Factors Influencing University Sport Participation among Rural and Remote First Nations Athletes in Manitoba

by

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Abstract

This research focused on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Call to Action 90(ii): "[a]n elite athlete development program for Aboriginal athletes" (TRC, 2015, p. 10). Numerous barriers impede Indigenous peoples' sport participation (e.g., racism, cultural exclusion, few Indigenous coaches, geographic isolation of reserves). University sport programs can be helpful in this regard by providing access to sport resources (e.g., expert coaches, athletic therapists, sport nutritionists, sport psychologists, quality facilities and equipment) yet many obstacles affect university education for Indigenous students (e.g., racism, cultural irrelevance, limited academic direction in communities). Approximately 18% of people in Manitoba identify as Indigenous, suggesting efforts to overcome barriers to university sport/education would be impactful. Using socioecological frameworks and following an Indigenous research paradigm, the overarching focus of this research was to identify factors influencing university sport participation specifically among rural and remote First Nations athletes in Manitoba. Chapter 5 used conversational interviews to gather insights from rural and remote First Nations athletes at the high school level, as well as their coaches and teachers. Similar methods were used in Chapter 6, but with university-level athletes, their coaches, and university athlete alumni. Due to the importance of Indigenous coaches to athletic development of Indigenous athletes, Chapter 7 used conversational interviews to examine the factors influencing Canadian First Nations coaches' coaching paths. Results of Chapters 5 and 6 highlighted challenges related to opportunity and direction with respect to both sport and education, as well as the importance of exposure to urban environments and high-performance, mainstream/university sport prior to university. Results of Chapter 7 highlighted the importance of relationships along coaches' career paths, as well as the need for more coaching clinics in rural/remote communities. Collectively, Chapters 5, 6, and 7 can inform academic and sport organizations contributing to the development of First Nations athletes and coaches. Lastly, to raise awareness among graduate students considering work following an Indigenous research paradigm prioritizing relational accountability and reciprocity, as well as among current and potential members of these graduate students' support networks, Chapter 8 used a fictional autoethnography to examine the challenges I encountered throughout my thesis work.

Keywords: First Nations peoples, First Nations athletes, First Nations coaches, sport, university, rural, remote

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to everyone who helped with not only its production, but also with my growth and development as a researcher and human being. Joannie says research should be transformative, and I can say that over the past several years, from the start of my MA until now, I have been very humbled by the wisdom, positive encouragement, support, and patience of the athletes, coaches, and teachers I have talked to, as well as my thesis committee members, mentors, lab mates, family, and friends. As well, I have long been a critic of the predominating views existing in our society regarding the images we, as its citizens, should project in terms of appearance, behavior, beliefs, and values, and so, I would like to also dedicate this thesis to all those who work toward making environments (in sport and elsewhere) more inclusive of those who do not find themselves within the narrow boundaries society uses to define what is virtuous.

My good mentor Heatherrrr says the work we do is not only hard work, but also heart work. I'm not sure what it is that prompts some people to engage in this type of work, and others to choose something that isn't as emotionally taxing. Perhaps the words of Rocky IV's Apollo Creed may be useful here in helping us explore why we do what we do: "You and me, we don't even have a choice. See we're born with a killer instinct that you can't just turn off and on like some, some radio. We have to be right in the middle of the action 'cause we're the warriors. And without some, some challenge, without some damn war to fight then the warrior may as well be dead" (Chartoff et al., 1985).[1] Perhaps we're just geared that way. Perhaps we simply *have* to be involved. Whatever the case, we continue on in a way that can be described using the words Kennedy (1980, 33:27)[2] spoke at the 1980 Democratic National Concession Address: "The work goes on, the cause endures, the hope still lives, and the dream shall never die."

We don't stop at impossible.

-Nickolas J. Kosmenko

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[1] Winkler, I., Chartoff, R. (Producers), & Stallone, S. (Director). (1985). *Rocky IV* [Motion picture]. United States of America: MGM/UA Entertainment Company.

[2] Kennedy, E. (1980, August 12). *1980 Democratic national concession address* [Speech audio recording]. American Rhetoric. https://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/tedkennedy1980dnc.htm

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Preamble

The Thesis

There is much to talk about with respect to rural and remote First Nations athletes' pursuit of university sport in Manitoba and, as indicated in the Table of Contents, this thesis does so over the course of nine chapters. The first chapter, the General Introduction, has several purposes. First, it discusses what "Indigenous" means in the context of this thesis. It then provides rationale for the scope of this research, including why Manitoba is the focus, and what "rural" and "remote" mean in the context of this thesis. Next, there is a discussion rationalizing the focus on sport, followed by an examination of why that focus was narrowed to university sport. Moving forward, the next section succinctly communicates the specific purposes of this thesis, including the research questions. Importantly, the chapter then discusses what is meant by an Indigenous approach to research, including rationale for the specific approach that was selected for the research discussed in this document. Finally, there is a discussion of the theoretical frameworks used in this research, followed by a summary of the chapter.

