.86	.26	.05
Place of association within women's hockey	.84	.23	.18
Association recruits girls' hockey players	.82	.27	.19
Association provides clear pathway for girls' hockey	.78	.30	.25
Association influence on female players	.66	.44	.33
Association driven by community values	.22	.84	.25
Association shares community values	.30	.76	.34
Association has an old school approach to player development	.36	.74	.04
Staff are qualified	.21	.66	.29
Association emphasizes winning or player development	.43	.60	.28
Coach communication	.29	.59	.52
The tryout process is acceptable	.14	.25	.89
Tryouts are fair	.22	.20	.87
At tryouts players are treated with respect	.27	.43	.61
% of Total Variance Explained	33.93	24.02	17.90
Cronbach's α	.96	.89	.85

Descriptive statistics were calculated for the perceived legitimacy dimensions. While all of the means were above the midpoint, a positive view of the dimensions of perceived legitimacy, they were not very far above the midpoint. This shows that while participants, on average, viewed their associations as legitimate with respect to the three dimensions, it was not

with a large amount of support. As shown in Table 6, the *skewness* values are between -.52 and -.60 and the *kurtosis* values are between -.23 and -.79. *Skewness* and *kurtosis* values within the range of +/- 2 are generally considered normal. Thus, these data meet the normality assumptions for MANOVA.

Table 7

Descriptive Statistics of Perceived Legitimacy Dimensions

	N	Min	Max	M	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
Association Engagement with Women's Hockey	92	1.00	5.00	3.53	1.24	-.60	-.79
Culture of Association	93	1.00	5.00	3.49	1.00	-.60	-.23
Fairness of Tryouts	94	1.00	5.00	3.71	1.13	-.52	-.73

MANOVA. A one-way MANOVA of structure type and perceived legitimacy was conducted using the five structure types and the three dimensions of perceived legitimacy. The MANOVA found that structure significantly impacts perceptions of legitimacy; $F(4, 82) = 14.84, p < .001$.

An examination of the univariate tests identified which aspects of legitimacy were impacted by structure type. There was a significant impact of structure type on Association Engagement with Women's Hockey, $F(4, 82) = 12.05, p < .001$ (See Table 8). However, results showed no significant impact of structure type on Culture of Association or Fairness of Tryouts.

Table 8

Univariate Effects of Structure Type on Dimensions of Perceived Legitimacy

Aspects of Perceived Legitimacy	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
Association Engagement with Women's Hockey	50.41	4	12.60	12.05	.001*

Table 8 (cont.)

Culture of Association	7.84	4	1.96	1.10	.103
Fairness of Tryout	2.61	4	.65	.51	.732

Post-hoc tests using Tukey's HSD were conducted to determine which contexts were significantly different in their impact on Association Engagement with Women's Hockey. The significant differences came between those (boys and girls) who play in All Boys associations and those who play in either All Girls associations or Coed associations (boys and girls, see Table 9). In short, the differences occurred between associations with and without girls' teams.

Players in All Girls associations ($M = 4.46, SE = .46$) had significantly higher perceptions of legitimacy of Association Engagement with Women's Hockey than did players in All Boys associations ($M = 2.61, SE = .21$). Players in All Girls associations ($M = 4.46, SE = .46$) had significantly higher perceptions of legitimacy of Association Engagement with Women's Hockey than did Girls in All Boys associations ($M = 2.61, SE = .31$). Boys in Coed associations ($M = 4.27, SE = .30$) had significantly higher perceptions of legitimacy of Association Engagement with Women's Hockey than did players in All Boys associations ($M = 2.61, SE = .21$). Boys in Coed associations ($M = 4.27, SE = .30$) had significantly higher perceptions of legitimacy of Association Engagement with Women's Hockey than did Girls in All Boys associations ($M = 2.61, SE = .31$). Girls in Coed associations ($M = 4.06, SE = .173$) had significantly higher perceptions of legitimacy of Association Engagement with Women's Hockey than did players in All Boys associations ($M = 2.61, SE = .21$). Girls in Coed associations ($M = 4.057, SE = .173$) had significantly higher perceptions of legitimacy of Association Engagement with Women's Hockey than did Girls in All Boys associations ($M = 2.61, SE = .31$). Based on these results, hypothesis one was confirmed. Those who participate in

coed and girls-only association structures had more positive perceptions of girls' hockey than did those in boys-only associations.

Table 9

Mean Differences in Association Engagement with Women's Hockey by Structure Type

(I) Structure	(J) Structure	Mean difference (I-J)	Std. Error	<i>p</i>
All Girls	All Boys	1.85*	.50	.01
	Girls in All Boys	1.85*	.55	.01
	Boys in Coed	0.18	.54	1.7
	Girls in Coed	0.40	.49	1.76
All Boys	All Girls	-1.85*	.20	.01
	Girls in All Boys	0.00	.37	1.00
	Boys in Coed	-1.66*	.43	.01
	Girls in Coed	-1.45*	.35	.01
Girls in All Boys	All Girls	-1.85*	.55	.01
	All Boys	0.00	.37	1.00
	Boys in Coed	-1.66*	.43	.01
	Girls in Coed	-1.45*	.35	.01
Boys in Coed	All Girls	-0.18	.54	1.00
	All Boys	1.67*	.36	.01
	Girls in All Boys	1.66*	.43	.01
	Girls in Coed	0.22	.34	.97
Girls in Coed	All Girls	-0.40	.49	.92
	All Boys	1.45*	.27	.01
	Girls in All Boys	1.45*	.35	.01
	Boys in Coed	-0.22	.34	.97

Player Experience

When examining the impact of structure on playing experience (RQ2), a one-way MANOVA (Multivariate Analysis of Variance) was conducted. The dependent variables were the dimensions of the scales measuring playing experience: Professionalization of Attitude (Webb, 1969), Sense of Community (i.e., Administrative Consideration, Common Interest, Equity in Administrative Decisions, Leadership Opportunities, and Competition) (Warner et al., 2013); Involvement (i.e., Attraction, Centrality, Social Bonding, Identity Affirmation, and

Identity Expression) (Kyle et al., 2007); and Perceived Support (i.e., Family Support and Social Support). Structure type was the independent variable. The structure variable included five structure types. The first structure was All Girls; this consists of girls who play on girls' teams in all girls' associations. The second structure was All Boys which consists of boys who play on boys' teams in all boys' associations. The third structure was Girls in All Boys which consists of girls who play on boys' teams in all boys' associations. The fourth type was Girls in Coed which consists of girls who play on girls' teams in coed associations. The final structure type was Boys in Coed which consists of boys who play on boys' teams in coed associations. Prior to the analysis, factor analysis was conducted on the sense of community items to determine whether the results from this study were consistent with the dimensions extracted by Warner et al. (2013), Kyle et al. (2007), and Green & Dixon (2012).

Factor analyses. Seventeen items of the Sense of Community Scale (Warner et al., 2013) were subjected to principal component analysis with varimax (orthogonal) rotation. Factor analyses were performed to assure that the dimensions were independent. One item was deleted due to weakness of loading and five items were deleted based on multidimensionality. After deleting six items via iterative analyses, three factors with eigenvalues greater than one were extracted, explaining a total variance of 78.89% (See Table 10). The first factor consisted of six items and was labeled, "Association Inclusivity". It explained 38.20% of the variance. The second factor was labeled "Friendship" and consisted of three items. It explained 22.50% of the variance. The third factor was labeled "Administrative Support" and consisted of 2 items. It explained 18.19% of the variance. Items in each factor were averaged to create an overall measure for each dimension. All dimensions were internally consistent with Cronbach's alpha ranging from .93 for Association Inclusivity to .84 for Friendship.

Table 10

Factor Analysis of Sense of Community

	Association Inclusivity	Friendship	Administrative Support
I have a say about what goes on in my hockey club	.87	.05	.21
If there is a problem in my hockey club, I can help solve it	.87	.15	.03
I feel comfortable talking openly with leaders of my hockey club	.83	.25	.12
I have influence over what my hockey club is like	.81	.06	.21
The leaders make me feel like a valued member of my hockey club	.76	.23	.42
Leaders in my hockey club consider everyone's needs when making decisions	.74	.31	.33
My hockey club provides me with friends who share a strong commitment to hockey	.16	.86	.15
I feel a bond with other players of my hockey club when I'm competing	.16	.85	.12
Competing with other players in my hockey club is fun	.15	.81	.17
Leaders of my hockey club care about other members	.23	.13	.91
Leaders of my hockey club support other members	.29	.31	.84
% of Total Variance Explained	38.20	22.50	18.19
Cronbach's α	.93	.84	.89

Fifteen items of the Modified Involvement Scale (Kyle et al., 2007) were subjected to principal component analysis with varimax (orthogonal) rotation. Factor analyses were performed to assure that the dimensions were independent. In iterative analyses, one item was deleted based on weakness of loading and two items were deleted based on multiple loadings. After deleting these three items, three factors with eigenvalues greater than one were extracted, explaining a total variance of 67.57% (See Table 11). The first factor consisted of five items and

was labeled, “Centrality”. It explained 27.95% of the variance. The second factor was labeled “Identity” and consisted of four items. It explained 22.99% of the variance. The third factor was labeled “Social Bonding” and consisted of three items. It explained 16.63% of the variance. Items in each factor were averaged to create an overall measure for each dimension. All three dimensions were internally consistent, with Cronbach’s alpha ranging from .83 for Centrality to .76 for Social Bonding. While this study found only three dimensions compared to the five in the original scale, many similarities remained. The original scale had Identity Affirmation and Identity Express dimensions; the data in this study collapsed those two dimensions into the Identity Dimension. Similarly, the original Attraction and Centrality dimensions were collapsed into the Centrality dimension. Finally, Social Bonding remained the same, with the addition of one item that had previously been in the Identity Affirmation dimension.

Table 11

Factor Analysis of Modified Identity Scale

	Centrality	Identity	Social Bonding
Hockey occupies a central role in my life	.85	-.04	.16
Hockey is very important to me	.80	.17	.06
I find a lot of my life is organized around hockey	.76	.11	.21
To change my preference from hockey to another sport would require major rethinking	.68	.09	.27
Hockey is one of the most satisfying things I do	.67	.45	.10
When I participate in hockey, others see me the way I want them to see me	-.02	.83	.24
When I’m playing hockey, I don’t have to be concerned with the way I look	.05	.82	.10
When I participate in hockey, I can really be myself	.15	.73	.32
You can tell a lot about a person by seeing them play hockey	.26	.69	-.06

Table 11 (cont.)

Participating in hockey provides me with an opportunity to be with my friends	.07	.23	.87
I identify with the people and image associated with hockey	.37	.29	.71
Most of my friends are in some way connected with hockey	.51	-.00	.65
% of Total Variance Explained	27.95	22.99	16.63
Cronbach's α	.83	.80	.76

Ten items of the Perceived Support scale (Green & Dixon, 2012) were subjected to principal component analysis with varimax (orthogonal) rotations. Factor analysis was performed to assure that the dimensions were independent. Four factors with eigenvalues greater than one were extracted, explaining a total variance of 63.98% (See Table 12). The first factor consisted of five items and was labeled, "Non-Family". It explained 27.41% of the variance. The second factor was labeled, "Siblings" and consisted of two items. It explained 12.98% of the variance. The third factor was labeled, "Parents" and consisted of two items. It explained 12.74% of the variance. The fourth factor was labeled, "Coach" and consisted of one item. It explained 10.85% of the variance. Items in each factor were averaged to create an overall measure for each dimension. Siblings and Non-Family dimensions were internally consistent with Cronbach's alpha ranging from .76 for Siblings and .79 for Non-Family, however, Parents dimension was not internally consistent.

Table 12

Factor Analysis of Support Measure

	Non-Family	Siblings	Parents	Coach
Boys at School	.84	.18	.06	-.01

Table 12 (cont.)

Teachers	.78	.05	.23	.05
Male Friends	.71	-.04	-.04	-.14
Girls at School	.68	-.04	.01	.22
Female Friends	.67	-.08	-.28	.10
Sister	-.02	-.82	.13	.19
Brother	.01	.76	.19	.22
Dad	.04	-.05	.82	.15
Mom	-.02	.12	.64	-.31
Coach	.08	.03	-.06	.90
% of Total Variance Explained	27.41	12.98	12.74	10.85
Cronbach's α	.79	.72	.26	

Six items measuring Perceptions of Girls' Hockey were subjected to principal component analysis with varimax (orthogonal) rotation. Two factors with eigenvalues greater than one were extracted, explaining 67.57% total variance (See Table 13). The first factor consisted of three items and was labeled, "Checking". It explained 33.27% of the variance. The second factor was labeled Perceptions of Girls' who Play Hockey and consisted of three items. It explained 25.53% of the variance. Items in each factor were averaged to create an overall measure for each dimension. The dimensions were not internally consistent with Cronbach's alpha ranging from .47 for Perceptions of Girls Who Play Hockey to .01 for Checking.

Table 13

Factor Analysis of Perceptions of Girls' Hockey Measure

	Checking	Perceptions of Girls' Who Play Hockey
Checking should be allowed in competitive girls' hockey like it is in boys' hockey	.90	.12
Girls' hockey players would enjoy body checking in their games	.86	.16
Checking should be banned in boys' hockey like it is in girls' hockey	-.62	-.15
People have strong beliefs about girls who play hockey	.14	.81
Even if they don't say so; people think girls should act like girls, not try to be hockey players	.04	.68
If a girl plays hockey, people treat her differently	.23	.54
% of Total Variance Explained	33.27	24.53
Cronbach's α	.01	.47

Descriptive statistics were calculated for the dimensions of Playing Experience. With the exception of Professionalization of Attitude and Support, all were measured on a six-point scale. Support was measured on a three-point scale from not supportive to very supportive. While overall, respondents had positive perceptions of Sense of Community with most of the means fell between Somewhat Agree and Agree (See Table 14). Identity and Social Bonding also were also barely above the midpoint. Centrality had strong support, with the mean falling between Agree, and Strongly Agree. The support factors showed that most parents, coaches, and non-family supported the player, however siblings did not. Perceptions of girls' hockey showed neutral support with the means falling at the midpoint between somewhat disagree and somewhat agree. As shown in Table 14, the *skewness* values are between -2.31 and 2.66 and the *kurtosis* values are between -.52 and 7.10. *Skewness* and *kurtosis* values within the range of +/- 2 are generally

considered normal. While most of the dimensions fell within this range of normality, three did not. The three dimensions that did not fall within the range of normality were leptokurtic, meaning that the majority of participants selected middle option on the scale. This shows that players had a neutral perception of feeling a sense of friendship on their team and that they perceived that parents and non-family support did not care one way or another whether they played hockey.

Table 14

Descriptive Statistics of Playing Experience Dimensions

	N	Min	Max	M	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis	
Professionalization of Attitude	110	1.00	5.67	3.51	.84	-.341	.315	
Sense of Community	Association	106	1.00	6.00	3.67	1.21	-.38	-.52
	Inclusivity Friendship	109	1.00	6.00	4.97	.97	-2.31	7.10
Modified Involvement Scale	Administrative Support	110	1.00	6.00	4.48	1.31	-.87	.25
	Centrality	104	2.60	6.00	5.39	.64	-1.16	1.81
	Identity	103	1.50	6.00	4.76	.97	-1.16	1.76
Support	Social Bonding	103	1.33	6.00	4.73	.95	-.84	1.08
	Non Family	103	1.00	4.00	1.63	.55	1.52	3.97
	Parents	105	1.00	3.00	1.17	.41	2.66	6.64
	Sibling	99	1.00	4.00	2.33	.82	-.31	-.44
Perceptions of Girls Hockey	Coach	105	1.00	1.00	1.69	.99	1.27	.37
	Checking	110	1.00	5.67	3.51	.84	-.341	.315
	Perceptions of Girls Who Play Hockey	109	1.00	6.00	3.42	1.01	.23	-.24

MANOVA. A one-way MAONVA of structure type and experiences was conducted using the five structure types and the 12 dimensions of experience. The MANOVA found that structure significantly impacts experience; $F(12, 62) = 3.74, p < .001$.

An examination of the univariate tests identified which playing experiences were impacted by structure type (See Table 15). There was a significant impact of structure type on Professionalization of Attitude, $F(4, 70) = 3.484, p = .012$. There was also a significant impact of structure type on Perceptions of Girls' who Play Hockey; $F(4, 70) = 6.02, p < .001$. However, results showed no significant impact of structure type on Checking, any of the Sense of Community dimensions, Modified Involvement Scale Dimensions, or Perceived Support Dimensions. Hypothesis two is rejected; girls on girls' only teams did not experience a greater sense of community than those on boys' teams.

Table 15

ANOVA Results for Players' Experiences in Hockey across Structure Types and Player Gender

Experience	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
ProfAtt	23.47	4	5.89	3.48	.012*
PGH_Checking	4.66	4	1.16	1.55	.198
PGH_Perceptions of Girls Who Play Hockey	18.80	4	4.70	6.01	.001*
SOC_Inclusivity	6.83	4	1.71	1.23	.307
SOC_Friendship	3.80	4	.95	1.11	.358
SOC_AdminSupport	6.79	4	1.70	1.01	.408
MIS_Centrality	1.11	4	.28	.61	.654
MIS_Identity	3.78	4	.94	1.04	.394
MIS_Social	4.91	4	1.23	1.44	.230
SUP_Non family	.84	4	.21	.76	.556
SUP_Parents	.57	4	.14	.81	.521
SUP_Siblings	.163	4	.41	.62	.647

Post-hoc tests using Tukey's HSD were conducted to determine how contexts affected Professionalization of Attitude and Perceptions of Girls Who Play Hockey. The significant

differences regarding Professionalization of Attitude came between Boys in Coed associations and Girls' in Coed associations (See Table 16). In short, the differences occurred between girls and boys within associations with both boys' and girls' teams. Boys in Coed associations ($M = 3.10, SE = .41$) had significantly more professionalized attitudes than did Girls in Coed associations ($M = 1.79, SE = .23$).

Table 16

Mean Differences in Professionalization of Attitude by Structure Type

(I) Structure	(J) Structure	Mean difference (I-J)	Std. Error	<i>p</i>
Girls on girls' teams in girls' association	Boys on boys' teams in boys' associations	0.44	.66	.96
	Girls on boys' teams in boys' associations	1.27	.70	.37
	Boys on boys' teams in coed associations	-0.10	.78	1.00
	Girls on girls' teams in coed associations	1.29	.63	.25
Boys on boys' team in boys' association	Girls on girls' teams in girls' associations	-0.44	.66	.96
	Girls on boys' teams in boys' associations	0.83	.50	.46
	Boys on boys' teams in coed associations	-0.54	.51	.82
	Girls on girls' teams in coed associations	.085	.39	.19
Girls on boys' team in boys' association	Girls on girls' teams in girls' associations	-1.27	.70	.37
	Boys on boys' teams in boys' associations	-0.83	.50	.46
	Boys on boys' teams in coed associations	-1.27	.57	.12
	Girls on girls' teams in coed associations	0.02	.46	1.00
Boys on boys' team in coed association	Girls on girls' teams in girls' associations	0.10	.71	1.00
	Boys on boys' teams in boys' associations	0.54	.51	.82

Table 16 (cont.)

	Girls on boys' teams in boys' associations	1.37	.57	.12
	Girls on girls' teams in coed associations	1.39	.47	.03*
Girls on girls' team in coed association	Girls on girls' teams in girls' associations	-1.29	.62	.25
	Boys on boys' teams in boys' associations	-0.85	.39	.19
	Girls on boys' teams in boys' associations	-0.02	.46	1.00
	Boys on boys' teams in coed associations	-1.39	.47	.03*

The significant differences regarding Perceptions of Girls Who Play Hockey primarily came between girls and boys (See Table 17). In general, girls' had significantly more positive perceptions of Girls' Who Play Hockey than boys did. Girls in All Boys' associations ($M = 4.12$, $SE = .27$) had more positive Perceptions of Girls Who Play Hockey than did those in All Boys' associations ($M = 3.09$, $SE = .21$). Similarly, Girls' in All Boys associations ($M = 4.12$, $SE = .27$) had significantly more positive Perceptions of Girls Who Play Hockey than did Boys in Coed Associations ($M = 2.50$, $SE = .28$). Girls in Coed associations ($M = 3.70$, $SE = .16$) had significantly more positive Perceptions of Girls' Who Play Hockey than did Boys in Coed associations ($M = 2.50$, $SE = .28$).

Table 17

Mean Differences in Perceptions of Girls Who Play Hockey by Structure Type

(I) Structure	(J) Structure	Mean difference (I-J)	Std. Error	<i>p</i>
Girls on girls' teams in girls' association	Boys on boys' teams in boys' associations	0.71	.45	.51
	Girls on boys' teams in boys' associations	-0.32	.48	.96
	Boys on boys' teams in coed associations	1.30	.48	.07

Table 17 (cont.)

	Girls on girls' teams in coed associations	0.10	.43	1.00
Boys on boys' team in boys' association	Girls on girls' teams in girls' associations	-0.71	.45	.51
	Girls on boys' teams in boys' associations	-1.03	.34	.03*
	Boys on boys' teams in coed associations	0.59	.35	.44
	Girls on girls' teams in coed associations	0.61	.26	.15
Girls on boys' team in boys' association	Girls on girls' teams in girls' associations	0.32	.48	.96
	Boys on boys' teams in boys' associations	1.03	.34	.03*
	Boys on boys' teams in coed associations	1.62	.39	.01*
	Girls on girls' teams in coed associations	0.42	.31	.65
Boys on boys' team in coed association	Girls on girls' teams in girls' associations	-1.30	.48	.07
	Boys on boys' teams in boys' associations	-0.59	.35	.44
	Girls on boys' teams in boys' associations	-1.62	.39	.01*
	Girls on girls' teams in coed associations	-1.20	.32	.01*
Girls on girls' team in coed association	Girls on girls' teams in girls' associations	-0.10	.43	1.00
	Boys on boys' teams in boys' associations	0.61	.03	.15
	Girls on boys' teams in boys' associations	-0.42	.31	.65
	Boys on boys' teams in coed associations	1.20	.32	.01*

Experience and Perceptions of Legitimacy

Research question three considered the relationship between aspects of experience and dimensions of legitimacy. Pearson correlations were calculated between the experience variables and the three dimensions of legitimacy. As shown in Table 18, few experience variables were

significantly correlated with perceptions of legitimacy. Professionalization of Attitude and the dimensions of Sense of Community each correlated with some dimensions of Perceived Legitimacy. Identity, (a dimension of the Modified Involvement Scale) was significantly correlated with two of the Perceived Legitimacy dimensions: Culture of Association and Fairness of Tryout. However, none of the support variables correlated with any legitimacy dimensions. This is not surprising since, with the exception of coach support, the supports were all external to the hockey associations and the legitimacy dimensions were all in reference to organizational legitimacy.

Table 18

Correlations Among Playing Experience and Legitimacy Dimensions

87 < n < 89	Association Engagement with Women's Hockey	Culture of Association	Fairness of Tryout
Professionalization of Attitude	-0.14	-0.35**	0.19
PGH_Checking	0.03	-0.02	0.03
PGH_Girls who play hockey	-0.00	-0.05	-0.16
SOC_Inclusivity	0.14	0.46**	0.47**
SOC_Friendship	0.32**	0.43**	0.17
SOC_Administrative Support	0.48**	0.28**	0.29**
MIS_Centrality	-0.06	0.09	0.07
MIS_Identity	-0.11	0.24*	0.27*
MIS_Social	0.18	0.15	0.06
SUP_Other	-0.09	-0.12	-0.07
SUP_Parents	-0.06	-0.10	-0.03
SUP_Siblings	-0.02	-0.10	-0.06
SUP_Coach	-0.05	-0.14	-0.13

Note. * indicates significance at the $p \leq .05$ level; ** indicates significance at the $p \leq .01$ level

Discussion

Study one considered the impact of team and association structure type on perceptions of organizational legitimacy and playing experience, and the relationship between playing experiences and perceptions of organizational legitimacy. This section will discuss the findings of study one.

In regards to research question one and two, the gender of the players and of the team structures of associations had an impact on players' perceptions of organizational legitimacy as well as their experiences playing hockey. Many associations with only boys' teams still have girls' playing within their system. It is common for girls' to play on boys' teams in programs that do not have girls' teams. While it can be argued that these associations are supporting girls' participation in hockey by allowing them to play, it is doubtful that they are fully supportive, and have all the resources to fully support girls' development and transition pathways through hockey if they do not have a single girls' team. As such, it is not surprising that those who play in all boys' associations (both male and female players) were less likely to perceive their association as engaging with women's hockey in a legitimate way. This supports hypothesis one in that those in associations with girls' teams (coed and girls-only associations) had more positive perceptions of their associations legitimate engagement with girls' hockey. The mere existence of girls' teams in the association was all it took for players to perceive that their association was engaged in women's hockey. Both boys and girls in coed and all girls' associations perceived that their association was legitimately engaged in girls' hockey.

This disparity makes it clear that integrating girls onto boys' teams is not sufficient to position the association as legitimately engaging with girls' hockey. Integrating girls onto boys' teams is still a valid pathway for girls to develop in hockey. Structural legitimacy considers

whether constituents perceive the structural characteristics of an association to be valuable and whether the institutional structures portray a message that the organization is acting in a manner that shows they value the constituent group (Suchman, 1995). By failing to provide girls' teams, these associations are perceived as lacking structures that are perceived as valuable in their engagement with girls' hockey. Exchange legitimacy considers whether there is support for an organization's policies based on the expected value of those policies for the constituent groups (Suchman, 1995). In this case, the policies are integrating girls on to boys' teams versus having a girls' program. Players perceive the policy of integrating girls onto boys' teams as less legitimate in terms of the associations engagement with girls' hockey. By failing to create girls' teams, associations risk their exchange and structural legitimacy in terms of their engagement with girls' hockey. If associations want to be perceived as committed to growing girls' hockey and as engaging with girls' hockey, they need to provide girls with their own teams. Similarly, leagues and state associations should be encouraging associations to create these teams in order to encourage the growth of associations that actively engage with girls' hockey.

There were many ways in which association structure impacted player experiences. Building on the structural, gendered difference found in respect to perceptions of legitimacy, girls' have historically been stigmatized or heavily judged for participating in sports, particularly traditionally male sports such as hockey (Coakley, 2014; Schmalz & Kerstetter, 2006). Girls are participating in sport in general, and hockey specifically, in greater numbers than before (Acosta & Carpenter, 2012; USA Hockey, 2014), but some stigma associated with girls' sport participation still persists (Coakley, 2014; Schmalz & Kerstetter, 2006). Girls were more likely to perceive that girls are judged for their hockey participation than were boys. This is not surprising in that those who experience stigma and stereotyping are more aware of its occurrence

(Basford, Offermann, & Behrend, 2014; Kaskan & Ho, 2016). Boys may witness or perpetrate the judgements and actions that make girls feel judged, but since they are not the targets they are less likely to perceive it as critical. In fact, they may not understand the impact of a statement or action as it does not pertain to them.

