

THE WORLD LEISURE ORGANIZATION: STAKEHOLDER
ANALYSIS OF THE WL FAMILY NETWORK

by
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VANCOUVER ISLAND
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Patricia Jensen Verhage

Presented as part of the requirement for the award of MA Degree in Sustainable Leisure
Management within the Department of Recreation and Tourism Management at
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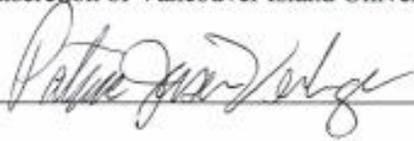
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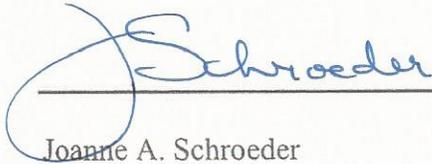
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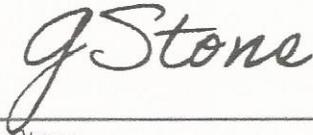
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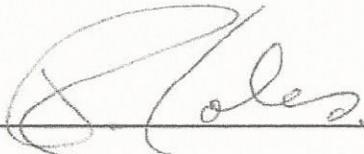
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Abstract

The World Leisure Organization (WLO) has recently seen growth in its global network, especially over the last five to eight years. Exciting new global partnerships have been created and currently the WLO network includes seven universities, along with other national organizations and institutions in the inter-disciplinary field of leisure. The growth of the WLO network has not been reviewed in recent years, and research into its current expansion is warranted. The purpose of this paper is to describe and map out the actors, their relationships within the whole WLO network, and how the network structure facilitates achieving their objectives. A mixed methods case study and network analysis of WLO and its family network were applied. Data from two sources were analysed, primary data from interviews and secondary data from the WLO stakeholder survey. This survey data, both quantitative and qualitative responses, were provided by the WLO. The interviews with family members produced rich qualitative data detailing connections within the WLO network. By collecting, describing, and mapping data on the WLO's growing network of stakeholders, this research can aid WLO in analyzing and further expanding its current network. Overall, this study found strong evidence of a WLO network that is well-connected, flexible, collaborative, and consisting of many different groups and organizations at all levels of society. The strong relationships among diverse actors within the WL family network allow these institutions to identify and collaborate with targeted leisure partners in the broad field of leisure.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

International tourism, global media networks, and multi-national corporations have exploded over the last decades (Van Dijk, 2006; Yang and Saffer, 2019). Today, diverse sectors of society are creating a more interconnected world than ever in history. Advancements in technology have created new on-line markets for commerce, government, and all parts of society. Organizations of all kinds have been linking globally, building networks, and making it easier to engage with others regardless of time or location. Business, education, and most civic organizations depend on these networks to share knowledge and resources, collaborate on projects, and create ongoing programs and policy (Van Dijk, 2006; O'Toole, 2015; Yang and Saffer, 2018). This increase in globalization has led to the expansion of all types of networks: large and small, academic and corporate, governmental and nongovernmental (Roloff, 2008; Yang and Saffer, 2019). Networks have become preeminent in all sectors of society. The United Nations (UN) best exemplifies the growth of networks and globalization over the last 75 years. In the early 1950s, the UN encouraged the creation of sector based nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) to collaborate with the UN in its global mission to help deliver local community support to achieve its goals (UN, 2019).

One of these NGOs is now known as the World Leisure Organization (WLO), which was formed in 1956 to be a leader in leisure (Edginton, 2013). This organization has grown into a vast global network over the decades, especially in the last five to ten years, yet the network structure has not been explored in detail. The network structure of WLO will describe the multiple, diverse, people, groups, and organizations that are

linked and integrated into a small group of dedicated people, called the WL family. The WL “family” is an informal term used by the WLO Secretariat’s office to describe the people and organizations that are most fundamental for the WLO network to function (C. Ortega, personal communication, May 20, 2019). The family involves the closest groups and members who collaborate to lead the WLO’s work. This thesis will examine the characteristics of the WL family network, as a whole, rather than any individual or single organization within the network. Using network analysis, a case study of the WL family network will be presented, the structural pattern of the WL family will be illustrated, as will the various connections among WLO’s closest partners or family members. This perspective will demonstrate how the networked connections within the WL family lead to achieving mutually shared goals of the WLO. In case study research, context is the relevant variable as it gives meaning to the big picture, or macro view of a place, person or organization being examined (Stebbins, 2017). Referring to the three levels in society (macro, meso, and micro), Stebbins explains that “To understand leisure we must recognize that the domain of leisure also consists of these three levels” (p.11). The World Leisure Organization functions at the global level of society, yet it is connected to institutions and organizations at the group or meso level and linked to family members at the individual level of society. For the purposes of providing the global context for this study, the following subjects will be introduced: the United Nations; the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; the history and structure of the WLO, and its advocacy for sustainability; and the WLO Charter for Leisure. The chapter concludes with the gaps in the research and the research questions and objectives to be studied.

The United Nations

The world's most renowned global network, the UN, was created in 1945 to bring stability and assistance to the post-WWII world (United Nations, 2019). Its global missions have expanded with increased globalization, and they now include the following: to maintain international peace and security, protect human rights, deliver humanitarian aid, promote sustainable development, and uphold international law (United Nations, 2019). Since its beginnings, the UN has understood the importance of collaboration with nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) to implement programs and policies worldwide (United Nations, 2019). NGOs assist governmental institutions, from the UN to local governments and social organizations, in solving complex problems with innovative solutions. These complex – or wicked – problems cross socio-economic, environmental, and cultural sectors of society, and include issues like climate change, poverty, disease, and famine (Weber and Khademian, 2008). Therefore, an international, inter-disciplinary, and intersectoral approach is needed to address them (Weber and Khademian, 2008). The UN collaborates with many types of organizations, corporations, non-profits, civil societies, and NGOs to effect changes around the world. Some NGOs were participants in the former League of Nations, which preceded the United Nations founding in 1945 (United Nations, 2019). The United Nations has grown from the original 47 founding member countries to approximately 193 today (United Nations, 2019). Within the UN System, NGOs are organized under the United Nations Economic and Social Council (UNESCO). Together, NGOs identify global challenges and promote innovation and the three pillars of sustainable development: economic, social, and environmental (United Nations, 2019). Guiding much of the UN and its partners' work is

the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (United Nations, 2019).

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights

One of the founding documents of the UN is *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (UDHR), which was adopted at the third session of the United Nations General Assembly in 1948 (United Nations, 2019). This document created standards for fundamental human rights to be universally protected. The importance of human rights was not as high a priority for some developing nations, where survival and growth were more crucial issues post-WWII (Weber and Khademian, 2008). Nevertheless, the UDHR became “the common standard of achievements for all peoples and nations” (United Nations, 1948). Those human rights that are directly associated with leisure are captured in Articles 24 and 27 of the UDHR. Article 24 states: “Everyone has the right to rest and leisure, including reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay” (cite, p. 6). Article 27 declares the following:

1. Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits.
2. Everyone has the right to the protection of the moral and material interests resulting from any scientific, literary or artistic production of which he is the author” (UDHR, 1948, p. 7-8).

The World Leisure Organization

In the early 1950s, the UN encouraged sector-based nongovernmental organizations to collaborate with them at the community and local levels of society on

their mutual objectives and goals. In 1956, the International Recreation Association (IRA) was recognized by the UN as an NGO with status to work with the UN (Edginton, 2013). The IRA changed its name, in 1973, to become the World Leisure and Recreation Association (Edginton, 2013). Finally, in 2007, its current name – World Leisure Organization – was officially adopted (Edginton, 2013). In 1990, this organization was granted special consultative status with the UN. Special consultative status is the formal connection between the UN and NGOs which allows them to participate in the work of the UN (UNESCO, n.d.). Also, these NGOs are based on sectors, or by regional or national interests (UNESCO, n.d.). Currently, more than 5,000 NGOs have special consultative status, for example, Amnesty International, the Special Olympics, the Rockefeller Foundation, and the World Leisure Organization (UN, 2018).

Created to be a leader in leisure education, research, knowledge mobilization and advocacy (Edginton, 2013), the WLO has been growing its global network, particularly over the last decade. New partnerships have been formed with universities, communities, and leisure organizations around the globe, as well as members from the interdisciplinary field of leisure. Along with researching leisure, scholars in sociology, psychology, and geography have evaluated how leisure can improve an individual's quality of life by enhancing social capital within communities, and more widely through global society, which leads to increases in health and well-being (Arai and Pedlar, 2003; Stebbins, 2018). Their research has shown positive impacts on human and social behavior due to the inclusion of leisure for individuals and communities at local, national, and international levels (Iwasaki, 2007; Stebbins, 2009). Society should embrace the full value of leisure and elevate it to greater importance in governance and communities

globally. Supporting leisure in all its forms leads to increasing community cohesion and a better quality of life for all (Iwasaki, 2007). The WLO has continuously worked to improve the human condition by promoting the importance of leisure for all. Their focus on the leisure sector is highlighted by the following statement: “Leisure in all its forms, culture, tourism, parks and recreation can and does improve the quality of life for all” (WLO, 2020). Finally, the WLO website clearly states: “Leisure encourages world peace by promoting cross-cultural communications, common values, equality, and social justice across diverse populations” (WLO, 2019, About Us section). The WLO has used a networked structure for decades to collaborate among the core members of WLO on various leisure issues (Edginton, 2013). The Office of the Secretariat along with the Board of Directors are the engine of the WLO network. This governing group within the WL family network initiates, plans, directs the work, and the whole network helps to achieve WLO goals. The main actors and groups within the WL family are introduced in the next section.

The WLO Family Network

To address their education, research, and knowledge transfer mandate, the WLO has established, and continues to expand, a network of World Leisure Centres of Excellence (WLCE). For example, at the end of 2020 WLO announced the addition of two universities to the WLCE network: University of Pécs, or UP (Hungary); and the Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières, or UQTR (Canada) (J. Schroeder, personal communication, February 12, 2021). UQTR is the second WLCE in Canada and the first French speaking university in the WLCE network. The most prominent and robust connections of the WLO are with seven universities, which make up the WLCE group or

cluster: (Figure 1).

Figure 1: World Leisure Centres of Excellence



Vancouver Island University (VIU), Canada; Breda University of Applied Sciences (Breda UAS), the Netherlands; Universidade de São Paulo (USP), Brasil; University of Otago, New Zealand; Zhejiang University in China; the University of Pécs, (UP), Hungary; and the Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières, (UQTR), Canada. Each of these WLCEs has a specialized focus. At VIU that focus is Leisure, Sustainability & Community Development; at Breda UAS it is Leisure, Placemaking, Story Telling and Imagineering; at Brazil's USP it is Leisure & Tourism; New Zealand's University of Otago focuses on Sustainable Tourism; Zhejiang University in China on Leisure & Sports; the University of Pécs on Sport Sciences; and UQTR on Leisure Research in French. As part of the WL family network, these centres represent the education, research and knowledge mobilization working lines of the WLO (WLO, 2021). This networked group of universities forms the core of the WLO network. The key strength of the WLCE

network is revealed in the fact that each university has a different focus area within the leisure field. This leads to expanding opportunities to collaborate on programs, policies, and ideas for novel research among the WLCEs.

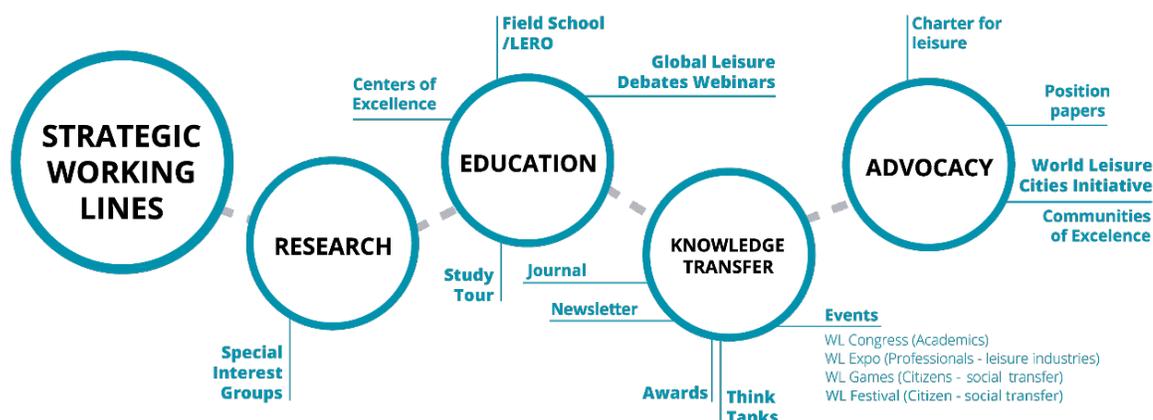
Other vital groups within the family network include the Special Interest Groups (SIGs). Each of these groups is organized by leisure scholars and focused around one of eleven current topics within leisure: leisure management; diversity, access and inclusion; leisure for children and youth; leisure education; leisure and well-being; leisure and ageing; leisure and gender; leisure and innovation; travel and tourism; community and economic development; and leisure and sports (WLO, 2019, Special Interest Groups section). This vast range of research issues within the SIGs demonstrates the interdisciplinary nature of the field of leisure. In addition, the World Leisure Academy (WL Academy) consists of 40-50 top researchers and scholars in leisure who function as an interdisciplinary forum for the scholarly exchange of ideas, much like the SIGs (WLO, 2019, Academy section). Their research leads to knowledge mobilization and advocacy for leisure to improve the human condition.