Subsequent to the General Introduction, Chapter 2 captures the positionality that was brought to this research, Chapters 3 through 4 contain literature review, and Chapters 5 through 8 contain the studies that were completed for this thesis. Specifically, Chapters 5 and 6 focus on factors influencing university sport participation among rural and remote First Nations athletes in Manitoba, with Chapter 5 discussing interviews conducted with First Nations high school athletes as well as their coaches and teachers, and Chapter 6 discussing interviews conducted with First Nations university athletes, their coaches, and First Nations university athlete alumni. Due to the importance of Indigenous coaches to Indigenous athletes' participation in sport (see Canadian Heritage, 2005), Chapter 7 focuses on the factors influencing the coaching paths of First Nations coaches in Canada. Next, Chapter 8 contains a fictional autoethnography examining my own experiences engaging in Indigenous research (i.e., research following an Indigenous research paradigm prioritizing relational accountability and reciprocity) in a colonial academy. Finally, Chapter 9 concludes this thesis with a general discussion.

My Positionality in Brief

Prior to moving on, it is important that I briefly discuss my positionality. Although, as mentioned, Chapter 2 provides a longer discussion regarding my background, I believe that to leave all mention of who I am until that chapter is to temporarily cheat readers out of context that

helps provide understanding as to the motivations for this work, as well as the lenses through which the topics discussed were viewed. In summary, the overwhelming majority of my ancestral background is Euro-Canadian. Although there have been mentions of an Ojibway ancestor on my mom's side of the family, Indigeneity is something we never embraced in our own lives. Therefore, I grew up raised under Western influences (lower-middle class), although with very strong ties to the environment, including both in my personal and work lives and in my college, undergrad, and Master of Science (MSc) careers. Being outside for play, fishing, hunting, snowshoeing, boating, and work (both as an employee and as part of a family who heated their home with a woodstove) was the norm for me while I was growing up in my small, northern hometown of Cranberry Portage, Manitoba (MB). There were some team sports in our town, mainly as part of the school system, yet much of my sport experiences were outside of this system, either with my brother and a friend or two, or on my own. My brother and I played a lot of road hockey, and we would shovel off a spot on the lake in front of my nana's house in the winter to play ice hockey there. I also enjoyed basketball, and still feel a certain sense of satisfaction when I hear the "swish" sound. Competitive distance running became a passion of mine sometime in high school though, and aside from a brief hiatus during my two year college diploma program, I continued with this sport for quite some time. I competed for the University of Manitoba's cross country and track teams, never hitting travel standard in track, but being selected as a member of our university's U Sports cross country championships team twice. I have also placed well in numerous local road races. As for race distances, I have competed in everything from the 1000m to the half marathon. I ran an 800m once at our university team's intrasquad meet, and I have run a virtual full marathon (during the COVID-19 pandemic). My personal best times are 2:54 for the indoor 1000m, 4:27 for the indoor 1500m, 9:24 for the indoor 3000m (I have run that time three times), 16:11 for the road 5km (a virtual event), 32:27 for the road 10km, 1:11:53 for the half marathon, and 2:35:56 for the virtual marathon that I ran. I do not know what my indoor 800m time was when I ran that race.

The student composition at the high school I attended was comprised of mainly Indigenous youth from reserves across Manitoba (about 80% or more I would guess). They stayed in dorms on campus during the year, with some going home on weekends, and some only going home for Christmas and summer, as they were from fly-in communities (i.e., not accessible by all-weather road). So, I was a member of the racial minority at my school, but

looking back, I would not have changed that, or my small-town, northern upbringing, for a different situation. That peer group, as well as my own experiences with sport and marginalization, is largely what brought me to the research discussed in this thesis. I struggled a lot with moving from place to place for seasonal employment and school, and I am still quite uncomfortable in the city (with that level of discomfort fluctuating between "somewhat" to "very"). Although running provided a positive environment for me while I struggled with mental health issues perpetuated by the otherwise isolating environment of the city, I also found that I was quite different from my teammates, many of whom had been raised in urban environments. Eventually I started to make connections between my experiences, and I created a graduate studies project which evolved over the years to that which is discussed in the thesis you are reading now.

Being a White person engaging in Indigenous research has had its challenges. On the one hand, I am happy to be moving away from Western ways of knowing that do not resonate with me, and away from Western ways of being and doing that I find destructive. On the other hand, I am still White, or an outsider, and I am constantly reminded of that in my work. Coming to terms with my own unearned White privilege[3] has not been a challenge, but finding my place in life considering that privilege has. This thesis itself would not exist if not for the oppression of First Nations peoples. As such, in a way, I am benefitting from that oppression. That thought lingers in my mind as I try to find ways to contribute the gifts I have been given in ways that make the world a better place. As my graduate studies career progressed, I came to understand that what I was doing was not about "helping" Indigenous peoples; it was about addressing the ongoing, oppressive practices imposed by the Western world on Indigenous peoples (in the field of sport, specifically). The way I see it, it was about helping the Western world get caught up by sharing the knowledge research participants so graciously shared with me. With that said, we proceed to the nine chapters.