The only group of girls that did not perceive that girls are judged for playing hockey more than boys perceive that girls are judged were those who played within an all-girls association. This could be due to the fact that they are in an environment that is focused on providing girls' specific opportunities in hockey. As such, those around them (e.g. other players, parents, and administrators) see the value in girls' hockey. Therefore, by participating in an all-girls association, these players might be protecting themselves to some extent from the judgement other female hockey players perceive. The focus on girls in hockey may shelter them from the reality of being a girl in the broader culture of hockey. However, there were no significant differences between the structure types and the support dimensions. As such, playing in an all-girls association does not provide any increased support from those around them compared to those is the other two structure types.

Moving from perceptions of girls' who play hockey to professionalization of attitude, there was also a gender difference, but only within coed associations. Boys had significantly more professionalized attitudes than did girls within the same association structure type. Within coed structures boys placed more value on winning than girls did. Socialization into societal expectations of normative masculinity and femininity may help explain some of this difference in attitude. Hegemonic masculinity teaches boys to be highly competitive and aggressive while girls are taught to be more docile and less competitive (Ezzell, 2009; Messner, 2002; Schmalz & Kerstetter, 2006). Gendered socialization may play a role in the difference of attitude. However,

this difference only appears within coed structures. One would expect to see the difference across all structure types if it was simply a matter of gender socialization.

Within teams, individual players have different attitudes regarding professionalization and desire to win and continue to progress in the sport. Based on the findings the qualitative portion of this study, girls' teams often have much bigger skill disparities within their teams and within their leagues than do boys' teams. As such, there might be a culture on girls' teams that places a stronger emphasis on playing well or playing fairly rather than on winning due to the skill disparity. If a team has little chance of winning or if they are trying to develop all players on a heterogeneously skilled team, a coach may be more likely to encourage players to work on playing as well as possible and developing as a team rather than a distinct focus on winning that might be more likely on more highly competitive teams. However, none of the structures or levels showed an emphasis on winning in their professionalization of attitude scores. Additionally, it would be expected that the differences would be evident in the other structure types as well, which they were not.

Several aspects of player experience also impacted perceptions of legitimacy (RQ3). Sense of community has often been cited as being important to sport experience and to player retention (Coakley, 2014; Warner & Dixon, 2013). While the construction of sense of community in this study was different from that of Warner et al. (2013), sense of community still played an important role in players' perceptions of organizational legitimacy. All dimensions of sense of community were correlated with at least two dimensions of organizational legitimacy. This makes intuitive sense, as players are likely to feel a greater sense of belonging within their association, feel supported, and have friends in the association if they perceive that the culture of their association cares about them and treats them fairly. Personal experience and situation plays

a role in constituents' perceptions of an organization's legitimacy (Bitektine, 2011; Lock et al., 2015). This often refers to experiences and situations in life broader than the organization that is being judged, however it can also include experiences within the organization. An individual who feels a sense of community within an organization may be more likely to perceive an organization as legitimate based on positive and inclusive experiences within the organization than an individual that has felt less included in the organization. Engagement with the geographic community around the association was important to constituents' perceptions of legitimacy in Lock et al.'s study (2015). While this study does not discuss community in the same way as Lock et al. (2015), engagement with the community of the constituents (e.g., the broader community for Lock et al., and the community of players within a specific association in this study) remains important to constituents' perceptions of organizational legitimacy.

This finding highlights the importance of an association fully engaging with their constituents. If the constituents do not perceive that they are cared about or feel that the culture of the association ignores them or treats them unfairly, people will not enjoy the experience and will have a harder time finding community in that setting. However, if associations work to create a sense of community and a feeling of support for their participants, then participants may be more likely to perceive the organization as legitimate and to stay engaged in the sport. Retention is a major aspect of sport development and sport associations strive to retain players. Since sense of community can help increase player enjoyment and retention in a sport (Cronan & Scott, 2008; J. Fraser-Thomas et al., 2008), community may also encourage them to stay within the association if they feel welcomed and supported.

This culture of community can also be viewed through the lens of legitimacy. Pragmatic legitimacy consider whether an organization has shared values with its constituents, has their

best interest at heart, or is responsive to the constituents' larger interests (Suchman, 1995). Due to the importance of sense of community for player experience, an association that is able to create a sense of community for players could be perceived as sharing the values of the constituents and being responsive to their interests. Players need to feel like they are cared for and included in their association. An association that is unable to create a sense of community may lack pragmatic legitimacy.

It was surprising that neither dimension of perceptions of girls' hockey was correlated with any of the dimensions of legitimacy. It was expected that Perceptions of Girls Who Play Hockey might be correlated with Perceptions of Legitimacy of Association Engagement with Women's Hockey and Culture of Association. Since judgement of players based on gender is often influenced by culture and norms (Coakley, 2014; Messner, 2002), it could be expected that the culture of the organization would influence players perceptions of the treatment of female players. Despite this, there was no significant difference between these two dimensions. This could be due to the fact that all structure types were analyzed together for this test. Perhaps if structure types or player gender were analyzed separately, there might be a significant correlation here.

Additionally, it was surprising that only one dimension of Involvement, Identity, was correlated to Culture of Association and Fairness of Tryouts. Culture has been shown to influence identity (Chen, Snyder, & Magner, 2010), especially within sports associations where team culture is a large aspect of the team and players identify with the culture of the team and the sport. Thus, it makes sense that Identity was correlated with Culture of Association. However, due to the impact culture can have on feelings of support and inclusion, it is surprising that more dimensions of Involvement were not correlated with dimensions of legitimacy. Involvement has

been shown to be influenced by feelings of support and inclusion within the activity in outdoor recreation settings (Kyle et al., 2007). Aspects of legitimacy deal with constituents' judgements of the value of organizational policies and the worth of the organizations support based on the organizations structural characteristic. an organization considers the value of organizational policies to constituents and the worth of support based on structural characteristics (Suchman, 1995). Policies that are supportive of constituents, would likely enhance bonding and identity aspects because the players would feel a part of the organization. As such, it was expected that the more highly involved a player is in the game and their association, the more likely they would be to perceive the association to be legitimate.

Gender and gendered structure play a significant role in respondents' experiences playing hockey and their perceptions of organizational legitimacy. Perceptions of organizational legitimacy are dependent on the personal experiences and social positions of constituents (Bitektine, 2011). Gender is a personal factor that can influence how one experiences the world (Hartsock, 2004). As such, one's gender and social experiences can impact how a person perceives an organization's legitimacy and an organization's commitment to themselves. It can impact how they experience the sport. When associations are creating pathways to support the hockey community as a whole, they should keep in mind that gender does matter, and that visibly supporting all constituents is important in the players' experiences and in their perceptions of organizational legitimacy. Based on these findings, associations should create girls' teams, rather than solely integrating them into the boys' teams. This will help the girls' feel like their association supports and includes them. Associations should also work to treat the girls' and boys' teams. This is in terms of resources, administrative structure, and administration. Associations should be careful not to treat the girls in their program as lesser and should ensure

that all members of the club understand the value and skill of girls' hockey players. This may help mitigate the perceptions of female players that they are negatively judged for being female players.

Study 2 Results and Discussion

Study two consisted of the qualitative interviews which sought to understand the organizational actions that stakeholders perceive as supports or threats to perceptions of organizational legitimacy of associations supporting girls' hockey. This section will present the results and discussion of the qualitative interviews. The results and discussion of the administrator interviews will be presented first, followed by the player interviews. The final part of this section will consider how the findings of these two groups work together to give a deeper perspective of perceptions of legitimacy of multiple stakeholders involved in girls' hockey.

Administrator Perceptions of Legitimacy

Administrators' views are reported first followed by those of the players. Interviewees began with the perceptions that girls' hockey is legitimate. The participants discussed their perceptions of organizational actions that would either threaten or support perceptions of all three types of legitimacy – moral, pragmatic, and cognitive. The factors that were most frequently discussed and most salient to these administrators were those that affected their perceptions of the moral legitimacy of women's hockey. The administrators in this study identified both facilitators and threats to organizational legitimacy, providing findings for research question seven. Facilitators included stability of girls' programs, organizational support for girls' hockey, and a sense of community. Instability of teams, skill disparities within teams, and state level rules were considered threats to the legitimacy of women's hockey. Many of these threats were also the issues that the administrators believed impacted player participation in girls' hockey. Body checking was not considered a necessary component for girls' hockey to be considered legitimate, at least in the eyes of these administrators.

Moral legitimacy. Moral legitimacy considers the positive, normative evaluation of an organization and its activities. It rests on judgements about whether an activity is the right thing to do (Suchman, 1995). There are four types of moral legitimacy, consequential, procedural, structural, and personal. Administrators identified aspects of girls' hockey organizations that relate to each of the four types of moral legitimacy. Structural and procedural were the most commonly discussed and most salient aspects of organizational legitimacy from the perspective of the administrators in this study. Structure and procedure are highly linked as the structures of an organization inform their procedures. The structures and procedures combine to create organizational accomplishments, which the administrators characterized in terms of consequential legitimacy. Personal legitimacy was mentioned, but in more limited important ways. The following subsections illustrate administrators' perceptions of the four types of moral legitimacy: structural, procedural, consequential and personal.

Structural legitimacy. Structural legitimacy considers whether the stakeholders view the organization as valuable or worthy of support based on its structural characteristics (Suchman, 1995). It focuses on whether institutionally prescribed structures convey messages that the organization is acting on collectively valued purposes in a proper manner. Team structure greatly affected administrators' views of the structural legitimacy of women's hockey. The most salient features of teams discussed by administrators were the stability and instability of teams, organizational support, community on teams, skill disparities, and double rostering of players.

Stability of girls' programs was a salient feature of organizational legitimacy for the administrators. Administrators discussed how the associations should create girls' programs, at what age girls' team should be created, and ways to grow girls' hockey structurally. The administrators in this study believed that a stable program that fully supported girls' hockey is

one that starts teams at the youngest age level and keeps players in the same organization throughout the age levels. Recently some associations had started girls' programs with teams beginning at the 14U level. This was seen as a bad practice that communicated a lack of care for girls' development and girls' hockey as a whole. In order for these teams to exist, associations recruit from other associations who have developed the girls from a young age. This practice can de-stabilize existing teams by recruiting away too many girls. Gina, an association administrator, pointedly stated that starting teams at the older ages cannibalizes other teams: "Can you start a program at 16? [...] Can you start a team? Cause that's not the way to start a program, because you're cannibalizing other programs." This hurts the stability of the program that was initially committed to the development of girls' hockey and often leaves girls that have not been recruited away without a place to play. Girls' hockey administrators suggested that legitimate organizations committed to the growth and development of girls' hockey (rather than to a couple of seasons of a championship teams) should start their girls program at the 8U or 10U age levels. Jack, an association administrator with a strong girls' program, articulated his view of the best way to build girls programs:

I would put some regulation around if you start a team at 16, there have to be X amount of girls on that roster that came from your club. Or else you have to start with the 10 or 12 level. Or 8, preferably 8. Girls start at 8, but 12 or under. If you don't have any girls' program right now, the first one you can have is a 12. You can't just pop a 14 team out of nowhere. Unless 50% of the girls that moved up from the peewee boys, or moving into bantams now they want to play girls, that's different.

A pathway that includes stable teams across all age groups was a key aspect of structural legitimacy for the administrators in this study.

In addition to the importance of stable, grassroots development, administrators saw the instability of girls' teams and programs as a major threat to organizational legitimacy. Many associations struggled to sustain teams across all age levels. It was common for players to switch teams, often in groups, which would then kill that age group at their home association. Associations that lost teams regularly were perceived as doing something wrong. Players would switch to a team that they perceived had a better chance of winning a championship, while staying in the same competitive division. Brianne, a girls' team coach, discussed the problems with this constant moving:

It's their [players] fifth program and they're skipping other rinks, they're passing by other rinks when there's nothing fundamentally wrong with those clubs, it's just bouncing around. It makes it hard to project for teams, it makes it hard to plan for girls when you have girls who can just leave on a whim and go anywhere.

This switching of teams made it challenging for associations to maintain a solid, continuous girls' hockey program structure. However, this is not a problem only experienced by girls' hockey programs. It had previously been an issue within the state on the boys' side. As the sport grew and developed and instability became an issue in boys' hockey, the state organization instituted rules that successfully curbed the movement of players. The state organization implemented two rules to restrict movement on the boys' side, the two choice rule and the 2-4-6-8 rule. The two choice rule limits a player to two associations within the same competitive division. If he switches from his home association to a new association, the only place he can switch to again is his original association. The 2-4-6-8 rule restricts the number of players are allowed to follow a coach to a new association. An association is only allowed to have two players on a Mite (8U) team, four players on a Squirt (10U) team, six players on a Peewee (12U)

team, and eight players on a Bantam (14U) team that played for a different association the year before. This limits mass exodus from associations to follow a coach to a new association.

These rules do not currently apply to the girls' side in the state. Because of the lower number of girls' participants, administrators believed that limiting the movement would limit growth. The downside of this rule is that it makes it challenging for an association to start new teams. They would have to have a large number of girls in their own association either playing on boys' teams or looking to start the sport as new players. This is the benefit of starting at the youngest level, as associations then have time to recruit players to the sport when everyone is young and beginning to play. There is now a perception by many administrators that these rules should apply to girls' hockey as the movement of players prevents structural stability.

AAA associations are not allowed to have teams younger than 12U on either the girls' or the boys' side. Thus, these associations are considered morally legitimate even as they contribute to the destabilization of girls' hockey overall. This is the most competitive level, so while they rarely take more than a couple of players from any given team at the older levels, at 12U level they often end up cannibalizing an entire team. According to state regulations, they are not able to develop their own players but rather girls must leave their home clubs to try out for them. This pathway of AAA recruiting away players at 12u is considered legitimate because coaches of AA associations usually perceive sending a player to an AAA team as an accomplishment, and do not find this part of the movement problem. AA coaches view this movement as player development and part of a legitimate sport development model where the most skilled players move to a more competitive division. However, the rule that these associations cannot start at the youngest ages does factor into the movement and stability issue. Greg, an AAA association administrator, wishes he was able to develop his own players:

We have to all of a sudden at U12, we have to come up with a team. Where do you think it's coming from? It's coming from all these AA clubs. Which is probably why they should let us have girls at younger levels, so we can start developing our own girls and our own cultures for those girls. It doesn't make any sense.

Greg even admits that to recruit for his 12U team each year he tries to find a good coach that can bring a following of girls,

Our girls' director, he's got to go out and he's got to recruit a guy, a coach, a guy or a girl that's coaching, that's got a following on that team that's going to bring ten kids with him. And then we'll backfill around them.

This necessarily means that they are cannibalizing, and leaving only a few players behind, from a 12U AA team in order to create their AAA team. While players moving to AAA may not affect the perceptions of the legitimacy of the association, their movement certainly factors into some of the stability issues facing programs trying to create a strong grassroots program. Structural legitimacy is often judged by administrators on the basis of the stability of girls' programs and the teams within them. AAA associations are judged slightly differently because of rules that limit their ability to create younger teams. AAA associations are perceived as a step up the sport transition pathway, as such they are not judged by the same standards as AA associations. AA administrators did not perceive AAA associations as part of the base level of participation that needed to grow broad, stable participation. Instead AAA was judged by their ability to develop elite players within the state.

The administrators in this study also suggested that organizational support affected their perceptions of the structural legitimacy of the association. Organizational support included ice time, girls' specific facilities, and a girls' director. Sufficient access to structural resources such

as ice time were perceived as necessary to recruit and retain sufficient numbers of girls to form multiple girls' teams. Ice was a very limited commodity. Ice time was very carefully allocated according to association procedures, which often led to girls' teams getting worse ice times. However, organizations must be willing to support the presence of the girls' teams at a structural level. Many administrators discussed that once the girls' program was established in their association it was less challenging to get ice time because the teams had become part of the organizational structure and were allocated ice as any other team would be. Brianne, a girls' team coach, mentioned that having a supportive president at the beginning helped in getting ice time and once the girls' teams at her association became well established, the association had to give the girls' teams ice time:

It was something I pushed very hard for. My former boss, he was super supportive. He had two daughters of his own, they didn't play, but he understood the whole equality thing. He was all for it and gave me what I needed to do, allowed me to run clinics and camps and stuff for free to get the girls in the door. Then by the time he left and we had a new manager, we already had established teams. It was not something that could be turned down or ignored. You had to give them ice, they were part of the league, they were treated just like any other team, given the same amount of ice time.

Brian, who is a girls' team coach and also the association president, noted that girls' teams in his association get the same resources and times as the boys, while also suggesting that this is not the case in other associations:

They're treated, they're hockey players, they're no different. Unfortunately, I think some of, if we're talking about other clubs outside, I know some kids who've played at other

clubs where they would get the crappy ice times, whatever is left over, oh give that to the girls. That doesn't happen here.

Brianne and Brian illustrate the importance of having organizational support within the association in the form of supportive staff and organizational structures present to facilitate ice allocation procedures that are fair and equitable to girls' teams.

Another aspect of structural legitimacy deemed important by administrators was the presence of girls-specific facilities. This primarily came in the form of girls-only locker rooms. The associations that strongly supported girls' participation had a dedicated locker room for girls for when there were girls on primarily boys' teams. When players reached Peewee/12U, if not earlier, it was usually deemed inappropriate for girls to change in the same locker room as boys. However, since many girls play on boys' teams through this age, this meant that they needed a separate space to change. While historically girls have often been relegated to bathrooms, hallways, or closets, it was perceived by these administrators that providing a dedicated space was a structural norm that should be followed by all associations. It was seen as a necessity to provide appropriate facilities for those girls who played on boys' teams so that they were not relegated to lesser spaces such as bathrooms when they were considered too old to change with the boys. Jamie, a girls' coach state that getting a girls' locker room was one of her first priorities at her association, "the first step was I got them to put in a locker room just for the girls. It was a small locker room, there were only five of them. It's all decked out, it says, 'Girls Only' on it. That was just a small step." Jarrod, an association administrator, described how they fought to have a locker room put in for the girls:

We worked with the civic center here and we built a dedicated girl's locker room facility. Small step, but that meant so much to that handful of parents, that we had done that.

That's one way we've at least given them an area where they feel comfortable, so that as they are 12, 13, 14 suddenly their bodies are changing and they're comfortable because they still have a private setting to go to.

These administrators realized the importance for girls to have a space that was their own to change in so that they did not feel like they were getting a lesser facility from their teammates. Without adequate facility space for female players, administrators did not perceive an association as having structural legitimacy. Providing appropriate locker room space for instance, was as a necessary facility for the administrators to perceive that the association was acting in a way that valued female players. Without adequate facilities, associations risked lacking structural legitimacy from the perspective of the administrators.

Youth hockey administrators talked about the importance of having a dedicated girls' director within their association, somebody who was specifically tasked to focus on the needs of, and advocate for, the female players. It was deemed as an important aspect of association structure that showed organizational support for girls' hockey. By creating this position within the administrative structure of the association, female players and the girls' program were provided with an ally and an advocate for their needs within the administration. In most associations, the girls' program was added to long standing boys' programs and had to fight for resources such as adequate amounts of ice, good time slots, and coaching resources. The associations that had stable teams across multiple age levels had designated a specific girls' director over the last few years in order to ensure that girls' were treated fairly, provided adequate resources, and that the association created girls' specific recruitment and retention initiatives. Josh, an AAA coach, strongly believes associations should have a girls' director so that parents and players have an ally that focuses on them, as well as an administrator that they

can see around the rink and talk to about any concerns: “They need to hire a girls’ director. It’s just more focused. It’s kind of in terms of recruitment of college stuff that there’d be another voice, another person for the parents of the girls to go to.” While the girls’ director is often a parent with a daughter in the association, Jack, an association administrator of one of the stronger associations, believed that when possible the girls’ director should be a non-parent or at least a parent of a girls committed to that association. Jack’s association had had a number of girls’ directors who were parent and after a year or two, moved their daughters to an AAA team, leaving the AA association behind. Jack commented:

It’s another good point is getting a girls’ director in there or someone that can be there more than a year or two. That has a daughter that’s not going to AAA, or doesn’t have a daughter is even better; somebody that you can rely on that is going to be a voice every year, year after year.

While not all administrators felt that the girls’ director should not be a parent, there was widespread belief in the value of creating a girls’ director. At many associations the girls’ program was created by due to a parent or a group of parents of girls’ to ensure their daughters had a place to play, and in particular a place to play on a girls’ team rather than on a boys’ team. These parents that were driving forces for the creating of the girls’ programs were often the same ones that became girls’ directors. As such, while some administrators believed girls’ directors that were not parents were best, others saw the value in parent support in this position, as these were the people who had the passion and drive to create and move the programs forward. Structurally it was important for organizations to have girls’ directors according to the administrators in this study. Having a girls’ director was considered a structural characteristic

that was valuable and morally favorable by the administrators. This position lent structural legitimacy to an organization from the perception of many of the administrators.

Creating a sense of community on teams was critical to retaining girls and maintaining girls' teams from the perspective of the administrators. They thought that it was challenging for girls to find community on boys' teams, particularly above the 12U level. The administrators suggested that while most of their organizations did a good job of including girls and making them feel welcome on their boys' teams, the structural necessity of girls being in a separate locker room was a barrier to creating community. John, a girls' coach who had previously coached boys' teams with girls on them, stated:

A big part of hockey is not just your practice time, your game time, it's the bonding, the friendships, the camaraderie, the locker room [...] we did that, I had a peewee team a couple years ago with a girl on it, which was fine, but I think they're missing that whole social aspect.

Due to the structural challenges to community on boys' teams, administrators perceived that creating girls-only teams within their associations would help create community and in turn, help retention of female players. Not only do girls' teams fix the locker room issue, administrators also believed that girls relate better to each other and will inherently get along better. Dave, a coach and an association administrator working to form a girls-only association, has a daughter who has played on both boys' and girls' teams and had observed the importance of camaraderie, friendship, and support on girls' teams. He states:

For the most part they emotionally support each other and you can see it as a coach of a girls' team. The benefit emotionally and socially for girls on all girls' teams is hands

down 100% better for them than being on a youth team. I've experienced it and my daughter has experienced it.

The coaches and administrators realize that it is challenging for girls to create the same bonds and friendships on boys' teams on girls' teams due to locker room issues as well as the importance of having teammates that truly support each other. They discussed that this helps the girls enjoy the game and thus perceive that creating the structure of girls-only teams within their associations is beneficial for the legitimacy and growth of girls' hockey.

The creation of girls' teams also creates a structure conducive to programming aimed at retaining more girls. Some administrators said that girls needed more programming and community building activities on their teams than boys did to create this sense of community and stay in the sport.

A perceived threat to structural legitimacy was the challenge associations face of forming teams of consistent skill levels. Since most associations only had one team per age level, all girls at that age are on the same team. This is the reality of the pathway of most girls' programs, however it results in beginner girls playing with girls who have been playing for many years. Jack, an association administrator stated:

The challenge with girls, especially at younger levels where the numbers aren't that large, you get a wide disparity of kids on the team. You get four or five really good ones or four or five that are just figuring out how to skate.

The reason that most associations only have one team per age level is because they do not have high enough participation numbers for more than that.

Additionally, many associations do not always have enough players to have teams at every level. They often combine two age groups to form one team. For instance, a 10U and a

12U team in combined into a single 12U team. This means that players as young as eight and as old as 12 are on the same team, resulting in skill and maturity differences. This team design puts further stress on coaches running the team. The maturity levels and ability to understand directions and systems is often different within those age gaps. It also makes it more challenging to achieve a sense of community within a team as the maturity and experiences of the players are different. This is particularly a challenge in the rural areas where there is less hockey in general and creating girls' teams is even more challenging. Jarrod, an association administrator from a rural area talked about the girls' team they sent to a tournament in December, "when they went up to Chicago, they had to play in the 10U bracket with a five-year-old. They had a great time but they'll never be able to be competitive just because of the age difference." Administrators judged structural legitimacy on the presence of stable, age-appropriate teams from the youngest age to the oldest. This age disparity within teams threatened the structural legitimacy of associations as it allowed gaps in the age successions of players. The gaps created issues that impacted player experiences such as skill level and maturity differences that also concerned the administrators. If an association is unable to sustain teams at each age level, perceptions of their structural legitimacy is threatened.

The final aspect that administrators' identified as affecting structural legitimacy is double rostering. Currently, girls are allowed to double roster on both a boys' team and a girls' team. This is a double-edged sword in the eyes of the administrators. In some ways it helps an association support a girls' program through increased participation numbers, at the same time it creates challenges for creating community on teams and for running practices. Structurally, double rostering allows more girls to play on the girls' side, without leaving the boys' team that they have grown up with. This allows for increased roster numbers on the girls' side, which

could make the difference between being able to have at that age level or not. As such, double rostering allows for girls' teams to exist and can help convince girls to switch fully over to the girls' side by allowing them to sample the camaraderie on the girls' side. Jack an association administrator, stated that it allows girls to experience girls' hockey and make the decision on their own to switch away from boys': "By allowing the double roster, at every level really, it gives them a taste of it. A lot of times they'll end up switching over on their own."

Administrators found that it was hard to get girls to move over without allowing them to stay on their boys' team initially. The administrators discussed that parents often perceived boys' teams as more skilled and thus developmentally better their girls. Due to this parents were often hesitant to move their daughters to girls' teams. Girls, particularly at the younger ages, often had some friends on their boys' teams and were hesitant to leave the players and teams that they knew.

However, since teams often had conflicting practices, it was challenging to have full team practices and for teams to be cohesive with girls playing for a second team. The boys' team was often considered the primary team for the girls, which made them less likely to attend their girls' team practices when there was a conflict. Dave, a girls' coach and association administrator, bluntly stated the usual priority of double rostered players, "they're torn, so if you have conflicts, which team do you go with? Generally speaking, most of the girls that dual roster in Illinois go with the youth [boys] team usually." Although double rostering allows teams to exist structurally, it is challenging for that pathway to truly support girls' development with girls' teams. John discussed the reality of double rostering and the resulting challenges to develop girls' hockey:

It makes it hard when you're trying to work on team things and you're always missing a quarter group of girls. We rarely have a practice where our entire team is there.

Sometimes you're missing two or three, sometimes we're missing ten.

Many administrators saw double rostering as the only way to get enough girls to field girls' teams. However, once created it was hard for the teams to be cohesive and competitive because all the players were double rostered and had divided loyalties.

