Organisational Resilience in Elite Sport

by

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Copyright statement

Abstract

Elite sport organisations often face high levels of uncertainty and change (Wagstaff et al., 2016). Accordingly, a better understanding of what enables such organisations to positively adapt to turbulence may offer valuable insight into elite sport organisations seeking to gain a competitive advantage. Organisational resilience is a relevant construct since it examines how individuals, teams, and organisations, within complex sociocultural systems, successfully deal with stressors and change. Resilience has been investigated in various organisational contexts outside of sport (e.g., disaster settings; Walker et al., 2020), while, within sport, researchers have focused on resilience at the individual level (see, for a review, Bryan et al., 2019), and the team level (see, for a review, Morgan et al., 2017). However, resilience at the organisational level has yet to be explored in the elite sport context. The purpose of this thesis is, therefore, to advance knowledge of organisational resilience in elite sport.

The thesis is divided into seven chapters. Chapter One provides an overview of the challenges encountered by elite sport organisations, highlighting multi-level considerations in organisational research. The literature review in Chapter Two is divided into three parts, namely a synthesis of resilience literature in sport and the workplace, an overview of relevant organisational-level concepts in sport, and organisational resilience research in domains beyond sport. Chapter Three presents the first empirical study of organisational resilience in elite sport in which a definition of organisational resilience is constructed and described as "the dynamic capability of an organisation to successfully deal with significant change. It emerges from multi-level (employee, team, and organisational) interacting characteristics and processes which enable an organisation to prepare for, adapt to, and learn from significant change." Five resilient characteristics are identified from the analysis, namely structural clarity, flexible improvement, shared understanding, reciprocal commitment, and operational awareness. The psychosocial processes underpinning organisational resilience in elite sport are explored in Chapter Four with the data analysis yielding two core processes of sensing (internal and external mechanisms, diversity of perspectives, evaluating and monitoring) and adapting (mirroring current resource availability, open and frequent communication, acute versus chronic change), and two

supporting processes of strengthening resources (quality and quantity of human and financial resources, relationships as source of additional resources) and shielding from risk (internal risk mitigation, external influencing).

Chapter Five investigates how organisational resilience is developed in an elite sport organisation through an immersive, ethnographic approach. The results are categorised into four main themes: collectively owning decisions and their consequences, awareness and exposure of vulnerabilities to strengthen relationships, recognition of future uncertainty rather than retrospective solace, and the desire to empower with a need for support and reassurance. Drawing on the findings presented in Chapters Three to Five, Chapter Six explores the implementation and effectiveness of a series of small-scale interventions to develop organisational resilience in elite sport. From a qualitative perspective, psychosocial outcomes of the interventions included meaningful cross-departmental connections, peer to peer innovative learning, and collective behavioural awareness, together with a significant (quantitative) increase in organisational resilience between the mid- and end-point quantitative outcome evaluation. Process evaluation factors identified from the qualitative data were categorised according to intervention context (the global Covid-19 pandemic), intervention content (comprising two sub-themes of self-organising groups with collective ownership and accountability, and expertise within the performance department), and mental model factors (with two sub-themes of psychological safety and enjoyment). The final Chapter Seven provides a summary, discussion, and conclusion of the thesis.

Overall, the work presented in this thesis provides the first programme of research on organisational resilience in elite sport and provides a strong conceptual foundation and unique insights into the ways in which organisational practices can be harnessed to create high performance systems better equipped to deal with complex, turbulent environments.

Publications Arising from this Thesis

Fasey, K. J., Sarkar, M., Wagstaff, C. R. D., & Johnston, J. (under review). Understanding organisational resilience in elite sport: An exploration of psychosocial processes. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*.

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Podcasts and other Presentations Related to this Thesis

Abrahams, D. (Host), Sarkar, M., & **Fasey, K.** (Guests). (2021, February 15). Organisational resilience in elite sport (No. 129) [Audio podcast episode]. In *The Sport Psych Show*. https://thesportpsychshow.libsyn.com/129-dr-mustafa-sarkar-and-kirsten-fasey-organisational-resilience-in-elite-sport

Park, S. (Host). **Fasey, K.** (Guest). (2020, November 25). Kirsten Fasey [Audio podcast episode]. In *All Season*. https://podcasts.apple.com/gb/podcast/kirsten-fasey/id1514845462?i=1000500255442

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Introduction

The ability to manage stress is a prerequisite of sporting excellence, with a range of interacting psychosocial factors determining whether an individual, team, or organisation is able to deal with the stressors and adversities they encounter (Fletcher & Sarkar, 2012; Morgan et al., 2013; Wagstaff et al., 2020). The term resilience is often employed whereby an individual, team, or organisation demonstrates a positive outcome despite experiencing adversity or change (Britt et al., 2016; Morgan et al., 2013; Linnenluecke, 2017). In sport, for example, the media highlight stories of 'resilient' individuals and teams that have 'bounced back' against the odds. Interestingly, however, much less attention is paid to the elite sport organisations that employ those athletes and govern their sports. Yet, importantly, these organisations create the environmental context in which athletes train and perform. Indeed, this link was highlighted in an independent review of British Cycling published in 2017 that unanimously found that "over the period 2012-2016 good governance was lacking at British Cycling Board level in relation to how it managed the culture and behaviours within the world class programme" (Phelps et al., 2017, p. 3).

The actions and decisions taken by those working within elite sport organisations have implications that extend beyond the performance department. To illustrate, for national sport organisations reliant on unpredictable funding streams, reductions in grant funding can create an instability that triggers "short-term responses inconsistent with rebuilding long-term success. Decision-making refocuses overwhelmingly on operations and survival, disconnected from the strategic thinking needed to optimise long-term prospects" (Bostock et al., 2017, p. 17). A short-term focus is also apparent in professional sport organisations, where high levels of managerial change can result in a lack of organisational continuity and learning as discussed by Wagstaff et al. (2016) in the context of English professional football.

One of the football club employees in Wagstaff et al.'s study commented:

> We aren't getting any better or wiser, there seems to be no learning here, it's senseless change; we just change from one philosophy to the next – you might say we go from one way of not achieving our goals to another – and because of the time it takes to recover and bed-in new ways – that upheaval each time – we are going backwards (p. 47).

Alongside the demands of governance, funding, and managerial change, a new challenge has recently emerged, that of the global Covid-19 pandemic, which "affects every aspect of sporting activity at both elite and grassroots levels and will challenge the resilience of sport organisations globally" (Bostock & Breese, 2021, p. 13). The pace of change in sport was recognised by UK Sport and Sport England in the introduction to their Code for Sports Governance (2017):

> The business of sport has changed rapidly in recent years. New opportunities and threats continue to present themselves. The type of decisions that now need to be taken are frequently complex, commercial, multidisciplinary, and high-profile in nature. Those entrusted with the responsibility to take these decisions therefore need to constitute and equip themselves in a manner that allows them to thrive in this shifting environment (p. 4).

How individuals and teams working within elite sport organisations can equip themselves to deal with these rapidly shifting environments is a question that can be addressed by the study of *organisational* resilience. The introduction to this thesis is organised into four sections. In the first section, some of the challenges and changes encountered by elite sport organisations are highlighted. The second section considers how to conceptualise psychological research at the organisational level, and the third section briefly introduces the concept of organisational resilience. Finally, in the fourth section, the purpose, objectives, and structure of this thesis are outlined.

1.1 Understanding the Challenges and Changes Encountered by Elite Sport

Organisations

An understanding of the types of challenges faced by elite sport organisations is central to a context-specific understanding of organisational resilience. While all organisations face some degree of change and uncertainty, elite sport organisations are particularly exposed across different levels of analysis. At the societal level, these include changing political policies, societal norms, and intense scrutiny from fans, stakeholders, and media (Feddersen, Morris, Abrahamsen et al., 2020). At the inter-organisational level, challenges include stakeholder heterogeneity in agendas and needs (Parent et al., 2018). At the intra-organisational level, professional sport organisations often face particularly high levels of internally instigated organisational change such as management turnover (Wagstaff et al., 2016), while national sport organisations are required to balance high-performance targets alongside investment in grassroots development (Smith & Stewart, 2013).

Within elite sport organisations, there has been a growing body of research focusing on the environmental demands associated primarily and directly with the organisation in which an individual operates, termed organisational stressors (Fletcher et al., 2006). Specifically, the research in this area has explored the impact of organisational stressors on the functioning of individuals and teams within sport organisations (e.g., Arnold & Fletcher, 2012; Arnold et al., 2019; Fletcher et al., 2011; Hanton et al., 2005; Thelwell et al., 2008). This work has highlighted the wide variety of organisational stressors that may impact individual and team functioning, although the distinction is not always clear between environmental demands associated primarily and directly with the organisation, and those demands emanating from other sources such as the coach, team, family, or community. Furthermore, by exclusively focusing on the impact of such organisational stressors on individuals and teams, the question of how such stressors might impact organisational functioning, and how that organisational functioning subsequently links back to the performance of athletes, teams, and employees, is yet to be explored.

1.2 Studying the Psychosocial Functioning of an "Organisation": Multi-Level

Considerations

How organisations function is a question of how a group of people are organised and how they communicate with one another (Mintzberg, 1979). It is ultimately the behaviour of individuals and teams that determines what an organisation does and, over time, what it has. Organisational psychology addresses human behavior in work settings, providing applied knowledge to enhance the effectiveness of individuals, groups, and organisations (Wagstaff et al., 2012a). This branch of psychology encompasses micro- (e.g., employee resilience), meso- (e.g., collective efficacy) and macro-level (e.g., strategy and structure) variables and processes, recognising that although organisational contexts are at a higher (macro-) level of analysis, they are anchored in the (micro-level) behaviours, attitudes, and feelings of individual employees (Klein & Kozlowski, 2000). For example, in an organisational context, individual behaviours, attitudes, and feelings contribute towards the creation of the macro-level culture of the organisation, which subsequently impacts employee behaviours and cognitions. In summary, organisational psychology does not attempt to ignore or discount the individuals working within that organisation. Indeed, internal human factors are often targeted in organisational development strategies (Gray & Jones, 2016). However, when focusing on the organisational level, this branch of psychology research differs from individual-level research by exploring how to enhance the functioning of the organisation, rather than the individual, but it usually does so by targeting both intra and inter-individual factors, acknowledging the inherent complexities arising from the multiplicity of interactions between those factors.

1.3 The Relevance of Resilience at an Organisational Level

The field of positive organisational sport psychology seeks to better understand the way in which successful dynamics are achieved and maintained in sport organisations through developing knowledge of the individual behaviour and social processes associated with such success (Wagstaff et al., 2012a; Wagstaff, 2019b). In pursuit of this goal, despite intuitive appeal, examining what has worked in the past may not always be a recipe for future

success. In his book *Thinking, Fast and Slow*, Daniel Kahneman (2011) explains the two systems that drive the way individuals think, making people:

> see the world as more tidy, simple, predictable, and coherent than it really is. The illusion that one has understood the past feeds the further illusion that one can predict and control the future. These illusions are comforting. They reduce the anxiety that we would experience if we allowed ourselves to fully acknowledge the uncertainties of existence. (p. 204-205)

To satisfy this need for predictability and coherence, recipe-style management books abound with stories of success and failure, but according to Phil Rosenzweig (2014) in his book *The Halo Effect* examining what drives business success and failure, such self-help texts consistently exaggerate the impact of leadership and management practice on positive outcomes. By focusing on how organisations can overcome, or effectively deal with, change and uncertainty in the present, rather than the ability of leadership to predict and avoid adversity based on what has worked in the past, organisational resilience is a valuable construct to help sport organisations navigate uncertainty and change.

Organisational resilience seeks to understand and explain how and why organisations adapt and thrive in environments which are complex and uncertain (Duchek, 2020; Lee et al., 2013). Resilience at the organisational level is not about the absence of adversity, it is about searching for "the everyday performances that underpin success…despite the complications, interruptions and uncertainties inherent to organisational life" (Macrae & Draycott, 2019, p. 495). The topic of organisational resilience has been investigated in a wide variety of contexts such as infrastructure providers (Brown et al., 2017; Walker et al., 2020), healthcare (Macrae & Draycott, 2019; Meyer, 1982), entrepreneurial start-ups (Branicki et al., 2018; Gray & Jones, 2016), and community sport clubs (Wicker et al., 2013). Within the elite sport domain, despite a growing body of literature on individual resilience (e.g., Fletcher & Sarkar, 2012; Galli & Vealey, 2008; Sarkar & Hilton, 2020) and team resilience (e.g., Decroos et al., 2017; Morgan et al., 2013, 2015, 2019), organisational resilience has yet to be investigated.

1.4 Purpose, Objectives, and Structure of the Thesis

The competitiveness of international level sport requires national and professional sport organisations to withstand the challenges, adversities, and changes associated with elite sport governance. Understanding how organisations can use individual, team, and organisational-level resources to overcome and adapt to changes in the elite sport environment is an essential requirement for achieving sporting excellence through optimal organisational functioning.

The purpose of this thesis is to explore the construct of organisational resilience in elite sport. The objectives of this thesis are to:

1. Construct a definition of organisational resilience and to identify resilient characteristics of elite sport organisations based on expert opinion;

2. Understand the underpinning psychosocial processes through which organisational resilience might function in elite sport;

3. Explore how an elite sport organisation successfully dealt with significant change; and

4. Explore the co-creation, implementation, and effectiveness of an organisational-level programme of small-scale interventions chosen by an elite sport organisation to purposefully develop its organisational resilience.

This thesis comprises seven chapters, including this Introduction as Chapter One. In Chapter Two, a literature review is divided into three parts, namely a synthesis of resilience literature in sport and the workplace, an overview of organisational-level psychosocial concepts in sport which are relevant to resilience, and organisational resilience research in domains outside of sport. Chapters Three to Six contain the four empirical studies carried out as part of this doctoral research programme. In Chapter Three (Study One), a definition of organisational resilience is constructed and the resilient characteristics of elite sport organisations are identified, and in Chapter Four (Study Two), the underlying psychosocial processes of organisational resilience are explored. Chapter Five (Study Three) details a first-

hand investigation into how organisational resilience has been developed in an elite sport organisation over a prolonged period of time through an immersive ethnographic approach. In Chapter Six (Study Four), the implementation of a series of small-scale interventions, and their effectiveness, is explored in order to understand how organisational resilience may be purposively developed in an elite sport organisation. The final chapter (Chapter Seven) provides a summary of the thesis and a general discussion of how the thesis advances organisational resilience research in sport psychology, its practical implications, strengths and limitations, and potential avenues for future research.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

The previous chapter provided an overview of the challenges encountered by elite sport organisations and highlighted multi-level considerations in organisational research. It concluded that understanding how organisations can overcome and adapt to changes in the elite sport environment is an essential component for achieving sporting excellence through optimal organisational functioning. Chapter Two is a literature review and is organised into three parts. In Part One, the individual and team resilience literatures in sport and in the workplace are synthesised to gain an appreciation of the definition, conceptualisation, characteristics, and processes associated with resilience at the individual and team levels. In Part Two, attention turns to the organisational level, providing an overview of psychosocial concepts in sport that are relevant for resilience. In Part Three, the organisational resilience literature is reviewed to explore how organisational resilience has been defined and conceptualised in fields beyond sport psychology. This third part also includes a review of characteristics and processes which have been described in the extant research. Chapter Two concludes with the rationale of this thesis by explaining the value in expanding resilience research in sport to the organisational level.

Part One: Individual and Team Resilience in Sport and the Workplace

2.1 Multi-level Resilience Overview

Within general psychology, the concept of resilience has been used to understand how individuals, teams, and organisations withstand pressures to maintain functioning, overcome challenges, or even attain peak performances. Definitions of what resilience is, whether at the individual, team, or organisational level, fundamentally incorporate two constituent parts – a

real-world event or stressor, and a positive outcome from that event (Bonanno et al., 2015; Fletcher & Sarkar, 2013). These two constituent features are often viewed through a temporal lens in which resilience is conceptualised as a capacity to achieve that outcome in the future, the extant process of achieving that outcome, or having (historically) achieved the outcome (Fisher et al., 2019; Gucciardi et al., 2018). At the individual and team levels, researchers frequently refer to either adversity or stressors to describe resilience-related events (Bonanno et al., 2015: Britt et al., 2016; Chapman et al., 2020; Fisher et al., 2018; Gucciardi et al., 2018). The debate surrounding the necessary magnitude of an event which has the potential to trigger a resilient outcome is evident at all levels of the resilience concept (e.g., Bryan et al., 2019 at the individual level, Gucciardi et al., 2018 at the team level, and Linnenluecke, 2017 at the organisational level), essentially requiring a differentiation from everyday stressors.

In addition to identifying resilience events, definitions of resilience at all levels of analysis also require a resilient outcome (Bonanno et al., 2015; Fletcher & Sarkar, 2013; Gucciardi et al., 2018). On a fundamental level, in order to be or demonstrate a resilient outcome, that outcome must be successful in that it must deal with or overcome the resilience event by way of a positive rather than negative adjustment (Bonanno et al., 2015). It is important to bear in mind though that the similarity of function of the resilience concept across levels of analysis, namely the shared requirement for a resilient event and a resilient outcome, may disguise structural differences (Morgeson & Hofmann, 1999). For example, the number of agents involved at individual (singular), team (few) and organisational levels (many) will impact the number of interactions between agents. It is therefore important to consider the characteristics and processes which underlie the resilience concept at each level of analysis.

At the individual level, resilience characteristics are often referred to as protective and promotive factors (see Fletcher & Sarkar, 2013), and include personality traits, genetics, social support, internal locus of control, personal and situational resources (Bonanno et al.,

2015; Britt et al., 2016; Fisher et al., 2018). At the team level, characteristics include group

structure, social capital, collective efficacy, awareness, group norms, leadership, and team

culture as well as individual factors such as knowledge, skills, and team orientation

(Gucciardi et al., 2018; Hartmann et al., 2020; Hartwig et al., 2020; Morgan et al., 2013).

Resilience processes are the dynamic aspects of how an individual or team functions (over

time). At the individual level, these are thought to include appraisal, self-regulation, and help-

seeking behaviours (Britt et al., 2016; Fisher et al., 2018). At the team level, psychosocial

processes include information sharing, monitoring, planning, learning, intrateam

relationships, and communication (Bowers et al., 2017; Hartmann et al., 2020; Hartwig et al.,

2020).

2.1.1 Individual Resilience in Sport

Resilience is best understood in a context-specific manner (Luthar & Cicchetti, 2000),

and as such there is a need to consider contextual factors which may impact on the

applicability of findings to a different domain (Suddaby, 2010). Researchers have been

interested in the resilience of athletes for over a decade, with notable review papers focusing

on stressors and protective factors in sport performers (Sarkar & Fletcher, 2014b),

implications of resilience in sport for research and practice (Galli & Gonzalez, 2015), and

resilience across the domains of sport and work (Bryan et al., 2019). In one of the first

resilience studies in sport, Galli and Vealey (2008) explored resilience in athletes from the

personal and holistic perspective of the athletes themselves, in contrast to earlier work

examining resilience generally based on winning or increased performance (e.g., Mummery

et al., 2004; Seligman et al., 1990). Interviewing ten athletes regarding their experience of the

most difficult adversity they had encountered, the authors used the findings to propose a

conceptual process-based model of resilience in sport with a central component of "agitation"

following adversity (e.g., the use of coping strategies) and resulting in a range of outcomes

not limited to performance, such as learning and perspective. The role of sociocultural

influences (e.g., social support) and personal resources (e.g., personality traits) was also

acknowledged. In 2012, Fletcher and Sarkar extended this work using a grounded theory approach to explore the relationship between resilience and performance in 12 Olympic champions. The concept of "adversity" was expanded beyond a single event allowing for chronic stressors or multiple simultaneous adversities. Their model placed challenge appraisal and meta-cognitions at the centre, influenced by numerous psychological factors (relating to a positive personality, motivation, confidence, focus, and perceived social support). Together these factors, as well as challenge appraisal and meta-cognitions, protected athletes from the potential negative impact of stressors and promoted the types of facilitative responses which preceded optimal sport performance. The studies by Galli and Vealey (2008), and by Fletcher and Sarkar (2012), laid the foundations of research in individual resilience in athletes by conceptualising resilience as a dynamic process, and emphasising the need to consider the sociocultural environment and the particular stressors encountered, alongside personal resources.

Recently, this body of work has expanded to consider resilience in coaches, and how they develop resilience in athletes. Kegelaers and Wylleman (2019) conducted the first study examining how coaches can develop resilience in their athletes. Through thematic analysis of semi-structured interviews with athletes, coaches, and sport psychologists (*n*=10), the authors identified three proactive strategies for developing resilience (i.e., foster motivation, mental preparation, and promote life balance) and three reactive strategies (i.e., evaluate setbacks, promote a positive mindset, and implement lessons). The effective use of strategies depended on a coach's interpersonal skills, in particular the quality of the coach-athlete relationship and taking an individualised approach. Kegelaers and Wylleman acknowledged the need for longitudinal research, given the dynamic nature of resilience, and also the need to explore the resilience of coaches themselves. Building on this work and employing longitudinal interviews with five Olympic medal-winning swimming coaches across a 12-month period to explore resilience in coaches and athletes, Sarkar and Hilton (2020) categorised their findings into coach stressors, coach protective factors, and enhancing resilience in athletes. Stressors

included managing the Olympic environment, preparation for major events, coach personal wellbeing, and directing an organisation, with protective factors including progressive coaching, coaching support network, maintaining work/life balance, secure working environment, durable motivation, and effective decision making. To enhance resilience in athletes, coaches referred to developing strong dyadic relationships, creating a facilitative environment, developing a resilience process, and individual factors in the athletes.

Taken together, this nascent body of work holds promise for developing practical insights into the role of coaches in developing resilience in athletes, whilst simultaneously highlighting the stressors which coaches themselves are exposed to, and the need for coaches to develop their own resilience capabilities. Whilst the lay person may struggle to identify an athlete as an employee in the ordinary sense of the word, the overlap between coaching roles and other types of employees may be more readily apparent. Therefore, as the resilience research in sport expands to encompass the team around the athlete, the potential for overlap with literature dealing with individual resilience in the workplace increases.

2.1.2 Individual Resilience in the Workplace

While resilience has been a research focus in sport psychology for over a decade, it is a relatively recent area of interest for occupational psychologists (Shoenfelt, 2016). There are a number of similarities between these domains which suggest findings in one context may be applicable in the other. By focusing on mentally healthy adult populations, in contrast to clinical psychology models, resilience in both populations may require adaptation to positive events, not just adversity, for example promotion (in the context of work), or Olympic success (in the context of sport; Fletcher & Sarkar, 2013). Both athletes and employees encounter stressors from personal life events and the organisational context (Sarkar & Fletcher, 2014b), and both environments focus on goals and achievement, characterised by the potential for chronic stress and uncertainty (Bryan et al., 2019). Finally, in relation to the context of employees and teams working within sport organisations specifically, there are many commonalities between sport and business organisational practices, including

recruitment, training, performance management and evaluation, and team dynamics (Britt et al., 2016; Molan et al., 2019; Shoenfelt, 2016).

Employee resilience is the manifestation of individual resilience in work-related behaviours (Kuntz et al., 2017), with interest in how the workforce can contribute towards a resilient organisation (Nilakant et al., 2016), and how an organisation can develop and support the resilience of its employees (Kuntz et al., 2017). Employee resilience has been distinguished from individual resilience by moving beyond a requirement to bounce back or even thrive from adversity, which is necessary but not sufficient, to incorporate a set of proactive and learning behaviours that support organisational adaptability through facilitating change and innovation (Nilakant et al., 2016).

In their integrative model of employee resilience, Britt et al. (2016) organise employee resilience into domains comprising the type of adversity experienced (i.e., its intensity, frequency, duration, and predictability), the processes reflecting the employee's capacity for resilience (e.g., appraisal of adversity, coping with adversity, seeking help from others), and the demonstration of resilience (such as job performance, low symptoms, high wellbeing, healthy relationships). The integrative model also incorporates a set of resources which can influence the capacity for resilience, comprising individual (genetic / biological, personality, affect), unit (cohesion, support, flexibility), family (support, close relationships, low conflict), and community (resources, belonging, connection) resources. The model highlights how employee and organisational resilience is likely a reciprocal process (Kuntz et al., 2016), with the organisation impacting individual resilience through the risks to which employees are exposed in the first place.

An important source of resources which can influence the capacity for employee resilience is the organisation in which the individual is working. Resources most frequently cited as resilience-promoting factors include a learning culture, flexibility, role clarity, clarity of communication, and managerial and peer support (e.g., Lim et al., 2020; Kuntz, 2021). Meneghel, Borgogni, et al. (2016) studied the effects of workplace resources on employee

resilience, as well as job satisfaction and job performance. Workplace resources were operationalised as collective team perceptions of social context, namely the behaviours of the most relevant individuals (i.e., top management, immediate supervisor and colleagues), which may better prepare employees to be resilient to setbacks. Survey data from 305 employees across 67 work-units indicated that workplace resources were related to employee resilience, and that employee resilience was related to job satisfaction, but there was no statistically significant relationship between employee resilience and employee performance (rated by supervisors). The research indicates the influence of both individual- and team-level predictors on employee resilience. The research also highlights the challenges of demonstrating a relationship between individual resilience and individual performance in workplaces with no standardised measure of performance, in contrast to the sport environment where at least one measure of performance, namely athletic performance, is readily ascertained.

The processes of employee resilience, together with individual and workplace (team or organisational level) resources, were explored in a study focusing on resilience of leaders. Förster and Duchek (2017) interviewed 27 leaders from a variety of industrial sectors, using qualitative content analysis to integrate the identified processes into three categories of individual, situational, and behavioural factors. Reviewing commonalities across these factors, the role of interpersonal competencies, the existence of a social support network, trust, and mobilising support across categories of resilience factors highlight the importance of relationships, and relationship building, in leader resilience. The research carried out by Förster and Duchek highlights the dynamic and complex nature of individual resilience in the workplace and the necessity of studying not only resource factors such as personal traits and capabilities, but also process factors such as personal and interpersonal behavioural patterns and person-situation interactions.

In conjunction with the literature on individual resilience in sport (Fletcher & Sarkar, 2012), appraisal of stressors is an important process component of employee resilience. A

recent study by Kuntz (2021) regarding worker resilience in New Zealand during the Covid-19 pandemic found that the nature and level of exposure to acute stressors resulted in distinctive stress appraisals, with different psychosocial risk profiles, across occupational groups. For example, in customer-facing jobs the appraisal of the risk of contagion at work was a prevalent resilience process, whereas in typically office-based employment, the requirement to work at home impacted perceptions of teamwork, isolation, and technostress. The findings suggest a need for individualised organisational support according to occupational group through cognitive reframing of perceived stressors, as well as the provision of appropriate organisational resources such as managerial support and increased workplace flexibility.

Overall, the findings indicate a strong link between employee resilience, workplace resources, and the interactions between an individual and their workplace, underlining that the onus on developing individual resilience does not and cannot solely fall on the employee. Organisations largely determine the extent and quality of external resources available to an individual to support their resilience (Kuntz et al., 2016), setting policies and training programmes, providing goals, and prioritising tasks (Boermans et al., 2012), which together will impact an individual's ability to manage potentially stressful situations (Boermans et al., 2012). The findings point to the need for resilience-enabling organisations to underpin and sustain individual resilience, such that employee resilience is embedded into business as usual, rather than being seen as a solely individual-level construct. Furthermore, because most athletes and employees involve team participation, and stressors often emanate from and are experienced at the team level (rather than the individual or organisational level), it is a natural progression that resilience both in sport and in the workplace are also investigated from this perspective (Galli & Gonzalez, 2015).

2.1.3 Team Resilience in Sport

Team resilience is more than the sum of resilient individuals (Decroos et al., 2017). It is a unique meso-level construct influenced by both individual- and organisational-level

phenomena, but also distinct from both. In particular, the study of team-level resilience requires a psychosocial perspective which includes shared experiences and the interactive resources that teams can provide (Morgan et al., 2017). Research on other team phenomena, for example collective efficacy (Bandura, 2000), highlights the importance of accounting for relational, interactive, and coordinative aspects of collective-level constructs.

Within the sport psychology literature, the first study of team resilience in sport was conducted by Morgan et al. (2013). With the aim of developing a definition of team resilience and identifying resilient characteristics of elite sport teams, five focus groups consisting of 31 participants were conducted with teams from rowing, hockey, football, handball, and futsal. Following thematic analysis of focus group transcripts, team resilience was defined as "a dynamic, psychosocial process which protects a group of individuals from the potential negative effect of stressors they collectively encounter. It comprises of processes whereby team members use their individual and collective resources to positively adapt when experiencing adversity" (p. 552). Four general dimensions were identified to represent resilient characteristics of elite sport teams: group structure (consisting of formal structure, group norms and values, and communication channels); mastery approaches (consisting of learning orientation, effective behavioural responses, and managing change); social capital (consisting of group identity, perceived social support, and prosocial interactions); and collective efficacy (comprising past mastery experiences, group cohesion, and social persuasion). The unique feature of team resilience when compared with individual resilience was the psychosocial processes, namely the interactions between cognitive, relational, and affective factors, with high quality relationships as central to the coordination of responses to stressors.

Given the dynamic nature of team resilience, Morgan et al. (2013) suggested future studies were needed to provide an understanding of how resources are used at different phases of a team's development. To address this gap, Morgan et al. (2015) subsequently explored potential underpinning psychosocial processes of team resilience in elite sport.

Narrative enquiry was employed to analyse the autobiographies of eight members of the 2003 England rugby union team. The results, presented across three phases of the team's seven season history, yielded five key psychosocial processes underpinning team resilience in an elite sport team, which together illustrated a narrative of the collective positive evaluation of setbacks. The identified processes comprised transformational leadership, shared team leadership, team learning, social identity, and positive emotions. Transformational leadership was particularly prominent during the early phase of team development, and thereafter resilience developed through an interplay of transformational and shared leadership. Team learning had previously been identified as a process underpinning the resilient characteristics of mastery approaches and collective efficacy (Morgan et al., 2013). Similarly, social identity, as the process by which a group identity is formed, accords with the 2013 study by the same authors. Positive emotions were thought to provide both an amplifying and buffering effect through strengthening social capital and high-quality relationships while buffering the team from the potential negative effects of stressors through facilitating the expression of tensions and absorbing threat.

Building on this framework of resilient team characteristics and processes, Morgan et al. went on to incorporate the sociocultural context in which a sport team operates in order to explore the contextual enablers which stimulate the resilience processes previously identified. Through prolonged ethnographic fieldwork, Morgan et al. (2019) conducted an 11-month study of a semi-professional rugby union team ($n = 27$ participants) to explore the psychosocial enablers and strategies that promote team resilience in high-level sport. Five categories encompassing multiple strategies, actions, and enablers for the development of team resilience were identified using content analysis. These comprised: inspiring, motivating, and challenging team members to achieve performance excellence; developing a team regulatory system based on ownership and responsibility; cultivating a team identity and togetherness based on a selfless culture; exposing the team to challenging training and unexpected / difficult situations; and promoting enjoyment and keeping a positive outlook

during stressors. Collectively, the research by Morgan, Fletcher, and Sarkar (2013, 2015, 2019) exploring team resilience in sport has investigated what team resilience is and how it may be defined, highlighted some of the characteristics and processes through which it functions, and identified strategies to develop team resilience.

In the first study to date of an intervention designed to develop team resilience, Kegelaers et al. (2021) designed and implemented a pressure training intervention in elite female basketball players in conjunction with the team's head coaches. The main feature of the intervention was regular exposure to increased pressure during daily practice across a total of eight sessions, a strategy noted in the findings of Morgan et al. (2019) to develop team-level resilience. These sessions were complemented by a resilience development workshop and post-session guided reflection moments. Qualitative findings included increased awareness, emerging leadership, stronger communication channels, and the development and execution of collective plans. These were not necessarily reflected in the quantitative results (which included measures of individual and team resilience) which indicated a reduction in team-level vulnerabilities, but no increase in collective resilient characteristics or in individual resilience. The lack of quantitative findings may reflect the small sample size, or may suggest that through developing collective processes, team-level resilience interventions only have a limited impact on individual resilience. Furthermore, the authors suggested that a reduction in team vulnerabilities may be the first step in developing resilient team characteristics. Overall, the intervention study suggests potential for team resilience to be developed through pressure training scenarios, as well as highlighting the difficulties of evidencing "effectiveness" following an intervention designed to impact a capability which may develop across a much longer period than that allowed for within funding limitations for typical study designs. Kegelaer et al.'s study also illustrates an advantage of studying team resilience in a sports context, namely the ability to integrate pressure training scenarios within an ecologically valid quasi-experimental research design. The extent to which resilience can be studied in workplace environments with relatively low

levels of work stressors has been questioned (Britt et al., 2016), although the use of disaster simulation exercises (e.g., Gomes et al., 2014) may prove fruitful as explored within the following section.

2.1.4 Team Resilience in the Workplace

Adverse events experienced by teams within the workplace can come from external (e.g., financial crises) and internal sources (e.g., project setbacks). Given the prevalence of team-based structures within an organisational environment, team resilience is an important construct to understand how teams manage collective challenges that threaten team functioning (Hartwig et al., 2020). The recent plethora of reviews of the team resilience literature (e.g., Bowers et al., 2017; Chapman et al., 2020; Gucciardi et al., 2018) including those specifically focused on team resilience in the workplace (e.g., Hartwig et al., 2020; Hartmann et al., 2020) is an indicator of the growing interest in this research area.

A number of models of team resilience in the workplace have been developed. Gucciardi et al. (2018) and Hartwig et al. (2020) both used an input-mediator-output-input (or IMOI) framework (Ilgen et al., 2005) with inputs (existing factors at the individual, team, and contextual level), mediators (the ways inputs are combined and transformed into outcomes through dynamic behavioural interactions amongst team members), and outcomes (valued results, or consequences, of team interactions). Both of the models conceptualise team resilience as an emergent state *and* an emergent outcome. Team resilience as an emergent state suggests it is a dynamic phenomenon resulting from interactions between a variety of interacting inputs and processes and reflects the capacity to respond effectively to future adverse events (Hartwig et al., 2020). Team resilience as an emergent outcome suggests it is the product of the team having dealt effectively with adversity (Hartwig et al., 2020). By incorporating both conceptualisations, team resilience is perhaps imprecisely located within the models as outcome resilience necessarily emerges *after* the demonstration of a positive outcome whereas state-based resilience suggests an earlier time point (i.e., a capacity to use inputs to deal with *future* adversity). In contrast, the models developed by Hartmann et al.

(2020), and Stoverink et al. (2020) conceptualise team resilience solely as an emergent state or future-orientated capacity, in particular placing resilience after inputs, but before resilience processes and outcomes. In addition to locating emergent resilience at a specified temporal point, the models developed by Hartmann et al. (2020) and Stoverink et al. (2020) avoid the assumption inherent within outcome-based models of resilience that there will be a return to "normal functioning", without regard to whether that is possible or indeed desirable.

Team resilience characteristics, i.e., those relatively static factors which a resilience team "has", are commonly referred to as input or enabling factors, antecedents, or resources, within the workplace resilience literature, and can reside at the individual, team, or environmental levels. At the individual level, the benefits of diversity of members' personalities, skills, and knowledge is the subject of debate, with diversity of perspectives thought to be beneficial to problem-solving in a crisis (Baral, 2013). If, however, that diversity cannot be accessed due to the incompatibility of team members, resilience may, in fact, decrease with reduced communication, social support, and co-operation (Landon et al., 2018). This example illustrates that individual resources on their own may not be sufficient for team-level resilience in a cumulative fashion, necessitating an understanding of how they exert their effect on resilience at a different level. Another example is the relationship between individual resilience and team resilience. Some studies indicate that the resilience of members of a team is likely to increase team resilience (Hartwig et al., 2020). However, Hartmann et al. (2020) suggested that the opposite may also be true in conditions of scarce resources, or adversity, whereby a resilient individual disengages from the team context through reducing effort and support to conserve resources and protect their own resilience.

Team-level characteristics have been categorised by Stoverink et al. (2020) to include team potency (collective efficacy tempered by vigilance / epistemic motivation), team mental model of teamwork (members' knowledge of roles, responsibilities, and interaction patterns and familiarity with one another's knowledge, skills, and preferences), team capacity to improvise, and team psychological safety. The work of Morgan et al. (2019) has already

highlighted the potential role of shared mental models, and trust, to harness resources to improve collective functioning. Team-level factors, common to both the sport and workplace literature, include the existence of high-quality relationships and collective positive emotions (Meneghel, Martinez, & Salanova, 2016), and a supportive team culture (Bowers et al., 2017).

Team resilience processes are the mechanisms through which teams draw on the input factors to produce resilient outcomes. Hartwig et al. (2020) and Stoverink et al. (2020) further categorise these processes into minimising behaviours (preparing for and preventing the negative impact of adversity), managing behaviours (coping and recovering from adversity), and mending behaviours (learning from past adversity). This temporal approach is reflected in much of the organisational resilience literature as discussed in Part Three of this Chapter Two, referred to there as planning, adapting, and learning phases, and differentiates these collective-level constructs from the individual resilience literature. Communication appears to be an overarching interpersonal team resilience process (Hartmann et al., 2020), helping to build shared situational awareness and coordinate collective actions (Gomes et al., 2014).

Field-based simulation studies provide an opportunity to gain detailed insight into the complex dynamic person-situation interactions which underpin team-level resilience, particularly in workplace environments with infrequent adversity, or as a pragmatic way to study contemporaneous responses to adversity without having to wait for adversity to arise. In this review, two such studies are outlined which respectively explore a limited time frame (single day) team-based approach to a disaster simulation exercise (Gomes et al., 2014), and a longitudinal (three month) inter-team comparison of business strategy simulation exercises within a Finnish University (Degbey & Einola, 2020).

Gomes et al. (2014) collected data during a disaster simulation exercise for a Brazilian nuclear power plant involving individuals from 26 different agencies. Communication was found to be a key resilience action category, particularly briefing / debriefing dialogs from the emergency team coordinator to achieve mutual situation awareness. The diversity of the

team was also identified as a source of resilience through broadening the knowledge base, acting in concert with reorganisation patterns such that when incidents required different competencies, the agents who were needed in order to understand information and make decisions self-organised into small discussion groups. The main source of brittleness resulted from the static design of the exercise which created a less complex and challenging environment than might be expected to arise from a real nuclear accident. Further potential sources of brittleness included the centrality of the team coordinator which could result in cognitive overload and decision bottlenecks, and declining concentration, suggesting larger teams where individuals may not always be actively participating may degrade teamwork. The research provides an important contribution to the team resilience literature providing micro-level details of communication and coordination activities in the immediate aftermath of a large-scale (albeit simulated) resilience event, in contrast to much of the extant work-team resilience literature concerned with how established teams deal with chronic workplace stressors.

Shifting focus from major external to mundane internal events, Degbey and Einola (2020) studied the resilience of virtual teams within a masters level business strategy course which simulated a consulting company context. The underlying psychosocial mechanisms to cultivate team resilience over time were identified as: action, comprising the regulating and leveraging of emotional expression, and also team inclusion practices; and reflective practices. Reflective practices were further divided into reflection-in-action (an individual's willingness and capacity to search for alternative causes for apparently negative events and actions) and reflection-for-action (an individual's willingness and capacity to read cues, plan for and execute future actions). In addition, important leadership processes included stepping back to allow more space for passive members, and building bridges between team members, illustrating the role of leaders as team connectors. The research highlighted the difficulties in paying attention to subtle cues where there is a lack of face-to-face interaction, and poor understanding of the personal situations of other team members and the social and

organisational contexts they are embedded in. Resilient teams were consequently characterised by a pattern of behaviours including proactive sensemaking, resource investment, reflective practices and suppression of spontaneous negative emotions. The practical difficulty highlighted by the authors was in detecting which of many mundane events and cues team members need to react to.

In summary, the burgeoning body of research in team resilience in the workplace has facilitated the development of several models which attempt to assemble the disparate characteristics, processes, and outcomes explored across a number of empirical studies and organise them into simplified frameworks. These are likely to provide a useful platform to structure future research in this area. Alongside this work, there is a need to conduct in-depth research examining how team resilience is developed and evolves across time. To this end, simulation exercises have provided a convenient vantage point to supplement the more resource-intensive ethnographic fieldwork such as that conducted by Morgan et al. (2019) in the sporting domain.

2.1.5 The Value of Exploring Organisational-Level Factors in Sport

The expansion of the individual resilience in sport literature to encompass the support staff surrounding the individual athlete has already started to blur the boundaries between resilience in sport and resilience in the workplace, with several reviews synthesising the literature across these performance domains (e.g., Bryan et al., 2019; Molan et al., 2018; Sarkar & Fletcher, 2014b). Furthermore, given the prevalence of team participation within sport and the workplace, team resilience is likely to be a relevant, albeit distinct, construct in these environments, incorporating the relational, coordinative, and interactive aspects of resilience at a collective level.

At both the individual and team levels, organisations are a potential source of stressors, and of supportive resources. In comparison to the research on individual- and team-level factors which contribute towards resilience at various levels of analysis, there is relatively little research on organisational factors that contribute towards, or hinder, employee

and team resilience in the workplace (Hartwig et al., 2020). Given that employees and work teams are embedded in their organisational environments and are influenced by organisational practices, greater consideration and sensitivity to organisational and sociocultural influences are required to gain a more complete understanding of resilience at different levels of analysis (Wagstaff et al., 2020).

Part Two: Organisational Sport Psychology

2.2. Introduction

Back in 2009, Fletcher and Wagstaff highlighted the existence of a "twilight zone" (p. 428) between the work of sport psychology researchers focused on individual and team-level factors, and sport management researchers considering governance, structural and strategic-level factors within organisations. This twilight zone encompasses the psychosocial factors in organisational functioning such as how individuals and teams interact, and organisational culture, to provide applied knowledge to help organisations function more effectively (Wagstaff et al., 2012a).

A decade later, a special issue in the *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology* has highlighted the diverse lines of enquiry now present in the field of organisational sport psychology, all with the consistent thread of the researchers' commitment to improving the day-to-day experiences of individuals that operate within sport organisations (Wagstaff, 2019b). Hence, there is now a growing body of research considering the impact of organisational-level stressors on individuals and teams within sport organisations (e.g., Arnold & Fletcher, 2012; Arnold et al., 2017; Arnold et al., 2019; Hanton et al., 2005; Tabei et al., 2012). Beyond organisational stressors and adversities, Wagstaff et al.'s (2012a) review of positive organisational psychology suggested attention needs to be paid to topics such as culture, climate, and change, which characterise organisational dynamics. Practitioners need to have knowledge of the organisational history and philosophy to be able

to competently communicate with athletes and staff, and to understand how information flows, where the power lies, how decisions are made, and in accordance with the associated values and attitudes. To this end, researchers have explored the impact of organisational culture (Maitland et al., 2015; McDougall et al., 2020b; Wagstaff & Burton-Wylie, 2018) and organisational change (Gilmore & Gilson, 2007; Wagstaff et al., 2015, 2016; Gibson & Groom, 2020). In this Part Two of Chapter Two, the extant literature on organisational stressors, organisational culture, and organisational change in sport are examined in turn.

2.2.1 Organisational Stressors in Sport

Organisational stressors, namely the environmental demands associated primarily and directly with the organisation in which an individual operates (Fletcher et al., 2006), can exert both positive and negative effects (Fletcher et al., 2012). Understanding the performance environment and the athletes' perception of organisational stressors encountered was the initial focus of this body of research.

Hanton et al. (2005) interviewed ten international sport performers about sources of stress, comparing the content and quantity of both competitive and organisational stressors. Of the organisational stressors, these were classified as environment issues, personal issues, leadership issues, and team issues, with organisational stressors mentioned twice as frequently as competitive stressors. Subsequently, Arnold and Fletcher (2012) synthesised 34 studies identifying organisational stressors encountered by athletes and developed a classification encompassing four general dimensions: leadership and personnel issues associated with the management and support of a sports team, cultural and team issues associated with the attitudes and behaviours within a sports team, logistical and environmental issues associated with the organisation of operations for training and / or competition, and performance and personal issues associated with an athlete's career and physical self. In both studies, the extent to which the stressors classified as "organisational" could be said to be "associated primarily and directly with the organisation", rather than environmental demands in general, is not always clear, for example weather conditions,

terrorist threats, pressure from family members, inappropriate support from parents, physical safety, and distractions. It would appear that further work is needed to differentiate sources of strain, and the extent to which the sport organisation in question is able to mitigate those demands. Nevertheless, the research serves to highlight the numerous sources of stress experienced by athletes beyond competitive pressures, and how it may be beneficial to intervene at different levels to minimise the sources of strain, rather than focusing on micro-level psychological skills training for individual athletes which until the turn of the 21st century was the predominant approach in applied sport psychology (Sly et al., 2020).

Research subsequently investigated links between environmental stressors and performance outcomes such as burnout and performance satisfaction (e.g., Arnold et al., 2017; Tabei et al., 2012). The findings suggest a predominance of stressors emanating from relationships with coaches and teammates (Tabei et al., 2012), as well as stressors closely related to the personal lived experience of athletes, e.g., injuries, personal goals, training schedule, and the team environment (Arnold et al., 2017). The research suggests a quite limited impact of "back room" organisational functions on the athletes themselves. This may be due to buffering of these stressors by the staff operating proximally to the athletes, such as their coach, and wider sport science team.

If those individuals who often transact with athletes, such as coaches and the sports science team, potentially provide a buffer between the athletes and the environmental demands emanating from the sport organisation, it is vital to explore and understand the stressors perceived by this group, potentially to a greater degree than in the athlete population. Thelwell et al. (2008) suggested that environmental demands experienced by coaches could be separated into performance-related and organisational-related dimensions. Fletcher et al. (2011) classified demands experienced by sport psychologists as factors intrinsic to sport psychology, roles in the organisation, sport relationships and interpersonal demands, career and performance development issues, and organisational structure and climate of the profession. Recently this body of work has expanded further to consider the

stressors experienced by sport science and management staff in elite sport organisations (Arnold et al., 2019). Six higher-order themes were classified as: relationship and interpersonal, physical resource, contractual and performance development, organisational structure, and logistical.

The body of work labelled organisational stressors in sport has helped to inform understanding of the range of stressors which may impact individual and team functioning, highlighting their multidimensionality, frequency, intensity, and duration. These types of classifications are starting to stratify where accountability for mitigating the stressors might lie, whether through helping the individual, the team, the coach-athlete dyad, or whether the environmental demands are to be addressed at the organisational level.

Further clarification is required to differentiate between the source of the environmental demands alongside the extent to which the organisation may have direct or indirect control to mitigate those demands. For example, in the study by Tabei et al. (2012) with college soccer players, it was unclear whether the "organisation" regarded as the source of organisational stressors was the university, or the coaching environment. Similarly, in compiling their taxonomy of organisational stressors in 2012, Arnold and Fletcher used a sample of sport performers competing at the high school and club level, as well as at an international level. The degree of influence likely to be exerted by stressors emanating from a sport organisation over high school or club athletes is uncertain. To this end, it would be helpful for researchers to identify the specific sport organisation which is believed to be the source of the stressors. Further, the work to date has focused on the impact of environment demands on the functioning of athletes, and groups of individuals within the performance department. How such stressors might impact organisational functioning, and how that organisational functioning then links back to the performance of individual employees, is at the cross-section between organisational stressor and organisational resilience research.

2.2.2 Organisational Culture in Sport

Given that employees and teams are embedded in their organisational environments, a

study of resilience at all levels of analysis requires an understanding of organisational

practices and sociocultural influences to help discern how individuals and teams interact,

where the power lies, how decisions are made, and in accordance with what associated values

and attitudes. Until recently, the topic of organisational culture has been relatively ignored in

the context of organisational psychology in sport (Wagstaff & Burton-Wylie, 2018). This has

started to shift, perhaps in part due to the number of questions raised over the last five to ten

years regarding the balance between winning and welfare, particularly within national

sporting organisations ("NSOs"). The development of team culture research in sport

psychology has been predominantly based on organisational culture work across other

domains (McDougall et al., 2020b).

In organisational domains beyond sport, organisational culture as an area of interest to

academics and practitioners alike has waned, which Alvesson et al. (2017) ascribe to a

gradual realisation that instead of being a useful toolkit for creating organisational

commitment, i.e., a variable to be manipulated by management, cultures are difficult to

control and design. Further, the existence of any form of strong and distinctive organisational

culture was questioned (Martin & Siehl, 1983), with organisations instead regarded as sites

where different cultural elements, for example occupational, national, and local cultures,

intermingle. For sport organisations, the culture within the sport itself is likely to also be a

factor. Individuals working within organisations are usually connected to other macro or

societal cultures and derive their values and identity(s) from many sources (McDougall et al.,

2020b). In sum, there is a growing appreciation of the need to grapple with what culture is,

not only in terms of a definition, but also from an ontological and epistemological

perspective, before researching how it manifests within organisations, and, depending on the

answers to what it is, how (if) it can be manipulated (McDougall et al., 2020b).

Wagstaff and Burton-Wylie (2018) distinguished between approaches which

conceptualise culture as something an organisation has, a variable to be manipulated, a

collection of values and norms, against those viewing it as something an organisation is, with

a view to understanding how cultures are interpreted, allowing for ambiguities and complexity. Whilst the former perspective dominates, suggesting a static, top-down phenomena, the latter allows for a temporal, dynamic understanding of culture as emerging, bottom-up, from the everyday interactions of individuals (Maitland et al., 2015).

Alternatively, organisational culture is often distinguished using the three-perspective framework originally developed by Martin and Meyerson (1988) of integration (focusing on shared cultural consensus, clarity, and consistency), differentiation (allowing inconsistencies between groups and the existence of subcultures, although these subcultures are regarded as internally consistent), and fragmentation (where ambiguity is central, with tension and paradox commonplace). The perspective adopted in any given piece of research may depend on the motives of the researcher, whether that be to predict and control, to improve mutual understanding, or to expose power (Girginov, 2010).

Maitland et al. (2015) conducted a systematic review of peer-reviewed journal articles on organisational culture in sport organisations, identifying 33 studies for review. They found that 23 (70%) of the studies adopted an integration perspective (i.e., culture is clear, not ambiguous). Aligned with this perspective, the most common definition of organisational culture within the sport literature (Maitland et al., 2015) is that provided by Schein as "a pattern of shared basic assumptions that the group learned as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems". (Schein, 1985, p. 19). According to this view, culture is an integration mechanism which teaches new members the agreed set of behaviours and values, and as such is regarded as a variable which can be manipulated by the leadership. Maitland et al. surmised that "the general trend towards knowing culture as a variable to be manipulated through a positivist approach, the use of questionnaires and structured interviews may have acted to simplify our current view of organisational culture in sport and make it unproblematic." (p. 508).

To better highlight the alternative lenses through which organisational culture can be understood, McDougall et al. (2020a) provided three narratives depicting the different cultural perspectives suggested by Martin (1992). In particular, McDougall et al. noted how the integration perspective may serve managerial agendas by simplifying cultural life through diminishing the cultural meanings ascribed by other actors in sport organisations. As a result, sport psychologists were urged to adopt a questioning approach if presented with or asked to develop homogenous values and messages. The differentiation approach to culture was offered as a means to examine themes of conflict, resistance to authority, and inconsistencies between espoused values and actual behaviour. It was noted by the authors that this may be a particularly useful approach to consider the dark side of sport cultures highlighted by a number of recent scandals involving national Olympic sport teams (see Feddersen, Morris, Littlewood, & Richardson, 2020). Finally, the fragmentation approach was suggested to examine unclear organisational goals, contradictory cultural meanings, and individual sensemaking in complex organisational environments. This is likely to have resonance within many NSOs, given their focus will often be both to maximise medals through their elite athlete programmes and to maximise participation through their grass roots programmes. In seeking to understand and interpret culture within a sport organisation, rather than taking a singular perspective on the type of culture (integrated, differentiated, fragmented) which exists, or examining it from a particular lens, Martin (1992) has also suggested that all three types of culture may exist simultaneously in the same organisation. In this way, nuanced differences between hierarchies, stakeholders, or demographic groups may be more readily explored and interpreted.

The nascent body of organisational culture work in sport psychology informs an understanding of the different ways culture can be understood and interpreted, which will impact how applied practitioners approach intervention work. Most of the extant cultural work in sport psychology has an agenda of performance enhancement and culture change (McDougall et al., 2020b; Wagstaff & Burton-Wylie, 2018), with culture viewed as leader-

centric, singular, and easily manipulated for competitive advantage. Wagstaff and Burton-Wylie (2018) concluded their review by calling on organisations to balance the performance focus with considerations of wellbeing, suggesting cultural perspectives beyond consensus may be employed to better understand marginalised voices and subcultures. Such a call from organisational psychology academics may not, however, be willingly adopted by applied sport psychology practitioners seeking to persuade organisational gatekeepers of the value of their services to the wider organisation. An alternative approach may be for such practitioners to help organisations explore and understand the complexities of their culture as the context which may determine the success or failure of organisational change, given that a failure to detect resistance or to overestimate support for planned changes is likely to decrease the chances of successful change (Alvesson, 2002).

2.2.3 Organisational Change in Sport

Elite sport is characterised by organisational change, notably in relation to staff turnover (Wagstaff et al., 2015). Organisational change can be examined from the micro level, examining individual employee experiences of organisational change, and at a macro level considering the factors, whether internal or external, which instigated the change and the organisational response.

At the individual level, Wagstaff et al. (2015) collected data from 20 sport medicine and sport science ("SM&SS") employees in three elite sport organisations across a two-year period via 49 interviews. Findings were divided into four temporal stages of change: anticipation and uncertainty, upheaval and realisation, integration and experimentation, and normalisation and learning. Notably, it appeared that change initiatives within sport organisations had the potential to directly impact productivity, creativity, engagement, and turnover in SM&SS staff. Wagstaff et al. suggested that adaptive responses to change are more likely if there is effective change communication during the first two phases, with a "pivoting" in phase three where employees must engage with the change, and finally constructive information sharing during phase four to facilitate learning and employee

resilience. Focusing on the experiences of a sport psychologist working in professional football, Gilmore et al. (2018) highlighted the existential and structural insecurities of such work, and how when managers change, individuals consider what it means for them, not as a collective, "so it becomes a very volatile and unpleasant environment" (p. 431) bringing "fear and uncertainty" (p. 431). An applied implication of the research is for managers to be hired to fit the existing organisational culture, ethos, and performance strategy, rather than making sweeping short term changes with consequential disruption to performance of SM&SS staff, and potentially the athletes.

Developing this body of work further by investigating recurrent change events, Wagstaff et al. (2016) interviewed 10 employees across two professional football organisations which had experienced repeated change, finding both positive and negative responses. Positive themes included resilience, autonomy, and learning, with negative themes relating to trust, motivation, and turnover, allied to increasingly deteriorating attitudes across change events. Whether responses were positive or negative was generally influenced by the extent to which individuals could see opportunities arising from the change, either for the organisation or themselves. Worsening responses were mediated by perceived threat, and restrictions on their autonomy. Particularly salient to the sport context was the investigation of change as open-ended and persistent rather than singular.

Shifting the focus from individuals experiencing change to those imposing change, Cruickshank et al. (2014, 2015) explored the management of cultural change in the performance departments of Olympic and professional sport organisations from the perspective of the individuals tasked with instigating change. The proposed model is based on an initial evaluation, planning, and impact phase, enacted alongside the management of multi-stakeholder perceptions and expectations. Notably, and in contrast to extant change management literature, best practice was a set of guiding principles rather than a step-by-step process, embracing and proactively managing the socially complex nature of culture change. This approach required sensitivity to the full range of a team or department's macro (e.g.,

board and / or funder strategy), meso (e.g., group-level perceptions), and micro (e.g., individual-level perceptions) contexts. The authors also emphasised the continual construction and re-construction of a team's culture, rather than working towards a point when the change process is "complete". Comparing their findings across Olympic and professional sport, Cruickshank et al. (2015) referred to the greater degree of complexity in top management structures in Olympic sport organisations, noting implications not only for the range of stakeholders to be understood and managed, but also the speed at which change is expected to be delivered.

Finally, in relation to micro-level experiences of change, Gibson and Groom (2020) also explored the perceptions of an incoming manager appointed to instigate change in a professional football academy, underlining the importance of micro-political work to improve working conditions for effective role performance, echoing the findings of Cruickshank et al. (2015). However, there was far greater emphasis on the need to establish and protect individual leader identity to avoid being questioned or undermined by staff, perhaps reflecting the lower status of academy football. The practical outcome was a need for quick wins, and publicising those wins, such that "making everyone aware of the success appeared to be as important as the success itself." (Gibson & Groom, 2020, p. 14).