[3] McIntosh (1989) said the following about White privilege: "I have come to see white privilege as an invisible package of unearned assets which I can count on cashing in each day, but about which I was 'meant' to remain oblivious. White privilege is like an invisible weightless knapsack of special provisions, maps, passports, codebooks, visas, clothes, tools and blank checks" (p. 10). In other words, those with White privilege live in a society where their ways of knowing, being, and doing are reaffirmed, and where they are automatically given the benefit of the doubt in social situations. Citation: McIntosh, P. (1989, July/August). White privilege: Unpacking the invisible knapsack. *Peace and Freedom,* 10-12.

Chapter 1: General Introduction

Who is Indigenous?

Indigenous[4] peoples have the right to define themselves, so "no formal definition [of Indigenous peoples] has been adopted in international law" (Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions & Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2013, p. 6). There is tremendous diversity among Indigenous peoples globally as well as within Canada, with representation in Canada occurring across many distinct nations/groups comprised of distinct individuals. Moreover, there are varying degrees to which people belonging to certain Indigenous communities engage in the cultural practices of those communities, and there are varying levels of socioeconomic experiences as well. Such variability is also demonstrated within the group that is the focus of this research, First Nations peoples. Yet generalizations regarding aspects of Indigenous cultures and social circumstances are made throughout this thesis, as they must be made in order to say anything at all about the topic that is the focus of this research.

Transparency with respect to the definition of "Indigenous" adopted in this research is critical due to the complexity of identity. Much of the rationale for this research stems from colonial practices that have marginalized, and continue to marginalize, the group of people Canada's federal government has labelled "Indigenous". The following definitions have been provided by the Canadian federal government:

- "The Canadian Constitution recognizes three groups of Aboriginal [Indigenous] peoples: Indians (more commonly referred to as First Nations), Inuit and Métis. These are three distinct peoples with unique histories, languages, cultural practices and spiritual beliefs" (para. 2, Government of Canada, 2017).
- "'First Nations people' include Status and non-Status Indians" (para. 1, Government of Canada, 2020a).
- "'Non-Status Indians' commonly refers to people who identify themselves as Indians but who are not entitled to registration on the Indian Register pursuant to the *Indian Act*. Some may however be members of a First Nation band" (para. 1, Government of Canada, 2012).
- "Inuit are the Indigenous peoples of the Arctic. The word Inuit means 'the people' in the Inuit language of Inuktut. The singular of Inuit is Inuk" (para. 1, Government of Canada, 2020b).

[4] In Canada, the words "Indigenous" and "Aboriginal" are often used interchangeably.

The sources of these definitions can all be found through links provided by the first referenced source (Government of Canada, 2017). Note the corresponding source for information about the Métis, provided by the link *Métis* (Government of Canada, 2017), does not provide a definition of Métis that clearly describes the criteria for this group. Walter and Andersen (2013) noted there are different understandings of who qualifies as a Métis person. Generally, a Métis person is of mixed First Nations and European heritage, although this discussion becomes complicated as issues of territory are taken (or not taken) into account.

The Assembly of First Nations (AFM), Manitoba Metis Federation (MMF), and Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK), all of which are organizations representing First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples, respectively (with the AFM and ITK being national organizations), have their own definitions that are distinct from those of the federal government. According to the AFN's Declaration of First Nations, the First Nations are "the Original Peoples of this land" (AFN, n.d., para. 1). According to the MMF, the Métis are "a people of North American Indian and European ancestry who coalesced into a distinct nation in the northwest in the late 18th century" (MMF, 2021, para. 5). According to the ITK, the Inuit are "an Indigenous people living primarily in Inuit Nunangat" (ITK, 2019, para. 1).

It is important to recognize there are many distinct nations within the First Nations and Inuit groups, yet the federal government amalgamates all nations together, along with the Métis, under the "Indigenous" umbrella despite differences in aspects such as culture, territories, and historic relationships with the federal government. This diversity is why the scope of the current research has been restricted to First Nations peoples only, and although political definitions are used throughout this thesis due to the reliance this thesis has on government-generated statistics and academic literature that also follows political definitions, self-identification was the method used to determine participant eligibility for Chapters 5 through 7.

Why Manitoba, and What is "Rural and Remote"?