Due to the challenges faced when double rostering is allowed, one association had begun to move away from double rostering. During this associations' first season with a girls' program, (just one 10U team), the team did not do well during most of the season. However, for the last month of the season all of the boys' season had ended. As a result, the girls were able to practice and play together consistently, and immediately started improving rapidly. The ability to play and practice together as a cohesive team allowed for rapid skill development. At the same time, the girls were having fun and bonding. This past season, the associations second season with a girls' program, players were not allowed to double roster. Jamie explained:

I actually have it so that the girls don't double roster. A lot of the teams in these tournaments do where the girls play with the boys and then they come over just for the tournaments. I just don't think that that is the way I wanted to run it, cause I wanted to show that you can play girls hockey and still get better and be good. Someone needs to teach you. For me, I feel like a lot of these girls' teams, they need the double rostered players to have the teams, like in tier two. I understand that, but those coaches aren't coaching those girls. They're being coached by somebody else and then just come over for tournaments.

The team quickly became one of the top teams in the league and have had many players from other associations ask to join the team. Other players see this team having fun and developing their skills. The coach of this team thought she had a successful model for growing the sport and developing girls' hockey without the need for girls to play on boys' teams. Other associations thought that she was recruiting players away from them. She suggested that maybe instead of blaming her they should consider following her model. When other associations tell her to stop recruiting players away from her she counters:

I tell them the same thing. I'm like, 'Listen, you have to look somewhere else besides me if your kids want to leave. It's got to be something, it's not me, I'll tell you that much, there's something else going on in your program that maybe you need to look at.'

Currently double rostering is considered a necessary evil, but associations are slowly finding ways to move away from it and are having success once they are able to create true girls-only teams where the player commitments are to the girls' team. Jamie has created an association structure for developing girls within girls-only teams without relying on girls to double roster. Her girls' program has exploded, with players wanting to join because the structure has shown to develop players within that model. She shows that it is possible to create a structure that is successful in sustaining girls' teams without relying on girls who double roster on boys' teams. Her model, with good coaching and attention to the girls' development, has fostered strong skill improvements, team camaraderie, and a thriving girls' program, all while allowing the girls and their parents to focus on only one team. However, there are also benefits to double rostering, and there may be ways to allow double rostering to serve the players and help advance the development of the sport for girls.

Double rostering gives players experience with more different coaches which can increase their knowledge and understanding of the sport. Additionally, double rostering allows girls' to experience the competitive level that is discussed by administrators and players as higher on the boys' side as well as the increased levels of community that is found on the girls' side. If an association designs their program with intentionality, they can create an environment that allows players to double roster more smoothly. For instance, if an association schedules ice in a way that girls' teams and boys' teams of similar ages are on different days (e.g. 12U girls practice on Tuesdays and Thursdays and Bantam boys practice on Monday and Wednesdays), this will allow a 12U girl to double roster while missing minimal games and practices. Since one of the biggest problems with double rostering is missed practices, intentional scheduling can circumvent some of this problem in a sport where ice time is a limited and known commodity that is scheduled at the association level. Most of the players double rostered at some point in their careers, often as a way to start playing girls' hockey. It is important to think creatively in creating a girls' centered sport development model that allows the common practices in place in the sport and practices that can increase participation to be implemented successfully within the sport.

Aspects of association structure were key to the administrators' perceptions of structural legitimacy. Stability of teams within girls' programs and limiting the player movement that created instability was an important aspect of having structural legitimacy. Judgements of legitimacy are based on constituents' expectations of an association. Expectations of sport development and sport organization are often formed on the basis of the hegemonic, masculine, center of sport (Balyi, 2001; Messner, 2002). Traditional sport development models are based on broad participation on stable teams within associations. Thus, when associations lack consistent

teams across all age levels, expectations of administrators are not met. As a result, instability was a treat to administrators' perceptions of structural legitimacy. Additionally, organizational structures that support girls' hockey through facilities and administrator positions were salient factors to administrators' perceptions of structural legitimacy. Addressing the needs of female players, particularly when those needs are different or in addition to the needs of their male counter parts, was perceived as a necessary to administrators' judgments of whether an association's structures were responsive to the needs of players. Feminist standpoint theory posits that women's experiences, particularly within male dominated areas of society, such as masculine typed sports, will likely be different than those of men. By addressing the needs of female players, through having an advocate in the girls' director position, and ensuring appropriate facilities for girls, associations are working to ensure that the experiences of female players are considered. Creating an association structure that allowed for girls to find community on their teams, along with limiting skill disparities that challenged community building, were important to creating a structure that supported girls' hockey.

Procedural legitimacy. Procedural legitimacy occurs when constituents feel that the organization uses socially accepted technics and practices (Suchman, 1995). It is most useful in the absence of clear outcome measures but when organizational practices demonstrate that the organization is making efforts in good faith to achieve valued ends (Suchman, 1995). Procedural legitimacy, in the context of this study, is highly tied to structural legitimacy. The organizational structures that the administrators discussed as important to legitimacy set the stage for procedures to promote the legitimacy of girls' hockey programs and support the development of girls' hockey. Without the supporting procedures, the structures would be gestures with little meaning because there are no actions that are perceived to be socially acceptable to follow

through. Along with structures, the administrators emphasized aspects of procedural legitimacy as important to the legitimacy of girls' hockey programs.

Stability was a key factor in administrators' judgements of both procedural and structural legitimacy. While stability, in terms of structural legitimacy, was concerned with the way in which the associations created teams, at what age level, how many teams, etc., stability was also discussed by the administrators with respect to development procedures. Overall, the administrators in this study firmly perceived that girls' hockey development should start at the grassroots level, with associations creating teams at the youngest ages. However, beyond the structure of providing teams at those levels, associations needed to also have the procedures in place to do this. Several administrators discussed having girls-only teams at the 8U/mite level. At the Mite level, players are often randomly assigned to teams resulting in, at most, one or two girls on any given team. At this age, gender does not particularly matter in terms of development or changing rooms, but players move to the next age group with their teams as they make friends and want to stay with their friends and teammates. Thus, girls are automatically funneled into the boys' system and later switch over, and leave teammates at older ages levels. Instead several administrators are beginning to create girls-only Mite teams that play in their coed Mite House program (in-house, non-competitive program within an individual association). This way girls start out with female teammates and can easily progress through a girls' program without leaving teammates or friends. John, an association administrator and girls' coach, formed a girls' team to play in his mite in-house program this past season:

What we're able to do is, with those girls, we're able to put them on one team. Even in our little house league, the 8U's, they're on their own little team together. For the girls,

they get to stay together, and then we did some jamborees where we invited some clubs, also we went to some other clubs.

Gina, another association administrator, plans to do the same thing next season:

I plan on having a 6U and 8U team next year, just the sheer number of six year olds that were out there. Most of them were ready for an in-house Silver Mite program. I want to capture those girls and get them on an all-girls team right away so they experience that instead of three girls on this Silver Mite team, three girls, 'cause that's what's happened in the past.

The concept is that if they are put on an all-girls team at the Mite house level, they will form a bond with that team and will not have a reason to play on a boys' team. As such they will stay within the girls' side of the sport, rather than having to either double roster or switch over later. This would make it easier to maintain teams, especially teams that do not rely on double rostered players since the girls' would be funneled through the girls' system. While not all administrators agreed with creating girls' teams at the mite level, they all saw the importance of procedures that supported grassroots development of girls' teams at the youngest ages to help create stable teams that girls' could develop within.

Instability of associations is perceived to be as a threat to procedural legitimacy as well. Associations try to make it as easy as possible for girls' to participate in hockey. Some associations lower the cost of participating for girls' that double roster by either waving or reducing the participation fee for the second team. Jack, an association administrator explained,

In the fall they pay for their higher costing team, whatever it is. Typically, it is the boys' teams. We lower the girls' prices to attract them and keep them there. If they play on a

boys' house team and a girls' travel team, the girls' travel team is typically more expensive so they pay that fee. And one of them gets waived. They pay one fee.

Other associations worked to make sure that their girls had as many participation opportunities as possible in order to create teams and retain girls. Jarrod, an association administrator who had a small girls' program for the first time this season, stated:

We give a lot of leeway to girls to kind of go find what fits for them. We're just trying to get them in the door and let them find what fits for them. If they want to play travel and play with the boys, great, we are going to support that. If they want to just play in the house program with the girls, great, we're going to support that also. They've got all the options.

The associations often give the girls a significant amount of leeway to find where they fit in the program and some associations give them financial incentives to join their girls' program. This is in an effort to create a system of stable girls' teams. Yet, whenever they encourage girls to double roster, they still run the risk of the instability and community issues faced by double rostered players not showing up to practices and team events of the secondary team. The administrators use procedures regarding the associations participation management to create stability. Procedurally, some administrators allow girls to choose amongst multiple participation options and offer discounts based on the option the player selects in an effort to encourage girls' participation and create stability in their girls' program.

Administrators identified aspects of organizational support that are important to procedural legitimacy. At the structural level, organizational support considered the arrangements in place to provide ice time for girls and an associations provision of facilities such as locker rooms for girls, and of administrators, such as a girls' director, to support the girls'

programs and female players. However, once those association structures are in place, administrators saw a need for procedures to support their girls' program. Ice time was once again an important topic as administrators talked about the need for associations to have procedures in place to fairly allocate ice time to girls' teams. As mentioned earlier, once the girls' program was established, ice time often became less of an issue; however, the process of acquiring appropriate ice time as they were growing programs was challenging for many coaches and administrators, and some continued to experience issues even after having girls' teams for years. Many girls' teams shared ice with another team and often received only 1-2 hours of ice per week at the AA level; AAA teams had significantly more practice time. The coaches and girls' directors often had to fight initially to gain sufficient ice time at appropriate times of the day. Since boys' teams had been around longer, adding girls' teams meant finding more ice time or taking time away from previously organized (boys) teams. Cameron, a girls' coach and association administrator, recounted his fight to get more and better ice times:

When I started we got 40 minutes of ice a week. I had two practices a week. After my second year I started complaining [...] now we get an hour and 20 min ice one day and an hour of studio the other day

While that still does not sound like a lot of ice, he is now happy with the time slots and the amount of ice that he gets, reporting, "with a lot of our girls' double rostering, it's plenty of ice." It is viewed as important to have policies in place that support a structure that values equitable ice for girls. If associations always allocate ice to the teams that have been around for longer first, the ice will usually go to the boys' teams first because girls' programs are usually newer. Instead, association administrators discussed that ice allocation procedures should be fair and

treat girls' teams like any other team by allocating appropriate amounts and times slots for the age of the team.

Another aspect of organizational support that the administrators deemed as important to procedural legitimacy was girls-specific recruitment initiatives. Association structures with a girls' director and organizational space for girls' hockey were judged to be more legitimate than those without these positions and spaces. These association structures, while necessary, were not sufficient in and of themselves. Associations still need to recruit and retain enough girls to fill their teams. The majority of the administrators in this study advocated for the importance of girls' specific recruitment initiatives, such as Girls Try Hockey for Free day. Administrators reasoned that for an association to be a legitimate supporter of girls' hockey, it should provide the resources (e.g., ice equipment, coaches) for girls-specific recruitment events. Coed Try Hockey days were not deemed sufficient. Alyssa, a state administrator stated the rationale behind the girls-only days: "USA Hockey helps sponsor 'Give Hockey a Try' twice a year. If every organization just commits to doing one session for girls only (sic), because face it, some girls don't want to come out with boys on the ice." Several of the associations use their older female players to help during these clinics so that the new, younger girls have role models. Cameron, a girls' coach, runs a clinic that he uses his high school players as coaches and subsequently invites the new players to watch the high school girls' game that evening:

We try to do, have girls play a game that same day, that the new girls can watch after try outs and then we try to get all of them to come to a [high school] game. Usually a home game that night. We try to make it a beginning to end, and I have my [high school] girls come out for the try hockey, so the 6 and 7 year olds are like, Wow. There are these high school hockey players with their jerseys on.

Gina, an association administrator shared how successful the girls-only events were for her:

I did a girls-only Try Hockey for Free event. We had 60 girls signed up. I had 30 on a wait list [...] that's how you get girls and then it's word of mouth really. I will probably do one once a quarter.

Creating these events that lead to an influx of female players helps to create teams that can provide more stability in the association have having sufficient player numbers. However, there is also work that goes into filling the girls-specific events like Gina did. The girls' director and girls' coaches must work to encourage girls not currently in the sport to come try it. Some coaches have their players bring a friend who does not play to the try hockey events. Jamie, a girls' coach and association administrator also does a lot of work herself to spread a word of mouth message about the event and to encourage other girls (often siblings of male players) around her rink that it is okay for them to play hockey too:

I go out by the figure skating rinks. I encourage everybody that's in the rink. Any sister, little sister, little cousin. I give them equipment. Here's a bag, try it out, see if you like it. Come on out. They really do come. I feel like you have to have that female presence, or somebody that can relate or talk to these little girls and not scare them.

These intensive and girls' specific events were seen as beneficial to increase participation and in turn create more girls' teams and more stability. Administrators understood that some girls may not feel comfortable trying the sport around boys or may not view it as a sport open to them unless they saw other girls on the ice. An important aspect to perceiving that an association was legitimately supportive of girls' hockey was providing these opportunities and using older female players as coaches and role models for the new players. Administrators viewed it as socially expected and as a good faith effort to support girls' hockey that an association provide girls-

specific recruitment events, and have procedures in place to encourage girls' participation if the association was committed to supporting girls' hockey.

Once an association has recruited girls, it must be able to retain them. Associations viewed creating community amongst the players as a key component to creating community. Structurally, associations did this by creating girls-only teams. However, several administrators did not see the creation of girls' teams as sufficient to create a feeling of belonging on girls' teams and advocated for procedures the community feel girls' teams. These administrators discussed that girls are different from boys in their need for sense of community on teams – that they are more social and need more team bonding type activities than a boys' team did. This could be viewed as administrators having sexist stereotypes of the needs of girls. However, women have been shown to find sense of community important to their entrance into sport (Axelsen, 2009; Cronan & Scott, 2008). Warner & Dixon (2013) also found sense of community and non-competitive friendship to be more important to female athletes. Several associations that had strong girls' programs did extra programming for their girls' teams that their boys' teams did not do. They had girls' program-wide pizza parties, made door signs for tournaments, and created girls' team specific apparel. Gina, an association administrator, was one that believed in creating these extra social events to enhance community among her association's girls' teams:

Girls' hockey is so much different than boys, there's a big social aspect. I do ice cream socials and team bondings, where all three teams went to South Bend for a tournament. Before that I got the 19's, the 10's, and the 12's all together to make door signs together. All of our 19U's know the younger girls, so the 10's and 12's have something to aspire to, 'cause they see our team going to nationals. It keeps them excited and it actually keeps the parents excited.

These were all activities done to create a more communal environment for the girls in her association in an effort to increase retention.

When Jamie, an association administrator and girls' coach, began creating the girls' program at her association, she wanted to differentiate the girls from the rest of the association so that they had something to claim as their own and rally around. She changed the team colors and made slight alterations to the logo and the players rally around this and the nickname they gave themselves. In talking about her jerseys Jamie said:

I made it with this black and then just like a jet stream of pink right through the top. It's more of a badass, like cool girls thing rather than like a little girly pink sort of thing. I just feel like associating pink with a group of girls that just lay people out is kind of funny.

The girls just love it. They die for it. They love it, even the girls that don't like the color pink just love the jerseys.

She continues on to talk about how the girls have bonded not only around this color scheme but also the alternate nickname they gave themselves, based on a phrase she used, "So I have all these little tiny girls and they call themselves, 'The Chicas' and they're running around and they have pony tails and pink helmets. I'm like, 'This is just the best thing I've ever seen in my life.'" This shared identity on the ice, in the locker room, as well as through team events and differentiated team items is viewed as of primary importance to creating an inclusive environment and enhancing community which was perceived to help retain girls.

While not all associations create activities or other items specifically for their girls' teams, several administrators perceive that the best practice for creating a strong girls' program that is best able to recruit and retain girls is to have procedures in place for girls' specific programming aimed at team bonding and creating a sense of community within the girls' teams.

This is seen as procedural beneficial to retention and shows that the association is making good faith efforts to recruit and retain female participants. Associations that lacked procedures in place to address the needs of girls in hockey, such as girls' specific programming and procedures of ice allocation that were equitable, risked administrators not judging the associations to be procedurally legitimacy.

Consequential legitimacy. While procedural and structural legitimacy were the most salient aspects of moral legitimacy, the administrators considered the importance of factors related to consequential legitimacy. Consequential legitimacy is a function of judgements about the accomplishments of an association. Administrators in this study did not judge girls' associations on their wins or championships, as is often discussed in terms of sport organization accomplishments. Instead, equity between the girls' and boys' programs within an association was considered the important factor. Treating the girls' program with equity was the accomplishment on which associations were judged. Equity in light of consequential legitimacy was talked about in terms of organizational support and issues of skill disparity.

As discussed earlier, ice time was a prime issue for administrators. While they primarily discussed it in terms of structures and procedures that lead to the allocation of ice time, the summation of the structures and procedures leads to an easy to judge outcome. Administrators can easily judge whether the policies and procedures of an association have resulted in an overall accomplishment of equitably distributing ice time to their girls' teams. The other aspect of organizational support that can be easily judged is the presence of the girls' director. Most associations have a hockey director, however, administrators saw the importance of creating a position dedicated to their girls' program. This position was meant to serve as an ally to the girls' players and help in recruitment and retention of girls. The creation of this

position and having a person in place who actively works to create and sustain girls' specific recruitment and retention programs can be judged not only by their presence in the association but also by how much they have accomplished in growing and sustaining the girls' program in their associations. If a girls' director and her/his association is able to accomplish positive recruitment and retention of girls or changes in the association that improve the equity of girls' in their association, then that lends consequential legitimacy to the association.

The skill disparity of players was seen as a threat to consequential legitimacy. Creating equitable girls' programs with teams across all age levels was the goal of most associations. However, skill disparities made it hard to create cohesive teams. When players switched teams, they were often seeking a more competitive team to play on. Most often, it was the top players on a team moving to play on a more homogenous, highly skilled team. If associations were better able to create teams with homogenous skill levels, even multiple teams based on skill level at each age group, retention would be easier because team and player development would be easier. Currently coaches have trouble meeting the needs of all of their players due to the skill disparity. Cameron, a girls' coach and association administrator, discussed this, "It is really hard to meet the needs of all the girls in my team. I have girls who literally started playing hockey a year ago, up to girls who are going to Harvard, on the same team." This makes coaching the team and creating a cohesive team environment challenging, which creates challenges to team stability. The policies and structures need to be in place for programs to grow so that the associations can accomplish having teams with less skill disparity in order to create better community and development on the teams. Many of these issues are present in the development of any new sport. Associations must seek out players new to the sport in order to develop and sustain teams across a broad base of participation. However, gender also

plays a role in recruiting and retaining girls in hockey at high enough levels to create stability within associations. The masculine typing of an aggressive team sport like hockey and the stigmas surrounding girls' who participate in masculine typed sports (Coakley, 2014; Ezzell, 2009; Theberge, 2000) can dissuade girls' from participating. Thus, beyond the normal challenges of developing a new sport, associations must be prepared to address the gendered issues that accompany hockey participation for girls. Without properly addressing these issues, or recruiting in a way that minimizes them, associations may struggle to sustain participation at a level that allows for stability.

Personal legitimacy. The fourth type of moral legitimacy is personal legitimacy which considers the charisma of organizational leaders. The administrators judged personal legitimacy in terms of organizational support and coaches. In terms of organizational support many of the administrators considered the ways that girls' programs at their associations were started and driven by an individual or group of individuals who were champions of girls' hockey. These were often parents of girls easier to ensure that there was a place for their daughter to play. These champions served as the driving force to start teams, often served as coach of the initial girls' teams, and at times were the first girls' director of their association. Most of the associations could trace the origins of their girls' programs back to a champion that pushed hard for the development of girls' teams and a girls' program. Some association accepted these champions more easily, quickly establishing and supporting teams. Other are still hesitant to fully support girls' teams. John, a girls' coach, relayed the development of girls' hockey in his association:

The girls program really started with a couple, usually what happens in girls' programs is it takes a board, it either takes a dedicated board, a dedicated parent, a dedicated coach, a dedicated hockey director, someone that has vested interest in girls, honestly to get it

started. In our program, we had one of our coaches and board members, [names redacted], they had a daughter, who is currently on my U19 team. She was a younger player and so it's like, "Hey, why don't we try to have a girls' program?" So we just kept working at it.

Jack had a similar experience at his association:

You have a couple dads that have a couple daughters and they end up putting a girls' team together. That's kind of how it started - 8 or 9 years ago, with a dad who had a daughter... and one who was coaching girls at the AAA level. His daughters finally get old enough to play, and so he came to AA level and started helping me start the girls program with the [association]. Just an ambitious dad that wanted to put a team together.

The administrators saw the importance of these charismatic individuals driven to create a girls' program as necessary in forming girls' programs.

There were also some individuals who were recognized widely by administrators as not only being the champion of girls' hockey at a specific association, but of girls' hockey in the state as a whole. Jamie was one of these individuals. She was widely recognized by other administrators as being the driving force for girls' hockey at her association, and as an example of the passion and drive needed in girls' hockey more broadly. She was not initially on my interview list as her associations' girls' teams were all below the age level examined in this study. However, after multiple administrators noted her role as a champion of girls' hockey and complemented her as an example of growing a program 'the right way,' I asked her to participate as well. She started her girls' program two years ago. She returned to the association she had grown up in, and the situation for girls was the same as when she had played. She found this unacceptable. She is a champion who did not have a girl of playing age, but did wanted to make

sure other girls were better supported than during her time in the association. She started with one 12U team her first season and this past season she had three 12U teams, a 10U team, and an 8U team. She noted:

It wasn't completely easy. It was, I have really good backing because our hockey director and our president are so about the girls, which is amazing. They basically will help me with anything I need, anything I want. It doesn't hurt that their daughters are both on my team.

She continues, reflecting on the necessity of having a champion for girls:

I really feel like a lot of people can do it. You just have to have someone that's extremely passionate about what they do, who will dedicate a lot of time and a lot of family time.

My husband is at the rink seven days a week with my kids. He says if he wants to see his family, he has to be at the rink. He's best friends with all the dads and the moms and the parents, and they all get along. Sometimes I'm with the kids and they're all at the bar. I'm just like, "What the?" I just feel like you have to have somebody that is dedicated to do it, but wants to be there, wants to be present and really wants to teach.

She has a policy of accepting any girl who wants to play, and even when her association doubts her ability to serve that many girls with the allotted ice time, she is determined to make it work and to give the girls' an opportunity to play in a supportive environment. She is committed to continue to grow the girls' programs and sees a role for the girls themselves to enhance retention. Her teams support one another in their games. She described her intention to keep growing and the importance of girls supporting each other:

Yeah, and just keep it going. For us, I'm like, don't we have enough? We have like five teams and they're like, "Let's have another open house". I'm like, "Okay, all right. Let's do

it." It's great. This weekend I've been here like all day every day because we have so many teams. Then the teams stay and support each other. The little 8U's just played a cross ice game.

While champions are often parents of girls' in the association, they are not always. However, most girls' programs start with the push of a champion, some are only known internally, some are such strong advocates that their work is recognized by surrounding associations as well. This personal legitimacy of having champions to create girls' programs, is key for associations that are working to better support and grow their girls' programs. While champions are good for starting a program, they are not sustainable long term. Since champions are often parents, their child will eventually leave the association either because she is too old or decides to move to a new association. Associations need to be prepared for this; other administrators must buy into the girls' program and be willing to support it, even when they do not have a champion pushing them to. Champions lend personal legitimacy to the association by advocating and encouraging the association to support their girls' programs.

Personal legitimacy can also be considered in terms of the coach of girls' teams, which relates to the issues of team instability. The administrators complained about the instability in terms of players moving too much. Often a charismatic coach would move with his/her daughter to a different, supposedly better, association. If the players like this coach, they were likely to switch with him/her to the new association. This also allowed them to retain their community or social group on the team. A charismatic coach helped develop a team at an association, however, when that coach left, he/she could take the majority of a team with him/her. In turn this threatens the legitimacy of the association because they may no longer be able to have a team at that age level. A coach judged to be personally legitimate lends legitimacy to the overall association

through her/his actions. Judgements regarding the coaches affect perceptions of association legitimacy. An association will struggle to be perceived as legitimate without a coach who is judged to be legitimate. If a coach is not legitimate, players may be more likely to switch to another association with a better coach or drop out of the sport all together. As such, perceptions of the legitimacy of a coach impact perceptions of legitimacy of the overall organization.

Administrators were acutely aware that a good coach could help them recruit and retain girls but at the same time if one of their coaches' left could be a threat to their legitimacy because they might lose a team.

Moral legitimacy was the most salient form of legitimacy judged by the administrators. The administrators were particularly concerned with the structural and procedural legitimacy. This could be related to their role within the association. Role theory considers the role or part that an individual plays within situation (Biddle, 1986; Stryker, 2001). Roles are socially constructed through interactions with others and come with expectations of behavior and actions. Administrators roles within the organization relate to the creation and maintenance of structures and policies within the association. As such, administrators are likely to judge associations based on the aspects that they are familiar and regularly work with.

Pragmatic legitimacy. The administrators also discussed several factors that impact pragmatic legitimacy. Pragmatic legitimacy considers the self-interests of organizations and is the most immediate form of legitimacy (Suchman, 1995). There are three types of pragmatic legitimacy: influence legitimacy, dispositional legitimacy, and exchange legitimacy. The administrators identified factors relevant to all three types of pragmatic legitimacy.

Influence legitimacy. Influence legitimacy is concerned with an association's responsiveness to constituents' larger interests and an organization's willingness to relinquish

some of its authority to the affected audience (Suchman, 1995). In terms of girls' hockey, administrators discussed influence legitimacy regarding the organizational structure of having a girls' director within the association. A girls' director was seen as an ally to the girls playing; one that could be available and understand their needs and advocate for them with the administration of the association. By creating a position that is directly responsive to the girls in the association and tasked to serve and advocate for their needs, an association may be seen as relinquishing some of its authority to the affected audience, the girls in their program in this instance. If there is a girls' director who advocates for the needs of the players, and the association approves some of the requests, then it is likely the association will be viewed as being responsive to the needs of the constituents. Due to this, administrators in this study perceived that having a girls' director position in an association was a good indicator of an association's influence legitimacy.

However, there was also

Dispositional legitimacy. Dispositional legitimacy is judged based on whether the constituents believe that the association has its best interest at heart, if it shares their values, or if it is otherwise trustworthy, decent or honorable (Suchman, 1995). The administrators judged dispositional legitimacy in terms of coach and player movement. Several administrators observed that players and coaches leaving an association was a sign that that association was doing something wrong, or could be doing something better. Mass defections, or repeated player movement away from an association deprived associations of disposition legitimacy.

Constituents did not believe the association had their best interests at heart and thus left for an association that they believe will better support them. Jamie, a girls' coach and association administrator, noted that other coaches shifted the blame to her, essentially accusing her of stealing their players. Her view highlights the judgements of dispositional legitimacy:

I have 47 girls on the ice on Tuesdays and Mondays. A lot of people want to be a part of it, so what I'm kind of seeing now is other coaches getting mad at me because girls want to come play for me. What, do I say no? No you can't come? How do you say "no" to a ten-year-old that wants to come play for you? [...]? You would think if they're all leaving to come play for somebody who's got these kind of values and morals, doing it this way, maybe something would change in their own club. Maybe it will, hopefully.