The WL family network also includes four WL Communities of Excellence. These are communities recognized by the WLO for using leisure programs to improve the quality of life within their respective communities (WLO, 2019). For example, Richmond BC was the first to become designated a WL Community of Excellence in 2018 because of the extensive leisure programs it offers to the local multi-cultural community (Coles, 2018). The WLO field schools design service and research opportunities for students in leisure studies from around the globe. Field school experiences are organized by universities in the WLCE network in coordination with local actors (WLO, 2019). Three

field schools have been delivered to date: 2016 in South Africa, 2017 in China, and 2018 in Sao Paulo Brazil (WLO, 2019). Finally, the WLO collaborates with national and regional organizations to produce numerous global leisure events, for example, the WL Expo (for professionals in leisure industries), the WL Games and WL Festival (for citizens and the public), and the WL Congress (for academics) (WLO, 2019).

The WLO Figure 2 illustrates the four working lines of the WLO, and the diverse range of activities and groups within the WL family network. The WLO's mandated objectives are research, education, knowledge transfer and advocacy in the field of leisure (WLO, 2019).

Figure 2: *WLO's Strategic Working Lines*



Note: From *The World Leisure Organization*. worldleisure.org

The fourth working line of WLO is Advocacy or policy development (WLO, 2019). WLO has produced numerous declarations and policy papers outlining the importance of leisure for society. According to Edginton (2013), “A significant and important function of WLO has been the crafting of public policy statements to advance leisure on a worldwide basis” (p. 277). The most important public policy statements are from the *Charter for Leisure*, which Edginton (2013) describes with the following statement:

Based on advancing Article 24 of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations, 1948) that “everyone has the right to rest and leisure, including reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay,” the Charter emphasizes personal freedom and choice as central elements of leisure and accentuates its benefits to both the individual and the community (p. 277).

The updated *Charter for Leisure 2020* (see Appendix A) was introduced in May 2020, after a two-year revision process was completed by a special task force from the WLO Academy (WLO, 2020). It outlines human rights pertaining to leisure specifically and is similar to the UDHR in that it is a foundational document for the WLO. The updated WLO Charter still includes UDHR Articles 24 and 27 but adds the essential UDHR Article 25 as well. This article revises the Charter to emphasize the UDHR as an overarching global human rights document that applies to all persons. Article 25 contains the following statements:

1. Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.
2. Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care, and assistance. All children, whether born in or out of wedlock, shall enjoy the same social protection” (UNHR, 1948, p. 7).

The latest WLO charter was updated in other important ways as well. For example,

it is more user friendly and accessible than the 2000 version, because of its use of common language. Most importantly, however, the charter is easily accessible on the WLO website where resources are provided for government, research, or educational use to spread the message of the WLO. The charter enumerates eleven government responsibilities, such as to “ensure availability and protection of land for open space for recreation in residential areas...” (WLO, 2020, p. 2). In sum, the *Charter for Leisure 2020* speaks to a broad audience about the crucial importance of leisure for individuals and communities, and it explains the government’s role in providing leisure services for communities.

Leisure and Sustainability

Before a society or its citizens can fully embrace leisure, some degree of economic, social, environmental, and cultural development must have occurred. Without socio-economic stability, cultures cannot devote resources to improve their society. As seen above in the WLO’s *Charter for Leisure 2020* and the UDHR’s Article 25, everyone has the right to an adequate standard of living. Once a developing country can maintain that, culture and leisure will be able to grow and develop more easily. The WLO’s updated charter highlights the importance of leisure with its many physical and mental health benefits. Often, the health benefits derived from leisure can be provided in a cost-effective way to generate positive changes in all segments of a civil society: educational, governmental, social, cultural, and economic (WLO, 2019, About Us section).

As a global NGO, the WLO creates policies and programs to further leisure in the cultural, social, economic and environmental development of communities (WLO, 2020). Each of these four elements is necessary to explain the concept of the quadruple bottom

line (Walters and Takamura, 2015). Over the last six decades, the often-used “triple bottom line” model involved three main sectors, all of which mainly affected people: economic, social, and environmental (Walters and Takamura, 2015). Walters and Takamura (2015) updated the “triple bottom line” by adding culture to the model and creating a new measurement of the crucial elements needed for sustainable development. Culture adds a great deal to the social lives of people, not only in terms of language, art, literature, and music, but spiritually as well. According to the authors, sustainable development settings should use a quadruple bottom-line when analyzing complex development problems (Walters and Takamura, 2015). These same four elements are fundamental to the work of the WLO. As stated, on the WLO website: “The World Leisure Organization promotes leisure as integral to social, cultural, economic and sustainable environmental development” (WLO, 2020).

Sustainability and leisure management are core principles and founding concepts for the WLO and are defined within the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and derived from the Millennial Goals of the UN (United Nations, 2018). The SDGs consist of seventeen goals aimed to improve the health and wellbeing of society, the environment, and the economic life of the world (United Nations, 2018). In 2015, members of the UN adopted a plan called *Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (United Nations, 2015). The preamble of this document states: “This Agenda is a plan of action for people, planet and prosperity” (United Nations, 2015, p. 1). It is a call to action for global cooperation to end poverty and increase health, education and equality while addressing multiple problems caused by climate change (sdgs.un.org/2030agenda). By updating the *Charter for Leisure 2020*, the WLO has

clearly linked its charter with the UN SDGs because all human rights, as expressed in the UDHR, are embedded in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Context of Research and Gaps

The WLO has changed and evolved in many ways over its long history. In recent years, the number of universities that are affiliated with the WLO has increased significantly. The growth of the Chinese market for leisure and leisure research has been expanding, and developing countries are enhancing leisure opportunities both at home (e.g., eco-tourism) and abroad (e.g., cultural tourism). New avenues of collaboration are being considered as WLO affiliates, programs, and activities continue to grow (WLO, 2019). In 2013, a 50-year history of the WLO was published in the WL Journal by C.R. Edginton, past chair at WLO (Edginton, 2013). This work was an extraordinary documentation of WLO's history and its accomplishments from 1956 through to 2012 (Edginton, 2013). However, this thesis will show that the WL family has expanded more in the last five years than ever before, by creating a network of seven universities, a variety of collaborative working groups, and other opportunities within the WL family network. The success of WL's family network, since 2012, will be examined in this thesis.

The lack of a current structural overview of the WLO represents a gap and is the basis for this research paper. At the WLO headquarters in May 2019, the secretariat expressed interest in conducting a survey to examine stakeholders' relationships, impressions, and opinions about the WLO. Later, it became the topic for this case study and a useful tool for the WLO to review the state of their family network and to plan for future growth. Taking a current inventory of the WL family network allows for a

description of the main actors within it, as well as their connections. Stokowski (1994) states, “The research agenda of leisure has developed at the micro level of analysis with little attention to macro-level structures of institutionalized social relationships in leisure” (p. 43). In other words, there is a large gap in leisure research – a macro-level analysis gap. The networked structure of leisure organizations must be analyzed at the macro-level, as opposed to the individual or micro levels. This thesis uses network analysis as a tool to illustrate the network structure of the WL family. Stokowski (1994) defines network analysis as “a set of procedures for mapping and analyzing the multiple simultaneous extended inter-personal relationships of a set of actors” (p. 48). In 2004, Timur added the purpose for network analysis to his definition stating, “Measuring and analyzing relationships among a group of actors provides a tool for researchers who are interested in how a system and its subunits are intertwined and how the system functions” (p 11). New evidence-based research is needed to map out the key structures in the WL family network, and to demonstrate how it collaborates synergistically to further its common agenda. This study aims to fill this need.

Terms Used

As per the *Constitution and By-Laws of the World Leisure Organization*, the World Leisure Organization will be referred to as the “WLO” (Art. 1, 2019, p. 2). In this thesis, the abbreviation of ‘WLO’ refers to the whole Organization as a separate entity-- an NGO. But the abbreviation WL (+ sub-group) will be used to abbreviate World Leisure and its sub-groups, i.e., the WL Academy, the WL Congress, or the WL family network. This is not an official name, the WL family, it simply signifies the close-knit relationships among members at the center of the organization-- WLO. Furthermore, the

initials WLCE will only be used to refer to the World Leisure Centres of Excellence, which includes the seven universities around the globe. It is not to be confused with the WL Communities of Excellence, which will be written out as such.

As mentioned earlier, the WL family network consists of the closest and most important connections within the network. In layman's terms, a family is the first network that each of us is born into, in which several people generally share warm feelings, similar values and goals, cooperation, appreciation, and reciprocity for one another. The WLO is part of a global network, along with the United Nations and a myriad of other leisure networks. The smaller WL family network is a dynamic group, with fluid membership, and an overall feeling of '*simpatico*', or friendliness, and closeness in peoples' relationships. Like-minded people who cooperate to achieve similar goals is a very basic definition of family and networking.

With these concepts in mind, the family network is defined by the secretariat as the close inner circle of actors in the WLO (C. Ortega, personal conversation, May 23, 2019). Approximately 60-70 individuals were identified, by WLO, as part of the family network, many of whom represent a group, organization or university. The wide array of members in the family network is representative of its diversity and scope. Depending on the needs of the whole network, family members may become involved by leading an ad hoc committee, publishing new research, or hosting a field school. With such a wide variety of projects, in different locations, schedules, and leisure specialties, the WL family collaborates with each other globally to achieve their objectives. In this way, the "feeling of family" is demonstrated by the WLO's openness to new connections and ideas, collegial friendships, innovation, and collaboration, as a means to fulfill its

mission.

Members of the WLO family network may also be called stakeholders, connectors or relations (Stokowski, 1994). The most common definition of a stakeholder is a party who has an interest in a group, an organization, or company which is affected or can be affected by another (Freeman, 1984). Stakeholders may be individuals, local groups, civic institutions, international organizations, businesses, or universities. A more complete definition of a stakeholder is from Aligica (2006), which says:

A stakeholder is defined as persons or groups whose interests and activities strongly affect and are affected by the issues concerned, who have a 'stake' in a change, who control relevant information and resources and whose support is needed in order to implement the change (p. 79).

In this paper, everyone in the WL family network are stakeholders and members of the family because they all affect and are affected by the WLO.

This case study will be illustrated and analyzed at the macro, or whole network level, rather than at a micro level. It will focus on the WL family network and their most vital players, or stakeholders, as defined by the WLO. In cooperation with the WLO, this thesis describes and inventories the current connections and stakeholder relationships within the WL family network. Collaborations among current stakeholders within the WL family network are also examined. This new data has the potential to inform strategic planning by the WLO and its network of stakeholders. The findings will be presented in a master thesis for the Sustainable Leisure Management (SLM) program at Vancouver Island University (VIU). Also, it will be shared with the WLO and participants of this

research. In fact, this researcher presented preliminary research results and findings at the WL Congress, April 2021. Other dissemination approaches may include future publications or expansion of this research. In collaboration with the WLO, this research has led to an exciting opportunity to be immersed in their important work – to improve the human condition through leisure.

To inventory the WLO family and describe their connections, the following research questions have been posited: what is the current state of the WLO family network, and how do these stakeholders interact to attain the WLO objectives? To address these questions, three study objectives guide this research.

Study Objectives

- 1) To describe the main actors of the WL family network;
- 2) To explain the relationships between actors in the WL family network;
- 3) Explore the structures that have the potential to affect substantive outcomes, such as relationships with universities and evolving policy changes in leisure.

CHAPTER 2

Literature review

This chapter will highlight relevant literature concerning sustainability, sustainable leisure management (SLM), networks, and gaps in the research. Sustainability and SLM are reviewed because the WL family network is embedded within the broader field of SLM and provides the context for this study. Furthermore, sustainability and leisure development define the work of the WLO and its family network. Next, several types of networks are discussed since these provide the framework for the WLO to conduct its mandate and networks are the focus of this study. These networks include global, multi-stakeholder, and international social-change networks. Finally, a review of the current literature highlights the gaps in leisure research that this study aims to address.

Sustainability and SLM

Sustainability and leisure management are core principals and founding concepts for the WLO. As mentioned previously, “The World Leisure Organization promotes leisure as integral to social, cultural, economic and sustainable environmental development” (WLO, 2019, About Us section). Walters and Takamura (2015) expand the definition of sustainability in development by arguing: “What ‘the triple bottom line’ does not incorporate is an acknowledgment of culture or spirituality as a primary role in developing a sustainably sound entrepreneurial model fueled on innovation” (pg. 78). According to the authors, sustainable development settings should use a quadruple bottom-line approach when analyzing complex development problems (Walters and Takamura, 2015). These complex, intractable development issues, or wicked problems,

include poverty, hunger, the climate crisis, and now the COVID-19 pandemic. Global networks, such as the UN and the WLO, are better equipped to handle these types of problems because they operate collaboratively, and share information, resources and goals to improve society by addressing wicked problems in a cooperative manner (Weber and Khademian, 2008). In this way, networks can lead to improving a community's ability to address all the aspects of the quadruple bottom line.

Networks

Although networks may seem to be a modern phenomenon, according to Van Dijk (2006) in his book *The Network Society*: "Social networks are as old as humanity" (p. 21). The history of networking dates to the time of hunters and gatherers. Once humans created speech and the ability to communicate with one another, small groups exchanged information, food, and other resources (Van Dijk, 2006). Van Dijk (2006) expands on a historical view from *The Human Web* by McNeill and McNeill. The McNeills describe five successive worldwide webs that have evolved over time from the earliest small groups of tribes and bands, to metropolitan or city webs about 6,000 years ago, to the Old-World web connecting Eurasia and Northern Africa about 2,000 years ago (Van Dijk, 2006). The Cosmopolitan web occurred from about the 1400s to the early 1800s when Europeans completed the worldwide expansion into the Americas, and the Global worldwide web began (Van Dijk, 2006).