The province of Manitoba serves as an appropriate context for this research due to its significant proportion of Indigenous peoples, including representation from First Nations (with several Nations being represented), Métis, and Inuit. Notably, Manitoba is home to 63 First Nations communities, including Cree, Ojibway, Dakota, Ojibway-Cree, and Dene peoples (Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada, 2014). Although only 4.7% of people (1,629,800 of 34,460,065) in Canada self-identified as Indigenous in the year 2016 (977,235 First Nations,

587,545 Métis, and 65,025 Inuit; Statistics Canada, 2020[5]), this proportion was nearly 18% for the province of Manitoba (220,470 of 1,240,695; Statistics Canada, 2020). In total, 13% of the Indigenous people in Canada in 2016 were living in Manitoba, and of this population, 130,505 (59%) were First Nations, 89,360 were Métis (40%), and 610 were Inuit (<1%; Statistics Canada, 2020).

Prior to discussing the number of Indigenous people in rural and remote areas of Manitoba, it is important to first explain this research's definitions of "rural" and "remote". The definitions of these two terms have at least part of their foundations in the research itself. The word rural, as this research intends, and as it relates to the province of Manitoba, means communities within the province that are not Winnipeg, not Brandon, and are not "remote". Winnipeg and Brandon are the only two cities in Manitoba containing universities that are members of the U Sports organization (U Sports, 2020a), which is Canada's governing body for university sport. These teams include the University of Manitoba Bisons (in Winnipeg), the University of Winnipeg (U of W) Wesmen, and the Brandon University Bobcats (U Sports, 2020a). Since the focus of this research is on university-level sport, using definitions that are based on the university sport situation in Manitoba is appropriate. It is important to acknowledge, however, that U Sports is not the only post-secondary sport organization in Canada. The Canadian Collegiate Athletic Association (CCAA) also plays a significant role in post-secondary sport in the country, although generally among colleges as opposed to universities. Two other notable differences between U Sports and the CCAA occur in the number of member institutions as well as the sports offered. U Sports, which has 56 member institutions (U Sports, 2020b), offers basketball, rugby (women's teams only), cross country, soccer, curling, swimming, field hockey (women's teams only), track and field, football (men's teams only), volleyball, hockey, and wrestling (U Sports, n.d.). The CCAA, which has 98 member institutions (CCAA, n.d.), offers basketball, cross country, soccer, curling, volleyball, badminton, and golf (CCAA, n.d.).

It is recognized that the definition of "rural" implies Brandon presents additional opportunities for research (i.e., working with current Brandon University athletes as well as alumni), but the scope of the current research must be limited to within a range appropriate for

[5] Note that in this chapter, data pertaining to Indigenous peoples was extracted from the "Single Aboriginal responses", "First Nations (North American Indian)", "Métis", and "Inuk (Inuit)" columns of the Statistics Canada table referenced.

doctoral-level studies. As such, Brandon University, the host city of which had a total population of 56,420 people (6,905 of which self-identified as Indigenous, including 3,855 First Nations, 3,020 Métis, and 30 Inuit; Statistics Canada, 2020), is not included in any of the studies found within this thesis. In addition, the categorization of Brandon as neither a rural or remote location implies that the current research excludes Indigenous athletes who are from Brandon but move to Winnipeg to pursue university sport and education. Yet this exclusion is insignificant with respect to the purpose of this research. Along with being the second-largest city in Manitoba in terms of population size, Brandon is geographically quite close to Winnipeg, so athletes from Brandon would probably be accustomed to occasional visits to Winnipeg for various purposes. Both of these factors (size and proximity to Winnipeg) suggest the acculturation challenges experienced in the case of moving from Brandon to Winnipeg to pursue university sport would not be as significant as that experienced when moving from a more distant and smaller community. Thus, Winnipeg is the sole non-rural, non-remote (i.e., "urban") location of focus in the current research.

Winnipeg is Manitoba's capital as well as its most populous city. As of 2016, Winnipeg was home to 761,540 of Manitoba's 1,240,695 people (61%; Statistics Canada, 2020), with 91,150 (nearly 12%) of the people in Winnipeg self-identifying as Indigenous (Statistics Canada, 2020), which is 5% of all Indigenous people in Canada (91,150 of 1,629,800; Statistics Canada, 2020). Of the Indigenous people in Winnipeg in 2016, 38,700 (42%) were First nations, 52,130 (57%) were Métis, and 320 (<1%) were Inuit (Statistics Canada, 2020). As stated previously, Winnipeg is home to two U Sports teams: the University of Manitoba Bisons, and the U of W Wesmen.