Jamie was judged to have the best interests of the players at heart in her coaching philosophy. As such, her, and her association were judged to have dispositional legitimacy. However, other coaches from associations that lost players to her association blamed her for their retention issues instead of looking at what their association could do to increase perceptions of legitimacy of their own association and reduce attrition. When other coaches call to complain that she is taking their players her response is:

I'm like, 'Listen, you have to look somewhere else besides me if your kids want to leave. It's got to be something, it's not me, I'll tell you that much, there's something else going on in your program that maybe you need to look at.'

When players move and leave an association, it threatens their legitimacy due to the issues of stability and the threat that poses to moral legitimacy as discussed earlier. However, it also signals a lack of dispositional legitimacy if the players are leaving because they do not feel like the organization has their interests at heart or that there is an organization that is better at supporting their interests or values. The movement to Jamie's organization shows that her association is judged to be dispositionally legitimate as it has the best interests of the players at heart.

Exchange legitimacy. The third type of pragmatic legitimacy is exchange legitimacy. Exchange legitimacy considers constituents' support for an organizational policy based on the policy's expected value for the audience. In respect to girls' hockey, administrators discussed the state level rules about player movement between associations, and the ability of players to double roster. On the boys' side, the state association imposed rules to restrict player movement and improve association stability in the form of the two-choice rule and the 2-4-6-8 rule. However, because to player numbers on the girls' side were low, it was decided that those rules would hinder growth of girls' hockey. However, as girls' hockey has grown, administrators now suggest that these rules would help to stabilize girls' hockey and to continue to grow the sport. In fact, the majority of the administrators in this study claimed the lack of rules was currently a threat to the legitimacy of girls' hockey and supported their implementation. The administrators stated that these rules would help stabilize girls' teams, making it easier for associations to field teams across the age levels and build their own programs from the youngest ages all the way to the oldest. This would allow consistency and development. Bob, an association administrator at an association that does not currently have any girls' teams, clearly thought that these rules would enable associations to build girls' programs with less risk. He stated:

I think it would help because...if I build a 10U team, I don't have any risk, I have little risk of losing them, other than to AAA, but if you have a big enough group, you can lose a few and you're still fine. When you make it... open season, then you may have a team that's 10U one year and the next year the coach says, 'you know what I just got hired by the [other association] to come down there, who wants to go with me,' and they're all gone.

These rules would make it easier for teams to have enough girls because they would not face mass exodus to another association each year and it would allow associations to be more confident in having a team from year to year. The rules had not yet been implemented in girls' hockey, however, administrators explained that these policies now had value on the girls' side as well. Cameron made this clear when he said, "I think not having the rule is more detrimental than having it, at this point." Most of the administrators discussed that these rules would be implemented soon, and one state administrator indicated that they were in the process of writing the rules to be implemented next season. It was clear that the administrators thought the state organization needed to implement these rules in order to have policies that supported the continued growth of girls' hockey. The lack of the rules threatened the exchange legitimacy of the state organization of girls' hockey, at least in the eyes of the administrators, because existing policies were not supporting continued growth of the sport.

The rule that girls are allowed to double roster on a boys' team and a girls' team acts at a double edged sword. The administrators see this a positive policy that has value and thus lends exchange legitimacy to the associations, while also serving as a threat when girls are more committed to their boys' teams, hindering the growth and commitment of the girls' team. Administrators discussed that double rostering helps attract girls to their girls' teams and eases girls' transitions from boys' teams to girls' teams when that time comes. However, it causes issues for the girls, the teams, and the associations. The girls risk burn-out if they are playing too much at too young of an age, which can easily happen when they double roster on two competitive teams (J. L. Fraser-Thomas et al., 2005). The teams struggle because they are often missing a substantial number of players at practice when the players have a conflict with their other team. This makes it hard for coaches to plan practice and for the teams to grow and

develop together. It is also challenging to associations because they run into team stability issues if they have to rely on girls being willing to roster on two teams in order to form a girls' team at that level. Gina, an association administrator that allows double rostering, and actually reduces the fee for double rostered players, realized the impact of girls' who are only occasionally at practice. She would like to move away from double rostering, but that is not a reality for her association yet: "I'd like to have enough girls that we don't double roster girls cause they're playing too many games. Then you have the issue where your team is strong when they're there, and then when the girls have conflicts..." Josh, a girls' coach, adds to this idea of playing too many games by talking about burnout:

I think that it can be too much. You see them fatigued a lot. Most of the games we're battling second period and real close games, and then by the third period, whether they're just tired or mentally fatigued from hockey, it just seems like the wheels fall of the bus. If I had it my way, I'd have them only playing on one team, but they want to do it.

Double rostering was a double edged sword for the administrators in this study. They saw its value and in many ways supported it, but also saw how it could be a threat to the growth of girls' hockey if it caused team instability or caused girls to quit due to burnout. Double rostering simultaneously was a way for associations to gain exchange legitimacy but also was a threat to exchange legitimacy if the association was not careful. The policy was judged as lending legitimacy as the policy effectively facilitated enough girls rostering to create girls' teams at many age levels. However, when the girls then did not show up at practices, caused instability if they chose to not double roster, or led to attrition from burn out, then the policy was not having the expected value to the administrators and was thus judged as a threat to the legitimacy of the association.

Cognitive legitimacy. The final type of legitimacy is cognitive legitimacy which considers the larger picture of the social world and how the social world is understood. There are two types of cognitive legitimacy, comprehensibility legitimacy and taken for granted legitimacy (Suchman, 1995). Comprehensibility legitimacy is judged based on participants' ability to understand their experiences in a coherent fashion within a chaotic social world. The accounts of the constituents must mesh with both the larger belief system of the organization and with the lived reality of the constituents daily life (Suchman, 1995). The administrators in this study did not find this type of legitimacy salient to their experiences of hockey associations. However, they did make judgements based on taken for granted legitimacy. Specifically, these judgments were of the checking rule.

Taken for granted legitimacy. Taken for granted legitimacy considers whether a change in an aspect of the social structure is unthinkable, or whether challenges to the structure are impossible (Suchman, 1995). Many of the administrators in this study discussed the non-check nature of girls' hockey as taken for granted. Several of the participants in this study, did not even consider adding checking. To them, it was taken for granted that girls' hockey does not include checking and therefore was never discussed. On the boys' side of the game, excluding checking is unthinkable for most. When USA Hockey and Hockey Canada both raised the age of checking in boys' hockey from Pee wee (12U) to Bantam (14U), there was significant backlash from parents, coaches, and administrators (Milbury, 2015). They saw it as changing the nature of the game, even though evidence showed that it created a significantly safer game at the Pee wee level. After 25 years of no checking in women's hockey, it seems that those involved have become accustomed to it and see no reason to question the status quo.

The administrators discussed that checking was not critical for good hockey. In fact, several suggested that without checking, the skill of the game comes through more and it is a truer game to watch and play. Jamie, a girls' team coach, association administrator, and from a collegiate hockey player herself, liked the skill game found when checking was not involved:

The non-check rule in girls' hockey is, I like it. I think it keeps the girls' game more skill based instead of the biggest person just nailing people. Especially, I watched the US [women's] team play [a boys' high school team]. They were such a highly more skilled team. Stick handling, skating, passing. I feel like the checking aspect kind of takes away from that a little bit.

Bob, an administrator of an association without a girls' program, reaffirmed the sentiment that girls' can develop better skills when checking is not involved, "It forces you to plan a little bit better, work a little harder and you can still be physical without body checking." Some of the administrators and coaches even viewed the girls' game and female players as more responsible while maintaining a sufficient level of physicality. Keith, a boys' team coach, stated that, "they play enough body that they just do it more responsibility than sometimes boys do it, because it looks cool or whatever. There is plenty of body that gets played. It is just not checking."

When asked whether or not they would include checking in the girls' game, several of the participants actually said that they did not even think about checking in women's hockey. They took for granted that girls' hockey did not include checking and did not think twice about it. They talked about how girls' hockey includes a high level of physical contact which should be maintained, but that the game itself did not need checking added to it to be good or legitimate in their eyes.

A couple of the administrators even went so far as to say that maybe should be removed from the boys' game. While this was not a commonly stated opinion, it was one that was shared by a couple of participants. Carl, a state level administrator stated:

If you take away body checking, you still have hockey, and I think as people get smarter, and more prudent, and more aware, and more educated, if hockey doesn't move towards that, it'll eventually pique and maybe even start to suffer.

Greg, an association director and former professional player said:

I think boys' is going that way. I think there's too many concussions. Until someone gets hurt or they do studies long enough. In Canada they're trying to get checking out of bantam hockey. There's no head contact now. I just think it's going that way. It basically eliminates open ice hitting. Obviously the players' safety is first.

While this was not commonly stated, most coaches and administrators believed that girls' hockey should remain non-check. It was viewed as taken for granted that girls hockey was non-check, but very limited advocacy for eliminating it from the boys' game. Checking was still taken for granted with regards to boys hockey which relates to the hegemonically masculine nature of the game (Coakley, 2014; Messner, 2002; Weaving & Roberts, 2012). Hegemonic masculinity teaches that boys should be aggressive and powerful (Ezzell, 2009; Schmalz & Kerstetter, 2006) which checking reinforces. As such, this dichotomous view between expectations for the men's game and the women's game fits within the socially constructed norms of hegemonic masculinity that values aggression and power from men and boys (Connell, 1987) and Ezzell (2009) construction of a new emphasized femininity that allows for athleticism and toughness while maintaining a level of traditional femininity.

The administrators liked the skill based game that was present non-check women's hockey allowed and took for granted that girls' hockey was non-check. The administrators' presented it as the non-check that allowed for this skill based game, however, there can be highly skill based teams within check hockey as well. Additionally, when administrators discussed the issues with checking in men's hockey, it was on the basis of safety and the current issues with head injuries. Yet, they emphasized the skill game as an important reason for the women's game to remain non-check, only rarely mentioning the safety concerns of check hockey. This is an important distinction in constructing the different expectations with which they judge the legitimacy of girls' and boys' hockey. They cognitively separate the difference between boys and girls and traditional stereotypes of femininity and masculinity. This difference, allows for a promotion of aggressive check hockey for boys as long as it meets a minimum level of safety. It then allows for the construction of girls' hockey as skill based, promoting the athleticism without making it to aggressive or masculinized (Connell, 1987; Ezzell, 2009). By changing the expectations of the two games, administrators were able to judge women's hockey as legitimate without comparison to the men's game. They had no desire to change the game or challenge the current levels of allowed physicality in the game. They understood girls' hockey to be a non-check game and saw a change in that to be unthinkable. Girls' hockey as a non-check version of hockey was taken for granted by the administrators in this study.

Overall girls' hockey, and associations with girls' hockey programs were seen as legitimate in the eyes of the administrators in this study. However, there were factors that influenced the administrators' perceptions of the Moral, Pragmatic, and Cognitive legitimacy of an association supporting girls' hockey. Judgements of legitimacy are based on the association meeting the expectations of the constituents. Expectations are often based on the hegemonic

construction of hockey and traditional sport development models. As such, when the reality does not match the expectations, perceptions of legitimacy are threatened. However, due to the currently contingencies within girls' hockey, such as the lack of sufficient players to sustain stable teams at associations, the current structure of girls' hockey does not mimic that of boys' hockey. Associations need to work to enhance participation levels and support structures or expectations of what the structure of girls' hockey looks like need to be shifted. According to the administrators, an ideal organization begins growing their girls' program at the youngest ages, and they use girls-specific events to help recruit and retain their players. The state should implement the two choice and 2-4-6-8 rules in order to help these associations retain their players and grow girls' hockey at the community level as it is on the boys' side. These changes would move the associations and girls' hockey structure to be more similar to the boys' model and thus closer to the expectations of a traditional sport development model. Associations with the best interest of the players at heart need to provide equitable facilities and resources including a dedicated girls' directors and would encourage girls' to play on girls-only teams in order to enhance their experiences of community and camaraderie. Associations with strong girls' programs were doing a combination of some of these attributes and trying to work toward creating more stability within their associations. These associations that were in good faith trying to support girls' hockey were viewed as legitimate. However, checking was not viewed as necessary for the legitimacy of girls' hockey. This is an example of changing expectations to enhance legitimacy. While structures and procedures that enhance stability, follow the hegemonic sport development model, the perspective that checking is not needed in girls' hockey is a departure from the traditional male norms of the sport. This shows that there can be women's specific sport models that are viewed as legitimate and that break away from mimicking the male

center of sport. In order to enhance perceptions of legitimacy administrators can work toward developing girls' hockey to look similar to the boys' model, which may not work in some areas such as stability of teams, or administrators can change their expectations of what it means to have a successful sport model to a model that functions within the current state of girls' hockey.

Players' Perceptions of Legitimacy

The female players were asked about what they liked and disliked about girls' hockey and what should be done to improve girls' hockey. Players also began with the perception that girls' hockey is legitimate, thus they discussed their judgements of the actions of associations that would threaten or support perceptions of organizational legitimacy. These judgements fell within the frames of moral, pragmatic, and cognitive legitimacy. Similar to the administrators, the players found aspects of moral legitimacy to be very important. However, in contrast to the administrators who did not discuss comprehensibility legitimacy, the players found this important for several reasons. The following discusses the player responses in respect to research question four which considers that aspects that players considered important to their perceptions of organizational legitimacy.

Moral legitimacy. The youth players discussed many aspects of their experience in respect to moral legitimacy. The players identified judgements related to structural, procedural and consequential legitimacy. However, while the administrators mainly focused on actions that fell within structural and procedural legitimacy, the players viewed organizational legitimacy as stemming primarily from consequential legitimacy. While it is the structures and procedures that create the outcomes, the players talked about legitimacy as coming from the outcomes that an association was able to accomplish. This could be due to the different levels of influence of the two groups. The administrators have some influence and control over the structures and

procedures in place at their associations and experience the ways they do or do not function to help support girls' hockey. Players, however, have little influence over the structures and procedures and are often not even aware of the procedures and structures of their association. Instead, they experience the outcomes of those procedures and structures. They receive their practice schedules, and are placed on teams, what they know is how much ice time they get, what the skill level of their team is, and so forth, not the procedures that determine those decisions. The most salient outcomes for players are related to equity.

Structural legitimacy. Similar to the administrators, players judged structural legitimacy on the basis of actions taken that provided (or did not provide) ice time, locker rooms, and team stability. Many of the players desired more ice time. While some saw it as an issue of equity, stated that there were just not enough rinks in the area to support all of the hockey played. As such, nobody was getting enough ice time. Adie discussed how she wanted more ice time:

I just wish we had more ice time. There's only one rink there and we only have like an hour of... two and a half hours of ice a week and it's always with the 14's too so we only get thirty minutes on Thursdays by ourselves

This was a common sentiment, that they did not get as much ice as they would like and it was often shared with another team. Several players believed that structurally there was not enough ice to go around, and yet desired greater access to ice time, particularly solo ice time. The girls had relatively low expectations in terms of ice time, understanding that it was a limited commodity. This low expectation allowed them to judge an association as structurally relatively easily. As long as the girls' perceived that they were getting a fair amount of ice time relative to other similar teams, then they would judge the association as legitimate in this regard, even in the instance that it was still a very limited amount of ice time.

The girls also talked about the need for girls-only locker rooms at rinks for when they play on predominantly male teams. The majority of the girls played on a boys' team at some point during their hockey careers, and many of them through ages when they were not allowed to dress in the same locker rooms as their male teammates. The players expected a designated locker room space for girls in this situation for their association to be legitimate. Julia described her experience, "Once I got to Squirt, I ended up going in the girls' locker room for most of the time I was getting dressed. Ten minutes before the game I would just go into the locker room." This was the common experience of most girls. Once they reached the Squire/10U or Pewee/12U age level, they were no longer permitted to change in the same locker rooms as their male teammates. They commented that many of the rinks now have girls' locker rooms which often hold a few girls, but not a whole team. Molly discussed her experience playing boys' hockey and using a separate locker room this way:

I was with them in the boys' locker room until second year squirt and then I moved to the girls' locker room, just because everybody was changing, and it was just nicer to have my own space, but still be part of the team.

Molly felt that having this designated space allowed her to be separate but still felt like she was provided a sufficient space to change in. She still felt like a hockey player and a part of the team. Based on the reports of the players, most ice arenas now have a small, dedicated girls' locker room. Thus, it is an increasingly expected structural characteristic. From the perspective of the girls, it is unacceptable to expect girls to change in hallways, corners, bathrooms, or offices. Absence of these spaces was a threat to structural legitimacy as these structures were viewed as valuable and necessary to the support of their participation.

Stability of teams was also discussed by the players as a factor impacting their perceptions of structural legitimacy. As the administrators noted, players switch teams frequently, which leads to teams folding unexpectedly, leaving players without a place to play. Some associations do not have teams past the 12U or 14U age level, and others only have one or two teams based on the current ages of their players. Therefore, if a player ages out of one of those associations, particularly if they are at the older end of an age group with a team primarily made of younger players, they lose a team to play on. The girls wanted associations to have more stable teams across all age levels so that they would have a clear retention pathway to continue participating within their home association. While administrators were concerned with transition pathways, how players moved up the skill level ladder, players talked about pathways in terms of retention within their home association – how they can age up while still playing for the same associations rather than transitioning to higher skill levels in their sport pathway. Megan lamented that her association ends at 14U and so she does not have a clear direction of where to play next year, other than playing at her high school, which is considered a less serious form of hockey, “I can’t play U14 next year because my birthday is 2001, I’m the older side of the 8th graders, so I would want to play another couple years at clubs.”

At times teams fold because too many players either move up to a new age group or leave to join another association. When this happens, players are often left in limbo, wondering whether their association will have a team at their age level and then what options they have when there is no team available in their associations. Melanie talks about the reality of this instability, “That’s the story over and over in Illinois, is girls play AA and then a few of them go AAA, and then the rest, whatever is left behind falls apart. The teams fall apart.” Melanie continues on to describe her personal experience of this phenomenon:

I started [current association] this past fall because I played [past association] the fall before with the 14 team, which was my first year of real travel. Then they cut that 14s and I was going to be a 16, and they cut their 16s to only going to do 19s. and their entire 19 team returned so there were no spots. Then next year, I have nowhere to play again because [current association] cut their whole entire girls' program.

It is not uncommon for an age group to fold and not have a team that they had the previous year because too many players left. The girls wanted the associations to stabilize teams, ensuring a full array of age levels so that the girls had a clear retention pathway within their home association structure. They judged associations based on their ability to field an entire array of girls' teams regularly.

Players also discussed the skill gap and competitive balance, both within their teams and within their leagues, in terms of structural stability. The players wanted to play in a competitive league with a sufficient number of teams who were all of a similar skill level. At the older age brackets of girls' hockey, there were a limited number of associations who had girls' teams at the AA level. For instance, there were only two 19U girls' teams at AA and only three AAA 19U teams. At the 19U level, it was hard to maintain a league due to the small number of teams at that age level. One of those AA teams was a combined 16U and 19U team because the association did not have enough players for a 16U team that season. Beyond the need for more teams at all age levels, there was a need for more competitive balance within the leagues. Many of the players talked about competitive imbalance where several of the teams would demolish the rest of the league in games and others would lose the vast majority of their league games. Amy understood why this imbalance exists, but wished it did not have to:

You can't be completely equal but then I think since there's so little girls, little amount of girls, they can only do one league and then there are teams that really shouldn't be playing in that league. There are teams who were way out of it. It's like they're creaming everyone.

Cassie, who was on a 14U team, presented her suggestions for improvement: "More teams, and maybe more brackets or something so the teams are a little bit more the same in competition." This competitive imbalance reflects the lack of girls' teams within associations. On the boys' side there were often multiple teams at each age level, so that teams were able to play similarly skilled teams. However, on the girls' side, an association usually only had enough players to field one team and not all associations even had a girls' team. As such, all teams played in the same league regardless of skill or experience. Cassie continued to discuss the issues with this skill disparity, "Yeah. I would hate to be the other team; you know? Especially ... yeah. I think a lot more brackets so teams are more evenly matched. There's not one dominant team or a couple dominant teams." With a limited number of girls' teams, there was not flexibility to create multiple skill divisions at each age group which results in team imbalances between all-star teams and the programs with mostly new players. However, the girls wanted more league structure to help with this imbalance. They realized the constraints, but discussed creating brackets within the league so that during most of the season there would be fewer blow-out games.

The league imbalance was a result of the imbalance of skill within teams as well. Since most associations could only have one team at each age level, all girls at that age level ended up on the same team, regardless of her skill. This could mean that players who had played since they were five could be on the same 14U team as a player who just started in the last year or two.

Maria, who was on a team with big skill and age differences discussed the frustrations this caused, “we’re not all at the same skill level I feel like, and it’s harder to understand sometimes, but yeah. It [skill] ranges since we’re the only team where we are.” This association structure of only one team per age level creates uneven competition levels within teams which was challenging for both the highly skilled and the less skilled players as it was hard to accommodate both in practice and difficult to play together efficiently during games. Players expressed a desire for more players, so that there could be teams based on skill level instead of a mixture of skill levels all on one team. The current association structure, coupled with low participation numbers made it hard for teams to have homogenous skill levels which adds challenges to structural stability. Better players were inclined to move to teams with other higher skill players, which increased the movement and instability within girls’ hockey.

Exacerbating differences in in the level was an age disparity common within girls’ teams. When an association was unable to have teams at every age level, they often combined two age groups into one, so that 12U and 14U girls would be on the same 14U teams or 10U and 12U girls would be on one 12U team. This meant that the teams would have 10 year olds and 13 year olds on the same team or 8 year olds and 11 year olds on the same team. The result of this was maturity and skill level disparities on the same teams. It is rare than an 8-year-old will be similar skilled as an 11-year-old due to physical and psychological development and time in sport. Mara mentioned the prevalence of age differences:

Girls hockey, around here, there’s not that many people playing AA, so sometimes the age gap. I know when I played at [association] when I was a first year 16, I was playing up on the 19 team, and I was a sophomore playing with seniors. It was great, and they were some of my good friends but you could tell the age gap.

There were significant maturity and life experience differences which affected the sense of community that girls felt with their teammates. The girls explained the impact of this team structure on their playing experiences and wished that there could be more teams and better association structures to support homogenous teams based on skill and age level. The skill disparity was one of the most frustrating aspects about playing on a girls' team. Many of the girls' who had played boys' hockey before switching to girls' said that they experienced a decrease in skill level when they switched over to the girls' team. Megan bluntly said she liked boys' hockey because it was more competitive, "I liked playing with boys because they're sometimes more competitive than girls and it was fun just playing against them." The girls wished that there was more competitive balance within teams and within their league. The participation numbers and structures of the boys' programs allowed for this balance, which the girls appreciated when they played with boys. They wanted their associations and leagues to have more teams and more competitive balance, but recognized that the participation numbers in girls' hockey limited that. In order to increase the stability, the girls suggested that their associations do a better job of recruiting more female players. The girls discussed that they thought there were more girls out there who would play, but that the associations needed to put forth a greater effort to recruit them. Julia, who played on a 14U team laments how her association could do more to support and promote girls' hockey:

I wish we did more to support girls' hockey. There's a team called [association]. They do so many fundraisers and stuff like that. We don't do anything. I feel like we're wasting an opportunity to really help out girls' hockey and promote it and do skates and stuff. We just really don't do much for it.

The girls in this study judged associations based on whether they could sustain stable teams across age groups. They discussed a desire for appropriately skilled teams at appropriate age levels and for the associations to be visibly supporting this endeavor. Structures such as fundraisers and recruitment events were judged by the girls as being structural efforts that were of value to them and to supporting girls' hockey. As such, girls judged the structural legitimacy of associations on their ability to have stable, age appropriate teams, and structures to sustain these teams.

Procedural legitimacy. Procedural legitimacy, the perception that the association embraces socially accepted procedures and techniques (Suchman, 1995), was judged by the players in this study in terms of ice time and the teaching of physicality. The players discussed the allocation of ice time with respect to whether associations had procedures in place to give girls equitable ice time in comparison to their male counterparts. The participants thought that associations need to allot sufficient ice times, at good times, to the girls' teams. The girls thought that they should have similar access to ice as the boys' teams at their age level, and that they should be equally able to obtain good time slots. An association allocating significantly less ice, or ice at inappropriate times judged negatively for its procedural legitimacy. Sarah discussed her team's inferior ice time last season:

Last year there was a lot of times where we couldn't really get ice time because the guys' teams, they got first choice for ice time so we had to practice really late at night or really early in the morning and we had terrible ice slots. We would always have to split the ice so we would never get full ice practices so that really sucked because the guys' teams got the first pick.

While some associations were not perceived to allocate ice time fairly to girls' teams, other associations made a point of providing equitable ice and some players took note of this. Molly commented:

At [association], we're treated pretty nice. One of the head guys in [association] makes everything equal, so the girls get equal ice time. If the boys get an hour and thirty-minute practice, they get an hour and thirty-minute practice. Which is... that's why [associations] is one of my top rinks and clubs that I want to go to, because everything's equal.

Most of the players did not have a clear idea of the time their male counterparts were getting. However, they perceived that their association was treating them fairly based on comparisons to girls' teams at different associations. Despite the assumption of fairness, they often got minimal amounts of ice – one to two hours of practice time per week. McKenzie discussed this view:

We only get 2 slots a week. That bothers me sometimes. It's not just for girls. Sometimes it is. I don't really know about the other clubs but we get as much time as the boys, but it's still not enough time.

The girls desired more ice time, however, their biggest concern in regard to procedural legitimacy was the fair and equitable allocation of ice between girls' and boys' teams. When the players reference point was to boys' teams around them, they often saw disparities in the allocation of ice time. However, not all of the girls had a clear understanding of the ice time allocated to boys' teams in their associations. Those players often used other girls' teams as their comparison, and in those cases were more likely to believe that they had a fair amount of ice time because it was similar, in its limited amount, to other girls' teams. The girls judged associations on their procedural ability to allocate ice fairly between girls' and boys' teams.

The other factor that played into the girls' perceptions of procedural legitimacy was the introduction of checking and the teaching of physicality. The majority of girls wanted to be able to play full check hockey. In fact, they had a number of ideas about the procedures for implementing checking if it were to be legalized in girls' hockey. On the boys' side, checking is introduced at Bantam/14U. Several of the girls discussed that this would have to be slightly altered in order to integrate checking on the girls' side. Due to the age at which girls start playing, they posited that it would be better to postpone the implementation of checking to an older age bracket. There was a clear perspective that girls often start to play hockey at later ages than did boys, which should impact when checking would be integrated. Alisha explained this delayed participation:

I don't know if you'd be able to start at such a young age because I think that's when a lot of girls start. They don't start when they're super little, some girls start when they're like ten, eleven. The boys will start when they're like five. I think that you'd have to make it a little bit later in youth hockey.