Moving to the macro-level, Gilmore and Gilson (2007) used the organisational level of analysis when investigating organisational change through a three-year case study of an elite football club in the UK, Bolton Wanderers. The authors note how it can be hard within elite sports such as professional football to distinguish between the frequent discontinuous change events such that they can become the norm. In such circumstances, models which describe a before, during, and after process of change have less appeal. The four-sector model used by Gilmore and Gilson to describe how Bolton Wanderers had shifted emphasis towards value creation during a period of continual change describes short and long term activities, and those focused internally and externally, noting how the decisions made in each sector reflected traditional ways of working to ensure a high level of receptivity to change amongst

the employees. The authors commented that such an approach is at odds with change management literature emphasising coercive, dramatic restructuring during periods of upheaval.

Feddersen, Morris, Littlewood, and Richardson (2020) adopted an integrated action research and grounded theory approach, using ethnographic observations in the talent team of a UK NSO across at 16-month period, aiming to uncover the cultural processes through which a destructive culture had emerged. The findings indicated a complex process of dynamic cultural change influenced by ongoing internal and external structural conditions (such as an internal reduction in services following funding cuts, and external concerns about bullying in other sports), and a challenge to survival (imposed by external funders). The emergence of a destructive culture was then perpetuated such that antagonism, deception and manipulation were common. Core concepts included ongoing power relations between the talent team and the rest of the organisation, and with key funders, and the legitimisation and rationalisation of destructive behaviours through various mechanisms such as ignoring their occurrence or denial of responsibility. Through this research, Feddersen and his colleagues (2020) offer an understanding of culture as dynamic, temporal, and contested, focusing on ambiguity and change. In particular, the authors highlight the role of ongoing power relations and the limitations this may place on a leader's ability to enact cultural change.

Feddersen, Morris, Abrahamsen, et al. (2020) subsequently expanded their research to consider the extent to which external forces are perceived to influenced cultural changes within an elite sport organisation. The authors identified four levels of sources of macro-cultural influence: the societal level (societal norms, values, and beliefs, as well as social media, political will, education, and physical literacy); the governing sport organisation level (sport organisations that work within Olympic sports in the UK and influence NSOs); the NSO level (NSOs in Olympic sports in the UK), and the inside structural level (the properties of an individual NSO and its subcultures). The coupling between layers and within layers depended on the degree of dependency between organisations, and the perception of

legitimate power to influence changes. Their research noted how political will had, to a certain extent, shielded Olympic sports from societal changes, but that macro-cultural changes to social standards and the power of athletes highlighted deficient cultures in elite sport. Consequently, NSOs used their power to dictate appropriate avenues for change. The authors draw attention to the utility in understanding not only internal but also external forces influencing how an organisational culture can change, sometimes quite rapidly, rather than conceptualising it as a static, monolithic construct, or one arising only from the interactions of the individuals within the organisation. It also highlights how the level of influence can change across time. These diverse sources of change indicate that organisational culture is not an attribute that can easily be manipulated at will.

As a body of work, the extant literature on organisational change in sport serves to highlight the negative impact of employment vulnerability, particularly in professional sport. Those concerned with their own employment status exhibit prioritisation of individual concerns over the collective good (Gibson & Groom, 2020; Gilmore et al., 2018), with increasingly deleterious attitudes across change events for those who experience repeated managerial turnover (Wagstaff et al., 2015, 2016). A further theme is the importance of political work for those attempting to instigate change (Cruickshank et al., 2014, 2015; Gibson & Groom, 2020), necessitating sensitivity to internal and external stakeholder perceptions.

Several of the papers reviewed here note the inapplicability of step-by-step, processual change management models from other organisational domains to an environment such as elite sport where it can be hard to distinguish between the frequent and sometimes discontinuous change events (Cruickshank et al., 2015; Gilmore & Gilson, 2007; Wagstaff et al., 2016). Instead, the socially complex nature of organisational change required embracing and proactively managing change, rather than working towards a set endpoint.

Finally, taken together the extant work underlines the need to explore organisational culture as dynamic, temporal, and contested, requiring an understanding of ongoing power

relations and the limitations this may place on a leader's ability to enact organisational

change (Cruickshank et al., 2015; Feddersen, Morris, Abrahamsen, et al., 2020). Successful

change management may rely, at least in part, on an understanding of existing culture and

ways of working to maximise receptivity to change amongst employees (Gilmore & Gilson,

2007).

2.2.4 Summary of Organisational Psychology in Sport

The body of work incorporating organisational psychology in sport has done much to

expand knowledge on the demands faced by athletes, coaches, and support staff in their work

in elite sport environments (Wagstaff, 2019a), and provide a deeper understanding of the

complex cultural contexts in which these demands take place. Work examining the

instigation of organisational change, particularly cultural change, is attempting to improve

organisational functioning in such environments through improving the expertise of sport

psychologists in this area. For now though, there remains "a void of competence and service

support expertise to facilitate flourishing sport environments that enable thriving, and the

development of organisational resilience in sport." (Wagstaff et al., 2019a, p. 135). Within

the existing landscape of constructs in organisational psychology in sport, organisational

resilience is a particularly appealing unifying addition as it examines how individuals and

teams within complex, turbulent, sociocultural systems deal with stressors and change.

Part Three: Organisational Resilience in Non-Sport Domains

2.3 Introduction

The purpose of this section is to provide an overview of organisational resilience

research from a variety of organisational domains, which may then inform future research

regarding organisational resilience in elite sport. Firstly, a review of theoretical papers

addressing key elements of organisational resilience is presented, namely the concept (as a

capacity, process, or outcome), what constitutes resilience events, and potential resilience

trajectories, incorporating findings from the individual and team resilience literature where relevant. Secondly, peer-reviewed empirical research on the potential enabling characteristics and underlying mechanisms through which organisational resilience might function is reviewed and synthesised, together with a consideration of relevant contextual variables and how multi-level analysis might be integrated.

2.3.1 Definition and Conceptualisation of Organisational Resilience

As was previously outlined in this Chapter in relation to individual and team resilience, definitions of resilience essentially comprise an event or stressor, and a positive outcome from that event. Here, each of these key elements are considered in turn as they apply to resilience at the organisational level of analysis to examine and question current understandings and inherent assumptions.

2.3.1.1 Concepts of Organisational Resilience. Organisational resilience has variously been considered as a capacity which an organisation has, a process which an organisation does, or an outcome which an organisation demonstrates (see Table 2.1). These reflect the seemingly divergent perspectives on the conceptual underpinnings of individual and team resilience (see Bonanno et al., 2015, and Chapman et al., 2020, respectively). Resilience as a capacity, such as Hamel and Valikangas's (2003) "capacity for continuous reconstruction" (p. 55) captures the ability to display a resilient response in the future, but a criticism of this approach is that it does not seem to require a real-world event to be resilient to, which is considered a critical feature differentiating resilience from related concepts (Bonanno et al., 2015) such as organisational growth. As noted by Fisher et al. (2019), resilience does not occur in a vacuum, but rather in the context of adversity or stressors which have the potential to disrupt functioning. In contrast, resilience as a process acknowledges the dynamic aspect of resilience occurring over time in response to an adversity event, illustrated in Sutcliffe and Vogus's (2003) definition of resilience as "the maintenance of positive adjustment under challenging conditions" (p. 95). Yet, this approach also has its shortcomings in that by focusing on how organisations adjust, process-based definitions fail

Table 2.1

Examples of how Organisational Resilience has been Conceptualised

Capacity, process, or outcome	Example	Reference
Capacity	The capacity for anticipatory and strategic responses	(Annarelli & Nonino, 2016)
	The capacity for continuous reconstruction	(Hamel & Valikangas, 2003)
Process	The process of positive adjustment under challenging conditions	(Sutcliffe & Vogus, 2003)
Outcome	The time needed to restore organisational functioning	(Meyer, 1982)
Capacity, with process elements	A dynamic capacity which grows and develops over time	(Gittell et al., 2006; Wildavsky, 1988)
Capacity, with outcome elements	A capability to survive in, adapt to, bounce back from and often thrive in unexpected, sometimes disastrous events	(Ma et al., 2018)
Process, with capacity elements	The process by which an organisation builds and uses its capability endowments to interact with the environment	(Williams et al., 2017)
Outcome, with capacity elements	An emergent property which relates to inherent and adaptive qualities and capabilities	(Burnard & Bhamra, 2011)

to incorporate the "resilience potential" (Somers, 2009, p. 13) of being able to so respond to a future event. For example, through successfully dealing with adversity, an organisation may have depleted its resources to such an extent that it could not similarly deal with a future adverse event (Fitzgerald & Lupton, 2015). Conceptualising resilience as an outcome may be a pragmatic response to the difficulties of recognising resilience potential or resilience in action, and so instead it is assumed to have existed if an organisation demonstrates a resilient outcome (Boin & van Eeten, 2013), but again there are difficulties with this approach because defining resilience in terms of whether it has occurred rather than what it is could potentially be tautological.

More recent definitions of organisational resilience have sought to combine aspects of all three conceptual approaches in various ways (see Table 2.1), but none fully captures the dynamic, cyclical nature of resilience as the process of adjusting and adapting to a resilience event such that a resilient outcome is demonstrated whilst retaining or developing the capacity to do so again in the future. It seems that conceptually placing the resilience event centre stage facilitates a temporal examination of each phase of the resilience cycle, considering resilience trajectories both post-resilience event, and as a precursor to future challenges. To do so, it is necessary to identify the types of event which can properly be categorised as "resilience events".

2.3.1.2 Resilience Events. At the individual and team levels, resilience events are often referred to as stressors or adversity, as referred to in Part One of this Chapter Two. At the organisational level, terms such as change and uncertainty have been used, as indicated in Table 2.2. Morgeson et al. (2015) suggest that it is the attributes of events, rather than their label, content, or outcome, which should be used to define them. Such an approach may help to identify which types of events, when paired with a positive outcome, can be regarded as an indicator of resilience. Key aspects to consider include the necessary valence, magnitude, and frequency of the event (see Table 2.2 for examples of each).

In terms of valence, events are often treated dichotomously, either as negative or

Table 2.2

Examples of Attributes of Organisational Resilience Events

Event attribute	Example	Reference
Valence - negative	Adversity	(Williams et al., 2017)
Valence - negative or positive	Variability, surprises, and disruptions	(Woods & Hollnagel, 2017)
Magnitude - major	Significant change	(Horne & Orr, 1998)
	Extreme events	(Sullivan-Taylor & Branicki, 2011)
Magnitude - major or minor	Unexpected situations	(Ortiz-de-Mandojana & Bansal, 2016)
Frequency - singular	Environmental jolt	(Meyer, 1982)
	Unexpected crisis or challenge	(Kimberlin et al., 2011)
Frequency - ongoing	Uncertainty	(Lee et al., 2013)
	Environmental change	(Hamel & Valikangas, 2003)

positive, with an emphasis at the individual and team level on resilience as a response to negative events, or adversity (Fletcher & Sarkar, 2013). Nevertheless, this can be problematic at all levels of analysis for several reasons. First, an event can be multifaceted, comprising both positive and negative elements, such as (at the organisational level) the departure of a key individual, which can cause internal disruption but also provide an opportunity to introduce necessary or even unrelated changes (Meyer, 1982). Secondly, an "event" at the macro level might constitute a cluster of micro-events, clustered in space or time (Morgeson et al., 2015) of which some are negative and some positive, for example a recession which may include both reduced customer demand but also reduced competition due to the departure of competitors from the marketplace. Thirdly, events are often the subject of individual appraisal, and so the same event could be viewed as either a threat or an opportunity, an issue which is magnified at the team and organisational levels of analysis which may comprise multiple perspectives. Thus, at all levels resilience may be better defined in valence-neutral terms such as change or event.

The required magnitude of a resilience event will necessarily be subjective such that some events, for example the non-payment of a single (large) invoice, will have different effects depending on the size of organisation (Sullivan-Taylor & Branicki, 2011). Rather than engaging in debate as to the exact scale necessary to constitute a resilience event, researchers have instead referred to events which are of sufficient magnitude to be disruptive (Witmer & Mellinger, 2016), significant (Horne & Orr, 1998), or beyond those which the system was designed to bear (Boin & van Eeten, 2013). The latter two are preferred to the term disruptive, as this infers a particular proximal resilience trajectory (namely a disruption to functioning), which as discussed below may be too narrow a perspective.

Historically, much of the debate around the required frequency of organisational resilience events stemmed from disparate research streams, with studies evolving from disaster management research considering resilience as a response to a singular, surprising event such as flooding (e.g., Wicker et al., 2013) or terrorism (e.g., Sullivan-Taylor &

Wilson, 2009). However, resilience has more recently incorporated the role of frequent stressors occurring over a period, recognising that slower developing agitations can weaken an individual, team, or organisation over time (Bonanno et al., 2015; Gucciardi et al., 2018; Williams et al., 2017). The frequency of events are now often considered alongside questions of magnitude, such that both large singular events and a series of smaller events whose effects are cumulative may now both be considered as potential triggers for resilience outcomes (Annarelli & Nonino, 2016), although whether those outcomes differ significantly depending on the frequency of event requires further research.

In future, a more sophisticated analysis of resilience events in the context of the resilience cycle could utilise Event System Theory (Morgeson et al., 2015), so that in addition to their attributes such as valence, magnitude, and frequency through which events become meaningful or significant, events themselves are seen as temporal phenomenon, evolving dynamically in terms of where, when, and how they exert their impact. Here, resilience is not conceptualised purely in terms of anticipating and responding to events, but also considers how those events are themselves capable of altering the resilience-enabling characteristics and underlying resilience mechanisms of an entity, and how an entity may co-create those events through dynamic interactions with its environment.

2.3.1.3 Resilience Trajectories. Alongside some form of resilience event, definitions of resilience also require a resilient outcome, namely a positive outcome which overcomes the resilience event. This is a key differential between organisational resilience and organisational change, as the latter is not prescriptive regarding outcome. Trajectories of resilient outcomes have variously been described as a return to baseline or enhanced functioning following a dip in performance, the maintenance of functioning with no performance loss, and adaptation or transformation to some new state (see Table 2.3). This last perspective allows that it may not be feasible or desirable to return to pre-event functioning, for example following a large-scale loss of revenue from a key customer or stakeholder.

Table 2.3

Examples of Proximal Resilience Trajectories

Proximal trajectory	Example	Reference
Initial loss of functioning followed by quick recovery to prior functioning	Bouncing back	(Wildavsky, 1988)
	Return to functioning following a disruption	(Sheffi, 2005)
	How fast a system under pressure returns to equilibrium following a perturbation	(Koronis & Ponis, 2018)
Maintenance of functioning	Propensity to absorb, deflect, or exploit	(Fletcher & Wagstaff, 2009)
Enhanced functioning	Thrive	(Lee et al., 2013)
	Positive adjustments	(Sutcliffe & Vogus, 2003)
Adaptation / transformation	Absorb and reorganise	(Holling, 1973)
	Successfully adapting	(Folke, 2006)

These different perspectives have, to some extent, been influenced by the disparate research streams from which organisational resilience work has emanated. The natural sciences paradigm, and subsequently the supply chain resilience research stream, suggests a return to some natural state (cf. Sheffi, 2005) with the organisation "bouncing back" (Lengnick-Hall et al., 2011; Sutcliffe & Vogus, 2003) or returning to former capacity (Baral, 2013; Wicker et al., 2013). This type of resilience trajectory is visible, given that it requires some kind of failure, and consequent response. However, given that returning to essentially the same function is successful only to extent that this is desirable or positive (Larsson et al., 2016), some commentators instead referred to "bouncing forwards" following a dip in performance, for example by innovation and reinvention (Shaw, 2012). From an engineering perspective, consideration of robustness and stability dominate (Holling, 1996), and resilience is seen as maintaining systems integrity by absorbing shocks and accommodating change without failure (Woods & Hollnagel, 2017), which correlates to the notion of "minimal impact" resilience whereby an individual's protective resources deflect stressors so that functioning is maintained (Bonanno & Diminich, 2013). This type of resilience is much harder to see, given that it is typified by a lack of failure, or outward impact.

Both resilience as a return to functioning, and resilience as maintenance of functioning imply linear trajectories, whereas an evolutionary perspective considers the ability of complex systems to change and adapt in response to changing environmental conditions (Sgrò et al., 2011), such that the organisation adapts and learns (Boin & van Eeten, 2013; Fitzgerald & Lupton, 2015). From an ecological perspective, such as Holling's (1973) adaptive cycle, resilience also involves adaptation, although emphasising the concurrent maintenance of functioning (contrast with engineering resilience, where functioning is maintained, but there is little fundamental reorganisation). Similarly, in the social-ecological tradition, Folke (2006) noted that resilience is not stability, or lack of change, but successful learning, adaptation, and re-organisation in response to external influences.

Rather than a prescriptive, singular outcome, whether linear or transformational, it

would appear that to be considered a resilient trajectory, it must produce a "successful" outcome in the context of the particular boundaries imposed by the nature of the resilience event as well as the wider internal and external environment in which the organisation is positioned. What constitutes "success" will depend on the organisational goals (van der Vegt et al., 2015), which themselves may be multiple and conflicting (Birkinshaw & Gibson, 2004), but referencing organisational goals serves to highlight the need for both proximal and distal successful trajectories. It is also a prominent feature of team resilience research, given that teams are often defined in relation to common goals (Hartwig et al., 2020). It is not enough to have achieved an immediate goal if this is at the expense of the capability to achieve more distal goals. Moreover, by focusing research solely on proximal outcomes defined by short term profits and efficiencies, this may fail to reveal underlying changes in culture, reputation, employee commitment, and external relationships, all of which could influence an organisation's capacity for future resilience (Fitzgerald & Lupton, 2015). It is therefore important to consider the distal trajectory of resilience, namely the likely sustainability of the resilience outcome over the longer term (Ortiz-de-Mandojana & Bansal, 2016), contributing towards future resilience capacity. Both the proximal and distal resilience trajectories need to be considered in their relationship to resilience events, such that in order to demonstrate resilience, an organisation must not only display a proximal trajectory of a "successful" resilience outcome, but in order to be considered resilient it must also develop a distal trajectory which forms its capacity for future resilience.

Resilience capacity is under-researched and under-theorised compared to resilience outcomes, perhaps because it is difficult to see (Boin & van Eeten, 2013; Linnenluecke, 2017) as it exists prior to demonstrating a resilient response. Whilst the literature around organisational learning (e.g., Dixon, 2017) could help to inform how resilience capacities are developed over time, little is understood about how organisations activate capacities for resilience into resilience outcomes (Linnenluecke, 2017; van der Vegt et al., 2015). This requires a better understanding of the underlying mechanisms through which organisational

resilience functions, and the organisational-level characteristics which may facilitate both proximal and distal resilient trajectories (i.e., the *how* rather than the *what* of resilience).

It is notable that the organisational resilience research has broadly developed along similar lines to the individual and team resilience literature in relation to the conceptual underpinning of resilience. The principle areas of divergence relate to resilience events, specifically whether such events are necessarily negative in valence, and the linkage between resilience trajectories and goals. These issues have been highlighted at the organisational level, and the individual and team resilience research would benefit from exploring the extent to which negatively-valanced descriptors such as adversity or stressors should shift towards a more neutral term such as resilience event, and the extent to which individual goals are relevant to individual resilience trajectories.

2.3.2 Characteristics of Organisational Resilience

Resilience enabling characteristics encompass what an organisation *has* (rather than what it *does*) which contribute towards its resilience potential or capacity. Identification of the enabling characteristics allows an organisation to prepare for and respond to stressors (Hamel & Valikangas, 2003), as well as helping to identify strengths and areas of weakness (Morgan et al., 2013). Synthesising the findings from the heterogeneous body of empirical research on organisational resilience characteristics included within this review, there appears to be some consensus around key enabling characteristics comprising the resources, capabilities, culture, and structure of an organisation (Linnenluecke, 2017; Tengblad & Oudhuis, 2018) although as noted by Linnenluecke (2017), the factors revealed in the extant research will have been driven by the variables selected for research. It seems likely that the full range of resilience enabling characteristics have not yet been discovered, let alone their interactions (Wilson, 2016), relative importance (cf. Hopkin, 2014; Kimberlin et al., 2011), and contextual and temporal specificity (Bonanno et al., 2015). With this in mind, this review highlights areas of consensus and disparity in the research findings in relation to an organisation's resources, capabilities, culture, and structure.

2.3.2.1 Resources. Types of organisational resource include human (essentially, the management, employees, and regular volunteers), financial (income, loans, grants, subsidies), physical (typically buildings and equipment), social (relationships between people, and between organisations), informational (knowledge), and intangible (reputation / brand). Of these, human resources are frequently found to be the most important (Baral & Stern, 2011; Gittell et al., 2006; Wicker et al., 2013), with financial resources also featuring heavily in the research findings (Gittell et al., 2006; Pal et al., 2014). Organisational resources can be categorised as internal, i.e., those which an organisation has control over, and external, which are available to the organisation via its external network of relationships with stakeholders and other organisations (Wilson, 2016; Witmer & Mellinger, 2016).

Research originally focused on and emphasised the importance of internal resources (e.g., Gittell et al., 2006; Kimberlin et al., 2011), in terms of resource "redundancy" or "slack", such that an organisation had the spare capacity to scan for, anticipate, and respond to a crisis, as well as allowing employees greater opportunity to innovate on a day-to-day basis. Not only does this come at a cost (Boin & van Eeten, 2013), but in some contexts (such as the public sector, or sport organisations, supported by public funds) may not be possible due to public perception of inefficiency (Dalgaard-Nielsen, 2017). Indeed, reliance on internal resources may hinder resilience, with Wicker et al. (2013) suggesting that community sports clubs reliant on their own sporting facilities would be more susceptible to external turbulence (such as natural disasters or terrorism). More recently, and perhaps as a reflection of the more challenging economic environment during the 2008 financial crisis, attention has turned towards external or "virtual" reserves of resources (Dalgaard-Nielsen, 2017) which an organisation can call on in response to adversity. Many studies have considered a resource-based view of resilience and the vast majority of these have considered mobilisation of existing resources, rather than availability of spare resources, as a key characteristic. This suggests it may be preferable to focus research on the mechanisms underlying the identification and mobilisation of existing third-party resources, rather than maintenance of

spare capacity, particularly given that this may be a common weakness within organisations (Stephenson et al., 2010). An additional incentive for sport organisations to focus on using third-party resources is public policy aimed at maximising utilisation of sport facilities (Iversen & Cuskelly, 2015).

A separate but related research finding relates to "bricolage", or the ability to mobilise resources in innovative and creative ways, making solutions out of whatever is available (Weick, 1993). The term "bricolage" is often used to refer to an organisation's creative use of internal physical resources, but such use is also reflected in Mallak's (1998) resilience factor of "role dependence" (whereby employees are able to fill various roles as required) and Lee et al.'s (2013) "information and knowledge" (such that information is stored in a variety of freely-accessible sources). Thus, it is not just the availability of resources but how they are accessed and combined which appears to be important. Empirical research has also considered diversity of resources (Baral, 2013; Hopkin, 2014; Kimberlin et al., 2011; Wicker et al., 2013), the importance of stability or permanence in resources (Gittell et al., 2006), and how resources are built or depleted (Billington et al., 2017; Fitzgerald & Lupton, 2015; Kimberlin et al., 2011). Surprisingly, given the raft of research into resource quantity, the quality of resources is rarely discussed, and is a potential future research avenue.

2.3.2.2 Capabilities. Organisational capabilities relate to a "firm's capacity to deploy resources for a desired end result" (Helfat & Lieberman, 2002, p. 725). Fundamental to an ability to deploy resources are the concepts of awareness (McManus et al., 2008), both of available resources as a pre-requisite to be able to combine and mobilise them in an effective manner, as discussed above, and of the organisation's environment. The latter is key to being able to anticipate, plan for, and adapt to changes in the environment (Boin & van Eeten, 2013; McManus et al., 2008; Meyer, 1982), termed "risk radar" by Hopkin (2014). Awareness also extends back in time to an awareness of the organisation's history, or "organisational memory" (Jaaron & Backhouse, 2014; Reinmoeller & van Baardwijk, 2005), including the storage and sharing of knowledge, practice, and policy within organisations.

This may facilitate resilience through collective efficacy, whereby those within an organisation are likely to be more confident they can deal with future stressors if they have similar experiences in the past (Billington et al., 2017). However, note that Demmer et al. (2011) stressed the need to break from the past, cognitively, in order to innovate in the future. The extent to which organisational memory impacts the capability to innovate, positively or negatively, merits further investigation.

Timeliness is another key resilience capability (Hopkin, 2014; Pal et al., 2014; Sullivan-Taylor & Branicki, 2011), which can refer to rapidity of response both behaviourally, but also in decision-making. The latter is labelled "adaptive capacity" by McManus et al. (2008), reflecting Weick's (1993) earlier concept of "dynamic sense-making", namely the ability to understand and inform the decision at hand rapidly. In contrast, research has also uncovered a need for slowness of response in some situations, labelled as avoidance or scepticism by Mallak (1998) (see also Frisbie & Converso, 2016; Moran, 2016; Somers, 2009). This reflects the ability of an organisation to provide space and time for information-gathering from multiple sources and reflection prior to making a decision or embarking on a particular course of action. The appropriate speed of response is likely to be dictated by the context of the resilience event, such that response to a reputational threat over social media is likely to require a far greater speed of response than, say, an economic threat during a recession (Williams et al., 2017).

2.3.2.3 Culture. Organisational culture comprises the shared values, beliefs, expectations, and practices governing the way employees within an organisation think about and act on problems and opportunities (Choi et al., 2010; Cruickshank & Collins, 2012). The majority of empirical studies which consider resilience characteristics and / or mechanisms refer to a resilience culture or ideology, implicating its centrality in the development of resilient organisations. In the only study to consider the relative importance of resilience enabling characteristics, Meyer (1982) found ideologies (culture, values), together with strategies, to be more important to organisational resilience than structure (rigid vs. flexible)

and quantity / redundancy of resources. Several studies found support for the importance of shared goals, values and vision in particular (Billington et al., 2017; Larsson et al., 2016; Witmer & Mellinger, 2016), which may also impact the trust and loyalty within an organisation (Larsson et al., 2016), and its ability to generate solutions (Mallak, 1998). Innovation, creativity, and openness to ideas are consistently cited as impacting organisational resilience (Billington et al., 2017; Demmer et al., 2011; Reinmoeller & van Baardwijk, 2005). The requirement of expecting, and tolerating, uncertainty and adversity (Jaaron & Backhouse, 2014; Mallak, 1998) may be a precursor to facilitate the development of an innovative and creative culture. Indeed, Hamel and Valikangas (2003) noted complacency (characterised by an absence of expectation of adversity) as a cognitive challenge to the development of resiliency. Instead, resilience requires a desire to learn and continuously improve (Chen, 2016; Pal et al., 2014).

Challenge appraisal, as the cognitive process by which potential stressors are viewed as potential opportunities (Lengnick-Hall et al., 2011), has been implicated as an essential component of a resilience culture (Meyer, 1982; Witmer & Mellinger, 2016). Interestingly though, Meyer (1982) found that when stressors were labelled as crises (rather than played down, or regarded as opportunities), they infused organisations with energy, legitimised unorthodox acts, and destabilised power structures, thereby permitting adaptation and flexibility of response. Therefore, the extent to which challenges can or should be framed as opportunities rather than threats remains to be seen. Linked to this, an organisation's shared attitudes to risk and failure have also been associated with organisational resilience (Fitzgerald & Lupton, 2015; Kimberlin et al., 2011; Pal et al., 2014), although the relationship here is less clear. It may be that the appropriate risk attitude, and tolerance of failure, is driven more by the organisational context than an absolute relationship with resilience levels – what may be appropriate for a "high reliability organisation" such as a nuclear power plant is likely to be different to an entrepreneurial start up. Instead, Hopkin (2014) suggested determining an organisation's risk attitude so that an appropriate resilience

strategy can be formulated.

Finally, shared trust has also consistently emerged from the empirical research as enabling organisational resilience (Larsson et al., 2016; Ortiz-de-Mandojana & Bansal, 2016; Pal et al., 2014), particularly to the extent it facilitates other enabling characteristics such as devolved decision-making (Baral & Stern, 2011), and a willingness to take interpersonal risks, creating a culture of psychological safety. Described as a shared belief that the organisation is a safe place to experiment and fail (Edmondson, 1999), psychological safety has previously been identified as a necessary contextual condition for organisational resilience (Lengnick-Hall et al., 2011), particularly as it is associated with a learning capability (Edmondson, 1999). A no blame culture may also aid internal communication (Hopkin, 2014), thereby improving an organisation's awareness of potential stressors.

2.3.2.4 Structure. An organisation's structure consists of the parts of an organisation, namely how people within an organisation are grouped and to whom they report, and how work is coordinated, that is how groups share information / communicate with each other (Mintzberg, 1979). In terms of ownership and governance, Amann and Jaussaud (2012) looked at the resilience of 98 Japanese family-owned firms compared to a matched group of non-family owned firms and how they responded during the Asian crisis of 1997. They found that family firms ''resist the downturn better, recover faster, and continue exhibiting higher performance and stronger financial structures over time" (p. 203). However, it may not be the ownership structure itself which is relevant for organisational resilience, but instead how that interacts with the decision-making process. Lampel et al. (2014) found that employee stock ownership programs on their own were not sufficient to develop organisational resilience, and instead need to be combined with employee involvement in governance. Involvement does not necessarily require an absolute devolution of power, rather the ability to devolve decision-making as and when required (Baral & Stern, 2011; Boin & van Eeten, 2013; Jaaron & Backhouse, 2014). However, in the only study to date looking at the boundaries of resilience, Dalgaard-Nielsen (2017) noted delegation may be problematic within certain

organisational structures due to the need to remain politically accountable.

More widely, research emphasises the ability to flexibly re-organise an organisation's structures in response to stressors, and to minimise barriers between groups within an organisation (Cardoso & Ramos, 2016; Demmer et al., 2011; Jaaron & Backhouse, 2014; McManus et al., 2008; Pal et al., 2014). The research presents a complex picture of interactions between an organisation's structural characteristics, suggesting a need to investigate the underlying mechanisms to understand how and when those characteristics interact. For example, a recent model proposed by Kahn et al. (2018) theorises about when and how intra-organisational teams share or withhold resources following a resilience event, depending on the attributes of the event itself, the extent to which work is synchronised between groups, their relative power structures, the resources available, and the current and historical relationship networks between teams. Models such as these provide opportunities for future empirical research to investigate organisational responses to resilience events in terms of the interactions between an organisation's structural characteristics, team-level analysis, and relationship mechanisms.

2.3.3 Processes of Organisational Resilience

Organisational mechanisms are the dynamic aspects of how an organisation functions. Mechanisms uncovered by empirical research to date regarding organisational resilience centre around planning, adaptation, learning, relationship networks, and leadership. While relationship networks and leadership have been associated with organisational resilience throughout the resilience cycle, planning, adaptation, and learning are more prominent at specific temporal phases, aligned with Meyer's (1982) three phases of resilience – anticipatory (which links to planning), responsive (short-term adaptability), and readjustment (reflecting longer-term adaptation, as well as learning, following exposure to a resilience event).

Recently, recognising opportunities alongside threat mitigation has been considered as an additional resilience mechanism (Demmer et al., 2011; Witmer & Mellinger, 2016).

However, while opportunities may be an integral part of the turbulence during adversity (Folke, 2006), regarding the capacity of the organisation to pursue and exploit such opportunities as fundamental to its resilience (Cardoso & Ramos, 2016) is potentially blurring the distinction between resilience and similar terms such as organisational growth, which is concerned with planning, or responding to, opportunities to expand capacity, scope of activities, or clients (Kimberlin et al., 2011). Resilience fundamentally requires some resilience event alongside any potential opportunities. It is perhaps better therefore to consider recognising opportunities amongst turbulence as a potential beneficial side-effect of resilience mechanisms, rather than a fundamental component. In the following sections the focus is therefore on planning and adaptation mechanisms, acknowledging and bridging the historical debates regarding their relative importance, before turning to learning, relationship networks, and leadership.

2.3.3.1 Planning. Historically, resilience has been seen largely in terms of precursory planning processes, or an ability to handle potential threats using pre-planned capabilities (Demmer et al., 2011; McManus et al., 2008). Much of this stream of work originates from high reliability organisation research studying the distinctive features, and in particular the daily operations, of organisations managing hazardous essential technical systems (Bourrier, 2011). Ontologically, resilience events are regarded as unknown, but potentially knowable, so planning processes are focused on considering and mitigating against such risk (Alvarez et al., 2018).

2.3.3.2 Adaptation. In contrast to viewing resilience events as unknown, an ontological "uncertainty" perspective regards events as unknowable (Alvarez et al., 2018), rendering the planning stage futile and thus leading to a focus on adaptation once an event occurs. Resilient adaptation, particularly short-term adaptation, incorporates earlier research into crisis management, which recognises the need to focus on how to cope with or respond to stressors (Boin & van Eeten, 2013). Here, resilience is regarded as an organisation's reactive adaptability, its ability to develop new capabilities "on the go" (Boin & van Eeten,

2013; Chen, 2016; Lee et al., 2013; McManus et al., 2008).

Given the potential trade-offs between developing contingency plans and developing flexibility (Burnard et al., 2018), the relative emphasis between resilience planning and adaptation mechanisms may depend both on the event and its predictability (such that an unfolding global recession will require a different resilience strategy than a natural disaster) and the organisational context (thus a "high reliability organisation" such as a nuclear power plant may focus more on planning processes, whereas a small entrepreneurial start up may be more concerned with "on the go" adaptation; Williams et al., 2017).

2.3.3.3 Learning. Learning processes close the loop back to further developing an organisation's resilience capacity. The mechanisms of learning have been considered both immediately following a significant change (Frisbie & Converso, 2016; Mallak, 1998; Meyer, 1982) and over the longer term (Boin & van Eeten, 2013; Hopkin, 2014; Pal et al., 2014). Related to this, Billington et al. (2017) highlighted the importance of having experience of persisting through adversity, echoing resilience research within team sport which noted the theme of collective efficacy (Morgan et al., 2013). Mere exposure is not sufficient however, there must be some purposive reflection and learning processes following a resilience event in order for resilience capacity to be increased (Hopkin, 2014). Ates and Bititci (2011) found that smaller organisations frequently overlooked this period of embedding learning in favour of immediate operational implementation of change. It is likely that planning, adaptation, and learning processes overlap and are dependent on each other (Duchek, 2020), with organisational decision-makers potentially required to make trade-offs between developing contingency plans and developing flexibility (Burnard et al., 2018).

2.3.3.4. Relationship Networks. Networks of relationships form an organisation's sensory systems (Hopkin, 2014) and provide a vital source of resilience support (Baral & Stern, 2011; Kimberlin et al., 2011; Witmer & Mellinger, 2016). The process of communicating through and connecting into external networks facilitates the monitoring of potential threats (Cardoso & Ramos, 2016) and opportunities (Demmer et al., 2011) prior to a

resilience event. This provides access to shared resources (Lee et al., 2013), including knowledge (Wicker et al., 2013; Witmer & Mellinger, 2016), and potentially shared processes such as open innovation (Cardoso & Ramos, 2016) and collaboration (Duarte Alonso & Bressan, 2015) to help assuage the immediate aftereffects following a resilience event. External relationships with individuals (Powley, 2009), organisations (Cardoso & Ramos, 2016; Fitzgerald & Lupton, 2015), and regions (Billington et al., 2017) all impact organisational resilience throughout the resilience cycle. Similarly, internal affective and cognitive relationships between employees and organisations are a key focus point (Jaaron & Backhouse, 2014), strengthening engagement (through role clarity), empowerment (through devolved decision-making) and commitment (Demmer et al., 2011; Gittell et al., 2006; Lee et al., 2013).

2.3.3.5 Leadership. The role of leadership, as the process by which leaders influence others, and build and maintain effective teams (Bass & Riggio, 2006), is well documented in the organisational resilience literature (see Fitzgerald & Lupton, 2015; Kimberlin et al., 2011; McManus et al., 2008; Witmer & Mellinger, 2016). Leadership processes which are central to organisational resilience include providing transparency and inclusiveness (Pal et al., 2014), shaping the organisational culture, providing support, acting as a communications hub (Baral, 2013; Johnson & Elliott, 2011), championing innovation (Demmer et al., 2011), and displaying entrepreneurship (Kimberlin et al., 2011), although different leadership is likely to be required at different temporal stages in the resilience cycle (Lee et al., 2013; Williams et al., 2017). In particular, relational and collaborative leadership processes may contribute towards psychological safety and focus employees on organisational rather than individual goals (Witmer & Mellinger, 2016), important aspects of a resilience culture. The role of leadership processes in organisational resilience echoes findings in the team resilience in sport literature (Morgan et al., 2015) regarding the importance of transformational leadership, particularly during the early phase of team development.

2.3.4. Measurement of Organisational Resilience

In the domain of engineering resilience, measurement instruments have proliferated which compare the performance of a system before and after a specific disruption (Hosseini et al., 2016; Tamvakis & Xenidis, 2013), in line with the conceptualisation of resilience as maintaining systems integrity by absorbing shocks and accommodating change without failure (Woods & Hollnagel, 2017). These instruments are dominated by mathematical approaches measuring the system's reliability or robustness through measuring the system's variation of performance in time. Some resilience measures (e.g., Cimellaro et al., 2010; Francis & Bekera, 2014) have attempted to integrate the engineering quantification of resilience and organisational contexts so as to apply to socio-technical systems such as critical infrastructure. The concern here is that these instruments require failure to occur before remedial action can be taken and rely on lagging indicators which measure how resilient an organisation has been, rather than its capability to do so now or in the future. In addition, such measures frequently require quantification of performance outputs such as sales, customers, and assets in efforts to integrate technical and organisational aspects in a single measure (Tamvakis & Xenidis, 2013). When defined as a dynamic psychosocial capability, it is more difficult to link to such financial and performance related outcomes (Lee et al., 2013). It is necessary to use leading rather than lagging indicators in order to measure the processes and actions that underlie the resilience of an organisation (Lee et al., 2013).

There are several papers that include methods or instruments specifically designed to assess or measure organisational resilience, although some of these (viz., Mallak, 1998; Somers, 2009) contain items directed towards the individual employee's resilience, rather than their perception of their organisation's resilience. A number of studies represent progressions of the same instrument (viz., Lee et al., 2013; McManus et al., 2008; Stephenson et al., 2010; Whitman et al., 2013). Originally comprising self-assessment tools (McManus et al., 2008), Stephenson et al. (2010) went on to develop a 92-item survey, which was further refined by Lee et al. (2013) into a 52-item instrument known as the Benchmark Resilience Tool, or BRT-53. In the same year, Whitman et al. (2013) developed a short form, 13 item

version of the BRT-53. These instruments all seek to measure staff perceptions of organisational resilience. Wicker et al. (2013) purposefully departed from this research stream, as they were concerned it could conflate individual with organisational resilience. Instead the authors developed their own instrument to study the recovery by community sports clubs in Australia from flooding events. The instrument developed by Wicker et al. was based on Bruneau et al.'s (2003) framework of robustness, redundancy, resourcefulness, and rapidity (itself developed from community resilience to earthquakes, not organisational resilience). While the instrument was found to have high reliability (Cronbach's alpha over .7), exploratory factor analysis did not support these four dimensions of the concept of organisational resilience, as a number of cross-loadings were observed.

2.3.5 Contextual and Multi-Level Considerations in Organisational Resilience

Empirical organisational resilience research has been highly context dependent (Linnenluecke, 2017). While incorporating a dynamic interactive research perspective acknowledging the influence of contextual variables is essential, such an approach can be problematic. This is because the number of contextual parameters in any study is infinite and, in an organisational setting, are continuously changing (Busse et al., 2017). Nevertheless, some key contextual variables can be seen to emerge from the heterogenous body of empirical research included in this review. Across the organisational level of analysis, the size of an organisation will affect resilience characteristics such as level of resources, control of external turbulence, and strategic planning (Ates & Bititci, 2011; Ismail et al., 2011) which all tend to be lower within small and medium-sized enterprises (Sullivan-Taylor & Branicki, 2011). Characteristics which may serve to support resilience in these smaller organisations included responsiveness, flexibility, informal decision making, and an opportunity-seeking culture (Ates & Bititci, 2011; Sullivan-Taylor & Branicki, 2011). Beyond this, the wider context in which the organisation is nested (industry, region, economy) will also impact resilience with studies finding sector-level factors such as the intensity of competition (Sawalha, 2015) and conflicting financial priorities (Dalgaard-Nielsen, 2017), and regional-

and national-level factors such as cultural influences (Billington et al., 2017; Sawalha, 2015). In the context of community sports clubs, Wicker et al. (2013) also noted that sport type had a significant impact on recovery, with those sports which were heavily reliant on particular physical assets (such as motor sports, equestrian, and golf clubs) taking longer to recover from flooding events. However, the "context" here may be the extent to which an organisation is reliant on bespoke resources which are particularly affected by the relevant stressor, rather than sport type per se.

Contextual factors also operate at the intra-organisational levels of the employee, and the team, given that collective constructs such as organisational resilience are rooted in the cognitions, behaviours, and emotions of individual employees (Klein & Kozlowski, 2000). Over time, bottom-up interaction processes emerge which shape subsequent interactions (Morgeson & Hofmann, 1999). Organisational characteristics and processes are often regarded as contextual factors which partly shape resilience at the employee and workplace team levels (Britt et al., 2016; van der Beek & Schraagen, 2015; Vera et al., 2017), and individual-level characteristics and processes from which team resilience emerges are beginning to be explored (Hartwig et al., 2020; Gucciardi et al., 2018). However, individual- and team-level characteristics which may contribute towards organisational resilience have received limited attention. From the empirical research included within this review, individual- and team-level factors found to be associated with organisational resilience included duration of tenure of members (Baral, 2013), levels of employee affective commitment and trustworthiness (Jaaron & Backhouse, 2014; Pal et al., 2014), and team work enthusiasm (Chen, 2016). Caution is needed in distinguishing between the conceptual analysis of resilience at multiple levels from the underlying characteristics and mechanisms. Whilst this review has highlighted the apparent similarities of function of the resilience concept across levels of analysis, the structural components may originate in quite divergent characteristics and mechanisms. Fundamentally, the individual level is focused on intrapersonal factors, including personality traits, genetics, and cognitive-affective processes,

whereas the team and organisational levels are built on interpersonal factors such as structure, culture, and relational and collective processes. In striving to identify interactions between levels, it is important not to lose sight of these fundamental differences.

2.4 Rationale of the Thesis

Resilience remains an area of interest to understand the factors underpinning how individuals, teams, and organisations successfully overcome adversity, uncertainty, and disruption. This is particularly the case for elite sport organisations, given the volatile nature of elite sport, and the high levels of organisational change (Wagstaff et al., 2016). A positive organisational psychology research agenda may "help researchers better understand positive states and traits such as organisational resilience… to buffer against the demands that are placed on individuals within organisations." (Wagstaff et al., 2012a, p. 99). Over the last decade, there has been significant definitional and conceptual advancement of both individual resilience (Fletcher & Sarkar, 2012, 2013, 2016) and team resilience (Morgan et al., 2013, 2015, 2019) in the sport context. More recently, resilience in the workplace, at both the individual and team levels, is receiving increasing attention, together with the importance of contextual factors, particularly organisational-level resources and the team and organisational culture, in developing resilience in employees and teams (Hartwig et al., 2020). The "drastic surge" in resilience research within organisations (Caza et al., 2020, p. 338) has led to important insights about the ways in which organisations recover from and overcome a wide variety of adversities. Although models developed outside of the elite sport domain have much potential for knowledge to be transferred across to organisational sport psychology, there remains a need for context-sensitive conceptualisation and application (Wagstaff et al., 2019a). The purpose of this thesis is, therefore, to advance knowledge of the construct, factors, and applications of organisational resilience in elite sport. Drawing on the reviews of resilience at the individual, team, and organisational levels in this Chapter Two, Chapter Three (Study One) reports on the development of a definition, and identifies the characteristics, of organisational resilience in elite sport organisations.

Chapter Three:

Empirical Research: Study One

In the previous chapter, the resilience literature in sport and in the workplace were synthesised regarding definitions, characteristics, and processes associated with resilience at the individual and team levels. An overview was then provided of relevant organisational level psychosocial concepts in sport, namely organisational stressors, organisational culture, and organisational change. Finally, the organisational resilience literature in domains beyond sport was reviewed to explore how organisational resilience has been defined and conceptualised elsewhere. This section also included a review of organisational resilience characteristics and processes. Following the review of literature, Chapter Two concluded by recommending the need to expand resilience research to the organisational level in sport. This Chapter Three (Study One) reports the results of the first study of organisational resilience in elite sport. The objectives of this study are to understand the extent to which experts agree on the different features of existing definitions of organisational resilience, and to identify which characteristics are perceived as most important for organisational resilience in elite sport.

Defining and Characterising Organisational Resilience in Elite Sport[1]

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[1] **Fasey, K. J.,** Sarkar, M., Wagstaff, C. R., & Johnston, J. (2021). Defining and characterizing organizational resilience in elite sport. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, *52*, 101834.
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3.1 Introduction

While all organisations face some degree of turbulence and unexpected events, elite sport organisations often face particularly high levels of internal uncertainty and change due to stakeholder demands for demonstrable and sustained success (Wagstaff et al., 2016). As noted by Parent et al. (2018), state funded sport organisations in particular need to balance investment in grassroots development with high-performance targets, and face stakeholder heterogeneity in agendas and needs. Sport organisations have been on a 'journey of professionalism' from volunteer-driven to commercialised organisations (Shilbury & Ferkins, 2020), with a rapid change in the demands of governance practices. Beyond this, elite sport organisations frequently face reputational issues such as the allegations of financial corruption at FIFA (Boudreaux et al., 2016), doping within Russian sporting institutions ("Russia banned for four years", 2019), or failures to prevent abuse at USA Gymnastics (Dure, 2019).

How organisations deal with uncertainty and disruption depends on a range of internal and external factors, with some being better equipped to respond than others. The term resilience is often applied where an organisation, or indeed a team or individual, demonstrates a positive outcome following an unexpected or disruptive event (Britt et al., 2016; Fletcher & Sarkar, 2013; Linnenluecke, 2017). Organisational resilience is an emerging concept which seeks to understand and explain how and why organisations survive, adapt, and thrive in dynamic environments which are uncertain and complex (Duchek, 2020; Lee et al., 2013). This concept has been investigated in various contexts such as business and industry (Boin & van Eeten, 2013; Gittell et al., 2006), the public sector (Dalgaard-Nielsen, 2017; Fitzgerald, 2018), and community sport clubs (Wicker et al., 2013). Within the elite sport context, despite the presence of a growing body of literature on individual resilience (e.g., Bryan et al., 2019; Fletcher & Sarkar, 2012) and team resilience (e.g., Morgan et al., 2017), organisational resilience has yet to be explored.

Over the last decade or so, there has been definitional and conceptual advancement of

individual resilience (Fletcher & Sarkar, 2012, 2013, 2016) and team resilience (Morgan et al., 2013) in the sport context. At the same time, there has been a burgeoning body of empirical evidence investigating individual resilience (see, for reviews, Bryan et al., 2019; Galli & Gonzalez, 2015; Sarkar & Fletcher, 2014b) and team resilience in elite sport (see, for a review, Morgan et al., 2017). At the group level, team resilience has been defined as "a dynamic, psychosocial process which protects a group of individuals from the potential negative effect of the stressors they collectively encounter. It comprises of processes whereby team members use their individual and combined resources to positively adapt when experiencing adversity" (Morgan et al., 2013, p. 552). Researchers in this area have identified resilient characteristics of elite sport teams (group structure, mastery approaches, social capital, collective efficacy; Morgan et al., 2013) and psychosocial processes underpinning team resilience in elite sport (transformational leadership, shared team leadership, team learning, social identity, positive emotions; Morgan et al., 2015). Morgan et al. (2019) subsequently found five psychosocial enablers and strategies that promote the development of team resilience within a high-level sports team, namely inspiring, motivating, and challenging team members to achieve performance excellence, developing a team regulatory system based on ownership and responsibility, cultivating a team identity and togetherness based on a selfless culture, exposing the team to challenging training and unexpected/difficult situations, and promoting enjoyment and keeping a positive outlook during stressors. Within both the individual and team resilience in sport literatures, definitional inconsistencies remain (Britt et al., 2016; Morgan et al., 2017), such as the types of adversity which "trigger" resilience, and the necessary or expected outcomes.

The hitherto lack of research attention devoted to organisational resilience in elite sport is somewhat surprising given the growing acknowledgement that sport organisations are characterised by highly complex social and organisational environments which exert major influences on those that operate within them (see Fletcher & Wagstaff, 2009; Wagstaff, 2017).

Furthermore, organisational resilience has the potential not only to positively influence the functioning of the sport organisation itself, but also the resilience of its athletes and teams (Wagstaff et al., 2020). Allied to this, there have been calls to dedicate both theoretical and applied attention to understanding and influencing the cultural environments within elite sport organisations (Wagstaff & Burton-Wylie, 2018), and to promote the development of optimally functioning organisations (Fletcher & Wagstaff, 2009; Wagstaff, 2017). Several features of elite sport make it an intuitively appealing context for organisational resilience research, including the relatively short, scheduled performance periods, the objective outcome of winning or losing (Shoenfelt, 2016), and that some of the stressors encountered in elite sport are "unquestionably more severe" (Fogarty & Perera, 2016, p. 424) than those encountered in other work settings. Specifically, the intensity of interactions within an elite sporting environment, having to fulfil different roles leading to task and relationship conflict, logistical demands, external expectations and cultural norms (Arnold & Fletcher, 2012; Rumbold et al., 2018) are all organisational stressors commonly encountered by individuals working in elite sport.

In order to better understand how organisations and the employees working within them deal with these stressors, it is necessary to consider how organisational resilience is conceptualised in the elite sport context, as well as the range of factors which may equip some organisations to respond better than others. Researchers have highlighted potential links between elite sport and various other performance domains, such as military, medical, and the performing arts (Molan et al., 2019). It follows that insights from organisational resilience research in other performance domains are therefore likely to aid understanding and interpretation of organisational resilience in elite sport.

Organisational resilience has variously been defined in other performance domains (for a review, see Conz & Magnani, 2020; Duchek, 2020) as "the maintenance of positive adjustment under challenging conditions such that the organisation emerges from those conditions

strengthened and more resourceful" (Vogus & Sutcliffe, 2007, p. 3418), and "the inherent and adaptive qualities and capabilities that enable an organisations adaptive capacity during turbulent periods" (Burnard & Bhamra, 2011, p. 5587). From these definitions, key strands are apparent (Annarelli & Nonino, 2016), principally the need for some kind of unexpected or disruptive resilience event, and a positive outcome following such an event. Nevertheless, there are inconsistencies in how these defining features are conceptualised, for example whether the adversity must be extreme or can encompass everyday stressors, and whether thriving is a necessary positive outcome, or mere survival is sufficient. Such variations in the current research base derive from the fragmentation and importation of organisational resilience definitions across and between domains (Conz & Magnani, 2020; Tarba et al., 2017).

Organisational resilience researchers are also interested in the factors which contribute towards an organisation's resilience capacity, allowing an organisation to prepare for and respond to stressors (Hamel & Valikangas, 2003), as well as identifying strengths and areas of weakness (Morgan et al., 2013). Recent reviews in this area suggest that factors such as organisational structure, culture, networks, and resources, as well as an organisation's adaptive capacity, minimisation of barriers, and employee engagement are potential characteristics of organisational resilience (Barasa et al., 2018; Rahi, 2019; Wagstaff et al., 2020).

Given the diverse range of organisations covered by the existing research base, and the need to give due consideration to contextual factors which may impact the applicability of extant findings to a novel domain such as elite sport (Suddaby, 2010), it is necessary to employ a research methodology which is conducted in close collaboration with end-users to foster usability and alignment to their needs. The Delphi method is a structured communication technique designed to transform expert opinion into group consensus through a series of survey rounds (Hasson & Keeney, 2011), and has been used in research on wellbeing in sport (Daykin et al., 2017), European resilience guidelines (Adini et al., 2017), and Paralympic athlete

classification (Ravensbergen et al., 2016). Selecting experts working in or with elite sport organisations alongside organisational resilience, or resilience in sport academics, the purpose of the study was to construct a definition of organisational resilience and to identify the resilient characteristics of elite sport organisations based on prior literature and expert opinion, providing an important stepping stone in the conceptual building process. The research objectives were twofold: 1) to understand the extent to which experts agree on the different features of existing definitions of organisational resilience; and 2) to identify which characteristics experts perceive as most important for organisational resilience in elite sport.

3.2 Method

3.2.1 Research Design

The research was informed by a critical realist perspective (Ronkainen & Wiltshire, 2021), underpinned by ontological realism (i.e., reality exists independently of our knowledge of it) and epistemological interpretivism (i.e., the production of knowledge is a social practice). Specifically, while social-psychological phenomena are regarded as multifaceted and complex, "there is a state of the matter which is what it is, regardless of how we do view it, choose to view it or are somehow manipulated into viewing it" (Archer, 2007, p. 195). This ontological perspective is congruent with the aim of constructing a definition of organisational resilience and identifying resilient characteristics of elite sport organisations. In adopting an epistemological interpretivist approach to this study, it is recognised that knowledge is the product of intersubjective relations between individuals. Attempting to "align explanations of reality with reality itself" (Williams, 2018, p. 30), using the Delphi method within this study allowed me to explore multiple perspectives of organisational resilience while trying to align those multiple perspectives within an agreed co-produced definition and resilient characteristics. With an emphasis on methodological pluralism a distinguishing feature of critical realism (Ryba et al., 2020), a mixed methods convergent design (Fetters et al., 2013) was used. Quantitative and

qualitative data were collected concurrently through forced response items and unforced open responses via four online iterative surveys over a period of seven months.

3.2.2 Participants

To qualify as an "expert", participants had to be able to provide insight into the functioning of elite sport organisations (through working in or with such organisations) or have academic expertise in organisational resilience or resilience in sport (determined through relevant peer-reviewed publications). In the absence of an existing definition of an "elite sport organisation", it was operationalised as a governing body for an Olympic or Paralympic sport, or the organisational body employing a national or professional athlete or team, for example a professional or national football club (cf. Swann et al., 2015; Grey-Thompson, 2017).

Of the 167 individuals invited to participate in the study, 82 (female = 31%, age $M = 43.2$ years, $SD = 11.0$) took part in round 1, comprising 61 applied experts (47% of those invited to participate) and 21 academic experts (55% of those invited), with 62 of those individuals (female = 31%, age $M = 43.1$ years, $SD = 11.3$) completing all four rounds. Of those participants who completed all four rounds, 46 (74%) were based in the U.K., nine in North America, five in Australasia, and two in Europe. The panellists had a combined experience of 744 years working with elite sport organisations ($M = 12.0$ years, $SD = 9.4$), across 50 sports and held a range of roles including coaches, support staff, CEOs, and practitioners. Of the academic panellists ($n = 17$), 47% were from a sport psychology background and 53% from organisational psychology.

3.2.3 Procedure

3.2.3.1 Participant Recruitment. Following institutional ethical approval, criterion sampling of individuals qualifying as experts was used to select participants in three stages. First, an initial list was compiled comprising professionals known to, or suggested by, the research team. Second, the initial list was augmented to include at least one representative from each of the major professional sports in the United Kingdom (football, rugby, and cricket), and each of

the national governing bodies of Olympic and Paralympic sports in Great Britain. Where no email was available, potential panellists were contacted by LinkedIn. Third, recruitment was broadened using snowball sampling by asking panellists to forward the contact on to others within their organisation who met the expert criteria. To enhance the response rate, all invitations to participate were personalised, and a maximum of two reminder emails were sent for each round, in addition to follow up individual "thank you" messages (Iqbal & Pipon-Young, 2009). Informed consent was obtained for each round. The study was conducted over seven months, with each round remaining open for approximately four weeks.

  3.2.3.2 Delphi Rounds. Four Delphi rounds were employed with two aims, namely, to build consensus on definitional aspects of organisational resilience in the elite sport context (rounds 1 and 2), and to rate the importance of various potential resilient characteristics (rounds 3 and 4). For each aim, the initial survey was constructed following a literature review of organisational resilience in other performance domains, and individual and team resilience in sport, identifying areas of conceptual ambiguity regarding the construct of organisational resilience together with key results from the empirical research regarding potential characteristics of organisational resilience. These areas of ambiguity and key results were converted into corresponding statements presented in a uniform mode which were reviewed by the research team and, where necessary, rephrased to ensure each item was standalone and consistent, and similar items were consolidated. The draft surveys for rounds 1 and 3 were then piloted to check for clarity and estimated completion time. As a result of feedback, the order of presentation of statements was altered, and there was further consolidation of characteristics to reduce participant burden (for example, "shared vision" and "shared values" were combined into "shared vision and values", and "hopeful" was subsumed within "optimistic").