Finally, the word "remote", as used in this research, means a community within Manitoba that is not accessible by an all-weather road. "Rural" and "remote" have been separated in this research because the lack of all-weather road access as maintained by the government exacerbates the sport- and university-related barriers imposed by isolation from areas where there are more resources (e.g., competition with other communities, and access to expert coaches, athletic therapists, sport nutritionists, sport psychologists, and quality facilities and equipment). Whereas individuals living in rural communities can travel by road to areas with these resources, individuals living in remote communities must either fly (which is expensive), travel by train (which is slow), or wait until ice roads are established. Even when travel is

feasible, the geographic distances of many rural and remote communities to areas with these resources makes such trips uneconomical and time-consuming.

With respect to the reach of this research, of the 148,455 registered First Nations individuals in Manitoba in 2014, 59.3% (88,076) lived on reserves, and more than half of on-reserve First Nations people lived in any of the 23 First Nations communities in Manitoba that are not accessible by an all-weather road (i.e., "remote" communities; Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada, 2014). Conservatively assuming an on-reserve, remote First Nations population of exactly half of the 88,076 First Nations people living on-reserve in Manitoba in 2014 yields a total of at least 44,038 on-reserve, remote First Nations people in the province. Note this number does not consider remote areas within the province that are not reserves.

Based on the preceding data as well as this research's definitions of "rural" and "remote", one can roughly estimate the population size of First Nations people in Manitoba who live in rural areas. Manitoba contains 130,505 First Nations people (Statistics Canada, 2020); Winnipeg is home to 38,700 First Nations people (Statistics Canada, 2020) and Brandon is home to 3,855 First Nations people (Statistics Canada, 2020), implying a "rural or remote" First Nations population of 87,950 individuals. Subtracting the 2014 data provided by Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (2014) that implies an on-reserve, remote First Nations population of at least 44,038, as calculated previously, yields a rural First Nations population of 43,912. Note that these estimates are based on data from different years (2016 and 2014), so they should be taken as rough estimates only. Nonetheless, considering sport at some level plays a role in many people's lives (e.g., school recess times, physical education, youth programs, unstructured and unsupervised play), these statistics and estimates imply that the current research is quite broad in terms of reach.

Why Sport?

Sport can help foster positive development among youth (Fraser-Thomas et al., 2005), facilitate meaningful connections with others (Lavallée, 2007), and enhance one's self-image (Halas, 2001) while being a vehicle for expression (Halas, 2001). Unfortunately, numerous equity gaps[6] exist within sport between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians, meaning

[6] It is important to consider the distinctiveness discussed in the section "Who is Indigenous", as not doing so can result in a myopic approach to addressing equity gaps. In addition, addressing equity gaps should be about addressing the marginalizing practices imposed, and continuing to be imposed, by Western society on Indigenous peoples.

sport is one area (of many) in which reconciliation is a priority. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) defined "reconciliation" as follows:

> To the Commission, "reconciliation" is about establishing and maintaining a mutually respectful relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples in this country. For that to happen, there has to be awareness of the past, acknowledgement of the harm that has been inflicted, atonement for the causes, and action to change behavior. (TRC, 2015a, p. 3).

Further, the TRC asserted:

> Reconciliation must create a more equitable and inclusive society by closing the gaps in social, health, and economic outcomes that exist between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians. (TRC, 2015b, p. 3)

Of the 94 Calls to Action created by the TRC (2015c) to address equity gaps and promote reconciliation, five (#87-91) relate to sport (p. 10):

> 87. We call upon all levels of government, in collaboration with Aboriginal peoples, sports halls of fame, and other relevant organizations, to provide public education that tells the national story of Aboriginal athletes in history.
> 88. We call upon all levels of government to take action to ensure long-term Aboriginal athlete development and growth, and continued support for the North American Indigenous Games, including funding to host the games and for provincial and territorial team preparation and travel.
> 89. We call upon the federal government to amend the Physical Activity and Sport Act to support reconciliation by ensuring that policies to promote physical activity as a fundamental element of health and well-being, reduce barriers to sports participation, increase the pursuit of excellence in sport, and build capacity in the Canadian sport system, are inclusive of Aboriginal peoples.
> 90. We call upon the federal government to ensure that national sports policies, programs, and initiatives are inclusive of Aboriginal peoples, including, but not limited to, establishing:
>
> i. In collaboration with provincial and territorial governments, stable funding for, and access to, community sports programs that reflect the diverse cultures and traditional sporting activities of Aboriginal peoples.
> ii. An elite athlete development program for Aboriginal athletes.
> iii. Programs for coaches, trainers, and sports officials that are culturally relevant for Aboriginal peoples.
> iv. Anti-racism awareness and training programs.
>
> 91. We call upon the officials and host countries of international sporting events such as the Olympics, Pan Am, and Commonwealth games to ensure that Indigenous peoples' territorial protocols are respected, and local Indigenous communities are engaged in all aspects of planning and participating in such events.