Sheila added to this sentiment, "I'd definitely do it at a higher age level, not like U12, U13, I'd do like U15, U19, maybe even." Due to the timeline of girls entering the sport, the participants suggested that if checking were to be implemented for girls' hockey, it should be at 16U instead of 14U in order to give players adequate time to develop their skills before checking was introduced. The socially accepted procedure is that boys' hockey introduces checking at Bantam/14U. However, most boys' start playing hockey before they are eight years old. On the girls' side it is not uncommon for girls to start playing at ten or twelve years old, delaying players' development of basic hockey skills. As such, the accepted procedure should be altered so that it is in line with skill development of the players instead of matching the chronological

age of boys' introduction checking for it to be safely and adequately integrated into the girls' game.

Another aspect of procedural legitimacy surrounding body checking and body contact in hockey was the girls desire to have procedures in place to teach them proper physical contact. Regardless of whether they were being taught body checking or legal body contact (currently allowed), the girls thought there needed to be more instruction in place to help them learn about legal contact and ways to implement contact legally and safely. A high level of physical body contact is legal in girls' hockey, however, very few girls had been taught, or repeatedly practiced proper physical contact. Julia talked about the problems this causes:

Even though we don't check, it's still physical, but it's not as often. When you do get hit and you go flying into the boards and stuff, girls don't know what they are doing and they don't know how to take it. They don't know how to keep their heads up and watch where they are going and stuff.

The participants in this study contended that in order to improve the girls' game, and to have safe physical contact, proper positioning and form should be taught. Before boys become Bantams, they are required to attend checking clinics to learn to safely make contact and to protect themselves while receiving hits. The girls wanted procedures to be in place to require them to receive similar training regarding body contact. Melanie described what she would like to see:

I think that the women's coaches could do a better job of teaching girls how to manage their bodies [...] You have second year Peewee boys always go to a mandatory checking clinic and there should be something at least similar for girls so that they know how to handle body contact.

Kara had a similar perspective and talked about how right now, it is more dangerous because girls are checking, or coming close to checking without knowing how to give or receive the hits properly. She said:

But some checks that girls do, because girls want to check right now, because they can't but when they think they can they just don't know how. Honestly I feel like there should be more checking clinics, not to encourage checking, but at least to supervise it. Try to tell the right way to be aggressive because right now, they just – oh my god it's insane.

Despite the fact that a high level of body contact is allowed in girls' hockey, very few girls in this study had been on teams where proper physical contact had been explicitly taught in their practice. It is expected that boys undergo checking clinics and practice checking regularly in order to understand proper methods to give and receive checks. However, there are no procedures or norms in place on the girls' side to teach body contact. Although coaches tell the girls to be physical, they are not taught the limits or bounds to legal physicality, nor safe techniques to give and receive body contact. There is a large gap in physicality between expectations and procedures. There is an expectation that players be physical and play a high level of body contact. Body contact does take skill and education to be executed properly, particularly at the higher level of player where players are faster and more skilled at evading contact. Despite there, there is no mechanism in place currently for teaching proper body contact, unlike the checking clinics that are present on the boys' side of the game. This leave the education up to the coaches, who may, like the referees not have a clear understanding of the limits of body contact. This gap in procedures leaves girls not knowing what is allowable and what is not. It also can open them up for greater risk of injury if they do not properly position themselves to receive contact. They also may not meet the expectations of the coach for physical

play, not out of effort but because the coach has not taught them how to play to his expectations. The expectation gap between what the players desire in terms of knowledge and skill and what they are taught also exists. If their coach does not adequately instruct the players on allowable and proper contact to the level that the girls expect, this may serve as a threat to perceptions of legitimacy. If the girls do not perceive their coach or their association as adequately teaching them body contact, they could judge this as a lack of procedures that show the value of the girls' game within the association, thus threatening perceptions of procedural legitimacy. From the perception of the girls, this lack of procedure to educate the girls about legal body contact threatens the procedural legitimacy of the associations and of girls' hockey because the players then do not fully understand the mechanics and boundaries of body contact. Equitable allocation of ice time, and procedures to integrate body contact more smoothly and safely into girls' hockey were the players' biggest concerns regarding procedural legitimacy of the associations.

Consequential legitimacy. Consequential legitimacy, judgements about the accomplishments of an organization, was the more salient form of moral legitimacy noted by the players in this study. Overall, the girls desired equity from their associations and based many of their judgements of the organizations on whether they perceived they were getting treated equitably in comparison the boys. It was the outcomes that the girls were concerned with, such as: were there enough teams for them, did they receive equitable ice time, access to equitable locker room facilities, did the rules treat them fairly as hockey players. The players were not as concerned with the procedures and structures that went into association decisions. Instead they were focused on the outcomes that impacted their experiences.

The players wanted more associations to have more teams. They were not concerned about the records of the teams but rather their mere existence. The girls judged the associations

based on the ability to have and sustain teams and programming for female players. The participants were disappointed that some associations only provided teams at limited age levels, and they wanted to see these associations expand to include teams at more age levels. Marissa, who played on one of the only 19U teams in the state, when asked what she would do to make girls' hockey better, said, "I would just get teams at all age levels." The girls also believed that many associations were not doing their part to grow girls' hockey or to provide adequate opportunities for female players. There was a perception that the major associations, the ones that had a myriad of boys' teams, across all age and skill levels, should also have to provide girls' teams. McKenzie wanted all associations to have girls' teams, "Make more girls' teams at every rink to give girls opportunities, whether it's like a hockey league or not." Only a select number of associations have girls' programs, but the participants in this study believed that there needed to be more opportunities for girls' to play and that it was the responsibility of large hockey associations to have girls' teams. Having girls' teams was seen as including another type of hockey and if they are going to support all the age and skill levels of boys,' they should have to do the same for girls.' Not providing teams for girls to play on was perceived as a threat to consequential legitimacy by the players in this study. Some players stated that they thought that if girls' hockey kept growing, associations would eventually be forced to create teams. Mara stated, "I think if the game grows, that eventually they won't have a choice. They're going to have to make a team, eventually. Definitely, we just need to grow the game of girls' hockey." This was an optimistic and naive view that associations would be forced into providing teams for girls' if the sport kept growing.

Along the lack of teams, and instability of teams across all age levels within a single association, players often did not have a clear idea of the retention pathways available to them. It

was rare for a player in this study to have played for a single association for her entire playing career, either due to her own decision to switch associations, aging out of an association, or being forced to switch because her association was unable to sustain a team at her age level due to other players leaving. Players switched repeatedly and frequently. Yet, there was not a good understanding of alternative opportunities when they were forced to switch. When teams disappeared, players were often left on their own to find another association. The players wanted there to be a direct retention pathway within their home institution, which would allow them to stay in the same association as they aged. In terms of consequential legitimacy, they wanted the associations to establish teams at all levels, so that there was a clear retention pathway of movement within the association. When an association was able to provide stable retention pathways through the age groups, it was judged to have achieved consequential legitimacy. Youth sport organizations exist to recruit, retain, and develop athletes and often judge their own success in terms of player retention. In retaining girls on their own teams, throughout girls' entire youth careers, associations have accomplished player retention. As such, they would be viewed as a legitimate girls' hockey organization that can support girls' hockey at all age groups.

The presence of girls-only locker rooms was also an issue for girls in terms of consequential legitimacy. For them, having a girls' locker room was a symbol of equity. If an association did not provide a separate space for girls on boys' teams to change, they were not perceived to truly support girls' participation in hockey. They were not achieving the goal of equitable treatment or the provision of sufficient facility space. The girls wanted to feel like hockey players with proper facilities. When they were not provided with locker rooms to change in, they felt like second class players. Molly shared her thoughts on locker rooms:

At some rinks, when I'd play with the boys, I'd have to get dressed in the bathroom and stuff like that, which I don't feel is fair. Because there's so many girls now playing hockey that, instead of giving them a bathroom, you gotta give them something else. It's not fair to girls to get shorted... the short end of the stick with stuff. It's just not fair.

When the players had their own locker room they at least felt like they were being treated as equal, just different parts of the same team. Equity was at the core of what they wanted from their associations, the creation of girls-only locker rooms was something that was seen as an easy way for associations to signal that they valued female players.

The ban on checking was also viewed by many, but not all, players as a threat to consequential legitimacy. They saw it as preventing associations and girls' hockey more broadly from reaching a state of equity with the boys. Many of the participants stated that they wished that they could play full check hockey. For some it was because checking was part of the game. But another common reason that some of the participants wanted to play full check hockey was tied to notions of equality. When asked why she thought girls should check, Sarah bluntly stated, "equality. They treat the girls the same. How about we check? I would like to check." The players thought that there was no reason why the boys should be able to check, while girls should not.

Several of the players related this equity with the arguments around safety and injury and playing check hockey, by wondering if it is safe enough for boys, why is it deemed unsafe for girls? Julia brought up the point that the size difference amongst girls in girls' hockey is similar to size difference amongst boys in boys' hockey. As such, she did not believe that girls would be less safe than boys if checking was allowed:

I don't understand why we're not allowed to do it because boys playing against boys, or even boys playing against girls, they can check, but girls playing against girls can't check. We're basically the same size, same age. We're not fragile little snowflakes.

Abby discussed this in light of the fear of injury to girls, but acknowledged that this fear is largely ignored on the boys' side:

It's like a different game and I don't understand why. I don't see why you have to take the physical element out of it. It's not like a danger. If it was a danger, they would take it out of boys too. You can't say yes to them and no to us.

The argument that Abby makes mirrors the judicial ruling that permitted girls to play football and full court basketball in the 1970's. the judges in the landmark cases for these sports ruled that if the sport was too dangerous for girls' to play, as the associations had argued, then it must also be too dangerous for boys' to play (Fields, 2005). However, if it was safe enough for boys, then girls should also be allowed to play. Abby's point also brought to light the idea that maybe checking should not be allowed in boys' hockey either, that the girls' rules are actually better rules. Particularly in light of the growing concern around concussions, there have been recent discussions of the appropriate use for checking, if it is appropriate at all (*Reducing Injury Risk From Body Checking in Boys' Youth Ice Hockey*, 2014). Some of the participants in this study perceived the ban on checking as an issue of equality. They thought that it was a threat to the legitimacy of girls' hockey as it made it a different sport and was not equitable with boys' hockey. They wanted to be treated as equals in the sport at the association level as well as at the level of the sport, where the checking ban created a distinctive difference with boys' hockey.

Players' reference groups greatly impacted their judgments of equity and fairness. In general, if the player used a boys' team, and had a good understanding of how a local boys' team

was treated, she was less likely to perceive that she was treated fairly. These girls were quick to identify disparities between the treatment of the boys' teams and the girls' teams. This was most evident in discussions of allocations of ice time and skill disparities of players within teams and within leagues. However, players with girls' teams as their reference points, were more likely to state that that associations treated them fairly. As noted earlier, players that judged the allocations of ice time against other girls' teams thought they were given fair allocations, because the other girls' teams were given similarly low amounts of ice. But when players judged their ice time in comparison to local boys' times, they were more likely to believe that they were unfairly given less times, in less ideal time slots than the boys teams. When girls judged the accomplishments of their association against other girls' teams and programs they were more likely to view their associations accomplishments positively than when they judged the accomplishments against boys' teams or programs.

Moral legitimacy was the most salient form of legitimacy judgements to the players. Their judgments of legitimacy were based on perceptions of equity. The players have been raised in an era where liberal feminist ideals of women's integration into most aspects of society have been widely accepted (Donovan, 2012; Nicholson, 1997). As such, the girls expect to be treated equitably within hockey associations as well. While they realize girls' participation is lower than that of boys, and thus to not expect to have the same number of teams, or exactly equal opportunities, they do expect to be treated equitably and fairly. They judge associations in regards to whether they have equitable access to facilities (e.g. ice time, locker rooms), to retention pathways that allow them to play within the same association, to rules that treat them as hockey players, and to procedures that allow them to play and understand their game at the highest levels. Equity is at the core of the players' judgements of moral legitimacy. If they do not

perceive they are receiving equitable treatment, their judgements of the association may be affected. Associations risk being perceived as lacking moral legitimacy from the players if they do not treat female players equitably.

Pragmatic legitimacy. Pragmatic legitimacy considers the self-interests of the organizations in question and consists of three subtypes, exchange legitimacy, influence legitimacy, and dispositional legitimacy (Suchman, 1995). Similar to the administrators, the players discussed aspects of pragmatic legitimacy significantly less than the aspects of moral legitimacy. In fact, the players did not discuss anything related to exchange or influence legitimacy. It could be that the kids did not discuss these aspects because they have little to no control over these aspects. While the administrators are involved in organizational policy and concerned with the responsiveness of the associations to the constituents interests (Suchman, 1995), the players mostly just took what their association did at face value and did not consider the policies and practices that go into creating that outcome. However, the players did judge the associations' dispositional legitimacy which is based on whether they believed the association shared their values or were trustworthy in their efforts to support girls' hockey (Suchman, 1995).

Dispositional legitimacy. Participants judged the associations based on the ways the associations do or do not support players. The players discussed the locker room issue and inconsistent officiating of body contact with respect to dispositional legitimacy. The chosen reference group of the players impacted their perceptions of the association as sharing their values and having the best interest of the girls at heart. Players who used other girls' teams as their reference group for judging and comparing their association were more likely to perceive their association to have their best interest at heart and to share their values. When boys' teams or associations formed the reference group, girls were more likely to feel they were being treated

unfairly and that the association did not value their participation. The reference group that players used tended to impact their perceptions of their associations dispositional legitimacy.

The players discussed the presence of girls-specific locker rooms in light of dispositional legitimacy. Providing a girls' locker room was a way that an association could show that they had the interests of the girls' at heart and that they were concerned with providing the players with appropriate facility space and not treating them as second class players in their facility allocation. When associations failed to provide a space for the girls, players judged the associations as lacking dispositional legitimacy.

The players also judged dispositional legitimacy on the basis of officiating. The players perceived that officials treated the girls' games as less important than boys' games. They complained that the officials did not pay as much attention to their games as they did to boys' games. They also felt that officials were often overprotective of girls. They would call checking penalties if a girl fell down, even if it wasn't an actual check. Some girls had played on boys' teams that had played games against elite girls' teams. When this occurred there was a perception that the officials penalized the boys' teams too harshly in an effort to be over protective of the girls, an action that the players in this study did not appreciate. Molly talked about her experience with this:

It was a hard decision to come to the girls' because, watching the girls, and seeing how differently they are treated compared to the boys [...] Like, we played a team when I played for the boys, and the refs put everything into their favor because they were afraid we were going to hurt them, and my old boys' team played a mission team, the girls' team this year, and they called a lot of stuff on my boys' team for being too physical when I feel like they should be ... The boys and girls shouldn't be judged unevenly.

The girls wanted their games to be officiated fairly and for officials to pay attention and treat their games with the same respect and seriousness afforded the boys' games. The disparate treatment of girls' games by officials threatened the dispositional legitimacy of the leagues and girls' hockey from the perspective of the players in this study.

Cognitive legitimacy. Cognitive legitimacy considers the ways in which the constituents understand the social world and the organization in question fits into the broader picture of the social world (Suchman, 1995). Youth participants in this study consider factors that influenced their perceptions of both comprehensibility legitimacy and taken-for-granted legitimacy in their judgements of cognitive legitimacy.

Comprehensibility legitimacy. Comprehensibility legitimacy considers the way in which participants judge the ways that an organizations actions assist to arrange their experiences in a chaotic social world into coherent, understandable accounts (Suchman, 1995). The participants' accounts of the social world must mesh both with the larger belief system of the social world and with their everyday lived experiences (Suchman, 1995). The administrators did not discuss anything in relation to comprehensibility legitimacy, however, this was important to the players. This disparity is likely to relate to the players' focus on the overarching actions of the organization. As discussed earlier, players were more concerned with the organizational outcomes and consequential legitimacy in comparison to the administrators who were more focused on the procedural and structural aspects of an organization. Players discussed several aspects of comprehensibility legitimacy in their effort to negotiate their place in the social world of girls' hockey. The players discussed girls' teams and program stability, retention pathways, and the inconsistent officiating of checking in reference to comprehensibility legitimacy.

The stability of teams within associations was important to players' perceptions of comprehensibility legitimacy. This instability of teams was a threat to comprehensibility legitimacy from the perspective of the players because there was not a clear cultural model for them to follow when their teams disappeared. Associations rarely helped them to find a new team. The players discussed how challenging this instability was for continuity in their playing experiences. Julia discussed the state of one association she was familiar with (but did not play for):

Their U12 team fell apart last year and their 14 team isn't working this year. They've got their U16 and U18 team that's working really well. Their 14 team, they haven't won a game all season because they have no girls.

Girls recognize the reality of the instability of girls' programs, however, they wish that associations would talk to one another to help provide them with coherent retention pathways to remain in hockey if and when their teams fall apart.

In order to help create coherent retention pathways, the players in this study suggested that associations should communicate with each other more. The girls' wanted the associations to talk to one another so that they could work together to form joint co-op teams, rather than drop the age level team, when they were short players. That way, if Association A has 8 players at 14U and Association B as 6 players, instead of both those teams being disbanded or combined with a different age group, they could combine and have an age-level appropriate team without forcing players to search for a new association themselves. Melanie, discussed this:

I would want people to get together, like all the different ... I guess you don't really need a magic wand for this, but all the admin to get together and just say, I'm gonna have a team, I'm not going to, and just make sure they're solid. Wilmette and Winnetka can

combine their girls for one team. And then Darien and well, Orland has a pretty standard team, but like Darien and Orland could maybe combine to set a team and they don't have to be each like ten, twelve, thirteen girl teams when you can have one very solid, more competitive team.

This would help with clarifying retention pathways for girls. Since teams often get dropped without a place for the remaining players to go, this would provide them with a clear retention pathway. It would also help in the instances where some associations only go up to the 12U or 14U age level. If they had a co-op with another association that had trouble starting a developmental program the associations could share resources and have a continuous retention pathway from 8U to 19U. While this is likely to be a useful short-term solution, it may have issues in the long term. For instance, if two associations that previously had their own teams combined, that is one less team, in a league that often suffers from insufficient number of teams. Additionally, associations that were once responsible for providing resources and recruiting players to their associations, may invest less into a combined program because they expect the other association to be doing that work. They may not see the need or pressure to invest in sustaining the team as they do when it is solely in the purview of their association. Due to this, co-op teams may appear to be a solution from the girls' perspective, and may help stabilize a team for a year or two but if it is continued for a longer time period, it may hurt the viability of the teams by reducing association input and reducing the overall number of teams in a league.

While very few associations communicated well with each other to create these combination teams, in Central Illinois where there are few girls' teams, there was a new effort to create a girls' co-op program. None of the central Illinois associations had enough players on their own to field girls' teams at any age level. There was an effort to create a new association

dedicated to girls' hockey, which pulled together the girls from five different cities to create a regional co-op program. This was a good example of communication and working with other associations to provide a place for girls to play together when there were not enough girls in individual associations to have teams and to create opportunities for girls' hockey participation in the region.

If associations, administrators, and the state organization fail to offer clear models of where and in what ways girls can play when their team no longer exists, then their associations fails to have comprehensibility legitimacy as it leaves participants confused and without a team. This lack of retention pathways is a threat to comprehensibility legitimacy, but it is also a threat to the growth and development of girls' hockey. When it is unclear where to go next, or when players have to drive significant distances to find another girls' program, there is a good chance that some players will drop out. With the limited numbers in girls' hockey, dropout only fuels the instability and hinders the growth of girls' hockey. The associations and state organizations need to better facilitate retention pathways in order to continue to grow the sport.

The one clear transition point for girls in hockey was the age at which it was socially expected that girls' no longer play on boys' teams. Associations, teams, and state administrators had done sufficient work that the girls were able to understand that in this social world they were expected to switch to girls by Bantam/14U. The social expectation was that girls move to girls' hockey before checking was introduced. Some girls wanted to make the moves themselves, but for many, the impetus for the switch was that their parents did not want them to play boys' check hockey. Cora was one of the players who actively wanted to move to the girls' side without parental pressure. She described her decision: "I started boys as a last year Peewee, then didn't want to move on to Bantam because I was like four feet tall and I'd get killed, so then I moved

into girls.” For many though, parents were the driving force for moving to girls’ teams at that age. Mara stated how her parents initiated the change to girls’ hockey to avoid checking: “mostly because my parents didn’t want me checking.” The transition pathway was clear that the girls should no longer be playing boys’ hockey once they reached bantam. Associations and other actors in girls’ hockey communities gave a clear expectation that girls should not play boys’ check hockey. Girls clearly understood the expectation was for them to move to girls’ hockey at this age. While retention pathways between teams and associations was often unclear once on the girls’ side, the transition pathway away from boys’ hockey was clear.

The officiating around body contact in girls’ hockey was also a threat to comprehensibility legitimacy from the perspective of the players. Body contact, but not body checking is legal in girls’ hockey. However, the line between contact and checking was inconsistently called from game to game, which made it difficult for girls to understand checking. The majority of girls stated a preference to check. As they talked through their rationale for this, many players expressed a more nuanced view wherein they were okay with the level of physical contact currently in girls’ hockey as long as it was called consistently between games and between players and they were not penalized for legally making contact with other girls. This lack of consistent officiating made it difficult to understand the social world in which they played.

Players explained that in one game they would be allowed a certain level of contact and then be called for checking for the same play in another game. Chelsea thought that the rules should be loosened to allow girls to play more freely: “Well I feel like they should let us be a little more physical because sometimes they call penalties that did not happen.” This inconsistent officiating also led some players to believe that girls were afraid to play aggressively because

they did not want to receive a penalty. Megan said, "I feel like girls are a little scared to be aggressive because they're going to get a penalty." Similarly, there was a feeling girls who were bigger in size were called for more penalties. If a taller girl made physical contact with a smaller girl, and the smaller one fell, it was likely that the taller girl would get a checking or roughing penalty, even if this contact was within the bounds of proper physical contact. McKenzie described this occurrence, "I'll play girls and there has to be so many penalties called cause you're just trying to get the puck and the girl might be smaller than you and it looks like you checked her." The belief was that the official would see the player go down and assume the hit had been illegal and was attempting to protect the girls on the ice. Players noted that their smaller teammates could get away with a lot more physical contact than their bigger teammates.

When the girls were encouraged to talk more about their views on checking and physicality beyond their initial reaction of wanting to be able to check, several of them started discussing a more nuanced view of physicality. Several of the participants stated that they actually like the level of physical contact in girls' hockey when it is called well. If the game is called well, and players, particularly the taller players, are not called for using their body appropriately just because the opponent fell down, they would actually be okay with the current level of physicality. Helen talked about how she would like there to be less penalties when it was hitting girls into the boards, "Like if you were to accidentally hit a girl into the boards, and they're like, 'Oh, that's a penalty.' I wish that wasn't there." Chelsea just wanted the rule loosened a little, "It's just like, let us be a little bit more open like the guys get to." Checking was not viewed as a necessary addition to the women's game as long as officiating was improved to the level where proper body contact was called correctly. Molly said, "I don't think ... not add checking, because, like I said, the physicality as you get older gets where checking wouldn't be

necessary because they're so physical.” Andrea and Kathy also thought that while full check was not necessary, allowing a little more contact, especially along the boards would be good. Andrea said, “Maybe not full on checking but a little bump.” Kathy added, “Not like open ice maybe but like [...] If I were, honestly, to [give a] little hit on the boards, they'd call that. It's so stupid.” Some referenced the level of physical contact allowed at the collegiate or Olympic as proof that there is already a high level of physical contact with no need for checking when officiating is done well.

This nuanced perception on physical contact is a prime example of the way that the checking rule, and the officiating around it, was a threat to the comprehensibility legitimacy of girls' hockey from the perspective of the players. The players were trying to make sense of the environment that they were in (Suchman, 1995). However, the cultural model that they had to work with was one in which they perceived the boys' game, which involved checking, to be more consistently officiated. Checking, then was initially identified as a way to fix this. This perspective aligns with liberal feminist ideals advocating for equality and equal access that are commonly advocated for within school and sport settings (Boutilier & SanGiovanni, 1994; Donovan, 2012; Hargreaves, 2004; Nicholson, 1997) But as they worked through their understandings of their own game, they began to question whether a full check model was actually right for them. They also saw an incongruity between their experience in the sport, where body contact was called unfairly, and the larger rule system of girls' and women's hockey, which allowed a high level of physical contact across the board. This begins to challenge the notions of liberal feminism and begin to grapple with the debate between equity and equality. It touches on the argument that women's sport may not need to follow the same rules as men's sport to be perceived as legitimate and worthy of support (Adams & Stevens, 2007; Boutilier &

SanGiovanni, 1994; Hargreaves, 2004)The participants could see their non-check game as legitimate through the lens of comprehensibility legitimacy if the officiating was improved to a point where body contact was called consistently and at a high level so that their playing experience matched the structurally assigned model of girls' hockey with body contact but not body checking.

Taken for granted legitimacy. Taken for granted legitimacy is a type of cognitive legitimacy in which the removal of an aspect of a social structure is unthinkable and challenges to that structure is impossible. The girls in this study discussed their view of the ban on checking in light of taken for granted legitimacy. A commonly cited reason for wanting to be able to check was that checking is a part of the sport and that if they were playing hockey, they should be allowed to check. This shows a perspective that checking is taken for granted because they consider it to be a part of hockey culture. For example, when Amber was asked why she thought there should be checking in girls' hockey, she said, "Because, in general, it is part of the game." Some participants thought that boys' would perceive girls' hockey as more legitimate if they were allowed to check. According to Mara:

If we were equal with the boys, if it was all check ... You know, I feel like boys look down upon girls' hockey because they're like, they can't even hit. It's like okay, great. I would have it if I had the option.

These girls' have been in a hockey culture where boys' hockey includes checking, and the professional and semi-professional hockey all includes checking. As such, the accepted structure of hockey is as a full check game. It is taken for granted that the sport of hockey includes checking, and thus girls' hockey should also include checking from the perspective of many of the girls. They see a disconnect between the social concepts of equality and women's

access to sport and the fact that they are not allowed to play check hockey like their male counterparts. In this regard, many of the participants viewed checking as a taken for granted aspect of hockey which challenges the legitimacy of girls' hockey as a non-check sport from the perspective of many female players in this study.

However, it should be noted that not all participants stated a desire to check and the majority of the players believed that checking would hurt participation. This should be taken into consideration when considering to adding checking to girls' hockey. Despite checking being taken for granted by many players, not all wanted it included and most thought it would hurt the growth of the sport. Some players explicitly stated that they did not want checking in their sport, they were happy with the level of physical contact currently and did not want to see an increase. Cora said, "I like it the way it is, I like that we're forced to find other ways to knock people off the puck, stuff like that." Molly repeated that getting hit from behind encouraged her to switch over to non-check girls' hockey,

I know when I played guys, I got hit from behind and it was scary. It was one of the things that made me think, 'You know what, if I have a way to go to girls' hockey and not be afraid to get hit, then it's a smart idea.' I know I was scared to get hit, and it's just not a fun feeling to know that you have this target and everybody's like, 'Okay, I'm going to hit you,' you know? When it's more about scoring, who has the puck, you know.