  Throughout the data collection process, panellists were asked to draw on all their experiences in elite sport, not just their current role. In round 1, panellists were presented with

ten statements concerning definitional and conceptual aspects of organisational resilience and asked to choose the response which best reflected their views. For example, "Within elite sport, organisational resilience is: a) a reaction to sudden stressors or changes, b) a reaction to incremental changes over time, c) both options could apply, d) neither option is relevant." In addition to providing responses to the ten statements, all participants were asked to provide their own definition of organisational resilience in elite sport. The requirement for participants to suggest their own definition was intentionally placed *after* the ten statements to address potential concerns amongst those working in elite sport, rather than academia, that they may not have sufficient knowledge or awareness of organisational resilience to proffer their own definition.

In round 3, participants were asked to rate 63 potential characteristics of organisational resilience drawn from the literature review on a four-point Likert scale from "very important" to "not important". Panellists were given the additional instruction in round 3 that "this section is not about the characteristics of your current organisation, or of a successful elite sport organisation, but of a resilient one."

Rounds 2 and 4 consisted of items that failed to reach consensus in the preceding rounds (rounds 1 and 3 respectively), together with feedback as to how other panel members had responded. The feedback contained both statistics, and examples of comments provided by participants, given the preference for this format by expert panellists (Meijering & Tobi, 2016). An example of feedback from round 1 is included as Appendix One. The feedback aspect of the Delphi method is based on the rationale that group judgments are more compelling than individual opinions, but that it is also important that each expert has an equal opportunity to impact the overall decision-making process (Okoli & Pawlowski, 2004). In these rounds, participants were reminded, via email, of their original responses.

Participants were encouraged to add comments throughout each round, and these were reviewed at each stage of the study with any issues addressed in the following round. For

example, in round 1, there were two statements regarding whether organisational resilience in the elite sport context is different to other contexts, and whether it differs according to the type of sport (see Table 3.1, statements 9 and 10). The comments indicated that there was a lack of clarity amongst participants as to whether they were being asked if the contexts were different, or if the concept was generalisable between contexts. A clarifying note was subsequently added to these statements when they were repeated in round 2. As a further illustration, in round 3, some participants stated that their responses would depend on contextual factors such as the size of the organisation. An additional response of "it depends" was subsequently included in round 4 with a request for accompanying comments. Additionally, an item was clarified so that "Access to resources (e.g., centrally controlled or freely available resources)" was re-presented as two separate items of "Centrally controlled access to resources" and "Freely available access to resources". Although participants had been invited in round 3 to suggest any additional characteristics to include within round 4, they were found to constitute rewordings of characteristics already presented in round 3, for example "a compelling vision" was not regarded as sufficiently unique from "shared vision and values" to warrant a new characteristic. Therefore, while those suggestions were considered in the qualitative analysis, the supervisory team felt that none emerged consistently and separately from the existing list to warrant inclusion in round 4.

3.2.4 Data Analysis

The quantitative and qualitative data yielded by this research in the form of responses to, and comments on, survey items necessitated different approaches to data analysis. For the quantitative data produced in each round of the study, it was necessary to establish the degree of consensus between panellists to determine whether items were to be retained or to be removed from the next round. In determining how to calculate consensus in Delphi studies, it is necessary to consider the research aims, the types of measurement items (von der Gracht, 2012), and the number of possible responses (Diamond et al., 2014). In this study, two different percentage rates

were applied, to reflect the different types of measurement items and the different possible

responses in rounds 1 and 2, and 3 and 4 respectively. In rounds 1 and 2, the responses were

nominal and largely entailed four discrete responses (each item and the possible responses are

detailed in Table 3.1). Given the type and spread of possible responses, it was necessary to

introduce a higher level of sensitivity to the point at which consensus could be said to have been

reached than the more common figure of 75-80% for Likert-type scales (cf. von der Gracht,

2012). Specifically, the Average Percentage of Majority Opinion (AMPO; Kapoor, 1987)

attempts to quantify an appropriate percentage rate for consensus based on the actual data in a

specific Delphi study round (see Cottam et al., 2004; Price & Robinson, 2017). Based on the data

for round 1 the AMPO was calculated to be 65.1%, this being the sum of majority opinions

(round 1 responses chosen by >50% of participants, $n = 801$) divided by total opinions expressed

(number of participants x number of questions, $n = 82 \times 15^2 = 1,230$). In rounds 3 and 4, which

employed Likert scale ratings to determine the importance of potential resilient characteristics,

consensus was assessed using the most commonly employed method for these types of

responses, namely a pre-determined threshold of 80% (von der Gracht, 2012). This percentage

was applied to summed responses of either 'important' or 'unimportant' (e.g., Moreira et al.,

2017). In the case of both preliminary rounds (i.e., rounds 1 and 3), items that reached or

exceeded the appropriate consensus threshold were removed, and unagreed items were carried

forward. As a result, four items were carried forward to round 2 and ten items were carried

forward to round 4.

  All items that reached consensus in rounds 1 and 2, together with the accompanying

qualitative comments regarding definitional and conceptual aspects of organisational resilience

(totalling 27 pages of single-spaced text), were integrated through merging the data sets on an

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[2] As two of the ten statements in round 1 allowed more than one response, each option was treated as a separate question with "agree" or "disagree" as the possible answers for the purpose of calculating the APMO. This produced a total number of questions as 15.

item by item basis. Specifically, after calculating the percentage of participants agreeing with each item response, the research team read and reread the accompanying comments, together with the panellists' own suggested definitions, to explore the extent to which those comments confirmed, expanded on, or were discordant with the apparent consensus response from the quantitative data, weaving the analysis into a single definition (Fetters et al., 2013).

For the quantitative data from rounds 3 and 4, as well as determining whether items had reached consensus, the item responses were also ranked numerically ("very important" = 3, with "not important" = 0), from which mean rankings were calculated for each item. Items were rated as "very important" to organisational resilience in elite sport if they had a mean ranking of 2.5 or above, "somewhat important" for a mean ranking of 1.5 - 2.49, and "not very important" if the mean ranking was below 1.5. For participants who selected the additional response of "it depends" included in round 4 following participant comments in round 3, these responses were treated as neutral and removed from the final ranking calculations (Adini et al., 2017). Only those characteristics ranked as "very important" were retained for the next stage of analysis.

The resilient characteristics ranked as "very important" were subsequently considered as qualitative data and analysed alongside the participants accompanying comments from rounds 3 and 4 (totalling 13 pages of single-spaced text) using reflexive inductive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2019) from a critical realist standpoint. The aim of this analysis was to identify patterns of shared semantic meaning across data sets, as opposed to participants' individual experiences, in line with the epistemological interpretivist approach that knowledge is the product of intersubjective relations between individuals. Guided by the six phases suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006) for conducting thematic analysis, the characteristics identified from the consensus and ranking stage of analysis were treated as preliminary codes. The accompanying comments provided by participants were explored to identify additional codes, or to rename the preliminary codes. The codes were then examined to identify broader patterns, checking each

against the original dataset to ensure faithfulness to the integrated survey data and panellists' comments and suggestions. Different combinations of themes were explored with the supervisory team, who adopted a predominantly inductive approach whilst acknowledging and reflexively examining how the supervisory team's knowledge of the extant literature was influencing the development of themes. Once agreed, the description of each theme was refined, and exemplar comments were chosen, before finally settling on the name of each theme.

Whilst it is common in thematic analysis for each data item to be given equal attention during the coding process (Braun & Clarke, 2006), greater weighting was given in the present study to the quantitative results of the Delphi surveys by using this data to identify initial patterns or central concepts, given these represented the views of all participants, whereas the provision of comments was voluntary with 58% of participants providing comments in round 3, and 42% of participants providing comments in round 4. This prioritising was to avoid concepts being generated from a few vivid examples (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

3.2.5 Methodological Quality

The study was guided by a critical realist approach to judge the credibility and quality of the research (Maxwell, 2017). In doing so, the supervisory team accept that the Delphi method cannot directly offer indisputable fact but instead provides a snapshot of a range of expert opinions at a point in time which can be used to inform theory development (Okoli & Pawlowski, 2004). Specifically, the Delphi method, through the ongoing feedback given to panellists and invitation to reconsider dissensus responses or provide additional comments, contains an inherent form of member reflection to increase the ontological plausibility of the research findings (cf. Ronkainen & Wiltshire, 2021; Smith & McGannon, 2018).

Several quality indicators for Delphi studies are available. These include clearly stating the aim of the Delphi method employed, and the criteria used to identify "expert" panellists and to define consensus or agreement (Diamond et al., 2014; Hasson & Keeney, 2011). Involving

individuals from target organisations as "experts" helps to engage relevant stakeholders, and to ground the research in its context (Linstone & Turoff, 1975). Resilience researchers were included to integrate the research in a novel (sport) context with the wider resilience literature across different levels of analysis and domains, and to address concerns of resilience being studied in silos (Britt et al., 2016). The degree of consensus required when analysing the data in each round, and the restriction to four rounds of surveys in total, was determined before inviting experts to participate. These decisions were guided by the origin of the survey items, having been drawn from a literature review, and to minimise participant fatigue in light of the substantial commitment required from participants in a Delphi study (Hasson et al., 2000).

3.3 Results

The results across four rounds of the Delphi study, together with analysis of the accompanying qualitative commentary provided by the expert panel, are presented in two parts to offer a definition of organisational resilience followed by the resilient characteristics, of elite sport organisations. In each case a brief overview of the quantitative survey results is presented, followed by examples from the integrated quantitative and qualitative data, to illuminate facets of the suggested definition and the five characteristics of organisational resilience, namely structural clarity, flexible improvement, shared understanding, reciprocal commitment, and operational awareness.

3.3.1 Definition of Organisational Resilience

Based on the survey results across rounds 1 and 2 of the Delphi study, and the accompanying comments provided by the expert panel, organisational resilience is defined as:

> The dynamic capability of an organisation to successfully deal with significant change. It emerges from multi-level (employee, team, and organisational) interacting characteristics and processes which enable an organisation to prepare for, adapt to, and learn from significant change.

An integrated summary of the quantitative results from rounds 1 and 2 of the Delphi study is shown in Table 3.1. Of the eight statements which required a single response, six statements achieved consensus in round 1 (statements 1-3 and 5-7), and two statements achieved consensus in round 2 (statements 9 and 10 in Table 3.1). A further two statements (statements 4 and 8 in Table 3.1) allowed panellists to select as many of the responses as they felt were applicable, with two of the seven possible responses (responses 4c and 8b) having achieved consensus by the end of round 2. Panellists were also asked to provide their own definitions of organisational resilience. Using the integrated quantitative and qualitative data, a definition of organisational resilience was developed, and the panellists were given an opportunity to comment on this definition during round 3. The comments were compared with the research data from rounds 1 and 2 and discussed amongst the research team, which led to minor revisions to the original proposed definition (e.g., "the" dynamic capability rather than "a" dynamic capability).

In this study, the panel of experts were invited to evaluate and comment on the nuanced ways in which organisational resilience has been defined, centred around two key concepts – an unexpected or disruptive resilience event, and a positive outcome following that event (Britt et al., 2016; Fletcher & Sarkar, 2013; Linnenluecke, 2017). In terms of an unexpected or disruptive resilience event, panellists reached consensus within statements 1 and 2 that resilience events can span a range in intensity and duration from everyday incremental changes or stressors which accumulate over time to sudden major events (see Table 3.1), with several panellists commenting on how everyday hassles can be aggregated to be appraised as big problems, such that "even seemingly small stressors could be perceived as big at an untimely moment". The resulting conceptualisation of resilience events as "significant change" purposefully retains some linguistic ambiguity (Suddaby, 2010) to encompass this perceived breadth of dimensions for resilience events.

Table 3.1

Results of Rounds 1 and 2 Regarding Definitional Aspects of Organisational Resilience in Elite

Sport

	Statement	Response – number (percentage of all responses)			
1	Within elite sport, organisational resilience is a reaction to:	significant stressors – 8 (9.8%)	everyday stressors – 1 (1.2%)	**both could apply - 69 (84.1%)**	neither is relevant - 4 (4.9%)
2	Within elite sport, organisational resilience is a reaction to:	sudden changes - 13 (15.9%)	incremental changes - 4 (4.9%)	**both could apply - 62 (75.6%)**	neither is relevant - 3 (3.7%)
3	If an elite sport organisation has displayed resilience, it has:	absorbed stressors, so experienced disruption then recovered - 12 (14.6%)	deflected stressors, so maintained functioning - 9 (11%)	**both could apply - 59 (72%)**	neither is relevant - 2 (2.4%)
4	*If an elite sport organisation has displayed resilience, it has (select all which apply):				
4a	recovered its former level of performance	agree (round 1) – 47 (57.3%)		disagree (round 1) – 35 (42.7%)	
		agree (round 2) – 35 (49.3%)		disagree (round 2) – 36 (50.7%)	
4b	enhanced its performance	agree (round 1) – 58 (70.7%)		disagree (round 1) – 24 (29.3%)	
		agree (round 2) – 40 (56.3%)		disagree (round 2) – 31 (43.7%)	
4c	adapted and developed new capabilities	agree (round 1) – 70 (85.4%)		disagree (round 1) – 12 (14.6%)	
		agree (round 2) – 59 (83.1%)		disagree (round 2) – 12 (16.9%)	
4d	embarked on a positive, sustainable path	agree (round 1) – 54 (65.9%)		disagree (round 1) – 28 (34.1%)	
		agree (round 2) – 38 (53.5%)		disagree (round 2) – 33 (46.5%)	
5	Within elite sport, organisational resilience is:	a reactive capacity – 6 (7.3%)	a proactive capacity - 6 (7.3%)	**both could apply - 70 (85.4%)**	neither is relevant - 0
6	If you consider organisational resilience has some proactive element, is this focused towards:	considering and planning for problems - 20 (24.4%)	considering and seeking out opportunities - 2 (2.4%)	**both could apply - 59 (72%)**	neither is relevant - 1 (1.2%)

	Statement	Response – number (percentage of all responses)			
7	Within elite sport, organisational resilience is concerned with:	reliability and stability - 10 (12.2%)	innovation and change - 8 (9.8%)	**both could apply - 59 (72%)**	neither is relevant - 5 (6.1%)
8	*Organisational resilience is (select all which apply):				
8a	a quality	agree (round 1) – 49 (59.8%) agree (round 2) - 41 (57.7%)		disagree (round 1) – 33 (40.2%) disagree (round 2) - 30 (42.3%)	
8b	a process	agree (round 1) – 55 (67.1%) **agree (round 2) – 55 (77.5%)**		disagree (round 1) – 27 (32.9%) disagree (round 2) – 16 (22.5%)	
8c	an outcome	agree (round 1) – 39 (47.6%) agree (round 2) – 27 (38%)		disagree (round 1) – 43 (52.4%) disagree (round 2) – 44 (62%)	
9	*Do you think that organisational resilience in an elite sport context is similar or different to organisational resilience in other contexts?	similar (round 1) - 47 (57.3%) **similar (round 2) – 51 (71.8%)**	different (round 1) - 8 (9.8%) different (round 2) – 7 (9.9%)	it could be both (round 1) - 21 (25.6%) it could be both (round 2) – 12 (16.9%)	I'm not sure (round 1) - 6 (7.3%) I'm not sure (round 2) – 1 (1.4%)
10	*Do you think organisational resilience is similar across an elite sport context, or unique to the particular sport?	similar (round 1) - 40 (48.8%) **similar (round 2) – 52 (73.2%)**	unique (round 1) - 6 (7.3%) unique (round 2) – 5 (7%)	it could be both (round 1) - 31 (37.8%) it could be both (round 2) – 12 (16.9%)	I'm not sure (round 1) - 5 (6.1%) I'm not sure (round 2) – 2 (2.8%)

Note: Consensus ≥ 65.1%. Consensus responses are in bold. * these statements did not reach consensus after round 1, so were carried forwards to round 2. In round 1, the total number of responses was 82. In round 2, the total number of responses was 71.

Within statements 3 and 4, proximal and distal positive outcomes were explored, namely what does the organisation look like both immediately following exposure to significant change, and in the longer term, if it is to be regarded as resilient. For proximal outcomes (statement 3), 72% of our panellists agreed that organisational resilience could encompass both an initial loss of functioning immediately following the exposure to significant change before recovering and deflecting changes such that there is no loss of functioning. Participants noted that positive outcomes may depend on the nature of the resilience event, as well as organisational priorities in the context of finite resources, described by a senior sport psychologist as "picking your battles".

Within statement 4, participants were asked to select all relevant distal positive outcomes, or resilience trajectories, listed in the survey as recovery to a former level, recovery to an enhanced level, adaptation, and sustainability of recovery or adaptation. Although each response was analysed for consensus individually, the statement was re-presented to participants in round 2 in its entirety to standardise the statement across rounds as some of the responses did not achieve consensus following round 1. Adaptation (response 4c) maintained a high level of consensus (83%), and recovery (response 4a) maintained a lack of consensus across rounds as to its relevance to organisational resilience. For the potential outcomes of recovery to an enhanced level, and sustainability of recovery (responses 4b and 4d), participants demonstrated a reduced consensus in round 2 following the feedback provided from round 1. Such movements in consensus highlight the importance of integrating the accompanying comments with the quantitative results on a statement by statement basis to interpret the data holistically. For example, from the accompanying comments it was apparent many participants felt that enhanced recovery could be a consequence of, rather than a necessary part of, resilience, and this perspective was included in the feedback provided when participants were asked to complete round 2. Given the panellists' inclusive perspective on proximal outcomes (statement 3), and the lack of consensus on distal outcomes (statement 4), the proposed definition of organisational

resilience therefore refers to "successfully dealing with…" since it is not prescriptive as to the exact nature of either the proximal or distal resilience outcomes, and appeared as a term used by several participants ahead of similar expressions such as "withstand", "manage", "handle", "cope with", and "overcome".

Statement 5 explored whether organisational resilience was considered by the expert panel to be a reactive phenomenon in response to changes in the external environment or a proactive phenomenon, with organisations planning for potential resilience events. The panel concluded that organisational resilience comprised both reactive and proactive elements (85%). Specifically, while the initial survey statement referred to "planning" when discussing the proactive element of organisational resilience, participants instead referred to "preparing for". "Preparation" goes beyond "planning" to include raising awareness, testing plans, providing training, and embedding resilience processes (Boin & Lagadec, 2000), and therefore seems to provide a better linguistic fit with organisational resilience.

Statement 8 considered how organisational resilience has been conceptualised, with researchers portraying this as a quality, a process, an outcome, or a combination of these. As was the case for statement 4, statement 8 was re-presented to participants in round 2 in its entirety as the quality and outcome elements (responses 8a and 8c) did not achieve consensus in round 1, either for agreement or disagreement. Participants did reach and maintain consensus regarding organisational resilience having a process component (78%), which from an analysis of the accompanying comments reflects the "dynamic", proactive element of resilience emerging or developing over time. The panel failed to reach consensus regarding resilience as an outcome (62% disagreeing) or a quality (58% agreeing) as illustrated in Table 3.1. This latter finding was somewhat surprising given the majority of definitions provided by the participants (74%) referred to organisational resilience as an "ability", "capability", or "capacity". Analysis of the participants' commentary led to the interpretation that the panellists regarded "quality" as

inferring a static concept, akin to a personality trait, rather than a skill that can be developed. The final definition of organisational resilience as a "dynamic capability" which emerges over time reflects the panellists' views and attempts to capture both the quantitative findings of a "dynamic" process component and the high number of references to "capability" from the qualitative analysis of definitions provided by the participants.

In statements 9 and 10, the context specificity of resilience was explored; that is, whether organisational resilience in elite sport was perceived by the panellists as different to organisational resilience in other domains, and indeed, whether it differs according to the type of sport. There was consensus for organisational resilience as an overarching concept rather than being specific to elite sport, with panellists noting that while resilient behaviours will likely vary across sport types, the decontextualised term "organisational resilience" is the same regardless of context. The data presented in Table 3.1 indicate that both statements 9 and 10 moved to consensus across rounds 1 and 2. It is possible that this increase in consensus was due, at least in part, to a clarifying note added to each of these two questions in round 2 that these statements were concerned with similarities in the *concept* of organisational resilience, rather than similarities in the *context* of elite sport or the types of *challenges* faced. The ability to amend survey items during the research process following panellist feedback is a valuable quality of Delphi studies, where experts' degree of opinion change outside of such refinements is generally limited (Meijering & Tobi, 2016; cf. Pilgrim et al., 2018; Thompson et al., 2019).

3.3.2 Resilient Characteristics of Elite Sport Organisations

The initial 63 items included in round 3 of the Delphi study yielded 33 items rated as "very important" to organisational resilience in elite sport (i.e., with a mean ranking of 2.5 or above). None of the items carried forwards to round 4 were rated as "very important". Internal communication (2.98), a desire to learn and improve (2.95), and role clarity (2.88) emerged as the most important items for organisational resilience in elite sport, with longevity (1.06), low

tolerance of failure (1.12), and risk avoidance (1.17) as the lowest ranked items. A thematic analysis of the 33 items ranked as "very important" to organisational resilience in elite sport, integrated with the accompanying qualitative comments, were categorised into five themes to represent the resilient characteristics of elite sport organisations: structural clarity, flexible improvement, shared understanding, reciprocal commitment, and operational awareness. For each resilient characteristic, relevant items from the Delphi study with their mean ranking and percentage agreement, together with illustrative qualitative comments, are provided in Table 3.2.

3.3.2.1 Structural Clarity. Structural clarity refers to the need for an organisation to have a clear and effective structure, particularly regarding communication channels, roles and responsibilities between individuals and teams, and decision making. As noted by a performance director, "Every organisation needs a structure which is clear internally and externally. Crucially individual role clarity and clarity of responsibility for and across discrete teams is also essential." Three of the top five ranked items in the Delphi survey are in this theme as shown in Table 3.2, namely effective internal communication channels (2.98), role clarity (2.88), and transparent decision making (2.84), with effective external communication channels (2.59) and a flexible or adaptable structure (2.58) also rated as very important.

Overall, participants agreed that "communication is probably the most important part of elite sport resilience," with a warning that "Chinese whispers can kill any organisation". Commenting on the link between communication and decision-making, a board director of a national governing body noted the need for "emphasis on openness and transparency as to [the] rationale for decisions whether strategic or operational to allow all levels of the organisation to grasp [the] rationale for decision-making". Clear and effective communication channels were also seen as providing the structure which facilitates shared understanding, with a performance director explaining that through "getting comfortable in understanding what others are trying to achieve and [making] communication happen, we achieve much better shared consciousness".

Table 3.2

Resilient Characteristics of Elite Sport Organisations

Themes	Sub-themes*	Illustrative comments
Structural clarity	Effective internal communication channels (100/2.98); role clarity (100/2.88); transparent decision making (100/2.84); effective external communication channels (96.9/2.59); a flexible or adaptable structure (93.8/2.58)	"For resilient organisations communications and decision making needs to flow rapidly" "high levels of comms between different elements, to allow learning and joint problem-solving" "understanding what others are trying to achieve and [making] communication happen, we achieve much better shared consciousness" "You need to know what your role is and who you report to. You need to know who makes the decisions and what accountability looks like. Boundaries can be important but clear communication channels are more important." "Every organisation needs a structure which is clear internally and externally. Crucially individual role clarity and clarity of responsibility for and across discrete teams is also essential."
Flexible improvement	Desire to learn and improve (100/2.95); openness to ideas (100/2.77); adaptable /flexible (100/2.77); flexibility of use (95.3/2.64); innovation and creativity (95.3/2.61); accepts uncertainty and change (95.3/2.59); structured training and development program (96.9; 2.58); optimistic (95.3/2.53)	"Adaptability and learning…contribute to capability to interact across multiple levels of the organisation" "human resources that are willing and able to adapt to what is available to them" "A shared understanding of individual / department strengths and a willingness to develop them further"
Shared understanding	Shared vision and values (100/2.88); collective efficacy (100/2.77); group norms (98.4/2.66); values unity / integration (95.3/2.55)	"A core set of organisational values adopted and bought into by all so that we 'live' them day to day provides a really stable level of resilience."

Themes	Sub-themes*	Illustrative comments
		"need a strong social identity for collective effort" Stability in clarity of vision helps resilience in times of chaos. "a compelling vision…that attracts, develops and retains passionate employees"
Reciprocal commitment	Employees feel valued (100/2.84); high levels of employee loyalty and commitment (96.9/2.8); effective internal partnerships (96.9/2.78); trusting (100/2.77); supportive (98.4/2.69); psychological safety (98.4/2.66); employee wellbeing prioritised (95.3/2.64); enthusiastic employees (93.8 /2.61); affectionate relationships (90.6/2.52)	"passionate people in caring, trusting relationships are always the basis for resilience. When people get isolated or choose to isolate themselves, then issues can occur." "reciprocal commitment and investment between members and the organisation"
Operational awareness	Anticipate problems early (100/2.8); awareness of priorities in a crisis (98.4/2.69); awareness and understanding of operating environment (98.4/2.66); gathering and considering alternative options (100/2.59); pause and reflect before making decisions (96.9/2.56); awareness of opportunities or resources available (93.8/2.53)	"As a leader it is essential to be aware of both environment and organisational priorities" "foresight, focus on external environment, awareness of changes taking place in the [external] landscape"

Note: *extracted from Delphi survey. Numbers in brackets are firstly the percentage of consensus agreement on a characteristic as being very important or somewhat important to organisational resilience in elite sport, and secondly the mean ranking from the Delphi survey.

The panellists' comments regarding the role of team-level boundaries within an organisational structure was illuminating for this theme. Boundaries were seen as potentially impeding communication between groups, with a professor in organisational resilience noting that "for resilient organisations communication and decision making needs to flow rapidly." Nevertheless, boundaries can also facilitate individual role clarity and provide space to focus on team-specific goals, illuminated in the comment from a development director that the "right and left hand need to talk to each other but also need that spacing to concentrate on their own goals". Several participants stated that clear structural boundaries may also provide important divisions to allow delegated decision making and free allocation of resources within those boundaries, given the number of variables which may be changing within an organisation at any one time. From the qualitative comments, it seems the importance lies not in whether boundaries exist or not (which may be specific to the organisational type and size), but in clarity around where the boundaries lie, and how teams coexist, communicate and benefit from each other. It was also suggested that boundaries may provide important feedback regarding the extent to which boundaries are challenged or stretched during times of adversity such that "when the tolerances of those boundaries are exceeded during periods of adversity it can be recognised and the potential impact identified", with the ability to "flex and lean on other areas when needed or in times of stress" as a way to absorb that strain.

3.3.2.2. Flexible Improvement. Within a culture of flexible improvement, learning and innovation are valued and the need for flexibility of approach is recognised. More than a mindset, this characteristic also encapsulates the capability of an organisation to learn and innovatively adapt. This combination of culture and capability is embodied in one elite coach's comment that "the organisation doesn't have to have the most expensive equipment but it has to have human resources that are willing and able to adapt to what is available to them". A desire to learn and improve was the second highest ranked item in the Delphi survey (2.95), reflected in

the comment from a vice president of a professional sport organisation: "we realise the outcomes mean that we will make mistakes and lose sometimes, but our commitment is to learn and get better every day" and that "if all you try to do is not lose, you can never win." Other items contributing towards the theme of flexible improvement (see Table 3.2) include openness to ideas (2.77); adaptable/flexible (2.77); innovation and creativity (2.61); accepting uncertainty and change (2.59); and optimism (2.53). Flexibility of use (2.64), creating a solution out of whatever resources are available, is key to the capability to adapt, with the human resources director of an elite sport organisation noting "there needs to be clarity of what resources are aligned to what priorities which should have some level of flexibility which can be retargeted to new emerging priorities."

Panellists' qualitative comments regarding uncertainty, risk, and failure highlighted the need to accept risk and failure as an inherent precursor of the capability to learn and adapt. Specifically, panellists commented that pursuing innovation is likely to increase both rates of failure and opportunities to learn and adapt, while noting this strategy will concurrently increase the vulnerabilities or stressors in the system over the short term, for example by diminishing the available resources. The lead psychologist for a national sport organisation observed that in elite sport too much resource can be allocated to innovation, and instead suggested "focusing on nailing the basics really well and learning from others". Furthermore, there was a tension amongst participants between accepting failure in order to learn, and delivering high performance, with concerns that "high tolerance [of failure] might mean that people do not push themselves to achieve." The pressures were summarised by a development director commenting that "more is often learnt from failing in order to find the right way, but there does become a point when organisations have to deliver."

3.3.2.3 Shared Understanding. Shared understanding incorporates not only the organisation's vision and values (ranked 2.8 in the Delphi survey), but more widely across the

organisation a shared belief in the collective ability to achieve goals (2.77), shared rules governing behaviour (2.66), and shared regard for unity and integration (2.55) including "a shared understanding of individual/departmental strengths and a willingness to develop them further". A sport psychologist working in an elite football organisation noted that "to have staff working on the same page and delivering core messages that align throughout the organisation is vital." It seems that a corporate vision on its own is not enough, and any vision or values must be shared between an organisation and its employees with "individual values and identity nurtured and linked to the mission" and embedded into everyday processes if it is to galvanise collective effort and drive behaviours, as highlighted by a performance director who explained:

> I have worked in teams who 'believe' in the organisation and its Vision, Mission, Objectives and Values ["VMOV"] and in teams where the VMOV have either been weak or where the leadership lacks the authenticity and passion to take their team on the journey … a compelling VMOV that attracts, develops and retains passionate employees is critical.

3.3.2.4 Reciprocal Commitment. Reciprocal commitment recognises the partnership between employees and employer as a two-way allegiance within which employees feel valued, supported and safe, with a highly-cited organisational resilience academic emphasising the importance of "reciprocal commitment and investment between members and the organisation as well as a belief and demonstrated behaviours that all groups of participants (players, owners, etc.) are valued comparably." It was interesting to note that our panellists ranked items such as employees feel valued (2.84), high levels of employee loyalty and commitment (2.8) and enthusiasm (2.61), effective internal partnerships (2.78), a trusting (2.77) and supportive (2.69) culture, and psychological safety (2.66), as detailed in Table 3.2, over and above unidirectional items provided by the organisation to its employees such as prioritising employee wellbeing (2.64), structured training programs (2.58), appropriate remuneration (2.34), and job security

(2.27), emphasising the importance of mutually supportive relationships amongst individuals, and between employees and the organisation. These items may be related, with a sport psychologist noting that "employees are more likely to be enthusiastic if they are valued" and a board chairperson commenting "I think people do their best work when they genuinely care about the people they work with/for, and have fun at work. The organisation can sustain this by ensuring the employee feels valued for their contribution." There was a particular emphasis on the high levels of loyalty within elite sport organisations, and employees who are willing to go the extra mile because of the passion for sport, with an operations manager for an elite sport organisation commenting that this is the case "without the remuneration or well-being offered by the organisation being of the same level" (presumably by comparison to other types of organisation).

The resilient characteristic of reciprocal commitment incorporates a belief that the organisation is a safe place to fail (ranked 2.66), providing psychological safety (Edmondson, 1999), which it has been suggested supports organisational resilience through fostering a willingness to take interpersonal risks (Lengnick-Hall et al., 2011), and cultivating a learning capability (Edmondson, 1999). Linking psychological safety to other resilient characteristics of structural clarity and flexible innovation, a national performance manager noted the importance of clarity in communicating the acceptability of failure within an elite sport organisation as "it's so easy to create a high fear-based environment" in a setting which is so focused on winning.

3.3.2.5 Operational Awareness. Operational awareness is a capability to identify and assess the range of options available to the organisation through understanding the operating environment, available resources, and alternative viewpoints. As shown in Table 3.2, items from the Delphi survey included the capability to anticipate problems early (2.8), be aware of priorities in a crisis (2.69), be aware of and understand the organisation's operating environment (2.66), to gather and consider alternative viewpoints and options (2.59), to pause and reflect

before making decisions (2.56), and awareness of the opportunities or resources available (2.53). In particular, panellists from both academic and applied backgrounds agreed that recovery from adversity requires an understanding of environmental and organisational priorities so that leaders can monitor and allocate resources appropriately.

While the capabilities of being able to respond rapidly (2.39), make decisions quickly (2.28), and to pause and reflect before making decisions (2.56) reached consensus in the Delphi survey, it was interesting to note that in a fast-paced, high-change, environment such as elite sport that only the capability to pause and reflect was ranked as "very important". Shedding light on this further was the comment by the lead psychologist of a national team that "sport often prioritises urgency over strategic priority". Thus, in terms of the speed of response, participants suggested resilience is linked to the ability to make "timely" rather than "quick" decisions, and that "it is about making decisions as rapidly as the situation requires".

3.4 Discussion

The purpose of this study was to construct a definition of organisational resilience and to identify the resilient characteristics of elite sport organisations. As such, this study provides a timely contribution to the currently wide-ranging and fragmented organisational resilience research by offering a compass to navigate an obfuscated definitional and conceptual landscape. The definition that was constructed from the findings of the Delphi survey is "the dynamic capability of an organisation to successfully deal with significant change, emerging from multi-level (employee, team, and organisational) interacting characteristics and processes which enable an organisation to prepare for, adapt to, and learn from significant change". In contrast to extant review-based work in which researchers have sought to extract and integrate key strands of the heterogeneity of organisational resilience definitions, picking and choosing from those originating in different research fields (e.g., Annarelli & Nonino, 2016; Conz & Magnani, 2020; Linnenluecke, 2017), this is the first study which has sought to develop consensus from a panel

of experts as to which features and areas of ambiguity of organisational resilience definitions are most suited to a specific context (in this case, elite sport).

The discussion is centred around key insights regarding the two main parts of the definition of organisational resilience, namely positive outcomes following unexpected or disruptive resilience events, and the temporal phases and multiple levels across which organisational resilience takes place. Furthermore, by integrating the five resilient characteristics of elite sport organisations suggested by the findings (viz. structural clarity, flexible improvement, shared understanding, reciprocal commitment, and operational awareness) into the discussion with the proposed definition, alongside findings from the wider organisational resilience and resilience in sport literatures, it is hoped to facilitate a multi-level understanding of the concept of organisational resilience.

The first part of the proposed definition, "successfully deal with significant change", centres around positive outcomes following resilience events. The findings suggest that the type of outcome regarded as "successful" in a specific context may depend on the nature of the change faced by an organisation, given the potential scope of intensity and duration that the panellists felt could be encompassed within resilience events. Whether an outcome is successful or not will also be interpreted with reference to organisational priorities and values, an integral part of the shared understanding resilient characteristic, alongside collective efficacy and group norms. Previous organisational resilience research has highlighted the importance of shared goals, values, and vision (Billington et al, 2017; Chen, 2016; Larsson et al., 2016; Ortiz-de-Mandojana & Bansal, 2016; Witmer & Mellinger, 2016), and research by Morgan et al. (2013, 2015) has suggested that social identity and collective efficacy are key factors for team resilience in elite sport. The importance of the organisational-level characteristic of shared understanding may lie not only in its ability to guide individual-level employee behaviours towards organisational-level goals, but also in helping to identify when those goals have been

successfully achieved in the face of significant change.

I incorporated the term "deal with" significant change to encompass the variety of outcomes which could immediately follow the impact of significant change on an organisation, including an initial loss of functioning immediately following the change before recovering (cf. Koronis & Ponis, 2018; Sheffi, 2005), and deflecting changes such that there is no loss of functioning (cf. Boin & van Eeten, 2013; Weick & Roberts, 1993). The inclusive term "deal with" also mirrors the breadth of potential proximal outcomes following significant change across the individual (Britt et al., 2016) and team (Gucciardi et al., 2018) resilience literatures.

Furthermore, by referring to "significant change", this reflects the dynamic and interactive nature of resilience events suggested by the panellists. This terminology moves away from organisational resilience research originating in crisis management (see Williams et al., 2017) pursuant to which resilience events are seen as predominantly unexpected and externally generated, or in the alternative, research originating in high-reliability organisations (e.g., Weick et al., 1999) where resilience events are frequently ongoing and foreseeable. Instead the terminology moves towards a systems-based model in which the interactions between an organisation and the environment are dynamic and emergent (e.g., Holling, 1973). Reviewing organisational resilience literature in health systems, Barasa et al. (2018) noted that a framework of complex adaptive systems is commonly used to understand resilience as an emergent property of systems interacting and adapting in a dynamic and non-linear manner, enabling organisations to adjust to multiple changes at any given time (Cilliers, 2001; de Coning, 2016). Overall, defining organisational resilience as a dynamic capability to successfully deal with significant change represents a shift in organisational resilience thinking away from simplistic engineering-based models in which external, singular events cause an organisation to temporarily deviate from a linear trajectory. Instead, organisational resilience is expressed in terms of a complex systems-based model in which resilience events, organisational systems, and their wider

sociocultural context dynamically interact (Morgeson et al., 2015).

The second part of the proposed definition of organisational resilience incorporates the temporal phases and multiple levels across which organisational resilience takes place, described as "emerging from multi-level (employee, team, and organisational) interacting characteristics and processes which enable an organisation to prepare for, adapt to, and learn from significant change." Noting the dynamic interplay between individuals and their organisational environments, this aspect of the definition is underpinned by the resilient characteristic of reciprocal commitment that recognises the employee-employer relationship. In their focus-group research with resilient sport teams, Morgan et al. (2013) identified the existence of high-quality interactions and caring relationships within the team, termed "social capital", as a key characteristic of team resilience in elite sport. Empirical evidence has emerged to demonstrate that a lack of support and connection undermines organisational resilience (Branicki et al., 2019), suggesting that it may be beneficial to explore organisational resilience from the perspective of relational systems (Kahn et al., 2013) in which employees, teams, and society are considered as an integral part of the organisation rather than as separate entities. Specifically, how employees successfully co-ordinate, make sense of, and respond to significant change within the context of supportive and safe relationships to produce resilient outcomes merits further exploration (Barton & Kahn, 2019).

The capability of an organisation to *prepare for* significant change is underpinned by the resilient characteristic of operational awareness, mirroring previous literature which highlighted the importance of organisations having an understanding of their operating environment (Boin & van Eeten, 2013; Hopkin, 2014; Lee et al., 2013; McManus et al., 2008). Within the individual and team resilience in sport literatures, challenge appraisal (Fletcher & Sarkar, 2012) and collective positive appraisal of setbacks (Morgan et al., 2015) foreground a positive evaluation of current stressors, but do not incorporate proactive attempts to monitor, identify, realistically

assess, and prepare for potential future stressors.

The capability of an organisation to *adapt to* significant change will be influenced by its cultural and structural characteristics (Barasa et al., 2018), specifically the resilient characteristic of flexible improvement. Within an organisation's culture, comprising the shared values, beliefs, and practices governing the way employees think about and act on challenges (Choi et al., 2010; Cruickshank & Collins, 2012), the importance of a willingness to adapt (Lee et al., 2013; McManus et al., 2008) and a desire to learn and continuously improve (Chen, 2016; Pal et al., 2014) have been found to be relevant for organisational resilience.

Alongside a willingness to adapt, there needs to be the capability to do so. Adaptive systems rely on dynamic interactions and feedback in order to assess the need for, and consequences of, adaptation (de Coning, 2016). In both the present study, and the findings of Morgan et al. (2013) in relation to team resilience in elite sport, communication channels were important structural aspects of resilient characteristics. This suggests a need to understand the channels through which teams within organisations communicate and interact in times of change. Specifically, Kahn et al. (2018) noted that significant change is unlikely to be experienced uniformly across an organisation, highlighting the need to understand the interactions through which the impact subsequently spreads (Morgeson et al., 2015).

By incorporating reference to multi-level characteristics and processes, and the phases of preparing, adapting, and learning from significant change within the definition of organisational resilience, attention is focused on the interactive and temporal elements of organisational resilience, facilitating an understanding of organisational resilience as a dynamic and complex phenomenon emerging from interactions between individuals and within teams and which manifests collectively over time in the context of organisational factors which shape and constrain these lower level phenomenon (Kozlowski et al., 2016).

3.4.1 Strengths and Limitations

This research was notable both in terms of the large number, and range, of experience of participants, and also the breadth of sports and roles represented in elite sport. The low drop-out rate across the study (averaging less than 10% between each Delphi round) was particularly noteworthy given the number of rounds and therefore the required workload, together with the number of items in each round. However, the study is not without its limitations. While the Delphi panel consisted of experts representing a range of applied and academic disciplines, the study would have benefitted from the inclusion of participants from wider cultural backgrounds to advance a socio-culturally sensitive understanding of organisational resilience. Similarly, it would be useful to explore how representative the findings from an elite sport context are to the wider sport context, such as community-based sport organisations focused on enhancing local physical activity participation. Finally, it is unclear the extent to which experts were persuaded to move towards consensus between Delphi rounds following feedback provided from the previous round. In researching expert consensus during Delphi studies, Meijering and Tobi (2016) found no significant move in the opinions of experts between rounds. The utility of additional rounds in Delphi studies may instead lie in the ability for researchers to amend and clarify items in line with expert opinion, rather than increasing the level of consensus per se.

3.4.2 Practical Implications and Future Research Directions

The identification of five resilient characteristics of elite sport organisations provides a framework for practitioners to design interventions targeted at enhancing organisational resilience in elite sport. The extent to which any such organisational-level interventions may also positively impact employee resilience merits further attention, given the likely mutually beneficial interactions. For example, research has indicated that organisational resilience supports individual resilience (Kuntz et al., 2016), individual resilience supports wellbeing (e.g., Grant et al., 2009; Sood et al., 2011), and employee wellbeing constitutes a fundamental factor in organisational resilience (Nilakant et al., 2016). More specifically, organisational structures and

values can signpost desirable employee behaviours (Kuntz et al., 2016), balancing challenging work with autonomy can support innovative goals (Li et al., 2014), and encouraging network-leveraging collaborative behaviours can improve employee wellbeing and adaptability (Kuntz et al., 2016). Therefore, interventions targeted at enhancing structural clarity, such as an informal communications audit, could shed light on the effectiveness of formal communication channels and also signpost open and transparent communication behaviours. Network-leveraging mentoring schemes are an opportunity to enhance reciprocal commitment within an organisation. Scenario planning is a multi-purpose intervention which can be used to evaluate operational awareness, enhance shared understanding, and support flexible improvement. Specifically, identifying potential significant changes and how equipped the organisation is to deal with them illuminates the organisation's current operational awareness (McManus et al., 2008). Shared understanding is enhanced through the growth of mutual understanding among those involved in the planning process (Crichton et al., 2009). Finally, practitioners could design scenario planning exercises targeted at supporting flexible improvement which involve the mobilisation of increasingly scarce resources to balance employee challenge and autonomy.

The study in this Chapter Three has identified resilient characteristics indicating what a resilient elite sport organisation *has*. Future research to examine what a resilient elite sport organisation *does*, and to identify the underlying dynamic processes, would benefit from a longitudinal perspective. At the individual level, key resilience processes include event appraisal, coping/self-regulatory efforts, and social support (Britt et al., 2016; Fisher et al., 2019). At the team level, key resilience processes include information sharing, monitoring, planning, accessing and deployment of resources, social identity, team learning, intra-team relationships, and shared leadership (Bowers et al., 2017; Gucciardi et al. 2018; Hartmann et al., 2020; Hartwig et al., 2020; Morgan et al., 2015). At the organisational level, Wagstaff et al. (2020) suggest that planning, adaptation, learning, relationship networks, and leadership may be important. Thus, a

deeper understanding of the relative contributions of, and mutual interactions between, these multi-level processes over time will greatly enhance future organisational resilience research.

3.4.3 Conclusion

The results presented in this Study One provide a novel and significant contribution to the field of sport psychology by identifying and consolidating a wide variety of concepts pertaining to organisational resilience and evaluating their applicability to the elite sport context, providing a vital stepping stone between conceptual development and empirical research (Verreynne et al., 2018). The formulation of a definition of organisational resilience and the identification of resilient characteristics of elite sport organisations endorsed by experts working within elite sport lends legitimacy to this research stream as an area worth investigating further, both by academics and practitioners. While changing organisational practices will be more challenging than focusing on individual and team level behaviours (Sarkar, 2018), this focus on organisational-level factors is an essential component of creating high performance environments in which individuals, teams, and organisations can thrive (Wagstaff, 2017).

Chapter Four:

Empirical Research: Study Two

In Chapter Three (Study One), the findings of the first empirical study of organisational resilience in elite sport were presented. A definition of organisational resilience was constructed, and five key resilient characteristics were identified. Endorsed by experts working within elite sport and from academia, the research provided a vital first step linking existing concepts pertaining to organisational resilience with the elite sport context. This Chapter Four (Study Two) extends the research in Chapter Three (Study One) regarding what a resilient organisation 'looks like' by exploring the dynamic processes underpinning what a resilience elite sport organisation 'does', namely the underlying resilient processes. Specifically, using dual timepoint interviews supplemented by timelines compiled from documentary analysis, data was gathered across an 8-month period to better understand the processes through which organisational resilience might function in elite sport.

Understanding Organisational Resilience in Elite Sport:

An Exploration of Psychosocial Processes[1]

4.1 Introduction

Contemporary elite sport organisations and the people working within them are faced with multiple constraints and stressors of varying intensity, duration, and frequency (Arnold &

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[1] **Fasey, K. J.,** Sarkar, M., Wagstaff, C. R. D., & Johnston, J. (under review). Understanding organizational resilience in elite sport: An exploration of psychosocial processes. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*.
Fasey, K. J., Sarkar, M., Wagstaff, C. R. D., & Johnston, J. (2021, October). *Understanding organisational resilience in elite sport: An exploration of psychosocial processes.* Poster presentation at the 36th AASP Annual Conference, online.

Fletcher, 2012; Rumbold et al., 2018). Performance specific pressures and intense scrutiny from media, fans, and stakeholders alike (Smith & Stewart, 2013) are some of the more readily perceptible stressors. Moreover, performance success and failure can bring rapid changes to expectations and funding for professional and national sports bodies. Beyond the performance team, elite sport organisations face unique tensions between winning and financial return for professional sport, and between elite performance and social good within national sport organisations. Elite sport organisations need to adequately respond to these demands and provide a supportive environment for those working within them.

The field of organisational sport psychology is concerned with the ways people understand the organisations in which they work and the behaviour of those they interact with (Wagstaff, 2017). The burgeoning body of literature on organisational sport psychology (Fletcher & Wagstaff, 2009; Wagstaff, 2017, 2019a) has been dedicated to a range of organisational issues including, but not limited to, organisational stressors (Arnold & Fletcher, 2012; Rumbold et al., 2018), culture (McDougall et al., 2020a; Wagstaff & Burton-Wylie, 2018), and change (Cruickshank & Collins, 2012; Wagstaff et al., 2016). This work has been important in expanding the traditional focus of sport psychology from athlete- and team-level foci to include the role that organisations play in supporting athletes, the group and organisational level variables associated with high performance environments, and how the performance team and those within it interact with the broader organisation.

Despite calls for sport psychologists to promote optimal organisational functioning (Wagstaff et al., 2012a) and act as architects of cultural excellence (Sly et al., 2020), the research remains predominantly rooted in the performance department, perhaps bounded by the notion of sport psychology as addressing interactions between psychology and optimal athletic functioning (Barker et al., 2016). Notable exceptions include the work of Jones et al. (2009), Wagstaff et al. (2012b, 2013), and Neil et al. (2016), all of which have used psychosocial dynamics to better understand the functioning of the sport organisation itself as the subject matter of the research. Without a whole-organisation approach, key sources of tension within

elite sport organisations may be overlooked, such as between winning and financial return, elite performance and social good, and commercialisation and passion (Smith & Stewart, 2013).

In considering factors which positively influence the functioning of an organisation, researchers in domains outside of sport have recently dedicated attention to the construct of organisational resilience to better understand how and why some organisations can deal with change better than others (cf. Wagstaff et al., 2020). Resilience is a term often applied where an individual, team or organisation demonstrates a positive outcome following an unexpected or disruptive event (Linnenluecke, 2017). In the first study to explore organisational resilience in elite sport, a Delphi-based study was conducted with 62 applied and academic experts, as presented in Chapter Three, to develop a definition of organisational resilience and to identify resilient characteristics of elite sport organisations. Specifically, organisational resilience was defined as, "the dynamic capability of an organisation to successfully deal with significant change. It emerges from multi-level (employee, team, and organisational) interacting characteristics and processes which enable an organisation to prepare for, adapt to, and learn from significant change" (Chapter Three, p. 73). Five resilient characteristics were identified by the author: structural clarity (i.e., a clear and effective structure); flexible improvement (i.e., a culture and capability of learning, innovation and flexibility); shared understanding (i.e., shared values, collective efficacy, and group norms); reciprocal commitment (i.e., a two-way relationship between employees and employer); and operational awareness (i.e., a capability to identify and assess risks, available resources, and alternative options). In Chapter Three, a complex picture of the dynamic interactions between an organisation's resilient characteristics was illustrated, concluding by suggesting that future research was needed to investigate the underlying processes to understand how and when resilient characteristics interact.

Within the non-sport organisational psychology literature, there has been a growing emphasis on resilience *processes* as central to understanding organisational resilience. Early research in this area was influenced by high reliability organisations (such as nuclear power plants or air traffic control systems) operating hazardous systems in which small failures could

escalate into catastrophic events (LaPorte & Consolini, 1991) and focused on organisational processes which prevented failures and malfunctioning from happening (e.g., Ismail et al., 2011; Weick et al., 1999). More recently, researchers have emphasised an organisation's reactive adaptability (Boin & van Eeten, 2013; McManus et al., 2008) and differentiated between achieving a resilient outcome and developing resilience. Learning processes are conceptualised as closing the loop back to further developing an organisation's resilience capacity, both in the immediate aftermath of a disturbance (Frisbie & Converso, 2016; Meyer, 1982) and over the longer term (Boin & van Eeten, 2013; Ismail et al., 2011).

Organisational resilience research in elite sport offers an enticing potential to significantly advance current resilience conceptualisation. Specifically, much of the extant research on organisational resilience has been conducted in large organisations such as those found in critical infrastructure (e.g., Brown et al., 2017), the military (e.g., Cornum et al., 2011), and healthcare systems (e.g., Barasa et al., 2018). In contrast, the size of elite sport organisations allows for a greater level of connection between individuals and teams, and with external perspectives through mainstream and social media. This in turn facilitates a micro-level exploration of the interactive psychosocial processes underpinning an organisation's capability to successfully deal with significant change.

In line with recent calls for researchers "to examine what a resilient elite sport organisation does, and to identify the underlying dynamic processes" (Chapter Three, p. 93), the aim of the present research was to better understand the processes through which organisational resilience might function in elite sport. To address this aim employees were interviewed about what organisations were doing before, during, and after significant change which they perceived to have helped or hindered the organisation's ability to deal with that change. This research is significant as it offers a first exploration of the psychosocial processes underlying organisational resilience in the elite sport context but also, by widening the lens of research into organisational psychology, it is hoped to gain a dynamic, holistic perspective of optimal organisational functioning in elite sport.

4.2 Method

4.2.1 Research Design

The study was designed and conducted in accordance with a critical realist perspective (Ronkainen & Wiltshire, 2021) which asserts that objects and structures are "real" and not "multiple", although they are complex, dynamic and open. Critical realists also acknowledge that such objects and structures are not easily knowable, are socially produced, and that unobservable mechanisms have the potential to cause observable events (Ryba et al., 2020). Researchers adopting a critical realist approach therefore "aim to centralise the theorisation of their existence and their nature" (Ryba et al., 2020, p. 10). Further, such causal mechanisms are emergent so that they only generate influence when arranged with other parts. The philosophical assumptions of critical realism are congruent with the aim of understanding the mechanisms of organisational resilience (assuming such mechanisms are real and not multiple), explored using qualitative methods to investigate experiences and perceptions of significant change (acknowledging such mechanisms are socially produced and not directly observable), framed by a conceptualisation of organisational resilience as complex, dynamic, and emergent.

Despite conceptualising organisational resilience as a dynamic, interactive process, much of the empirical research to date has been cross-sectional and retrospective or case study based, focusing on a single or small number of organisations (Linnenluecke, 2017). A more nuanced understanding of the dynamic processes underpinning organisational resilience is offered through the use of dual timepoint interviews to explore interpretations from multiple perspectives and across a variety of organisations. In particular, organisational research presents an excellent opportunity to enrich interview data using prompts from contemporaneous public documentary data (see Kimberlin et al., 2011). These qualitative methods were supplemented with event-based diaries (Shiffman et al., 2008) and researcher-produced timelines (Phoenix & Rich, 2016).

4.2.2 Sampling

After gaining institutional ethical approval for the study, purposeful criterion-based

sampling (Patton, 2002) was used to recruit participants currently working within elite sport

organisations who had knowledge of how the organisation functioned. These individuals,

principally at manager or director level, were presumed to have special knowledge and therefore

positioned as expert (Foley, 2012). Initial contact was by email to 20 individuals already known

to the supervisory team through participation in the research presented in Chapter Three,

representing a range of Olympic and Paralympic sport organisations, and professional sport

organisations, covering both team and individual sports. To broaden the sample, participants

were asked to recommend a colleague who could offer an alternative perspective on how their

organisation functions, such as a coach, administrative personnel, or a senior athlete. Multiple

responses are more likely to indicate what is happening within an organisation, rather than what

is discussed, and the extent to which this is embedded in the organisation's values (Lee et al.,

2013).

A total of 22 individuals participated in the first interview ranging in age from 32 to 70

years ($M = 49.1$, $SD = 10.5$), of whom six were female. Of these, 21 completed both interviews

with one individual declining the second interview due to a change in employment. The

participants were from 10 U.K. elite sport organisations – seven national sport organisations

("NSO"), one professional sport organisation, and two multisport support providers. Their roles

included chief executive officers ($n = 5$), directors ($n = 7$), board members ($n = 2$), middle

managers ($n = 4$), support staff ($n = 2$), a head coach ($n = 1$), and a senior athlete ($n = 1$).

Together they represented a range of roles across performance, operations, finance, commercial

and marketing.

4.2.3 Data Collection

Data collection spanned an eight-month period from November 2018 to June 2019,

during which two semi-structured interviews were carried out with each participant,

supplemented with event-based diaries, timelines, and documentary analysis.

4.2.3.1 Semi-Structured Interviews. Participants engaged in two semi-structured

interviews approximately 4-6 months apart. The dual timepoint interviews had the purpose of

allowing participants time to reflect and develop their own perceptions of organisational resilience and the underlying processes involved (cf. Hermanowicz, 2013). The first interviews focused on retrospective accounts of processes employed during organisational responses to self-selected significant change. The interview guide (Appendix Two) consisted of three sections covering background information (e.g., a brief organisational history, and personal career history), organisational resilience processes, and recommendations to other organisations to improve their resilience. Focusing on the organisational resilience processes section, the interviewer began by providing a definition of organisational resilience as "the dynamic capability of an organisation to successfully deal with significant change". Participants were asked whether they thought their current organisation displays resilience, and how it compares to other similar organisations in this respect. The interviewer then asked participants to focus on an experience of significant change, and to describe what happened during that change (e.g., "can you describe what the organisation did to successfully deal with that change?") and after (e.g., "what do you think your organisation did to move on from that change?"). Examples of significant change chosen by participants during this part of the interview ranged from acute issues, such as serious accidents, significant operational disruption, and changes in key personnel to chronic changes in finance, governance, and performance. Finally, in this section, participants were asked about periods prior to significant change (e.g., "thinking about periods when significant change is on the horizon, what does your organisation do during these times which might contribute towards its resilience?").

In accordance with a dynamic conceptualisation of resilience, the second interviews were divided into questions about current, past, and future significant change (Appendix Two). Specifically, the interviews began by asking about changes since the previous interview (e.g., "can you give me an overview of key events since we last spoke?"), prompted by event-based diaries where relevant, and any increase or decrease in resilience over that period. The section about the past included a summary of topics discussed in the first interview, supplemented with a personal temporal graph or "timeline" of significant organisational changes which acted as a

tool to facilitate member reflection (Smith & McGannon, 2018). During this step, participants typically demonstrated more engagement in the process as they became conscious of the contribution and insight they were able to provide, which also served to address the power asymmetry between researcher and participant (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015). The interviewer also asked about whether the participant's views had changed or evolved since the first interview. Where appropriate, the participant was asked about initial themes developed from a preliminary analysis of first interview data from other participants, for example "how organisations learn from change". Finally, participants were asked about any future significant changes currently anticipated, and what was being done to prepare for them, as well as any actions being taken to be better prepared for unknown risks.

4.2.3.2 Event-Based Diaries. Between interviews, participants were invited to record their thoughts in an event-based diary (Appendix Three) should any significant organisational changes be experienced. Specifically, the diary consisted of two parts, the first asking participants to describe any current or anticipated significant change, and the second asking what the organisation is currently doing which may help or hinder its resilience. Event-based diaries are relevant when researchers are interested in a particular event, in this case significant organisational change, triggered by the participant's assessment that the predefined event has occurred (Shiffman et al., 2008). Rather than using the diaries as a form of data for analysis, they were used as a prompt for participants during the second interviews to help with recall of details surrounding significant events between the first and second interviews, and to encourage participant talk (Sparkes & Smith, 2013).