Over the last 150 years, urbanization and population growth has led to both a widening and thickening of ties and relationships. Van Dijk (2006) explains that networking has produced a mass global society, including mass media and communications that are online, organized into networks, and connect all actors.

Online resources used within a network are also called actors or nodes, as explained by Yang and Saffer (2019). The authors make an important distinction between social actors and non-social actors within networks: “The crux of networks are nodes that are both social actors like individuals, groups, organizations, etc. as well as nonsocial actors like websites, texts, artifacts, etc.” (Yang and Saffer, 2019, p. 2). Both types of actors are fully embedded in the WLO network. For instance, organizations within the WLO network have their own websites, or non-social actors, where partners have easy access electronically to online knowledge, resources and opportunities. These non-social actors are vital in linking members and new alliances or partnerships. This current online networked ecosystem continues to change the world with knowledge that is easily accessible and globally available in this modern era.

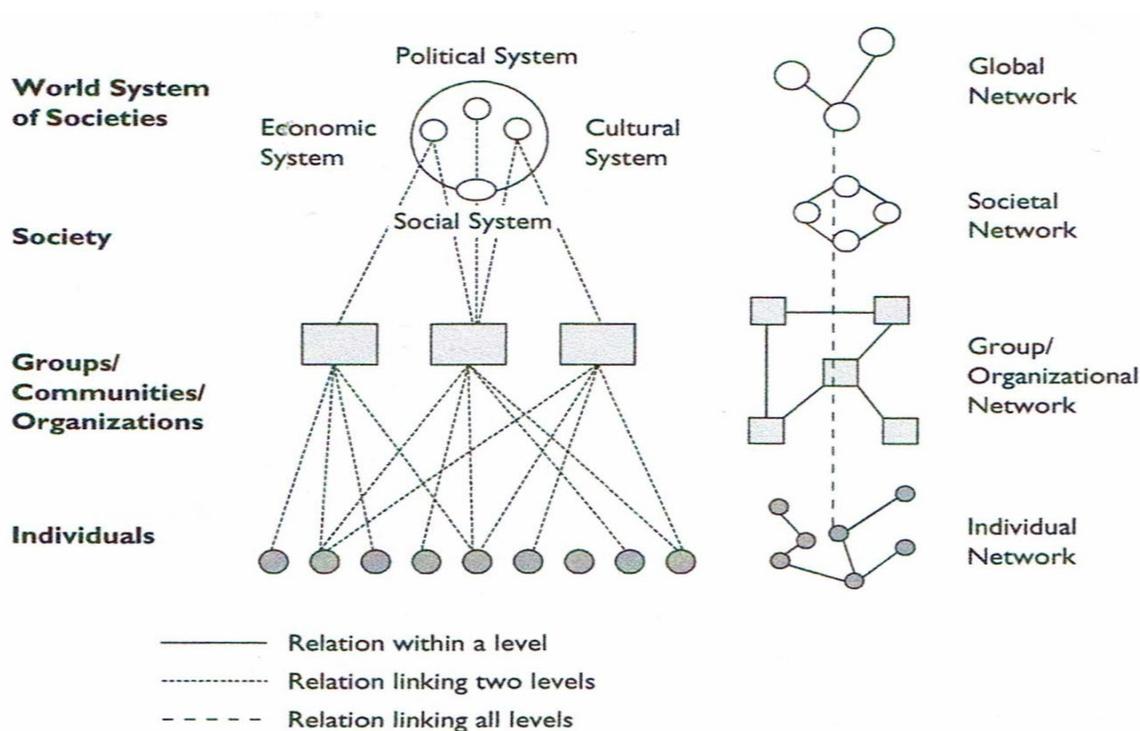
Networks are now ubiquitous, from personal to social and business networks. The world consists of a multitude of networks connecting organizations and people with each other. Networks can include informal groups, corporations, organizations, nations, and/or regions, as well as individuals who are all connected as part of a network structure. From the macro view, a network perspective conceptualizes networks as various nodes, and analyzes the links among multiple levels and networks (Stebbins, 2017; Stokowski, 1994; Timur, 2004; Van Dijk, 2006). From the macro view, the UN consists of networks connected to other networks. In the same way, the WLO is a network of networks with the WL family at its heart. Yang and Saffer (2019) describe this global phenomenon in the following way: “Networks of organizations are connected to other networks of organizations in ways that form expansive network ecologies” (p. 3). From a network perspective, the structure of a whole network includes different sectors and levels within

society.

In *the Network Society*, Van Dijk (2006) illustrates the structural outline of networks at each societal level (Figure 3). Figure 3 illustrates the relationships between the networks that comprise various levels of society, from world systems (e.g., economic) to individuals (Van Dijk, 2006). These connections are multi-directional and facilitate the sharing of resources among network actors.

Figure 3

Societal Networks and Their Connections



Note: From *The Network Society* (p. 26), by J. Van Dijk, 2006

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) describes networking characteristics in the following way: “networks...with shared norms, values and understandings facilitate co-operation within or among groups” (OECD, 2020). This definition includes actions essential to the success of organizations, individuals, and

whole networks. Other essential functions of networks include facilitating the exchange of information, resources, contacts, and experiences for professional or social purposes (Yang and Saffer, 2019).

Types of Networks

Global networks, such as the UN, operate world-wide rather than simply at the local, regional, or national levels. Global connections with universities and international organizations, as well as various national and regional leisure organizations, illustrate how these types of networks can also be described as multi-stakeholder networks (Roloff, 2008), and/or interorganizational networks (Provan et al., 2007; Pouwels & Koster, 2017). Multi-stakeholder networks have grown rapidly since the mid-nineties (Roloff, 2008). Roloff (2008) explains that, “In these networks actors from business, civil society and governmental or supranational institutions come together *in order to find a common approach to an issue that affects them all and that is too complex to be addressed effectively without collaboration*” (emphasis added) (p.234). Again, wicked problems need more than one simple solution or perspective; multiple ideas from diverse stakeholders are needed when attacking complex social problems.

International social-change networks, as defined by Wilson-Grau and Nunez (2007), usually perform at least two of the following tasks: manage knowledge for members, promote exchange and learning for members, and conduct meetings and events. These tasks are especially relevant for this case study because WLO performs all of these in the following ways: first, the WLO creates its agenda by research, education, and knowledge transfer of little-known but crucial ideas for the public (i.e., leisure and health); second, WLO organizes projects for collaboration of family members to address

global problems through leisure; and third, the WLO has been holding global events for decades. In sum, these types of networks influence the economic, political, and socio-cultural structures and relationships in ways that are not possible by individual actors alone (Wilson-Grau & Nunez, 2007).

Characteristics of Networking

Networks have the characteristic of increasing community capacity in many ways. In their 2005 article, Provan et al. explain that strengthening relationships among public and nonprofit organizations increases the community's capacity to tackle critical needs in areas such as health, social problems, and economic development. By working together, community organizations can draw on the broad range of resources and expertise provided by other organizations in the network, and as a result, the health and well-being of community members can be improved (Provan & Milward, 2001).

Another way networks can increase community capacity is by providing social capital. According to Lavigne (2014), speaking on governance and public leisure policy, social capital describes the characteristics of social organizations such as networks, standards of reciprocity, shared values, and trust. Lavigne (2014) further states: "Social capital is the ability to build and maintain a relationship based on trust and a willingness to collaborate; also, the ability to cooperate and establish and maintain networks" (p. 34). Other scholars have explained social capital as a type of network relationship in which cooperation and collective action is implicitly understood (Cots, 2011; Adler and Kwon, 2002). Finally, Lavigne (2014) summarizes that "social capital is what binds relationships" (p. 35).

Network Perspective

Many scholars from different disciplines have examined the multiple benefits that can come from using a Network Perspective to guide collaboration between organizations or networks (Provan, et al., 2005; Yang and Saffer, 2019). Pouwels and Koster (2017) examined inter-organizational cooperation and innovation across different sectors and the benefits of networks. They found that there is a positive relationship between cooperation and innovation (Pouwels and Koster, 2017). Other authors have looked at how networks grow successfully and how they can more easily collaborate to achieve their goals, as well as how small NGOs can survive and thrive (Cots, 2011; Provan et al., 2005). Cots (2011), for instance, suggests a “networked stakeholder theory” that highlights the role of social capital in networked relationships. She states:

The concept of stakeholder social capital proposed here is defined as the goodwill that arises from the pattern of social relations (multiplex and dense) between the firm and its stakeholders realized through members’ meta-purpose and shared trust that contributes to the common good of both the stakeholder network and the society (Cots, 2011 p. 334).

In other words, network relationships can produce goodwill and social capital between people and groups in a network because they are created by patterns of shared goals, trust, and a common purpose to improve society. Based on the networking literature, this researcher anticipates the data collected will describe the structure of, and explain relationships within, the WL family network.

Gaps in Research

Research pertaining to leisure and networks is limited, since the concepts,

models, and terminology of network analysis have been developed in the business, management, and public policy sectors (Stokowski, 1994). One exception is *Leisure in Society- a Network Structural Perspective* by Stokowski (1994), which illustrates basic terms and ideas in networking; however, its application to this thesis is limited since network theories have evolved tremendously since 1994. Stokowski in 1994 explained the gaps in leisure research then, and they are still relevant today: “The research agenda of leisure has developed at the micro level of analysis with little attention to macro-level structures of institutionalized social relationships in leisure” (p. 42). Furthermore, she states that generally the analysis of social structures, especially at the whole network level, has been ignored by leisure research (Stokowski, 1994). However, Stebbins’ in his 2017 book, *Leisure Activities in Context : A Micro-macro / Agency- Structure Interpretation of Leisure*, describes context as the ‘big picture’ in which a phenomenon exists. Stebbins further explains how leisure occurs at all of the different levels of society- micro, meso and macro. This thesis is intended to fill this gap with a macro or whole network case study of the WL family network.

Another gap to fill is that few academic articles focus on the WLO specifically. In 2013, the *World Leisure Journal* published an article on the 50-year history of the WLO (Edginton, 2013). This article gives great insight into how the WLO has changed over the years and has built social capital through their network by working cooperatively to achieve their mutual goals. For more than 60 years, the WLO has been networking with other international organizations that share values, trust, cooperation, and reciprocity (Edginton, 2013). Now in 2021, nearly a decade later, it is time to update this research to gain specific knowledge about the current WLO, its family network, and how the WLO

can continue to spread the unique importance of leisure in society.

It is expected that the data from the WLO survey will reflect current partnerships among this family network. By illustrating clear connections between partners, the WLO could then review or revise current links or generate new opportunities for program collaboration. This has the potential to deepen partnerships within the WL family. Leisure benefits deserve to be recognized as essential for all people and their quality of life. This topic requires further academic study to mobilize new knowledge and raise awareness of the positive influences that leisure brings to individuals and society.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

This research project applied the case study method along with the cross-cutting technique of network analysis. Following case study methodology was a pragmatic choice used to describe and define actors and their relationships within the WLO network. This was the primary methodology utilized to analyze the whole WLO network. Both primary and secondary data were collected to address my objectives in this study. Secondary data were provided by the WLO from its online Stakeholder Survey conducted in 2020 about its network of family members. The WLO provided both the original raw data set, as well as the findings of their analyses. The raw data set was re-analyzed by the researcher for the purposes of this study. Primary data was created by the researcher while conducting in-depth interviews with family members. Existing online resources from the WLO and UN, such as non-social actors like websites, videos, and official documents from the WLO and the UN, were also utilized extensively for this case. The majority of the background information and current details about the WLO and the UN in this thesis come directly from these organizations, since there is a wealth of knowledge within them. This analysis examines the connections within the WLO's network, the factors enhancing network collaboration, and the elements for moving this network's objectives forward.

Epistemology

This researcher took a pragmatic approach to gather and analyze primary and secondary data from the WLO and its family network. A pragmatic approach was taken for many reasons: direct access to the WLO was available through VIU's WLCE

master's program; this author's views and research interests align with those of the WLO; and the flexibility this research approach provides. This worldview is best suited for case studies based on real-world applications, since it is a practical way to gather information, analyze data, and reveal trends or issues to be solved (Veal, 2017). A pragmatic approach is often used in problem-solving since it can use multiple means to understand an issue or an organization (Veal, 2017)). The WLO has a transformative worldview that illustrates how leisure and global collaborative relationships can lead to improved health, and positive changes in society. Together with local, national, and global partners, the WLO works to further the goal of improving the human condition through leisure, in all its many forms. To paraphrase the WLO, cross-cultural communications, shared values, and social justice can lead to world peace, or at least a better world (WLO, 2019). The author's epistemology stance is straightforward and aligns with the WLO.

Study Design

Case study research is used to study a place or an organization in depth to develop new perspectives or new knowledge (Veal, 2017). The primary method of case study research was selected because it focuses on real-world issues, it is practical and flexible in data collection, and it recognizes that multiple methods are beneficial and add depth to data (Veal, 2017). Furthermore, the use of a variety of types of data and types of analysis can be said to be a key feature of the case study method (Veal, 2017). Some scholars assert that a case study is both a method and a methodology (Pearson et al., 2015) since it is a tool to be used, and a means to study a specific entity. Furthermore, Veal explains that in a case study one must first determine the unit of analysis to be researched, which in this case is the WL family network . The second step is to define and select the cases to

study. These will include the WLO and their closest collaborators who comprise the WL family network. The third step utilizes multiple methods to collect both qualitative and quantitative data to guide this research. Finally, the concept of Triangulation of data is also a key feature of case study research. Simply put, triangulation occurs when using different mixed methods to study the same phenomenon, resulting in similar data.