Considering the Government of Canada has committed to addressing all the TRC's (2015c) Calls, the sport-related Calls discussed here provide significant support for this research:

> During the TRC's final event on December 15, 2015, the Prime Minister reiterated the Government of Canada's commitment to work in partnership with Indigenous communities, the provinces, territories and other vital partners, to fully implement recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, starting with the implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. (Government of Canada, 2015, para. 5)

The research contained within this thesis primarily deals with Call to Action #90(ii) by examining factors influencing university sport participation among rural and remote First Nations athletes in Manitoba under the idea that university sport can serve as a pathway to elite sport.

Why University Sport?

This research is particularly relevant to the TRC's (2015c) Call to Action #90(ii). University-level sport can play a crucial role in an athlete's pathway to the elite level of participation through the many resources it provides, such as high-quality facilities and equipment, athletic therapy, sport psychology, nutrition counselling, and coaches with experience coaching elite athletes, including athletes who have represented Canada at international competitions. For example, Alex Gardiner, who is the current sprint coach for the University of Manitoba's track and field team as well as a speed coach for the school's football team, was the head coach of Canada's track & field team during the 2004 Olympics (University of Manitoba, 2020). Some other very accomplished university sport coaches include Dennis Fairall, who is a former head coach of the track & field and cross country teams at the University of Windsor, as well as coach of Olympian and Canadian 800m record holder Melissa Bishop (Windsor/Essex County Sports Hall of Fame, n.d.); and Steve Boyd, who is a former head coach of the track & field and cross country teams at Queens University, as well as coach of Olympian Dylan Wykes (Queen's University, 2018 [the corresponding article has since been removed from Queen's University's website]). Simply by being a U Sports athlete one is put in touch with experts such as those listed here, which can be a valuable connection in terms of athletic development.

An additional benefit of participating in the U Sports system is the opportunity to obtain a university degree. U Sports emphasizes a balance between sports and athletics by requiring

athletes to meet certain academic criteria simply in order to compete (see U Sports' *Policies and Procedures*, specifically, 40.10.3.2 [*Course Load Requirements*] and 40.10.3.3 [*Academic Standing*]; U Sports, 2019). As such, in addition to addressing Call to Action #90(ii), this research has potential to contribute to education as it pertains to Indigenous student-athletes by helping with recruitment and retention. Notably, education was also among the priorities of the TRC (2015c), with 11 of 94 Calls to Action (#6-12 and #62-65; pp. 1-2 and pp. 7-8) addressing this concern.

Historically, university environments have been culturally exclusive and hostile places for Indigenous students who, upon entrance, are expected to adapt to the dominant culture (see Kirkness & Barnhardt, 2001, for a discussion specifically relevant to First Nations students). More recent research suggests racism toward Indigenous students in university settings is prevalent (Bailey, 2016). Sport can encourage feelings of family and community (Lavallée, 2007), which may help make university atmospheres feel more welcoming to Indigenous students. In addition, a recent study found a positive association between year of U Sports eligibility and grade point average (GPA), with GPA being higher among more veteran athletes (Harris et al., 2018). Although using GPA to measure academic success is problematic, especially for Indigenous students (see Preston, 2008), as long as it remains the criteria for advancement within the university system, then supporting measures that encourage higher GPA, such as sport, may be worthwhile. Harris et al. (2018) suggested the GPA requirements set out by U Sports and/or the results of the life skills gained through participation in sport may have been contributing factors in their research, although caution should be used when considering these results.

University academic programs typically allow students more autonomy over course choice as they progress from one year to the next, thereby allowing students to choose classes that are of more interest to them later on in their eligibility. In addition, Harris et al. (2018) noted that race was linked to GPA, with Caucasian (as opposed to non-Caucasian) students more likely to have higher GPA's. As the authors stated:

> An extensive body of research has highlighted differences in academic achievement based on race, with complex and extensive sociocultural factors contributing to this disparity (e.g., Maldonoda, 2010; Kao & Thompson, 2003). Findings of this study suggest that the university sport context does not appear to serve as a protective factor against this concern, indicating further research is needed to better understand how to advance opportunities for student-athletes of minority groups. (p. 14)

If anything, the last sentence in the previous quote provides further justification for the current work by calling for more research relating to the development of opportunities for student-athletes of minority groups.