4.2.3.3 Timelines and Documentary Analysis. Timelines are a form of graphic elicitation (Sparkes & Smith, 2013) which encourage rich descriptions and space for participants to reflect by providing a visual scaffold within which to place the conversation (Phoenix & Rich, 2016), as well as helping to build rapport through demonstrating an understanding of the participant's organisational world (Williams, 2018). Individualised timelines were compiled by the lead researcher prior to each second interview to represent a temporal graph of significant

organisational changes as reported by the participant during the first interview, supplemented with information from analysis of online sources such as news websites (e.g., bbc.co.uk/sport) and the organisation's own website. Information obtained from such sources included details of changes in finances, performance, and key personnel. An anonymised example of a timeline is provided in Appendix Four.

4.2.4 Data Analysis and Methodological Rigour

In total, 43 interviews were conducted, which ranged in duration from 36 to 88 minutes ($M = 58.8$, $SD = 13.0$). Recorded digitally and transcribed verbatim, the interviews generated 486 pages of single-spaced text. Through a process of reflexive inductive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2019), the researchers conducted a systematic examination of the similarities and differences within and across interviews to identify and develop concepts and patterns of semantic meaning relevant to organisational resilience mechanisms. In practice, analysis occurred recursively throughout each stage of the research, from ideas generated during interviews and discussed with participants as they arose, immersion in the first interview transcripts to generate the structure and timelines for the second interviews, through to a more formal analysis following conclusion of data collection. The formal analysis was guided by the six phases of thematic analysis suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006), which initially involved coding of the data set by attaching key words to text segments, organising and categorising the data into initial themes. These initial themes were primarily generated by the lead researcher, and then discussed and refined among the supervisory team, continuously referring back to the original interview transcripts to refine the names and specifics for each theme. In this respect the supervisory team acted as critical friends (Smith & McGannon, 2018) by probing the sources of themes, acknowledging the role of the extant knowledge of the researchers in informing the analysis and interpretation of participant accounts (Braun & Clarke, 2020). For example, an initial theme of "learning" generated from the data in conjunction with extant knowledge was subsequently incorporated within a theme of "strengthening resources" to better reflect the function and purpose of individual and team-based learning portrayed in the data.

The study was guided by a realist approach to judge the quality and credibility of the research in terms of how well it helps to understand the phenomena studied (Maxwell, 2017) according to its ontological plausibility, empirical adequacy, and practical utility (Ronkainen & Wiltshire, 2019). By including a summary of what was discussed in the first interview, the second interviews acted as a form of member reflection, enhancing the ontological plausibility of the research (Ronkainen & Wiltshire, 2019; Smith & McGannon, 2018). In particular, while none of the participants felt the summary was incorrect, several of them used the member reflection to emphasise particular aspects of the discussions in the first interviews which they perceived to be important. Empirical adequacy was developed using multiple complementary approaches to data collection relating to resilience events. Practical utility was provided by taking a holistic approach to understand the mechanisms of organisational resilience, and by suggesting practical applications of the research results within elite sport organisations.

4.3 Results

The results from the analysis of the 43 interviews, supplemented with event-based diaries, documentary analysis and timelines representing a temporal graph of significant organisational changes, present the processes underlying organisational resilience in elite sport. The data analysis yielded 11 higher order themes, with two core processes of sensing and adapting, and two supporting processes of strengthening resources and shielding from risk, as illustrated in Figure 4.1. Given the high-profile nature of elite sport, and to protect anonymity, the names of participants have been changed and pseudonyms have been used throughout. Quotations from the first and second interviews are denoted as T1 and T2 respectively.

4.3.1 Sensing

Participants described the need, and the mechanisms used, to gain an awareness of what was happening within and external to their organisations. For each organisation, it was apparent from the visual timelines and the participant interviews across the two time points that various changes were happening at any one time with shifting salience such that changes faded in and out of significance, rather than occurring sequentially with a defined start, middle and end.

Figure 4.1

Two Core Processes and Two Supporting Processes of Organisational Resilience
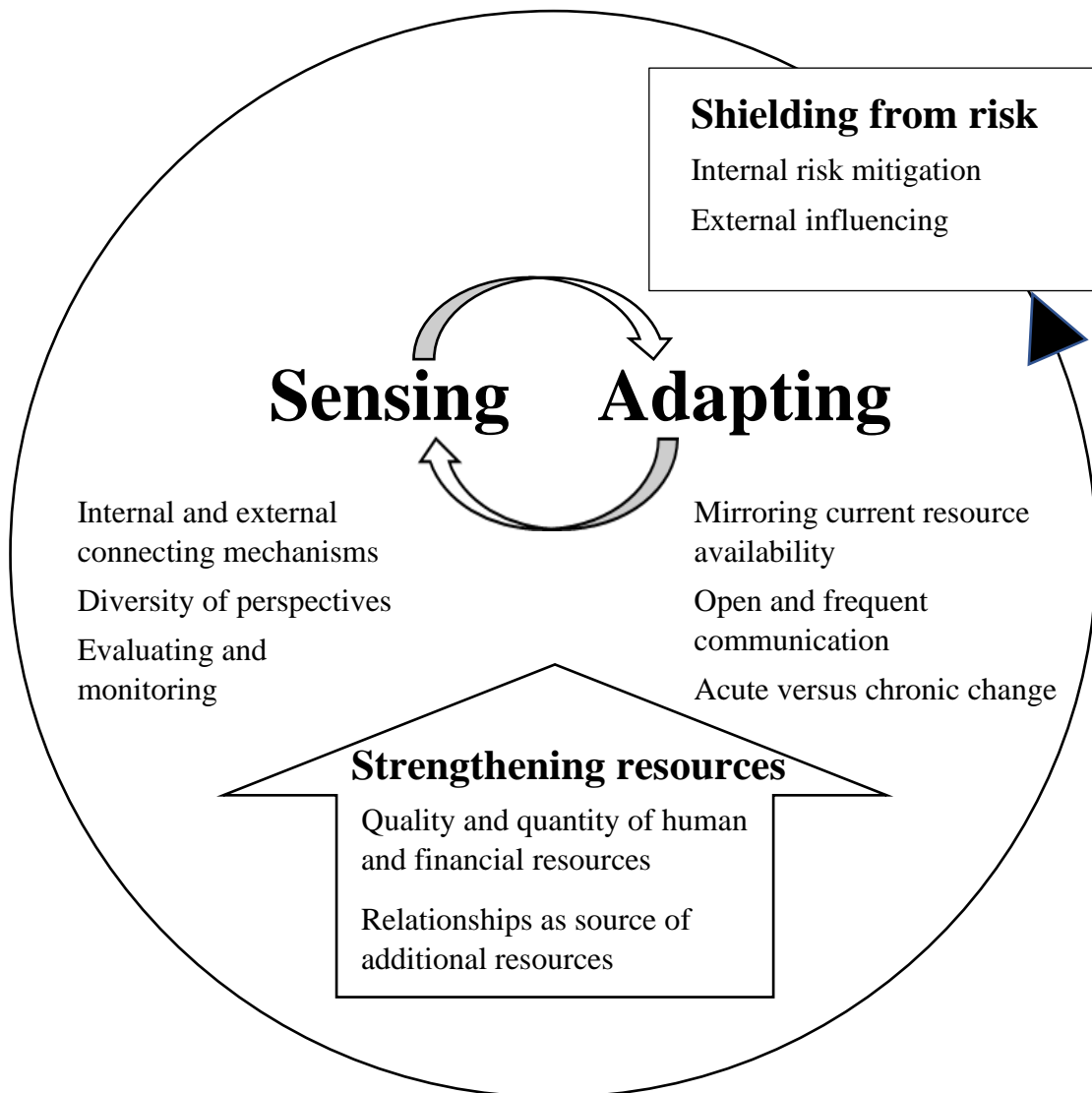
Sensing consisted of the three higher order themes indicated in Figure 4.1: internal and external connecting mechanisms; diversity; and evaluating and monitoring.

4.3.1.1 Internal and External Connecting Mechanisms. Organisational agents used a variety of mechanisms to connect decision makers with information which could impact those decisions. Internal mechanisms ranging from formal structures such as question and answer sessions, employee forums, senior player groups, working groups, and governance structures, to communication channels such as intranets and email updates, to less formalised social events. In an organisation which experienced significant performance decline between T1 and T2, Chris, the CEO, explained how the national focus on their league position had placed staff under immense pressure. As a consequence, a staff forum was put together and a number of initiatives launched to increase connections between staff, so they felt "part of a team that's working together to deal with it." Referring to a newly established employee forum, a chief executive of a medium sized NSO explained:

> They [the employee forum] help the management team and consequently they're helping the board as well, see some of the risks at a lower level, which are often about pressure of time, pressures on people, mindset, mental state of some people that I wouldn't normally see, get close to. (Andy, T1)

External mechanisms included networks of relationships, role-specific forums (e.g., CEO forums), and cross-sport mentoring. A performance director of a large NSO explained during the second interview, when discussing organisational preparations for future unknown risks, the need for an awareness of the external environment, "what the general feeling is about performance sport, lottery funding, and all these other things… If the public perception changes, politicians can change [the environment] very quickly, and then there could be massive implications" (Vince, T2).

4.3.1.2 Diversity of Perspectives. Diversity was regarded as particularly beneficial to the capability of an organisation to sense significant change through wider awareness both of potential risks and potential solutions, especially at leadership and board level. Describing the

different backgrounds and personalities of their executive team, the operations manager of a
small NSO explained "that combination tends to cover the strategic issues from a few directions.
There's no one way of looking at it. We haven't formed an opinion before we enter the room"
(Uri, T1). Participants described diversity not in terms of demographics such as age, race, or
gender, but in terms of the range of perspectives available prior to decisions being taken, as
explained by one performance director in the context of his manager:

> What he's done in his senior leadership team, he's got people who can look at things
> through very different lenses and throw in very different experiences. [Sport] was very
> much [sport]-only, if you weren't involved in [sport] you'd never get into [sport]... So,
> the culture of our meetings has changed massively. (Vince, T2)

> Recruiting people from outside of sport was highlighted as a way to gain access to
different experiences, and thus perspectives, although participants also spoke of the need to
recognise the boundaries of expertise, and the contextualisation of experiences in order to ensure
those perspectives added value to the decision making process.

4.3.1.3 Evaluating and Monitoring. Participants noted the need to not just hear but also
then evaluate information in order to inform decision making. Whilst such evaluation may
ordinarily be internalised, 13 participants stressed the importance of inter-person evaluation
through questioning between colleagues, board members, and external mentors, to assist in that
evaluation process. A performance director (Owen, T1), reflecting on an issue which had
recently become significant, commented:

> Some decisions at the time I probably viewed as very positive, now I reflect on that very
> differently and think actually, if the board had demanded of me in 2014 that all of [the
> issue], not the detail but the principles of [the issue] were run past them before decisions
> were made, then we would be in quite a different place now.

> Ongoing and iterative, sensing also involves monitoring for the impact of decisions
made in response to significant change. In particular, there were examples of unintended
consequences of internal organisational decisions, such as financial or human resources given to

or withheld from particular work streams, or leadership narrative focusing on particular departments, which had been interpreted as indicating their relative importance to the organisation. Keith, an executive Director, spoke of a decision to delay recruitment: "It's landed as, so you don't value our job then, because it's okay to delay that. So, I think there are going to be a lot of unintended consequences" (T2). This was symptomatic of a wider change in perspective from Keith between T1 and T2, during which time a significant financial deficit had been uncovered within the organisation, leading him to re-evaluate the capability of the organisation to deal with change – "normally we've handled change quite well, we've come the other side. I guess I'm not sitting here quite as confident…in the decisions we're making to close the gap." External decisions also resulted in unintended consequences, with notable examples stemming from external funding, both governmental and commercial, being linked to "on field" performance, or political values, in contrast to organisational performance metrics. Specifically, substantial changes in funding strategy, such as TV rights, government grants, and commercial partnership deals were linked to the performance of a team or individual athletes, or to wider political values such as diversity in sport participation. Potential impacts noted by participants included discouraging planning, hiding inefficiencies, and increased focus on one team at the expense of another. Debbie, a board member of a mid-sized NSO, described at T1 how partnership funding allocated to a particular discipline within her sport "did have an impact on the rest of the organisation, on the rest of the [disciplines]. Because all the other [disciplines] were then basically left to feel, 'Well, we're not as important, we're not as special'." In such instances, what were perceived as positive adaptations, or strengthened resources, had unforeseen negative consequences which themselves required sensing as potential risks.

4.3.2 Adapting

Adapting is part of the ongoing iterative resilience processes in which changes are continuously sensed and adapted to. It includes the likely noticeable responses to the "storms" of acute change, as well as the less visible process of successfully dealing with chronic change over a longer period of time through constant flexing and adjusting. Adapting consists of three

higher order themes indicated in Figure 4.1: mirroring current resource availability; open and frequent communication; and acute versus chronic change.

4.3.2.1 Mirroring Current Resource Availability. Adapting involves continuously and sustainably adjusting the activities of the organisation to mirror current resource availability, described at T1 by Tina, a performance coordinator, as "trying to work out how to do things differently and more effectively when you've not got the same resources". This adaptive process may involve retrenching through cancelling or postponing programs and focusing on smaller projects to allow future adaptive survival and growth. It may also (sometimes simultaneously) reveal opportunities such as strengthening key relationships, allowing physical resources to be upgraded, creating new bargaining positions with external stakeholders, or driving difficult but necessary staffing decisions. Participants spoke negatively about experiences of leadership artificially altering the pace of adapting within an organisation, either by imposing unnecessary change or, more frequently, of changes being delayed by leadership. The head coach of a national team, Mark, described his frustration (T1): "[The board] were just looking at us to produce some world-class players, rather than looking at the system. The culture's changed, and the way people go about their life has changed, we need to address that."

Nevertheless, there was a recognition from nine participants of a temporary need for stability to purposefully slow the pace of change during periods of higher disruption, particularly in relation to retaining employees during periods of high turnover. The purpose of such temporary stability was described at T1 by Vince, a performance director: "we've got to decide within this journey, who are those key people to keep the stability, consistency, make sure the risk management, the systems, the processes are adhered to while we get fresh blood in." Another participant spoke of stability in operational processes to allow the building of informational resources, and for organisational learning to become embedded. It seems from participant's comments that the role of leadership is to sense and facilitate adapting at a pace that allows resources to be built rather than depleted. For example, participants from one multisport support provider spoke of the difficult balance they were dealing with across T1 and

T2 between changing strategy (cutting expenditure) in response to external change (delayed income generation) versus sticking with a pre-determined strategy, described by the chief executive as "holding our nerve" (Ben). The interviews with participants from a variety of roles within the same organisation across two time points facilitated a nuanced understanding of the ongoing decision-making process. Rather than focusing on pre-empting future change, or protecting the organisation from change, decision making involved constant iterative sensing and adapting as information and available resources changed.

4.3.2.2 Open and Frequent Communication. In order to adapt effectively, communication between individuals and teams within the organisation must be open, honest, and transparent, as identified by the majority (14) of participants. This echoes the need for free-flowing information which underpins the sensing process to identify, evaluate and monitor risk. During the adapting process, communication was thought to facilitate trust amongst key stakeholders, guard against siloed working, ensure relevant information was available in a timely manner, and bring people along with the change:

> If you all come to a decision together, it's much easier for an organisation to effect change, to be resilient for that change, because everybody's had a say in the decision, everybody knows the parameters that are involved in making that decision, and therefore there's much more of a buy-in (a) to make it work but (b) to understand it's a better option than the other options. And when it's not quite going right people understand what the end game is. So, I think that transparency of communication is really important for effecting change. (Chris, CEO, T1)

Adapting here is seen as necessarily engaging all employees, rather than a strategic process solely engaging the board and the executive team, to ensure that the need to adapt as well as the direction of adaptation permeates throughout the organisation. Some participants in leadership roles, concerned about the potential for misinterpretation of information and negative consequences, felt it may be desirable to control communication during acute change rather than facilitating free flowing information. This point was highlighted by Vince at T2, following a

summary of the discussions from T1. On being asked whether his thoughts had changed or anything was missing, Vince wanted to emphasise the need to think ahead to the next Olympic cycle while trying to maintain focus on the current cycle: "if we want to restructure some department or operations in a different way…that needs to be kept very tight, whilst also making sure we've properly consulted and discussed and listened to people. And that is a real difficult balance. I'm only getting my head around that now." Conducting interviews at two timepoints within the Olympic cycle helped to capture some of the more subtle shifts in emphasis between controlling and enhancing the flow of information.

In contrast, participants outside of senior leadership roles felt they were aware of major changes and expressed concern, anxiety, and mistrust in the absence of information, formulating their own explanations, as described at T1 by Tina, a performance coordinator: "There was a lot of hearsay going round…and it got to a point of we just felt like we weren't either being trusted or we weren't included." This quote can be interpreted to indicate great care needs to be taken when balancing the desire to minimise negative consequences of adapting against the potential for damaging trust through restricting organisational communication.

4.3.2.3 Acute versus Chronic Change. When dealing with acute change, the focus for participants was on mobilising resources which had been built up, specifically having the right people working in collaborative relationships communicating effectively to deal quickly and effectively with the event: "You have the right trained people, you have the right connections, people available, good quality people in the system you can solve most relatively large problems there and then" (Vince, T1). The impact was often felt, and dealt with, in relatively discrete teams, either pre-existing or purposefully co-opted. Investing authority in a small group to facilitate rapid decision making, and increasing clarity over communication channels, such teams were charged with a clear task goal and empowered to find solutions to deal with the short-term organisational response. Although there were some examples of implementing pre-formulated crisis plans, particularly concerning the cascade of communications, far more frequently the emphasis was on the capabilities of individuals and their relationships with

others, suggesting that organisational resilience in relation to acute change relies on organisation-level processes to rapidly divest responsibility with structural clarity, and on high quality human resources and relationships at the individual and team levels. In contrast, successfully dealing with both chronic change and gradual adaptation following acute change, participants focused on organisation-level communication as the impact spread to wider parts of the organisation. In particular, conscious effort was required to communicate the 'why' behind decisions made rather than simply the 'what' to allow the organisation to adapt because, as described at T1 by Chris, "if you do things that people don't understand and you don't explain it, then that makes it very difficult for them to buy into what's coming." The principle applies to negative as well as positive information:

> If someone thinks, 'Well, that's a little bit broken, or inefficient, or ineffective', then
> share it. Because then when you push through a change, people understand it's not just
> the whim of the leader, or of the Board, but that it's based on some tangible, credible,
> third party opinion. (Ed, T1).

4.3.3 Strengthening Resources

Supporting the central resilience processes of sensing and adapting, participants spoke of strengthening the quality and quantity of human and financial resources as important for supporting an organisation's resilience (see Figure 4.1). Relationships were an important source of additional organisational resource which could be called upon during significant change.

4.3.3.1 Quality of Human and Financial Resources. Strengthening the quality of human resources through recruiting the 'right people' and then developing their skills and experience was referred to by nine participants as an essential component to cumulatively developing the resilience of the organisation. Exposure was regarded as particularly important to developing experience, whether vicariously through learning about experiences of third parties, and debriefings following significant events, or directly through secondment, exposure to increasingly demanding competitive events, or delegating challenging decisions. This last point was summarised by the CEO of a large professional sport organisation when asked at T2 about

how to capture organisational knowledge, a point which had been raised by other participants at T1: "So much of people's good decision making is down to their personal experiences…delegating to the point of being uncomfortable, because people have to learn by making decisions that sometimes go wrong" (Chris, T2). Other participants shared concerns over the difficulty of translating individual experiences to an organisational level, noting how 'hard' information can be captured and disseminated, but it is the 'soft' information, understanding the how and the why, which is harder to share. Probing further on this topic at T2, much of the application of individual know-how was felt to require judgement and expertise, such as an understanding of individual athletes' preferences, or wider contextualised understanding, for example of current and historic relationships. Through being able to explore themes at T2 which had been extracted from an initial analysis of interview data at T1, a more nuanced perspective on the relationship between learning in elite sport organisations and resilience was developed. Specifically, individual learning through exposure was perceived to contribute towards organisational resilience through strengthening the quality of human resources available to deal with significant change, rather than directly increasing organisational learning.

Strengthening the quality of financial resources took place by increasing the control over income streams. Specifically, developing collaborative funding partnerships was regarded as more sustainable than reliance on government grants or traditional sponsorship models, as such relationships tend to be established over the longer term, based on mutual value, and allow greater autonomy. In contrast, participants from three organisations spoke of the negative consequences which can arise from grants or sponsorship funding. Examples included the development of unsustainable resource-heavy programs, and concentrating resources in a discrete area with unintended impacts on other teams, inhibiting organisational adaptability and flexibility. The experience of being freed from such negative consequences was captured in the comment by a board director: "When the funding was withdrawn… there was a palpable sense around the table of, 'Okay, we can call the shots now'" (Debbie, T1).

4.3.3.2 Quantity of Human and Financial Resources. Turning to consider issues of resource quantity, participants repeatedly highlighted the need for spare human resource capacity to allow individuals to sense changes and learn from their experiences. Where there is little spare human resource capacity, this can lead to a reduction in available resource through employees engaging in extensive monitoring processes, illustrated in frequent budget meetings and closely monitoring workloads. The consequent depletion of emotional capacity was succinctly illustrated by Paula, a performance director, commenting at T1 "it's probably the most emotionally draining thing. You just got to the point you thought, 'If we have another budget meeting, I'm going to kill myself'. But I think we all felt that." Exploring this theme at T2, leaders raised concerns around flexing this resource to breaking point by becoming reliant on asking for "120% from the people who are already working at 100%" (Ed, T2), suggesting care needs to be taken when estimating spare capacity availability, particularly during significant change. Concurrently, participants developed this theme further at T2 noting that lack of capacity can also result in failure to exploit opportunities to strengthen resources, with examples provided by participants including developing club and competition structures, monetising assets, or changing to a more efficient governance structure.

Whilst spare human capacity was regarded as universally positive, participants were divided as to the benefits of higher quantities of financial resource in terms of its impact on organisational resilience. Two participants directly linked a greater quantity of financial resources with increased resilience, for example by enabling investment in processes and technology, and the employment of additional staff, as well as building financial reserves. In contrast, six participants highlighted that higher overall resources could hinder resilience by shielding the leadership from having to make tough decisions or disguising underlying dysfunctional processes. The lead researcher interpreted that it was the buffering effect of spare financial resources, rather than the absolute amount, which helped an organisation to sense and adapt to significant change and enabled calculated risks to exploit future opportunities.

4.3.3.3 Relationships as Source of Additional Resources. High quality relationships

were one potential source of additional capacity during times of significant change, providing access to organisational resources such as finance (through commercial partners, bank funding, and grant funding for hard-to-reach groups) and high-quality recruitment, as well as intangible resources such as informational and social support. Inter-organisational relationships, built on these inter-personal relationships, were described as "leveraging the network to support you becoming stronger" (Paula, T1). The importance of these external relationships was highlighted by a CEO of a national team: "Partnerships are the main things that can work to improve an organisation's ability to handle challenging situations…if you have partners, and they needn't be in the same sports sphere, they can sometimes take some of that load off" (Ed, T1). These inter-organisational relationships, whether with funding partners, academic institutions, or other elite sport organisations, were described as a 'win-win' scenario. Organisations were regarded as more efficient when collectivising rather than competing, with participant examples including sharing facilities, training partners, and human resources.

4.3.4 Shielding from Risk

Shielding from risk is the second of the two supporting processes for organisational resilience, alongside strengthening resources. Participants described how relentless change can lead to overwhelming of the system, with no spare capacity to sense other potential risks, make timely adaptations, and strengthen resources to deal with future change. A performance director of a mid-sized NSO highlighted the impact of significant change between T1 and T2:

> We spent a massive amount of time on finances to try and basically keep the organisation going, let alone being able to do the things we want to do. And that has undoubtedly been the biggest challenge, because it has meant that we have had to stop doing things that we wanted to do, and not start things we wanted to do. (Quentin, T2)

Shielding from risk appears to have a protective function as illustrated in Figure 4.1, allowing an organisation to strengthen resources and build its future resilience capability, as well as space to maintain and develop current resilience capabilities of sensing and adapting. Participants discussed two main forms of shielding from risk, internal and external.

4.3.4.1 Internal Risk Mitigation. Internal risk mitigation involved good governance processes, such as risk registers, financial budgeting, and decision-making structures, as active management tools to both reduce the likelihood of significant change, and to be able to deal with it should it occur. Scenario planning was a tool used by several participants to work through specific risks collectively in detail, shielding the organisation from risk and strengthening the quality of human resources within the organisation, as described by the head of sport from a multisport support provider:

> You have done the thinking around quite a number of scenarios so that if they happened, you would kick in and just know what to do. It wasn't just one person going right, I'll take away people having an accident and writing it up. People thought it through, but then you had a conversation. (Harry, T1)

Participants were divided in the extent to which it was the output, or the process, of scenario planning which directly helped in dealing with acute change. Outputs mentioned by participants included crisis communication plans and delegation of authority policies, which provided structural clarity to aid rapid decision making under pressure. In contrast, within the team tasked specifically to deal with the acute change, formal policies were rarely adhered to, either due to their inapplicability to the context, or not having time to refer back to the detail of such policies. Instead, the benefits of scenario planning were in the process itself, through having developed individual and team-based efficacy and coping skills and improved relationships amongst team members to work through problems collectively.

4.3.4.2 External Influencing. External risk mitigation processes focused on influencing risk through relationships with third parties. Examples given by participants principally related to board directors with influential roles in national and international sporting bodies, in existing or potential stakeholder organisations, and in club and volunteer bodies. A striking illustration came from a significant dispute between an NSO and its membership base, with Nancy, the CEO, describing at T1 the role of one of their board members:

> He came into his own in this process because he's well regarded within the sport, and he

sat on the phone and he rang people and he used his network…[A club member] isn't going to listen to an Independent Director who he sees just from the corporate world, 'What are you doing meddling in my sport anyway?'"

These individuals were able to advocate, influence, and lobby from within those bodies, influencing for example how rules and regulations were developed, how governance structures were changed, and how policies were developed and implemented, to the advantage of the organisation in question. From the participant data, the lead researcher noted that shielding an organisation from risk is not just concerned with interpreting and responding to existing risks. The dynamic interactions between an organisation and its environment include proactively influencing the environment, and therefore the amount of risk experienced.

4.4 Discussion

Drawing on qualitative data gathered from multiple stakeholders from elite sport, this research is the first to explicitly seek to understand the processes or mechanisms of organisational resilience in elite sport organisations. The study extends the research in Chapter Three by illustrating how organisations engage in concurrent and iterative processes of sensing and adapting in relation to ongoing and multiple significant change. Alongside these core mechanisms, organisations simultaneously engage in strengthening and shielding processes of building resources and risk mitigation to help develop future resilience capabilities. The discussion has therefore been structured around these core and supporting resilience processes.

4.4.1 Core Resilience Processes – Sensing and Adapting

The results of this study revealed that ongoing change required continual adapting to ensure current organisational priorities and workstreams were aligned with current and anticipated resource availability. The ongoing analysis and adjustment is reminiscent of Holling's (1973) model of ecological resilience in which a system is constantly adapting, but always retaining its central functioning. Adapting to current circumstances is in contrast to Weick's (1993) notion of bricolage, which involves crafting temporary solutions from available resource, or to literature emphasising strategic foresight, such as Hamel and Valikangas's (2003)

definition of resilience as changing before change becomes necessary. Adapting involves perpetually altering the organisation to provide a sustainable change to mirror current resource availability. In particular, resilience as adaptation departs from a view of resilience as bouncing back (e.g., Boin & van Eeten, 2013; Wildavsky, 1988), or even forwards (Sutcliffe & Vogus, 2003), with their inherent implication of an illusory stable condition (Walker & Cooper, 2011). Wagstaff et al. (2016) noted repeated organisational change was accepted by their participants in elite sport as an "inherent characteristic of working in high-performance domains" (p. 43). Although there were found to be both negative and positive responses to repeated change, employees in Wagstaff et al.'s study typically reported learning from successive change events. The results presented in this chapter support the acceptance of uncertainty and change by employees within elite sport, suggesting that resisting the urge favouring "snapping back to previously successful, ordered solutions", which Uhl-Bien and Arena (2017, p. 10) noted in their decade-long research as the natural proclivity of people and organisations, may be more readily achieved within the elite sport domain. There was some support amongst participants in this study for the need for temporary stability during periods of acute change to allow resources, particularly informational resources in the form of expertise, to be strengthened rather than depleted.

The results highlighted a tension among participants when leadership attempted to control or restrict the content, timing, and tone of communication during periods of significant change. According to Weick (1995), individuals continually engaging in sensemaking activities, through which they collaboratively interpret and frame organisational events to understand them, extracting cues from the context, and preferring plausibility over accuracy. The term "sensegiving" has been coined to describe attempts by leaders to influence these sensemaking activities towards a preferred outcome (Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991). The results presented in this chapter indicate that employees may experience anxiety, or mistrust in leadership, if they detect inconsistencies in what they are sensing, and the information flowing from leadership, or lack thereof. However, Maitlis and Christianson (2014) noted that in a crisis, where actions become

more public and irrevocable, committing to a particular explanation may be counterproductive at a time when flexibility is required. The participants in the current study noted that during acute change, communication channels were temporarily restricted and hierarchical. The relationship between communication, trust, and flexibility in times of acute versus chronic change merits further investigation, as do the wider processes characterising sensemaking in sport contexts (Wagstaff, 2020).

Interpretation and evaluation of information is not a linear, temporal response to significant change, but instead is continuous and iterative, also acting as a form of feedback to evaluate and monitor the outcomes of actions taken in anticipation of or in response to significant change. Of particular importance is the detection of unintended consequences arising from such actions. Counterintuitively, participants in the current study spoke of high levels of financial resource as potentially impeding organisational resilience, avoiding the need to adapt by making tough decisions or doing "the right thing". External funding, whilst providing increases in the overall quantity of financial resources, may disrupt the balance within the organisation by introducing requirements or constraints on how the funding is used (decreasing adaptability), requiring particular goals to be fulfilled (altering system purpose and workload), or encouraging reliance on a limited source of funding (decreasing sustainability of resources). Described as "rigidity traps" (Walker & Cooper, 2011, p. 156), such financial gains may make an organisation resistant to change and adaptation, inhibiting the flexibility needed for adapting. Such unintended consequences are a feature of emergence in complex systems (Cilliers, 2001; Walker & Cooper, 2011), where agents both internal and external to the organisation interact in a non-linear manner and produce unpredictable outcomes (de Coning, 2016). The results presented in this chapter suggest that rather than attempting to foresee and control outcomes with leadership focused on a "command and control" top down hierarchy, attention should be shifted to evaluating and monitoring feedback and emerging outcomes, with an acknowledgement that teams within an organisation are likely to experience and respond to change differentially (Kahn et al., 2018).

4.4.2 Supporting Resilience Processes - Strengthening Resources and Shielding from Risk

Our participants spoke about the importance of strengthening the quality of human resources by exposure to a variety of situations but were sceptical of the potential for organisation-wide learnings as a result. The integration and application of these types of individual knowledge for the collective (organisational-level) benefit is at the heart of knowledge management (McIver et al., 2016), which is concerned with how best to leverage individual experience, know-how and judgment either through composition or compilation. Composition creates value through fostering replication and repetition by integrating similar activities in a linear fashion, such as rowers in a boat's crew, whereas compilation creates value through combination and augmentation, integrating dissimilar activities in a non-linear pattern, such as musicians in an orchestra (McIver et al., 2016). When describing how elite sport organisations successfully deal with acute change, participants spoke of small teams of people with specialised, relevant, and complementary knowledge collaboratively integrating their individualised know-how to create original solutions to the unique circumstances. Similarly, Gomes et al. (2014), when studying a large-scale emergency simulation exercise, found that the agents in specific domains necessary to understand and make decisions gathered in small groups to discuss. Carlson (2018) referred to this as "preparedness" in which a resilient response to acute change requires an ad hoc "network of responders" with the specific knowledge for that crisis to emerge. In these circumstances, the benefit of strengthening the quality of human resources through experiential learning as advocated by the participants in the current study may be leveraged to the organisational level through combining and augmenting the specialised individual knowledge variation resulting from such experiential learning, rather than seeking to reduce such individualised knowledge to documented, replicable processes (McIver et al., 2016).

As well as strengthening the quality of human resources, the results presented in this chapter suggested that strengthening relationships would also benefit the resilience of an organisation through providing access to additional resources. In other organisational domains,

networks of relationships provide a vital source of support (e.g., Kimberlin et al., 2011) and access to shared resources (e.g., Dalgaard-Nielsen, 2017; Wicker et al., 2013). The centrality of communication to the process of building relationships was noted by Buzzanell (2018), commenting that resilience is cultivated in human communication and network structures, and therefore consciously building "deep and multiplex bonds, and alliances through, for example, board membership and inter-organisational networks, increases the opportunities to rebuild" (p. 16). The results in the current study extend this body of research by indicating that relationships also have an important protective role in shielding the organisation from risk through influencing external stakeholders.

4.4.3 Strengths and Limitations

Integrating a variety of qualitative methods during data collection, in combination with the breadth of participants' experience, revealed a more comprehensive understanding of organisational resilience for those working in elite sport organisations. In particular, analysis of documents and transcriptions prior to and between interviews is likely to have enhanced the quality of data collected through demonstrating to participants familiarity with their organisation and their personal background. This in turn facilitated trust and rapport, increased participants confidence in the worth of the perspectives provided, and legitimised the time spent by participants on the interviews (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015). A limitation of the study may lie in the initial sampling method, through contacting individuals already known to the supervisory team through having participated in at least one round of the online study into organisational resilience in elite sport presented in Chapter Three. This group represented seven (33%) of the final sample. In terms of study design, by exploring individual perceptions of resilience the research is subject to presentational biases, particularly those arising from individual sensitivities in terms of management capabilities.

4.4.4 Future Research Directions and Practical Implications

A framework which holds promise for enhancing the future understanding of dynamic constructs such as organisational resilience is complex systems theory (Cilliers, 2001; Walker &

Cooper, 2011). From this perspective, organisations are seen as systems which have the ability to adapt, demonstrating emergent properties including self-organisation. This self-organisation is a result of dynamic and non-linear interactions of its constituent parts, based on local information, interactions with their environment, and feedback (Chandler, 2014; de Coning, 2016), enabling organisations to adjust to multiple changes at any given time in a sustainable manner. With this lens, the focus is on patterns of interactions, the processes through which resilience emerges, rather than the constituent components. Already commonly used by organisational resilience researchers in other domains such as healthcare (Barasa et al., 2018), within sport organisation research systems theory has been used to explore contextual intelligence (Brown et al., 2005) and change management (Cruickshank & Collins, 2012). Given that sport organisations are open systems with formal and informal relationships at every level with external agents and their environment, the application of complex systems theory to guide the development of organisational resilience thinking within the elite sport context appears an "intuitive ideological fit" (Walker & Cooper, 2011, p. 144).

The non-linearity of complex adaptive systems (Cilliers, 2001; Walker & Cooper, 2011), with emergent unpredictable outcomes, means that it is important to explore the interactions between resilient characteristics and resilient processes situated in their sociocultural context. To better understand the temporal effects between these factors, Morgan, Fletcher, and Sarkar (2019) utilised an ethnographic approach to explore the enablers and strategies that promote the development of team resilience within a high-level sports team. Ethnography has also been used recently to explore the influence of organisational cultures in sport (e.g., Feddersen, Morris, Littlewood, & Richardson, 2020). By offering an opportunity to study specific cultures and their social interactions and behaviours in-depth through prolonged immersion, ethnographic practices could also provide a pre-intervention evaluation of organisational resilience as a precursor for future intervention work which remains scarce within organisational sport psychology (Wagstaff, 2019a).

The results of this study provide practitioners with strategies at the individual, team, and

organisational level to stimulate resilience within an elite sport organisation. At the individual

level, a focus on strengthening resources by cultivating relationships both internally and also

externally with key stakeholders is likely to provide opportunities to access resources during

times of significant change. At the team level, scenario planning with a diverse group of

employees provides an opportunity to sense risks and develop risk shielding strategies from a

variety of perspectives whilst simultaneously developing the team-based efficacy and coping

skills which are particularly valuable for adaptation processes during periods of acute change.

At the organisational level, leadership of complex adaptive systems requires a paradigmatic shift

away from strategic foresight. Instead, leaders are encouraged to focus on stimulating the

capacity of the organisation to adapt and self-organise (de Coning, 2016) through facilitating

intra- and inter-organisational sensing connections and communication flows, working

collaboratively and rewarding adaptive sustainability rather than purely performance-based

outcomes (Uhl-Bien & Arena, 2018).

4.4.5 Conclusion

The study's results revealed two core and two supporting organisational resilience

processes, namely sensing and adapting, and strengthening and shielding, as illustrated in Figure

4.1, based on comprehensive qualitative data gathered from 22 individuals operating in ten elite

sport organisations. Given the ongoing and iterative nature of significant organisational changes,

these processes are not sequential or temporally distinct, but instead cumulatively contribute

towards the capability of an organisation to deal successfully with the multiplicity of changes

faced at any one time. Through a perspective of complex adaptive systems (Cilliers, 2001;

Walker & Cooper, 2011), change is seen as normal, and indeed necessary, such that resilience is

not concerned with control or stability but rather stimulating and facilitating the processes

necessary for successful adaptation. The results in the current study, as the first empirical

investigation exploring the psychosocial processes underpinning organisational resilience in

elite sport, provide a unique framework and practical implications to help those working in and

with elite sport organisations successfully navigate uncertainty and change.

Chapter Five:

Empirical Research: Study Three

In Chapter Four (Study Two) the results of the second study of organisational resilience in elite sport were provided, focusing on the mechanisms which helped elite sport organisations successfully deal with significant change. Data analysis yielded two core resilience processes of sensing and adapting, and two supporting processes of strengthening resources and shielding from risk. This extended the findings described in Chapter Three (Study One) regarding the resilient characteristics of elite sport organisations by exploring how such organisations function. With reference to these resilient characteristics and processes, the aim of this Chapter Five (Study Three) is to explore how an elite sport organisation dealt with significant change over a prolonged period.

How an Elite Sport Organisation Successfully Dealt with Significant Change: An Ethnographic Approach to Understanding Organisational Resilience

5.1 Introduction

While there exists a tradition of scholarly interest in successful organisations, in a world characterised by uncertainty and change the strategies traditionally associated with success through taking calculated risks to achieve stabilised and predictable growth may no longer work (Alvarez et al., 2018). When uncertainty and change are viewed as ongoing and continual, rather than singular and static, sustainably successful organisations will be those with the capability to address the needs of a shifting environment (Uhl-Bien & Arena, 2018).

For those working in elite sport, the importance of optimal functioning in competitive environments has long been of interest (Morgan et al., 2019) as sport organisations seek a competitive edge (Wagstaff et al., 2016). Moreover, as the scientisation and technologisation of sport continues, any such competitive edge must not merely provide fleeting value but must be sustainable. It follows that better understanding factors which help sport organisations positively adapt to turbulence will potentially offer valuable insight for researchers, sport psychologists and those working within elite sport organisations. The exploration of these factors has recently received scholarly attention (Chapters Three and Four) under the rubric of organisational resilience.

Organisational resilience is a multi-level construct (Chapter Three), requiring consideration of the individual, team, and organisational levels of analysis. One of the difficulties in approaching such multi-level research is the separation of organisations from the people who work within them (Wagstaff, 2020). The task is made more straightforward by viewing an organisation as a group of people and how they are organised and communicate with one another (Mintzberg, 1979). It is essentially the behaviour of individuals which determine the characteristics and processes of an organisation accumulated and undertaken over time, and as such it needs to be viewed holistically, albeit with an appreciation of the constituent parts. Organisational research bridges micro and macro levels of analysis to incorporate both the individual participant's interpretation of reality, and the culture within the organisation, recognising that pre-existing macro-level social structures constrain and enable individual interactions (Fleetwood, 2005). Organisational psychologists have long been interested in the notion of organisational resilience at the macro level (see Annarelli & Nonino, 2016; Barasa et al., 2018; Duchek, 2020; Linnenluecke, 2017; Williams et al., 2017 for reviews), and there are increasingly calls for cross-level integration of organisational resilience research (Linnenluecke, 2017). Sport psychologists have, until recently, focused on the personal and competitive stressors and adversities at the individual

level (e.g., Fletcher & Sarkar, 2012; Gonzalez et al., 2016; Sarkar & Hilton, 2020), and team level (e.g., Decroos et al., 2017; Morgan et al., 2013, 2015, 2019; Stuart & Moore, 2017), when considering the impact of uncertainty and change.

In the first known study of organisational resilience in elite sport, in Chapter Three a definition was developed and characteristics were identified of organisational resilience in elite sport organisations. Organisational resilience was defined as "the dynamic capability of an organisation to successfully deal with significant change. It emerges from multi-level (employee, team, and organisational) interacting characteristics and processes which enable an organisation to prepare for, adapt to, and learn from significant change" (Chapter Three, p. 73). Five resilient characteristics were identified: structural clarity (i.e., a clear and effective structure); flexible improvement (i.e., a culture and capability of learning, innovation and flexibility); shared understanding (i.e., shared values, collective efficacy, and group norms); reciprocal commitment (i.e., a two-way allegiance between employees and employer); and operational awareness (i.e., a capability to identify and assess risks, available resources, and alternative options).

In Chapter Three, it was suggested there was a need to examine the processes underlying these resilient characteristics. Consequently, in Chapter Four, the experiences and perceptions of 22 elite sport directors and employees were investigated, focusing on the mechanisms which were understood to have helped the organisation successfully deal with significant change. Data analysis yielded two core resilience processes of sensing (internal and external mechanisms, diversity of perspectives, evaluating and monitoring) and adapting (mirroring current resource availability, open and frequent communication, acute versus chronic change), and two supporting processes of strengthening resources (quality and quantity of human and financial resources, relationships as source of additional resources) and shielding from risk (internal risk mitigation, external influencing). In Chapter Four, the concurrent and iterative processes engaged in by resilient organisations to gain an awareness

of, evaluate, and continuously adapt to their internal and external environments were elucidated. A framework of complex systems theory (Cilliers, 2001; Walker & Cooper, 2011) was suggested to better understand organisations as open systems with emergent properties such as self-organisation which allow them to adjust in response to interactions with their environment.

Within Chapter Four, it was noted that in order to gain a longitudinal, dynamic perspective of organisational resilience, and specifically a more nuanced and multi-dimensional understanding of how the characteristics and processes underpinning organisational resilience are developed and interact over time and situated within their sociocultural context, a promising approach is through immersive, ethnographical research, in order to "capture the highly complex, socially embedded, and path-dependent resilience capabilities" (Duchek, 2020, p. 238). To the best of my knowledge, no organisational resilience ethnographic studies have been carried out to date. Part of the challenge in undertaking such research may be the uncertainty as to when an organisation will experience significant change, and therefore the ability of the research team to observe how the organisation is able to successfully deal with such change. The temporal difficulties are compounded by the time required for a research team to be embedded within an organisational setting, even more so where that setting is an elite sport organisation (Champ et al., 2020).

In one of the earliest studies of organisational resilience (Meyer, 1982), the researchers expressly considered and rejected an ethnographic approach when adapting a research strategy following a sudden and unanticipated doctors strike in hospitals in San Francisco where the research team were already conducting organisational research in another field. The decision was influenced to a large extent by the researchers' epistemological positioning reflected in the original research design which involved making systematic comparisons across 19 hospitals, and for which data collection had already begun.

The team recognised the opportunity to adapt the study design to examine adaptive behaviour following a significant change, and the advantages afforded by an ethnographic approach within one or two hospitals, with cited benefits including directly observing behaviours, and becoming familiar with the contexts necessary for interpreting events. Instead, a compromise was reached whereby three hospitals with maximally disparate strategies and structures were studied through unstructured interviews and naturalistic observations gleaned from time spent in hospital corridors, waiting rooms, and cafeterias. Meyer noted the value of observing organisations undergoing significant change through exposing values and traditions which may be invisible during periods of stability, and urged investigation of the opportunities, and not just the challenges, which may arise during periods of significant change.

To overcome the issue of researcher embeddedness during significant change, an alternative design employed to undertake longitudinal, contextually-informed organisational resilience research is that of the case study involving authors with personal knowledge of the participant organisation, thereby sharing commonalities with autoethnographic research, albeit typically retrospective in nature. In this vein, Demmer et al. (2011) explored resilience strategies within Demmer Corporation across the preceding 20 years, the first author occupying the role of CEO in his family's $600 million turnover business, with a stated overarching goal being to identify strategies employed by Demmer Corporation "that enabled it to reinvent itself to become one of the few, former automotive suppliers in Michigan with a bright future." (p. 5400). This quote highlights concerns regarding the potential for presentational biases in this type of research design, particularly where a senior figure with an ongoing vested interest within an organisation charts its resilience, and resilience is operationalised as "thriving" or success. Concerns regarding the ability for detached reflexivity, managing conflicts, and power dynamics, are often a feature of organisational ethnographies (Champ et al., 2020), where the researcher will occupy a position somewhere along the insider-outsider continuum (Culver et al., 2012), namely situated within the

participants natural setting, or an outsider not positioned within the specific subculture.

Alongside challenges of being in the right place at the right time, and sufficiently embedded within the organisation to provide contextually informed insights yet sufficiently detached to be able to demonstrate methodological rigour, the sheer number of influencing and interacting parts and processes can make the study of organisational resilience seem unworkable. If an overly simplistic approach is taken, this risks depicting the superficial, isomorphic exterior of labels and buzzwords adopted by organisations to appear dynamic and progressive (Alvesson et al., 2017), where resilience becomes a "quicksand term" (Britt et al., 2016) used in different ways with different meanings. Given the scale of challenges involved, the extant dearth of organisational resilience ethnographic studies is perhaps understandable. Nevertheless, there is a need for empirical research which reflects "real-world" environments, especially the localised dynamics which dictate how the characteristics and processes manifest themselves within a particular organisation. The aim of this study, therefore, was to explore how an elite sport organisation has successfully dealt with significant change through an immersive, ethnographic approach. This study will advance knowledge in this area by investigating first-hand (i.e., in a naturally occurring context), and through ongoing, shared experiences, and personal interactions with organisation members, how organisational resilience has been developed over a prolonged period of time.

5.2 Method

5.2.1 Research Design and Philosophical Assumptions

Organisational resilience is described as an emergent, dynamic phenomenon within complex adaptive systems (Chapter Four). As such, an investigation of how it may develop requires a holistic approach to capture the interactions between individuals and the resulting emergent properties. A critical realist perspective (Ronkainen & Wiltshire, 2019) offers a meta-theoretical paradigm (Atkinson, 2016) for explaining underlying causal mechanisms which may shape human action. This perspective encompasses ontological realism (i.e.,

reality exists independently of our identification of it), an entity is regarded as "real" if it has causal efficacy, that is, it influences behaviour or cognitions (Fleetwood, 2005). Through a lens of epistemological interpretivism (i.e., there is no unmediated access to the world), critical realists propose that organisations exist independently of our construction of them while acknowledging that such existence will be conceptually mediated (Fleetwood, 2005).

The critical realist approach suggests that some knowledge is more useful than others, with better explanatory power of causal efficacy (Danermark et al., 2019). Ethnography, a qualitative research methodology aimed at describing and analysing the practices of complex social systems, was chosen in the present study due to its focus on presenting grounded, pragmatic accounts of how the social world works (Watson, 2011). Ethnographic research involves participant observation within real-life settings usually requiring an immersive approach, often supplemented with interviews and documentary analysis. Through prolonged immersion in the field, ethnographic research provides an opportunity, in the present study, to study first-hand how the characteristics and processes of organisational resilience are developed and maintained, allowing the contemporaneous capturing of highly complex and socially embedded resilience processes (Duchek, 2020) to better understand the dynamic and temporal nature of organisational resilience.

5.2.2 Sample

Critical case sampling, a form of purposive sampling, was employed to reveal insights that may be applicable to other like cases (Emmel, 2013). Following institutional ethical approval, organisations were considered as potential cases based on the following criteria: that the participant organisation was an elite sport organisation (as defined in Chapter Three), based in the UK, which had experienced significant change within the previous 12-month period. Based on these considerations, six organisations were shortlisted and individuals within those organisations were consulted as to their suitability for a study of organisational resilience and the feasibility of carrying out research there (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2019).

The prospective organisations were all within a reasonably accessible geographical location from the research team to allow the principal researcher to maintain a "habitual presence" (Krane & Baird, 2005, p. 94) at the main offices of the organisation.

As noted by Wagstaff et al. (2016), "buy in" and endorsement from gatekeepers acting in senior leadership roles in the organisation was vital to ensure the researcher was given a sufficient level of access to individuals, meetings, and documents in order to obtain rich data. Ethnographies "thrive or fizzle out depending on the researcher's ability to gain access to the setting or culture of their choice" (Atkinson, 2016, p. 55). The supervisory team were aware of the difficulty in obtaining sufficient access to an elite sport organisation, and the likelihood of failure in an access request. Discussions to reach the point of "failure" took weeks, sometimes months, with an initial request, meeting(s), a verbal or written proposal, the gatekeeper circulating that proposal elsewhere in the organisation, then a final response. As a result, there was a need to speak to several organisations at once to facilitate a timely recruitment process. Weighed against this, the supervisory team were aware that due to the nature of an ethnography, there was only capacity to proceed with 1-2 organisations. The approach decided upon was to divide potential participants into an "A" and a "B" list, based on factors such as size of organisation, strength of connection, and location. From our initial approach to the "A" list, two organisations declined quickly, and of those who we engaged with more extensively, concerns were raised by three organisations which included anonymity, disruption caused by the presence of a researcher, and timing pressures in the Olympic cycle. It was realised that there needed to be potential for mutual benefit, that research itself would not be sufficient to justify the investment of time, and the potential exposure from publication. When consulting with the fourth organisation, there was therefore an offer to undertake unpaid work for part of the time spent at the organisation, assisting as and when required. Whilst recognising the potential benefits of greater immersion in the field, the supervisory team nevertheless expressed concerns as to whether this could

jeopardise the time available for research, and it was agreed to meet regularly to discuss any ethical issues which might arise. Fortunately, these concerns proved unfounded. This research therefore proceeded with an organisation from list "A" and no contact was made with those on list "B".

The participant organisation (hereinafter referred to as "NGB-1") selected for this study is the national governing body for the Olympic and Paralympic GB teams in its sport (hereinafter referred to as "NGB-1 Sport"), with a World Class Programme funded in part by UK Sport, as well as a remit to grow the sport through Sport England funding. With a staff of 50-100 employees and an annual income of £5-10 million, it is a medium sized UK national governing body. The "significant change" experienced by the participant organisation was a sharp deterioration in its financial position during the preceding financial year to March 2019, as evidenced through documentary analysis of the annual accounts which indicated financial reserves having diminished to just 25% of the previous year's figure, to a level deemed "critical" by the organisation's financial reserves policy. Analysis of the accounts for the year to March 2020 provided evidence of having "successfully dealt with" this change, with a 300% increase in financial reserves across this 12-month period. The extent of the financial recovery, and the capability demonstrated by the organisation to successfully deal with the number of challenges which had cumulated in the previous year's decline, was significant enough to give rise to a request for case study information from a major funder to use as an exemplar with other elite sport organisations.

Satisfied that NGB-1 ostensibly fulfilled the criteria for demonstrating organisational resilience, the initial period of fieldwork employed a broad focus so as not to exclude other forms of significant change which were not apparent to an outsider. Later, when it became apparent that the most significant change being experienced was indeed the financial decline and recovery, the focus of data collection narrowed. Three key "causes" of the significant change, and associated remedial actions, had already been identified in a briefing paper

written by the CEO to two key stakeholders in the month prior to the commencement of the research. Yet, the CEO expressed concern in private over the sustainability of the recovery, that is, the extent to which lessons had truly been learnt and embedded organisation wide. The focus of the research was, therefore, to identify psychosocial strategies which contributed to the financial recovery.

5.2.3 Biographical Positioning

As the instrument of data collection in an ethnography, who you are determines, at least in part, "what you see, what you are told, and what you eventually know" (Atkinson, 2016, p. 55). During the research the lead researcher (from here onwards, "I") held several identities. These were a researcher, a sport participant, volunteer and club member, a middle-aged, middle-class white woman, and a former businesswoman. Each of these identities contributed towards an acceptance within NGB-1 at managerial level, which was evidenced by comments such as being asked to move chairs during an executive meeting, "move in closer, you're part of us now". I did not set off to study the organisation from the perspective of the senior leadership team (referred to from here on as "SLT") but, through identification and acceptance at this level, some of these individuals became key informants with whom I had long lasting and open-ended discussions, learning how they wished to shape the organisation and the problems they perceived. This may have compromised the ability to interrogate the data from an outsider's perspective but is part of an inevitable balance to be struck when building strong and collaborative relationships with influential actors in the organisation.

The identification as part of the managerial team meant I was conscious of the need to invest more time building relationships with other people in the organisation, such as by volunteering at an event over the weekend, helping to unload vans, and helping with an office move. My participation in NGB-1 Sport facilitated relationships with those in the organisation who participated or coached NGB-1 Sport. The physical location of the desk I

sat in during the fieldwork allowed relationships to form with those who sat close to me. The work carried out on behalf of the organisation included drafting and amending policies and contracts, holding a commercial contracts workshop, dealing with customer enquiries, and reorganising online document storage. These tasks provided a further opportunity to interact with employees across a range of roles and departments and examine a wide range of organisational documentation.

The identity of an academic researcher, combined with positioning as an impartial observer, resulted in my opinions, reflections, and feedback being sought, particularly towards the end of the immersive phase of the research. The role had evolved into that of a critical friend, being asked to feedback during executive team meetings, probing, asking provocative questions, and providing critiques or alternative perspectives. Falling into a consulting or advising role is often regarded as inevitable within organisational ethnographies (Fayard & Van Maanen, 2015). The longer the fieldwork, the more the observations were regarded as valid or true, and I was conscious of the difficulty in appreciating that my feedback resulted from an interpretative analysis rather than a mirror image of reality, particularly given the respect held for my academic status. I tried as a result to pose my observations as questions back to the SLT, rather than as statements. Over time, members of the SLT became increasingly more reflexive when referring to resilience – naming it in organisation-wide emails, talking about it, making it explicit. I became increasingly aware of the performativity of the research, how the representations and observations I was discussing informally were being interpreted and acted upon. As noted by Fayard and Van Maanen (2015), organisational ethnographers are not only producing knowledge and understanding of the area they are studying, "they also have a hand in producing the organisational realities they study" (p. 6). Rather than being framed as problematic, Fayard and Van Maanen argued this is simply part of the process of making aspects of an organisation visible through ethnographic research.

5.2.4 Managing Field Relations and Accessing Insider Accounts

Brannick and Coghlan (2007) referred to "primary access" as the process of obtaining permission to undertake research within an organisation and "secondary access" as access to people, meetings, documentation, and data. The current research, spanning seven months in total, took place over two phases, beginning with a series of meetings over a two-month period to negotiate "primary access" to the organisation and the form and duration of such access. Accessing the field was facilitated by my having participated and volunteered in NGB-1 Sport for several years and having spent time interviewing two employees of NGB-1 as part of a previous research study (Chapter Four). The second, immersive phase involved working within NGB-1 two days a week over five months, shifting to four days a week for a final two months of intensive engagement, together with additional time at weekends working to deliver major events and attending board meetings. A copy of the email sent by the CEO of NGB-1 to all staff within the organisation to explain participation in the research is included at Appendix Five.

For the immersive phase of the research, initial attention was focused on getting to know individuals within the organisation on both a professional and personal level, building the relationships necessary to gain "secondary access" to people and the information they hold, whilst maintaining a daily reflexive diary to record thoughts, conversations, and observations (see Appendix Six for the framework used as a prompt for diary entries). The start of the research was timed to coincide with several key strategic meetings (at board, council, and executive levels) to provide an overview of the issues faced within the organisation. Additionally, a series of home major events provided important opportunities to assist more widely within the organisation in a setting beyond the office. These interactions demonstrated commitment, and positioning as "one of us", allowing for new relationships to be formed and existing relationships to be deepened. Throughout the immersive phase of research, key informants emerged who were able to reflect upon practices and share this

information with the researcher (Roper & Shapira, 2000). During the seven-month ethnography, the primary data sources were observations, formal and informal interviews, and documentary analysis.

5.2.4.1 Observation. Observations took place over a period of 506 hours and were recorded in contemporaneous field notes generated during or immediately after relevant conversations, meetings, or events. Meetings attended included board and council meetings, meetings with key stakeholders, training sessions, operational briefings and working groups, and all staff meetings. Observations allowed an appreciation of cultural dynamics, as well as recording minutiae of conversations, how they were presented across contexts such as board meetings contrasted with all staff briefings, and how individuals interacted and related to each other. A "habitual presence" (Krane & Baird, 2005, p. 94) was maintained such that towards the end of the ethnography, within plans for a proposed office move a desk had been assigned to me, and I was described by an employee as "part of the furniture".