Players not interested in checking considered it a safety issue and wanted to be able to play hockey without fear of getting hit and injured. There were also a couple of players who realized that while they think they want to play check hockey, they have never experienced it, and may not like it once they start receiving hits. Cassie thought she wanted to check, "I always say I wish it was girls had checking, but I don't really know because I never played."

Despite their views on checking, the majority of the players thought that introducing checking into girls' hockey would hurt participation. However, most did not think that girls' themselves would want to stop playing. Many of the players had moved to girls' hockey before bantam/14U at the request of their parents, so as not to play boys' check hockey. Helen stated, "I know that parents don't want it. That's why my parents won't let me play boys." Sarah reiterated this sentiment, "Well for me it wouldn't change my decision but I think my mom wouldn't let me play. That's the reason she wouldn't let me play guys' lacrosse and so my mom wouldn't let me play anymore." The players believed that parental decisions to avoid full check boys' hockey would transfer over to decisions to avoid full check hockey with girls as well. Marissa said, "I don't think my parents would let me play if we checked." There was a belief that parents would pull them out of the sport, and not allow them to play at all if checking was introduced to girls' hockey.

Many players viewed checking as taken for granted and an aspect of the sport that would enhance comprehensibility legitimacy. The fact that the majority of the players believed it would decrease participation should be kept in mind in the discussion around adding checking to girls' hockey.

Boys perceptions of the legitimacy of girls' hockey. An unexpected finding regarding the legitimacy of girls' hockey was the girls' perceptions of the ways that boys' perceived girls' hockey. Specifically, they discussed how girls playing on boys' teams impacted boys' perceptions of the legitimacy of girls' hockey. The girls explained that some boys, both on their past teams, and at school, perceived girls' hockey and female hockey players to be less skilled than themselves. On boys' teams, the girls often had to prove their worth by being one of the best on the team in order to be accepted. Molly said:

There was one issue where a new kid came onto our team and he didn't realize how good ... I feel like I'm a pretty good player and the boys I played with thought I was a really good player, but he had never seen me play. So he treated me like I was a girl and I shouldn't be allowed to be in their hotel room, if we were hanging out or anything, and he treated me like that. Then after he saw me play, he changed how he was towards me, and he's still one of my really close friends now.

Some of the participants talked about how they thought that boys who had played with girls were more likely to view female hockey players as equally skilled, and to view girls' hockey as legitimate. Abby discussed this belief: "Some guys I've played with. Who have girls on their team, and they get it more. If someone asks, 'How do you feel about playing hockey?' They would just be, 'I don't know they play hockey.'" Due to this, the structure of girls' hockey that often requires them to play on boys' teams, seems to help boys perceive girls' hockey as more legitimate due to the interactions the male players have with female players.

Factors Impacting Playing Experience

The players' broader experiences playing hockey are important in understanding their overall perceptions of legitimacy. There are aspects of their experience that they discussed that do not relate directly to any particular of legitimacy. However, the actions an association takes to create perceptions of legitimacy impacts the lived experience of the players. Hence it is important to understand the experiences of the players more broadly to ensure that associations do not implement something to aid in legitimacy that will negatively impact players' experiences. Negative experiences could reduce player retention and thus interfere with the growth and development of the sport. The players in this study were asked about what they liked best and least about their playing experiences on both boys' and girls' teams. The responses to

these questions provide findings regarding research question five regarding the aspects that are important to players in order to have a positive playing experience and research question six regarding the issues that players perceive as being problematic to their continued participation. Through these questions, three major themes emerged regarding impacts on girls' playing experiences: community on the team, acceptance of girls on boys' teams, and coaches.

Community on the team. A sense of community was of utmost importance to the girls in this study. The girls wanted their teammates to be their friends both on and off the ice. They wanted to get along with teammates in the locker room and on the ice. Some of the girls talked about switching teams to find teammates they get along with better. Keira mentioned switching teams to find a team with better personalities:

I did the spring league at [current association] when I was deciding if I was going to go back to [past association] for my U14 year or completely go a different route. I did the spring at [current association] and, oh my God, I fell in love with the girls and the coaching and it was just ... I guess it was a new, fresh element that wasn't what I was used to. That was like, "Oh my God, people are nice."

While this was framed in terms of player personality, some of it was in relation to having teammates with similar goals and objectives for playing, whether that was a college scholarship or a fun experience. Mara exemplified this, when she discussed the transition from AA to AAA:

It's different. I felt that at AA, the relationships on your team were more personal, and I felt like at AAA, it was almost so competitive, to the point where people were worried about their spot for next year. It was like, that's great, of course you want to make the team next year, but don't ... People were rude to other people because they were worried

about that, and I didn't like that. I liked having my team be my best friends. I realized that, at least from what I've experienced of AA, it's been more of that.

In order to get along in the locker room there was a need for similar playing goals. Players who had disparate goals than their teammates struggled to find a sense of community and friendship within those teams. They often switched organizations in pursuit of a team with similar playing goals.

Within this sense of community players desired to be on teams with people who understood them and what they were going through. This was discussed in terms of having an easier time finding camaraderie on girls' teams than on boys' teams. Even for girls that had friends on their boys' teams, they found it easier to find community and friendship once they joined girls' teams. Amber talks about the impact that just being able to share a locker room has on team camaraderie: "With boys, I'm not always in the locker room but with this I always am and we formed a really close bond as a team." However, the sense of community was not only because they were able to spend time in the locker rooms with the girls' but also because there was a perception that their female teammates were more easily able to understand them and relate to what they were going through as teenage girls, which was important to them. Cassie clarified this idea, "I don't really know, kind of creating friends. It was more like, they're more like, there. They're girls, you know? They understand everything." Lily, who still double rosters on a boys' high school team and a girls' 16U team underscored the importance of female teammates in finding a sense of community:

What I liked was something that I didn't find with the boys, is I can't go in the boys' locker room. I'm a very outgoing person. I like to talk to people. I like to have all these inside jokes. With girls, I feel like I can do that. It's really nice to be able to come to the

locker room and have a bunch of people to support you right there, which I think is hard for the boys. I think over anything, that's the main thing that I really appreciate. That, and, just, I am a girl. There's a feminine side to some things. Although I don't like to be all like, 'Oh, braid my hair for the game,' it is nice to have some teammates that I can just talk about life with in a way.

For some, this sense of community extended beyond their team to the girls' hockey community as a whole. Mara explained it this way:

My close, true friends are my hockey friends. I liked being able to come to practice every day and practicing with not only my teammates, but my good friends. That's what I really like about it, I like that we're all so close. I think it's a very tight knit community, and I know girls on all different girls' teams. Some of my friends are in college, playing in AAA, and I don't know, I just think the community is great.

This could be, in part, a result of the frequent switching of teams as well as the age disparities. Within girls' hockey, individuals end up playing with a wide variety of girls even if they stay on one team due to the transient nature of other girls' in girls' hockey. This breeds a broader sense of community since that individual then creates friendships that spans across teams and associations.

On top of this desire to get along on the ice and have their teammates understand what they are going through, the girls' want the ability to be friends with their teammates and hang out with them off the ice as well. Alice talked about the inseparability of her teammates: "We just have this connection. If we go someplace we're always just together. Everyone can just tell that we're a team. Even if we don't have the same outfits on." This was another benefit that girls' teams had over boys' teams. The girls were able to have sleepovers and more easily hangout

with their female teammates than they could with their male teammates. Molly talked about how the off-ice socializing was a downside of playing boys' hockey:

Being away from everybody and not being able to ... When the guys go hang out, it's weird. You can't have a boy sleepover at your house like you can [a girl]. That's where you have to understand that, but it still was a downside of it.

The players often talked about their teammates on their girls' teams as their primary friendship groups, especially for the players that lived close to their teammates. Megan mentioned that her best friend was on her team:

I have a girl on our team now who I've been playing with since 4th grade, so we know each other really well, and we hang out with each other a lot. One of my best friends is on this team so we hang out with each other a lot, and then with everyone, I hang out with them a lot outside, so we don't just play hockey together, we also go to the mall together, we do other stuff together.

Julia explained the value of small group:

Sometimes it's kind of hard to get the whole team together. If we want to go watch another team's game or something like that, if we have a group chat we'll be like, "Hey, let's go watch this." Sometimes groups of us will hang out with each other. I know my friend Lynn, we hang out with each other all the time after, and stuff like that.

The players spent time together outside of school and hockey; their teammates were their social groups. Melanie explained how she loved having a tight knit team:

We were all very open with each other, and we're very comfortable. So I like that community aspect and we all live somewhat near so you can kind of reach out here and

there, like hey you want to come skate in the rink in my backyard? Hey you want to go to open skate? So I'd say we're all a really great group of friends.

As Melanie alluded to, this was harder for the girls with a long commute to play on girls' teams. Cora, whose team was pretty spread out, lamented that they could not hang out as much as she would have liked:

I wish we didn't all have to drive from so many different locations. I can't just call up a teammate, like want to hang out right now? because I have to drive an hour to your house, so we have to plan it out. I wish I could just call up my teammates and hang out.

However, the players on this team still felt they bonded closely with their teammates and enjoyed socializing with them off the ice when they could.

One aspect of girls' hockey that did challenge the camaraderie and community building on girls' teams was the age differences that were often found on girls' teams. There are significant maturity and life experience differences that impacted the camaraderie and community building that was possible on teams. Several of the girls explained that, when they were on combined teams, they had more trouble making friends and being social off the ice with their teammates than when they were on single age level teams. McKenzie clearly stated the issues the age difference can cause:

I'm the youngest on my team. Sometimes it's hard to like relate to some of the things the girls do. Some of them are juniors and sophomores, there's only two freshmen. It's hard to relate to what they do off of the ice and sometimes they come unfocused cause they are focused on a boy and I am completely not like that. If I had an issue with anything like boys, school, or whatever, when it comes game time I just don't even think about

anything. They tend to do that sometimes. I guess it's just a thing when you get older but I'm not there yet.

The age difference within teams impacted the skill differences and the sense of community within girls' teams. Even with the skill and age disparity issues, the girls found community and camaraderie on the girls' teams more easily than on boys' teams. Players in this study did admit to more drama on girls' teams. Many of the participants discussed the drama present on girls' teams and dislike of it. Abby stated, "It's like sometimes on girls, there can be lots of drama. I don't like doing that stuff." Sarah mentioned that she thought boys' hockey had less drama than girls' hockey did:

With girls' teams it's a lot more cliquy than guys' teams are, so that can cause drama on and off the ice. That happens a lot for my high school teams because being from different schools you can really see who gets along with who and on the ice who passes to who. It just doesn't work if people are cliquy.

When asked how drama could be avoided, several players mentioned that it was unavoidable on a girls' team. In response to the question, Keira laughingly said, "Avoid the drama? I don't think you'll ever be able to avoid the drama. You're with a bunch of teenage girls." However, a couple of players mentioned that they have been on teams with less drama. The teams with minimal drama were often the teams where the players had open lines of communication with each other and strong leadership from a captain. Cassie discussed her role as captain in reducing the level of drama on her team:

This year I was fortunate enough to become captain, so I just kind of right from the get go, I said, 'If you have drama, bring it to me, but nowhere else.' You know? I don't want to hear that stuff. I really don't care. Actually it's been really good. The girls really listen

to me and they understand, too. In a way they feel it. There's a couple girls that will always do it. I'm just like, 'No, you can't do that. That's not acceptable.'

These were also teams where most players had similar commitment levels. The players each had similar goals for their hockey careers and wanted similar things out of hockey. However, this commitment level, as mentioned earlier, was often described in terms of personality. They got along with the other girls and had personalities that fit together. However, the majority of the girls perceived some amount of drama to be unavoidable on a girls' team, which was one aspect of playing boys hockey that they liked better.

Players had mixed experiences finding community on boys' teams. Some were able to make friends and get along with male teammates quite easily while some had very negative experiences of being excluded on boys' teams. For some girls, this experience varied based on age. They had community and friendship on their boys' teams when they were younger but when they were around the Peewee/12U level, boys started creating distance from their female teammates and they stopped finding as much camaraderie on their boys' teams. Regardless of their experiences on boys' teams, all of the girls found it easier to find camaraderie and a sense of community on girls' teams. This was a universal experience for the participants in this study.

Acceptance of girls on boys' teams. The vast majority of girls' in this study played on a boys' team during some point in their careers. For many, this was their way into the sport, when they started playing at 8U or 10U. They joined a local house league and played on a predominantly boys' team, that may have had two or three more girls on it. Most of the girls' that played on boys' teams, had no problem with this at the younger ages. At the 6U and 8U levels, and for some the 10U level, they were accepted on their boys' teams and were included as any

other player. They got along with their teammates and changed in the same locker rooms. Megan discussed her experience on a boys' team at a young age:

There was (sic) maybe 1 or 2 girls on my team, including me, so there was (sic) mostly boys but we all got along because we were younger [...] I think we all changed in the same locker room because I just wore, like, clothes.

At the youngest levels there were very few players that had a concern about playing on a predominantly boys team. However, this began to change for most players starting either at Squirt/10U or Pee wee/12U. Julia mentioned feeling the shift in treatment as she got older:

I tried talking to them and they just didn't really want to talk to me too much. They never passed me the puck or anything [...] Gradually it got a little less, I could tell the difference. It wasn't like I was just one of the guys anymore. It really wasn't a problem. It might have been a few who didn't want to talk to me. That's normal.

It should be noted here that some girls' never had an issue of inclusion, and some were still playing on boys' teams, even beyond the Bantam level.

The team dynamics started to change as they get older and their male teammates started to treat the girls differently both on and off the ice, which isolated the girls on the team. On the ice, many girls experienced a need to prove themselves to their teammates and show that they were worthy to be on the team. Sarah faced this issue on one of her teams:

The guys' teams it's more like, 'Oh, you're a girl, you can't really do anything.' Then you have to show them that you can actually skate and actually play hockey. Then they're like, 'Whatever, you still aren't as good as us and stuff.'

For most girls, it was not good enough to be a mediocre player on the team, they had to prove that they were one of the best in order to be accepted on the boys' team. For some, even that was

not enough. Julia described the problems she faced fitting into her boys' team before switching over to girls:

My last year playing boys' hockey just because I didn't feel like I played bad or anything. I felt like I was always trying to compete to make them like, like me so I tried to be better than all of them so they'd like because that's what my dad said would work. It never really worked.

Girls also faced challenges to their participation from opposing players. Instead of treating the girls as just another hockey player, many girls experienced differential treatment during games in one of two ways. Some teams or opposing players would target the girls, especially once checking became legal at Bantam. The girls effectively skated around with a target on their back and opposing players would hit them more frequently and harder than their male teammates because they were invading a male space. Cassie described her experience playing boys' check hockey, "I was the smallest on the team, and since I was a girl, I'm pretty sure all the other teams basically just saw, there's a girl, let's just hit her the whole game." Megan had a similar experience, "Boys, when you're playing, they might go for the girls especially, like might hit the girls harder or go against them harder."

At the other end of the spectrum, some girls experienced opponents that would go easy on them. The boys would not go as hard to the puck, or challenge the girls as hard as they would a male player. Madison saw boys on her team do this when they played teams with girls on them, "The boys would be like, 'oh, we gotta take it easy on them because they're just going to get hurt.'" This situation was equally problematic to being targeted, because the girls were not able to play their game in a normal way. Lily, a goalie, experienced boys targeting her and playing easy against her:

I've had guys come and they actually try to tip me out of the net and they realize that I'm like 130 pounds. They try to, if I'm on the ice, try to shove me into the net. A lot of it is they're males and they're trying to say, 'I'm not going to let this girl make me look bad, so I'm going to do this.' Then there are some of them that they actually take it easy on me because they don't think they need to go that hard in order to score on me. Then they find out that, 'She's actually making the saves. I got to try to go harder.'

Both being targeted and being given extra space meant the girls were not being treated as a player on the ice but rather as a female player who was given special treatment due to her gender. This made the female players feel different and less included in their sport.

Girls also faced disparate treatment and isolation off the ice. Structurally, they were isolated from their team by being given a separate locker room space to change in. This usually happened by the time they were Peewees/12U. In hockey, much of the camaraderie and socializing amongst teammates happens in the locker room before and after games and practices. Lily, who played high school boys' hockey, discussed how she missed out on a big part of team socialization:

Hardest part is probably fitting in because I'm not in the locker room. I have to wait outside the locker room. They have to get changed and stuff, so I have to respect their privacy[...] I would say just the hardest part is trying to be a part of that as closely as possible because the locker room is pretty much half of the team, and I'm just not a part of it

Julia reiterated this sentiment:

Obviously as I got older, I just didn't connect with the boys as much anymore. It just, always kind of missing out on some experiences that you know you can't get if you're not in the same area with the locker rooms, but there's not much you can do about that.

By separating out the girls, they missed out on a lot of the socializing and bonding that was important to feeling included on the team and making friends on the team.

In addition to the forced structural isolation of the locker room, several girls complained that once they hit a certain age the boys, who had once treated them as just another teammate, started treating them different and acting awkward around them. Boys that were friends with the girls on the team were sometimes teased about liking the girl, as more than a teammate. This encouraged the boys to be less inclusive to the girls and it policed the girls' actions to where they also had to be careful about their action around their male teammates so that they were not interpreted as being interested in the boys or only on the team to meet boys to date. Sasha talked about the experiences she had on a boys' team before switching over to a girls' team:

If we were at a tournament I would just be kind of like alone, I guess. Because the guys would want to do their own thing and stuff. But luckily I had some friends on the team that would include me. Because I think it was kind of awkward for them since they were going into puberty and it was like, 'Oh, you're talking to a girl, you must like her or something like that. You know?'

While Lily had predominately positive experiences with her teammates, she did note that social interactions in high school could be awkward:

Being a girl [on a boys' team] is hard for high school boys. Talk to them without them being like, 'Hey, you like her?' because it makes it awkward. They don't think of me that way. I'm a teammate, which is really great, which I really appreciate because I don't want

to have a bunch of guys, like, 'Hey,' treating me not seriously because they think of me that way. They treat me like a teammate. Although it is awkward because I'm a girl, they still say hi to me. They pat my head when I'm going on the ice and stuff.

The social script of heterosexuality and of boys and girls not being able to just be friends with each other had a significant impact on the inclusion of girls on predominantly boys' teams as they get older and started reaching puberty. It led to policing of behaviors, which often led to social exclusion of the girls from team activities. While girls were easily included at the youngest ages of the sport, as they got older, the treatment they received on and off the ice began to change and that made it harder for them to be included on the team and to find a sense of community amongst their teammates.

The current state of girls' hockey often required that girls play on boys' teams at some point in their careers due to participation numbers, even though they faced many issues to inclusion. Despite these issues, the participants in this study offered some solutions to improving their inclusion on boys' teams. The first suggestion was to place multiple girls on one team whenever possible. Cassie mentioned how she became friends with the other girls on her boys' team, "There was (sic) actually three girls on my team that year. That's when it was really fun. We all got to bond and created lifelong relationships. It was awesome. That was a great season." Since many clubs have multiple boys' teams at any given age group, there were times when there may be three to four girls in an association at an age group, each on a different team. The girls suggested putting all, or multiple girls on one boys' team to ease their inclusion. Julia talked about her last year playing boys' hockey:

Yeah. I think the Pee wee year I played I was the only girl, that might have been the thing. There was maybe two, three, four girls rotating around in those couple of boys' teams.

They ended up having two on that team and two on that team, and I was just left with me on the one team [...] I don't know why they did that. It was kind of weird.

Having other girls on the team gave them somebody to be with in the locker rooms. It also made it harder for boys to exclude them on and off the ice. It would a lot harder to exclude three people than it would be to exclude one in terms of team dynamics. Thus putting multiple girls on one team, instead of spreading them out across multiple teams, helped encourage their inclusion on the teams and gave them other players to be with when they were structurally separated.

As discussed earlier, a few of the participants of this study argued that despite these challenges, including girls on boys' teams actually helped improve boys' perceptions of female hockey players. although girls did not experience the same level of community and social enjoyment on the boys' teams that they did on their girls' teams, they believe that boys who had played with girls on their team had higher opinions of girl hockey players. They think these boys were more likely to see female hockey players as skilled, competent, and competitive players than boys who had never played with girls. The exposure to girls who could keep up with them, and maybe even beat them, helped teach boys that girls can be hockey players. As such, including girls on boys' teams may help increase social acceptance and interest in girls' hockey, despite the challenges that the girls playing face. Putting boys' on girls' teams or integrating teams for several practices during the season may create the same result. While it is not common practice to put boys' on girls' teams, by placing some boys on a girls' team, even if temporary, may allow them to understand the skills possessed by female players and give the boys' a greater respect for the girls' game.

Importance of a good coach. The participants in this study emphasized the importance of a good coach. While this is highly dependent on individual perceptions of what it means to be

good, there were several aspects that players valued including, a perception that the coach understood how to work with girls specifically, that they paid attention to all the players on the team, and that they treated all players fairly.

The players want a coach that understands how to work with girls. While the players presented this as more easily accomplished by a female coach, it did not exclude male coaches. Players who have had female coaches view them as being more relatable. Helen, who played on a team with an all-female coaching staff, enjoyed this experience, “I love my coaches, I probably won't go back to a boys' coach. Now that I've had the girl coaches.” The participants also thought female coaches were more understanding of the needs and desires of female athletes because of their similarities and shared experiences. Helen went on to explain this belief:

They know how to deal with girls so at the point where like, some boys' coaches ... I've had a few girls on my team cry a few times because they've been yelled at. But they have been more softer. They know how to deal with girls. They understand you because you're a girl and they are too.

Mary added to this, pointing out that many of the female coaches played collegiate hockey so they understood hockey at a high level and could relate to the girls:

I like having girl coaches because you can relate to them more and a couple of our coaches have played D1 hockey which is really good hockey, so they're good at playing hockey so they can give you good tips for playing hockey

This ability to relate was important to the participants in this study. While it was perceived that female coaches could do this more easily than males, being female was not a coaching requirement.

Male coaches could also understand girls, and be perceived as good coaches. The male coaches that were identified as the best coaches were often described as fatherly. They provided the girls with another strong male figure and were often perceived as caring for them in a fatherly way both on and off the ice. Keira described how her coach did this:

[He] points out everything that we need and I think that he's mostly there for us as a coach, but also is kind of more of a father figure for us on the road, you know? He sees what's going on with all of us. He knows all of our personalities. He knows pretty much everything that's going on with us and who we are and pretty much everything like that. This helped to build the community and family feel of a team that the girls repeatedly discussed as critical to the positive experiences on a team. A male coach acted in a fatherly way and built a family like community on the team that would encourage the players to continue that community building and helped to create the camaraderie that the players found to be important.

Several of the girls discussed this as meaning a coach that did not yell much, but rather clearly communicated her/his desires without yelling. A good coach also provided clear guidance to the players in drills and during games. Laurie explained the fine line of communication, "My coach is a great coach. He doesn't yell at us, but he holds us accountable for the things that we should be doing." Megan added:

I like my head coach because he's really nice, he doesn't scream at you. He can yell at you but he doesn't yell a lot, which is nice, I don't like when people yell a lot. He can get mad at you but it's not like yelling mad, it's like his voice, the tone of it changes, not the loudness of it.

Being a good coach meant understanding girls and fostering the community and camaraderie that was so important to female players.

According to the players in this study, a good coach was also someone who paid attention to all of the players. This was very much based on the perceptions of players and whether or not the coach was being adequately attentive to all the players. Sarah talked about why she disliked a past coach: “He had a lot of favorites and then if you weren’t one of those favorites being on the team sucked. He played favorites a lot.” The players wanted feedback from the coach to learn and to improve. However, some players commented about having coaches who were only attentive to some players or were overly critical of other players. In discussing her reasoning for switching teams, Keira focused on the attention the coaches at the two associations paid to the players:

Coaching was better at [current association], I felt more comfortable there. The coach at [current association] gave us more one-on-one. They actually cared about their individual players other than just like their star kids. That's why I switched [...] There was like three or four girls [at past association] that was (sic) really cared about.

The participants wanted good, constructive feedback to all players regardless of skill or time with the team. While this was highly based on perceptions of fairness, being treated equitably and getting fair treatment by the coaches was important to the perception of a good coach. Coaches were viewed as an important factor that impacted the playing experience of the girls.

Girls are playing hockey at an increasing rate and, while more associations are supporting girls’ teams and working to grow the game than in the past, there is still substantial room for growth. The female players in the study believed that more associations needed to fully support girls’ hockey by providing girls-only teams, doing girls’ specific recruitment and providing them with proper resources and facilities that are equitable to those that boys’ teams have been receiving. Community and camaraderie were of utmost importance to the players in this study,

which was most easily found on girls' teams where the competitive level and commitment of their teammates was relatively homogenous.

Discussion

This section will consider the intersections of both study one and study two and the ways in which they inform each other in considering perceptions of organizational legitimacy within girls' hockey and in creating best practices for supporting girls' hockey across association structure types. This section will also discuss the ways in which the findings of this study fit within and add to the current organizational legitimacy and sport development literatures.

Organizational legitimacy is based on constituents' perceptions of the organization (Bitektine, 2011; Suchman, 1995). Players and administrators are constituents relevant to youth sport associations. Perceptions of legitimacy are based on the judgements of individuals. The judgements people make about the legitimacy of the association are based on their judgments about what the association does. People are judging the actions of the organizations, but very little of the broader literature on legitimacy has identified the contextual elements that are being judged (Bitektine, 2011; Lock et al., 2015). Qualitative studies have been used to explain practices of legitimacy and data from past performance has been used to judge legitimacy (Deephouse & Carter, 2005; Lock et al., 2015; Ruef & Scott, 1998). Despite calls for context-driven research on legitimacy (e.g., Lock et al., 2015; Suchman, 1995), legitimacy research has yet to adequately compare drivers of legitimacy across contexts. This drove the creation of Lock et al.'s (2015) Capture Perceptions of Sport Organizations Legitimacy (CPOL), and provided a measure which was used in this study to compare contexts.