Triangulation adds internal validity to this study by using two different data sets and network analysis to study the WL family. The data corroborated similar results and findings regarding the WL family. In qualitative research, the term ‘trustworthiness’ is used in place of validity and reliability. In sum, this paper undertakes a descriptive approach utilizing empirical data from multiple sources to give rich, detailed descriptions of the connections within the family network.

The overall study design applied three specific tools of case study research to collect and analyze data about the WL family: online surveys, personal interviews, and network analyses. First, the WLO Stakeholder Survey (Appendix B) was shared as an online survey by WLO to approximately 70 different family members in early 2020. Next, in May 2020 the office of the Secretariat invited twenty-two family members to be interviewed for this research. By email, the WLO included the Recruitment letter describing this collaborative project with the WLO (Appendix C: Recruitment Letter). Next, individual qualitative interviews (Appendix D: Interview Questions) took place in May and June 2020. Lastly, a network analysis of the WL family identified specific groups (nodes) and their relationships (links) to others in the network. The two data sets – the WLO survey and the interviews – along with websites and WLO documents, formed the basis for describing the WL family network. The network analysis yielded

information on the structural form and links among the WL family network.

Population and Sampling

In this case study, an updated overview of the WLO and its close family of stakeholders is examined and presented. The WLO shared with the researcher a list of approximately 70 unique individuals and organizations within the WL family network. These stakeholders were identified by the secretariat's office as being part of the WL family network, including seven university partners, diverse organizations, academics, and professionals within the leisure domain. All those who participated in interviews and/or the WLO survey work in the field of leisure and are stakeholders in the WL family network. Participants in this research were leisure professionals from around the world in their early 30s to a few over 70 years old and semi-retired. The WL family members answered questions in their professional capacities as administrators, academics, and/or WLO members.

Research Tools

WLO Survey

In January 2020, the WLO surveyed its closest partners regarding their connections with the WLO. The survey was designed to collect basic information about their WLO connections, opinions, and ideas about their current relationship with the WLO. This survey was created to understand how members perceive their connections with the WLO, its current projects, and how to expand the network, among other ideas. All responses to the WLO Survey in this thesis remain anonymous. The survey was sent by the WLO to approximately 60 members within the family network. With cooperation from the WLO, the findings of this survey were shared for this research and form the

secondary data set. As Veal (2017) explains, there are no specific analytic tools for secondary data analysis, so there is flexibility. Also, the advantages of using this type of data (cost, experience, and scale) far outweigh the disadvantages, which could include issues of survey design and limits on data usage. The WLO's online survey was produced by a survey company called Servio and was available to respondents for fourteen days in February 2020. Then, the survey company sent the WLO the raw data as well as their analysis of said data. In May 2020, all of this data was shared by the WLO for this paper. The WLO survey data set can be classified as administrative or management secondary data, per Veal (2017). The WLO created an online survey to understand more about their stakeholders' relationships within the family network. Although 28 participants visited the survey, only nine participants completed it for a 32.1% completion rate. The survey consisted of nine questions in total: 4 quantitative questions about respondents' connections with the WLO, and 5 open-ended questions. Both quantitative and qualitative data from Servio's WLO survey was presented in multiple ways: spreadsheets, graphs, tables and even a PowerPoint presentation. However, all data from the survey was specifically re-analyzed for the purposes of this study. The survey data itself was taken from the spreadsheets and reorganized for this context. Some of the overlapping opinions and ideas, were collated to create qualitative statistics and generalizations that emerged from the data to include in this thesis. Manual analysis was more appropriate for this data set of nine WLO survey participants. Survey data from current stakeholders created a new data set of both quantitative and qualitative data. These results should not only demonstrate connections between stakeholders, but also potential areas for collaboration and insights into the expanding network of academics and practitioners. In

addition, survey data can then be used by WLO in its strategic planning.

Interviews

In May 2020, the WLO contacted twenty-two family members by email to encourage their participation in this case study. Members were asked to be interviewed by this researcher to produce qualitative primary data for this study on the WLO network. Personal semi-structured interviews with eight people from within the WL family network were conducted through electronic communications, including telephones and computers, in May and June of 2020. Interviews were voluntary and descriptive in nature. These conversations were recorded and later transcribed by the commercial site Rev. The transcripts and recordings were reviewed numerous times. Both computer spreadsheets and printed copies of data were manually edited by the researcher. Different colored pens and highlighters assisted in classifying themes among the vast amount of data. This recursive process was used to analyze all qualitative data, repeatedly and deductively. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and then qualitative responses were grouped by themes. All interview data was examined deductively for pre-determined themes: trust, friendship, reciprocity, social capital, shared resources, and goals. These themes arose from literature on networks (Provan et al., 2005; Stokowski, 1994).

Overall, the purpose of interviews was to gather details about respondents' connections within the WLO network. This primary data was needed to add depth to the insights garnered from the secondary data on network connections. After receiving a signed consent form from each participant, the interviews were electronically recorded, and notes were manually taken. The semi-structured interviews captured personal views, perceptions, and opinions about the current WL family network and its potential growth.

In contrast to the secondary data created by the WLO survey, the interview data forms a new primary data set created by the researcher for this project.

Network Analysis

Network analysis is a subsidiary or cross-cutting method, that was used to perform an in-depth analysis of the WL family network (Veal, 2017). This is a secondary method within this case study to analyze the connections within the WLO. Network analysis is a practical way to demonstrate the structure of the network by examining its parts and connections (Veal, 2017). Provan et al. (2005) define the relevant analytical terms needed to illustrate network relationships. These include the following: *links* are the connections between, which are separate individuals or groups; the *level of interaction* within a network can be evaluated by looking at trust, reciprocity, strong vs. weak ties, and fragmentation and/or cliques; and finally, *density* of the network, *centrality*, and *multiplexity* explain the relational attributes between stakeholders. To illustrate, within the WLO network, a *node* is a group of people, for example, the WL Academy. Comprising over 40 scholars, this *node* is linked to other *nodes* within the WLO family network (Provan et al., 2005). The same networking terms are used by leisure scholars such as Stokowski, 1994; Timur, 2004; and Veal, 2017. Although networking research is led by scholars in Business, Public Relations, Organizational Management, and Sociology (O'Toole, 2015; Provan and Milward, 2001; Saffer, 2019), some leisure scholars are using a network perspective to evaluate organizations, tourism developments and such. The network perspective has been applied to solve these real-world issues in leisure, often at the group or individual level of society. For example, Blackshaw and Long, in 1998 took a social network perspective to leisure ; Kimbu, A. and Ngoasong,

M., in 2013 applied a network perspective to tourism development in Cameroon; and Timur referred to Stokowski's framework of network analysis in his examination of urban stakeholder relationships (2004). Timur described network analysis as, "Measuring and analyzing relationships among a group of actors provides a tool for researchers who are interested in how a system and its subunits are intertwined and how the system functions" (p. 11).

Ethical Considerations

The overall risk to participants was low for many reasons. This research plan was approved by WLO and the VIU Research Ethics Board, and the WLO provided introductions and access to members in its family network. All participants were professional adults from diverse cultural backgrounds who are connected to WLO, and all participated in this research voluntarily. The research was conducted at a VIU sanctioned workspace in Nanaimo, B.C., and interviews were conducted by telephone or Zoom video conferencing. The WLO network is a medium sized NGO in the developing field of leisure. Therefore, participants could be either indirectly or directly identified by others if they disclosed their organization's name or location. Some participants chose anonymity for their interviews and others did not. Therefore, in this study no names will be connected to any specific person who was interviewed. All participants were treated with respect and dignity throughout this project.

Researcher Positionality

This study presented an exciting opportunity to be involved with the WLO by researching and describing its current network more definitively. The author's views and values align with those of the WLO. It is anticipated that the research project will assist

in spreading this message: “Leisure encourages world peace by promoting cross-cultural communications and common values, equality, social justice across diverse populations” (WLO, 2019). Collaboration with the WLO is the culmination and combination of my own leisure experiences and career. This author has enjoyed international travel and learning languages from a young age. After finishing a bachelor’s degree in political science, specializing in international development (UN, NGOs), the author then completed a masters in Linguistics, teaching English as a Second Language, at the University of Michigan. This led to various teaching jobs, from the University of Michigan, the Dutch State School for Translation, to public and private schools in San Diego, California. All this experience brought me to Canada and VIU because of the World Leisure Centre of Excellence and the work of the WLO. Now, this researcher has come full circle from her academic beginnings in political and economic development, to completing the master’s in SLM, a truly interdisciplinary field. The dual purpose of this thesis is to complete the masters in Sustainable Leisure Management and to describe and illustrate the current WL family network in more detail, for the strategic planning of the WLO.

CHAPTER 4

Findings

The purpose of this case study was to describe the WLO and its family network in-depth, focusing on the connections and relationships between members of the network. The study was framed by the following research questions: what is the current state of the WL family network, and how do these stakeholders interact to attain the WLO objectives? To answer these questions, three objectives guided this research: 1) identify the crucial actors in the WLO family network; 2) explain the relationships between these actors; and 3) explore the structures that affect substantive outcomes of the network.

The research tools utilized to gain knowledge about this topic consisted of primary data collected from interviews with network members, secondary data from the WLO Stakeholder Survey and data from WLO and UN websites. The findings of these analyses are introduced in the sections that follow. These sections include networks and the WL family, the WL family network map, and the findings from the interviews and the WLO survey. Finally, an analysis of the network themes that connect these close relationships within the WL family network is reported.

Networks and the WL Family

The WL family network was examined on a macro level as a whole network. This network encompasses organizations and individuals who operate in the global arena at the national, international, and local levels, to spread the WLO's message that leisure can improve the human condition. As mentioned in chapter one, the WL family network comprises approximately 70 global leisure professionals who have the closest, most influential, and active relationships within the whole WLO network. This study involves

17 family members, nine of whom replied to the WLO survey and eight who were interviewed individually.

Presently, the entire WLO network maintains links with thousands of stakeholders, including individual and institutional members of the World Leisure Organization. Although the WLO collaborates with diverse media groups and various national leisure associations around the globe, those groups were not part of this study. Analysis of the WL family network focussed on the relationships and connections between its members, and how these relationships lead to achieving the common goals of the WLO. These links are described and explored in the broadest sense. This study is not a comprehensive statistical analysis of every node and link found in the WLO network. Rather, it is a demonstration of the structural forms present within the WL family network and how their collaboration leads to achieving common goals.

The Networked WL Family

The World Leisure Organization's family network consists of core stakeholder groups. Figure 4 illustrates a network perspective of the WLO family network, and highlights distinct levels of engagement, the intersections of nodes and links, and the density of their relationships. Centrality is an essential word to define when analyzing networks. Although small informal networks may not have one central organization connected to all groups, the network is ready to join forces as partners when an issue or problem requires collaboration. The United Nations is at the pinnacle of global networks and consists of multitudes of networks within networks, yet all nodes are connected to the UN. Provan et al. (2005) would call these other UN organizations, UNICEF and UNWTO, cliques, or subgroups of fully interconnected organizations.

In the 1950s, the UN encouraged the formation of NGOs based on various sectors to collaborate with communities and civil society. In doing so, the UN built bridges that connected global level sectors to local level sectors within society. The UN linked with different non-profit organizations from civil society and in 1956, the predecessor to the World Leisure Organization, the International Recreation Association (IRA) was granted status as one of these first NGOs, at the UN. The WLO is approved to work with the UN and other NGOs with consultative status through UNESCO, the organizing body for these UN NGOs. Despite this organizational history, this study did not find the UN to be at the center of the WL family network. Rather, it was determined that the WLO Office of the Secretariat is at its center and represents both the WLO and its governing board of directors.

In figure 4, the WLO is positioned just below the UN to represent their close and unique relationship. The secretariat's office is headed by the Chief Operating Officer (COO), Cristina Nuere Ortega, and a small team in Bilbao Spain. The COO is accountable to the board of directors which is comprised of approximately twenty elected members with intentional global representation. Together this group is the engine that moves the WLO forward in this ever-changing virtual world.