5.2.4.2 Interviews. Formal interviews were pre-arranged, recorded, and transcribed verbatim, focusing on perspectives of significant changes experienced within the organisation, and factors which have helped or hindered the organisation to successfully deal with those changes. These began one to two months after starting the research to allow sufficient time for relationships to develop prior to those interviews. Interviewees were purposively selected to represent a range of perspectives of organisational functioning, initially comprising each member of the SLT, and current and previous CEO and chairpersons. I also asked for recommendations from the SLT for long serving employees, new employees, outgoing employees, and those working from home from a range of departments. I also requested access to a commercial partner for an external perspective on the functioning of NGB-1. Key individuals were interviewed more than once to further explore potential themes, producing a total of 23 formal interviews with 17 individuals, which ranged in duration from 34 to 89 minutes ($M = 52.5$, $SD = 14.5$). Spontaneous

"ethnographic conversations" (Silk, 2005) were also employed on an opportunistic basis, for example whilst making tea or unloading vans, recorded in field notes. These sources provided a diverse range of perspectives and were guided by the context and the individual concerned, with examples including reflecting on specific recent events or meetings, current concerns, dissatisfaction with leadership narratives, and preferred strategies to address issues within teams.

       5.2.4.3 Documentary Analysis. To support the observations and interviews, documentary analysis was conducted using a variety of both public and private organisational documents such as company accounts, board papers, risk registers, action plans, strategy papers, and media reports. Documentary data was particularly valuable during the early stages of the ethnography to provide an overview of the range of issues faced by NGB-1 in the previous 12-18 months and the context in which they had arisen, with this initial analysis informing subsequent data collection. I was given full access to all documents stored on NGB-1's intranet within the board, SLT and policy files, all of which had restricted access and required specific approval to open, demonstrating the high level of trust and access afforded by NGB-1. Additional documents were also suggested or provided by certain individuals during formal interviews and ethnographic conversations to assist in understanding specific events or timelines, for example a new commercial strategy, or sequential versions showing the development of a financial reserves policy.

5.2.5 Data Analysis

       Data analysis in an ethnography began on day one (Atkinson, 2016), with reviewing and analysing field notes regarding what has been observed, heard, read, or discovered that day. I worked iteratively, stimulated by the interplay between data gathered in the field and organisational resilience literature (cf. Chapters Three and Four), initial thoughts and patterns were noted in a reflexive diary (Watson, 2012). As the fieldwork progressed, a temporal understanding of events and new initiatives were constructed based on analysis of

organisational documents such as meeting minutes and accounts, supplemented by informal interview data. This temporal interpretation formed the framework to analyse causal relationships between events and actions, although the temporal separation of events is recognised as a heuristic device to explore and analyse the data (Fleetwood, 2005). In reality, all actions are continuous, with no start and end point, and with varying degrees of salience across time and individuals. For this reason, the event-structure provided a broad framework to help guide the analysis, but the focus was on underlying psychosocial strategies.

Regular feedback and discussion with key individuals within the SLT was invaluable given that the research aimed to bridge micro and macro levels of analysis to incorporate both the individual participant's interpretation of reality, and the culture within the organisation. Recognising that pre-existing macro-level organisational systems and processes constrain and enable individual interactions (Young, 2005), examining both insider and outsider perspectives aids understanding of those interactions. The discussions also acted as a form of member reflection (cf. Ronkainen & Wiltshire, 2019; Smith & McGannon, 2018), helping to draw out what is judged by participants to be useful, or with better explanatory power.

Once fieldwork was concluded, a more formal reflexive inductive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2019) was conducted, guided by the six phases suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006). The data set, comprising interview transcripts, the reflexive diary, meeting and observation notes, and notes made during documentary analysis, was initially coded by attaching key words to text segments, and these preliminary codes were then examined to explore broader patterns or themes. Various descriptions and names for themes were discussed amongst the research team, recursively referring back to the original data set. For example, an initial main theme of "getting comfortable with being uncomfortable" was discarded as it was felt to be an individual level strategy, and insufficiently descriptive of the sub-themes. These sub-themes were instead later incorporated into the main themes of "awareness of uncertainty", "owning decisions" and "awareness and exposure of

vulnerabilities". At various stages during the formal analysis I presented a summary of the results of the study, to the SLT and the junior leadership team ("JLT") of NGB-1, to fellow PhD researchers, and to practitioners. Each presentation served to sharpen and refine the analysis as part of the constant process of reflecting on what was important in the data and formulating an approximation to convey meaning. For example, when articulating an early theme of "mitigation or adaptation" it became clear to me that the descriptor was not sufficiently connected to the content to facilitate clarity of meaning. Parts of the theme were eventually incorporated into "desire to empower" and "owning decisions".

The intention was to be faithful to the ethnographic fieldwork, whilst recognising that the data generated was, in part, already value-bound by the perspectives of the lead researcher (Braun & Clarke, 2020). In particular, the data collection and analysis are bound by my biographical positioning, as already discussed, and the positioning of this study within a series of PhD studies. To address the latter point, the supervisory team and myself were conscious of minimising the influence of the results from PhD studies 1 and 2 (Chapters Three and Four) on the analysis of the present study's data (PhD study 3) through seeking out variances to prior conceptions. Examples of such variances included the consideration of long-term consequences to short term decision-making, and the requirement from the SLT for reassurance through demonstration of financial processes.

5.2.6 Methodological Integrity

The methodological integrity of the study can be evaluated in accordance with its fidelity to the subject matter and utility in achieving research goals, as recommended by Levitt et al. (2017), underpinned by a critical realist approach in terms of how well it helps to understand the phenomena studied according to its empirical adequacy, ontological plausibility, and practical utility (Ronkainen & Wiltshire, 2019).

Fidelity to the subject matter, akin to the notion of "empirical adequacy", is demonstrated through timely observational notes, checking of transcriptions, diverse data

sources, and prolonged engagement in the field. In particular, the formation of close

relationships with key individuals assisted with the quality and comprehensiveness of data

collected, whilst variations were sought through examining external perspectives. Reflexive

analysis, assisted by diary entries, helped to identify assumptions and how they might

influence the data. For example, an early note in my reflexive diary recorded how I became

aware of "biases about how things should be (e.g., employee turnover) – I think it is a

negative that it's so high, whereas the team say how important it is in sport." The rich data

extracts serve as exemplars to help demonstrate "groundedness" of the results in the data.

Utility in achieving research goals (Levitt et al., 2017) is enhanced through

contextualising the data through detailed descriptions of NGB-1 and the significant financial

change experienced. My biographical positioning served as a "catalyst for insight" through

my identity as a professional, an academic, and a sport participant. The concept of

meaningfulness has parallels with "ontological plausibility", enhanced by utilising existing

organisational resilience literature as a resource to guide fieldwork, and the use of member

reflections and critical friends with key individuals and research team members respectively

(Ronkainen & Wiltshire, 2019; Smith & McGannon, 2018). The coherence of the results is

explicated within the discussion, both internally amongst the themes, and externally with

extant research. Finally, the concept within critical realism of practical utility (Ronkainen &

Wiltshire, 2019) can be aligned with the holistic concept of utility in achieving goals. If

understood as akin to generalisability, this is difficult to achieve through a single

organisational ethnography, although some level of naturalistic generalisability may be

ascertainable for readers engaged in elite sport organisation settings (Smith & McGannon,

2018). When understood on the local level, as guiding practical actions in the real world,

practical utility was in evidence at multiple points during the ethnographic fieldwork, arising

from the various discussion and feedback sessions with key individuals. Instances included

changes to board meeting agendas designed to improve relationships, and more focused

narratives from the senior executive to communicate change.

5.3 Results

The results derived from the seven-month ethnographic fieldwork present the psychosocial strategies that contributed towards NGB-1's success in dealing with financial decline. These were: collectively owning decisions and their consequences; awareness and exposure of vulnerabilities to strengthen relationships; recognition of future uncertainty rather than retrospective solace; and the desire to empower with a need for support and reassurance. Given the high-profile nature of elite sport, and to protect anonymity, the names of participants have been changed and pseudonyms have been used throughout. Table 5.1 provides a summary of the key findings together with illustrations of strategies employed at the individual, team, and organisational levels.

5.3.1 Collectively Owning Decisions and their Consequences

There was a willingness amongst the senior leadership team ("SLT") to approach, evaluate, and deal with difficult facts or situations, not only in the present but also with a view to their potential future consequences. Two of the four issues identified by the organisation as having contributed towards the financial decline were expressed by several individuals independently (in informal conversations and recorded in fieldnotes) to have been hindered by a historic unwillingness to examine the detail underlying contractual arrangements with third parties. This avoidance of the facts was ascribed to "emotionally led" decisions "for the sport rather than the business", arising from a desire to proceed "almost at any cost" (all fieldnotes from informal interviews with two different employees discussing the same issues). This "organisational lack of appetite" was compounded by a perception of "big reserves" (fieldnotes) providing a buffer against any issues which arose, without investigating how large those issues could become. In contrast to these past issues, the current SLT spoke of a willingness to approach, rather than avoid, difficult or uncomfortable facts or situations to determine what, if any, decisions might be required. George, a director,

Table 5.1

Strategies Employed to Develop Organisational Resilience with Illustrative Examples of

Behavioural Indicators

Strategy	Description of strategy	Behavioural indicator at the individual, team, or organisational level
Collectively owning decisions and their consequences	A willingness to approach, evaluate, and deal with difficult facts or situations collectively, not only in the present but also with a view to their potential future consequences.	Team: during discussions regarding a large, complex IT investment, the SLT went beyond probing the individual responsible, providing support – "this type of project often goes wrong, what can we do to help stop that?" and constructive evaluation – "If you could only achieve one thing, what would that be?" (comments between members of SLT)
Awareness and exposure of vulnerabilities to strengthen relationships	Strengthening relationships through developing an awareness of, and exposing, individual, team, and organisational vulnerabilities.	Individual / team: Beginning SLT meetings with a "how are you feeling?" exercise, with each individual encouraged to express their current emotional state, whether arising from personal or work circumstances.
Recognition of future uncertainty rather than retrospective solace	A position of awareness and agility to deal with future uncertainty, in contrast to solely deriving confidence from successfully dealing with significant change in the past.	Organisation: Changes to the membership structure had been discussed for several years at board level, it was finally accepted they would never attain the certainty they sought and a decision was made to proceed – "at some point you've got to just hold your nose and jump" (Emma, a director)
Desire to empower with need for support and reassurance	Empowering individuals to take decisions, and act autonomously, but also need for support (from leadership) and reassurance (for leadership)	Organisation: The JLT was modified with the intention of it becoming a self-organising, autonomous group: "Set the direction, get the right people in there, develop them, and sit back and watch it happen" (George), but in a later reflection: "we probably haven't given them enough skill development in that area, and I think the thing I've got to be aware of is, to me, it's really simple and really obvious…and so I've got to always remind myself to see it through their eyes and not through mine, or those of the SLT" (George).

commented in an interview "it's slightly masochistic, I take pleasure in making difficult decisions. I want to confront brutal facts, and make difficult decisions based on values and evidence."

In conjunction with a willingness to face uncomfortable information, there was a focus on collectively evaluating that information prior to decision making through checking and challenging each other. The role of the board was described by George in a formal interview: "they must scrutinise the executive and say 'why are we doing this?', 'what is therisk attached to that action?', 'what is the cost of that action?', and I just don't think that was there in the past". Similarly, in the opening comments of a board meeting, the chair of the board spelled out that the purpose of such meetings was to "go away with a good understanding of the sport and the business, and the confidence to check and challenge." The focus on collective evaluation was also apparent during the monthly executive meetings, as recorded in contemporaneous reflexive notes from the first SLT meeting attended in May: "Challenging each other – done respectfully, in a friendly manner, openly, lengthy discussions so everyone has a chance to be heard and understood." At times this could be experienced as uncomfortable, with Emma (a director) admitting during a formal interview how she had felt challenged by a new colleague, thinking: "hang on, that's my area of work, why are you having an opinion on it?...But it's that recognition, I'm glad I've been able to recognise that in myself, recognise that I was a bit unsure, got over myself." Emma demonstrated how she had overcome her initial reaction to a perceived threat through reflexive self-awareness to facilitate future collective evaluation.

Armed with a deeper understanding of information available for decision making, there was a willingness to deal with those situations, illustrated in a comment from an interview with a new director, Elizabeth, when reflecting on differences between NGB-1 and her previous organisation:

we've had conversations about decisions that might have to be made in the near

future. Very difficult decisions. And my experience in the past is, that wouldn't ever have been discussed, or actually done. But it's obvious from the conversation that it's not really going to be an issue here.

The willingness to deal with situations collectively was observed during SLT meetings and recorded in contemporaneous meeting notes. For example, in discussions around rethinking strategy, George urged one of the junior leadership team ("JLT"): "We're going to break some eggs here, for sure. But you need to know the board has got your back, you're recommending what is right for the sport. Be brave, be bold, be innovative, don't cut corners to placate people." There was an acceptance both of responsibility to take current decisions, and to consider their longer-term implications, as expressed in an SLT meeting by another director, Frank:

> so many decisions are evolutions, and instead we need to look at where we want to get to, what's the right thing long-term, and then we find a way of getting there. And it might be difficult and uncomfortable, or we might not be able to see how to get there, but we need to know what that looks like, rather than what do we do today to solve today's problems.

5.3.2 Awareness and Exposure of Vulnerabilities to Strengthen Relationships

Relationships, both internal and external, were strengthened through developing an awareness of individual, team, and organisational vulnerabilities, and then exposing those vulnerabilities through asking for help. In turn, this provided access to crucial resources, including financial, relational, and informational support. To illustrate in relation to external inter-organisational stakeholder relationships, one of the issues identified as contributing to the financial decline was a poor partnership agreement. This arrangement had left the organisation vulnerable to delivery costs in excess of income. The documentary mitigation against similar future risks included a major decisions checklist, together with a new commercial strategy. Inquiring how the arrangement itself was addressed, George (director)

described, in an informal interview recorded in fieldnotes, how he waited until a major event attended by the relevant stakeholder, then went for a walk with their head of sponsorship. George exposed the pre-identified organisational vulnerability, setting out the problems within NGB-1 arising out of the arrangement, and asking how it could be solved collaboratively. He described that moment as "the start of the journey", knowing he was taking a gamble but trusting they had similar values which would create the desire to find a joint solution. Shortly after, a new director, Philip, was recruited who worked hard to identify and strengthen relationships with key individuals within the stakeholder organisation. The intention was to develop confidence, understanding, and trust with those key individuals prior to further meetings seeking to explore potential solutions to the exposed vulnerability, i.e., the poor contractual arrangements, in greater depth. Philip explained: "They're not going to invest in you as an organisation unless they trust yourselves as people. And really understand the objectives of an organisation." Those subsequent meetings were focused on "just being brutally honest about where we've come from… It's about understanding how ugly it was." (Philip). Through identifying and exposing their organisational vulnerability, these individuals within NGB-1 were able to engage in collaborative problem solving by leveraging strengthened relational resources. A further illustration was provided by Frank, describing the approach taken with a key funder:

> [George] made the decision very early on in his time in the job to be really open and
> honest with [key funder], and tell them warts and all what's happening, and what's not
> happening. So every single time there was a financial issue, when we got the big VAT
> bill for example, [George] told them immediately…And the main reason for that is,
> they potentially have either the expertise or the resources financially to help us if we
> get in trouble. If you come to them last minute and say 'oh, we're about to go
> bankrupt', and they'll be like 'well why the hell haven't you told us, we could have
> helped you, and we could have put some money aside to potentially bail you out'.

Contemporaneous fieldnotes from a meeting between Frank and the same key funder (referred to above) described how Frank shared concerns about future areas of organisational vulnerability and asked to be kept informed of early warning signals which could impact those areas. In this way, exposing vulnerabilities not only had the potential to provide access to additional resource in the present to deal with those vulnerabilities, but also facilitated access to future informational resources. These future resources could only be made available in a timely manner if the stakeholder knew in advance what information was likely to be useful.

An example of how exposing vulnerability at the team level was perceived to result in a heightened ability to deal with the financial decline was provided by Henry, a member of the JLT, during an interview. Discussing behaviours surrounding the period of financial decline, Henry described how the SLT had provided the JLT with adverse financial information and requested that it not be shared in that format for fear it would unduly worry people who didn't understand the full context of the information. Henry confessed he did share it with his team:

> it was almost, not shock tactics, but I felt it was important that they saw that, to go almost – this is how bad it is. And they were like, wow, now I get it. And therefore understand why we need to change. Rather than, it's not great, but just bear with, and we'll work through it. No, you need to see this is how bad it is. And they've now rallied, and are almost more committed to making it better.

A powerful example of strengthening internal, individual-level relationships through exposing vulnerabilities was provided during an SLT meeting in September, which had the stated aim of exploring "how can we support each other better". It was instigated by George explaining "I want to go a bit deeper. I feel like things are becoming more difficult. I'm struggling a bit and want to know if it's just me". By voicing vulnerability, it allowed others in the room to expose their concerns, current circumstances, and raw emotions, with

admissions including being worried mistakes had been made. One of those present, Emma, later reflected how the atmosphere created in the meeting room carried on through lunch: "I felt like for the first time when we sat and had lunch together, we actually opened up to each other and talked about our personal lives in a way that we'd never done before." The impact of the strengthened relationships was evidenced in the next executive meeting one month later which was described by Frank as "the best meeting we've had as an exec". The contemporaneous meeting notes recorded "lots of friendly chat" over lunch, "tension free discussions, everyone leaving their department at the door, bringing insight but not protectionism" and in summary "Great relationships. More decision focused. Openness and trust." Strengthening individual relationships through exposing their vulnerabilities appeared to facilitate collaborative decision making amongst the SLT by allowing information to flow openly in a safe environment.

Recognising that relationships at any level are two-way, the need to develop an awareness of vulnerabilities also required investing time in understanding the needs and vulnerabilities of the other party in a relationship. During an SLT meeting in May, George reported having dedicated a whole day the previous month to building two key stakeholder relationships which had become strained. His learning was the "need to understand why people behave the way they do, before we can move the relationship forwards" (contemporaneous meeting notes). Later the same month George described that day as "one of most important days in last 18 months" (contemporaneous meeting notes from a JLT meeting), explaining how ways of working between the organisations would be adapted in the future to allow better resolution of inter-organisational problems as they arise.

The iterative nature of relationship strengthening through exposing vulnerabilities was illustrated by Emma during an interview, discussing how NGB-1 was adapting to an internal change and the balance needed between the psychological safety of one individual and another in a team or organisational environment:

to make sure that an individual feels safe and supported, but we don't allow an individual's view to be representative of the whole organisation…being conscious that your big voice might make someone else feel uncomfortable. So there's a whole load of work, if you're going to talk about organisational resilience, around individual self-awareness…my learning from that is be accountable for how what you're saying and doing has an impact on other people.

To develop an awareness of the needs and vulnerabilities of the other party in a relationship it was necessary to create an environment where an individual feels safe to express their needs and vulnerabilities, but also to be aware of the impact this expression might have on the ability of others to do likewise.

5.3.3 Recognition of Future Uncertainty rather than Retrospective Solace

A position of recognising and being able to deal with future uncertainty was evident within the organisation, which appeared to be purposively in contrast to deriving confidence from successfully dealing with significant change in the past (i.e., the financial decline). The recognition of uncertainty was observed during SLT meetings, with a reflective comment within the contemporaneous field notes from a meeting in May: "All the decisions are so interconnected, it becomes too difficult to make a decision. The SLT seem to recognise the need to make temporary decisions, acknowledging they may not yet understand the implications across all areas, and so may need to change that decision in the future." The acceptance of uncertainty was manifested behaviourally in a board meeting in April, with notes from the major events update by George recording "[person] noted how [George] was able to reel everything off without notes, shows how close he is to everything. [George] commenting that situation currently so fluid, not worth writing a paper." In this instance, the uncertainty *was* accepted at board level, but at other times there was tension between requests for detailed operational plans to help the board with oversight, and the reality of having to constantly adapt to changing, unpredictable circumstances. In an interview Emma (a director)

explained:

> I don't think it's right that the board see the detailed spreadsheet that says what's
>
> going out, because it's only a guide and all that changes. The way [my specialism]
>
> works now, you don't do all those things that you think you're going to do, because
>
> you change it. That's the nature of what we do now. We're much more agile in our
>
> work, so we don't need to spend hours doing the planning because we go, that's an
>
> idea, let's try it, yeah, it worked brilliant, do it bigger. Or that's an idea, no, it didn't
>
> work, okay, but what about if we did it like this. You know, it's very agile...it's much
>
> more fluid. So to give a plan to somebody who doesn't understand that is pointless.

To try to capture some learnings from the experiences of financial decline and recovery, and to mitigate against future risks, a raft of new policies had been put in place including a major decisions flow chart and a new reserves policy. It was recognised by the SLT though that these were only tools to help guide risk mitigation, they did not provide certainty per se. Discussing the major decisions flow chart, Charlotte, a director, explained:

> we've now got a decision tree model which says if we have anything like that in the
>
> future which is a large-scale project, we've got criteria that we have to consider, one
>
> of them being VAT, one being the financials. I don't know whether that document is
>
> complete, and the trouble is we would only recognise whether it was complete by
>
> coming up against a problem.

Rather than seeking solace from these policies, the detailed process to determine the content of such policies served to heighten awareness of future uncertainty. Later, in the same interview, Charlotte described the discussions around potential future risks which guided the development of the new reserves policy:

> We've looked at various scenarios for each areas of the business. They are very
>
> subjective conversations though, so in the end we had to draw a line under them and
>
> say, actually we don't really know what would happen in that situation, we can have a

guess, and we can roughly plan for it, but we could argue it forever…How do you

determine if something is risky or not? Because of that subjective nature, you have to

say you don't really know, there are so many big variables in there, you can't have a

definite answer for them all.

At other times, the absence of taking solace from historic success (of dealing with

financial decline) appeared more purposeful, borne from concerns about complacency, as

described by George during an interview:

there's a slightly masochistic satisfaction or comfort in it, yeah we were in a mess, all

our jobs were at risk if it wasn't sorted out, it's been sorted out, therefore we're

confident. But the risk in that mindset is that people become too confident, and we

just end up back in that same cycle, and with another problem.

From a practical perspective, Robert, a member of the JLT, questioned during an

interview whether learnings from past experiences of overcoming significant change can ever

be truly embedded at an organisational level in any event:

the people that start now, or in a few months' time, or towards the end of this year,

they might never hear of the lessons learnt, they might never hear of that challenge

that we had to overcome and that resilience that we had to display…At what point do

you stop learning from it, stop talking about it?….Is it then the responsibility of the

next people that come in to look back through all of the documentation, or go and

consult with people that have left previously, to say, what did you learn? What did

you experience? How can I avoid it? Because that's just not realistic.

5.3.4 Desire to Empower with Need for Support and Reassurance

There was a desire within NGB-1 to empower individuals to take decisions and act

autonomously, mitigated at times by a perception of insufficient support from leadership. The

desire to empower was also hindered by a conflicting need for increased oversight by

leadership which appeared to stem from the recent experience of financial decline. Regarding

empowerment, there was particular emphasis on ownership of personal development,

building the quality of human resources within the organisation, with George having the

mindset that "Learning is about learning together, it's about sharing experiences and figuring

stuff out together, not going on a course and somebody giving you all the answers like an

empty bucket." There was a gap, however, between the desire to empower and develop

employees and the act of doing so. Emma (a director) explained during an interview

responsibility had been conferred without concurrently increasing support:

> we're working with a lot of legacy behaviours…if you don't explain to somebody
>
> what you expect of them, how can you have a go at them for failing? Or how can you
>
> think less of them? And if we don't give people the right training and set out clearly
>
> what our expectations are, we're never going to feel that they're doing the right
>
> thing…you've got a body of people that have spent however many years being told
>
> what to do. So you can't suddenly expect them to know how to do it.

These sentiments were mirrored by Robert (a member of the JLT), who highlighted

the need for contextual information to support empowered decision making:

> I'd also love more of the filtering down of when those discussions do take place at an
>
> executive level, even if they're not necessarily decision-making discussions but
>
> they're just conceptual, theoretical discussions, I'd still like to know what the
>
> outcome of that is, to guide my thinking. I think that's where the executive team have
>
> got great visibility of a) the organisation as it currently is, but b) of the challenges that
>
> led us to have to make a lot of change in the last year, people wise, budget wise etc,
>
> where they've got that visibility they're having great discussions, but I don't always
>
> hear of the outcomes of them, that can then inform how I go about my work, or how I
>
> can then contribute to that, and maybe take it a step further, maybe an idea that I've
>
> got. Similarly, I want to learn from them, it would be great to hear the process they go
>
> through sometimes with these conversations.

Alongside the desire to empower, there was a need amongst the SLT for reassurance which manifested itself through attention to the detail of budgetary planning, as explained by George (a director): "my budget holders got 25 expenditure lines, I want to see that forecast column changing. Even by 50p. It sounds a bit ridiculous, but if I can see it changing, I can see it's been considered." This need for oversight appeared to be driven by diminished confidence in the financial discipline within the organisation following the recent experience of financial decline:

> I think most people have got a sense of what "good" looks like, but I'm just not convinced we've got an absolute culture of discipline around [budgeting]. And I'm probably being slightly paranoid about it, because of the last two years, because of the horrible financial year we had last year. (George).

The dual focus on empowerment and a need for reassurance manifested itself at times as a misalignment between "doing what's right" in the context of a values-based system centred around individual empowerment, and "doing what's required" in the context of a process-based system centered around demonstrating accountability. The tension and confusion arising from this misalignment was illustrated during an interview with Charlotte (a director), discussing a proposed change in the appraisal process, which had been discussed at length during meetings throughout the ethnography and never sufficiently resolved:

> [person] came in and said, "we don't need all this process, let's have conversations, let's make it more fluid" for understandable reasons. And then it's perhaps moving back now towards more process. I don't know if that's because there's a change in attitudes, or an attempt to change the culture, and time hasn't been given yet to change the underlying behaviours. Or whether actually, it's the wrong direction of travel, or people don't believe in it.

In summary, throughout the ethnography there was a sense of a cultural shift within NGB-1 towards individual empowerment, autonomy, and responsibility, and away from

process and hierarchy. The SLT acted as role models exhibiting a willingness to own decisions, but at times failed to recognise the need to support others, either through skill development or contextual information, to allow other employees within the organisation to accept responsibility. In conjunction with the shift towards empowerment, there was an underlying current of unease, with recent events contributing towards the financial decline still salient. The positive effect was a lack of complacency and awareness of future uncertainty. The negative impact was expressed as a need for increased oversight which had the potential to erode trust, with notes from an informal interview with Catherine (a member of the JLT) confessing confidentially how she had considered leaving the organisation when the organisational context was perceived to have shifted towards a requirement to demonstrate accountability, experiencing it as a lack of trust from the SLT. During an interview, Philip (a director) commented "Have we demonstrated resilience? Yes, absolutely. Have we built more resilience? To be seen." Rather than categorising NGB-1 as a resilient, or not a resilient, organisation, it appeared to be moving along a continuum towards developing increased resilience capabilities, whilst still displaying some areas of weakness and contradiction as the stated values and behaviours appeared to be changing more rapidly than the underlying organisational culture. There were striking examples of how an awareness of vulnerabilities was advantageous in strengthening relationships both internally and externally (see previous sub-section of this theme). It was this awareness, of vulnerabilities and uncertainties and failings, combined with a willingness to face and own difficult decisions, and a desire to disseminate this approach throughout all levels of the organisation, which ultimately gave rise to an elite sport organisation which had not only successfully dealt with significant change, but appeared to have strengthened its capability to do so again in the future.

5.4 Discussion

In the present study, using detailed longitudinal data triangulated from a variety of

sources via an ethnographic approach, we explored nuances and complexities in how organisational resilience develops over time. The findings point to a number of psychosocial strategies that contribute towards an elite sport organisation's ability to successfully deal with significant change (viz. financial decline), namely: collectively owning decisions and their consequences; awareness and exposure of vulnerabilities to strengthen relationships; awareness of future uncertainty rather than retrospective solace; and desire to empower with a need for support and reassurance. To understand some of the interactions between the themes, the discussion that follows is organised around the multiple levels at which organisational resilience takes place, namely organisational, team, and individual.

5.4.1 Organisational Level of Analysis

At the organisational level, the experience of having successfully dealt with financial decline had the impact of cultivating a recognition of uncertainty and the organisation's fallibility. Historically, from a research perspective, organisational resilience has been viewed largely in terms of precursory planning processes (Ismail et al., 2011; Lee et al., 2013; McManus et al., 2008), with resilience events regarded ontologically as unknown, but potentially knowable (Alvarez et al., 2018). In contrast, an ontological "uncertainty" perspective, such as that displayed by NGB-1, regards events as unknowable, rendering the planning stage futile (Alvarez et al., 2018), and thus leading to a focus on gathering and evaluating information in real time, accepting that decisions will be made with incomplete information and subject to change. Adopting a position of expecting, and tolerating, uncertainty has been highlighted in previous organisational resilience research (Jaaron & Backhouse, 2014; Wilson, 2016), and within Chapter Four the core organisational resilience processes of sensing and adapting encourage a focus on the present rather than anticipating the future. Notwithstanding the acceptance of uncertainty, the raft of new policies put in place indicates that NGB-1 did not discard the planning stage altogether, recognising the value of clear procedures and processes as organisational resources to deal with significant change

(Powley & Cameron, 2020). Rather than providing illusory control, which is particularly sought after in times of uncertainty, process was employed with an understanding that some events will be more predictable than others.

The rejection of deriving solace from having successfully dealt with the financial decline appeared to arise, at least in part, from concerns of senior leadership regarding complacency, leading to inattention and drifting back into habitual routines. Hamel and Valikangas (2003) noted complacency (characterised by an absence of expectation of adversity) as a cognitive challenge to the development of resilience. Complacency can be inadvertently fostered when the accomplishment of recovery is regarded as implicit evidence of the organisation's resilience (Carlson, 2018), consistent with conceptualisations of organisational resilience as recovery (e.g., Wildavsky, 1988; Sheffi & Rice, 2005; Koronis & Ponis, 2018). Collective efficacy, whereby those within a team or organisation are likely to be more confident to deal with future stressors if they have similar experiences in the past (Bandura, 2000), may also trigger complacency. Collective efficacy has previously been found to be a relevant characteristic in organisational (Billington et al., 2017), team (Morgan et al., 2013), and individual resilience (Bonanno et al., 2010) research. The dark side of demonstrating resilience was illustrated in research by Tinsley, Dillon, and Cronin (2012) who found that when people frame their experience of escaping disaster in terms of resilience, they underestimate the danger of future similar situations and are less likely to take actions to mitigate potential risks. As an alternative paradoxical viewpoint, interpreting an experience of escaping disaster as recognising the potential for future uncertainty, as was evidenced at NGB-1, rather than increased collective efficacy, may serve better to aid sensing of future danger and appropriate risk mitigation.

The results can be interpreted as pointing to the value of identifying and then exposing organisational vulnerabilities in order to strengthen relationships, in contrast to the existing organisational resilience literature which suggests a need to manage organisational

vulnerabilities through risk mitigation (McManus et al., 2008; Powley & Cameron, 2020; Sheffi & Rice, 2005). There are inherent risks in this alternative strategy of exposing vulnerabilities, particularly that the vulnerability is viewed as symptomatic of organisational weakness which key stakeholders turn away from, rather than towards. To facilitate collaborative problem-solving and access to third-party resources, it seems attention should first be paid to strengthening inter-organisational relationships, emphasising mutual values and goals, which in turn motivate interpretation of vulnerabilities as shared rather than individual concerns (Barton & Kahn, 2019).

5.4.2 Team Level of Analysis

At the team level, decisions were faced, evaluated, and owned as a collective, particularly within the Board and the SLT. There was evidence of an appetite to confront uncomfortable facts, encouragement to check and challenge each other in a constructive manner, and to make brave decisions based on values, evidence, and desirable long-term consequences rather than to solve short term problems. A recent empirical study by Walker et al. (2020), researching resilient responses to large scale disaster amongst eleven organisations in New Zealand, found a key resilience feature to be leaders who create a united senior leadership team around them with a shared sense of ownership and shared values, empowered to actively deal with matters. Similarly, in Study One a key resilience characteristic was shared understanding, which incorporated not only the organisation's vision and values, but also shared rules governing behaviour, and shared regard for unity and integration. Within elite sport, Morgan et al. (2019) listed the development of a team-regulatory system based on ownership and responsibility as a strategy to develop team resilience within a semi-professional rugby team. It seems then that collective ownership of responsibility and decisions is an important feature of both team and organisational resilience. This Study Three extends the literature by highlighting an important precursor to collective ownership, namely collectively confronting and evaluating information prior to accepting responsibility and

making decisions.

The current study underlined the importance of turning towards, rather than away from, difficult facts and situations, approaching and working through adversity together with eyes wide open (cf. Coutu, 2002). The ability to own decisions was predicated on teams being comfortable to face and evaluate negativity within a psychologically safe group environment and was therefore also linked to the theme of exposing vulnerabilities to strengthen relationships. In Chapter Three the resilient characteristic of reciprocal commitment incorporated a belief that the organisation is a safe place to fail, with psychological safety linked to organisational resilience through fostering a willingness to take interpersonal risks (cf. Lengnick-Hall et al., 2011; Walker et al., 2020). The current study suggests that psychological safety may be cultivated within a team through sharing vulnerabilities which in turn allows teams to approach and evaluate difficult facts or situations collectively.

Also, at the team level, in the current study decisions were made based on approaching and evaluating current information, but with a view to their long-term consequences. In a three-year case study of Bolton Wanderers, a professional football club, Gilmore and Gilson (2007) noted how an elite sport organisation had transformed its performance through focusing on a collection of short and long-term strategies, a rarity in an industry which demands instant results. The authors commented that "being able to simultaneously and effectively operate in these temporally distinct domains underpins the club's ongoing ability to perform." (p. 424). Highlighting the need to consider both proximal and distal outcomes, Fitzgerald and Lupton's (2015) study of resilience in three local authorities in London during an extended period of spending cuts noted how focusing on short term profits and efficiencies can mask underlying changes through pushing problems elsewhere, and reducing resources to deal with future adversity. When conceptualised as the ability to swiftly recover from adversity, resilience can encourage short term thinking, but the

results of this study suggest it is important to consider the distal trajectory of decisions and their likely sustainability (Ortiz-de-Mandojana & Bansal, 2016).

5.4.3 Individual Level of Analysis

At the individual level, employees were empowered to take responsibility and make decisions, allowing flexible self-organisation and adaptation. Researchers have found that organisations demonstrating resilience are not managed hierarchically, but instead rely on diffused decision making and decentralisation (Boin & van Eeten, 2013; Jaaron & Backhouse, 2014; Lampel et al., 2014; Lee et al., 2013; Wilson, 2016), as represented by ongoing iterative adaptation as a core resilience process in Chapter Four. The SLT in the current study also encouraged ownership of personal development. Cognitive capabilities such as knowledge and expertise help groups and organisations to combine and deploy knowledge to resolve issues (Gomes et al., 2014; Weick, 1995). It is the collective integration and application of knowledge which is valuable for organisational resilience (Williams et al., 2017) rather than individual knowledge itself, suggesting that any strategies to develop organisational-level resilience by increasing employee knowledge and expertise should also attend to how those individual level resources are integrated through simultaneously developing collaborative problem-solving skills.

At the same time as encouraging individual responsibility and delegated decision making, leaders sought increased reassurance from employees through requiring visibly disciplined financial planning behaviours, creating an apparent incongruence between transformational leadership focused on creating an environment in which employees can achieve their potential and transactional leadership behaviours focused on behaviours and outcomes (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Transformational leadership has been linked with team resilience in elite sport (Morgan et al., 2015) as well as organisational resilience in other performance-related contexts (McManus et al., 2008; Walker et al., 2020; Witmer & Mellinger, 2016). It can however have a dark side by creating unrealistic expectations of a

higher purpose at odds with the everyday experience of routine administrative work, creating confusion, cynicism, and ambiguity (Alvesson et al., 2017). A more coherent understanding of the interplay between the desire to empower and delegate, and the everyday experience of having to demonstrate compliance with process, as evidenced during our research within NGB-1, is offered by the model of "semi-structured" organisations (Brown & Eisenhardt, 1997, 1998). Brown and Eisenhardt (1997, 1998) posit that such organisations will be required in continually changing environments which demand "dynamic equilibrium", and fall between those which are mechanistic (with rigid strategic planning, bogged down in implementation) and those which are organic (engaging in chaotic reactions). Semi-structured organisations enable adaptability through increasing communication, adding project-level responsibilities, and combining flexibility with reporting relationships that have final decision-making authority. Through this lens, the combination within NGB-1 of a desire to empower with a requirement to demonstrate compliance can be seen as striking a necessary balance between mechanistic process and organic adaptability to maintain dynamic equilibrium in the face of significant change.

5.4.4 Multi-Level of Analysis

A strategy which manifested itself at the inter-organisational, team, and dyad levels was strengthening relationships through exposing vulnerabilities. Whilst internal and external social connections have been found repeatedly to enable access to a variety of organisational resilience resources, including social, informational, and tangible (Billington et al., 2017; Chapter Four; Dalgaard-Nielsen, 2017; Gittell et al., 2006; Jaaron & Backhouse, 2014; Walker et al., 2020), the way in which such connections are strengthened has received limited attention. Powley (2013) refers to "relational proliferation" in times of adversity, which involves organisations identifying and strengthening internal and external networks of relationships. Key external stakeholders who may support a resilient response receive focused attention and support (Powley & Cameron, 2020). However, at a time when relational

resources are particularly important, crises can affect the connective capacity of internal and external relationships.

Kahn et al. (2013) note it is important to attend to relational repair, not just operational repair, during times of uncertainty and change. Specifically, adversity triggers anxiety in individuals, which can impact the functioning of organisational teams (Barton & Kahn, 2019). This can lead in turn to brittle, defensive patterns where members move away from and avoid adversity-triggered anxiety. Barton and Kahn (2019) propose an alternative trajectory where groups instead move towards anxiety, engaging with it directly through a reflective process they term a "relational pause", through which groups can develop greater resilience. Relational pauses are triggered by individuals emitting distress signals, which other group members can either interpret as symptomatic of a problem member, or of a wider, group-level concern. The latter is more likely when the issue is interpreted as threatening important collective tasks. In the current study, members of the SLT within NGB-1 were willing to face and evaluate difficult facts, and then communicate these vulnerabilities to key external stakeholders, framing them as threatening the viability of collective goals rather than purely internal, organisational issues. There was an awareness within the SLT of the need to communicate vulnerabilities within the context of strong relationships, which at times required identifying and correcting affected relations before shifting to a task focus to draw on collective resources for problem-solving.

Viewed holistically, the results from this study raise important questions about the level at which resilience is assessed, and how there might be positive effects at one level but negative effects at another (Caza et al., 2020). For example, at the organisational level, delegated decision making and increased individual responsibility aids self-organisation and adaptability, but at the individual level, resilience research emphasises the need for appropriate support within a challenging environment (Fletcher & Sarkar, 2016). Extending previous research indicating that resilience at one level does not automatically equate to

resilience at another level of analysis (Gucciardi et al., 2018; Morgan et al., 2013), the current study suggests that any purposive development of organisational resilience demands a consideration of its impact at multiple levels to avoid unintended detrimental consequences. As a further illustration, encouraging individuals to take ownership of their development may increase organisational resources in the form of knowledge and expertise, which can be called upon in times of adversity, but without a concurrent emphasis on developing collaborative team behaviours, it may negatively impact team-level resilience. It is, therefore, important to adopt a multilevel perspective when studying the effectiveness of strategies to develop organisational resilience (Britt & Sawhney, 2020).

5.4.5 Strengths and Limitations

With increased focus on the influence of the organisational context to the performance of athletes and teams, the present study offers deep insight into organisational resilience of an elite sport organisation through prolonged immersion in the field. The varied forms of data collected across the seven-month ethnography including formal and informal interviews, and extensive observations in meetings and within the office environment, enabled a multi-faceted perspective of resilience strategies and how at times these can conflict, for example the desire to empower with the need for oversight. The research is elucidated by specifying the nature of the adversity faced and evidence of having successfully dealt with it, details too often omitted from resilience research (Caza et al., 2020).

Obtaining a sufficiently transparent level of access to organisations in the public eye such as those within elite sport is challenging but necessary for the research to provide rich description of participants' perspectives (Wagstaff et al., 2012b). Indeed, a significant strength of this study was the level of access to confidential and sensitive information afforded by participants, particularly those within the SLT. This is likely to have been facilitated by the positioning of the lead researcher as a white, middle-class, professional, but this revealing of data may simultaneously have concealed the perspectives of those

disaffected with the organisation, or having negative views or concerns, fearing the likelihood of information being passed back to management. As such, this high level of endorsement by the SLT within the organisation may have reduced access to a broader perspective, such as dissenting, critical, or marginalised voices.

A further limitation may be seen to arise from the researcher's entanglement in partially creating the environment which is the subject of the research. As Fayard and Van Maanen (2015) noted, rather than being seen as problematic or flawed in the failure to stand apart from the focus of the study, it is simply part of the process of conducting organisational ethnographies. Instead of seeking objectivity, the research team tried to make the observations and representations of functioning within NGB-1 as credible and empirically detailed as possible. We were also able to experience the reactions of organisational members to these representations, further enhancing the methodological integrity of the research.

5.4.6 Practical Implications and Future Directions

The results of this study suggest the potential for practitioners to work at the individual, team, and organisational levels to promote organisational resilience through enhancing both cognitive and behavioural capacities (see Table 5.1 for some examples employed by NGB-1). At the individual level, encouraging responsibility and autonomy both for decision making and personal development needs to be set alongside provision of necessary support (Fletcher & Sarkar, 2016). Leveraging these individual-level skills needs to be practised in a team environment through collaborative working and problem-solving.

At the team level, various exercises can be introduced such as 360 feedback whereby information is gathered on an individual from a number of sources who know them, typically colleagues, line managers, and direct reports, to develop an awareness of individual and organisational level vulnerabilities. It is then important to have an opportunity to practise exposing vulnerability, for example through a communication exercise such as Personal-Disclosure Mutual-Sharing (Holt & Dunn, 2006) whereby individuals publicly disclose

personal stories and information. Not only are such exercises thought to facilitate communication and cohesion, important characteristics and processes of team and organisational resilience in sport (Chapters Three and Four; Morgan et al., 2019), but they are likely to increase the confidence of individuals to expose vulnerabilities within individual and organisational level relationships.

At the organisational level, leaders can be encouraged to reflect on the consistency between organisational cognitions as embodied in an organisation's vision and values, and individual behaviours through the creation of a behavioural charter in which direct links are drawn between cognitive and behavioural resilience capabilities, particularly those which appear superficially inconsistent. Areas for reflection might include identifying behaviours that facilitate employee empowerment whilst simultaneously supporting and overseeing those individuals, and how leaders can make decisions with an awareness of uncertainty whilst owning the long-term consequences of such decisions. In this latter example, a behavioural tool such as the pre-mortem (Klein, 2007) may prove useful. Knowledgeable individuals are gathered together prior to a formal, committed decision and asked to imagine the project a year from now, when it has gone terribly wrong, and to write down a brief history of the failure. The responses elicited simultaneously focus on long-term outcomes and heightened awareness of current uncertainty and vulnerabilities.

The results indicate potential academic value in several future research directions. First, interventions are needed to better understand how strategies designed to purposively develop organisational resilience may be implemented. In providing a commentary and reflections on the field of sport psychology in 2019, Wagstaff noted the dearth of knowledge on effective and efficacious organisational interventions, urging specific attention be paid to how interventions work as well as why they work. Second, the suggestion of resilience at one level negatively impacting resilience at another level underlines the importance of capturing organisational resilience as a holistic phenomenon enacted at multiple levels, and

acknowledging the potential for a dark side of resilience (Caza et al., 2020; Williams et al., 2017). Third, and finally, the research was undertaken with a UK Olympic governing body. The data extracts representing employees' voices, and the contextually embedded results generated from prolonged immersion in the field, enable readers to consider whether the findings are transferable to their sport contexts or other organisational settings (Smith, 2018). Nevertheless, more work is needed in elite sport organisations worldwide, of different sizes and particularly those which are geographically dispersed, to better understand the potential transferability of the results. In the UK, there is a need for research within other types of elite sport organisation such as professional football, rugby, or cricket clubs.

5.4.7 Conclusion

Through an immersive, ethnographic approach to better understand organisational resilience over time, we explored how an elite sport organisation has successfully dealt with significant change. The results were categorised into four main themes: collectively owning decisions and their consequences; awareness and exposure of vulnerabilities to strengthen relationships; awareness of future uncertainty, and desire to empower with need for support and reassurance. These results provide insight into the strategies used by an elite sport organisation and its employees in the aftermath of a significant adversity and offer several unique suggestions to the organisational resilience literature. Significantly, it is suggested that organisations would benefit from a paradigmatical shift in thinking away from controlling the future, instead being aware of the future but cultivating a recognition of current uncertainty and vulnerability, and the need for collaborative relationships as a potential source of diverse resources which can be drawn upon as changes become manifest over time. Collectively, the research advances knowledge of how organisational resilience develops within an elite sport organisation and provides practical, evidence-based intervention strategies for practitioners at the individual, team, and organisational levels.

Chapter Six:

Empirical Research: Study Four

The first empirical study in this thesis, as detailed in Chapter Three (Study One), emphasised the need to work collaboratively with end-users of the research to enhance ecological validity and alignment to their needs. This contextual embeddedness has been a constant theme throughout this thesis, prioritising the perspectives and experiences of those working in elite sport organisations in Chapter Four (Study Two), and culminating in prolonged ethnographic immersion as described within Chapter Five (Study Three) to present a pragmatic account of how an elite sport organisation successfully dealt with significant change. Based on the findings from the empirical studies in Chapters Three to Five (Studies One to Three), the final empirical chapter of this thesis (Chapter Six, Study Four) explores how the research to date could be applied to assist an elite sport organisation in developing its organisational resilience, enhancing the transfer of knowledge gained during this thesis into a real-world applied setting.

Co-creating, Implementing, and Evaluating Interventions to Develop Organisational Resilience in an Elite Sport Organisation

6.1 Introduction

In Chapter Three, organisational resilience was defined as "the dynamic capability of an organisation to successfully deal with significant change. It emerges from multi-level (employee, team, and organisational) interacting characteristics and processes which enable

an organisation to prepare for, adapt to, and learn from significant change" (Chapter Three, p. 73). Conceptualised as a capability, organisational resilience should have the potential to be cultivated and developed (Caza et al., 2020). The results of Chapters Three, Four, and Five identified the resilient characteristics, processes, and strategies which contribute towards an elite sport organisation's success in dealing with financial decline, yet how to create the conditions necessary for the emergence and development of these factors remains unclear.

From the literature, it seems that few psychosocial organisational resilience interventions have been undertaken, with the most prominent research design being case-based studies diagnosing what has happened following accidents or disasters, seeking to derive insights into how resilience may be developed (Linnenluecke, 2017). As an evolving but immature field, organisational resilience research is hindered by diversity in conceptualisation and, as a related point, how then to measure and assess the presence or absence of resilience. As a result, alongside the "plethora of conceptual development and theory building through descriptive qualitative research studies… there has been a reluctance to move to empirically testing research models" (Verreynne et al., 2018, p. 1125).

An early study on organisational resilience was conducted in New Zealand by McManus (2008), with the principle objective to identify aspects of this construct that may be generic through comparisons between ten organisational case studies. This thesis has formed the cornerstone of what is now an expansive research programme under the title "Resilient Organisations" (www.resorgs.org.nz/resources/organisational-resilience-publications). A five-step programme was developed to gather case study information through interviews and discussions, event scenarios, the mapping of organisational vulnerabilities, and finally through undertaking readiness exercises and disaster simulations. While at the end of the case studies each organisation was provided with an action plan, the research design did not include an assessment as to whether those action plans were implemented, and if so, their impact on organisational resilience. Nevertheless, the research provided detailed examples of practical exercises which could be used by organisations to improve their resilience.

A criticism of the scenario planning approach to developing resilience used by McManus (2008), is that it potentially foregrounds planning for known or foreseeable threats at the expense of developing a capability to deal with uncertainty (Linnenluecke, 2017), wasting resources preparing for events which never happen, or missing opportunities to develop knowledge and insight through experimenting and failing (Wildavsky, 1988). This criticism was disputed by Macrae and Draycott (2019) in their study of field-based simulation exercises designed to deliver resilience in maternity care. The authors noted how such participant-designed interventions provide an opportunity not only to assess strengths and weaknesses in dealing with foreseeable scenarios, but also allow the development of a set of social, cognitive, and material resources that can be drawn upon when confronted with entirely novel or completely unexpected events. Macrae and Draycott identified three core processes: relational rehearsal (building shared expectations and collective trust); system structuring (improving the organisational systems and cognitive infrastructures, including situational awareness and shared understanding); and practice elaboration (focusing on embodied wisdom, connecting abstract knowledge with practical work, and reflective inquiry). Although the researchers did not aim to capture any outcome measures following the simulation exercises, the study findings did illuminate potential processes through which such interventions may exert an effect.

In the only organisational-level intervention (to the author's knowledge) purposively designed to contribute towards organisational resilience and sustainability, Gray and Jones (2016) designed and delivered a series of organisational and learning interventions for 12 small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). The interventions comprised the creation of a new collective identity centred around collaborative peer support, workplace coaching, and a generative learning environment. The interventions were delivered over four days, interspaced across four months of dedicated activities which allowed the gradual development of skills and the emergence of long-term patterns of behaviour. The post-intervention survey results indicated increases in business confidence and self-belief, clarity

in vision and action plans, willingness to collaborate, perceived support, motivation to overcome adversity, and communication skills, although no measure of organisational resilience was administered. The qualitative data from open-ended survey questions at three months post-intervention indicated the supportive peer community had continued beyond the end of the interventions, and the self-coaching skills developed during the interventions had helped to sustain confidence and motivation. Given that theory testing on design, implementation, and improvement processes to enhance organisational resilience was identified as a key future research direction by Annarelli and Nonino in 2016, the lacuna of organisational resilience interventions is surprising and perhaps reflective of the practical difficulties in carrying out organisational-level intervention research in any field of study.

To date, there have been a limited number of intervention studies at the organisational level in sport. In 2013, Wagstaff et al. conducted a series of educational workshops for a range of employees ($N = 25$) in a national sport organisation, and subsequently one-to-one coaching with three national managers, across 9 months in total. Interventions were designed to develop emotion abilities and regulation strategies and, ultimately, improve individual and organisational functioning. The results suggested that both emotional intelligence and emotion regulation can be enhanced, although only those in the coaching phase showed improved emotional intelligence, leading the authors to recommend the use of tailored rather than generic interventions. Later, Slater and Barker (2019) explored the development and efficacy of a 2-year organisational (leadership-based) intervention underpinned by social identity principles. Working with coaches and athletes ($N = 7$) from a male elite disability soccer team, the research team delivered workshops, and designed activities to be completed by athletes with other team members outside of the workshop sessions. Data indicated that the intervention had a positive effect on athletes' social identification, perceived staff identity leadership, and hours practice completed, with no changes observed in collective efficacy. The authors reflected on the challenges of delivering an intervention within sport organisations, including: the need to clearly outline expectations for key stakeholders,

particularly the time and effort required to instigate behaviour change; the value of sharing the project with a wider group of staff; the desire of participants for more frequent sessions; and the value of collaborating with staff to embed the follow-up activities.

In reviewing the dearth of organisational-level interventions in sport, Wagstaff (2019a) urged researchers to focus on how organisational interventions work, as well as why, and to develop more effective knowledge transfer partnerships, noting that "too little intervention work is published in the sport psychology domain as a whole" (p. 138). Challenges faced by those wishing to instigate organisational intervention work include understanding the unique structure, climate, and culture of an organisation, as well as gaining organisational buy-in to conduct the research. Using the in-depth organisational knowledge gained in Chapter Five through a seven month ethnography within an elite sport organisation, and based on findings from Chapters Three, Four, and Five regarding the characteristics, processes, and psychosocial strategies that contribute towards organisational resilience in elite sport, the current study seeks to understand the development of organisational resilience in elite sport. Specifically, the aim of the current study was to explore the co-creation, implementation, and effectiveness of a series of small-scale interventions chosen by an elite sport organisation to purposefully develop its organisational resilience, providing insights that could inform the practical development of organisational resilience.

6.2 Method

6.2.1 Research Design

This study combined participatory action research, or learning by doing (Ismail et al., 2011), with process evaluation, which considers the perspectives and actions of those implementing interventions and their potential influence on outcomes (Nytrø et al., 2000). In complex organisational systems, there are limited options for controlled intervention exposure and isolation of intervention outcomes to explore whether and how practical transformation has occurred. Process evaluation focuses on gathering information from those participating in interventions and those involved in their implementation about the quality

and effect of intervention activities (Randall et al., 2019) to help identify explanations for intervention outcomes.

The aim of action research is to bring about practical transformation and to advance knowledge (Huxham & Vangen, 2003). In contrast to traditional action research, in which the researchers act as outside agents of change, participatory approaches are those in which the researcher works alongside practitioners already embedded in the organisation or community, working together to design and deliver the research (Holt et al., 2013; Van Slingerland et al., 2020). Such an approach can increase the likelihood of interventions being positively perceived by participants (Randall et al., 2019). In this study, the research ends, namely to advance knowledge regarding how organisational resilience may be developed, are the researcher's reason for getting involved, but the intervention itself is driven by the client's needs to bring about practical transformation in the organisation's resilience capability.

The research is conducted from a critical realist perspective (Ronkainen & Wiltshire, 2019), concerned with causal mechanisms, often from a detached perspective considering what mechanisms might explain the outcomes. When combined with action research, this extends to incorporate an engaged perspective, focusing on the mechanisms which could be introduced or encouraged in a particular context to produce a particular outcome (Ackroyd & Karlsson, 2014). Action research places causal responsibility in the participants' own hands, whilst the critical realist perspective can promote a consciousness of causal mechanisms amongst participants which holds potential for progressive change (Ram et al., 2014).

6.2.2 Organisation and Participants

Participatory action research is inherently opportunistic, given the degree of participant involvement required. This study was conducted in collaboration with a mid-sized UK based Olympic and Paralympic governing body where the lead researcher had previously conducted ethnographical research over a seven-month period (see Chapter Five for further details), hereinafter referred to as "NGB-1". The detailed knowledge of NGB-1 gathered by the lead researcher, and the relationships formed with a number of employees, facilitated

access to the organisation. The six practitioners[1] (female = 2) who led the interventions were purposively selected from the performance department (n = 5) and human resources, ranging in age from 28 to 55 years (M = 37.3, SD = 8.7). Practitioner roles within NGB-1 included a Paralympic head coach, head of culture development within the performance team, and people development manager, assisted by a head of high-performance centre programme, talent pathways manager, and performance operations manager. The intervention participants[2] consisted of the senior and junior managers within NGB-1 (N = 22, female = 50%) who ranged in age from 29 years to 59 years (M = 40.5, SD = 7.5) with an average of 3.9 years of employment within NGB-1.

6.2.3 Procedures

6.2.3.1 Intervention Creation. Action research involves a cyclical process of planning, implementing, monitoring, reflecting, and evaluating (Wagstaff et al., 2013). In participatory action research, participants may be involved in some or all of these phases of the research project (Holt et al., 2013). In the current study, the phases of research, and the activities of participants in each phase, are detailed in Figure 6.1. The ethnographic research described in Chapter Five facilitated a negotiated understanding of the existing organisational resilience capabilities of NGB-1, and also served to establish relationships between the lead researcher and employees who subsequently participated in the current study. Towards the end of the immersive phase of ethnographic research, exploratory discussions took place between the lead researcher and the CEO of NGB-1 regarding the potential for intervention research in collaboration with NGB-1. Given the lead researcher's understanding of the complexity of both the concept of organisational resilience, and the organisational context,

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[1] The term "practitioners" has been purposively chosen to reflect the experience of the individuals embedded within the organisation delivering the interventions (see Huxham & Vangen, 2003). Other terms considered included "fieldworkers" (see Holt et al., 2013) but this seemed inappropriate for individuals embedded within an organisation, and "leaders", a term the individuals themselves were uncomfortable with, given their intention to co-create the interventions with the participants, and to shift from initially delivering but then later facilitating the interventions as they became increasingly self-organising.

[2] Organisational intervention research sometimes refers to employees "exposed" to the intervention in preference to "participated" as the latter suggests an active level of involvement which may not be verifiable. In the current study, the term participants is used as all were known from the qualitative data to have been actively involved in the interventions, notwithstanding that the degree of involvement varied between individuals.