Players made positive judgments in relation to the culture of fairness in their association and felt that the associations had positive commitments to women's hockey and treated the athletes fairly. However, these judgements were barely positive, particularly with respect to players' perceptions of their association's engagement with women's hockey. Lock and his

colleagues (2015) asserted that context matters in perceptions of legitimacy as context impacts peoples experiences, perceptions and judgements more generally (Bitektine, 2011; Suchman, 1995). Constituents of soccer in Australia judged the legitimacy of a regional club based on role in community, staff and organizational behavior, valuing community, development approach, local players, and trialing procedures. This study found a difference in how the constituents think about the judgements being made from Lock et al.'s (2015) study. Constituents of hockey associations in Illinois judged the legitimacy of their organizations based on three things: how well they perceived the association as supporting women's hockey, the overall culture and feeling of the association, and whether they believed the association treated players fairly in tryouts. All three of these categories revolve around fairness and equity of participation. Clearly, context matters in the way that constituents judge an associations legitimacy. Within the context of women's hockey, engagement with women's hockey, association culture, and tryouts were perceived as the dimensions on which the participants judge legitimacy.

There is the broad understanding within the legitimacy literature that perceptions of legitimacy is contingent on the personal and social factors that influence individual experience (cf. Bitektine, 2011; Suchman, 1995). However, the research on legitimacy in sport organizations has neglected to critically analyze the ways in which different constituent groups, based on their individual experiences, may differ in their judgements of legitimacy (cf. Edwards & Washington, 2015; Lock et al., 2015). Lock et al. (2015) discuss context in terms of difference in experience relative to the organizational environment (i.e., the industry matters), yet constituents' experiences of an organization vary depending on the context by which they interact with the organization as well. In hockey, gender forms an important context for individuals' experiences of hockey organizations. The gendered difference shows that context, defined by team and

association structure type, matters. There are differences in the ways that an individual judges an organizations actions that are based on the gendered structure in which that individual participates. Those who participated in all boys' structures had significantly more negative perceptions of their organizations engagement with women's hockey than did players in coed or all girls structures. Association structures that did not have girls' teams were not perceived as engaging with girls' hockey in a substantial way, even though they often have girls' participating within the association. Despite the fact that girls playing within boys' teams and boys associations is a common structure, it is perceived that these associations do not fully support girls' participation. This could impact the continued participation of girls' in their associations. If the players do not feel valued or like they have a space in the association, they may feel less welcome in the sport. It is hard to grow participation levels to the point of sustaining a girls' team if the girls' present in the association do not feel valued to the same level as their male counterparts.

Perceptions of legitimacy are formed by judgements about the actions of an organization. As such, the roles that individuals play within that organization affects their experiences and their judgements based on those experiences. The role an individual has affects the issues that are salient about her/his experience (i.e., what is noticed). Role theory posits that within a situation, individuals have a role or a part to play (Biddle, 1986; Stryker, 2001). This role is socially constructed based on interactions with others in the situation; expectations for behaviors and actions come with these roles. Role theory can help understand differences in perceptions of legitimacy on the basis of the role an individual holds in an association. In this study, the administrators were focused on the structures and procedures of an organization because their roles and activities within the organization focused on organizational structure and procedures.

They judged associations based on the structures and procedures that did nor did not engage with girls' hockey development including, the allocation of ice time, the presence of girls' hockey directors, and structures supporting grassroots, stable, girls' programs.

The players' experiences of the organization were more varied, thus focused on a broader view of their association. Their judgments were about association engagement with girls' hockey and overall equity of actions made by the association based on actions that were part of their playing experience: equity of ice slots compared to boys' teams, provision of equitable facility spaces, and presence of a coherent retention pathway. The role within an association that a youth player has, the expectations of their actions, and norms around their role dictate a much different form of participation and influence within the association than that of a coach, hockey director, or association president. The differing expectations that accompany these roles influences the experience of the different constituent groups as well as the level of information and influence of which they are knowledgeable. Players notice what is within their purview, which is comparisons of equity to boys' teams and other girls' teams. They are not involved in the administrative side, so they judge what they receive from the organization in terms of equity compared to boys' teams. Organizational structures and procedures are less salient aspects of their experience.

The participants in this study discussed topics related to perceptions of pragmatic and cognitive legitimacy. However, the most salient aspect of legitimacy for both players and administrators was moral legitimacy. Administrators discussed team stability, organizational support, community on teams, and skill disparities in terms of issues relevant to the moral legitimacy of associations. The players discussed clear retention pathways, access to resources, and team stability, all under the umbrella of equitable access, as key issues to perceptions of

moral legitimacy. Moral legitimacy considers the normative evaluations of an origination and its activities and is based on perceptions of whether those activities are the right things to do (Suchman, 1995). In this study, the participants' judgments of the policies, procedures, structures, and overall setting of the association were aspects that the participants were critical of in terms of organization legitimacy. The participants were concerned about equity and equitable treatment of girls within associations.

Equity is a moral issue. Liberal feminists within sport management have long strived for the equitable inclusion of girls' in athletic associations. Liberal feminists argue for greater integration of women and girls into already existing sport structures (Donovan, 2012; Nicholson, 1997). The majority of participants in this study discussed equitable treatment of girls within hockey associations as a salient aspect that is required for an association to be considered legitimate in regards to girls' hockey. This equitable treatment was discussed in a manner consistent with liberal feminist ideals.

It should also be noted that both groups judged aspects of legitimacy in terms of equity rather than equality. Equity is defined as "fairness or justice in the way people are treated," ("Equity," 2015) while equality is defined as "the quality or state of being equal: the quality or state of having the same rights, social status, etc." ("Equality," 2015). Equity is understood to mean that a group is treated fairly but may not have complete equality based on. For instance, the players do not expect their association to have the same number of boys' teams as girls' teams because they realize that there are fewer girls playing hockey than there are boys. However, there was an expectation that associations' provide girls with a team to play on and a stable retention pathway with ice time for practices and games that is equitable, in amount and time of day, to a boys' team at their similar age and skill level. Facilitating equitable access and resources for girls

to play hockey were aspects that both administrators and players considered in their perceptions of legitimacy of an association in regards to girls' hockey.

Like prior research on legitimacy, constituents in hockey judged the legitimacy of their organizations based on their experience of the actions of those organizations. However, judgements varied based on organizational context as well as individual roles within those contexts. As a result, the judgements constituents made about their sport organizations played a key role in recruitment, retention, and transition within the sport development system.

Expectations in sport development based on the hegemonic view of what sport should be have been constructed around the masculine center of sport (Messner, 2002). In light of this, the questions of the legitimacy of women in hockey is brought into view. This idea of legitimacy for the girls' version of the sport is important. It is important in terms of the way in which people judge the actions of an organization and in the expectations people have against which the actions are being judged.

It is not surprising then, that the perceptions of legitimacy of the associations were not very high, particularly judgments about associations' engagement with women's hockey. Women's hockey, despite its differences from the men's game, has long been compared to men's hockey, with expectations that it will look the same as the men's sport both in terms of the on-ice game, and in terms of its development system (Poniatowski, 2011; Theberge, 2000). However, the rule difference banning checking in girls' hockey means that the game on the ice is inherently different than the boys game. The stark difference in participation numbers necessitates differences in the association structure and development systems for male and female hockey players. The long tradition of hockey for males has set the expectations for the sport. When

neither the association structure nor the game itself meets those expectations, it is not surprising that the judgements of legitimacy are low.

The standard expectations within sport development models is that there will be enough players to field enough teams within and across associations to have competitive stable associations and leagues. However, the findings of this study show a disconnect between this sport development expectation and the reality of girls' hockey. Most sport development models rely on a pyramid analogy with broad, community-based participation at the entry level. From there, participation shrinks as players move up to competitive and elite levels or are eliminated from play. However, in girls' hockey in this state, there are not enough players to field teams at every age level at every association within the AA level, which is considered the participatory level. For instance, there are only three 19U girls' teams. Thus, there really is no mass participation level. This continues to be problematic at the competitive, AAA level, where four associations exist. However, only two associations are truly competitive locally and nationally. Those two associations regularly beat the other two by large margins, showing that there is not really enough talent for four competitive level teams. The expectation that there will be enough players to fill multiple levels of the sport development system is evidenced within boys' hockey, where most associations have multiple boys' teams at every age level and at multiple skill levels. However, this is not the case on the girls' side where associations struggle with instability and regularly filling a single team at each age level. Because this expectation is unrealistic, it impacts peoples' judgements of the legitimacy of the sport.

Manning theory could help associations overcome this issue (Wicker, 1979). Manning theory considers the number of participation opportunities relative to the number of people available to fill them. Creating teams, even when an association does not yet have enough girls to

fill the roster, may help encourage participation and in turn recruit more participants through the players. Having too few players encourages strong social contract and a stronger need to contribute as the players understand the importance of the role they play within the team (Barker & Gump, 1964; Green, 2005). Additionally, as they see the value in their participation, the players may recruit friends to join them and others interested in joining will see that there are spots and roles available to them. As such, undermanning and maintaining girls' programs when they cannot fill a roster, may help recruit more participants and help develop the sport to a place where broad-based participation exists at a level high enough to enhance perceptions of legitimacy.

When expectations are not met, people are less likely to consider an organization legitimate, which further impacts their experience. There is a need to increase participation through recruitment and retention as increased participation will allow for girls' hockey to fit the traditional sport development models more closely. Alternatively, there is a need to shift expectations by which legitimacy is judged. As participation increases, experiences will likely more closely match expectations, which will in turn alter perceptions of legitimacy. In order to increase recruitment there is a need for girls-specific recruitment events and targeted recruitment announcements. Flyers that depict girls' playing the sport help to show that it is acceptable for girls' to play the sport. Additionally holding girls-only try hockey for free recruitment events allows girls to try the sport together without the stereotypes and stigmas associated with comparing boys' and girls' sport skills (Coakley, 2014; Messner, 2002). Additionally, having more experienced girls helping at the clinics can serve to act as role models and mentors to the new players and show them that the sport is open and acceptable for girls to play. Stigmas and stereotypes still exists around girls' participation in sports, particularly traditionally masculine

sports like hockey (Coakley, 2014; Ezzell, 2009; Messner, 2002; Theberge, 2000). However, giving girls' female role models within the sport and allowing them to try the sport within an all-female context may allow them to feel more comfortable playing the sport and perceiving it to be more acceptable.

Additionally, once those players have been recruited into hockey, they need to be retained. Both administrators and players discussed the importance of girls-only teams. Girls' teams allowed players to connect more with their teammates and develop a greater sense of community within their teams than they were able to do on boys' teams. (Warner & Dixon, 2013) found that female athletes place a greater importance on teamwork and friendship within their teams than male athletes. For girls in this study, friendship on and off the ice and camaraderie with teammates was important to their playing experience. Having a best friend on a team can make drop out less likely (Fraser-Thomas et al., 2008). Friendship and a sense of community were more easily found on girls' teams than on boys' teams in this study. Thus, creating a team and association structure that enhances girls' sense of community can lead to increased player retention. With increased recruitment and retention of female players, the experience in girls' hockey may come closer to matching expectations, thereby increasing perceptions of legitimacy.

The next disconnect in terms of expectations of standard sport development and the current lived reality of girls' hockey is the existence of stable teams within an organization. When stable teams within organizations are not present, that leads to negative perceptions of legitimacy because it does not look like traditional boys' hockey organizations. However, due to the limited number of female teams, and girls' constant movement between associations, teams within associations were not stable and there was a consistent fear of losing a team before the

next season. When teams are unstable, the number of transition points for a single player increases. Additionally, the transition points become more challenging and severe as not only is the player transitioning from one age level to the next, but possibly from one association to another. This impacted the perceptions of legitimacy of the administrators the most as they were the ones responsible for team and association stability. Implementing rules such as the two-choice rule, which limits players' ability to move repeatedly between associations, and the 2-4-6-8 rule, which limits the number of players can move to a new association with a coach may help stabilize teams. The boys' side of the sport already has these rules in place in Illinois. Implementing the rules may help to stabilize the teams. Additionally, many hockey families are familiar with the system in place on the boys' side and often use that structure to judge the legitimacy of hockey associations. While mimicking the status quo is not always the best option for other groups, it is one path to gaining legitimacy within the normative structures currently in place.

By stabilizing the teams, experiences may more closely match perceived expectations of the sport structure. Another avenue to enhancing association legitimacy is to change expectations. While much of the feminist sport literature has advocated for liberal feminism and the inclusion of women within the traditional male model (Boutilier & SanGiovanni, 1994; Donovan, 2012; Hargreaves, 2004; Nicholson, 1997), sectors of feminism have also argued that the current sport model is not beneficial to all players. Radical feminism does not believe in working within the system but rather working to alter the system from the outside in a manner that is beneficial to girls and women (Donovan, 2012; Nicholson, 1997). Creating separatist associations and leagues in order to provide girls with the association structure and support they were not receiving from the boys' associations follows the grassroots development models

promoted by the Ontario Women's Hockey Association (C. Adams & Stevens, 2007; Stevens & Adams, 2013).

This separatist model may not look the same as the boys' side or have the same participation benchmarks and expectations of stability. The administrators' perceptions that checking is not a necessary aspect for women's hockey to be perceived as legitimate fits well within this separatist model. While this may make it more challenging to be accepted as legitimate by the male center of sport, it also creates girls' hockey as a separate game to be judged on its own accord rather than compared to the male game. This is a radical idea that serves to fight the male model of sport and claim that women's sports do not need to and maybe even should not always conform to the male model.

Another aspect of the stability question in girls' hockey is the allowance of double rostering. It was seen as simultaneously a way to enhance the presence of girls' teams, but also caused issues of consistency when girls' would not show up to practices of their girls' teams due to scheduling conflicts with their boys' teams. This is where a new model of sport development that focuses on increasing participation across the spectrum through intentional planning at the association level could be created. While not all girls double roster within the same association, many do. Those associations supporting both boys' and girls' teams and supporting double rostering can work to grow girls' participation by mindful programming. Ice scheduling often happens at the association level. This allows the association to schedule in a way that limits scheduling conflicts for similarly aged teams. While conflicts would not completely be eliminated due to away games, they would be limited if the association made an effort to schedule boys' teams and girls' teams at similar ages on different days or times so that double rostered players could play for both teams consistently. This would also lend procedural

legitimacy to the association as they would be seen making a committed effort to support girls in their association.

There is also a disconnect with traditional sport development in terms of pathways. Pathways did not meet the expectations of players or administrators, but in different ways for the two groups. Pathways are important for the development of players and their movement through the sport system. The sport development literature often talks about pathways in terms of transitioning to more advanced skill levels (Green, 2005; Sotiriadou et al., 2008), such as moving through the stages of an Long Term Athlete Development (LTAD) program. Administrators primarily discussed transitions in this way, looking at vertical player movement through stages of skill development. Players used similar language in respect to discussing pathways but they were not talking about transitioning between skill levels and associations. Instead, they were concerned about horizontal pathways, that is, staying within the same association while they moved to older age groups. They wanted to be able to stay in the same association from age group to age group. This was the important pathway for most players. Since it was not uncommon for teams to disappear suddenly when multiple players left one association, remaining players were often in need of a new team and association. However, there was a lack of a consistent retention pathway to move from age group to age group within the same association. Linkages with other associations, which are often discussed as easing vertical transitions up the development ladder (Green, 2005), may also help facilitate transitions caused by team instability. If two associations at risk of losing a team at the same age level talked to each other, they might be able to create a joint team together. This would ease the transition by allowing the players to stay within a familiar association. Dropout often occurs at transition points, and this solution might help to minimize dropout by keeping players connected to their

home associations. More stable retention pathways may increase retention and also create an environment that is more closely aligned to the expectations of traditional sport development settings.

For the administrators, there was a need to facilitate smooth vertical transitions, both from AA to AAA teams and then back down to AA from AAA teams. Green (2005) discussed the importance of linkages between associations at different levels to ease transitions along the sport development pathway. Linkages facilitate transitions by making athletes aware of advancement opportunities and identifying potential athletes for advancement. The AAA associations discussed a desire for more linkages to be allowed with AA associations. This would help AAA associations ensure that players were receiving proper teaching of hockey fundamentals, identify potential athletes to move to AAA, and allow for them to educate players about the AAA system. Meanwhile, AA associations were concerned with the transitions of players who either get cut from a AAA association or decide willingly to play AA after playing for a AAA association. A player who tries out for, but does not make a AAA team then must find a AA association to play for. However, her home association may no longer have a team if too many players left when she did. The instability makes the transition back to AA challenging. Despite this, most AA association talk about welcoming players back easily and do not want the direct linkages to AA that AAA associations want. AA associations perceive direct linkages as talent poaching and hurting the overall development of AA hockey as it creates an elite hierarchy within that level of hockey. Thus, pathways and linkages was a topic that differed based on the competitive level of the administrators.

Theoretical implications

This research advances the legitimacy research by challenging the understanding that legitimacy either exists or does not exist in an organization. By considering the specific context of girls' hockey and the perspectives of the various stakeholder groups in girls' hockey, it is evident that perceptions of organizational legitimacy are not black and white, but vary along a continuum. Stakeholders could perceive an action of an association as lending legitimacy in one aspect while the absence of a different association attribute could hurt perceptions of legitimacy. For instance, players perceived that having consistent teams across all age levels lent legitimacy to an association. However, if an association gave girls' teams less ice and worse times than the boys' teams, that was a detractor from its legitimacy. As such, if an association provided teams at all age levels but gave boys' teams better ice time, the female players perceived the association to legitimately support girls' hockey in one respect, but not support it fully in another respect. As such, legitimacy is not a straight forward entity that an association either has or does not have. Rather, an associations' legitimacy is dependent on the stakeholder and the aspects of legitimacy being judged.

While the legitimacy literature asserts that context and stakeholder groups are relevant to perceptions of legitimacy, little research has actually considered the differences amongst stakeholder groups within one context (Bitektine, 2011; Edwards & Washington, 2015; Lock et al., 2013; Suchman, 1995). The findings of this study show that the stakeholder group significantly impacts what are considered important aspects to perceptions of legitimacy of girls' hockey. While there were many similarities in the topics that the players and administrators found important to perceptions of legitimacy, (e.g., development pathways, ice time, team consistency, body checking) the way that the two groups talked about the topics and the ways

that they judged legitimacy often differed. For instance, both groups thought the topic of body checking was important to perceptions of legitimacy, however, the administrators took it for granted that girls' hockey did not include body checking and girls' hockey could be legitimate without body checking. The majority of the players thought that inclusion of body checking was a taken for granted aspect of hockey and thus thought that the inclusion of body checking in girls' hockey would improve perceptions of legitimacy for the sport. These findings support the assertion that stakeholders have different perspectives on organization legitimacy and underscore the importance of considering multiple stakeholder groups when considering organizational legitimacy in order to fully understand the context.

This research advances the sport development literature in considering alternative models of sport development that are aimed at increasing girls' participation in sport and focus specifically on traditionally masculine typed sports where girls' participation is still significantly lower. Girls, particularly girls in traditionally masculine sports, may need different tactics to become involved and stay involved in the sport than those targeting their male counterparts. At times there is a tension between athlete development and the development of associations: some actions may be good for the development of an association but less beneficial for the development of athletes or vice-versa. This poses a challenge for sport development in terms of whether the focus should be on developing the association and its broader functioning or on the development of individual athletes and teams. One situation where this is evident is in double rostering. Double rostering can provide players with more opportunities to participate and allow players to participate on a team they have played with for years while also introducing girls' to the girls' hockey system. It also allows athletes to be coached by multiple people, which could give them a broader and more diverse understanding of the sport, and different skills and

practices that could make them a better player. Additionally, boys' teams were often described by players as a higher skill level than the girls' teams they switched to. As such, playing on a boys' team may help the development of individual girls while making association development and development of girls' hockey broadly, more challenging. Double rostering can also mean that players prioritize one team over the other leaving the secondary team regularly with a low number of players, particularly for practice. This makes it challenging for coaches to plan practice and to work on systems with their full team at practice. In this way, it might be beneficial to the development of individual athlete skills, but detrimental to the development of a specific team or association program in the instance of the less important team. Double rostering served as a way for associations to have enough girls to form age group teams, however, those teams often struggled to develop as a team and remain consistent because the girls' team was often considered the secondary team for players. In this respect, double rostering both helped and hurt the development of girls' programs within associations.

Double rostering also has implications for long term athlete development. By playing on multiple teams, with multiple coaches, players are exposed to more skills, systems, and knowledge surrounding the game which can help them develop into better individual players. Additionally, the girls' talked about that playing on boys' teams helped boys be more accepting of girls in the sport. This helps with LTAD as there are more girls' playing and at more levels of the game, including in adult leagues which have been traditionally male centered. If boys learn to accept girls within the sport, the sport at all levels, including adult league may become more welcoming of girls' participation. Adult leagues are often heavily male dominated, with very few women's only leagues. If girls double roster and play on boys' teams for multiple years, they may be more willing to join a predominantly male adult league after retiring from competitive

levels of the sport as playing with boys will be a normal part of the sport for them. As such double rostering can help to bridge the gender divide and make the sport more inclusive of all participants at all levels of athlete development and participation.

This study has implications for the development of sports beyond girls' hockey. While boys' hockey is a well-established sport, girls' hockey is a relatively new addition to the sport scene. As such, some of the findings may be useful when applied to other emerging sports. Considering which aspects of organizational legitimacy are important for the constituents of the sport is necessary in building associations and development system that are responsive to the constituents and adheres to the local norms and values. Creating associations and systems responsive to constituents and norms would allow new participants to perceive the organizations and sport as legitimate and of value.

One challenge to new sports is the formation of enough teams to form leagues and leagues with multiple skill level categories. This was one challenge discussed by administrators and players in this study. The findings of this study may provide suggestions for other new sports in this regard. Since there was only one AA league for girls due to team numbers, and all teams regardless of skill or ability were in that league, they were creating solutions to make the league more balanced and thus more competitive games. At many age groups, they split the age group into two brackets after the first several games based on their win-loss records. After that point, the teams primarily only played teams in their own bracket. This allowed the better teams to play each other and the less skilled teams to play each other and reduced the number of blowout games. However, both brackets could qualify for playoffs, which allowed for the less skilled teams to improve over the season and face the more skilled teams at the end of the seasons. This organizational system allowed for a situation with limited teams and only one league level to

skill have competitive balance and a fun season for all teams while still giving all teams a chance to win the championship at the end of the season. Other sports with limited team numbers might be able to use a similar structure to organize their leagues in a way that allows for close competition and development for all teams.

Some of the sport development implications are also gender specific. Creating a sense of community within the girls' teams was a high priority for improving retention and enjoyment of the sport in this study. The girls' wanted to be able to find a team they fit in on, and wanted to stay there throughout their youth careers. This furthers Warner & Dixon's (2013) assertion that while both male and female athletes enjoy competition with other teams, female athletes are less likely to enjoy competition with their teammates. The players enjoyed being friends with their teammates and wanted to stay together as a unit, moving up through the age levels. With this, having players of similar age, not just skill, is important to creating a community dynamic. In girls' hockey, there are often teams that combine multiple age groups to create a team. This caused issues in creating a strong community on the team. Women's specific sport development systems should focus on ensuring that the girls teams are able to create a strong sense of community on and off the ice, along with creating developmentally appropriate skill progressions and recruitment and retention tactics.

Practical implications

Woman-centered recruitment techniques are also important to creating women's specific sport development and should be a focus of implications for practitioners. Creating recruitment initiatives that focus on girls in the sport and their needs is important for any sport trying to encourage female participation, but particularly sports that are predominantly male where girls' might need extra encouragement that it is acceptable to play. This can come in the form of fliers

and posters that specifically show girls' playing the game, girls' only learn to play times, female coaches, older female players as mentors. Creating a space that highlights female participation in the sport can help to show girls,' and their parents that it is acceptable for them to take up the sport. Once the girls have been recruited into the sport, it is important to reinforce those ideas of inclusion and support. Utilizing girls on older teams to help out with the younger teams gives the girls role models to look up to and show that they can keep playing through high school or college. Additionally, providing girls-only spaces even when the girls mostly play on boys' teams can help with retention by allowing them to see that there are other girls in the sport and giving them the opportunity to create friendships with other female players. Associations with girls playing primarily on boys' teams could put together tournament teams or a regional team from several associations for some girls' jamborees or tournaments that will allow their girls' to experience playing with other girls' and to bond with other girls' in the sport. While playing with boys is still a necessary and viable path in many regions, allowing the girls to experience the community of girls' teams can be encouraging and help retain them in the sport particularly as they get older. Associations who are dedicated to supporting and growing girls' hockey need to be intentional in their planning from recruitment techniques, to retention initiatives, to practice planning when double rostering is involved.

Limitations and Future Research

There are limitations to this study. No interviews were completed with players in girls-only associations or who only played on boys' teams, never on a girls' team. These are two groups whose experiences and perspectives may differ from those who have experienced coed associations. Future research should include the perspectives of girls' who only play on boys' teams. While the survey was sent to eight states across the United States, the interviews were

only reflective of one state. Thus, the experiences of the participants may be unique to the culture and structure of hockey in Illinois. Future research should look at perceptions of legitimacy in other regions of the country including states with significantly different participation numbers or association structures that support hockey development.

All participants in study two started with a perception that girls' hockey is legitimate and thus discussed what factors may threaten that legitimacy. None of the participants failed to consider girls' hockey to be legitimate; this may be a potential bias in the sample. Additionally, while this study addressed the perceptions of legitimacy of female players and of administrators, it did not consider the perspective of parents who are another key constituent group and are often the ones making decision regarding where and how youth players participate in a sport. As such, future research should address how parents perceive the legitimacy of women's hockey and associations' engagement with women's hockey.

Additionally, many of the administrators discussed the need for more rules to provide stability among girls' hockey programs. The two choice and 4-6-8 rules are to be implemented during the 2016-2017 season according to one high level state administrator. As such, future research should readdress the issue of organizational stability and its impact on player retention in light of the implementation of these rules. Future research should continue to develop a women's specific sport development model including developing and testing best practices for recruitment, retention, and transition both in regards to elite level development transition pathways and participatory level retention pathways.

Conclusion

Organizational context is important for perceptions of legitimacy and for understanding the diversity of experiences that impact those perceptions. Future work needs to continue to consider context-specific judgements, and the ways that people go about making those judgements. This will facilitate an understanding of ways to change people's perceptions of legitimacy.

This study has shown that there are distinctive gender differences in terms of experiences and perceptions of legitimacy and that gender is important in sport development models. Expectations driven by the hegemonic sport development models lead to participants experiencing a disconnect when their experiences do not match the expectations created by existing models for sport development. When this happens, it affects the experience of all the constituents, not just the players, and impacts the constituents' judgments about the legitimacy of the organizations. Work needs to be done to create sport development models that are responsive to the needs of female athletes in growing sports.