Research Purpose in Brief

The purpose of the current research was threefold: 1) to examine the factors (i.e., facilitators and challenges) influencing university-level sport participation among rural and remote First Nations athletes in Manitoba, as well as solutions for change; 2) due to the importance of Indigenous coaches to Indigenous athletes' participation in sport (see Canadian Heritage, 2005), to examine the factors (i.e., facilitators and barriers) influencing First Nations coaches in Canada along their coaching paths, as well as solutions for change; and 3) to raise awareness among graduate students considering work following an Indigenous research paradigm prioritizing relational accountability and reciprocity, as well as among current and potential members of these graduate students' support networks by examining the challenges that were encountered while engaged in the first two studies. To those ends, the following questions were asked:

> Chapters 5 and 6: What are the factors (i.e., facilitators [opportunities/supports] and challenges [reduced opportunities/obstructions]) influencing university sport participation among rural and remote First Nations athletes in Manitoba as seen through the eyes of some First Nations athletes as well as their coaches and teachers? What are some strategies for improvements?
>
> Chapter 7: What are the factors (i.e., facilitators [opportunities/supports] and barriers [reduced opportunities/obstructions]) influencing the coaching paths of First Nations coaches in Canada as seen through the eyes of some First Nations coaches? What are some strategies for improvements?
>
> Chapter 8: Along my graduate studies path, while engaged in Indigenous research (i.e., research following an Indigenous research paradigm prioritizing relational accountability and reciprocity) in a colonial academy, what were some of the challenges I encountered about which graduate students engaged, or seeking to become engaged, in Indigenous research should be aware, and that should be conveyed to others in the academic setting (faculty, administrators) and beyond (family members, significant others, friends, peers) to raise awareness in order to create more support for graduate students engaged in Indigenous research?

What is an Indigenous Approach to Research?

Western research has long marginalized Indigenous peoples through extractive approaches that have failed to recognize Indigenous knowledge systems (Kovach, 2015). As such, although Western methods of data analysis were used in the current research, I felt it was important to follow a research approach that resonated with Indigenous perspectives regarding how research should be done (i.e., an Indigenous research approach). The following sections are summaries of chapters or articles by some scholars who have discussed Indigenous approaches to research. A summary of Kovach's (2015) chapter *Emerging from the margins: Indigenous methodologies* is presented first, as this chapter provides an explanation of the emergence of anti-oppressive research methodologies, including the beginning of the incorporation of Indigenous worldviews in Western research academies. Proceeding from there, a summary of Wilson's (2001) Indigenous research paradigm (IRP) is presented. Next, since Hart (2010) considered works of both Wilson and Kovach when creating his IRP, a summary of his work is then presented. Finally, a summary of Jaworsky's (2019) allied research paradigm (ARP) is included because her ARP presents an option for researchers whose own beliefs may not align with what is considered Indigenous, but who recognize that the omission of Indigenous worldviews from research is highly problematic, and who want to work with Indigenous peoples in ways that respect and incorporate Indigenous worldviews to make research beneficial and culturally meaningful.

Margaret Kovach (2015)

(Racial identity: Nêhiyaw and Saulteaux. Home: Saskatchewan, Canada)

According to Kovach (2015), positivism became prolific in Western society due to the successful role it played in industrialization and, consequently, economic growth. In addition, she explained that quantitative research was more commonplace in Western research academies than qualitative research for many decades, and that following its inception, qualitative research proceeded through phases, with an expansion comprising non-positivistic paradigms starting in the 1970s. According to Kovach, Indigenous knowledge systems started to emerge in qualitative research in the 1990s and, like other anti-oppressive research methodologies, they were meant to stand in opposition of the positivist approaches that marginalize minority groups. Kovach provided examples of various works that emerged during this time, including Smith's (1999) influential *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples.*

With respect to decolonizing methodologies, Kovach (2015) explained that such work needs to be grounded in Indigenous culture because knowledge and culture are interconnected, with knowledge influencing the cultures that thrive or become oppressed in society. As such, in the Indigenous methodologies Kovach describes, there are four main, critical characteristics: 1) legitimacy of Indigenous knowledge systems, 2) relationality between researchers and participants, 3) reciprocity to the community ("the collective", p. 54), and 4) legitimacy of Indigenous methods.

Kovach used a plethora of descriptors with respect to Indigenous knowledge systems. Examples included relational, fluid, localized, experiential; an emphasis on spirit, heart, reciprocity, and respect; and an inclusion of storytelling, dreams, and visions. In her discussion about relationality, Kovach explained that researchers must have strong and ongoing ties to the communities with which they are working. Regarding the collective, she emphasized the importance of serving each other, as doing so has traditionally been the norm in Indigenous communities. She highlighted that efforts to do this must occur even at the expense of the more traditional obligations researchers have in Western academic settings, such as publishing. Alluding to important social obligations researchers have, Kovach justified this prioritizing by saying:

> [W]e can only get so far before we see a face—our elder cleaning fish, our sister living on the edge in East Vancouver, our brother hunting elk for the feast, our little ones in foster care—and hear a voice whispering, "Are you helping us?" (p. 55).

Finally, with respect to methods, Kovach conveyed hope regarding a growing acceptance of Indigenous knowledge systems (e.g., dream journaling) within Western research academies.