Figure 6.1

Action Research Processes and Data Collection for Organisational Resilience Interventions

Time period	Action research processes	Activities	Qualitative data	Quantitative data
Ethnographic research (April – Nov 2019)	Understanding existing capabilities, establishing relationships	Prolonged immersive research (see Chapter Five)		
	Mobilisation	Discussing scope of interventions and timescale		
Pre-intervention (March 2020)	Reflecting	Workshop - presenting framework of potential intervention topics		
	Co-analysis of issues	Workshop - rating topics on priority, feasibility, and impact		
	Co-design of interventions	Agreeing intervention topics, practitioners, and participants		
T1 (April 2020)	Co-creation of action plan	Creating, discussing, and refining action plans for each intervention topic	Focus group (practitioners only)	OR survey; PE survey (practitioners only)
	Implementation of action plan	See specific action plans (Appendix Seven)		
T2 (July 2020)	Evaluation of action plans	Reflexive discussions to monitor and enhance intervention adherence / adaptation	Three focus groups (practitioners only, one per intervention topic)	OR survey; PE survey
	Implementation of action plan	See specific action plans (Appendix Seven)		
T3 (Oct 2020)	Evaluation of interventions	Debrief sessions, feedback regarding how to sustain intervention outcomes	Two focus groups (practitioners; participants)	OR survey; PE survey

Note. OR survey = organisational resilience survey; PE survey = process evaluation survey.

combined with the desire within senior management of NGB-1 to empower the staff and encourage responsibility and accountability, both parties were keen for the interventions to be internally designed and implemented. A scope of work and timescale was prepared based on the principles of participatory action research. Following institutional ethical approval, informed consent was obtained from the CEO on behalf of NGB-1.

A face-to-face workshop was delivered in March 2020 to the senior and junior management teams within NGB-1 as indicated in Figure 6.1 summarising the most recent research underlying this project, namely Chapters Three, Four, and Five. Drawing on the detailed contextual information gathered during the immersive ethnographic work described in Chapter Five, a framework was compiled by the lead researcher proposing a range of topics that could be utilised to develop organisational resilience within NGB-1 as shown in Table 6.1. The workshop participants were asked by group to discuss and rate these topics based on the level of priority, feasibility of implementation, and potential impact, and to indicate whether they would be prepared to lead any of the interventions. This co-analysis of underlying issues and priorities between researcher and participants as part of the participatory action research approach facilitated the development of interventions with a better chance of matching the needs of NGB-1 than a generic intervention programme (Nielsen et al., 2010).

Less than a week after the face-to-face workshop, the head office of NGB-1 was closed due to concerns about the potential spread of Covid-19, and within two weeks the whole of the UK had been placed in national lockdown. All the activities described hereinafter took place online. The impact of the global pandemic on the intervention delivery and outcomes is discussed within the Results section as a key contextual factor during the process evaluation (Randall et al., 2019).

Following the workshop, mean scores were provided to NGB-1's CEO (see Table 6.1) together with individuals who might be suitable to lead the interventions, and examples of potential intervention content. Further discussions concluded with a list of the intervention

Table 6.1

Mean Scores for Proposed Intervention Topics

	Priority	Feasibility	Impact	Total
	(1 - high, 5 - low)			(range 3-15)
Owning development	1	1.25	1	3.25
Succession	2.25	3	2.75	8
Self-awareness	1.5	3	1.5	6
Ability to influence	1.5	2.75	1	5.25
Showing your workings	2.25	1.75	2	6
Monitoring unintended consequences	2.25	3	1.25	6.5
Aligning values and behaviours	1	3	1	5
Checking and challenging	1.25	3.75	1	6
Locus of control	2.25	3.75	3	9

topics, and proposed leaders and participants. It was decided by the CEO and lead researcher to use the skills of individuals within the performance and human resource departments to lead the interventions. The use of appropriately qualified and knowledgeable stakeholders in the intervention design and delivery who have credibility amongst the participants, in line with participatory action research approaches, is an important component in making organisational interventions context-specific and bespoke (Nielsen et al., 2010; Randall et al., 2019). Participants were limited to the senior and junior management teams to ensure manageable group numbers, with individuals initially randomised to intervention groups that were then checked and adjusted where necessary to achieve cross-departmental representation across all groups. This design was to address one of the researcher's intervention aims of building cross-departmental relationships, impacting two organisational resilience factors – strengthening resources and increasing reciprocal commitment.

The lead researcher then contacted the proposed intervention leads by email to check they were willing to be involved, following which the first focus group was conducted to collectively explore potential difficulties and solutions to intervention delivery and to answer any questions or concerns the leaders had. This phase of the research is labelled "T1" in Figure 6.1. The initial focus group was followed by a series of informal discussions between the lead researcher and the intervention leads (hereinafter referred to as "practitioners") to facilitate the design and content of each intervention with specific activities, timings, and delivery mechanisms over a four month period. The resulting action plans are included at Appendix Seven for each of the three intervention groups, with the topics "Aligning Values and Behaviours" (Group 1); "Owning Development" (Group 2); and "Self-Awareness and Ability to Influence" (Group 3). Each intervention had a different task focus, but all shared design elements that contribute towards the development of organisational resilience characteristics and processes identified in Chapters Three and Four, specifically strengthening resources, increasing shared understanding, flexible improvement, and reciprocal commitment. While intervention content was intended to address these

organisational resilience factors, it is acknowledged that many of the psychosocial mechanisms are at the intra- and inter-individual levels. The resulting activities therefore operate at multiple levels: individual (e.g., reflexive practice skills); team (e.g., collaborative evaluation of development resources); and organisation (e.g., exploring organisational values).

       6.2.3.2 Intervention Implementation. During the initial intervention sessions the practitioners presented their proposed action plans (see Appendix Seven) and invited participants to input into the planning of session content, timing, and format which was then incorporated into the plans so far as practicable. For example, in Group 3 ("Self-Awareness"), there was a proposal to record individual life-journey videos, intended to support the creation of psychological safety within the group, to be viewed outside of sessions to increase time for group discussion within sessions. Participants felt the stories would be more powerful if delivered live, allowing greater engagement and cross-departmental relationship-bonding within the group, consequently the practitioners amended their action plan to incorporate the additional time necessary.

       The lead researcher was present at the first meeting for each intervention group to answer any wider questions about the research background and aims, following which the lead researcher was purposively absent from group meetings to minimise the impact of the research agenda on participant behaviour (Huxham & Vanhove, 2003), and to allow trust to be developed within closed groups. The lead researcher's involvement during the four-month intervention delivery phase was limited to data collection comprising focus groups and mid-point surveys (see Figure 6.1), interspersed with emails to practitioners to monitor and enhance intervention adherence.

       Group 1 ("Aligning Values and Behaviours") sessions considered the values of NGB-1, and the types of behaviours which might exemplify them. A behavioural charter was drawn up, and buddy pairs were formed to further explore those values and behaviours within dyads. Reflective practice was a key aspect of the intervention design, partly through individual

reflective journals. The practitioners subsequently discovered through ongoing monitoring and evaluation that participants did not regard keeping journals as beneficial, preferring collective reflection in meetings and buddy pairs. Consequently, the intervention design was adapted to allow additional time for collective reflection within meetings. Within Group 2 ("Owning Development"), the initial focus was on exploring participants' experiences of development, with pairs then assigned to explore and trial different types of learning and development with their wider team (e.g., podcasts, webinars) before reporting back to the group. In Group 3 ("Self-Awareness"), changes to the intervention action plan were required at the outset due to a lack of funding for external personality profiling. The practitioners subsequently proposed a storytelling exercise to build trust and psychological safety within the group, with participants agreeing to an increase in the duration of planned sessions given this more time-intensive approach. Participants were tasked with seeking feedback outside of group sessions from others within NGB-1, both people they work well with and people they struggle with, to raise awareness of how their behaviours are perceived by others. Participants then reported back, with the group providing reflections on what aspects of the feedback were perceived as important or unexpected, and why. Individuals developed their own action plans, with collective reflection in a final session on what was working and why.

6.2.3.3 Intervention Evaluation Procedures. Following a process evaluation approach, data were collected during intervention creation (T1), implementation (T2), and post-implementation phases (T3) (see Figure 6.1) regarding intervention processes and outcomes. Qualitative data was supported by quantitative data collected at each time point shortly after focus group discussions.

6.2.3.3.1 Qualitative Evaluation. An initial focus groups was conducted with all practitioners at T1 to allow collective evaluation of potential difficulties to the implantation of interventions and how these could be overcome. Three separate focus groups were conducted at T2 with each practitioner dyad leading an intervention, with sessions intended to hold the practitioners accountable, provide space to reflect on progress to date, and focus on

delivering the whole intervention including how it would conclude. Post-intervention focus groups were conducted at T3 with practitioners and participants separately to minimise concerns about expressing unfavourable opinions. Following the participant focus group, the lead researcher was asked by participants to provide brief (10 minutes) feedback to the junior and senior management group, within their regular fortnightly meeting, regarding the intervention learnings, and to suggest ways in which the intervention effects could be sustained.

6.2.3.3.2 Quantitative Evaluation. The two quantitative measures, comprising an organisational resilience survey and a process evaluation survey, were both distributed via an e-mail sent directly from the lead researcher to work e-mail addresses at T1, T2, and T3 and administered online using the Qualtrics survey software (https://www.qualtrics.com). All employees in the organization received an invitation to participate in the organisational resilience survey, whereas only those involved in the interventions received a request to complete the process evaluation survey. In each case, follow-up reminders were sent to non-completers. From the 80 employees invited at T1 to complete the organisational resilience survey, 49 employees did so, yielding an initial response rate of 61%. Only those completing the previous survey were invited to complete the next one. By T3, 32 participants had completed the organisational resilience survey at all three timepoints (a response rate of 40%). For the process evaluation survey, the baseline (T1) survey was completed by practitioners only ($n = 6$; 100% response rate). Mid-point (T2) process evaluation was completed by practitioners and participants ($n = 20$; 71% response rate). Endpoint (T3) process evaluation, approximately four months after the start of the interventions, was again completed by both practitioners and participants ($n = 23$; 82% response rate).

6.2.4 Data Collection

The participatory action research methodology enabled the utilisation of a mixed methods approach to data collection, with qualitative data allowing for depth and flexibility of inquiry, supported by quantitative data to help analyse potential links between intervention

processes and outcomes (Abildgaard et al., 2016; Randall et al., 2019). In particular, the qualitative data, together with the quantitative process evaluation data, were collected using the framework proposed by Randall et al. (2019) of intervention context, content, and mental models. Intervention context questions and items were designed to capture two layers of the intervention context: the omnibus and discrete (Nielsen & Randall, 2012). The omnibus context refers to the prevailing culture of the organisation, and the discrete context refers to specific events which may have influenced the effects of the intervention. Intervention content questions and items relate to intervention adherence and quality. Finally, mental models refer to perceptions of the organisation and the intervention activity.

6.2.4.1 Qualitative Data. Qualitative data was collected from focus groups before, during, and after the interventions in addition to a researcher diary used to capture informal conversations and record observations.

6.2.4.1.1 Focus Groups. Focus groups were employed to obtain insights on the "how and why" of the interventions from expressed experiences, views, and actual actions of those involved in the interventions (Huxham & Vangen, 2003) following the semi-structured interview schedules set out in Appendix Eight. The interview schedules were adapted from Randall et al. (2019) and were designed to enable analysis of the links between intervention processes and outcomes, based on the framework of intervention context, content, and mental models. Specifically, the initial focus group with practitioners at T1 explored prior experiences and motivations of practitioners, potential difficulties and barriers to implementation of intervention, and resources available to help overcome them. Example questions included "do you feel competent to deliver the interventions?" and "how suitable do you think the intervention is?"

Focus groups at T2, approximately two months into the interventions, assessed the extent to which each practitioner dyad had been able to implement the interventions, progress towards goals set, and reasons for any changes to the planned interventions. Example questions included "have you experienced, or do you anticipate any difficulties in the

implementation of the intervention" and "do you intend to make any changes from the planned intervention? If so, why?"

Post intervention (T3) focus groups explored perceptions of intervention effectiveness and potential causal mechanisms, together with learnings for future interventions. Example questions for participants included "do you think you have been able to benefit from the intervention" and "were there any difficulties in implementing the intervention, and how well were these addressed?" See Figure 6.1 for a timeline of the focus group data collection.

6.2.4.1.2 Research Diary. Personal notes were completed by the first author to provide a contemporaneous, descriptive record of informal conversations, emails, and online chats which took place throughout the intervention phases. Informal conversations with practitioners pre-intervention were to facilitate the design and content of each intervention, emails with practitioners in between the formal data collection points (T1, T2, and T3) were intended to motivate adherence to the intervention delivery action plans, and online chats created by each intervention group were observed but not participated in by the lead researcher. This research log was supplemented with the lead researcher's reflections relating to the intervention process, comprising a critical examination of the researcher's own assumptions and emotions, helping to create space within which to be reflective (Nadin & Cassell, 2006). These data sources were used to supplement the focus groups in understanding how practitioners and participants perceived intervention context, content, and mental models (Randall et al., 2019), and also to critically reflect on my role in the participatory action research design. For example, following a call during Phase 1: Intervention Creation, the diary entry reads "am I trying to do too much here, or too superficially? But it's also reassuring in terms of longer-term prospects to realise you aren't expected to solve every problem overnight, and practitioners are prepared to work with people over the longer term." Another entry following one of the mid-point focus groups reads "I'm concerned there is an attitude of just turning up at meetings, without any advance preparation, no diarising. I will need to think about the frequency of nudging, and also my

tone in this. I need to try to separate out my concerns about inaction from before this project started, and stay positive / incentivising, rather than sounding negative."

6.2.4.2 Quantitative Data. Quantitative data comprised of an organisational resilience survey (Appendix Nine) to assess any pre/post intervention effects, and a process evaluation survey to assess intervention context, content, and mental models (Appendix Ten).

6.2.4.2.1 Organisational Resilience Survey. With no appropriate validated scale of organisational resilience available for the context of elite sport, a bespoke set of items was developed by the lead researcher taking into account guidance for scale development provided by Gehlbach and colleagues (Gehlbach, 2015; Gehlbach & Brinkworth, 2011). Items were based on the research reported in Chapters Three and Four, which identified five characteristics and four processes underlying organisational resilience in elite sport. Using the operational definitions for these indicators, a total of 40 items were developed comprising four items per indicator other than "strengthening resources" for which eight items were developed[3]. During development, items from existing scales, notably the Benchmark Resilience Tool (Lee et al., 2013; Whitman et al., 2013) and the Employee Resilience Scale (Näswall et al., 2019) were adapted and incorporated where relevant. The survey items were worded to measure employee perceptions of organisational resilience indicators rather than idiosyncratic employee attitudes in order to accord with an organisational-level research design (Pulakos et al., 2019), known as the referent-shift model (Chan, 1998). Specifically, the item stem used throughout the survey was "Within [NGB-1]" rather than "I. . . .".

Items were reviewed by experts in resilience in sport, and elite sport organisations, to establish the construct relevance of individual items (DeVellis, 2016), and were pre-tested using cognitive interviewing by asking respondents to think out loud to report every thought as they answer each item (Gehlbach & Brinkworth, 2011). After the pre-test, minor changes were made to the survey to enhance the comprehensibility and readability of the questions. For example, for the item "the way future risks are planned for is appropriate", the words "to

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[3] The scale was developed based on an initial analysis of data from Chapter Four, containing five factors, which has since been superseded, with the factor of "learning" subsumed within "strengthening resources".

the level of risk faced" were added to aid clarity. Finally, within the survey, items were randomised using an online random list generator. The items were all measured on a five-point Likert scale using verbal rather than numerical labels of "not at all", "slightly", "somewhat", "quite", and "very much" (Gehlbach, 2015; Gehlbach & Brinkworth, 2011).

     6.2.4.2.2 Process Evaluation Survey. Process evaluation often requires the design of bespoke data collection tools (Randall et al., 2019). The surveys used in the present study (see Appendix Ten) were adapted from suggestions by Randall et al. (2019), with eight items in the baseline (T1) survey, 15 items at midpoint (T2) and 14 items in the post intervention (T3) surveys (see Figure 6.1), in each case exploring perceptions of the intervention context, content, and mental models. Context items were designed to capture aspects of the prevailing culture of the organisation, e.g., "this intervention fits in well with the way things are done around here", along with specific events which may have influenced the effects of the intervention, e.g., "other things happening around here are disrupting the intervention". Content items relate to intervention adherence and quality, for example "problems with the intervention are being resolved", and "appropriate expertise is being used in intervention implementation". Finally, mental models items related to perceptions of the organisation and the intervention activity, for example "others around me are supporting the intervention" (Randall et al., 2019). Responses were noted on a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (0) to strongly agree (4) (Gehlbach, 2015; Gehlbach & Brinkworth, 2011).

6.2.5 Data Analysis

     6.2.5.1 Qualitative Analysis. In total, six online focus groups were conducted. One was during intervention creation (T1) with all practitioners, three were at the mid-point (T2) with each of the practitioner dyads, and two were at the end-point (T3), with practitioners, and with participants. The focus groups ranged in duration from 40 to 65 minutes ($M = 50.5$, $SD = 10.1$). Recorded digitally and transcribed verbatim, the focus groups generated 61 pages of single-spaced text. A process of reflexive inductive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2019) was conducted, incorporating the researcher's diary alongside the focus group

transcripts, and guided by the six phases proposed by Braun et al. (2016). Text segments within the data set were initially categorised as relating to either the process or outcome evaluation, although this division was kept under review throughout. For example, the theme of enjoyment was moved mid-way through the data analysis during theme refinement from being an outcome factor, to a more nuanced interpretation of the theme as representing a positive mental model of the intervention work which motivated sustained intervention adherence. The initial focus for outcome evaluation was on identifiable outcomes, relationships, and capabilities, with process evaluation factors categorised according to the framework proposed by Randall et al., (2019) of intervention context, content, and mental models. Exemplar text segments for sub-themes within each group were arranged in a table, and these sub-themes were moved between sections until the lead researcher was satisfied of the fit between sub-themes and overarching themes.

6.2.5.2 Quantitative Analysis. Pre-analysis screening of the organisational resilience and process evaluation survey data using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests confirmed the univariate normality of a) the total organisational resilience scores for the intervention and non-intervention groups at each of the three timepoints, and b) the total process evaluation scores for each intervention group at T3 (post-intervention). Levene's test was also performed, showing invariance across groups and, for the organisational resilience scores, across timepoints. Given the assumptions of normality and homogeneity of variance, the organisational resilience survey scores across the three timepoints (see Figure 6.2) were analysed using repeated-measures ANOVAs to check for differences across time, and between those respondents who had participated in an intervention ($n = 13$) and those who had not ($n = 19$). The process evaluation survey scores at T3 were analysed using ANOVA to check for differences in perceptions of intervention context, content, and efficacy between the three intervention groups.

It is acknowledged in all of the statistics reported above that these assumption tests may lack power to detect violations of assumptions in small sample sizes such as the current

Figure 6.2

Organisational Resilience Survey Results across Time by Intervention Participation
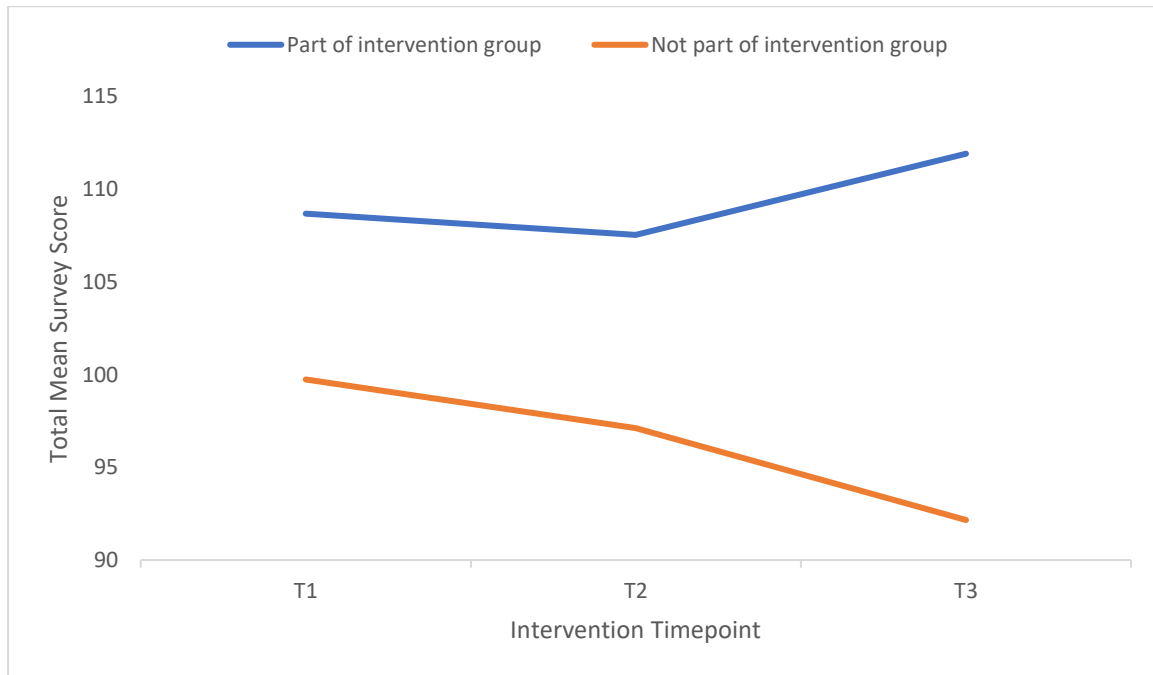
study (Field, 2013). Given that the quantitative data were collected with the aim of supplementing the qualitative analysis, this is not regarded as problematic in the current study. Nevertheless, visual analysis of the organisational resilience survey data was also conducted to complement the statistical analysis via a line graph (see Figure 6.2).

6.2.6 Methodological Integrity

Methodological integrity can, according to recommendations of Levitt et al. (2017), be appraised in accordance with fidelity to the subject matter and utility in achieving research goals. To assess fidelity, Levitt et al. propose considering the adequacy of, and perspective management in, data collection. The former is enhanced in the current study by obtaining data from those delivering and those participating in the interventions at three time points, namely before, during and after the interventions, which relate to both outcomes and also processes, addressing *why* alongside *what*. An example of perspective management, where researchers attempt to recognise and limit their influence on data collection, came in the decision to minimise the visibility of the lead researcher during the intervention sessions to minimise the impact of the research agenda on the behaviour of participants. Groundedness of the results in the data is demonstrated through the rich qualitative data extracts.

To assess utility in achieving goals, the second core evaluative process, Levitt et al. (2017) suggest contextualisation, whether the data is capable of catalysing insights, whether the findings provide meaningful contributions, and coherence of the findings. In the current study, a detailed account of the context is presented at the start of the results, as it played a prominent part in both the study design and implementation. Data as a catalyst for insight, and capable of providing meaningful contributions, speaks to the heart of action research, having as it does the dual purpose of advancing knowledge and bringing about practical transformation (Huxham & Vangen, 2003).

6.3 Results

The results are presented in two sections considering intervention effectiveness, termed outcomes, and intervention implementation factors which may have impacted

intervention outcomes, termed process. Qualitative outcomes were categorised as meaningful cross-departmental connections, peer to peer innovative learning, and collective behavioural awareness, with the key quantitative outcome being a significant increase in organisational resilience between mid (T2) and end (T3) points, as perceived by the intervention group compared to those who did not receive the intervention ($F(1,30) = 4.27$, $p = .047$, $r = .35$). Process factors identified from the qualitative data were categorised according to intervention context, namely the global Covid-19 pandemic, intervention content, comprising two sub-themes of self-organising groups with collective ownership and accountability, and expertise within the performance department, and mental model factors, with two sub-themes of psychological safety, and enjoyment. The key quantitative process finding was the absence of any "red flags" indicating fundamental issues with the intervention context, content, or mental models likely to interfere with the intervention implementation.

6.3.1 Outcome Results

6.3.1.1 Qualitative Outcome Results. The psychosocial outcomes of the interventions were categorised into three themes of meaningful cross-departmental connections, peer to peer innovative learning, and collective behavioural awareness.

6.3.1.1.1 Meaningful Cross-Departmental Connections. Participants across all three intervention groups reported the creation of meaningful connections with other participants in different departments and the formation of new support networks. This was particularly noteworthy given the intervention context, discussed further in relation to the process evaluation framework below, in which participants who would usually share an open-plan office space were working individually from home during the Covid-19 pandemic.

> I'm not doing it justice by saying how privileged and impactful it was. If you want a chat, pick up the phone, and if you want to meet up for a coffee when we get back into the office, let's do it, let's keep something going. If that's the only thing that came out of it, we've built five strong relationships across the group of us. (Andrew)

> These connections seemed to be stronger in Groups 1 ("Aligning Values and

Behaviours") and 3 ("Self-Awareness") which had engaged in more self-disclosure such as life histories or personal values compared to Group 2 ("Owning Development"). Through some of the exercises, there was an increased understanding of the similarities in the challenges faced across different departments, which helped to underline that diversity was often within the individual, rather than their role or department. Participants not only recognised the existence of diversity but also the value of the different perspectives it could provide, as explained by Connor when referring to an unexpected cross-departmental connection which had arisen as a result of the intervention: "it's completely polar opposite, like lifestyles and paths of life, but we chat and she gives me a good test bed, she's got a different opinion on things than I would." Meaningful connections also helped to establish a support network in which challenges could be shared and collectively evaluated:

> I've been able to talk about certain situations with this group and I don't feel guilty that you haven't got the time. Or am I being petty, is this something I should be dealing with on my own. This group has given me that safe place to go through some of those challenging situations that I've been dealing with in day to day life and feel that I can talk about them and get some support. (Caroline)

Observable effects of the psychosocial connections as mentioned by participants included taking walks and WhatsApp messages with colleagues where there was no previous relationship.

6.3.1.1.2 Peer to Peer Innovative Learning. Across all the intervention groups, participants experimented with new ways of developing themselves, and often extended this to helping to develop those around them. Practitioners also felt they had actively developed their skills through designing and implementing the interventions, and through learning from their co-practitioners:

> During this four-month process, I've developed more from working through the intervention with [Dave] I've developed differently and more impactfully, and I think more sustainably, than I would from the personal development activities my line

manager is expecting me to do. (Andrew)

Another practitioner enjoyed the freedom to innovate and "be a bit braver than perhaps my day job allows me to" (Dave). Vicarious learning, in the form of knowledge-sharing, was an important component in Group 2 ("Owning Development"), which it was felt could "create the relationships between different people's teams" (Bonnie), suggesting it was not only the personal disclosures, a prominent feature of Groups 1 and 3, which helped to develop meaningful cross-departmental connections. Observable effects of these psychosocial changes mentioned by participants included the introduction across the organisation of a period of time each week to be devoted to personal development, and the initiation of a programme of work to develop an online learning and development platform. When organisational resilience is conceptualised as an adaptive capability to deal with a vast range of potential future change and uncertainty, the self-initiated learning and development of an increasingly skilled workforce is likely to strengthen the resources available to an organisation to deal with such events.

6.3.1.1.3 Collective Behavioural Awareness. There was a heightened awareness of self and others' behaviours, particularly in Groups 1 ("Aligning Values and Behaviours") and 3 ("Self-Awareness"), cultivated through sustaining emphasis and revisiting issues over a number of sessions, and encouraging reflexivity outside of the sessions.

> it's made me think about behaviours more mindfully. We're all a victim to just trying to get through a day because we're so busy, and you're almost doing it on adrenaline, you don't get time to just breathe and think about how you're coming across. Whereas this has enabled me to be a bit more conscious about how myself and others are coming across, instead of just being on autopilot constantly. (Dani)

This reflexivity seemed to facilitate a deeper embedding of behavioural awareness:

> We've done values stuff with the leadership team, but you've done it one day a year, and then you don't revisit it. Having those regular catch-ups kept it at the forefront of your mind and made you constantly think about it. (Amelia)

Increased individual awareness was accompanied by an appreciation of the value in expanding this learning throughout the organisation to allow for a degree of consistency in shared behavioural expectations: "looking to the whole organisation, we want everybody to be doing that so that generally people aren't then getting annoyed with people's behaviours, and that everyone's accountable for it" (Amelia). Participants referred to striving for consistency in awareness rather than consistency in behaviours, displaying an empathetic appreciation of diversity between individuals:

> One of my biggest realisations is that everybody is different and there's nothing you can do about it. We've come up with this list of ideal behaviours, but you're never going to get 25 people on a leadership group displaying 100% of these behaviours 100% of the time. We can try and work towards that, but you've got to accept that if you're in a meeting with someone…they might just see things completely differently. So even though we're all trying to strive towards this ideal leader, there's a lot of acceptance that we're all extremely different. (Dani)

Observable effects of the increased collective behavioural awareness mentioned by participants included a behavioural charter linked to organisational values, altering a recruitment interview schedule to discuss values, and changing how meetings are run "to draw things out of each other as people, and not just about the work programme" (Dani). During the final focus group when asked whether the interventions had succeeded, one practitioner noted that enhanced awareness at an individual level would take time to manifest at the organisational level:

> I don't think we've got a point where it's really made an immediate change to the way people work… I think it will do, just slowly and over time. Because people are now very aware of a conversation they're having, and they're very aware about feedback they've been given, they're very aware about their natural trends or tendencies to work in a certain way. (Dave)

6.3.1.2 Quantitative Outcome Results: Organisational Resilience Survey. The line

graph on Figure 6.2 indicates that the intervention group ($n = 13$) rated organisational resilience higher across all the time points ($M = 328.15$, $SD = 61.57$) than respondents who did not take part in an intervention ($n = 19$, $M = 289.00$, $SD = 95.94$). This difference, 39.15, 95% CI [22.52,100.83], was not significant, $t(30) = 1.30$, $p = .21$. Nevertheless, it did represent a medium effect size, $r = .23$. Looking at differences in the organisational resilience survey responses for NGB-1 as a whole across the three time points, a repeated-measures ANOVA indicated there was no significant main effect on organisational resilience of the time point at which data was gathered, $F(2, 62) = 0.74$, $p = .48$. Finally, there was no interaction effect between whether individuals had participated in an intervention group or not across the three time points, $F(2, 60) = 2.48$, $p = .09$.

Visual analysis of the line graph in Figure 6.2 shows a divergence in ratings of organisational resilience between intervention and non-intervention participants between the mid-point survey (T2) and the post-intervention survey (T3). Contrasts comparing the two groups between these time points did show a significant effect, $F(1,30) = 4.27$, $p = .047$, $r = .35$. Whilst perceptions of organisational resilience increased among the intervention group between the mid and end points of the interventions, perceptions of organisational resilience in the wider organisation decreased during this time.

6.3.2 Process Results

6.3.2.1 Qualitative Process Results. The psychosocial processes identified as the mechanisms through which the interventions took effect were categorised according to intervention context, content, and mental models (Randall et al., 2019). The principle contextual factor, which focuses on events which may have influenced the effects of the intervention, was the global Covid-19 pandemic. Content factors relating to intervention adherence and quality were organised into two sub-themes labelled self-organising groups displaying collective ownership and accountability, and expertise within the performance department. Mental model factors, comprising perceptions of the organisation and the intervention activity, contained two sub-themes of psychological safety, and enjoyment.

6.3.2.1.1 Intervention Context: Covid-19 Pandemic. Interventions do not occur in a vacuum, and any process evaluation requires consideration of the potential impact of discrete contextual factors which may have influenced the effects of the intervention (Nielsen & Randall, 2013). In the present study there was a single dominating contextual factor, namely the global Covid-19 pandemic. The interventions were designed and initially conducted during a period of "lockdown" in the UK due to the global Covid-19 pandemic which principally spanned from 23 March to 4 July 2020. During this period, the Olympic and Paralympic games were cancelled, all sport was prohibited, and individuals were required to stay at home with one short period of outdoor exercise permitted each day. The period of lockdown provided opportunities, particularly the ability to utilise the skills within the performance department to lead the intervention, individuals who would otherwise have been unavailable due to the proximity to a Games period. Also, decreased workloads and travel commitments provided space for reflexivity: "[Lockdown] has just given you more space in your own head, on your own, that you think about things a lot more as well" (Amelia). Reduced social connections impacted some individuals negatively, which may have conversely increased motivation to participate in the interventions: "I had a bit of a dip during lockdown where I was missing my parents, and this got me on track" (Andrew). The resumption of sporting activities, including both elite training and mass participation events, was incremental and fraught with uncertainty. As a result, there were unusual and unanticipated increases and decreases in workload across the organisation throughout the intervention periods, meaning unpredictable engagement with intervention sessions: "You can tell people are quite stressed sometimes, they're definitely buying into it, but it's hard to make it a priority sometimes. People will come onto the call late or have another call to make and things like that" (Bonnie).

All intervention work had to be conducted online due to restrictions on meeting in person, forcing individuals to consider, explore, reset, and review established ways of behaving and thinking about work. Concerns raised in the initial focus group about the effect

of conducting interventions online included whether there would be "the same quality of interaction through Teams than we are face to face?" (Andrew) and the reduced inability to sense issues and support individuals who were struggling. The group went on to share ideas about how to overcome issues, from practical concerns with the technology such as to how to access different online meeting platforms and their respective benefits and disadvantages, to more specific suggestions around facilitating online learning, such as setting expectations in advance regarding participation, and how to use breakout rooms to facilitate conversations.

During the course of the interventions, as working at home continued to be the norm, individuals noted benefits of working online included everyone being on an equal footing during meetings (rather than some present physically and some online), and the increased familiarity with online working. The reflexivity and self-awareness capabilities cultivated during interventions helped during online meetings:

I was in a meeting this morning and I was like, is that person even listening to what I'm saying? And I now know that it's just this Zoom world, it's tough. People's facial expressions, are they listening to you, are they thinking "shut up, I'm trying to do this other piece of work on my second screen"? So it's that self-awareness on bigger meetings. One-to-one, it's much easier. (Caroline)

The relationships and support network formed between participants were also valuable when meaningful connections were not available in a face-to-face office environment, as explained by Dani: "Spending time on Zoom and Teams for the last seven months, this was probably the only conversations that I've really had about people as people, and not people as work programmes and task lists." One practitioner felt that discussing sensitive subjects online could be beneficial:

People's willingness to open up to a computer screen, rather than people directly is different. I don't think we would have had the candour that we'd had, had everyone been in the same room, because people wouldn't have known how to react. Certainly in my group, when somebody burst into tears, you didn't know what to do, other than

say take your time, talk them through it, you've done amazing. People would want to

smother, and that could actually change the environment. (Andrew)

Not everyone thought it was positive though. Another practitioner, used to working

from NGB-1's head office, felt that "face to face, it's so much more productive. Time wise,

you can have a quick catch up, you can just pull somebody for five minutes" (Bill). His co-

practitioner, used to working "on the go", challenged this: "From someone who's external to

the office, on Teams makes it easier. I think people commit more to doing it" (Bonnie).

6.3.2.1.2 Intervention Content: Self-Organising Groups displaying Collective

Ownership and Accountability. Intervention adherence was enhanced through the creation of

self-organising groups. These groups facilitated the sustainability of the interventions by

accepting ownership and accountability for the relationships and initiatives which had been

developed through the action plans. The intervention groups all began with an outline plan

but leaving flexibility to proceed with content and at a pace agreed with participants. Not

being overly prescriptive allowed space for organic ways for the groups to self-organise:

> What I really liked about it was the fact that [Euan and Amelia] gave us no rules. It
>
> wasn't like we had to meet up physically, we didn't have to do it on Teams. I've just
>
> WhatsApp'ed. I've been pretty busy, I've got a one-year old son, so my time in the
>
> evening is very much random. I was talking to [Ellie] sometimes, ten o'clock at night,
>
> I was just replying to a message when I had a moment. I think that's why it worked
>
> because it was just so organic, it wasn't like it was a meeting. (Connor)

Self-organisation using participants' own preferred communication methods

contributed towards the intention to sustain the relationships formed beyond the intervention

period and reduced the reliance on the practitioners to directly facilitate relationships. This

self-directed ongoing communication, particularly around values and behaviours, was noted

by participants in Group 1 ("Aligning Values and Behaviours") as a key factor to help deal

with future uncertainty and change, and thereby sustain intervention effects over the longer-

term: "coming up with some guidelines and a document is one thing. But guidelines sit on

someone's desk and are just completely irrelevant. The critical thing for me is making it a live discussion" (Freddie).

Self-organising groups engendered ownership of initiatives. When discussing whether a charter put together by Group 1 ("Aligning Values and Behaviours") could be rolled out to the rest of the organisation, a participant commented: "I don't think it'd necessarily work if we said to the wider organisation, right; this is the way that we're going to do things. Because where is the buy in, it's almost like bottom up. And I think that's why it worked" (Fiona). Ownership was linked to collective accountability: "now we've discussed these behaviours, and we've created this document, if I don't do what we've written on that sheet, I'm going to be held accountable by this group for the fact that I haven't done that" (Euan). In contrast, participants from Group 2 ("Owning Development") expressed frustration in the post-intervention focus group at what had appeared to be a sudden end to the intervention without the practitioners facilitating a discussion regarding what had been achieved and how to sustain and build on those changes. A member of Group 2 reflected: "Maybe the rest of us could have pulled it together, actually stepped up to it. But I suppose that's a feeling of not wanting to step on the toes of those people who are leading" (Gordon). This quote can be interpreted to indicate that trying to provide strong, directional intervention leadership may be counter-productive through suppressing self-organisation, and thus collective accountability.

6.3.2.1.3 Intervention Content: Expertise within the Performance Department. The existence of skilled individuals within the performance department who have extensive relevant experience is a feature of elite sport organisations that is particularly favourable for encouraging high-quality, internally led psychosocial interventions. In the initial focus group, one coach explained that in his role: "There's a technical element to it but at the same time, 90% of what we do is intervention based, relationship based, around trying to create meaningful and long lasting change" (Dave). Research diary notes from an early meeting included a comment from a senior member of the performance team that staff and athletes in

his department wanted to be more deeply embedded in the organisation, and how this was an excellent opportunity to support that process. Having the performance team leading interventions to develop the wider organisation was not only beneficial for participants, it was also rewarding for the practitioners themselves:

> This has dived right into, who are you and why are you that person? If you work in performance, as an athlete, or as a coach working with athletes, you're forced to ask and answer those questions. In real life, people just don't. It's blown me away how some people within this group have been so impacted by what I think of as the relatively modest few questions we've posed to people. (Dave)

The impact of Group 3's intervention ("Self-Awareness") was particularly evident during the sharing of personal life histories at the outset, designed to foster psychological safety and meaningful connections within the group, which had left some participants in tears. There were concerns expressed as to the capability within the wider organisation to lead similar in-depth interventions:

> The depth we got into, quickly, really took us by surprise. We had to tread really carefully at times. If you expanded that across the entire organisation, I don't think we are skilled enough to be able to do this properly. (Dave).

6.3.2.1.4 Mental Models: Psychological Safety. The principle perception of the groups in which the interventions took place, which facilitated intervention outcomes, was as a place of psychological safety. Exploring the processes used to create psychological safety, the size of the groups, being 5-8 people, was important: "the group is about the right size to really get good rapport, a high level of trust and safety, and therefore a really good open conversation" (Euan). Roles, hierarchies, and personalities were influential in smaller groups, requiring careful consideration and allocation to groups to allow people to speak freely, prioritised over the benefits of including individuals with greater experience to share. Reflecting on the self-removal of one influential person from Group 1: "it would have stunted things a little bit. I think people would have felt a little bit more hamstrung" (Euan). Creating

self-organising groups may have also contributed towards perceptions of psychological safety within the groups: "It didn't feel like we were being forced, it didn't feel like an autocratic process. And I think that that was conducive to the kind of honesty and safe space that we all had over a period of time" (Connor). Notwithstanding the benefits of psychological safety, there was a recognition that creating psychological safety can take time:

> Looking back, how far we've come as a group, so the first meeting we were all pretty mute thinking "oh, can we say this?". Not that we said anything to upset people, but we were like where's the honesty, the integrity of the group. We've come a long way since the start. (Fiona)

6.3.2.1.5 Mental Models: Enjoyment. The principle perception of the intervention activity, which facilitated intervention outcomes, was that of enjoyment. Both practitioners and participants expressed enjoyment at participating in the interventions, describing them as "cathartic", "therapeutic", and "useful", explaining: "If I'm honest, what I expected from it, I was just 'oh god, that's another thing I've got to do'. And it quite quickly became one of my favourite hours of the week" (Caroline). The feeling extended to the practitioners:

> it's been the highlight though lockdown to be able to be involved in this project. I've really enjoyed it; I've really looked forward to the sessions. It's a different bunch of people; it's a different task that you're not working on at other times. Taking people outside of their day job, giving them some responsibility, a bit of freedom to help their colleagues, I think as a concept is awesome. (Dave)

By implementing intervention designs which were enjoyable for both practitioners and participants, and creating self-organising, psychologically safe groups with feelings of ownership and collective accountability, the intervention practitioners had instilled a firm intention amongst all those involved in the interventions to sustain the intervention effects into the future: "It's a permanent project, this is constant. It's how we use the work we've done to make sure it's something we're always thinking about and implementing" (Amelia).

6.3.2.2 Quantitative Process Results: Process Evaluation Survey. Quantitative

analyses of the process evaluation surveys completed by participants (n = 17) at T3 indicate there was no significant effect of intervention groupings (Group 1, Group 2 or Group 3) on total scores in the process evaluation survey immediately following the end of the intervention sessions, $F(2,14) = 2.38$, $p = .13$. The remainder of the process evaluation is, therefore, based on the survey results from all participants regardless of the specific intervention they took part in. Reviewing the process evaluation numbers in aggregate, there are no "red flags" indicating fundamental issues with the intervention context, content, or mental models likely to interfere with the intervention implementation. Descriptive statistics are provided in Table 6.2. To help interpret results, note that a score of 2 is "neither agree nor disagree" and 3 is "agree".

At baseline (T1), there was concern amongst practitioners about the potential for extraneous factors to disrupt the interventions (M = 3.33), although these concerns appeared reduced at T2 two months later (M = 2.33). Otherwise, practitioners seemed satisfied with the early intervention proposals and their ability to deliver them, agreeing with all items and strongly agreeing with the intervention being relevant to and appropriate for NGB-1 (M = 3.50). At the mid-point (T2) practitioners felt they were doing things differently as a result of the interventions (M = 2.67), whereas the effect was not yet felt by participants (M = 2.07). Both groups rated the effect size of the interventions as small (M = 2.33, M = 2.43) at this time.

Notable points from the end-point (T3) evaluations are the lower practitioner ratings for understanding the aims and objectives of the intervention compared to T2, which one might expect to increase as the interventions progress (M = 3.33 at T2, M = 2.50 at T3). This may be due to practitioners' concerns as the formal interventions ended, noted in the research diary, regarding the future application within NGB-1 of learnings from this research study, specifically whether further interventions would be instigated without an external facilitator creating responsibility and accountability. Finally, ratings of perceived post-intervention outcomes in both groups were small but positive, and in all cases rated higher by practitioners

Table 6.2

Means and Standard Deviations for Process Evaluation Survey Items

Item*	T1** (Prac.)*** (n = 6)	T2 (Prac.) (n = 6)	(Part.) (n = 14)	T3 (Prac.) (n = 6)	(Part.) (n = 17)
This intervention is fitting in well with my other commitments		2.50 (0.55)	2.43 (1.02)	2.33 (1.03)	2.41 (0.94)
The way this intervention is being designed and implemented fits in well with the way things are done around here	2.67 (0.52)	3.00 (0.63)	3.07 (0.83)	2.83 (0.75)	2.88 (1.11)
Other things happening around here are disrupting intervention delivery activities	3.33 (0.52)	2.33 (1.21)	2.64 (1.01)	2.33 (1.21)	2.41 (0.94)
This intervention is relevant to, and appropriate for, my organisation (T1) / my situation (T2)	3.50 (0.84)	3.17 (0.75)	3.07 (1.07)	(item not repeated at T3)	
I am contributing effectively to the implementation of this intervention	3.33 (0.52)	3.17 (0.75)	2.64 (1.22)	3.33 (0.82)	2.47 (0.94)
Appropriate expertise is being used in intervention implementation	3.00 (0.63)	3.00 (0.63)	2.64 (1.15)	2.67 (0.82)	2.41 (0.87)
Problems with the intervention design and / or delivery are being resolved		2.83 (0.75)	2.43 (0.85)	2.83 (0.75)	2.35 (0.61)
I understand the aims and objectives of this intervention	3.00 (0.63)	3.33 (0.52)	3.00 (1.04)	2.50 (0.84)	2.88 (0.86)
Others around me are supporting this intervention	3.17 (0.75)	3.33 (0.82)	2.79 (0.98)	3.67 (0.52)	3.18 (0.88)
This intervention is causing some conflict or uncertainty		1.33 (0.52)	1.14 (0.66)	1.33 (0.52)	1.53 (1.01)
I am doing things differently now as a result of this intervention		2.67 (0.52)	2.07 (1.14)	2.83 (0.75)	2.29 (0.99)

This intervention is making a sustainable, positive difference for me		2.67 (0.52)	2.43 (1.22)	2.50 (1.05)	2.29 (0.92)
This intervention is making a sustainable, large (4) / small (2) / no (0) difference for me		2.33 (0.82)	2.43 (0.65)	2.67 (1.03)	2.12 (1.27)
This intervention fits well with my preferred ways of doing things		2.67 (1.03)	2.79 (0.89)	2.67 (0.52)	2.41 (0.62)
I have the knowledge, skills, abilities, and confidence to make this intervention effective for me	2.67 (0.52)	3.00 (1.10)	2.93 (0.73)	3.00 (0.00)	2.88 (0.70)

*Item wording is how it appeared at T2, in the present tense. Items at T1 were in the future tense, and at T3 in the past tense. See Appendix Ten for details. **Not all items appeared on the baseline survey. Only practitioners completed the baseline survey. ***Prac. = practitioners; Part. = participants

than participants – slight agreement for the interventions having made a positive sustainable difference (*M* = 2.50, *M* = 2.29), and having impacted behaviour (*M* = 2.83, *M* = 2.29), with a perceived intervention "effect size" of small to medium (*M* = 2.67, *M* = 2.12, where 0 = no difference, 2 = small, 4 = large).

6.4 Discussion

Participatory action research was used to explore the co-creation, implementation, and effectiveness of organisational interventions targeting values and behaviours, ownership of development, and self-awareness intended to develop organisational resilience in an elite sport organisation. The qualitative data was interpreted as indicating three key psychosocial outcomes of the interventions: meaningful cross-departmental connections, peer to peer innovative learning, and collective behavioural awareness. Quantitative analyses of intervention outcomes showed participant ratings increasing whilst ratings decreased over the same period in the wider organisation, indicating a significant difference in changes in perceptions of organisational resilience between the mid and end point evaluations. Process factors which impacted how the interventions exerted their effects included: the Covid-19 pandemic, self-organising groups with collective ownership and accountability, expertise within the performance department, psychological safety, and enjoyment. The discussion which follows initially considers the intervention design and implementation processes, and the contexts in which they occurred, before going on to integrate the process evaluation factors with the outcome results to explore how the interventions exerted their effects.

6.4.1 Process Evaluation: Intervention Context, Content, and Mental Models

A key part of the study was to go beyond outcome-only evaluation to consider the crucial role of process and context in intervention effectiveness. Contextual factors, specifically the restrictions on movement stemming from the Covid-19 pandemic, resulted in the intervention workshops being delivered entirely online. The initial focus group with practitioners explored concerns around this method of delivery particularly with the likely level of engagement, and difficulties sensing when individuals might need additional support.

By the end of the intervention period, only one practitioner expressed a negative perception of online intervention delivery, believing face-to-face meetings would have been preferable, whilst none of the participants raised it as a concern. Indeed, potential benefits of working online identified by practitioners in the current study included an ability to detach from emotionally challenging subjects if required and the ability to schedule meetings with geographically dispersed employees. Reviews of individual-level resilience building interventions at work have found that face-to-face delivery formats were more effective at building resilience than computer-based programmes (Robertson et al., 2015; Vanhove et al., 2016). On closer examination, it appears the contrast may have been between generic online activities and resources compared with bespoke training applied to specific experiences and situations, and therefore the differences in effect may be due to the specificity of intervention content rather than delivery format. The current study helps to advance understanding by demonstrating how a successful organisational-level workshop-based intervention can be delivered via an online format.

Quantitative data capturing participants' perceptions of intervention content indicated no differences between the three intervention groups. In the systematic review of organisational-level interventions on employee health carried out by Montano et al. (2014), their main finding was that intervention effectiveness was higher among more comprehensive interventions tackling a variety of organisational-level targets simultaneously. The findings from this study suggest it may not be necessary for all employees to experience all intervention targets, and that participation of discrete groups of individuals in discrete interventions may have a similar cumulatively beneficial impact at the organisational level.

A number of strategies were used, both in the design of the study content and its implementation, to promote intervention adherence and quality, together with positive mental models of the interventions and the groups in which they took place. These strategies also addressed some of the challenges identified by Slater and Barker (2019) in the delivery of interventions within sport organisations, such as clarity of expectations, involving a wide

range of staff, and collaboration to embed follow-up activities. The study took a participatory approach to not only consult with but also work alongside employees in the co-creation of the interventions, so that intervention content targeted issues and objectives consistent with organisational priorities. In particular, using practitioners already embedded in the performance department to co-create and subsequently deliver the interventions helped to ensure they were feasible, broadly accepted, and maximised specificity and trust (Nytrø et al., 2000), as well as generating high levels of momentum during implementation (Holt et al., 2013). Ryan et al. (2008) highlighted the potential barriers if changes are perceived as coming from 'head office', rather than from employee consultation. Interventions driven wholly externally can leave participants uninvolved and jeopardise future progress once the external consultant's involvement is over (Dahl-Jørgensen & Saksvik, 2005; Ismail et al., 2011). Sustainability was enhanced in the current study by empowering stakeholders to develop internal intervention expertise through drawing up and experimenting with solutions to areas of weakness in organisational resilience. This degree of participation in the action research process is likely to serve as a springboard within NGB-1 to help develop better collaborative interventions in the future reliant on internal rather than external resources.

6.4.2 Outcome Evaluation Integrated with Process Evaluation

The formation of meaningful cross-departmental connections was a valued outcome for participants and practitioners alike, sustained in enjoyable, psychologically safe support networks which emerged through the practitioners' design and implementation of interventions allowing participants' ownership of the programme. Allowing participants to be involved in co-creating and designing solutions to problems during interventions can enhance their perceived control and autonomy, making the process itself a positive intervention (Elo et al., 2008). Facilitating the creation of new relationships was a key part of the intervention design in common with many organisational-level interventions designed to deliver improved psychosocial work environments (Abildgaard et al., 2016). Facilitating relationships was particularly relevant for the current study aims given that intra- and inter-organisational

relationships are consistently found to be an important factor in organisational resilience (Cardoso & Ramos, 2016; Chapter Three; Lengnick-Hall et al., 2011; Wicker et al., 2013). Workshop formats have previously been found to be effective in sport organisations for improving relationships and enhancing both individual and organisational functioning (Wagstaff et al., 2013).

Peer-to-peer innovative learning was evidenced through participants sharing knowledge, experimenting with new ways of developing, and for practitioners in particular through partnering with others in designing and implementing the interventions. Through the participatory intervention design, using in-house practitioners, each of the intervention groups was actively demonstrating to participants that NGB-1 employees could learn from each other. An organisation's resilience capacity is contingent on employee capabilities, particularly proactive behaviours such as utilising networks and learning (Näswall et al., 2019). Specifically, proactive learning behaviours support organisational adaptability, a central organisational resilience process (Boin & van Eeten, 2013; Chapter Four; Duchek, 2020; Lee et al., 2013). Creating and retaining a knowledgeable workforce which is able to flourish during times of transition is at the heart of both employee and organisational resilience (Gray & Jones, 2016; Youssef & Luthans, 2007), strengthening organisational resources (Chapter Four).

Collective behavioural awareness was encouraged by practitioners through the use of reflexive exercises, specifically in Groups 1 ("Aligning Values and Behaviours") and 3 ("Self-Awareness"), which encouraged participants to notice and reflect on the behaviours of themselves and those around them. Creating an environment in which employees get used to observing, being observed and reflecting on their own behaviours and work practices has the potential to enhance not only behavioural awareness, but also awareness of the organisation's operating environment, a key organisational resilience capability (Chapter Three; McManus, 2008). Noticing and acting operate in a virtuous circle such that being encouraged to inquire into, and then act upon, issues expands the range of issues that are noticed in the first place

(Macrae & Draycott, 2019). Acting upon behavioural issues, in the form of successful regulation of emotions and behaviours, can foster resilience within organisations (Kay & Merlo, 2020), with the development of self-regulation strategies meriting further attention in sport organisations (Wagstaff et al., 2013). In this study, behavioural awareness was developed collectively, underpinned by the formation of shared mental and written representations in the form of a behavioural charter. The development of a shared regulatory system based on ownership and responsibility was found to be a key strategy for the development of team resilience in elite sport (Morgan et al., 2019). Collective behavioural awareness can therefore be seen to contribute towards organisational resilience at multiple levels. At the individual level, it acts as a precursor to developing behavioural and emotional self-regulation capabilities, at the team level it supports shared mental models of appropriate behaviours, and at the organisational level it enhances an awareness of the organisational environment.

The quantitative data indicated that participants rated the impact of the interventions as small to medium in the process evaluation survey, which was comparable with the effect size found in the organisational resilience survey amongst intervention participants compared to the wider organisation. Small effect sizes are common in organisational behaviour studies (Paterson et al., 2016), reflecting both the methodological challenges of this type of research as well as what is being studied (Randall et al., 2019). The increase in perceived organisational resilience amongst intervention participants was against a backdrop of decreasing perceptions of organisational resilience for non-intervention survey respondents. This suggests there were contextual factors experienced during this period leading to a generalised decline in resilience which the interventions helped to offset, the most prominent of which was the global Covid-19 pandemic and its consequential impact on working patterns (uncertain) and working style (online only). At the individual level, research suggests working from home during the pandemic has caused a decrease in physical and mental well-being, with important contributors including increased distractions, decreased communication

with co-workers, higher workloads, and longer workdays (Xiao et al., 2021). At the organisational level, Spicer (2020) suggests sudden changes such as that triggered by Covid-19 can cause organisational defensiveness due to employees feeling threatened or troubled, and can create perceptions of hypocrisy when organisations quickly change aspects of their culture but leave the deeper underlying culture untouched.

While the intervention context appears to have negatively impacted perceptions of organisational resilience across the intervention period, this appears to have been offset to some extent by process factors, specifically intervention adherence and quality, together with positive mental models, which resulted in increased perceptions of organisational resilience among intervention participants. In particular, the expertise of the performance department in designing and delivering intervention content was crucial in founding the psychosocial processes of self-organising groups. Within the discussion in Chapter Four it was noted that self-organisation is an emergent property of complex organisational systems resulting from interactions between its constituent parts (Chandler, 2014; de Coning, 2016), facilitating organisational resilience through increasing adaptability, a key resilience process (Chapter Four). The results of the current study extent this research by highlighting the coordinative mechanisms through which self-organisation may be achieved within organisations, specifically collective ownership and accountability, psychological safety, and enjoyment. Collective ownership and accountability, and enjoyment, have been identified as key strategies to develop team resilience with elite sport (Morgan et al., 2019). Psychological safety allows individuals within cohesive group structures to explore ideas and quickly share information within a psychologically safe environment (Uhl-Bien & Arena, 2017), as well as fostering a willingness to take interpersonal risks (cf. Lengnick-Hall et al., 2011; Walker et al., 2020), and facilitating peer to peer learning (Edmondson, 1999). Alongside the potential facilitation of organisational resilience, the findings of the current study also suggest a short-term benefit of self-organising groups, namely the creation of a supportive peer community that helps to sustain intervention outcomes (Gray & Jones, 2016).

There were indications from the qualitative data that the positive impact of the interventions on participants' perceptions of organisational resilience were starting to filter out to the rest of the organisation, notwithstanding the quantitative findings of a generalised decline in organisational resilience across the intervention period. For example, focus group discussions suggested that through the increased behavioural awareness developed in Group 1 ("Aligning Values and Behaviours"), some participants had started to change how they led meetings. Specifically, through seeking to empower others to contribute, challenge, and participate in decision-making, these participants were enacting the strategies outlined in Chapter Five relating to a desire to empower, and collectively owning decisions. Further, as a result of the work in Group 2 ("Owning Development"), increased provision was made within NGB-1 for personal development, thereby strengthening the quality of the human resources available (see Chapter Four). With practitioners and participants alike expressing intentions to sustain the intervention effects over the longer term, it can be tempting to call for further follow-up survey data to ascertain whether the intervention "succeeded" or "failed", particularly given the length of time likely for any incremental changes in organisational-level outcomes to manifest themselves (Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2015). Such an approach contains an inherent assumption that there is a definitive time point when intervention "success" can be measured and quantified. Instead, with the number of intervening factors potentially confounding more distal outcomes, there is a strong argument to focus on proximal outcomes alongside a commitment to learning the "how and why" of apparent intervention successes (Randall et al., 2019).