Creating girls-only spaces are of utmost importance for the continued growth and success of girls' hockey. Girls-only spaces are critical at all stages of sport development from recruitment to retention to development. Creating girls-specific recruitment initiatives, from posters that explicitly pictured and reached out to girls-only try hockey for free days, allows girls to see themselves as hockey players and it allows the social stigmas to be minimized. Girls' specific recruitment materials can help associations gain more girls which will in turn lead to more girls' teams. By having more teams and more playing opportunities for girls, they can feel a greater sense of place in the sport and more easily find a team where they are included and supported by their teammates and the association. Additionally, in terms of development, the

girls' game is different from the boys' in several key ways which impacts how the game is taught and played. Thus, girls' only spaces allow for girls to develop within the girls' system and style of play and have female players as role models to look up to. Even within predominantly male teams, providing girls with their own space, in terms of a dedicated locker room allows them to feel like they are a part of the team and a hockey player even when they are separated from their teammates. Additionally, having girls' teams also increases perceptions of organizational legitimacy in respect to an associations support of girls' hockey. Having girls-specific spaces from locker-rooms, to recruitment events, to teams, can help to support the current girls in the sport and further encourage the growth and development of girls' hockey.

Beyond providing girls-only spaces, associations need to work to ensure equitable and fair treatment of the girls and girls' teams under their purview. In order to support girls' participation in a meaningful way it is not enough for associations to simply create the girls' teams, they must ensure that that they have structures and procedures in place to provide female players with equitable experiences to their male counterparts. This includes procedures for fair allocation of ice time, equitable access to coaching, facilities, and equipment, and administrators in place to support and promote the needs of the female players in their association. At the institutional level, ensuring equitable treatment for girls and girls' teams in hockey means ensuring that the structures in place to support the needs of the girls. Institutionally, there needs to be a focus on coach and referee education that provides them with the necessary information to coach and officiate girls' hockey at as high of a level as boys' hockey. This is particularly important in respect to body checking and body contact. Educating coaches in what body contact is and how to teach and educating officials clearly on the differences between body contact and body checking, and what is legal in girls' hockey. This will help ensure that body contact is

clearly understood by the players and that games are called consistently. Raising the level of knowledge and education around this topic will help to ensure more equitable officiating, despite rule differences in the game. Creating structures and procedures that support girls' participation in a way that is equitable to the boys will help ensure that players feel that they are supported in their participation in the sport.

The stakeholders in this study had different perceptions of the actions that could impact their perceptions of organizational legitimacy based on their context and positions. However, in ensuring the girls' hockey is perceived as legitimate and continuing to grow and support the sport, the majority of the participants focused on providing equitable experiences to female and male players. There was also a broad belief the providing girls-specific spaces was important to the development of girls' hockey.

References

- Acosta, R. V., & Carpenter, L. J. (2012). *Women in intercollegiate sport: A longitudinal, national study thirty-five year update: 1977-2012*. Retrieved from <http://acostacarpenter.org/AcostaCarpenter2012.pdf>
- Adams, C., & Stevens, J. (2007). Change and grassroots movement: reconceptualising women's hockey governance in Canada. *International Journal of Sport Management and Marketing*, 2(4), 344. <http://doi.org/10.1504/IJSMM.2007.013710>
- Adams, M. L. (2006). The game of whose lives? Gender, race, and entitlement in Canada's "national" game. In D. Whitson & R. Gruneau (Eds.), *Artificial Ice: Hockey, commerce, and Canadian Culture* (pp. 71–84). Peterborough, Canada: Broadview Press.
- Axelsen, M. (2009). The Power of Leisure: "I Was an Anorexic; I'm Now a Healthy Triathlete." *Leisure Sciences*, 31(4), 330–346. <http://doi.org/10.1080/01490400902988283>
- Babiak, K. (2007). Determinants of interorganizational relationships: The case of a Canadian nonprofit sport organization. *Journal of Sport Management*, 21(3), 338–376.
- Balyi, I. (2001). Sport system building and long-term athlete development in British Columbia. *Sports Med BC*, 1–14.
- Barker, R. G., & Gump, P. V. (Eds.). (1964). *Big school, small school: High school size and student behavior*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Basford, T. E., Offermann, L. R., & Behrend, T. S. (2014). Do You See What I See? Perceptions of Gender Microaggressions in the Workplace. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 38(3), 340–349. <http://doi.org/10.1177/0361684313511420>
- Biddle, B. J. (1986). Recent Development in Role Theory. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 12, 67–92.

- Bitektine, A. (2011). Toward a theory of social judgements of organizations: the case of legitimacy, reputation, and status. *Academy of Management Review*, 36(1), 151–179. <http://doi.org/10.5465/amr.2011.55662572>
- Boutilier, M. A., & SanGiovanni, L. F. (1994). Politics, public policy, and Title IX: Some limitations of liberal feminism. In S. Birrell & C. L. Cole (Eds.), *Women, Sport, and Culture* (pp. 97–109). Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.
- Canadian Sport for Life. (2011). LTAD Stages. Retrieved from <http://canadiansportforlife.ca/learn-about-canadian-sport-life/ltad-stages>
- Chen, S., Snyder, S., & Magner, M. (2010). The effects of sport participation on studentathletes' and non-athlete students' social life and identity. *Journal of Issues in Intercollegiate Athletics*, 3, 176–193.
- Chimelis, B. R. (2012, December 22). Girls in boys hockey: "No big deal" is sign of progress. *Mass Live*, pp. 1–3. Retrieved from http://www.masslive.com/sports/2012/12/girls_in_boys_hockey_no_big_de.html
- Coakley, J. (2014). Gender and Sports: Does Equity Require Ideological Changes? In *Sport in Society: Issues and Controversies* (11th ed., pp. 178–223). New York: McGraw-Hill Education.
- Cohen, A., Melton, E. N., & Welty Peachey, J. (2014). Investigating a coed sport's ability to encourage inclusion and equality. *Journal of Sport Management*, 28(2), 220–235. <http://doi.org/10.1123/jsm.2013-0329>
- Connell, R. W. (1987). *Gender and Power*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Côté, J. (1999). The influence of the family in the development of talent in sport. *The Sport Psychologist*, 13, 395–417. <http://doi.org/10.1177/1527002502003003001>

- Côté, J. (2002). Coach and peer influence on children's development through sport. In J. M. Sliva & D. E. Stevens (Eds.), *Psychological Foundations of Sport* (pp. 484–502). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Cribb, R. (2010, December 22). Controversy pushes girl off coed hockey team. *Toronto Star*, pp. 6–8. Retrieved from http://www.thestar.com/sports/hockey/2010/12/22/controversy_pushes_girl_off_coed_hockey_team.html
- Cronan, M. K., & Scott, D. (2008). Triathlon and women's narratives of bodies and sport. *Leisure Sciences*, 30(1), 17–34. <http://doi.org/10.1080/01490400701544675>
- Deephouse, D. L. (1996). Does isomorphism legitimate? *Academy of Management Journal*, 39(4), 1024–1039. <http://doi.org/10.2307/256722>
- Deephouse, D. L., & Carter, S. M. (2005). An examination of differences between organizational legitimacy and organizational reputation. *Journal of Management Studies*, 42(2), 329–360. <http://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-6486.2005.00499.x>
- Donnelly, P., & Young, K. (1988). The construction and confirmation of identity in sport subcultures. *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 5(3), 223–240.
- Donovan, J. (2012). *Feminist Theory: The Intellectual Traditions* (4th ed.). New York: Continuum.
- Edwards, J. R., & Washington, M. (2015). Establishing a “ Safety Net ”: Exploring the Emergence and Maintenance of College Hockey Inc . and NCAA Division I Hockey. *Journal of Sport Management*, 12(29), 291–304. <http://doi.org/10.1123/jsm.2012-0122>
- Emerson, Robert, M. (Ed.). (2001). *Contemporary Field Research: Perspectives and Formulations* (2nd ed.). Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press, Inc.

- Equality. (2015). In *Merriam-Webster.com*. Retrieved from <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/equality>
- Equity. (2015). In *Merriam-Webster.com*. Retrieved from <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/equity>
- Ezzell, M. B. (2009). “Barbie dolls” on the pitch: identity work, defensive othering, and inequality in women’s rugby. *Social Problems*, 56(1), 111–131.
<http://doi.org/10.1525/sp.2009.56.1.111>.
- Fielding, N., & Fielding, J. L. (1986). *Linking Data*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Fields, S. K. (2005). *Female Gladiators: Gender, Law, and Contact Sport in America*. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press.
- Fraser-Thomas, J., Côté, J., & Deakin, J. (2008). Examining adolescent sport dropout and prolonged engagement from a developmental perspective. *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology*, 20(3), 318–333. <http://doi.org/10.1080/10413200802163549>
- Fraser-Thomas, J. L., Côté, J., & Deakin, J. (2005). Youth sport programs: an avenue to foster positive youth development. *Physical Education & Sport Pedagogy*, 10(1), 19–40.
<http://doi.org/10.1080/1740898042000334890>
- Glaser, B. B., & Strauss, A. L. (1967). *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research*. Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company.
- Green, B. C. (2005). Building sport programs to optimize athlete recruitment, retention, and transition: toward a normative theory of sport development. *Journal of Sport Management*, 19, 233–253.
- Green, B. C., & Chalip, L. (1998). Sport tourism as the celebration of subculture. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 25(2), 275–291. [http://doi.org/10.1016/S0160-7383\(97\)00073-X](http://doi.org/10.1016/S0160-7383(97)00073-X)

- Greene, J. C. (2008). Is mixed methods social inquiry a distinctive methodology? *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 2(1), 7–22. <http://doi.org/10.1177/1558689807309969>
- Hargreaves, J. (2004). Querying sport feminism: Personal or political? In R. Giulianotti (Ed.), *Sport and Modern Social Theorists* (pp. 187–206). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Hartsock, N. (2004). The feminist standpoint: Developing the ground for a specifically feminist historical materialism. *Discovering Reality*, 161, 283–310.
- Hayhurst, L. M. C., & Frisby, W. (2010). Inevitable tensions: Swiss and Canadian sport for development NGO perspectives on partnerships with high performance sport. *European Sport Management Quarterly*, 10(1), 75–96. <http://doi.org/10.1080/16184740903554140>
- Hesse-Biber, S. N. (Ed.). (2014). *Feminist Research Practice: A Primer* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications Inc.
- International Ice Hockey Federation. (2015). World Girls' Ice Hockey Weekend. Retrieved from <http://www.iihf.com/girlshockeyweekend/>
- Johnson, R. B., & Onwuegbuzie, A. J. (2009). Mixed methods research: A research paradigm whose time has come. *Educational Researcher*, 33(7), 14–26.
- Kaskan, E. R., & Ho, I. K. (2016). Microaggressions and Female Athletes. *Sex Roles*, 74(7-8), 275–287. <http://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-014-0425-1>
- Kyle, G., Absher, J., Norman, W., Hammitt, W., & Jodice, L. (2007). A modified involvement scale. *Leisure Studies*, 26(4), 399–427. <http://doi.org/10.1080/02614360600896668>
- Light, R. (2006). Situated learning in an Australian surf club. *Education and Society*, 11(2), 155–172.
- Lister, S. (2003). NGO legitimacy. *Critique of Anthropology*, 23(2), 175–192. <http://doi.org/10.1177/0308275X03023002004>

- Lock, D., Filo, K., Kunkel, T., & Skinner, J. (2013). Thinking about the same things differently: Examining perceptions of a non-profit community sport organisation. *Sport Management Review, 16*(4), 438–450. <http://doi.org/10.1016/j.smr.2013.02.001>
- Lock, D., Filo, K., Kunkel, T., & Skinner, J. (2015). The development of a framework to capture perceptions of sport organizations legitimacy. *Journal of Sport Management, (29)*, 362–379.
- Macris, L. I., & Sam, M. P. (2014). Belief, doubt, and legitimacy in a performance system: national sport organization perspectives. *Journal of Sport Management, 28*, 529–550.
- Martin, P. Y. (2004). Gender as social institution. *Social Forces, 82*(4), 1249–1273. <http://doi.org/10.1353/sof.2004.0081>
- Messner, M. A. (1988). Sports and Male Domination : The Female Athlete as Contested Ideological Terrain. *Sociology of Sport Journal, 5*(1), 197–211.
- Messner, M. A. (2002). *Taking the Field*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Milbury, M. (2015, April). Changing the checking age does not soften our sport. *USA Hockey Magazine*, 1–3. Retrieved from <http://usahockeymagazine.com/article/2011-04/changing-checking-age-does-not-soften-our-sport>
- Morgan, D. L. (2014). *Integrating Qualitative & Quantitative Methods: A Pragmatic Approach*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications Inc.
- Nicholson, L. (1997). Introduction. In L. Nicholson (Ed.), *The Second Wave: A Reader in Feminist Theory* (pp. 1–5). New York: Routledge.
- Poniatowski, K. (2011). “You’re not allowed body checking in women’s hockey”: Preserving gendered and nationalistic hegemonies in the 2006 Olympic ice hockey tournament. *Women in Sport and Physical Activity Journal, 20*(1), 39–52.
- Poniatowski, K., & Hardin, M. (2012). “The more things change, the more they...”:

- Commentary during women's ice hockey at the Olympic Games. *Mass Communication and Society*, 15(4), 622–641.
- Reducing Injury Risk From Body Checking in Boys' Youth Ice Hockey*. (2014). *American Academy of Pediatrics* (Vol. 133). Retrieved from <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/cgi/doi/10.1542/peds.2014-0692>
- Robinson, T. (2014, December). Bloomington Girls Hockey Creates New Opportunity. *USA Hockey.com*. Retrieved from http://www.usahockey.com/news_article/show/460293?referrer_id=752796
- Ruef, M., & Scott, W. R. (1998). A multidimensional model of organizational legitimacy: hospital survival in changing institutional environments. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 43(4), 877–904. <http://doi.org/10.2307/2393619>
- Sam, M. P. (2011). Building legitimacy at Sport Canada: Pitfalls of public value creation? *International Review of Administrative Sciences*, 77(4), 757–778. <http://doi.org/10.1177/0020852311419389>
- Sarason, S. B. (1974). *The Psychological Sense of Community: Prospects for a Community Psychology*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Schmalz, D. L., & Kerstetter, D. L. (2006). Girlie girls and manly men: Children's stigma consciousness of gender in sports and physical activities. *Journal of Leisure Research*, 38(4), 536–557.
- Selznick, P. (1957). *Leadership in Administration*. New York: Harper Row.
- Small, M. L. (2011). How to conduct a mixed methods study: Recent trends in a rapidly growing literature. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 37(1), 57–86. <http://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.soc.012809.102657>

- Sotiriadou, K., Shilbury, D., & Quick, S. (2008). The attraction, retention/transition, and nurturing process of sport development : Some Australian evidence. *Journal of Sport Management*, 22(3), 247–272.
- Stevens, J., & Adams, C. (2013). “Together we can make it better”: Collective action and governance in a girls’ ice hockey association. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 48(6), 658–672. <http://doi.org/10.1177/1012690212454466>
- Stryker, S. (2001). Traditional Symbolic Interactionism, Role Theory, and Structural Symbolic Interactionism: The Road to Identity Theory\rHandbook of Sociological Theory. In J. H. Turner (Ed.), *Handbook of Sociological Theory* (pp. 211–231). New York: Springer. http://doi.org/10.1007/0-387-36274-6_11
- Suchman, M. C. (1995). Managing legitimacy: Strategic and institutional approaches. *Academy of Management Review*, 20(3), 571–610.
- Theberge, N. (2000). *Higher Goals: Women’s Ice Hockey and the Politics of Gender*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Tucker Center for Research on Girls & Women in Sport. (2007). *Developing Physically Active Girls: An Evidence-based Multidisciplinary Approach*. Minneapolis, MN.
- USA Hockey. (n.d.). *American Development Model*. Colorado Springs, CO.
- USA Hockey. (2011a). *Official Rules of Ice Hockey*. Colorado Springs, CO.
- USA Hockey. (2011b). *Should My Daughter Play for a Girls’ Team or a Boys’ Team*. Colorado Springs, CO.
- USA Hockey. (2011c). *USA Hockey Body Checking Rule Proposal Background*. Colorado Springs, CO.
- USA Hockey. (2012). *Girls’ & Women’s Hockey* (Vol. 4090). Colorado Springs, CO.

- USA Hockey. (2014). *2013-2014 Season Final Registration Reports*. Colorado Springs, CO.
- Warner, S., & Dixon, M. A. (2013). Competition, gender, and the sport experience: An exploration among college athletes. *Sport, Education and Society*, 1–19.
- Warner, S., Dixon, M. A., & Chalip, L. (2012). The impact of formal versus informal sport: Mapping the differences in sense of community. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 40(8), 983–1003. <http://doi.org/10.1002/jcop>
- Warner, S., Kerwin, S., & Walker, M. (2013). Examining sense of community in sport: Developing the multidimensional “SCS” scale. *Journal of Sport Management*, 27, 349–362.
- Weaving, C., & Roberts, S. (2012). Checking in : An analysis of the (lack of) body checking in women ’ s ice hockey. *Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport*, 83(3), 470–478.
- Webb, H. (1969). Professionalization of attitudes toward play among adolescents. In G. S. Kenyon (Ed.), *Aspects of Contemporary Sport Sociology* (pp. 161–187). Chicago: Athletic Institute.
- Weiss, R. S. (1995). *Learning from Strangers: The Art and Method of Qualitative Interview Studies*. New York: The Free Press.
- Wicker, A. W. (1979). *An introduction to ecological psychology*. Monterey, CA: Brooks/Cole.

Appendix A: Survey Measures

Webb Scale

What do you think is MOST important when playing hockey
Place a “1” next to the one you think is MOST important
Place a “3” next to the one you think is LEAST important
_____ to play as well as you can
_____ to beat the other player or team
_____ to play the game fairly

Sense of Community

6 point Likert scale from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree

Administrative Consideration

Leaders of my hockey club care about other members
Leaders of my hockey club support other members
I feel comfortable talking openly with the leaders of my hockey club
The leaders make me feel like a valued member of my hockey club

Common Interest

I share similar values with other members in my hockey club
I feel like I belong in my hockey club
My hockey club provides me with friends who share a strong commitment to hockey

Equity in Administrative Decisions

Leaders in my hockey club make decisions that benefit everyone
Leaders in my hockey club make decisions that are fair
Leaders in my hockey club consider everyone’s needs when making decisions

Leadership Opportunities

I have influence over what my hockey club is like
If there is a problem in my hockey club, I can help to solve it
I have a say about what goes on in my hockey club
Being a member of my hockey club gives me opportunities to lead

Social Spaces

When going to a hockey game or practice, there are players where I can interact with other players
When going to a hockey game or practice, I know I’ll have an area where I can interact with other players
Hockey practices and games create a place for me to interact with other players
My hockey club provides me a place to interact with other members

Competition

I feel a bond with other players of my hockey club when I'm competing
I like the level of competition in my hockey club
Competing with other players in my hockey club is fun

Modified Involvement Scale

6 point Likert scale from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree

Attraction

Hockey is one of the most enjoyable things I do
Hockey is very important to me
Hockey is one of the most satisfying things I do

Centrality

I find a lot of my life is organized around Hockey
Hockey occupies a central role in my life
To change my preference from hockey to another sport would require major rethinking

Social Bonding

I enjoy discussing hockey with my friends
Most of my friends are in some way connected with hockey
Participating in hockey provides me with an opportunity to be with friends

Identity Affirmation

When I participate in hockey, I can really be myself
I identify with the people and image associated with hockey
When I'm playing hockey, I don't have to be concerned with the way I look

Identity Expression

You can tell a lot about a person by seeing them play hockey
Participating in hockey says a lot about whom I am
When I participate in hockey, others see me the way I want them to see me

Support

We would like to know how supportive people are of you playing hockey. Please tell us how each of the following people feels about your hockey participation:

Table 19

Support Measure

	Think it's great that I play Very supportive	Don't really care one way or the other	Think I shouldn't play Against me playing
Your Mom			
Your Dad			
Brother(s)			
Sister(s)			
Male friends			
Female friends			
Other girls at school			
Other boys at school			
Teachers			
Other coaches (not hockey)			

Legitimacy

1 2 3 4 5

Role 1 Does not serve a purpose in women's hockey Serves a purpose within women's hockey

Role 2 Does not have a place in women's hockey Has a place in women's hockey

Role 3 Is not valuable to women's hockey Is valuable to women's hockey

Staff 1 Staff are not well qualified Staff are well qualified

Staff 2 Coaches communicate poorly Coaches communicate well

Staff 3 Staff do not listen to the views of players Staff listen to the views of players

Comm 1 Is not driven by community values Is driven by community values

Comm 2 Does not share community values Shares community values

Comm 3 Is not engaged with the local community Is engaged with the local community

DevApp 2 Emphasizes winning matches Emphasizes player development

DevApp 2 Has an 'old school' approach to player development Has a progressive approach to player development

DevApp 3 Does not provide a clear development pathway in women's hockey
Provides a clear development pathway in women's hockey

DevApp 4 Does not encourage the technical development of players Encourages the technical development of players

Player 1 Does not recruit female players Recruits female players

Player 2 Does not give opportunities to girls that deserve a chance Gives opportunities to girls that deserve a chance

Player 3 Has a negative influence on female players Has a positive influence on female players

Trial 1 Tryouts are unfair Tryouts are fair

Trial 2 At tryouts players are not treated with respect At tryouts players are treated with respect

Trial 3 The tryout process is unacceptable The tryout process is acceptable

Perceptions of Girls' Hockey

Six point Likert scale from Strongly Disagree to Strongly agree

People have strong beliefs about girls who play hockey even if they don't say so
Checking should be allowed in competitive girls' hockey like it is in boys' hockey
People think girls should act like girls, not try to be hockey players
Girls hockey players would enjoy body checking in their games
If a girl plays hockey, people treat her differently
Checking should be banned in boys' hockey like it is in girls' hockey

Demographics

How old are you? ____

What gender do you identify as:

Female Male

What hockey club/association do you currently play for?

What age group are you in?

Bantam/14U Midget/16U Midget Major/19U High School varsity High School JV

Is your team:

Tier 1 Tier 2 Tier 3 Rec/house league High School Varsity High school JV

Is your team a:

Girls' team that plays against other girls' teams
Girls' team that plays mostly against boys' teams
Boys' team that plays against other boys' teams

How many years have you played for this team? _____

How many years have you played hockey? _____

Before you joined this team:

Did you ever play hockey on a girls' team? yes no

Did you ever play hockey on a coed team? yes no

Did you ever play hockey on a boys' team? yes no

Did you ever play full check (boys' bantam+) hockey? yes no

How do you rate yourself as a player?

Very good Pretty good Average Not that good

How much do you feel you contribute to the team?

A lot Pretty much Average Not much

My teammates feel that (check one):

___ I am very important to the teams' success

___ I am sort of important to the team's success

___ I am about average in importance to the team's success

___ I am not that important to the team's success

I will play hockey again next year:

Very likely Somewhat likely Somewhat unlikely Very unlikely

I will play for the same association next year

Very likely Somewhat likely Somewhat unlikely Very unlikely

What is the highest level of hockey you would like to play?

Bantam/14U Midget/16U Midget Major/19U NCAA/College

Would you consider playing in a recreational adult league after you stop playing competitive hockey?

Very likely Somewhat likely Somewhat unlikely Very unlikely

If you are female, would you be willing to play in a primarily male (non-check) recreational adult league?

Very likely Somewhat likely Somewhat unlikely Very unlikely

Appendix B: Player Interview

1. How did you get started playing
How long have you played for
When you started hockey, tell me about the team you played on (gender/age)
Tell me about the next team (go up to current team)
IF they switch from a boys team to a girls team probe for differences in the switch – what was good, what was bad, what were differences for them
 2. Tell me about the team you currently play on
Probe: What does the team look like – gender, age
What is the best part ?
What was the hardest part?
Friends? Locker rooms? Coaches? League? Travel distance?
Have there been past teams that you've liked more?
Past teams that you didn't like as much?
 - 3a. What do you particularly like about hockey?
Probe: What do you like about your team? Your club?
 - 3b. Was there anything you particularly dislike about hockey? Tell me about it.
Probe: Dislikes about team?
Dislikes about club?
 4. What keeps you playing?
 5. What do other people think about you playing hockey
Parents
Other relatives – siblings, grandparents etc
People at school – boys specifically, other girls specifically
 5. IF you could do anything to make hockey better for girls what would it be
What could your club specifically do better for you
What do you think would make more girls play
- [FOR PLAYERS ON BOYS TEAMS] What do you think about playing on a boys team?
Probe: What do you like
What don't you like
If there are issues, what are possible solutions to these issues?
In an ideal world would you stay on this team or would you play on an all girls team if there was a competitive one available to you?

6. Can you explain the difference between body contact (girls rules) and body checking (boys rules)

6b. What do you think about this rule

Probe: do you like playing without checking?

Do you think girls should be allowed to check?

How would checking change the game?

Would checking change your/your friends' decision to play hockey?

7. If there was anything that you would do to change about how/where you play, what would it be and how would you change it?

8. Is there anything else that you would like us to know?

Appendix C: Administrator Interview

1. How long have you been involved in this association?
How long have you been involved in hockey
2. Tell me about the organization you are part of?
Probe: Number of teams
Gender of teams
League structure
3. Tell me about how you organize girls' participation in your association
Probe: Team types?
Recruitment process?
Do you run girls only events?
Has this changed over the years? What was the evolution of including girls in the club?
- 3b. If you have girls playing on boys teams how do you integrate them
Probe: At what ages?
What issues have you faced?
How have people responded to the issues and their resolutions – parents/players/coaches
4. What do you think about the other ways of including girls in hockey – pros and cons of different girls hockey structures?
5. What are some issues you've faced in including girls'/girls' teams into your association?
Probe: How have people responded to the issues and their resolutions – parents/players/coaches
6. How have you responded to these issues as club?
Probe: how effective were these responses
What would you have done similarly/differently if you could do it again?
What things got in the way of implementing changes/solutions
7. If you could change anything about your organization and how it supports youth hockey, what would you change?
8. Can you explain the difference between body checking and body contact is and the difference in the girls' game?
- 8b. What do you think about this rule
Probe: Do you think girls' should continue playing non-check

Should they be allowed to check?

From what you know is this rule called consistently?

How would checking change the game?

Would it impact recruitment?

Would it impact how you integrate girls into your association?

9. If there was one thing you could do to improve inclusion of girls in youth hockey or the experiences of female players at your club what would it be?

10. Is there anything else that you would like us to know?

*Probe difference specific to girls hockey – if answers seem generic hockey issues.

Appendix D: Qualitative Findings

	Pragmatic			Moral				Cognitive	
	Exchange	Influence	Dispositional	Consequential	Procedural	Structural	Personal	Comprehensibility	Taken for Granted
Admin	AHAI rules	Girls' Director	Coach & player movement		Stability / instability	Stability / instability	Coach		Not checking
				Org support: ice, girls' director	Org support: ice, facilities, girls' director	Org support: ice, facilities, girls' director	Org support: girls' champion		
					Community	Community			
				Skill disparity	Skill disparity	Skill disparity			
	Double Roster					Double roster			
Players				Desire for equity	Ice time	Ice time			
				Pathways				Pathways	
			Reference group	Reference group		Stability		Stability	
			Locker room	Locker room		Locker room			
			Officiating	Checking	Checking			Officiating of checking	Checking