The next group shown in figure 4 is located directly below the WLO and it consists of seven World Leisure Centres of Excellence (WLCE). These university partners illustrate this large cluster in the family network. Collectively, these nodes are connected to each other and could be considered an academic network within the family network. These Universities have strong ties with the secretariat's office since all actors are committed to leisure education and research. On the left side of figure 4 is the WL

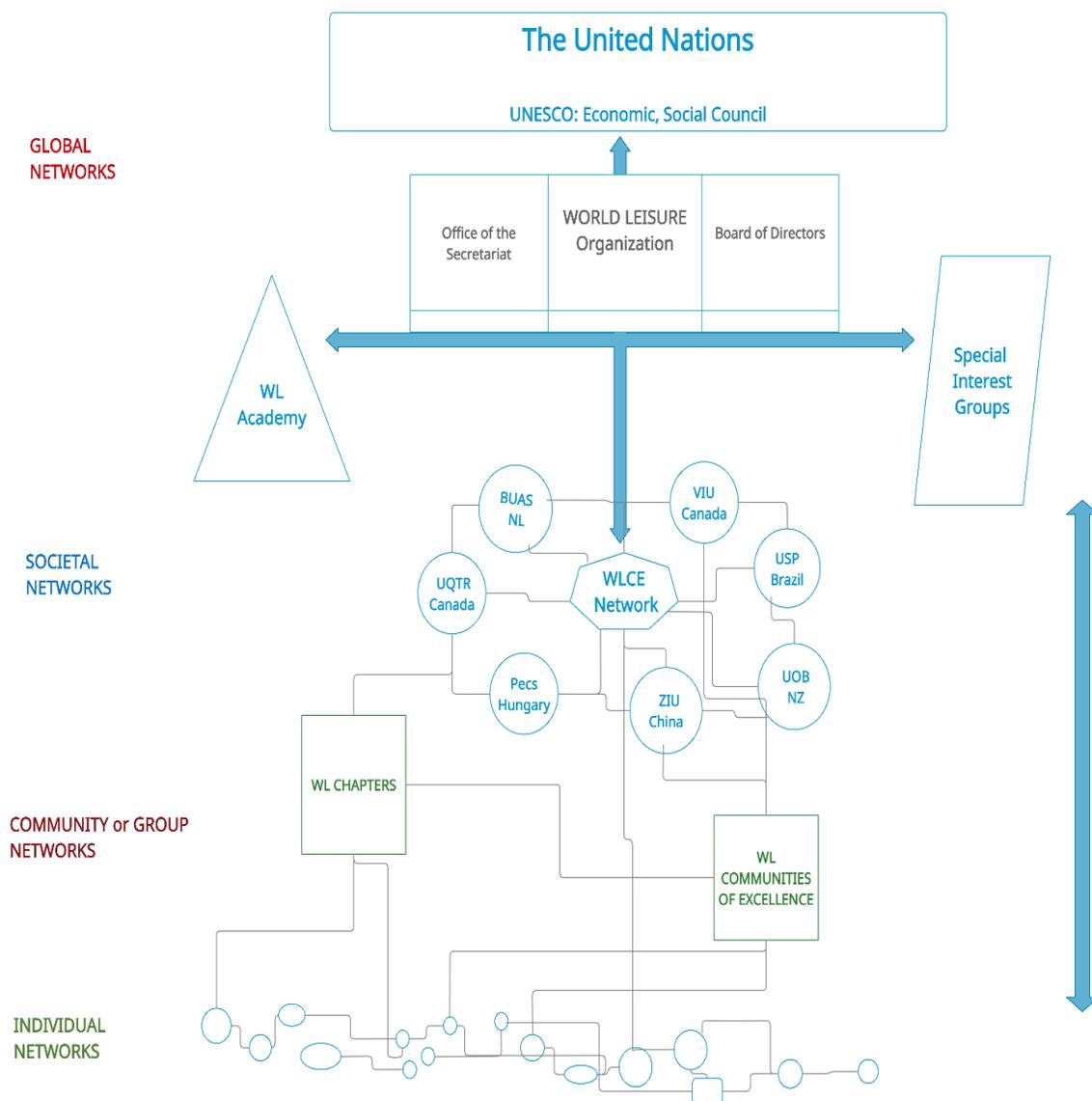
Academy which has approximately forty global leisure scholars as members who cooperate semi-independently to support WLO in achieving its goals. The Academy node is connected to the secretariat's office, the WLCE network, and the WL Special Interest Groups (SIGs) each with a facilitator(s). On the right side of figure 4 are the WLO SIGs – eleven loosely organized groups, each based on a different current topic in leisure. Every group is facilitated by a leader, collaborating with its SIG members to determine that specific group's agenda. As seen in the figure, these three main groups of the family network are positioned closest to the WLO central organizing group. They are linked in numerous and diverse ways within the World Leisure Organization and its family network. These three groups have the most substantial ties with the secretariat's office and work in partnership as the WL family network. Each WL node or group encompasses at least three of the four strategic working lines of the WLO: education, research, knowledge transfer, and advocacy. One may argue that these groups perform all four of these functions to varying degrees.

Throughout the WL family, members reported serving in multiple positions within the main family groups. For example, several family members are linked to the WL Academy and one of the SIGs; other members are on the board of directors and part of a WLCE. Half of those interviewed spoke of being on past WLO boards, facilitating a WL Congress, or collaborating with the WLO head office on specific programs or projects. The WL family network was found to have multiple ties, also known as multiplicity, which show the closeness and interconnectedness within the WL family network. Multiple connections indicate that the WL family is a dense network consisting of various links between societal levels and all the family network nodes. The overlap of

individuals in these groups signifies overall cohesion, and these connections are visible within the WL family network.

The last two groups on the map include the four WL Communities of Excellence – three in China and one in Canada – and the WL Chapters. These groups represent the WLO's commitment to reach all levels of society and were shown to have created more connected and more healthy communities through leisure. Each of the WL Communities have made leisure a major link between their community and its residents. Each of these community groups illustrates a small cluster that is somewhat fragmented because of their various locations, among other reasons. Their position on the map is the farthest away from the center of the network, indicating a weaker connection in the WL family network. The structure of these communities does not facilitate the kind of collaboration common to the rest of the WL family network. Yet, they are part of the WL family because of their focus on improving life through leisure. These communities and chapters have collaborated with the WLO to earn recognition and designation as WL Communities of Excellence and WL Chapters.

Located at the very bottom of the map are separate or individual networks made up of distinct networks based on individuals. Every member of the WL family has their own personal network that includes relatives, friends, and co-workers. Thus, each of the family members in this study is simultaneously represented at the global level engaging with the WL family network, as well as at the individual level when interacting within their own personal networks. Sometimes personal networks may overlap with community groups or the institutions at the societal or global levels of society.

Figure 4*WLO Family Network Map*

As seen in the above figure 4, every embedded subgroup, the WLCE group, the Academy, the SIGs, Chapters, and Communities of Excellence, is linked to one another as well as to the WLO's office of the secretariat.

Interview Participants

The overall purpose of individual interviews was to gather a greater depth of knowledge about respondents' connections within the WLO network. All eight interviews were voluntary and descriptive. Interview participants were mainly from North America: Canada, the USA, and Mexico. However, those interviewed had diverse international backgrounds and worked in the extensive field of leisure in various sectors. The eight WLO network family members interviewed fell into one of three sectors or categories: academia (3 interviewees), public health and community development (2 interviewees), and leisure practitioners (3 interviewees). Five of the eight participants worked at Universities within specific Leisure or Parks and Recreation departments. The other three worked in closely related discipline, including disabilities and healthcare at a university medical center, public health at the state level, and event planning at a business school. Among the interviewees, three identified as current SIG facilitators, two as former SIG or board of director members, two as leisure consultants, and one as a recreation department executive from a WL Community of Excellence. The age range of participants was estimated to be 30 – 70 years old, with five females and three males participating. Four participants reported having life-long careers with the WLO, working in the network for 20 to 30-years. Their roles included serving on the board of directors, acting as SIG facilitators, and working as WL Academy members. The other half had become connected with the WLO sometime within the past ten years by virtue of having already been working in the leisure field and subsequently linking with the WLO to become part of the family network.

Interviews

Data collected from interviews demonstrated the real-life experiences described by respondents. After a few interviews, it was noted that participants had the same or similar responses, and therefore the data had become saturated. This was expected since this case study focused on the WL family, which consists of those long-standing members with multiple relationships within the family. However, several participants reported having unique connections with the WLO. Leisure is interdisciplinary in nature and, therefore, is vast and broad in scope. One participant first became aware of the WLO when a colleague encouraged her to present a research paper at a WL Congress. This led to another presentation at the WLCE in Brazil, where she met a Ph.D. student with similar leisure interests. That student received a Fulbright Dissertation Award to study with the WL family member. This participant appreciated her long-standing relationship with the WLO and the exposure to new ways of thinking about leisure in diverse contexts. Eventually, her networked relationship with WLO led to her promotion to professor at her medical university.

The interview responses revealed both tangible (Table 1) and intangible (Table 2) benefits for members of the WL family. The tangible benefits that emerged include the biannual WL Congress, The WL Journal, and other informational resources. Intangible benefits were found to be the internationalization of leisure, WLO resources, and networking within the WLO. One long-time leisure academic asserted that the WLO's intangible resources are much more important than their tangible ones. This statement emerged only three months into the pandemic when the world was shifting to a predominantly online world in education, government, and business. The uncertainty of

this new pandemic reality, exposed opinions, and potential solutions to forced isolation from a few of the interviewees. The inability for people to meet face to face, has led WLO to continue utilizing online engagement with the whole WLO network.

Table 1

Reported Tangible Benefits of WLO Network Membership

	Tangible Benefit				
	WL Journal	WL Newsletter	WL Congress	Other WL Events	WL Awards & Grants
% of responses	100	30	50	25	25

Table 2

Reported Intangible Benefits of WLO Network Membership

	Intangible Benefit				
	Shared Goals & Values	Networking	Internationalization	Social Capital	Legitimacy Capital
% of responses	100	100	63	36	25

WLO Survey participants

The WLO survey was completed by nine members in total. Demographic data was not collected from participants to ensure they were not indirectly identifiable. Therefore, a sample description of the survey participants is not possible, beyond stating that they are all professional adults in the WL family. Also, the survey results below will provide insight into the participants. These results describe how the participants are connected within the family.

WLO Survey data

Data from the first five survey questions were initially analyzed quantitatively by the online company and then by the researcher for this project. These quantitative questions were designed to collect data on the types of connections survey respondents have with the WLO. The first survey question asked respondents to report their connections to the WLO by selecting all applicable responses from a list of eleven provided. Eight participants answered and one participant did not. Because participants could select more than one choice, eighteen total responses were collected from eight participants that describe the ways in which they are connected to the WLO, and therefore members of the WLO family. The breakdown of identified connections are as follows: over 62% (5 people) identified as a WLO member, 50% (4 people) as a WL Board of Director, 37% (3 people) were from WL Special Interest Groups, and 25% (2 people) reported being involved with a WL Centre of Excellence. The remaining responses identified one connection with each of the following: the WL Academy, a WL Chapter, the Young People Leisure Network, and Other. These findings are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3

Respondents' Connection to the WLO

WLO Connection	Number of Respondents	Ratio of Respondents
WL Board of Directors	4	50.00%
WL Centre of Excellence	2	25.00%
WL Academy	1	12.50%
WL Special Interest Group	3	37.50%
WL Chapter	1	12.50%
Young People Leisure Network	1	12.50%
Member	5	62.50%
Other	1	12.50%

The second question asked respondents to choose from a list of four, which of the WLO's working lines best describes their organization's main programs or activities. All members, 100%, chose Research and Education to describe their main professional roles, 66.67% (6 members) chose Knowledge Transfer and 33.33% (3 members) chose Advocacy. This again shows the interconnectedness of the family network. Members reported having various roles over time, mainly in research and education, but also in knowledge mobilization and advocacy in the leisure field.

The third question aimed to learn why family network members connect with the WLO, and how relevant those connections are by asking: which activities are relevant to you and your organization? Each of the nine participants was asked to rate how relevant five provided reasons for connection with the WLO were to their organization on a scale that ranged from 'not at all' to 'very much'. The top reason family members connect with the WLO was for internationalization, representing 89% of the sample. This was followed closely by research opportunities and resources at 78%, and networking purposes at 56%. The final two activities – advocacy and education and knowledge transfer – were each seen as very relevant to almost half of the participants (44%). These findings are summarized in Table 4.

Table 4*Reason for and Relevance of Connection With the WLO*

Reason for Connection	Response			
	Not at All	Not so Much	To Some Extent	Very Much
1. For networking purposes (meeting colleagues and staying connected)	0	1	3	5
2. For internationalization purposes	0	1	0	8
3. For education and knowledge transfer purposes (events, study tours, field schools)	0	2	3	4
4. For research opportunities and benefits (special interest groups, strategic priority grants)	0	0	2	7
5. For advocating opportunities (position papers, Charter for Leisure)	0	1	4	4

The next questions (4 and 5) asked if members had connections with other NGOs, and if so, with which ones. Seven respondents (77.8%) affirmed that they worked with other NGOs, while only two, or 22.2%, stated that they did not have connections with any. The range of NGOs and non-profits listed by respondents spanned from local community-based organizations (50%) to national and regional groups (33%). Other answers included local recreation associations, disability and inclusion organizations, those groups relevant to environmental and sustainability issues, and two answers included international NGOs. One answer stands out and describes the range of leisure sectors in which NGOs work: tourism, arts and culture, agricultural tourism, recreation and sport, community development, rural development, international economic development, outdoor education.

The last four questions were open-ended. They invited respondents to provide their suggestions for increasing collaboration, and ideas for specific projects to develop with WLO in the future, as well as their input on long-term plans for the members' organization, and any other further comments about their relationship with the WLO. These survey findings are summarized in tables 5 and 6. Table 5 contains responses for questions six and seven. Table 6 lists the responses from questions eight and nine. Empty boxes signify answers such as 'no' and 'I'll have to think more'. All responses were listed in random order by the online company Servio.

Table 5*Responses to Survey Questions 6 and 7*

Question 6: How to Increase Cooperation	Question 7: Specific Ideas for WLO Collaboration
1. Interdisciplinary and intersectoral collaborations are critical to address systemic change in complex social issues that we address in leisure. Network development is essential and continued conversation is required.	1. Also, more collaboration regarding Centres of Excellence collaboration with national association events. For example, I saw no connection between Otago C of E with the recent ANZALS conference.
2. Cooperation opportunities with the World Health Organization, UNESCO, UNICEF and International Sports Organizations can be increased.	2. In the future we will develop a system where our conferences and events will be supported or endorsed by the WLO.
3. Bringing together the WLCE in mutual actions, such as academic publications, thematic meetings, etc.	3. I would like to receive foreign students in our WLCE
4. Influence policy, charter development, literature influencers, and consultive status. Student Research Grants and perhaps online workshops, online resources	4. Vigorously support SIG activities; Field school, study tour and education labs; Some organizations can be organized for young people and research projects can be developed.
5. They must work at a high level of International influence and that must flow down through private, public and non profit levels of delivery.	5. We will also like to have outreach events particularly on the African continent where there is currently less participation.
6. Influence policy, charter development, literature influencers, and consultive status	6. Do local events with the partnership of the WLO.