6.4.3 Strengths and Limitations

The degree of participation in the selection, co-creation and delivery of the interventions is a strength of the study. Whilst participatory approaches are distinguished from conventional action research by the involvement of practitioners as both subjects and co-researchers (Van Slingerland et al., 2020), the level of participation will inevitably vary. For example, in their participatory action research Holt et al. (2013) interviewed participants

to evaluate the content of potential interventions which the researchers created, adapted, and delivered. In contrast McManus (2008) worked alongside participant organisations to co-create organisation-specific action plans to develop their organisational resilience capability. Although the study by McManus was not termed participatory action research as the implementation of the action plan was not evaluated, there was a higher degree of participation by the research participants than in the Holt et al. study. It is therefore imperative to look beyond the label of the research design to the underlying content.

A further strength was the quality of practitioners available within NGB-1 to lead the interventions, and the level of endorsement from senior management, promoting engagement and sustainability. In a systematic review of organisational-level interventions on employee health by Montano et al. (2014), commonly reported obstacles to intervention success included difficulty in developing or maintaining the interventions due to insufficient participation of employees, and a lack of support from leadership, leading the researchers to conclude "these reasons clearly point to the need of developing interventions in a participatory approach" (p. 6). The lack of issues identified in the process evaluation survey data from the current study is not to be underestimated in evaluating the intervention success.

It is possible that the current study would have been more effective if individuals had either been able to self-select intervention topics, thereby increasing motivation to engage with intervention content, or if weaker areas of organisational resilience had been identified and addressed on a team by team, rather than organisation-wide, basis. A meta-analysis of employee resilience interventions conducted by Vanhove et al. (2016) suggested that, at the individual level, resilience training is more likely to be effective for those most in need of it (Vanhove et al., 2016). A key difference however in organisational-level interventions compared to those aimed at individuals is the delivery of improved psychosocial work environments (Abilgaard et al., 2016), particularly relational resources. Creating effective inter-departmental relationships was consequently preferred to the potential benefits of addressing unique individual or team level factors.

The challenges of employing a control group format in organisational research designs (Randall et al., 2019) is sometimes seen as a barrier to "successful" intervention research (Montano et al., 2014). This was somewhat offset in the current study by the ability to split quantitative survey findings between intervention and non-intervention groups to aid interpretation of outcome evaluation. The goal is not, however, to seek to replicate the control group format to the greatest extent possible through manipulating extraneous factors or ensuring homogenous groups. Instead, this study attempts to acknowledge and evaluate the complexity of organisational contexts through the use of qualitative and quantitative data examining the process factors behind the outcome effects.

6.4.4 Future Directions and Practical Implications

Future research would benefit from an understanding of how organisational resilience variables operate at the macro- (e.g., strategy and structure), meso- (e.g., relational resources) and micro-levels (e.g., psychosocial behaviours). A quantitative analysis of interactions between changes in individual, team, and organisational resilience over the course of a season or before and after an intervention may start to shed light on this complex area. The current study was exploratory in nature, incorporating an initial quantitative assessment of organisational resilience in sport as one aspect of a holistic assessment of the feasibility and impact of organisational-level interventions. To measure pre-post quantitative changes in organisational resilience in sport as part of a quantitative analysis of interactions, a valid and reliable scale is required.

There are a number of implications for applied sport psychologists wishing to develop organisational resilience, given that some aspects will be more readily amenable to interventions, particularly over a limited period of time when changes to organisational structure or creating and embedding new policies and procedures may not be pragmatic. Initial needs assessment should therefore incorporate both profiling current resilience capabilities through the use of an evaluative tool such as the survey developed in this study, or the five step programme described by McManus (2008), and setting expectations regarding

what is acceptable and realistic for the end-user according to the time and resources available (Slater & Barker, 2019). In the absence of a tailored intervention programme it may be beneficial to focus on underlying factors which target several organisational resilience characteristics and processes at once. For example, assessing and refining organisational communication mechanisms and employee communication skills is likely to impact structural clarity, operational awareness, sensing, and shielding. Facilitating the development of internal and external relationships will benefit reciprocal commitment and strengthening resources. An alternative approach would be the use of simulation exercises (Macrae & Draycott, 2019; McManus, 2008) particularly focused on the development of social and cognitive resources that can improve adaptability through the development of collective behavioural awareness and shared understanding.

The study also highlights more general considerations for the instigation of organisational intervention work. These include understanding the unique structure, climate and culture of an organisation, the need for organisational stakeholders to be the instigators of positive change (Wagstaff et al., 2012a), consideration of the level(s) at which interventions are initiated, and inevitable limitations in time and resources available for such projects. Careful consideration of "the how" as well as "the what" of intervention delivery is required to ensure the appropriate level of trust and engagement within the organisation (Randall et al., 2019), as the best intervention content is of little use if participants are not motivated to engage with it. Yet, rather than being dissuaded by the challenges inherent in the complexity of organisational-level interventions, organisational realities should be embraced through participatory approaches which engage the end-users of the intervention in their design and delivery, whilst simultaneously evaluating where and how interventions exert their effects. It is only by seeking to understand the complex interactions inherent in such work that lessons can be learned and addressed.

6.4.5 Conclusion

This study aimed to assess the co-creation, implementation, and effectiveness of an

organisational-level programme to develop organisational resilience in an elite sport organisation at a particularly turbulent time. In doing so, the study not only responds to repeated calls for more intervention research in organisational psychology in sport (e.g., Wagstaff, 2019b), but goes beyond that by evaluating how intervention context, content, and mental models contributed to the intervention outcomes (Randall et al., 2019). The research underlines the potential for organisational-level interventions to influence the psychosocial environment, and develop organisational resilience, even during a period of significant uncertainty and change. Specifically, the interventions developed meaningful cross-departmental connections, peer to peer innovative learning, and collective behavioural awareness through a variety of psychosocial mechanisms including self-organising groups with collective ownership and accountability, expertise within the performance department, psychological safety, and enjoyment. The research operated as a catalyst for the development and implementation of cost-effective, sustainable organic interventions maximising the use of internal resources, providing the support required to strengthen future organisational resilience capabilities.

Chapter Seven:
General Discussion

This Chapter Seven begins with a summary of the four empirical studies in this thesis (Chapters Three to Six). This is followed by an evaluation of the overall contribution of this programme of research to the fields of resilience and organisational psychology research in sport, and organisational resilience research in general. A multi-level analysis of the similarities and differences in definitions, characteristics, and processes of resilience at the individual, team, and organisational levels is subsequently provided. Reflections and learnings to help guide future research in elite sport organisations are presented. The final sections include strengths and limitations, future research directions, and practical implications of the overall thesis, before offering some concluding remarks.

7.1 Summary

In this section, a summary is provided of Chapters Three to Six (Studies One to Four) of this thesis.

7.1.1 Chapter Three (Study One)

The purpose of this Study One was to construct a definition of organisational resilience and to identify resilient characteristics of elite sport organisations. Using the Delphi method, 62 expert panellists working in or with elite sport organisations ($n = 45$) or having academic experience of resilience in various contexts ($n = 17$), responded to four online iterative surveys over seven months, yielding both quantitative and qualitative data through item responses and accompanying comments. A reflexive thematic analysis of the integrated data was conducted from a critical realist standpoint. Organisational resilience was defined as "the dynamic capability of an organisation to successfully deal with significant change. It emerges from multi-level (employee, team, and organisational) interacting characteristics and processes which enable an organisation to prepare for, adapt to, and learn from significant

change" (Chapter Three, p. 73). The five resilient characteristics of elite sport organisations identified from the analysis were structural clarity, flexible improvement, shared understanding, reciprocal commitment, and operational awareness. By proposing a definition of organisational resilience which is appropriate to and endorsed by those in elite sport organisations, and identifying resilient characteristics of elite sport organisations, this study provided an important foundation for future research and practice endeavours in this area.

7.1.2 Chapter Four (Study Two)

Although Study One identified the characteristics of elite sport organisations that successfully deal with significant change, further research was needed to understand how they function. The purpose of this Study Two was to explore the psychosocial processes underpinning organisational resilience in elite sport. Using interviews supplemented by timelines compiled from documentary analysis of public online sources, data was gathered during 43 interviews with 22 participants from 10 elite sport organisations across an 8-month period. Participant roles included chief executive officers, directors, board members, middle managers, support staff, head coach, and senior athlete. Reflexive thematic analysis of the data was conducted from a critical realist standpoint. The data analysis yielded two core processes of sensing (internal and external mechanisms, diversity of perspectives, evaluating and monitoring) and adapting (mirroring current resource availability, open and frequent communication, acute versus chronic change), and two supporting processes of strengthening resources (quality and quantity of human and financial resources, relationships as source of additional resources) and shielding from risk (internal risk mitigation, external influencing). These data were interpreted to indicate that these processes are not sequential, or temporally distinct, but instead cumulatively contribute towards the capability of an organisation to deal successfully with the multiplicity of changes faced at any one time. As the first empirical investigation exploring the psychosocial processes underpinning organisational resilience in elite sport, the results provided a unique framework and practical implications to help those working in and with elite sport organisations successfully navigate uncertainty and change.

7.1.3 Chapter Five (Study Three)

In Study Two, a need was recognised for contextually embedded empirical research reflecting the localised dynamics which dictate how the characteristics and processes of organisational resilience, identified in Studies One and Two, manifest themselves within a particular organisation. The purpose of Study Three was, therefore, to explore first-hand how an elite sport organisation had successfully dealt with significant change. Through an immersive, ethnographic approach involving participant observation and supplemented with interviews and documentary analysis, data was gathered over a seven-month period working within an elite sport organisation. The participant organisation ("NGB-1") was a medium-sized UK national sport organisation ("NSO") for Olympic and Paralympic sport which had experienced a significant deterioration in its financial position during the preceding year. The results were categorised into four main themes: collectively owning decisions and their consequences; awareness and exposure of vulnerabilities to strengthen relationships; recognition of future uncertainty rather than retrospective solace; and the desire to empower with a need for support and reassurance. These results provided insight into the psychosocial strategies used by an elite sport organisation to successfully deal with significant change. The research advanced our understanding of how organisational resilience develops within an elite sport organisation and provided the platform for evidence-based intervention strategies for practitioners.

7.1.4 Chapter Six (Study Four)

Using the in-depth organisational knowledge of NGB-1 gained in Study Three, and based on the findings from Studies One, Two, and Three regarding the characteristics, processes, and strategies that contribute towards organisational resilience in elite sport, the purpose of Study Four was to explore the co-creation, implementation, and effectiveness of a series of small-scale interventions chosen by an elite sport organisation to purposefully develop its organisational resilience. The study combined participatory action research with process evaluation and took place over three phases, namely intervention creation,

intervention implementation, and intervention evaluation. The three interventions, which were led by six practitioners working within NGB-1, took place over a four-month period involving 22 participants working in NGB-1 in senior and junior management roles. Data regarding intervention outcomes and intervention processes were collected using quantitative and qualitative methods. From a qualitative perspective, psychosocial outcomes of the interventions included meaningful cross-departmental connections, peer to peer innovative learning, and collective behavioural awareness, together with a significant (quantitative) increase in organisational resilience between the mid- and end-point quantitative outcome evaluation. Process evaluation factors identified from the qualitative data were categorised according to intervention context (the global Covid-19 pandemic), intervention content (comprising two sub-themes of self-organising groups with collective ownership and accountability, and expertise within the performance department), and mental model factors (with two sub-themes of psychological safety, and enjoyment). Study Four demonstrated the potential for organisational-level interventions to develop organisational resilience, even during a period of significant uncertainty and change.

7.2 Discussion

7.2.1 Advancing Resilience Research in Sport Psychology

In this section, the contribution of the thesis to the fields of both resilience and organisational psychology research in sport will be discussed. In particular, the initiation of organisational resilience research in sport addresses how organisations can successfully deal with fast-paced high-performance environments using a whole-organisation approach.

7.2.1.1 The Initiation of Organisational Resilience Research in Sport Psychology. The programme of research described in this thesis represents the first exploration of organisational resilience in elite sport. As such, it begins to address the research gap identified by Fletcher and Wagstaff in 2009 in their review of organisational psychology in elite sport:

Since international-level sport has never been so competitive, national sport

organisations will likely need to meet the challenges, adversities, and changes associated with the developments in elite sport governance. Despite these observations, there is currently no rigorous research that specifically addresses… organisational resilience in elite sport (p. 433).

The initiation of organisational resilience research in sport represents a convergence of resilience and organisational functioning research within sport psychology to address how sport organisations can maintain and even enhance functioning in turbulent environments. Given the prevalence and degree of challenges faced by elite sport organisations as described in Chapter One, allied with the potential impact of organisational-level stressors on individual and team functioning as described in Part Two of Chapter Two, the research programme described in this thesis offers researchers and practitioners an important extension to the field of sport psychology by consolidating and evaluating the applicability of existing individual, team, and organisational resilience research (e.g., Bryan et al., 2019, at the individual level, Morgan et al., 2017 at the team level, and Duchek, 2020 at the organisational level) to the elite sport context. Further, the degree of collaboration throughout the research programme with those working within elite sport organisations, especially the participatory action research (Holt et al., 2013; Van Slingerland et al., 2020) and process evaluation (Randall et al., 2019) as detailed in Chapter Six, enhances the potential for knowledge transfer from the academic to the applied domain by helping to identify how organisational-level resilience interventions may work, as well as why (Wagstaff, 2019a).

7.2.1.2 Advancing Organisational Psychology Research in Sport. This thesis contributes towards the literature on organisational psychology in sport in four ways. First, it adds to the limited extant literature in organisational sport psychology in which the sport organisation itself is the subject matter of the research (e.g., Jones et al., 2009; Neil et al., 2016; Wagstaff et al., 2012b, 2013), rather than the performance department (e.g., Arnold et al., 2019; Cruickshank et al., 2014, 2015; McDougall et al., 2020a). The performance department is not an appropriate proxy for the organisation as a whole – it will have a key

overriding objective (maximising athletic performance) and, in the United Kingdom, a key government funder which provides ring-fenced funding which must be spent within the performance department. The organisation as a whole, in contrast, must balance multiple, concurrent, and often conflicting, goals such as social good, commercial opportunities, and engaging with members and / or fans, and diverse sources of income including grant funding, sponsorship, membership fees, and event income (Feddersen, Morris, Abrahamsen, et al., 2020; Parent et al., 2018; Smith & Stewart, 2013). The ability of sport psychologists to contribute towards optimal organisational functioning (Wagstaff et al., 2012a) will be enhanced through a better understanding of the wide range of factors that can hinder or help sport organisations in dealing with change.

Second, an expanded awareness of the sport organisation as a whole may help researchers more clearly differentiate between the source of organisational stressors, whether from the immediate coaching environment (e.g., Tabei et al., 2012), the performance department (e.g., Arnold et al., 2019), or the wider organisation. More accurately identifying the source of organisational stressors, and the extent to which the organisation may have control over those stressors, will then help to identify appropriate mitigating actions to eliminate or reduce the frequency or intensity of such stressors. Further, by focusing on the organisational level of analysis, the research programme presented in this thesis expands the literature regarding organisational stressors to consider the organisation as the entity experiencing, rather than just creating, strain, and the potential impact this may have on organisational functioning.

Third, given the centrality of change to the construct of organisational resilience, this thesis aids our understanding of organisational change in sport, specifically the characteristics and processes which may contribute towards successfully implementing organisational change. Through focusing on the core resilience processes of sensing and adapting as proposed in Chapter Four, organisations will be better placed to adapt to changes and opportunities as they currently exist, rather than attempting to predict the future, or pursue a

pre-determined agenda. In particular, the capability to sense existing power relations and cultural dynamics is necessary to maximise receptivity to change (Cruickshank et al., 2014, 2015; Feddersen, Morris, Abrahamsen, et al., 2020; Gilmore & Gilson, 2007). Viewing adaptation as ongoing and iterative, rather than singular and temporally bound, accords with Cruickshank et al.'s (2014, 2015) model of managerial culture change (see Part Two of Chapter Two) as a set of guiding principles rather than a step-by-step process. Through a complex systems approach (Cilliers, 2001; Walker & Cooper, 2011), focus is shifted away from trying to manage change towards a pre-determined end-state, instead suggesting managers should act as a catalyst for successful change by stimulating and facilitating the processes necessary for regeneration (de Coning, 2016). Finally, recognition and awareness of the need to strengthen resources, particularly human resources, to enhance the capability to deal with future change is necessary given the potential for increasingly deleterious employee attitudes across repeated internally instigated change events (Wagstaff et al., 2015, 2016).

Fourth, through the detailed accounts provided in Chapter Five of working within an elite sport organisation, and in Chapter Six of the co-creation, delivery, and evaluation of a programme of interventions designed to develop organisational resilience, this thesis expands the practitioner accounts of engagement in organisational-level processes which are currently underreported (Sly et al., 2020; Wagstaff et al., 2019b). A recent commentary on the field of applied sport psychology (Sly et al., 2020) pointed to a movement toward active engagement in organisational psychological practices (e.g., Cruickshank et al., 2014, 2015; Mellalieu, 2017; Wagstaff et al., 2013), suggesting the profession had arrived at a crossroads and needed to reassess key professional competencies. In particular, the authors noted that "applied sport psychologists must quickly establish a cultural appreciation of the complex social hierarchies, micropolitical structures, and cultural dynamics that exist within various levels of a high-performance landscape" (p. 91) in order to improve communication, reduce conflict, and engage in macro-level organisational and management practices. Through rich accounts of longitudinal, immersive research, Chapters Five and Six provide applied sport psychologists

with insight into practical, evidence-based intervention strategies to develop organisational resilience at the individual, team, and organisational levels.

7.2.2 Advancing Organisational Resilience Research

There are four main contributions from this thesis that heighten our understanding of organisational resilience: the empirical development of a definition of organisational resilience, support for a complex adaptive systems approach, re-imagining of the role of learning in organisational resilience, and expansion of the contexts in which organisational resilience research has been conducted.

7.2.2.1 Empirical Development of a Definition of Organisational Resilience. The definition of organisational resilience proposed in this thesis advances organisational resilience research in five main ways. First, this definition has been developed from the consensus of a panel of experts as to which features and areas of ambiguity from the extant fragmented and imported range of definitions (Conz & Magnani, 2020; Tarba et al., 2017) are most suited to a specific context (elite sport). Second, the proposed definition unifies the seemingly divergent perspectives on the underpinnings of resilience by referring to resilience as a capability (i.e., an ability to display a resilient response in the future, viz. Hamel & Valikangas, 2003), as dynamic (i.e., incorporating processual elements acknowledging that resilience develops over time, viz. Gittell et al., 2006), and specifying the required future outcome following a resilience event (i.e., successfully dealing with significant change, viz. Meyer, 1982). In particular, by primarily referring to organisational resilience as a capability, both proximal and distal outcomes are considered such that resilience requires not only a short-term successful outcome following a resilience event (Boin & van Eeten, 2013), but the capability to do so again in the longer term (Somers, 2009). Third, by allowing for a variety of resilience outcomes, the definition demands contextual embeddedness, such that what is a "successful" outcome will depend on the context, organisational goals, and the intensity and duration of the change faced. Fourth, referring to "significant change" allows for the dynamic nature of resilience events, which may be chronic or acute, emerging from interactions

between the organisation and its environment (Morgeson et al., 2015). Fifth, by incorporating reference to the temporality and multiple levels across which organisational resilience takes place, attention is focused on organisational resilience as a dynamic and complex phenomenon (Duchek, 2020) emerging from interactions between employees and teams (Gucciardi et al., 2018).

7.2.2.2 Support for a Complex Adaptive Systems Approach to Organisational Resilience. The definition of organisational resilience proposed in Chapter Three moves away from crisis research in which resilience events are regarded as unexpected and externally generated (see Williams et al., 2017), or safety and reliability research in which events can be anticipated and mitigated (e.g., Weick et al., 1999). Instead, it moves towards a systems-based model in which an organisation interacts dynamically with its environment (e.g., Holling, 1973). Rather than a simplistic linear perspective of organisational resilience as baseline functioning impacted by a singular stressor before returning to baseline functioning, in Chapter Four, complex systems theory (Cilliers, 2001; Walker & Cooper, 2011) was proposed as a useful framework to understand resilience as an emergent property of self-organising systems which have the capacity to adapt and operate under constant change (Barasa et al., 2018). In such an environment, multiple resilience events, organisational systems, and their wider sociocultural context dynamically interact (Morgeson et al., 2015) based on local information and feedback (Chandler, 2014; de Coning, 2016), enabling organisations to adapt to multiple changes at any given time. Through the perspective of constant iterative sensing and adapting proposed in Chapter Four, change is seen as normal, and necessary, representing a shift in thinking away from control or stability. Chapter Five further developed the systems perspective, highlighting the need to be cognisant of the future but cultivating an awareness of current uncertainty and vulnerabilities, or a collective awareness of the possibility of disaster (Crichton et al., 2009). This involves developing flexibility and responsiveness to pick up anomalies emerging (Weick et al., 1999), rather than interpreting the absence of adversity as evidence of competence.

7.2.2.3 Reimagining the Role of Learning in Organisational Resilience. Within

Chapter Four the core resilience processes of sensing and adapting were proposed, alongside

supporting processes of strengthening and shielding. These findings are a departure from

much of the organisational resilience literature which adopts a typically three-phased

temporal approach representing a before (anticipation, planning), during (implementing

solutions), and after (learning and adjustment) conceptualisation of resilience (e.g., Duchek,

2020; Meyer, 1982). In particular, a post-adversity phase of learning (cf. Boin & van Eeten,

2013; Hopkin, 2014; Jaaron & Backhouse, 2014; Pal et al., 2014), assumes organisations can

identify what needs to be learned and can choose what to learn (Alvarez et al., 2018).

However, if organisations are characterised as complex systems (Cilliers, 2001; Walker &

Cooper, 2011), as proposed in Chapter Four, the inherent capacity to produce novel or

surprising events is recognised (Crichton et al., 2009), requiring a collective and continual

'mindfulness' of the possibility of disaster (Sutcliffe et al., 2016) and rendering futile

attempts to learn from the past in order to control the future. As an alternative to a third

temporal phase of "learning-from-disaster" once a disruption has ended, the findings in

Chapter Four support a capacity for ongoing, real-time organisational learning and

adaptation, termed "learning-in-disaster" (Walker et al., 2020). Learning-in-disaster is a

strategy based on flexibility and adaptation in response to failures (rather than avoiding error

altogether) through sensing and acting upon change.

The findings in this thesis also underline the value of individual-level learning

through the resilience supporting process of strengthening resources (Chapter Four), the

strategy of empowering ownership of personal development (Chapter Five), and the

resilience outcome of peer-to-peer learning (Chapter Six). A key component of employee

resilience, individual-level learning strengthens the quality of human resources available to

an organisation when faced with significant change through cultivating a knowledgeable

workforce (Näswall et al., 2019; Youssef & Luthans, 2007). Translating employee learning to

develop organisational resilience requires teams of individuals to collaboratively integrate

their individual knowledge (McIver et al., 2016) to create original solutions to acute change or adversity.

7.2.2.4 Expanding the Contexts for Organisational Resilience Research.

Organisational resilience research has been highly context-dependent, leading to calls for examples from under-researched domains (Linnenluecke, 2017) to draw out the context dependence of their insights. As the first programme of organisational resilience research in an elite sport context, the research presented in this thesis bolsters the extant body of organisational resilience research by expanding the range of contexts investigated. In particular, the immersive ethnographic approach presented in Chapter Five provides a deeply embedded, first-hand account of the context-specific strategies used in an elite sport organisation to successfully deal with significant change. Beyond this, insights from elite sport are likely to aid understanding of organisational resilience in other performance domains such as medical, military, and the performing arts (Molan et al., 2019). The research may also inform understanding of organisational resilience in smaller organisations, as a counterpoint to the dominance of research in large organisations (Branicki et al., 2018) such as those found in healthcare systems (e.g., Barasa et al., 2018) and critical infrastructure (e.g., Brown et al., 2017). In particular, the size of elite sport organisations allows for a greater level of connection between individuals and teams, facilitating a micro-level exploration of the interactive psychosocial processes underpinning organisational resilience.

7.2.3 A Multi-Level Analysis of Resilience Definitions, Characteristics, and Processes

In this section, a multi-level analysis of resilience across the sport and workplace literatures is provided. Similarities in constructs across levels can, according to Morgeson and Hofmann (1999), be found in their common functions, or causal outcomes, and cross-level distinctions can be observed in their structures, or interactions. As referred to in Part One of Chapter Two, at the individual, team, and organisational levels, the construct of resilience has the same causal outcome namely a better than expected recovery or adaptation following adversity (cf. Bonanno et al., 2015; Fletcher & Sarkar, 2013; Linnenluecke, 2017; Morgan et

al., 2013). Cross-level structural and interactional distinctions, which create a need to explore resilience at the organisational level separately from the individual and team levels, predominantly arise from two sources. The degree of task inter-dependence (Stoverink et al., 2020), namely the extent to which individuals rely on each other to undertake their work, is highest in teams, lowest (or non-existent) at the individual level, and relatively weak at the organisational level. Structural distinctions include the number of individuals involved at each level of analysis, how those individuals are organised (for example the degree of hierarchy and how responsibilities are allocated), and how they communicate (Mintzberg, 1979). Divided into three parts, similarities and differences in resilience definitions, characteristics, and processes across the individual, team, and organisational levels are discussed.

7.2.3.1 The Advancement of Resilience Definitions in Sport Psychology across Levels of Analysis. Comparing definitions of resilience in sport psychology across levels, individual resilience has been defined as "the role of mental processes and behaviour in promoting personal assets and protecting an individual from the potential negative effect of stressors" (Fletcher & Sarkar, 2012, p. 675, 2013, p. 16). This early sport-specific definition moved the concept of resilience away from research in general psychology which focused on negatively-valenced adversity (Fletcher & Sarkar, 2013), instead referring to both the promotion of personal assets and the protection from the potential negative effect of stressors. It also expanded the concept of adversity beyond a singular, large-scale event, allowing for chronic stressors or multiple simultaneous adversities. In relation to outcomes, this individual-level definition allows for conceptualisations of resilience both as positive adaptation in response to stressors, and the protection or shielding from the impact of stressors. In the first study of team resilience in elite sport, Morgan et al. (2013) defined team resilience as "a dynamic, psychosocial process which protects a group of individuals from the potential negative effect of stressors they collectively encounter. It comprises of processes whereby team members use their individual and collective resources to positively adapt when

experiencing adversity" (p. 552). In doing so, Morgan et al. highlight the dual outcomes of resilience as both protection from stressors and positive adaptation. They also draw specific attention to the collective and relational fabric of team resilience as a group-level construct. In the thesis, in Chapter Three, organisational resilience was defined as "the dynamic capability of an organisation to successfully deal with significant change. It emerges from multi-level (employee, team, and organisational) interacting characteristics and processes which enable an organisation to prepare for, adapt to, and learn from significant change" (Chapter Three, p. 73). In conjunction with the previous definitions of individual and team resilience in sport, organisational resilience is conceptualised in Chapter Three as dynamic, allowing multiple interpretations as to the type of adversity, stressor, or change experienced, and noting the need to both prepare for or be protected from adversity, and to positively adapt to it. The proposed definition advances earlier resilience research in sport (Fletcher & Sarkar, 2012, 2013; Morgan et al., 2013) by emphasising the multi-level and interactive nature of the resilience construct which, while more readily apparent at the organisational level, could also help inform conceptualisations of resilience at the individual and team levels through placing greater emphasis on person-environment interactions.

7.2.3.2 Similarities and Differences in Resilience Characteristics in Sport and Workplaces across Levels of Analysis. Resilience characteristics encompass what an individual, team, or organisation has (rather than what they do) which contribute towards their resilience capability. In this section, five groupings of resilience characteristics are discussed, namely support, psychological safety, confidence, structure, and awareness, and the degree of similarity (for support, psychological safety, and confidence) or difference (for structure and awareness) between multiple levels of analysis.

Support appears to be a common resilience characteristic across levels of analysis, with protective factors or resilience characteristics of perceived social support, social capital, and reciprocal commitment at the individual, team, and organisational levels respectively (Britt et al., 2016; Bryan et al., 2019; Chapter Three; Fletcher & Sarkar, 2012; Förster &

Duchek, 2017; Galli & Vealey, 2008; Morgan et al., 2013; Sarkar & Hilton, 2020). The term "support" refers to the relatively static *characteristic* of relationships, or networks of relationships, whereas the dynamic processual creation and maintenance of relationships was found in Chapter Four of this thesis to be an important resilience *process* in strengthening organisational resources and shielding from risk.

Psychological safety is sometimes referred to as a resilient characteristic in and of itself, linked to organisational resilience by cultivating a willingness to take inter-personal risks (cf. Lengnick-Hall et al., 2011; Walker et al., 2020), fostering a learning capability (Edmondson, 1999), and providing a buffer against defensive withdrawal by individuals faced with adversity (Carmeli et al., 2013). Weick used the term respectful interaction in 1993 as a source of organisational resilience, prior to Edmondson's (1999) work on psychological safety, with a focus on sensemaking such that respectful interaction allows the respectful voicing of ideas and thoughts to offer a better understanding of the resilience event and a wider range of alternative responses. Alternatively, psychological safety is described as one of the features exhibited in a resilience-enabling support network, as suggested in Chapter Three of this thesis where the resilient characteristic of "reciprocal commitment" refers to relationships in which employees feel valued, supported, and safe. In Chapter Five, the ability to collectively evaluate and own decisions was predicated on a psychologically safe group environment. The results presented in Chapter Five also extend previous research by suggesting how a psychologically safe environment might be cultivated through awareness and exposure of vulnerabilities to strengthen relationship networks. At the team level, psychological safety has been found to be a distinct feature of team resilience in the workplace (Stoverink et al., 2020) and a feature of social capital in sport, termed prosocial interactions (Morgan et al., 2013). Psychological safety, as a group-level construct regarding beliefs concerning group norms (Edmondson, 1999), is not directly relevant at the individual level. Instead trust, a key component of psychological safety, is cited as a resilience characteristic of leader resilience (Förster & Duchek, 2017) and, in sport, as an important

quality of social support, alongside respect, as a resilience characteristic (Fletcher & Sarkar, 2012). Overall, there appears to be strong evidence as to the importance of support as a resilience characteristic across multiple levels of analysis. Whether psychological safety, and trust, sit alongside, or are subsumed within, the characteristic of support requires further exploration.

Confidence also appears to be a key resilience characteristic at multiple levels of analysis, with confidence cited as a protective individual factor in sport (Fletcher & Sarkar, 2012). At the collective levels of team and organisational resilience in sport, this confidence is in the ability of the team or organisation to achieve its goals, rather than in individual abilities, represented by collective efficacy at the team level (Morgan et al., 2013) and shared understanding at the organisational level (Chapter Three). In Chapter Five, it was suggested that confidence needs to be attenuated by an awareness of future uncertainty to avoid complacency following experiences of successfully dealing with adversity. At the workplace team level, Stoverink et al. (2020) propose the characteristic of "team potency", reflecting Weick's (1993) attitude of wisdom in organisational resilience, representing a balance between confidence and caution. Potency is the motivational fuel to persist despite adversity, tempered by constant vigilance, or a desire to maintain an accurate understanding of the current situation. More commonly, motivation to succeed is regarded as a separate resilience characteristic to confidence in the (collective) ability to do so. In the resilience in sport literature, a desire or motivation to improve underlies motivation at the individual level (Fletcher & Sarkar, 2012), mastery approaches at the team level (Morgan et al., 2013), and flexible improvement at the organisational level (Chapter Three). Motivation to improve and confidence, therefore, both have endorsement as resilience characteristics at multiple levels of analysis, although, as suggested in Chapter Five, confidence may need to be tempered with caution to guard against complacency which could inhibit the future ability or motivation to sense future adversities.

Whilst support and confidence appear to represent common functions in resilience

characteristics at multiple levels of analysis, structural differences mean the resilience characteristics of group structure at the team level (Morgan et al., 2013) and structural clarity at the organisational level (Chapter Three) have no equivalent at the individual level. At the team level, formal structures were found to be advantageous for resilience, alongside a shared vision encapsulated in group norms, and frequent positive and open communication (Morgan et al., 2013). Given the higher degree of inter-dependence in teams compared to organisations, and consequentially the lower reliance on formal structure and process to communicate and collaborate on tasks (Stoverink et al., 2020), it is of note that resilient teams should be those with some formality in their structure. At the organisational level, within the findings presented in Chapter Three, the emphasis is not so much on the need for a formal structure, perhaps because this an implicit requirement of organisations, but rather a clear and effective structure. This allows for the wide range of organisational forms in terms of size, geographical disparity, and ownership structures such that what is an effective structure for one type of organisation may not be effective for another, but in all cases that structure must be clear both to employees and external agents.

Finally, there appears to be disparity in the need for awareness between levels of analysis which is not explained by structural or interactional differences. At the individual level, protective factors include focus (Fletcher & Sarkar, 2012), implying a purposeful narrowing of attention so as not to be distracted by other people, or sources of strain, whereas at the organisational level, the resilient characteristic of operational awareness (Chapter Three) mirrors previous literature which has highlighted the need for organisations to have an understanding of their entire operating environment (Boin & van Eeten, 2013; Lee et al., 2013). Within the individual and team resilience in sport literatures, the processes of challenge appraisal (Fletcher & Sarkar, 2012) and positive appraisal of setbacks (Morgan et al., 2015) highlight the positive evaluation of existing stressors, but do not incorporate proactively monitoring and assessing potential future stressors. In Chapter Six, it was suggested that individual- and organisational-level resilience will be mutually enhanced

through employees developing behavioural awareness, through feedback and reflective practices. This behavioural awareness is likely to enhance awareness of the organisation's operating environment through a mutually reinforcing circle of noticing and acting, thereby expanding the range of issues noticed in the first place (Macrae & Draycott, 2019).

7.2.3.3 Similarities and Differences in Resilience Processes in Sport and Workplaces across Levels of Analysis. Resilience processes are the dynamic aspects of how an individual, team, or organisation functions, or what they do, which contributes towards their resilience capability. Cross-level structural and interactional differences have implications for key resilience processes and how they emerge in terms of the degree of collaboration, coordination, and compromise required to make decisions and respond to adversity. In this section, four groupings of resilience processes as adaptation, communication, relational networks, and leadership are discussed.

Conceptualising resilience processes as centring around adaptation departs from a view of resilience as bouncing back (e.g., Koronis & Ponis, 2018), or even forwards (Lee et al., 2013), with the inherent assumption of stability as the prevailing state of affairs (Walker & Cooper, 2011). In sport, individual-level resilience commonly refers to managing, or being protected from stressors as central resilience processes (Galli & Vealey, 2008; Fletcher & Sarkar, 2012), in contrast to adaptability as a key employee resilience process (Bryan et al., 2019). In particular, employee resilience emphasises the proactive and learning behaviours that facilitate change and innovation, thereby supporting organisational adaptability (Nilakant et al., 2016). At the team level, Morgan et al.'s (2013) definition of team resilience in the sport context refers to positive adaptation when experiencing adversity, whereas team resilience in the workplace positions managing behaviours (namely coping and recovering from adversity) as central (Hartwig et al., 2020; Stoverink et al., 2020). Finally, the same distinctions can be found at the organisational level, with coping as the middle of three successive resilience stages proposed by Duchek (2020) followed by later adaptation following a period of reflection and learning. This is in contrast to the conceptualisation of

organisational resilience in a sport context as comprising two core processes of sensing and adapting as set out in Chapter Four of this thesis. A recent systematic review of 71 organisational resilience definitions by Hillmann and Guenther (2021) found that resilience as an ability to adapt or reconfigure (59% of definitions) dominated over resilience as an ability to cope or recover (28%). Ultimately, whether resilience processes centre around coping or adaptation is not a question of the level of analysis but instead rests on whether resilience is conceptualised as closed loop temporal phases essentially comprising before, during, and after exposure to adversity. An alternative conceptualisation, as supported in this thesis, is resilience as a capability to deal with ongoing and multiple changes in which an entity (individual, team, or organisation) interacts dynamically, and in a non-linear fashion, with its environment.

Compared to individuals, the structure of teams and organisations result in access to a wider variety of perspectives and experiences to facilitate dealing with change and uncertainty, but this necessitates communication in order to access those resources. Communication appears to be an overarching team- and organisational-level resilience process (Hartmann et al., 2020; Hopkin, 2014), coordinating collective actions (Gomes et al., 2014; Morgan et al., 2019; Duarte Alonso & Bressan, 2015). Communication also helps to build shared situational awareness through detecting, monitoring, and providing feedback regarding internal and external change (Chapter Four; Hartwig et al., 2020; McManus et al., 2008). Internal communication channels are integral to key structural resilience characteristics at both the team (Morgan et al., 2013) and organisational levels (Chapter Three). These structures serve to trigger and amplify information flows and increase inter-connectivity between organisational teams (Uhl-Bien & Arena, 2017). Lengnick-Hall et al. (2011), focusing on human resource management, identified communication in the form of on-going dialogues rooted in trust and honesty as central to the formation of deep social capital, one of their four contextual conditions for organisational resilience. In particular, they emphasised the role of sharing tacit information and appreciating alternative perspectives

during communication. Similarly, the creation and maintenance of communication networks has been highlighted as a way to communicatively develop resilience through building and utilising social capital (Buzzanell, 2010). Whilst information and communication have frequently been recognised as essential components of organisational resilience, the research described in Chapter Four aids a more nuanced understanding of the literature through highlighting the difference in purposes between information and communication, and how they interact. Specifically, facilitating the flow of information through increasing internal and external connecting mechanisms enhances the organisational capability to sense, evaluate, and monitor risks, whereas a focus on open and frequent communication develops the capability to adapt.

Relationships, and relationship networks, can be conceptualised as both a static resilience characteristic, something which individuals, teams, and organisations "have" in the form of social support or social capital (Britt et al., 2016; Chapter Three; Fletcher & Sarkar, 2012; Sarkar & Hilton, 2020; Morgan et al., 2013), and a resilience process, emphasising the dynamic aspects of forming, developing, and maintaining relationships. At the individual level, inter-personal competencies have been found to be a factor in leader resilience (Förster & Duchek, 2017). At the team level, the existence of high quality relationships has been regarded as central to the capability to coordinate team responses to stressors (Morgan et al., 2015), and a lack of compatible relationships can reduce communication, social support, and co-operation (Landon et al., 2018). In Chapter Four, the role of relationships in providing access to organisational resources was described, as well as facilitating the shielding of the organisation from risk by influencing relationships with external stakeholders. In Chapter Five, the understanding of the process of forming and maintaining relationships within organisational resilience was extended by describing how the exposure of vulnerabilities was used to strengthen relationships and to gain access to valued organisational resources. The notion of relational resilience is a relatively new concept examining how groups of individuals can move towards strengthened, rather than brittle, relationships when faced with

anxiety-inducing adversity (Barton & Kahn, 2019; Kahn et al., 2013; Olekalns et al., 2020). Through purposefully engaging with relational fractures triggered by adversity, and attending to relational repair, relationships can transition to a new state (Olekalns et al., 2020). Central to the process of relational repair is the interpretation of the adversity as a shared rather than individual concern (Barton & Kahn, 2019), achieved through shared knowledge, shared values, and an emphasis on relational goals (Olekalns et al., 2020). The results discussed in Chapter Five suggest that relational resilience may be a useful concept not just between individuals within a group but also when exploring inter-team and inter-organisational processes whereby teams within an organisation, and networks of organisations, repair or strengthen relationships during periods of significant change.

The role of leadership, as described in Chapter Five, was to empower individuals to take decisions and act autonomously, facilitating self-organisation and adaptation. Diffused decision making and decentralisation are characteristics of resilient organisations (Boin & van Eeten, 2013; Jaaron & Backhouse, 2014; Lampel et al., 2014; Lee et al., 2013; Wilson, 2016), suggesting that leadership of resilient organisations requires a shift away from "command and control" top down hierarchies in which leaders are seen as agents of transformation, able to foresee, and control outcomes. The research presented in Chapters Five and Six of this thesis suggests that organisational resilience may involve the suppression of more directional forms of leadership, including transformational leadership (Bass & Riggio, 2006), to allow emergent, bottom-up behaviours in which self-organisation can occur. In particular, Chapter Six included a description of how the provision of strong, directional leadership in one of the intervention groups appeared to be counter-productive through suppressing self-organisation and collective accountability. Instead, shared or collaborative leaders act as connectors between team members, stepping back to allow space for individuals to collaboratively perform tasks (Degbey & Einola, 2020). At the team level, Morgan et al. (2015, 2019) found that shared leadership, and a team regulatory system based on ownership and responsibility, promoted collective accountability and action during the

later stages of developing team resilience in sport. Notably, Morgan et al. (2015) highlighted the role of transformational leadership during the early phase of an elite sport team's history through constructing a shared understanding of the team environment and strategic direction. Acknowledging that the research presented in Chapters Five and Six focused on a relatively mature elite sport organisation, it may be that transformational leadership is similarly important in newer organisational forms, such as entrepreneurial start-ups, or following a merger.

7.2.4 Reflections and Learnings to Help Guide Research in Elite Sport Organisations

Organisational research is a relatively new domain for sport psychologists (Wagstaff, 2017). As such, practitioner reflections on the challenges encountered when undertaking organisational level research, and how these were addressed, are important tools to guide future researchers. Reflecting on the programme of research presented in this thesis, the key challenges encountered can be grouped into those concerned with negotiating access, and researcher positionality.

7.2.4.1 Negotiating Access. Being acutely aware of the difficulties in gaining access to elite sport organisations (Wagstaff et al., 2016), participant recruitment strategies were a central component in the design of each study presented in this thesis. Reflecting on what worked, and why, three key learnings emerge, namely the importance of bespoke messages, focusing on participant gain, and clarity around confidentiality. First, personal recommendations and bespoke messages helped to initiate relationships with potential participants. Done properly, this takes a considerable amount of time which must be factored in to the overall study design. At the outset of Study One, each member of the supervisory team was individually consulted to compile a list of known contacts who met the participant recruitment criteria and to agree a personalised strategy for engaging with each individual. To augment that contact list with representatives from each of a range of pre-identified elite sport organisations, online sources such as company websites and LinkedIn profiles were searched to identify individuals who may have been receptive to participating in research, for example

through having completed doctoral level research themselves, or who expressed an interest in resilience or organisational change. Each approach, either by email, or through LinkedIn, was then tailored using that information. Researching and contacting 167 individuals in this highly personalised way yielded 82 participants in the first round of Study One.

Second, a key turning point in negotiating access for the ethnographic research in Study Three was switching perspective away from what was being asked of participants, instead focusing on what they may gain. On reflection, the "gain" needed to be proportionate to the time investment sought, such that in Study One, the opportunity to share thought leadership with other experts in elite sport organisations was sufficient incentive to participate. In contrast, in Study Three, which demanded a greater investment of participant time, a higher level of return for the participant organisation was required. Following a number of rejections, a proposal was put forwards to act as an unpaid intern, assisting in the organisation as and when required. This type of offer is common in performance settings, where sport psychologists might find themselves assisting with training drills or practice routines (Mellalieu, 2017), or setting up equipment for practice sessions (Wagstaff, 2012b). Not only did this provide the incentive to the organisation to participate in the research, but it also enabled a deeper level of embedding in the organisation, through working alongside employees in a variety of departments such as customer support, events, and commercial partnerships.

Third, it was important to provide clarity when negotiating access as to the potential outputs of the research, and in particular the level of confidentiality afforded in any publications. Given the high profile of elite sport organisations, the use of pseudonyms will often be insufficient to prevent identification of the organisation involved (Champ et al., 2020). It may therefore be appropriate to offer participants a degree of editorial control, such as the right to read and amend any publications arising from the research, or the right to request an embargo on publication for a period of time. Careful consideration needs to be given to the implications not only for the content of any publications, but also the timescale.

On reflection, it was fortunate that the research programme described in this thesis explored how organisations have successfully dealt with significant change, and as such was unlikely to entail a highly critical approach. Other researchers exploring more sensitive topics such as destructive organisational cultures (Cavallerio et al., 2016; Feddersen, Morris, Littlewood, & Richardson, 2020) may be less willing to accede editorial control of their academic output. Even without concerns regarding the censorship of research findings, allowing senior management in an elite sport organisation the opportunity to read and approve an academic paper may cause delays given this is unlikely to be a priority for those managers.

7.2.4.2 Researcher Positionality and Influence. Reflecting back across the studies described in this thesis, understandings of researcher positionality and influence developed from initial attempts in Study One to minimise that influence so far as possible, perceiving that this would enhance methodological rigour, through to an understanding of positionality and influence as a choice, informed by the philosophical underpinnings of the research and the study aims.

At the outset of the research programme described in this thesis, the need to avoid "leading" participants or introducing potential bias into the data was influential in the study design. For example, in Study One the requirement for participants to suggest their own definition during round one was intentionally placed after the statements concerning conceptual and definitional aspects of organisational resilience to address potential participant concerns that they may not have sufficient knowledge or awareness of organisational resilience to proffer their own definition. Similarly, in Study Two, the research was designed to address the question of how to explore participant understandings of the underlying psychosocial processes of organisational resilience, without imposing the researcher's positioning on what could be perceived by participants as a primarily academic construct. Second interviews were used in part to make explicit the understanding which had been co-constructed between participant and researcher during the first interviews, and to allow critical reflection with participants to explore any gaps, inconsistencies, or similarities

in potential interpretations of the data (Smith & McGannon, 2018). In this way, the research design aligned with the central tenets of critical realism (Ronkainen & Wiltshire, 2019), in seeking knowledge of a social reality independent of researcher and participant (the psychosocial processes of organisational resilience), while accepting that knowledge of that reality is socially constructed and mediated (Ryba et al., 2020).

Having moved from a position of seeking to minimise the influence of the researcher, to acknowledging that influence in accordance with the philosophical underpinnings of the research, Study Three presented further challenges to understandings of researcher positionality and influence. In immersive research, who you are ultimately determines what you know (Atkinson, 2016), requiring reflection on the identities held during the ethnographic research, and how this may influence the data collected, and how it is interpreted. These epistemological considerations as to what knowledge is and how to attain it did not address the ontological consequences of the research design, namely the extent to which researcher positionality was influencing and actively producing the organisational reality being studied, not just how that reality was understood. There was a gradual acceptance during Study Three that in conducting an organisational ethnography, it was not possible to simply produce knowledge of the environment being studied, but that instead, the researcher will be instrumental to some extent in producing that reality. With this acceptance, the use of a reflexive diary (cf. Morgan et al., 2019; Wagstaff et al., 2012b) became a way to stimulate self-awareness, helping to make the implicit explicit through observations not only of the research environment, but also the behaviours and positioning of the researcher as an instrument in creating those environments.

Finally, and in contrast to the research aims of Study Three which sought a deep level of immersion, the interventions in Study Four were driven by the client's need to bring about practical transformation in the organisation's resilience capability. In order for such transformation to be sustainable, it was important to empower stakeholders to develop internal intervention expertise and enhance participant perceptions of autonomy and control.

In this context, limiting researcher influence was desirable to achieve the research aim, not as an aim in and of itself. The research programme presented in this thesis therefore ended as it began, with the use of research methods designed to minimise the influence of the researcher on the participants, and the environment being studied, but the purpose of the efforts to minimise influence were quite different. Instead of seeking to enhance methodological rigour, it was understood as a choice to be made in the context of how best to achieve the aims of the research.

7.2.5 Strengths and Limitations

In this section, some of the strengths and limitations of the thesis are discussed. A notable strength of this thesis is the range of methodologies employed in the four empirical studies to address the specific requirements of each objective outlined in Chapter One, and the integration of a variety of complementary qualitative and quantitative methods within each study. Specifically, within Chapter Three, the use of the Delphi method facilitated the development of a definition of organisational resilience informed by empirical research, integrating ecologically valid end-user perspectives with those of resilience academics. The Delphi method also addressed some of the limitations faced with interviews and focus groups by facilitating the involvement of time poor, geographically dispersed experts, and reducing the influence of powerful or influential individuals due to anonymity. Within Chapter Four, employing researcher-constructed timelines and documentary analysis alongside dual timepoint interviews facilitated the collection of rich, contextually-embedded data by demonstrating to participants an interest in both the organisations they worked for, and also the value attached to their personal experiences and perspectives (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015). The dual timepoint nature of the interviews also facilitated further reflection and guarded against a static perspective, recognising that a range of variables can shape understandings over time (Williams, 2018). It was notable in both Chapters Three and Four that participants expressed initial reticence to comment on organisational resilience amid concerns about lack of knowledge, highlighting the importance of the steps taken to

overcome such apprehensions, addressed through anonymity in Chapter Three and the development of rapport in Chapter Four. The ethnographic methods employed in Chapter Five extended case study methodologies so prevalent in organisational resilience research (Linnenluecke, 2017) through immersive, longitudinal research to include the lived experiences of those working within elite sport organisations. The craftsmanship of ethnographic research provides an antidote to the "McDonalization" of society (Ritzer, 2013) where qualities such as efficiency, calculability, predictability, and control are prioritised. Finally, the organisational-level interventions conducted as part of Chapter Six provide specific, practical guidance to the creation and implementation of organisational-level interventions within sport organisations through focusing on *how* the interventions worked, paving the way for more effective knowledge transfer partnerships (Wagstaff, 2019a) as well as starting to address the dearth of organisational resilience intervention studies.

The second main strength of this thesis lies in the degree of participant involvement. Throughout this research programme, the empirical studies have involved working in close collaboration with end-users to prioritise the experiences and perspectives of those working in elite sport organisations and promote ownership and usability of the study findings. Within Chapters Three and Four, the number of participants, their range of experience across different sports, types of organisation, and roles, and the low dropout rate across a research period spanning several months in each case was testament to the degree of interest in the topic of organisational resilience within elite sport. In Chapters Five and Six, the level of access granted to confidential and sensitive information, and the strength of endorsement from senior leaders for the intervention programme, facilitated access to a richness of data (cf. Wagstaff et al., 2012b) which has enhanced the contextual embeddedness of the research programme. In Chapter Six in particular, the use of participatory action research methods resulted in a high level of participation in the selection, co-creation, and delivery of the interventions (cf. Van Slingerland et al., 2020) promoting engagement and sustainability through the delivery of meaningful change. The contextually embedded research presented in

this thesis provides rich insights into what resilient organisational characteristics look like and ways in which resilience is enacted, thus contributing towards future efforts to develop the resilience capabilities of organisations.

As with any body of research, there are of course limitations to note. Being the first set of empirical studies in organisational resilience in elite sport, the research is still at an exploratory stage. For example, the results of Chapter Four regarding core and supporting processes of organisational resilience suggest that the definition proposed in Chapter Three may need refining to remove reference to "learning from significant change", given that the role of learning as a separate temporal phase following after a resilience event was not supported in the data from Chapters Four and Five. Instead, learning during adversity was suggested to be part of adaptation processes, and employee learning and development as part of processes through which organisational resources are strengthened. Further, the key characteristics identified in Chapter Three will have been driven to some extent by the selection of characteristics presented to participants during round three of the Delphi study (Linnenluecke, 2017). In that round, participants rated the importance of 63 potential characteristics of organisational resilience drawn from a review of the literature across the organisational resilience and resilience in sport domains. While there were opportunities to add comments, and suggest additional characteristics, these were found by the supervisory team to constitute rephrasing of characteristics already presented. It is likely participants were guided by the type of characteristics which had preceded the request for additional suggestions. It is, therefore, probable that the full range of resilience characteristics in elite sport organisations have not yet been discovered, let alone how they interact, and their relative importance.

Second, two of the four empirical studies in this thesis were conducted with the same participant organisation (Chapters Five and Six). Whilst ethnographic and participatory action research methods prioritise richness of data over claims to generalisability, some level of naturalistic generalisability and/or transferability (Smith, 2018) may be achieved.

Naturalistic generalisability will have occurred if the results resonate with personal experiences of those working in elite sport organisations. Transferability here is defined as "occurring whenever a person or group in one setting considers adopting something from another that the research has identified" (Smith, 2018, p. 140). Regardless of whether any generalisability is felt to be naturalistic or transferable, what is important is the extent to which the results of these latter two empirical studies are regarded as useful and applicable to those working in elite sport organisations in general, UK based NSOs, or even restricted solely to mid-sized UK NSOs. The degree of this potential limitation can only be ascertained once further in-depth research has been undertaken in different types of elite sport organisations. The findings of Cruickshank et al. (2015) may be informative when they compared NSOs with professional sport teams, noting the greater degree of complexity in management structures in NSOs, and the speed at which change is required to be delivered. The implications of such differences for the generalisability of the research findings in this thesis require further exploration.

A third limitation of this thesis is the failure to specify boundaries on the proposed generalisability of organisational resilience to aid conceptual clarity in this field. This is a particular concern when prioritising, as was the case in Chapter Four, the perspectives of a individuals from a range of sports and organisations who may each conceptualise resilience in different ways with different meanings (Britt et al., 2016). While there was an attempt to address this concern by providing a written copy of the definition of organisational resilience developed in Chapter Three which was visible to participants throughout the interviews, the possibility remains that organisational resilience was used by participants as catch-all term to cover any form of positive functioning (Humbert & Joseph, 2019). Adding to this concern, it is worth noting that the definition of organisational resilience proposed in this thesis is some way beyond early conceptions of resilience as bouncing back from, or recovery of, original functioning, as noted from its etymological origins and as applied in engineering resilience to this date (Baggio et al., 2015). It may be the case that definitions of resilience as stability, or

bouncing back (cf. Koronis & Ponis, 2018; Sheffi, 2005), were always overly simplistic when applied to human functioning, and that more recent interpretations of resilience as adaptation (Britt et al., 2016; Hillmann & Guenther, 2021) represent a natural evolution of the research field as properly applied to its context. Alternatively, it may be that the field of resilience has moved so far beyond its origins as to represent a different construct altogether, or to systemise the study of factors which contribute towards positive adaptation (Fogarty & Perera, 2016). To address this issue, attention must be paid to the boundaries of resilience, considering what resilience is not alongside what it is (Busse et al., 2017; Sarkar & Page, in press).

Fourth, and finally, the research in this thesis did not compare the resilience of different elite sport organisations. Given that resilience necessarily involves a better than expected outcome (Bonanno et al., 2015; Fletcher & Sarkar, 2013), to properly ascertain whether an outcome is better than expected requires a comparison or some form of benchmarking against which to assess this. In Chapter Four, whether an organisation had displayed resilience was at the judgment of individual participants, in Chapter Five it was assessed by external stakeholder perceptions of the financial turnaround achieved compared to what they would expect, and in Chapter Six an organisational resilience survey was developed. The studies did not, however, attempt to directly compare responses across organisations to explore differences in outcomes and potential characteristics and processes which may have underpinned those outcomes. Addressing this limitation is regarded as the most fruitful avenue for future research in this area.

7.2.6 Future Research Directions

This thesis suggests that organisational resilience is a construct of interest to researchers and applied sport psychologists alike. The research conducted to date suggests a number of areas for future research, categorised into research design and methods, the micro-processes of resilience, and the potential for a dark side of organisational resilience.

The research in this thesis has provided rich data predominantly using qualitative

methods to describe how resilience has been developed longitudinally, both from a retrospective perspective in Chapter Four across multiple organisations, and a contemporaneous perspective through the use of ethnographic methods and participatory action research in Chapters Five and Six. A useful extension to this nascent body of research would be a multiple case study approach to compare how a number of elite sport organisations have successfully dealt with significant change. This method is commonly used within the general organisational resilience literature in various ways. For example, Pal et al. (2014) compared eight relatively similar Swedish textile manufacturers across the same periods of time, using self-report surveys and interviews. This method could be used to identify organisations with higher resilience capabilities from those which have lower capabilities in the face of similar challenges, such as those which have experienced similar funding cuts from government funding agencies. An alternative option would be pair-matching organisations, a methodology employed by Ortiz-de-Mandojana and Bansal (2016) based on those which exhibit specific pre-defined characteristics compared to those which do not. As an illustration, this could be used to compare professional sport teams across a range of sports or in different leagues, matching those which have undergone a high level of managerial turnover across a defined period with those which have not. Further, Kimberlin et al. (2011) complied organisational histories of 12 non-profit organisations allowing both cross-sectional and longitudinal analysis. This method could be used to compare elite sport organisations with extensive histories and those which are relatively newly formed to ascertain if there are maturity aspects to organisational resilience (Sawalha, 2015).