Table 6*Responses to Survey Questions 8 and 9*

Questions 8: Goal of Member Organizations	Question 9: Comments and Suggestions
1. To improve the role of leisure in the university context, for example, as a mean of academic success	1. WLO is an organization that wants to expand its international network. It also wants to run the principles of universal democracy well. It would be good to spend some more time doing research projects.
2. Growth into PhD degrees, leading SDG initiatives, change agents for leisure globally.	2. Interdisciplinary and intersectoral collaborations are critical to address systemic change in complex social issues that we address in leisure. Network development is essential and continued conversation is required.
3. Increased recognition of community quality of life and leisure's capacity to be integral in that quality.	3. Thanks for this opportunity to share some ideas. It is an honor to partner the WLO coordinating the WLCE.
4. Teaching, research, and outreach	4. Although the secretariat is dynamic and very active, as mentioned earlier, we will have to come up with further strategies for enhanced engagement.
5. Establishing a Centre of Excellence	5. Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback.
6. We have just established our WLCE. Our plan is to foster opportunities and strengthen this Center of Excellence in the near future.	6. Please make sure you share the outcomes of this survey with all of us. WLO remains mysterious in how it operates.
7. We would like to expand the International Olympic Climbing organization.	
8. Rural outreach, research, curricular development	

Network Themes

Before collecting data, predetermined themes within network relationships were chosen to examine the WL family network to analyze its network structure. Themes from

network literature were used in this context to represent characteristics of nodes and connections within a network. Literature reviewed earlier about networking and networks of international organizations include many of these common characteristics. For simplicity, these themes were grouped into three overarching and overlapping concepts below which define some necessary components to a well functioning network. These are: 1) common interests, values, and goals; 2) reciprocity or mutually beneficial relationships; and 3) social capital, legitimacy, and intellectual capital.

Common Interests, Values, and Goals

Having similar goals, values, and interests facilitates growth in ideas, programs, and coordination within the family network. The leisure sector, among others, has generated thousands of like-minded people who have a shared ethical code, including civility, respect, and cooperation for the common good. As in many work environments, co-workers may share the same interests to a varying degree. Shared purpose and social norms help cooperation grow within small groups, organizations, and networks (Provan et al., 2005; Yang and Saffer, 2019). This theme was cited by every member interviewed. These common interests, values and goals were found to create an environment conducive to collaboration and coordination within the family network. Opportunities for research and education arise between professionals in the WL family network. One person stated that leisure is the good news business, since the benefits of leisure can improve lives. Others went on to say that this message needs to be amplified beyond this network. Most members agreed that this was a common goal of the whole WLO network.

Reciprocity or Mutually Beneficial Relationships

Along with reciprocity, trust in colleagues often lead to friendship, and increased communication in working relationships. This also facilitates collaboration within the larger network and development of new innovative programs and policy. As the network grows, the opportunities for coordinating with diverse stakeholders increase as well. Most members mentioned that some of their closest, life-long friendships have been made through collaborating with the WLO over the years. All responses included at least one or more characteristic of these themes, including: trust, friendship, shared resources, opportunities for collaboration, and feelings of support from the family network. An example of this was described by an academic at a business school teaching event planning and hospitality. Resources from the WLO, such as sample grant applications and past events hosted by the WLO, were modified and translated for use as real-world examples integrated into the university's curriculum. Another respondent described how grant money from the WLO had assisted with community-based leisure programs, expanding participants' view of their world. Changing lives through global travel, education and service is the purpose of WLO along with spreading their transformative message to all.

Expanding globalization, or internationalization of connections, was cited by 50% of participants as a very positive attribute of the WLO network. One practitioner called the relationship with WLO as, "a conduit to the worldwide market". Another practitioner mentioned that with growing diversity in communities, WLO's programs brought together groups that might not have collaborated otherwise. This brought a better quality of life to the community. Also, international exchange opportunities arise from being a

family member. One member cited that because of the WLO connection they were able to bring a Dutch intern to study parks and recreation in a different global context. Many of the academics also mentioned the benefits of bringing students to meet global scholars or present their research at WL Congresses, regional or local leisure events.

Social Capital, Legitimacy, and Intellectual capital

The findings suggest the non-tangible concepts of social and legitimacy capital represent the good will produced by reciprocity and common values which are inherent in networked relationships. Lavigne (2014) describes social capital as the “Ability to build and maintain a relationship based on trust and a willingness to collaborate; also, the ability to cooperate and to establish and maintain network” (p.34). The WLO appears to be able to create both social and legitimacy capital for its members and the organization itself. Over one-third of members included one or more of these types of capital as being crucial factors to their relationship with WLO. One young practitioner shared that her connection to the WLO brings legitimacy to her leisure consulting business, as well as social capital in the form of support from the premiere leisure network. Collaboration with others in the family network was also found to generate intellectual capital, which included new research and opportunities to distribute new knowledge to further the WLO mission. Other examples of legitimacy capital are the facts that the WLO has a close relationship the United Nations and was granted consultative status which allows WLO to collaborate with UN organizations and other NGOs. These UN connections describe the most significant links for potential growth and collaboration that were mentioned by those within the WL family network. Growing these relationships within the UN was one of the common goals reported by WL family network study participants.

In summary, the data found that the WL family network consists of a coalition of international partners and colleagues involved in education, research, knowledge transfer, and advocacy to improve the human condition through leisure. They work cooperatively on leisure projects and programs that do change lives, for the better. The consensus throughout these interviews demonstrated a firm belief that the WL family is a positive, friendly, cooperative global organization that is accessible to members. The WLO initiates programs, policy statements and new opportunities to collaborate with actors in the WL family network to achieve mutual goals. This synergy produces a variety of innovative ideas, new opportunities, and resources from within the WL family to address a particular issue. By cooperating with different actors inside the family network, WLO can confront the global challenges ahead.

CHAPTER 5

Discussion

In this last chapter, I review the main findings and results to complete this case study of the WLO and its family network. Various groups, members, and institutions within the WL family network were identified and described earlier. First, networking literature is reviewed and expanded further to define networking and the WLO network over time. The key conclusions in this chapter concern the relationships between family members and how the networked structure of the WLO lends itself to cooperation with partners to achieve mutual goals. Next, I present a synthesis of the survey and interview results and findings. Further sub-sections describe members' connections, which are affected by the network structure of the WLO family; next are the most relevant reasons members chose to collaborate with WLO. Then, I present findings of opportunities for expanding WLO's network and specifically the UN connections vital to family members. I consider the implications for practice, and then I introduce the limitations of this research. Finally, I explore avenues for future research.

Networking Over Time

All networks and relationship dynamics evolve and change over the years, as do organizations, communities, and individuals (Yang and Saffer, 2019). The findings and results of my data confirm this is true in the WLO network. Since WLO is an affiliate to the UN, it has been a networked organization for over 60 years. WLO has grown tremendously over those decades because the networked structure has led to growth in the number of like-minded people joining the WLO to resolve mutual goals in the leisure field. The history of the WLO is documented in *A 50-year History of the World Leisure*

Organization (Edginton, 2013). This article provides a history of the progress, the people, and the organizations that collaborated with the WLO up until 2012 (Edginton, 2013).

During the last decade, the WLO has flourished and now comprises seven WLCEs, and more partnerships and affiliates in countries around the world. The WLO network has expanded its connections to include more diverse global actors from inter-sectoral organizations who collectively work toward implementing the common goals of the UN SDGs. The various connections among the WL organizations have grown and strengthened, expanding the size and scope of the current WLO network. Van Dijk (2006) stated that over the last one hundred years, urbanization and population growth has led to both a widening and thickening of ties and relationships worldwide. These multiple, complex links become networks which collaborate to grow and fulfill their mission (Van Dijk, 2006). This has led to a mass global society including mass media and communications, which are online, organized in networks, and connect all actors. Van Dijk (2006) further describes the impacts of networking on society. Over time, networks have expanded qualitatively by becoming denser, with thicker, more frequent exchanges between actors (Van Dijk, 2006). Also, networks have grown quantitatively as seen in the enormous jump in the number of people, groups and institutions involved in networking. All data collected from this research support these conclusions that successful networks over the years expand their connections and links into a strong interconnected web of like-minded people collaborating to achieve mutual goals. The WL family network has shown both qualitative and quantitative growth over the last five to seven years.

Over the last decades, networks have been expanding and changing quantitatively

with thousands of networks developed at every level of society: global, institutional, community, and individual (Van Dijk, 2006). The sheer growth of global networks, and specifically NGOs such as the WLO, over the last 40-60 years is almost unimaginable (Van Dijk, 2006; UN, 2018). Statistical data from the UN (United Nations, 2018) illustrates the enormous increase in the number of NGOs associated with the UN. In 1948, the UN was connected to 40 NGOs (Statista, 2021). Twenty years later, 180 NGOs had UN connections (Statista, 2021). The growth in the number of NGOs connected to the UN has exploded since the 1990s (Statista, 2021). In 2000, there were 2,050 NGOs, and in the UN's most recent publication on NGOs in 2018, there were a total of 5,161 NGOs connected to the UN, more than doubling the number of NGOs in only eighteen years (United Nations, 2018). This has led to increased global networking among and between NGOs, which is increasingly important to achieve goals, both large and small.

By adding new universities to the WLCE network, more young scholars can be exposed to the whole WLO network. The research and learning opportunities within this whole network are expansive in size and scope encompassing economic and community development, sustainable eco-tourism, health, well-being, and inclusion for all. WLO advocates for these issues to be addressed formally in governmental leisure policy (WLO, 2019). This expansion of the WL family network brings more visibility for WLO to spread the important message that leisure improves the human condition.

Interviews and Surveys

In this section, I provide some general interpretations first. Both data sets support the conclusion that networks are effective at connecting like-minded people to collaborate on common goals. The most common networking characteristics and best

practices include reciprocity, trust, and cooperation which are all found within the WLO network. All these factors that drive networks to grow, and change have been described in the network literature both in leisure and from business management (Provan et al., 2007; Stebbins, 2017; Stokowski, 1996; Van Dijk, 2006). This finding describes how the WL family employs networking to achieve its goals. The synergy of the WL family network fosters social capital which enhances cooperation among all actors to address specific leisure issues and solutions.

Another important finding from this research is that the WL family network is open, rather than closed to those who wish to collaborate with them. The WLO's mandate requires diversity and inclusion for all, rather than a lack of diversity and exclusion of potential new actors. Participants in this study were all linked to leisure, yet in different disciplines across the broad and diverse scope of the field. Leisure professionals interviewed for this study represent several types of institutional connections with WLO. For example, three out of eight members interviewed were working outside of strictly 'academic leisure' programs. One member works within the business school in hospitality and event planning; another works within a medical school in leisure for people with disabilities; and another person works within the public health field. This overlap in the field of leisure with other diverse disciplines and sectors (business or public health) within society, illustrates how leisure is both interdisciplinary and intersectoral because of the wide scope and distinctiveness of leisure. This open network consists of actors from multiple disciplines cooperating with WLO for the common good, to improve the human condition through leisure. This research demonstrated many examples of how the WLO welcomes new scholars to participate in their mission. To

illustrate, a practitioner who was interviewed said that the WLO and its resources were easily accessible through the online network. Also, as a member, they could directly interact with the Secretariat's office when needed. Another example is this author's experience with the WLO. As an outsider in 2018, studying Sustainable Leisure Management at VIU's WLCE, I was drawn to the ideas and ideals of the WLO. This organization welcomed me in Bilbao, Spain for an internship where this thesis project began. Cooperating with WLO and its family network has been an amazing journey. Their continued dedication to providing internships at WLO will assist many future leisure scholars to careers in this field.

Generally, the interviews revealed each members' own deep, long history and the breadth of connections they have with the WLO. Personal insights were given which described their experiences collaborating at events, field schools, and other diverse programs in connection with the WLO. Some questions from the interviews, "Is your confidence in WLO increasing or decreasing?", and "Is the importance of WLO to you or your organization increasing or decreasing?", elicited similar positive responses by all participants. As expected, saturation of the interview responses became noticeable. Since all respondents had similar stories and are strong supporters of WLO saturation of the qualitative data was projected. I believe that the reason for the overwhelming evidence of positive responses, is likely because the family members interviewed share values and goals with the WLO. Their shared experiences, values, and interests, the density of connections, and the commitment to their profession were all factors in the saturation of responses in the interview data.

These family members voluntarily participated in my research which is evidence that they are some of the most actively engaged, committed people in the whole network. Reviewing the WLO actors over the last few decades demonstrates that many global academics in leisure from the 1990s are still collaborating with WLO. Close to half of my interviews were with renowned scholars in leisure and beyond. These long-time WL family members all share the positive belief that networking, or a networked perspective is crucial to their work. The WL family appears to be stronger, more diverse, and effective in achieving goals by cooperating as a network rather than as individual entities.

Relevance of WLO to Network Family Members

The importance and relevance of the WLO for its members was a significant topic of interest for this study. The responses from both the survey and interview data reveal three main purposes for collaborating with the WLO: internationalization, research opportunities and networking in leisure.

Internationalization of leisure is the most relevant reason for survey participants to collaborate with the WLO by a high margin of 88%. Globalization of the leisure market has been increasing rapidly every year (UN- WTO, 2020). The international growth of leisure over the decades is demonstrated by the ever-expanding tourism industry, benefitting both a country's economic development and new groups of tourists who can now afford global travel. While other areas of leisure growth can be seen in events, festivals, cultural pursuits, recreation, and sports at all levels of society. The variety, number, and scope of leisure options has also grown immensely over the last decades. Unfortunately, COVID-19 changed everything, especially leisure. When the pandemic began affecting multiple countries early in 2020, worldwide travel stopped

abruptly, and travel for business and tourism has continued to be severely impacted. Nevertheless, in the interviews, the three practitioners stressed how their connections with WLO gave them entry to the international leisure market and exposed them to diverse leisure experiences and opportunities worldwide. Instead of limiting their own organizations to regional or national levels, the WLO functioned as a bridge for them into the global world of leisure. All the participants cited the importance of the WL Journal as a highly regarded scholarly publication, in which family members have shared their research, and created special editions devoted to a single topic. Even though it is mainly academic, the practitioners found articles applicable to their businesses and organizations, as well as valuable information for their own professional development and to keeping current with innovative ideas or trends in leisure worldwide.

Research opportunities, including grants, SIGs, and field schools, were acknowledged as very important to more than half of the members. The long-standing members expressed how over time the WLO had assisted them with monetary or human resources to continue their joint leisure projects. These past relationships or links with the WLO spanned from their work in the 1990s at WL Congresses, to field schools within the last decade. These well-connected members have had a variety of relationships, such as past board members or SIG facilitators with the WLO over many decades. My interviews also included newer members to WLO, leisure professionals or practitioners, current leisure academics and some members nearing retirement. All these people are identified as actors within the WL family whose connections have been built over years. Their relationships are strong, multiple, and frequent because these links are thick, dense, and often over-lapping. These findings clearly illustrate the importance of cohesion,

collaboration, and interconnectedness within the WL family network. Also, by extension, these same warm family feelings of trust, reciprocity and cooperation live within the entire WLO network. Cooperation and novel opportunities seem to multiply when members within a network follow best practices to sustain their working relationships, creating social capital, and more capacity to expand in the future.

Networking has become more visible to society over the past few decades. The majority of family members acknowledged that networking or a network perspective is essential or extremely important to working with the WLO, their own organizations, and personal careers. Van Dijk (2006) explained that ‘non-social’ actors must be considered as part of networking because of the influence that non-social actors have on society’s thinking and actions. Websites, data banks, literature and artifacts are all considered non-social actors within a network. Through non-social actors such as websites, observatories, and such, the internet provides a platform to facilitate collaboration among networks worldwide (Van Dijk, 2006). Increasing one’s own social network occurs at the individual or micro level, and could be compared to expanding the WLO network, at the macro level. Many examples from the interviewees describe and define the same characteristics, found in networking, that they have experienced within the WL family. For instance, one member described how her collaboration at a field school inspired her to lead one of the WLO’s SIG, furthering both career and connections with the WL family network. Others interviewed gave numerous examples of how networking within the WLO had given them new opportunities in academic research, career enhancement, and personal growth.

Both tangible and intangible resources can also be called ‘non-social’ actors

according to Van Dyke (2006). The interview data uncovered the top tangible resources (WL Journal, WL Congresses, and grants) and intangible resources (networking, and internationalization of leisure) ranked by members. The importance of attending the WL Congress was expressed by most family members. Many of them stated that their first introduction to the WLO, was attending a WL Congress. The personal and professional relationships created at WL events are crucial to successful networking within the WLO. In April 2021, WLO held the first hybrid online WL Congress which had been postponed from October 2020, due to Covid-19 pandemic. Currently, the future of in-person events is uncertain and over the past year, most networking events such as conventions were either cancelled or postponed.

Since intangible resources are easily accessible, even during the pandemic, members mentioned the importance of them during these uncertain times. The most valued intangible resources mentioned by all members were networking and the shared goals and values within WLO. Internationalization was ranked third in importance, followed by both social and legitimacy capital. Even though tangible resources, mainly in-person WLO events and travel, have been affected by the physical consequences of the pandemic, the intangible resources, like non-social actors (the internet), are available online at any time for members. It is important to note that these intangibles have filled a physical void (no in-person events) with the intangible network relationships, which keep family members connected. WLO Zoom meetings, school, and online family get togethers have linked and engaged people during this extremely challenging time.

Networked Structure of the WLO

In this thesis, the WL family network structure was explored to identify its main

actors, their relationships and how these can affect practical outcomes. Relationships are the links between nodes and are used to achieve mutual goals. The building blocks of dynamic networks are the ever-changing connections and interactions among various actors with similar values and goals. The whole WLO network offers leisure education, research, knowledge transfer and advocacy around the globe. The most visible relationships within the family network are the connections with the WLCE network and the WL Academy. Together this family network encompasses all four working lines of WLO: research, education, knowledge transfer and advocacy. The WL family collaborates to deliver educational opportunities for students and leisure scholars around the globe. The inter-disciplinary nature of leisure can spark original approaches to old problems, leading to changes in legislative policy. The WL family is stretched all over the world as seen in the members of the Board of Directors, the leadership of the WLO Chair is in Canada, the Vice Chair in Hong Kong, and the Treasurer in the Netherlands. In fact, my data shows that often members of the WL family participate in multiple roles within the WL family. This finding illustrates the interconnectivity, collaboration, and common goals within the WL family network.

WLO Strategic Goals Met: 2014-2020

The WL family network consists of academics and researchers from universities in the WLCE, the WL Academy, and the WL SIGs, all with multiple, dense connections with WLO and their respective institutions. WLO depends on extensive engagement and involvement from a variety of members to affect substantive outcomes. The data collected from the WLO and this thesis, confirm that numerous goals have been achieved by the WL family network over the past decade. The long-term strategic plans for WLO

have been produced by the Chair of the WLO Strategic Planning Committee in 2014-2020 and 2021-2025 (Hayes & WLO, 2015, 2020). These plans have been analyzed to illustrate several goals that have been achieved recently.

Over the last few years, various ad-hoc professional task forces have been engaged to achieve two of the WLO goals: updating both the *Charter for Leisure 2020* and the WLO *Constitution and By-laws*. These major updates were approved in late 2020 and announced in early 2021, along with the addition of the two newest WLCE, in Hungary and Quebec, Canada. Leisure networks, such as the WL family and the whole WLO network, grow and cooperate to develop new innovative solutions to address global leisure issues. Different online events were hosted by WLO during 2020 to connect with leisure scholars, students, and the public. The WLO Global Debates were sponsored by the WLO and tackled issues caused by the impacts of COVID-19 on leisure worldwide (WLO, 2019). Another online event updated members on the *Charter for Leisure 2020*. WL Academy members explained how the WLO refocused on the UNDHR to add more expansive leisure rights to the revised document, and to highlight WL's commitment to the SDGs (WLO, 2020). These examples illustrate how various family network members cooperate to address issues that inform, elicit ideas, and propose innovative solutions to leisure problems. The interconnectedness of the family network is illustrated in these examples where members work simultaneously in multiple roles, collaborating with others to create change.

Collaboration led to growth in the WLO and its family. The greatest expansion of the family network was the number of universities that joined the WLO in the last ten years. The WLCE network grew from three universities in 2010, to five in 2018, and to

seven as of 2020. This explosion of network activity should assist WLO to expand its reach farther than ever before. The WLO has intentionally committed to focus on expanding growth in its University network into such under-represented areas as Latin America, the Middle East and Africa.

Also, WLO continues to grow relationships with new partners at all levels of society, such as, the new institutional partners in Brazil, the *Servicios Económicos e Sociales* (SESC), or in English ‘Social Services of Commerce’. This is a national Brazilian economic and social services organization which is a public – private partnership funded by business and industries. Together WLO and SESC have been able to achieve one of their mutual goals, to celebrate a “World Leisure Day”. The idea of a World Leisure Day has been incubating for over a decade within the WLO and this year the WLCE at University of São Paulo, working with SESC, implemented the first World Leisure Day. On April 16, 2021, World Leisure Day was celebrated by recognizing the importance of leisure and how it improves the human condition globally. Online and off-line, leisure in all its many forms were celebrated. These kinds of online events can build relationships within the WLO whole network, all over the world. New links or connections continue to join the WL family partly because of their work in the leisure sector, also the resources and opportunities available within the WLO.

The whole WLO network addresses complex social issues, which are interdisciplinary in nature, and often require multiple organizations to achieve positive solutions and outcomes. For example, addressing the issue of obesity is more complex than just losing weight and it involves access to housing, health care, education, affordable fresh food and more to achieve any substantive progress or changes. This

wicked problem has many different causes and will take multiple groups of stakeholders from different sectors of society to tackle it. But fundamentally, it appears to me that all wicked problems are caused by economic, social, cultural, and environmental inequalities that are systemic to our globalized society. Today, more people are aware, involved and engaged in solving important social crises in the world with novel solutions potentially to be developed (Provan & Milward, 2001). Diverse perspectives and multiple complementary interests working in partnership can lead to innovations to improve the human condition. Complex, global, wicked problems, such as disease, poverty, and famine need innovative solutions from multiple sectors (Weber and Khademian, 2008).

In sum, data in this thesis proves that WL family network consists of multiple stakeholders and groups from a variety of sectors and disciplines from parks and recreation to universities, medical and governmental institutions. The network is interdisciplinary and intersectoral, which increases the number of people involved as well as the number of unique viewpoints contributing ideas to address mutual goals. Collaboration within the WL family itself can and does lead to positive solutions to leisure issues. WL family members in public health or at medical universities have been and can continue to be bridges from WLO to their medical networks, increasing potential opportunities to collaborate. Further networking and cooperation could expand the reach of WLO and promote a new understanding of the health benefits of leisure, for all.

Implications for Practice

Survey and interview data illustrate members' thoughts regarding their current connections with WLO, what they value from the WLO, and which services are most important to them. The updated empirical evidence presented here can be utilized by

WLO for policy and strategic planning, networking opportunities and sustainability. The WLO must continue applying the network perspective, which incorporates cooperation and shared goals that can lead to greater connectivity of stakeholders and enhances the relationships within the WL family network. This perspective can generate an expanding global network to spread the message that leisure improves the human condition.

The research data support the above findings and further encourage the continued use of social media and networking to expand the WLO network. Innovative technology continues to evolve and WLO must utilize the most current platforms available to spread the WLO's visibility and message, engage more stakeholders, and expand connections worldwide. By bringing more partners into the whole WLO network, more opportunities arise, thus leading to more interconnectedness, and more partners, and opportunities, networks, and so on.

Expansion of the WLO network continued in late 2020, when two WLCEs were added to the family network, and WLO has future plans for new WLCEs in Africa and Latin America. Continued growth calls for new opportunities and so the WLO created a Coordinator for the WLCE network. This new position is a link for more collaboration among the WLCE network and for the new universities joining in the future.

Further, the data showed that future network growth is needed especially at the mid-levels of society, the group, and organizational levels. By expanding the number of WL Communities of Excellence, WL Chapters, and perhaps other regional leisure organizations or groups, stronger connections can be built between these communities and individuals to improve the community's social capital and capacity. New nodes at the lower, more local levels of society are needed to reinforce whole network cohesion. Also,

more research into the WL chapter model should be revisited to decide on their future. WLO must focus on expanding connections with more leisure organizations at the regional and local levels which are potentially new nodes to grow the overall network.

A majority of the members interviewed expressed the importance of the special consultative status with the United Nations. Increasing connections within the UN is crucial to strengthening and growing the WLO's standing in this leisure sector, as well as introducing the WLO to other NGOs. Exposure, participation, and networking at UN and UNESCO events will increase the WLO's presence in the global arena. The WLO has increased participation with UNWTO in the last few years and now must focus on creating more links within UNESCO. Also, WLO can continue participation at the UN virtual events for now and create side events for the larger UN sponsored occasions and events. Introducing the updated *Charter for Leisure 2020* at a UN event, or posting it online within the UNESCO member site could lead to more interest in WLO and expanding its connections within the UN.

Limitations of Research

The global pandemic caused by COVID-19, which started affecting North America in early 2020, has negatively altered humanity at all levels of society. The pandemic and the economic recession caused by it suddenly had enormous impact on all human activities, including research participation. The pandemic caused delays in this research, and possibly reduced participation level of the WLO's survey, which was open for 2 weeks in February 2020. Then, the WLO survey data results and potential names for interviews were received in May 2020. All primary data was collected by the end of June. Collaborating with stakeholders world-wide, including WLO's office in Spain, and its

global family network was challenging under these circumstances. In total, nine responses were received from the WLO survey and eight interviews were conducted for this research. This represented a smaller number of participants than expected. However, the collected quantitative and qualitative data do represent a significant and diverse sampling of members in the WL family network. The multiple and detailed research data from all participants in this study exemplify the whole WL family.

Future Research

Further research on the WLO network could include sending a revised WLO Survey to a larger number of stakeholders. This might generate different data on similar surveys. An examination of just the expanded WLCE network in greater detail could also produce data to guide the WLCE and the WLO. Finally, this case study could be replicated by other organizations utilizing a network perspective and these same tools to analyze their own network or different networks. Since case study research is practical, it can enhance organizational knowledge of current and future conditions (Veal, 2017). Both case studies and networking are interdisciplinary and can include research problems from any sector, making this approach flexible and pragmatic (Van Dijk, 2006).

The world has been adapting to the new reality of COVID-19. This new world is dominated by working, learning, and meeting virtually to decrease the spread of the disease. COVID-19 and social isolation has already become a central issue in leisure research with published results from the WLCE at Vancouver Island University and Breda University of Applied Sciences (de la Barre et.al, 2020; Marques and Giolo, 2020; van Leeuwen et. al., 2020). For instance, in Canada, the impacts of (ongoing) colonization and Indigenous peoples still persists. The pandemic has underlined the

“intersectionality” of issues, for example the pandemic and poverty, or the pandemic and homelessness.