Focusing on a single organisation, a future research opportunity would be to map out how a resilience event which initially impacts only a discrete part of the organisation subsequently spreads (Morgeson et al., 2015). In Chapter Five, the resilient event (significant change) was financial which arguably affects the whole organisation, whereas other resilience events will be, initially, located at the individual or team level. For example, a doping allegation against an athlete or coach will originate at the individual level, training ground, or

performance department level. How the impact spreads, and what factors shape the helping and hindering interactions between individuals and teams which culminate in resilience at the organisational level, will inform an understanding of the processes which take place at and between different levels of analysis (see Barton & Kahn, 2019; Kahn et al., 2018; Morgeson et al., 2015). It would also benefit the research knowledge base to amass case studies focusing on different types of resilience events (Linnenluecke, 2017), for example internally-instigated planned managerial change (e.g., Wagstaff et al., 2015, 2016) with unanticipated change originating externally, such as the Covid-19 global pandemic, to explore similarities and differences in the characteristics and processes underlying resilience to planned and unplanned change.

The final research design to highlight would be to investigate organisational resilience from a multidisciplinary perspective. Researchers from sociology, organisational management, and psychology could work collaboratively to explore resilience of an elite sport organisation informed by a macro-cultural perspective (e.g., Bostock et al., 2018; Feddersen, Morris, Abrahamsen et al., 2020), a governance structure and processes perspective (e.g., Parent et al., 2018), and an individual and team psychosocial perspective (e.g., Fletcher & Sarkar, 2012; Morgan et al., 2013, 2015, 2019). This would help to address recent calls for more cross-level integration of organisational resilience research (Hillmann & Guenther, 2021; Linnenluecke, 2017; Lui et al., 2019) and inform collective understanding of the multifaceted aspects of organisational resilience.

Methods to assess and measure organisational resilience will be inextricably linked to the research aims. Motivated by the need to provide evidence of short-term wins prevalent within the elite sport system, particularly in professional sport teams (Cruickshank et al., 2015; Gibson & Groom, 2020), a sport-specific valid and reliable scale would be useful to measure pre-post changes in organisational resilience. The preliminary scale devised in Chapter Six was exploratory in nature, incorporating an initial quantitative assessment of organisational resilience in sport as one aspect of a holistic assessment of the feasibility and

impact of organisational-level interventions. The scale was developed based on the findings of earlier sport-specific research (viz. Chapters Three and Four) in conjunction with organisational resilience research in other domains (e.g., Lee et al., 2013; Whitman et al., 2013) and would benefit from further item development and psychometric testing using a larger sample. Care needs to be taken, however, if using a scale to separate out specific organisational factors and examine them in isolation, particularly when viewing organisations as complex adaptive systems, due to the number of interactions between resilience characteristics and processes, and between levels of analysis. Beyond the use of a valid and reliable scale to measure organisational resilience, various proxy measures have been used including organisational longevity (Kimberlin et al., 2011) and financial performance (Gittel et al., 2006). Fitzgerald and Lupton (2015) noted the importance within public sector research of capturing wider social factors. Within elite sport organisations, alongside financial, athlete, and team performance, it may be necessary to consider less tangible metrics such as the impact on wider sports participation, the reputation of the sport, and any increased burden placed on the voluntary sector, when assessing resilience. As stated at the outset, the range of measures chosen will depend on the aims and drivers behind the research agenda, and the answer to the question "resilience for whom?" (Fitzgerald, 2018, p. 788).

The core resilience processes of sensing and adapting merit further research attention to understand the microprocesses at play in determining how organisations are able to sense, and respond positively to, significant change. Two potential avenues are through the literature on sensemaking (Maitlis & Christianson, 2014; Wagstaff, 2020) and unlearning (Fiol & O'Connor, 2017; Morais-Storz & Nguyen, 2017) respectively. How individuals and teams make sense of the information available to them, particularly in an age of big data when more and more information is being generated and made available, is crucial to an understanding of sensing as a resilience process. At the macro-level, the detection, compilation, and evaluation of information collectively warrant further investigation (Chapters Four and Five), and at the micro-level, processes are likely to include individual proactive sensemaking of

organisational-level communication (Wagstaff, 2020), and the interpretation of inter-personal cues (Degbey & Einola, 2020). Turning to adaptation, the relevance of "learning-in-disaster" (Walker et al., 2020) as a capacity for ongoing, real-time learning has already been noted. Allied to this, the concept of organisational-level unlearning (Fiol & O'Connor, 2017), a relatively underexplored area, highlights the importance of discarding obsolete knowledge and routines which can be a barrier to new learning. Morais-Stortz and Nguyen (2017) propose that, rather than waiting for a crisis to arise to allow learning, and therefore adaptation, processes to progress, problem formulation can be used to motivate adaptation through discarding old routines and acquiring new ones. Researchers could use a scenario planning design (e.g., McManus, 2008; Macrae & Draycott, 2019) to focus not only on processes and strategies employed to help shield an organisation from future adversity through exploring problems collaboratively, and from diverse perspectives, but also pay close attention to those existing processes and strategies rejected to allow space for adaptation to occur.

The potential for resilience at one level of analysis negatively influencing, rather than solely positively influencing, resilience at another level of analysis is an underexplored area (Britt & Sawhney, 2020; Caza et al., 2020). When experiencing adversity, employees may disengage from their team or organisation through reducing effort and support to preserve their own resources and individual resilience (Hartmann et al., 2020), or teams might pursue short-term team-level goals at the expense of organisational interests (Stoverink et al., 2020). For example, in an elite sport organisation, the performance department might pursue a policy of winning at all costs to achieve medal targets set by external funders regardless of reputational risk and the consequential impact on retaining commercial partners. Even in the absence of multi-level considerations, the dark side of resilience is a disjointed body of scholarship (Mahdiani & Ungar, 2021) which has received little attention from researchers (Britt et al., 2016). In this thesis, it was highlighted in Chapter Five, as an example, how collective efficacy, a commonly cited resilience characteristic (Billington et al., 2017;

Bonanno et al., 2010; Morgan et al., 2013) could trigger complacency where it arises from experiences of having successfully dealt with past adversity (Tinsley et al., 2012). Further, as it is linked to higher persistence in the face of problems (Bandura, 2000), collective efficacy may conflict with the resilience process of adapting to deal with a changing environment (Caza et al., 2020; Chapter Four; Williams et al., 2017), raising questions of whether there can be a wrong degree of resilience (Mahdiani & Ungar, 2021). Another question raised by Mahdiani and Ungar (2021), is whether there can be a wrong context for resilience. In Chapter Five it was noted how, when conceptualised as the ability to swiftly recover, resilience can encourage short term thinking, focusing on the immediate context and masking underlying changes which reduce the resources available to deal with future adversity (Fitzgerald & Lupton, 2015). Resilience can also be used to place the onus on individuals to deal with difficult circumstances as a way of avoiding putting mitigations in place in the team or organisational context (Card, 2018; Kinman, 2018).

Researchers should be aware of, and be explicit about, potential agendas underlying calls for elite sport organisations to develop resilience. There is potential for systemic issues within the elite sport system, in terms of how it is funded, or pressure to achieve performance targets for example, to be overlooked through narratives placing responsibility on individual organisations. Bostock et al. (2017) found that the ability of UK NSO's to recover following funding cuts was constrained by extreme funding dependency limiting their flexibility, and a prohibitive institutional environment which led to a focus on short term survival strategies at the expense of longer term success. Feddersen, Morris, Abrahamsen, et al. (2020) similarly commented on the systemic, coercive power of government funding agencies to prescribe changes within NSOs and drive their focus based on a perceived threat of a fragile funding relationship. This accords with the observation in Chapter Four of the potential for unintended consequences arising from external stakeholder funding decisions causing a "rigidity trap" (Walker & Cooper, 2011, p. 156) through decreasing adaptability, altering the system purpose, or decreasing the sustainability of resources. The way in which the elite sport

system as a whole operates to support or hinder the resilience of individual organisations is a fruitful area of future research.

7.2.7 Practical Implications

Within Chapters Three to Six, when presenting the findings of the four empirical studies included in this thesis, practical implications have been suggested at each stage to guide sport psychologists in translating the research findings to an applied setting. In Chapter Three, interventions to target each of the five key resilience characteristics were proposed, and Chapter Four contained strategies to stimulate resilience processes at the individual, team, and organisational levels. In Chapter Five, examples were provided of ways to promote organisational resilience through enhancing the cognitive and behavioural capacities of an organisation, and Chapter Six outlined considerations when implementing organisational-level interventions. This section focuses on expanding the practical implications briefly presented in Chapter Six by suggesting a framework to guide sport psychologists through developing and delivering organisational-level interventions to develop organisational resilience. Such interventions are a form of internally instigated organisational change, and as such, the literature on organisational change in sport, presented in Part Two of Chapter Two, is instructive, particularly the work of Cruikshank et al. (2014, 2015). Exploring the management of change in the performance departments of professional and Olympic sport organisations, the model proposed by Cruickshank et al. was based on a set of guiding principles addressing the initial evaluation, planning, and impact phases of instigating change, alongside managing stakeholder perceptions and expectations. The framework which follows addresses how to determine which interventions may be desirable and/or feasible in a particular organisation and processual issues which may be encountered, alongside suggestions as to how to incorporate some of the principles of organisational resilience at each stage, to help applied sport psychologists ("ASPs") develop the ability of a sport organisation to successfully deal with significant change.

7.2.7.1 Initial Evaluation Phase. Initial evaluation prior to agreeing to work with an

organisation includes an assessment of the perceived fit between the ASP and key internal stakeholders, meeting with gatekeepers from the participant organisation to understand their expectations and motivations in participating in the research (Slater & Barker, 2019). ASPs would also be advised to consult their network to gain external perspectives of the organisation and key stakeholders where possible, including an understanding of where decision-making power lies (Cruickshank et al., 2015; Wylleman, 2019). In particular, the extent of involvement or influence from external stakeholders should be ascertained as this may act as a motivation or limitation on enacting change (Feddersen, Morris, Littlewood, & Richardson, 2020; Lee et al., 2013). Once the appointment to work with an organisation has been agreed, initial evaluation shifts to a phase of information gathering about the department or organisation in which the change is to be introduced. From an organisational resilience perspective, this may take the form of a survey capturing key elements of organisational resilience such as that used in Chapter Six (see Appendix Nine), and/or interviews and focus groups with individual employees. This will help to gain an understanding of current resilience strengths and weaknesses within the organisation utilising the framework of characteristics and processes proposed in this thesis (Chapters Three and Four).

     7.2.7.2 Planning Phase. When planning intervention work, alongside understanding current organisational resilience strengths and weaknesses, where possible, ASPs should seek a wider understanding of the current organisational culture (Mellalieu, 2017; Sly et al., 2020), conceptualised as the context in which any intervention will take place (Wagstaff & Burton-Wylie, 2018). As highlighted in Part Two of Chapter Two, the study of organisational culture in sport has tended to favour the integration perspective (Martin & Meyerson, 1988), whereby culture is regarded as homogenised and over-simplified, privileging management agendas wishing to manipulate the culture of an organisation as part of the process of instigating organisational change (McDougall et al., 2020a). Rather than seeking to change the organisational culture to one focused on resilience, ASPs may do better by seeking to understand the interacting parts of an organisation through a differentiation perspective

(Martin & Meyerson, 1988) to consider, or at least be aware of, the potential for inconsistencies between organisational values and employee behaviours, resistance to change, and conflict between departments (McDougall et al., 2020a). From an organisational resilience perspective, introducing leadership to the principles of complex adaptive systems (Cilliers, 2001; Walker & Cooper, 2011) at this stage will help to explain why attempts to control and manipulate the organisational culture are unlikely to be successful. Further, the principles can also be used to encourage leadership to focus on stimulating the capacity of the organisation to self-organise and adapt (de Coning, 2016) through facilitating connections between teams and individuals (Chapter Four). In particular, the design and planning of interventions should prioritise developing inter-departmental working groups which accept ownership and accountability of the interventions and seek to inculcate the principles of peer-to-peer learning (Chapter Six).

Setting and aligning multi-stakeholder perceptions and expectations is also part of the planning phase, as proposed by Cruickshank et al. (2014, 2015), discussing expectations with key stakeholders regarding the time and resources available for the intervention work, and likely outcomes (Slater & Barker, 2019). From an organisational resilience perspective, this phase can also be used to introduce the concept of operational awareness (Chapter Three), helping to cultivate an awareness of organisational resources available not only for the intervention work, but more widely. Specifically, these conversations can be structured around the concepts of strengthening the quality, and spare capacity, of human, financial, and relational resources (Chapter Four).

7.2.7.3 Impact Phase. Turning to the impact phase of instigating change, ASPs are advised to identify and gain support from individuals and groups who could foster acceptance of change. Insufficient employee participation and lack of support from leadership are commonly reported obstacles to intervention success (Montano et al., 2014). From an organisational resilience perspective, in Chapter Six, support was achieved through sharing ownership of intervention selection with the junior and senior management teams, and

subsequently recruiting employees from the performance department to co-create and deliver the interventions.

Specific interventions should be tailored around the strengths and weaknesses of the organisation as identified in the Evaluation Phase. Suggestions which target multiple factors of organisational resilience include scenario planning, creating a behavioural charter, and stakeholder analysis. Scenario planning can be used to sense risks and develop risk shielding strategies (Chapter Four), thereby developing operational awareness of potential risks and the resources available to deal with them (McManus et al., 2008), supporting flexible improvement through encouraging innovative solutions (Chapter Three), and enhancing shared understanding among those involved (Crichton et al., 2009). Creating a behavioural charter requires a shared understanding of the organisations vision and values (Chapter Three), creating links between those values and demonstrated behaviours, and subsequently developing collective behavioural awareness through group reflexive practices (Chapter Six). Stakeholder analysis involves identifying key internal and external stakeholders and rating their power and influence in relation to an individual's role, or a team's project to determine which relationships to focus on (Walters et al., 2010). Relationship networks developed in this way can help organisations to sense potential significant changes, as well as being a source of additional organisational resources in times of adversity (Chapter Four).

Finally, during the impact phase, consideration should be given to the potential requirement for demonstrable quick wins within the organisation, with professional sport teams potentially more focused on short term performance gains than Olympic sport organisations (Cruickshank et al., 2015). Whether and how such performance or resilience gains will be assessed should, therefore, be ascertained at the outset, particularly any requirement from stakeholders for quantifiable measures of success. From an organisational resilience perspective, if feasible, the ASP could introduce an awareness of the inherent uncertainties which can impact organisational functioning (Chapter Five), including the delivery and embedding of initiatives to develop organisational resilience. Shifting focus

away from pre-determined outcomes, ASPs could encourage the development of a capacity to sense and adapt to changes as they occur, being mindful of the potential for unintended consequences (Chapter Four). For example, if only part of the organisation is involved in the intervention work, this may cause disengagement or disillusionment in those not invited to participate. Regular communication with line managers could be used to sense such changes, and intervention delivery could be adapted to use colleagues to deliver peer-to-peer learning to extend the reach of the intervention work (Slater & Barker, 2019). In sum, ASPs should not be disheartened by the scale of the task when implementing organisational-level interventions, and the potential difficulties or desirability of evidencing demonstrable outcomes, as working alongside key internal stakeholder and decision-makers can result in a greater visibility and understanding of the benefits of the applied work even without empirical measures (Fayard & Van Maanen, 2015). The suggestions provided in this section illustrate the stages at which visibility and understanding of the factors underlying organisational resilience may be integrated into organisational intervention work.

7.3 Conclusion

Elite sport organisations often face particularly high levels of uncertainty and change from internal and external sources (Feddersen, Morris, Abrahamsen et al., 2020; Wagstaff et al., 2016). Organisational resilience is the study of how some organisations are better equipped than others to deal with this turbulent and dynamic environment (Duchek, 2020; Lee et al., 2013). Within the elite sport context, despite a growing body of literature highlighting the importance of individual resilience (see, for a review, Bryan et al., 2019) and team resilience (see, for a review, Morgan et al., 2017), the notion of organisational resilience had yet to be explored. The work presented in this thesis addresses this fundamental research gap.

The main contribution of this thesis to the sport psychology literature is that it represents the first comprehensive programme of research regarding organisational resilience in elite sport. There is likely to continue to be a pluralistic debate on organisational resilience,

recognising that no single context or study will provide all the answers (Linnenluecke, 2017). However, by proposing a definition of organisational resilience endorsed by experts in elite sport and from academia, and by providing a framework of key resilience characteristics and psychosocial processes, this thesis offers a solid foundation to aid future research. Further, by illuminating the strategies which helped one elite sport organisation successfully deal with significant change, and by co-creating, delivering, and evaluating a series of organisational resilience interventions, the programme of research offers applied sport psychologists a valuable insight into the formal and informal structures, processes, and strategies of an elite sport organisation dealing with change. Beyond the sport context, the research advances the organisational resilience literature in domains outside of sport by providing a definition informed by the perspectives of a wide range of experts, clarifying the role of learning processes, and integrating the results through a framework of complex, adaptive systems (Cilliers, 2001; Walker & Cooper, 2011). Finally, an analysis of the definition, characteristics, and processes of resilience at multiple levels has helped to identify similarities and differences in the construct of resilience to aid future multi-level research.

While organisational resilience appears to be a construct of interest to those working in elite sport organisations, further research is needed to compare the responses of organisations displaying differing degrees of resilience, to map how resilience events spread, and to explore the potential for negative effects at multiple levels of analysis. The results generated from the four empirical studies in this thesis provide strong conceptual foundations and unique insight into the ways in which organisational practices can be harnessed to create high performance systems within complex, turbulent environments in which organisations, and the individuals and teams working within them, can thrive (Wagstaff, 2017). Further, the research from this thesis operates as a catalyst for the development and implementation of cost-effective, sustainable interventions, through facilitating the transfer of research to practice and supporting applied sport psychologists in developing new competencies to strengthen future organisational resilience capabilities.

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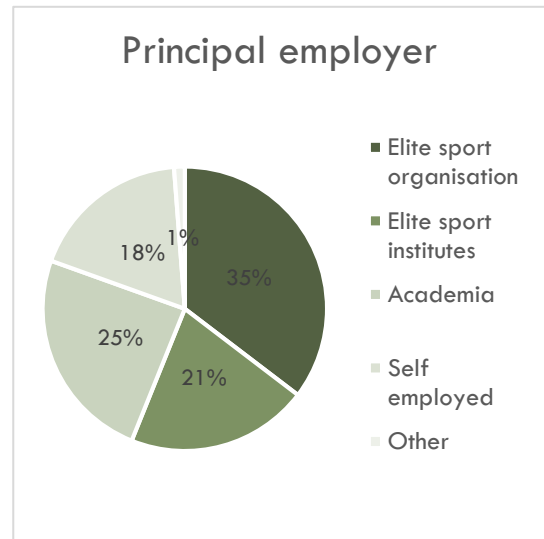
ORGANISATIONAL RESILIENCE IN ELITE SPORT

Thank you once again for your participation in our study. You are now part of an expert panel of 82 members who, over the course of four online questionnaires, will be guiding the future of research into the definition of organisational resilience in elite sport and the challenges faced, as well as the characteristics which make an elite sport organisation resilient. Ultimately within this research stream we aim to influence organisational policies and practices within elite sport, and to develop novel ways of assessing and enhancing organisational resilience within elite sport organisations.

Following the first questionnaire, we wanted to feed back to you some information regarding the composition of the expert panel you are a member of, together with areas where consensus has already been reached. Please feel free to circulate this feedback to others within your organisation as an indication of the valuable work you are contributing towards.

Panel composition

The panel includes 46 people identifying themselves as principally employed within elite sport, whether directly by an elite sport organisation, or through an overarching institution such as the English Institute of Sport, responsible for delivering a range of services to high performance sports organisations across Great Britain.   This includes 13 directors / CEOs of elite sport organisations, 5 in senior management positions, 16 coaches and performance managers, and 5 sport scientists.

Principal employer

- Elite sport organisation
- Elite sport institutes
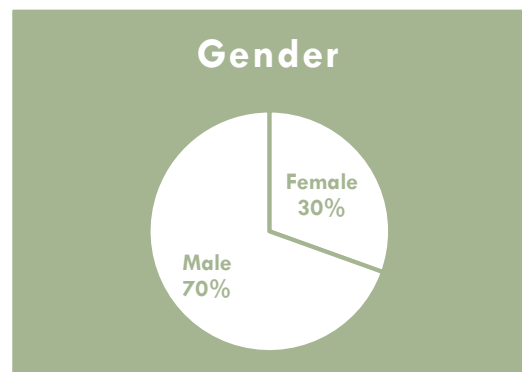- Academia
- Self employed
- Other

The panel has a combined experience in elite sport of over 1,000 years

From sport psychology, 16 panel members work directly in elite sport organisations and 9 on consultancy basis.

Out of 21 individuals principally employed by academic institutions (specialising in sport psychology, organisational psychology, or resilience), 11 are professors / head of department.

Last, but most certainly not least, our panel includes 3 former Olympic and commonwealth games athletes.

Age of panel members (M=43.2)

Age	Count
20-29	7
30-39	28
40-49	26
50-59	13
60-69	7
70-79	1

Gender

Female 30%
Male 70%
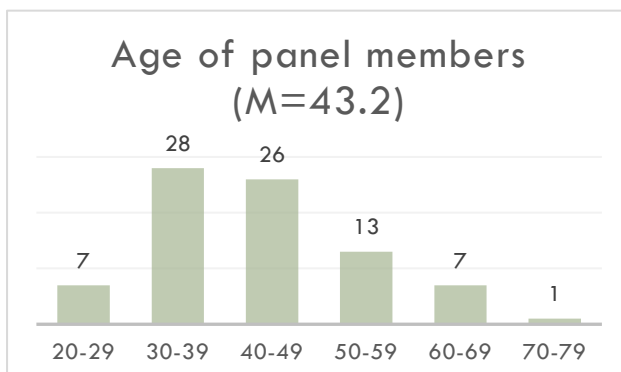
Sports represented

- *Alpine Skiing (Olympic and Paralympic)*
- *Archery (Paralympic)*
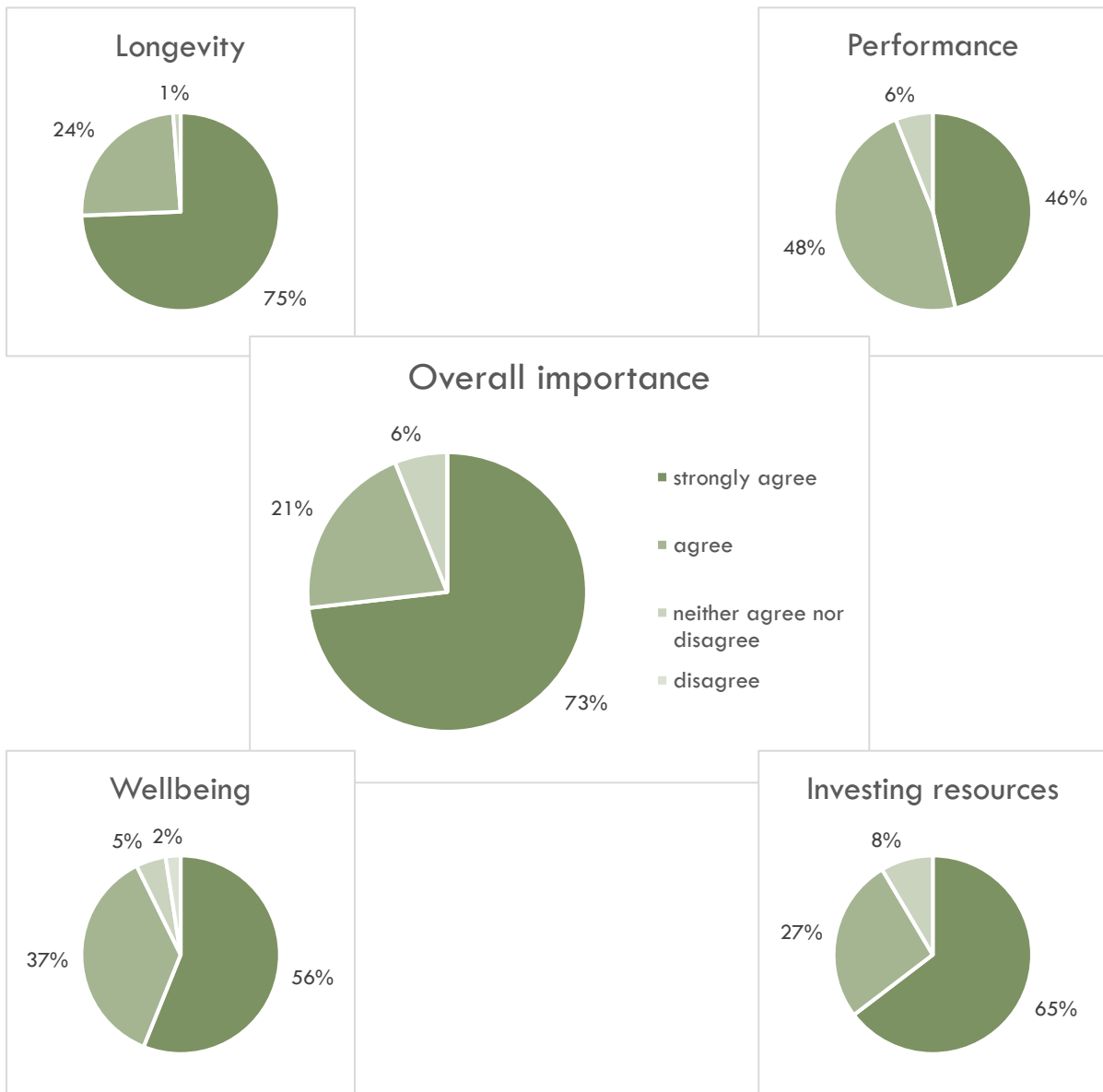- *Athletics (Olympic and Paralympic)*
- *Badminton*
- *Baseball*
- *Basketball*
- *Biathlon*
- *Bobsleigh*
- *Boxing*
- *Canoe Slalom*
- *Climbing*
- *Cricket*
- *Cross Country Skiing*
- *Curling*
- *Cycling*
- *Diving*
- *Equestrian Dressage*
- *Equestrian Eventing*
- *Equestrian Showjumping*
- *Fencing*
- *Field Hockey*
- *Figure Skating*
- *Football*
- *Goalball*
- *Golf*
- *Gymnastics*
- *Handball*
- *Ice Hockey*
- *Judo*
- *Lacrosse*
- *Luge*
- *Motor Racing*
- *Netball*
- *Nordic Skiing*
- *Rowing*
- *Rugby League*
- *Rugby Union*
- *Sailing*
- *Shooting (Olympic and Paralympic)*
- *Short Track Speed Skating*
- *Snooker*
- *Snowboarding (Olympic and Paralympic)*
- *Softball*
- *Speed Skating*
- *Squash*
- *Swimming (Olympic and Paralympic)*
- *Synchronised swimming*
- *Table Tennis (Olympic and Paralympic)*
- *Taekwondo*
- *Tennis*
- *Triathlon*
- *Volleyball*
- *Water Polo*
- *Weightlifting*
- *Wheelchair Basketball*
- *Wrestling*

-

Importance of organisational resilience

You were asked to rate the extent to which you agreed or disagreed with five statements:

- Organisational resilience contributes towards the **longevity** of an elite sport organisation

- Organisational resilience contributes towards the **performance** of athletes and / or teams

- Organisational resilience contributes towards the **wellbeing** of those working within the organisation

- It is worth **investing resources** to develop organisational resilience

- **Overall,** organisational resilience is **important** within elite sport

Longevity

1%
24%
75%

Performance

6%
46%
48%

Overall importance

6%
21%
73%

- strongly agree
- agree
- neither agree nor disagree
- disagree

Wellbeing

5% 2%
37%
56%

Investing resources

8%
27%
65%

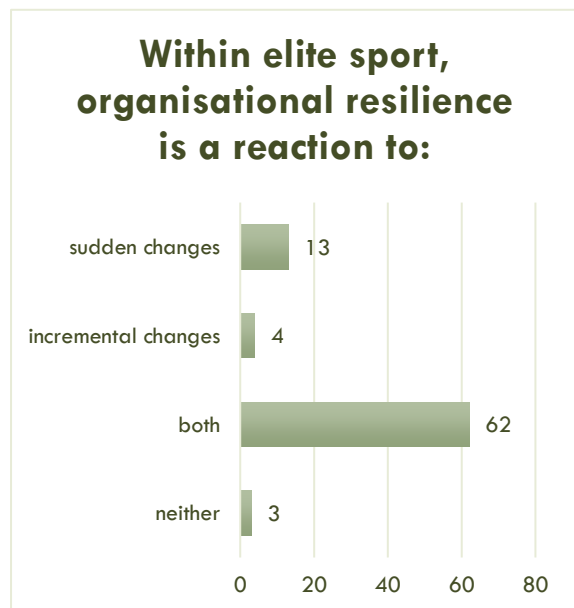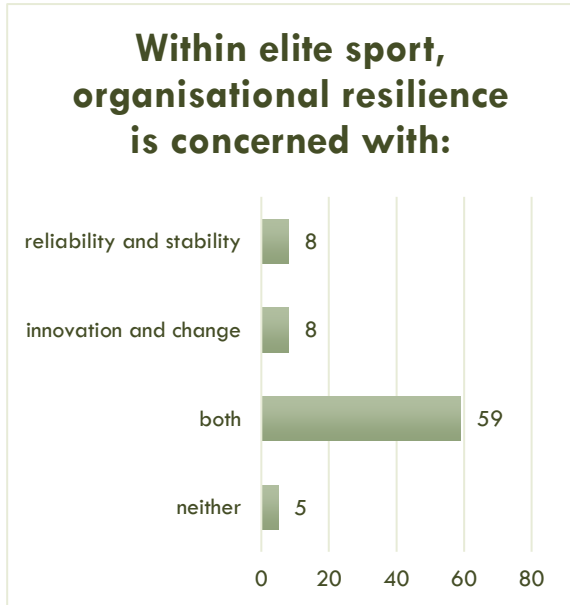# Towards a definition of organisational resilience in elite sport

Those items from Round 1 where consensus was achieved are detailed below, together with examples of some of the comments received reflecting the range of opinions expressed. Please note these are illustrative only, and that all comments submitted will be taken into account in the final data analysis.

Within elite sport, organisational resilience is a reaction to:

Category	Value
significant stressors	8
everyday stressors	1
both	69
neither	4

Significant stressors:
"some scholars think that sustained stress can trigger the need for resilience but to me, this requires coping rather than transformative action"; "everyday stressors can be compared to everyday activities…which are not usually taken into account when talking about resilience"

Everyday stressors:
No comments submitted

Both:
"everyday stressors can easily become major stressors if they are not managed correctly." "The type and intensity of stressors may be significant at different levels and at different times." Everyday stressors may have more impact on performance, whereas significant stressors may have more impact on governance.

Neither:
Resilience is a quality which influences the reaction, it is not the reaction itself.

Sudden changes:
"resilience as we think of it is the ability to react and adapt more to the sudden stressors and changes"; "the general wear and tear of a long season would require a different response"

Incremental changes:
No comments submitted

Both:
"Being resilient to sudden stressors is more obvious but being able to identify and be resilient to incremental change is just as important."
The "initial reaction is crucial… but what is also needed is further review, re-plot, review… so it becomes incremental"
Elite sport by its nature creates the need for sudden responses, but in order to stay in touch with medal zones and the anticipated landscape of the sport, the organisation has to be resilient to background changes.

Neither:
Resilience is not solely about reacting, but also about being proactive; resilience is a quality, not the reaction itself.

Within elite sport, organisational resilience is a reaction to:

Category	Value
sudden changes	13
incremental changes	4
both	62
neither	3

Within elite sport, organisational resilience is concerned with:

	Value
reliability and stability	8
innovation and change	8
both	59
neither	5

Reliability and stability:
"it's more about dealing with stability with constant change that is going on around us"; "innovation and change might arise out of identifying something that needs to be done"

Innovation and change:
Both are important, but "innovation and change are hallmarks of resilient organisations"

Both:
There might be two types of resilience – static (as a capability to be maintained over time) and dynamic (as a process of continuous enhancement); a reliable and stable environment needs to be developed to allow innovation and change; to be reliable and stable over time, one must adapt to changes; there could be a temporal element - "short term maintenance of functioning vs longer term learning and adaptation"
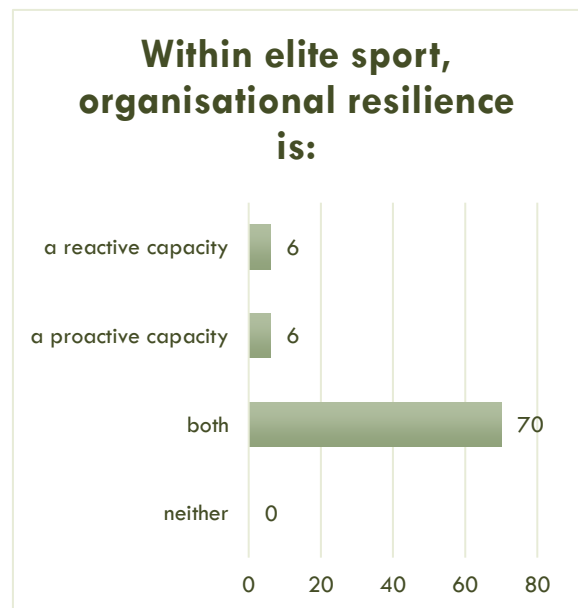
Neither:
"Neither are necessarily relevant to coping with some form of adversity"

A reactive capacity:
"Resilience is tested and comes through when dealing with sudden stressors and how you react and navigate through it. One could be proactive…but the actual nature of resilience is characterised through the reaction to a stressor"

A proactive capacity:
"Organisations that appear to react quickly and effectively do so because they had proactively prepared"

Both:
"By setting proper conditions beforehand, reactive behaviours will be mitigated, however anyone who works in group contexts understands that things rarely occur as you anticipate."; "Plan for the controllables but have capacity to deal with the uncontrollables."; "you can proactively build reactive capacity and reactively build proactive capacity."; "planning gets you so far, but if participants are not equipped to respond appropriately, the plan will be less effective or useful."
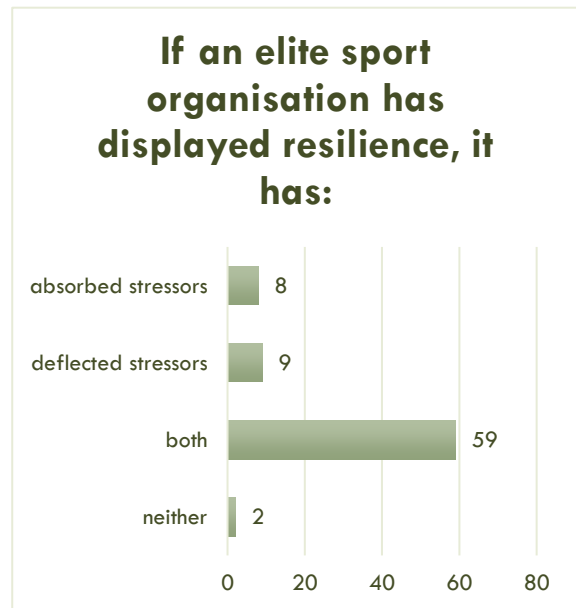
Neither:
Not selected by any participants

Within elite sport, organisational resilience is:

	Value
a reactive capacity	6
a proactive capacity	6
both	70
neither	0

Proactive organisational resilience is focused towards:

Category	Value
considering and planning for problems	20
considering and seeking out opportunities	2
both	59
neither	1

(x-axis: 0, 20, 40, 60, 80)

Considering and planning for problems: While opportunities are important, they aren't a marker of resilience.	
Considering and seeking out opportunities: "Perception is everything, problems can be framed as opportunities"	
Both: "problems are simply opportunities for growth and adaptation"; opportunities can arise from dealing with problems	
Neither: No comments submitted	

Absorbed stressors: "Deflected feels like sloping shoulders which will probably come back to haunt at some stage"; "the greater strength lies in absorbing and dealing";	
Deflected stressors: Being resilient is "deflecting stressors so that you don't break"; not every organisation can absorb disruption, the critical thing is to bounce back and limit the damage	
Both: Absorption is the learning process following initial deflection of a stressor; there needs to be an acceptance that there will be disruptive events, not everything can be anticipated and controlled for; the appropriate response (deflection or absorption) may depend on the nature of the stressor itself; it's about "picking your battles" - the appropriate response may depend on priorities, such that organisations work to absorb stressors in areas of high focus, and deflect others; a capacity to do both may be important as continuous absorption without deflection could be depleting.	
Neither: Absorbed is not the right word, it's about awareness of a stressor and then mobilising coping strategies; "I am not comfortable with the idea that a sport organisation "absorbs" stressors – I think it reacts but does not necessarily absorb"	

If an elite sport organisation has displayed resilience, it has:

Category	Value
absorbed stressors	8
deflected stressors	9
both	59
neither	2

(x-axis: 0, 20, 40, 60, 80)

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Interview Guide

Understanding organisational resilience in elite sport: A longitudinal qualitative study

Participant number:

Name:

Age:

Gender:

E-mail:

Current job title:

Current employer:

Approx. number of years (months) with this employer:

Approx. number of years worked in elite sport:

Elite sports principally involved in, together with the approximate number of years (or months) for each:

Interview date:

1. **Introduction.**
    1.1. Go through information sheet, outlining study aim, explain about event diaries, remind participant about issues of anonymity and data protection, and their right to withdraw, ask if any questions? Request written informed consent.
    1.2. Request / check demographic information.

2. **General discussion around organisational resilience**
    NB this section is to build rapport, get participant talking, and to set the context.
    2.1. Can you please start by giving me a brief overview of the history of [name of organisation], including any key events or turning points?
    2.2. And in terms of your personal career history, can you please give me a brief overview of the organisations / sports you've worked in?

3. **Organisational resilience processes**
    So that all the interviews are on the same page we will be using this definition of organisational resilience and this definition of processes in these interviews - [provide definitions]
    3.1. Do you think your current organisation displays resilience? If so, in what way?
    3.2. How does it compare with other similar organisations in this respect?
    3.3. Thinking specifically about periods of significant change [use example from organisational history provided], can you describe how [that organisation] functioned, what it did, to successfully deal with that change?
        3.3.1. If needed, provide examples such as decision-making, timeliness, role of protocols, role of leadership, role of internal and external relationships
    3.4. Moving on to the time period when the significant change has been dealt with, what do you think [your organisation] did, how it functioned, to move on from what happened during that period of change?
        3.4.1. If needed, provide examples such as learning / embedding learning. Role of leadership. Role of internal / external relationships.
    3.5. Thinking now about periods of "business as usual", perhaps when significant change is on the horizon, what do you think your organisation might do, how might it function, during these times which might contribute towards its resilience?
        3.5.1. If needed, provide examples such as training, formal procedures, role of leadership, relationships inside and outside the organisation

4. **Recommendations**

Finally, what recommendations would you give to other elite sport organisations to help them improve their resilience processes?

5. **Summary**
    5.1. Summarise what has been discussed.
    5.2. Is there anything you'd like to add about organisational resilience processes which we haven't already discussed?
    5.3. How do you feel the interview went? Were you able to get your points across fully, and without influence?
    5.4. Any comments or suggestions for future interviews?
    5.5. Ask re snowball sampling if relevant, and remind about event diary.

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Interview Guide

Understanding organisational resilience in elite sport: A longitudinal qualitative study

Participant number:

Name:

Interview date:

1. **Introduction.**
   1.1. Remind participant about issues of anonymity, and their right to withdraw, ask if any questions?
   1.2. Reminder of definition of org resilience.

2. **Organisational resilience – current status**
   2.1. Can you please start by giving me an overview of any key events since we last spoke in [   ]?
   2.2. Explore the before, during and after stages of these events (if relevant)
   2.3. Do you think your organisation's resilience has changed since we last spoke? If so, in what way?

3. **Organisational resilience - past**
   Recognise that what said previously was thoughts at that moment, and based on how the conversation was flowing, not "fact".
   3.1. Referring to events discussed last time, and using the timeline, elicit further information.
      3.1.1. Do you broadly agree with the timeline?
      3.1.2. Are there any missing key resilience events?
      3.1.3. Can you use an arrow to indicate whether resilience was increasing or decreasing between those events?
   3.2. Participant reflections:
      3.2.1. Summarise key points from previous interview, have views changed / evolved since then?

4. **Organisational resilience - future**
   4.1. Known and unknown risks
      4.1.1. What significant change is currently anticipated, and what are you doing about it?
      4.1.2. Are you taking any actions to be better prepared for unknown risks?

5. **Experience of interview process**
   5.1. Did you use the event-based diary, and did you find it helpful for today's interview?
   5.2. Did you find the timeline helpful for today's interview?

6. **Summary**
   6.1. Summarise what has been discussed.
   6.2. Is there anything you'd like to add about organisational resilience processes which we haven't already discussed?
   6.3. Thank you, and will send executive report of findings from across all interviews in due course.

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Event-based diary

Understanding organisational resilience in elite sport: A longitudinal qualitative study

1. Are you currently experiencing, or anticipating, any significant changes (events which have the potential to disrupt the functioning of the organisation)?

   1.1.   If so, please briefly describe the event (duration, likely impact)

2. Please describe what the organisation is currently doing which may help or hinder its resilience (its capability to successfully deal with significant changes).

Illustrative Anonymised Timeline
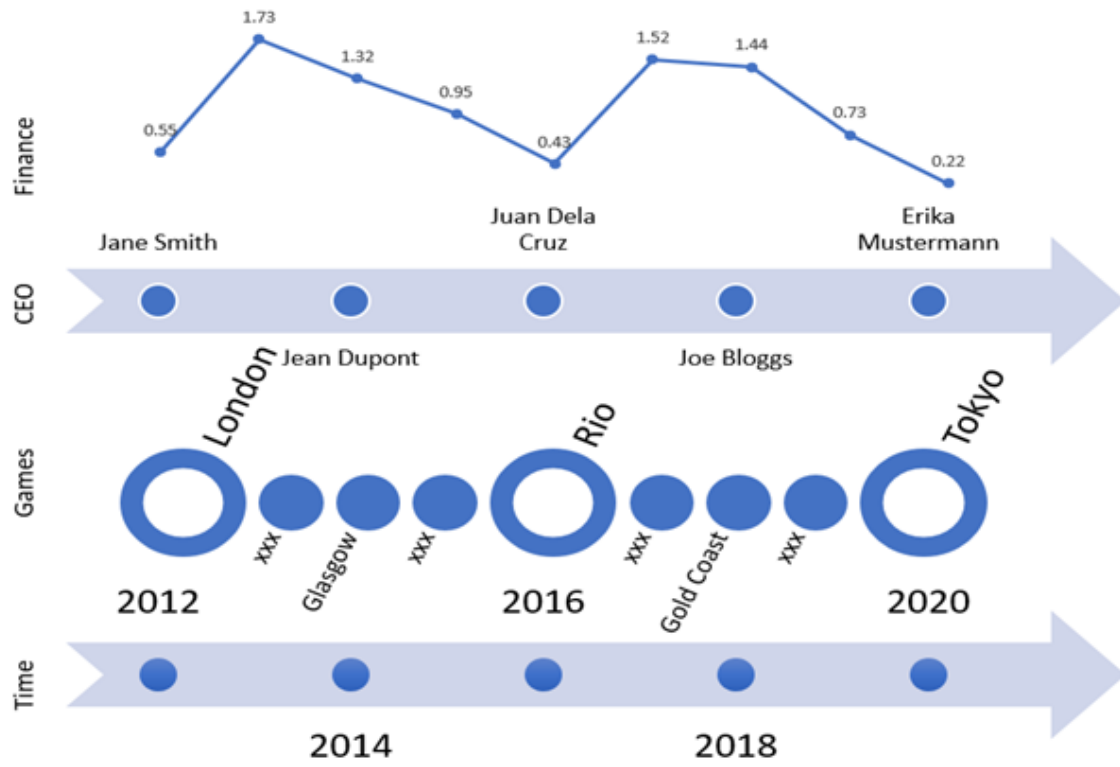
Appendix Five: Email (Study Three)

Hi All

We've been approached by Nottingham Trent University with an opportunity to collaborate with them on some exciting new research into organisational resilience in elite sport – how organisations such as [NGB-1] successfully deal with significant change. As part of this, a PhD student, Kirsten Fasey, who is also a keen [athlete], will be working in [NGB-1] two days a week from the beginning of May, principally based at the [location] offices. Kirsten will be interested in hearing your views on what currently works well, and what could be done better, in how we deal with risk and change.

I hope we will find this a useful exercise to reflect on how we deal with and learn from change, and possible improvements we could make. As an organisation, in order to see the full benefit of this research we want to give Kirsten as honest and open a view as possible of the challenges we face, as well as our successes, so please do feel able to talk to her candidly. Kirsten will also be conducting some interviews, and observing meetings. Before using any information, Kirsten will ask you for written consent to do so, and you are free to decline without giving any reasons. The information gathered will be used by Kirsten in her PhD, and also used publicly, such as in journal articles, or conferences. Individual names will be anonymised.

Kirsten will also be working for us, providing us with additional resource in different parts of the organisation over the next few months, so please do make her feel welcome and part of the team.

Please let me know if you have any queries or concerns.

Cheers

[CEO of NGB-1]

[NGB-1]
REFLEXIVE DIARY

APRIL 2019 – NOVEMBER 2019

DATE: [   ]

LOCATION: [   ]

"Organisational resilience is the dynamic capability of an organisation to successfully deal with significant events. It emerges from multi-level (employee, team, and organisational) interacting characteristics and processes which enable an organisation to prepare for, adapt to, and learn from significant events."

Observational notes (maximum detail, minimal interpretation). Who, what, when, where, how	
Observations / meetings	
Conversations	
Interviews	
Documents analysed	
General comments	
Theoretical notes (meanings, interpretations, analysis)	
Reflections	
General notes	
Methodological notes	
Ethical issues?	
Reading	
General notes	
To do	

Group 1 – Aligning Values and Behaviours

The purpose of the project is to:

- support the group members to build their understanding of the organisational values of BTF and the associated behaviours
- increase their awareness of their own behaviour and the behaviour of others
- understand and be able to align their own behaviours to the BTF values

Week Commencing	4th May 2020	11th May 2020	18th May 2020	25th May 2020	1st June 2020	8th June 2020	15th June 2020	22nd June 2020	29th June 2020	6th July 2020	13th July 2020	20th July 2020	27th July 20
Phase:	Prep	BTF values and associated Leadership values	How values inform behaviours		Reflection and review week	Reflective Practice						Group Review	Feed back Leadershi Group
Session Number:		1	2	3		4		5		6		7	8
Aims:	Prepare any resources required	Contracting. Exploring BTF Values. Leadership Values	In an ideal world, how would the ideal leader behave based on those values?	Review and build "model"	Independent reflection and review ready for next phase	Reflective Practice phase set-up	Reflect on own behaviour and the behaviour of others in a reflective and recorded (where possible) way to build self-awareness and initiate behaviour change					Wrap up and consolidate learning	Share learni and reflection
Content:	1) Reflection tool pro-forma 2) BTF Values descriptors 3) Intro to project 4) Values information 5) Buddy Pairs 6) Session dates 7) Behaviours reflection guide for session 2-3	- Explain the project. - What are values? - Open discussion about BTF and Leadership Values. - How involved do the group feel they were in designing the BTF values? - How engaged are people with the values already?	- Generally how are values and behaviours linked. - If we were designing the ideal BTF leader, how would they behave? - And in different contexts? (Day-to-day, meetings, as a manager, in how they communicate?)	Building of a "Behaviour Charter" style document of XX number of key behaviours to guide reflections.	A week to consolidate and reflect on discussions so far in preparation for reflective practice phase	Set up reflective practice and set buddy chat groups. Review "Behaviour Charter" document. Contracting.	- Complete Journal/ Reflections - Buddy Chat	- Complete Journal/ Reflections - Buddy Chat	- Complete Journal/ Reflections - Buddy Chat	- Complete Journal/ Reflections - Buddy Chat	- Complete Journal/ Reflections - Buddy Chat	Discussions to understand the journey for each member, what they've learned or observed, any ongoing learning they will take from the project. How they found the reflective nature of the project and if it's something they'll look to continue.	Group to fe back and sh learning wi wider leadershi group throu regular meeting

Group 2 – Owning Development

Aim:

- To improve the quality of people
- Staff to take responsibility for their own development
- To change our current culture
- To create a method of measuring organisational development, highlighting areas of success and areas of opportunity

	Content	Outcome	`Homework'

Session one
 	
60 mins
	• Introduce the topic of owning development
	  • The wish to align to BTF values (Change culture)
	  • What has/hasn't worked for group members in the past? Pre meeting task?
	  • What does good development look like?
	  • 'Non-traditional' approach what this could look like and can this work for all (SWOT)?
	  • How do we measure the success of development?
	• Manager commitment to give people time to do this
	• How do we measure if people aren't achieving?
	• Relevance of development to job – are we looking to motivate or develop in line with work area?
		1. Level of support determined for the approach
		2. SWOTs identified
		3. Key elements for good development recognised
			1. Work in pairs to identify approaches to `owning development' that meet the key elements identified in session one
			2. Feedback on an approach to the group and the key areas that motivated you

Session two
 	
90 mins
	• Group presentations (10 mins each) or tabletop discussions?
	  • Discussion on each presentation
	    • Likes/dislikes
	    • Motivating or not?
		1. A clear set of ideas/approaches that the group believes could be tested across BTF
		2. A variety of staff to have been
			1. Group members to discuss specific approach to development with identified staff (see questions session 3)

	• Deliverable across all departments and levels? • Resources available to support the approach • Identify specific approaches to `test' with different staff	identified to `test' the ideas on 3. Resources identified for each approach e.g. TED talk, BTF staff skills etc	2. Staff to feedback to group member re. the approach to development, suggested resource and any other resources they have found

Session three
 	
 60 mins
	• Feedback from staff conversations
	     • Likes/dislikes
	     • Motivating or not?
	     • Did it address individual needs?
	     • Were the resources useful/motivational
	     • Could they see themselves working with this approach?
	     • If yes, what is needed to ensure it happens?
	 • Summary of what worked, what hasn't and why
		1. Preferred development approaches identified
		 2. Set of resources identified
		 3. Key factors for successful implementation identified	

Session four	• Presentation from group leaders on overall approach and implementation • Discussion re. above and final `tweaks' made		
Session five	Reflection		

Group 3 – Self-awareness and Ability to Influence

Purpose - Relationship focus is the foundation of resilience within organisations - this piece of work should help to increase awareness of how people form and maintain relationships, with themselves and with others.

Step	Objective	Detail
1	Scoping Exercise	20-30 Min conversation with the selected group to assess how the grouping has landed, check in with peoples motivation to the cause, and check peoples understanding of what we intend to deliver and achieve. This could shape a change in the plan below if peoples hopes and expectations are wildly different
2	Storytelling to build trust	Each participant prep a timeline of key life events that have shaped them and how / why they are who they are 'critical moments' – in addition to explaining areas they feel at their best and areas they struggle in Idea being it helps to increase self awareness whilst being vulnerable with others – key building blocks of rapport and trust
3	Situational awareness	360 feedback exercise completed with 4 people – 2 people selected who they work well with, 2 people who they struggle with. Group reflective exercise of what stands out and why, linking back to the initial profiling to create a link to this being something they can control and change
4	Action Planning	121 Mentoring session to personalise the conversation and begin the action planning process This should be driven through ideas and questioning and not simply dictated to by the mentor or NGB
5	Commitment and Support	Group session to declare the commitments being made and discussion about what support would be wanted and needed to help ensure most people progress with their attempts to try new things
6	Feedback and re-plan	After a gap to allow for action to be tried and reflected upon, one last group session would be arranged to share stories of process made Always confidential and the group can act as supervision for each other.

Appendix Eight – Focus group interview schedules

At baseline (T1), completed by practitioners only

- What are the potential difficulties to the implementation of these interventions?
- What resources are in place to help manage or reduce difficulties?
- Do you feel competent to deliver the interventions?
- Do you feel you lack any skills to help deliver the intervention?
- How suitable do you think the intervention is?
- What do you think of the likely effectiveness and quality of the intervention?
- What is your motivation towards implementing the intervention?

At midpoint (T2), completed by practitioners only

- What information has been given to people about the reasons for the intervention?
- Have you experienced or do you anticipate any difficulties in the implementation of the intervention?
- What has been done in terms of implementing the intervention, when, with whom, for how long?
- Have there been any deviations or changes from the planned intervention? Why?
- Do you intend to make any changes from the planned intervention? Why?

At post-intervention (T3), completed by practitioners

- Have you experienced any difficulties to the implementation of the intervention?

- What has been done in terms of implementing the intervention, when, with whom, for how long?

- Have there been any deviations or changes from the planned intervention? Why?

- How suitable do you think the intervention was?

- What do you think of the effectiveness and quality of the intervention?

At post-intervention (T3), completed by participants

- Have you done anything similar before, and what were your views of that?
- Were you motivated to implement the intervention?
- Do you think the intervention fitted in to other demands experienced?
- What do you think the intervention was designed to address?
- How well do you think it addressed this?
    - What changes have been brought about?
- Do you think you have been able to benefit from the intervention?
- Were there any difficulties in implementing the intervention, and how well were these addressed?

Appendix Nine – Organisational Resilience Survey Items (Prior to Randomisation)

Within NGB-1:	**Not at all**	**Slightly**	**Somewhat**	**Quite**	**Very much**
Structural clarity					
communication flows clearly					
staff are listened to					
it is clear who is responsible for doing what					
staff understand the "why" underpinning decisions					
Flexible improvement					
the culture is to value learning					
staff are rewarded for "thinking outside of the box"					
we continually improve the way we do things					
we learn lessons from the past and make sure those lessons are carried through to the future					
Shared understanding					
we consistently demonstrate commitment to our values					
we strongly believe we can achieve our goals					
staff understand what is expected of them					
staff work as one organisation					
Reciprocal commitment					
the culture is to value the staff					
staff are very loyal to the organisation					
staff work with others regardless of departmental boundaries to get the job done					
staff feel trusted					
Operational awareness					
we actively monitor what is going on inside and outside our organisation to have an early warning of emerging issues					
we are regarded as an active participant in industry and sector groups					
staff are encouraged to suggest alternatives before decisions are made					
when faced with significant change staff are clear on our priorities					
Sensing					
our managers actively listen for problems					
staff feel able to raise problems with senior management					
staff interact often enough with each other to know what's going on					

across the staff we can offer a wide range of perspectives on emerging issues					
Adapting					
change is seen as an opportunity for growth					
leaders try to keep the amount of change to a minimum					
during significant change leaders act decisively					
communication around significant change is open and transparent					
Strengthening resources					
staff are encouraged to gain experience through trying new things					
staff are supported to challenge and develop themselves					
there are plenty of opportunities to learn from others within the organisation					
there are plenty of opportunities to learn from others outside the organisation					
staff can take time from their day to day roles to reflect and learn					
staff can take time from their day to day roles to plan					
the organisation is able to acquire resources and help from other organisations when needed					
staff actively manage relationships with others in our industry					
Shielding					
the way future risks are planned for is appropriate to the level of risk faced					
there is an appropriate balance between short- and long-term priorities					
the potential for risks is taken seriously					
staff feel comfortable checking and challenging each other					

Appendix Ten – Process Evaluation Survey Items

At baseline (T1), completed by practitioners only.

Intervention context

- The way this intervention is being designed fits in well with the way things are done around here
- Other things happening around here could disrupting intervention delivery activities

Intervention content

- This intervention is relevant to, and appropriate for, my situation
- I am contributing effectively to the design of this intervention
- Appropriate expertise is being used in intervention design

Mental models

- I understand the aims and objectives of this intervention
- Others around me are supporting this intervention
- I have the knowledge, skills, abilities, and confidence to make this intervention effective for me

At midpoint (T2), completed by practitioners and participants.

Intervention context

- This intervention is fitting in well with my other commitments
- The way this intervention is being designed and implemented fits in well with the way things are done around here
- Other things happening around here are disrupting intervention delivery activities

Intervention content

- This intervention is relevant to, and appropriate for, my situation
- I am contributing effectively to the implementation of this intervention
- Appropriate expertise is being used in intervention implementation
- Problems with the intervention design and / or delivery are being resolved

Mental models

- I understand the aims and objectives of this intervention
- Others around me are supporting this intervention
- This intervention is causing some conflict or uncertainty
- I am doing things differently now as a result of this intervention
- This intervention is making a sustainable, positive difference for me
- This intervention is making a sustainable, large (5)/ small (3)/ no (1) difference for me
- This intervention fits well with my preferred ways of doing things
- I have the knowledge, skills, abilities, and confidence to make this intervention effective for me

Process evaluation at T3 is the same as at T2, but using the past rather than present tense, e.g. "This intervention fitted in well with my preferred way of doing things."