As social distancing has been imposed upon much of the world, the WLO has responded by providing online forums called Covid Global Debates as a means to keep leisure professionals and students engaged during these challenging times. During pandemic shut-downs, museums worldwide created new virtual visits, instead of in person (Marques and Giolo, 2020). Other cultural organizations uploaded previous concerts and ballets, and artists created online music. Tik Tok became the newest internet sensation, enabling people to share anything with the world. Live concerts, movie theaters and new tv and movie productions are still severely controlled by COVID-19 protocols. As movie theatres have been closed or severely restricted, new ways of broadcasting media have evolved. Certainly, leisure research on the pandemic is just beginning to be published and will transform how we all approach leisure in the future.

Conclusion

This study found strong evidence of a WLO network that is well-connected, flexible, collaborative, and consisting of many different people and organizations at all levels of society. The diversity of leisure and the strong relationships among actors within the WL family network allows institutions to identify and support targeted leisure partners on whom future strength can be built. The growth of the WLCE network from three universities to seven over the last five years illustrates how family members who collaborate also expand and strengthen their ties within the network. For instance, WL family members and the WL Chapter in Quebec had been involved with the WLO and its partners for many years before joining the WLO university network. Over time,

relationships (links) are added and strengthened among WL family members (or nodes), leading to a dynamic group of people collaborating and increasing social capital to spread their shared beliefs. Authority and responsibility are diffused across the WL family network because each institution or community is independently managed. This allows the secretariat's office and the board of directors to focus on prioritizing WLO's long-term plans and projects, which address all sectors within the overall mission of the WLO. Then, members of the board coordinate the implementation of WLO programs and plans. The WL family network benefits from these shared connections and goals, which lead to increased cooperation and social capital, and thus an overall growth in capacity. Effective networks, like WL family, have grown with this formula.

In a recent article in the WL Journal about COVID-19's effect on leisure, Dutch scholars from the WLCE in Breda discussed how the pandemic has affected life, and leisure. In the end, this quote encourages future global collaboration with the whole World Leisure network in the intersectoral field of leisure:

“Via the World Leisure Organization network, there is a great opportunity to collaborate and share at a global level in the co-development of resilient leisure communities wherever they are needed. There is momentum now that we should seize, to ensure that even after COVID-19 is gone, *we can continue to pursue our shared dream of leisure as a force of good in this world.*” (emphasis added) (van Leeuwen, M. et al., 2020, p. 342).

In 2018, when I began the MA-SLM program at VIU, I was drawn to the mission and goals of the WLO for many reasons. To improve the human condition has been one of my personal goals in life. Also, the global aspect of the WLO is especially important to me. The UN and what it stands for has steered my education and career choices, first with a degree in Political Science concentrating on Latin American development, and then with a graduate degree in Linguistics to teach English as a second language (ESL). Life has always included multiculturalism, learning languages, and international travel for school and leisure. I taught international students ESL at universities and public schools at home and abroad. Unfortunately, the concept of leisure seems vague, elusive, and unattainable, especially in the United States (USA). Work, money, and success are often valued more than leisure, health, or quality of life. From my American perspective, the idea of leisure might be described as free time at best or limited just to hobbies and sports. Unfortunately, the lack of social cohesion within the USA has been evident and growing for decades for a multitude of reasons, including income inequality, immigration, and systemic racism, in my opinion as a politically engaged US citizen.

I believe that investment in leisure infrastructure could lead to better communities everywhere – physically, emotionally, and culturally. Cross-cultural communication is not limited to an international context. Countries should invest in the infrastructure of leisure in its broadest sense to improve the lives of individuals, groups, communities, and institutions. The importance and distinctiveness of leisure are key components to positive COVID-19 recovery. With the continued growth of leisure networks at all levels of society, the message will spread that leisure can improve lives. This thesis increases specific knowledge of the WL family through the case study about the current state of the

WLO, and its utilization of networking to expand the interdisciplinary and intersectoral field of leisure.

The following quote conveys a positive vision of the world that we would all like to see. It embodies the essence of the whole WLO network, and points to a clear path forward to improve the human condition through leisure:

With representatives all over the world, the World Leisure Organization stands for a global, multicultural, and very diverse community representation. The World Leisure Organization promotes leisure as integral to social, cultural, economic, and sustainable environmental development. *We are committed to enlarging choice, affirming, and enriching cultural identities, activating the human spirit, and promoting sustainable and well distributed economic growth through leisure*” (WLO, 2020).

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APPENDIX A: WLO Charter for Leisure 2020

Articles

1. Everyone, whether adult or child, has the right to adequate time for rest and for the pursuit of leisure activity.
2. For those engaged in remunerated work, Article 1 requires recognition of the right to reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay, as well as remuneration for public holidays. Securing these rights generally requires national/ provincial legislation.
3. Article 1 also applies to those engaged in unpaid labour, for example domestic care-givers.
4. Everyone has the right to freely participate in the cultural life of the community. Culture is viewed by the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights as including: ‘music and song, ceremonies, sport and games, natural and man-made environments’ and ‘the arts, customs and traditions through which individuals, groups of individuals and communities express their humanity and the meaning they give to their existence’. These activities depend on the provision of: ‘libraries, museums, theatres, cinemas and sports stadiums; literature, including folklore, and the arts in all forms; the shared open spaces essential to cultural interaction, such as parks, squares, avenues and streets; nature’s gifts, such as seas, lakes, rivers, mountains, forests and nature reserves, including the flora and fauna found there’. *Participation* in social and cultural activities includes engagement as: an active participant, a learner, a spectator or audience member or an unpaid volunteer.
5. Leisure is also a medium through which other rights and related benefits set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and associated covenants can be exercised, including: the physical, mental, emotional and social development of the child through play; support for family life; personal expression and development; sustaining of cultural life of the community; and promotion of physical and mental health and well-being through sport, physical activity and cultural engagement. Conversely, denial of time for beneficial leisure activity can have serious consequences for the well-being of individuals and societies.
6. These rights should therefore be observed and supported by all of society’s institutions, including commercial organisations, education institutions, professional bodies and non-government organisations. Governments at national, regional/provincial and local levels have particular responsibilities reflecting commitments under United Nations treaties and, in some cases, provisions in national constitutions and legislation.
7. Recognising that governments at all levels are not the only providers of facilities and services for leisure and that they face many challenges and competing demands for resources, they nevertheless have particular responsibilities to:
 - ensure availability and protection of land for open space for recreation in residential areas; ensure preservation of, and public access to, natural and culture heritage;

- ensure the provision of suitable space and facilities for children's play;
- support provision of health-enhancing amenities, such as facilities for sport and exercise; support cultural institutions and activities;
- ensure that all members of the community, regardless of age, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion, ability or income, have access to beneficial leisure facilities and services;
- support suitable training of a technical and professional work force for the leisure/ sport/cultural service industries;
- support research on the benefits and costs of leisure activity and on the provision of leisure facilities and services;
- include recognition of leisure-related rights in relevant national/provincial legislation and regulations, including those concerned with regulation of mass communications and digital media;
- recognise, in national, regional and urban policies and plans, the contribution which leisure-related provisions can make to personal, social, cultural and economic development;
- support other human rights which facilitate the participation in the cultural life of the community, including the right to food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services and security, as set out in Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

APPENDIX B: WLO Stakeholder Survey

1. Please select from the list below, the ways in which you are connected to WLO.
Select all the answers that apply to you.

- WL Board of Directors/ WL Center of Excellence /WL Academy
- WL Community of Excellence/ WL Special Interest Group
- WL Chapter Young People Leisure Network
- WL Awards beneficiary (WL Awards, Strategic Priorities Grants, etc.)
- Member Media Partner/ Other

2. Please choose which of the WLO's working lines best describe your organization's main programs or activities. Select one or more answers.

- Research
- Education
- Knowledge Transfer
- Advocacy

3. In relation to the WLO, to what extent are the following purposes relevant to you and your organization? Select one answer in each row.

Reason	Not At All	Not So Much	To Some Extent	Very Much
For networking purposes (meeting colleagues and staying connected)				
For internationalization purposes				
For education and knowledge transfer purposes (events, study tours, field schools) For research opportunities and benefits (special interest groups,				

strategic priority grants)				
For advocating opportunities (position papers, Charter for Leisure)				

4. Does your organization work with other Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)?

- Yes
- No

5. If yes, which ones?

6. How do you suggest WLO could increase collaboration among our network and community?

7. Do you have any specific ideas that your organization would like to develop or put in place together with WLO?

8. What are some long-term initiatives, plans or goals of your organization?

9. Please, share any further comments and/or suggestions with us.

APPENDIX C: Interview Recruitment Letter

May 4, 2020

Hello,

My name is Patricia Verhage. I am a graduate student at Vancouver Island University's World Leisure Center for Excellence. I am contacting you to ask if you might participate in a research study. This research is part of my master's thesis in Sustainable Leisure Management and my supervisor is Joanne Schroeder.

If you agree to participate, you will be interviewed one time, for 30-45 minutes by telephone, Zoom or WhatsApp. Email responses could suffice if different time zones and schedules necessitate. The individual interviews will be scheduled in May 2020, on a mutually agreed upon time.

The general purpose of the research is to describe the stakeholders and their connections within the World Leisure Organization (WLO) network, or family. In late January 2020, WLO sent out a Stakeholder Survey to gain insight into this topic. These interviews will expand upon the data from that survey. This combined data will add depth to leisure management research and the WLO network.

Please reply to this email if you would like to participate. Then, you will be sent further details of the project and interview questions.

Your participation is completely voluntary and if you choose not to participate it will not impact your relationship with Vancouver Island University or the World Leisure Organization.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I hope to hear from you soon.

Kind regards,

Patricia Verhage, Graduate Student
MA-Sustainable Leisure Management
Vancouver Island University
Patricia.Verhage@viu.ca

Joanne Schroeder, Graduate Chair
SLM
Department of Recreation and
Tourism
Vancouver Island University
Joanne.Schroeder@viu.ca
Supervisor

APPENDIX D: Interview Questions

1. How did your connection (or partnership) with WLO begin?
What factors have led to the continuation of this connection?
2. How has the relationship evolved over that time?
Both before and after the global pandemic.
3. Is your organization's confidence in WLO increasing, decreasing or constant?
Both before and after the global pandemic.
4. Is the importance of WLO to your organization increasing, decreasing or constant?
5. What are some tangible resources that WLO provides to your organization?
6. What are some intangible resources that WLO provides to your organization? (Ex. social capital, intellectual capital, legitimacy capital)
7. How can your organization spread these tangible and/or intangible resources within your own network?
8. How has your organization benefitted by the connection to WLO?

APPENDIX E: Interview Consent Form

Principal Investigator

Patricia Verhage, Graduate Student
 MA-Sustainable Leisure Management
 Vancouver Island University
Patricia.Verhage@viu.ca

Student Supervisor

Joanne Schroeder, Graduate Chair
 SLM
 Department of Recreation and
 Tourism
 Vancouver Island University
Joanne.Schroeder@viu.ca

I am a student in the Master of Arts in Sustainable Leisure Management (SLM) at Vancouver Island University (VIU). This graduate program is part of the World Leisure Center of Excellence (WLCE) in connection with the World Leisure Organization (WLO). My thesis project, entitled “*The World Leisure Organization: Stakeholder Analysis*”, aims to identify and describe the current stakeholders in the WLO network. The goal of this research is to aid WLO in strategic planning and future policy decisions. My research is being conducted in partnership with VIU’s WLCE and WLO.

Research participants are asked to complete a telephone or Zoom video-conference interview. If you agree, you would be asked follow-up questions concerning the WLO stakeholder network (Survey sent in late January 2020). Questions will probe further into factors affecting WLO connections within its network. With your permission, the interview would be audio recorded. Your participation would require approximately 30-45 minutes of your time. Questions will be sent to participants in advance of the interviews. Email responses could suffice if different time zones and schedules necessitate.

The results of this study will be presented in a final thesis required for completion of my MA in Sustainable Leisure Management, and may also be used for conference publications, presentations, and published in academic journals.

Depending on the information you provide, and whether you choose to participate anonymously, there is a possibility that the information you provide might cause loss of social status and/or embarrassment. As strategies to manage these risks, you have the option of not having your personal identity revealed in the products of the research. With your permission, the interview would be audio recorded and later transcribed into writing. At your request, you will be provided a copy of the transcript and invited to make changes to the transcript if you wish (e.g. if you would like to withdraw a particular statement you made during an interview).

If you choose to participate anonymously, all records or your participation would be confidential. Only my faculty supervisor and I will have access to the information you provide. Electronic data will be stored on a password-protected computer. Signed consent forms and paper copies of interview transcripts will be stored in a locked file cabinet in

my home. Data will be deleted, and paper records shredded at the end of the project, approximately August 3rd, 2023.

Your participation is completely voluntary. You may withdraw from the study at any time up to when I begin analysis of the data, for any reason, and without explanation. If you would like to review and potentially make changes to the transcript of the interview, you may withdraw up to three weeks from the time of being provided a copy of the transcript. If you decline to review the transcript, you may withdraw up to three weeks from the date of our interview. If you choose to withdraw from the study, all information you provided during the interview would be withdrawn from the study and destroyed.

I have read and understand the information provided above, and hereby consent to participate in this research under the following conditions:

I consent to the interview being audio recorded. Yes No

I consent to having my personal identity disclosed in the products of the research. If no, a code will be used instead of your name. Yes No

I consent to being quoted in the products of the research. Yes No

Participant Name _____

Participant Signature _____

I, Patricia J. Verhage, promise to adhere to the procedures described in this consent form.

Signature: Patricia J Verhage Date: April 29, 2020
Principal Investigator

If you have any concerns about your treatment as a research participant in this study, please contact the VIU Research Ethics Board by telephone at 250-740-6631 or by email at reb@viu.ca.