Prior to concluding her chapter, Kovach (2015) discussed some reflections she has had over the years regarding Indigenous methodologies. She drew attention to the importance of Indigenous knowledge systems in Indigenous methodologies, saying, "Indigenous knowledge systems are the heartbeat of Indigenous methodologies" (p. 57). Acknowledging the significance of having a strong understanding of these systems, Kovach explored the question, "[w]ho can apply an Indigenous methodological approach in their research?" (p. 57). She explained that individuals are free to choose the methodology they wish to follow, but ultimately, "there must be a deep, abiding respect for Indigenous knowledge systems and Indigenous experience" (p. 57). Finally, Kovach highlighted the importance of various ethics documents in helping ensure

researchers work in non-oppressive ways, and she emphasized the key roles Indigenous faculty in research academies perform in ensuring Indigenous knowledge and methodologies can grow amidst predominating Western research approaches. In closing this section, Kovach asserted that, "non-Indigenous allies have a responsibility and role in creating space for Indigenous methodologies" (p. 59).

Shawn Wilson (2001)

(Racial identity: Cree. Home: Opaskwayak Cree Nation, Manitoba, Canada)

> Wilson (2001) described a paradigm and a research paradigm as follows:
>
> To me a paradigm is simply a label for a set of beliefs that go together that guide my actions. So a research paradigm is a set of beliefs about the world and about gaining knowledge that go together to guide your actions as to how you're going to go about doing your research. (p. 175).

Wilson noted that any research paradigm is comprised of four parts: the ontology (what we think is real), the epistemology (how we think about reality), the methodology (how we gather information about reality), and the axiology (the morals or ethics). Specifically, Wilson's IRP emphasizes that knowledge is collective; it is not something that is gained and owned, but something that is shared (ontology). In addition, his IRP prioritizes relationships (e.g., between the researcher and participants, between the researcher and the knowledge, between the researcher and the cosmos; epistemology), and researchers must consider relational accountability when deciding upon a methodology. Lastly, the axiology of Wilson's IRP dictates that the research must be of direct benefit to community members.

Michael Anthony Hart (2010)

(Racial identity: Cree. Home: Fisher River Cree Nation/Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada)

Hart (2010) created his IRP in recognition of Eurocentric dominance in social work practices. He built from the four components that Wilson (2001) mentioned comprise a research paradigm (ontology, epistemology, methodology, axiology). The sprit world is highly emphasized in Hart's ontology, as is a reciprocal relationship with, and respect for, all life. Hart's epistemology involves going within oneself and connecting with happenings that "may be facilitated through rituals or ceremonies that incorporate dreaming, visioning, meditation, and prayer" (p. 8). Hart emphasized that Elders who know how to do this are important in guiding this process. The methodology in Hart's IRP, as in Wilson's (2001) IRP, emphasizes relational accountability, and like Kovach's (2005, 2015) Indigenous methodologies, Hart's IRP

methodology prioritizes the collective. Hart also stressed that in his IRP methodology, "knowledge gained will be utilized practically" (p. 9). Finally, Hart discussed eleven points regarding the axiology of his IRP. These points emphasize 1) Indigenous control over research; 2) respect for individuals and community; 3) reciprocity and responsibility; 4) respect and safely; 5) non-intrusive observation; 6) listening and hearing with not just the ears, but with one's being (i.e., emotional and spiritual responses); 7) reflective non-judgement; 8) honoring what is shared; 9) the importance of connection between mind and heart in guiding actions; 10) self-awareness; and 11) the subjectivity the researcher brings with them to the research. Importantly, although Hart recognized that worldviews cannot be perfectly placed into the categories "Indigenous" and "non-Indigenous", he stated that, "without working to reflect Indigenous peoples' understanding, we may be [. . .] leading other Indigenous peoples down the path of internalized oppression" (p. 11).

Denise Jaworsky (2019)

(Racial identity: Japanese-Canadian. Home: British Columbia, Canada)

In her article, Jaworsky (2019) identified herself as a Japanese-Canadian physician and PhD student. Jaworsky recognized that she did not have the lived experiences of being Indigenous, and that the Indigenous research paradigms of which she learned did not resonate with her own ontology, epistemology, and axiology. As such, she sought to define an ARP for use in her field (quantitative epidemiology). Consistent with the works discussed thus far, Jaworsky's ARP challenges "the dominant positivist assumptions of the field [epidemiology] and allow[s] for other ways of knowing" (p. 5), it honors Indigenous knowledge systems, it emphasizes relational accountability, and it calls for direct benefits (from the research) to communities. Where Jaworsky's ARP differs from the other works discussed, however, is in its recognition that research conducted under the ARP is a partnership between two groups with dissimilar belief systems. To work in a good way with each other, Jaworsky advocated for community-based participatory research (CBPR), in which knowledge is co-created to ensure meaningful outcomes for community members. Jaworsky acknowledged that subjectivity is embedded in quantitative epidemiology research (e.g., the questions one chooses to ask, the choice of literature that informs processes), so ongoing participation from research partners helps ensure relevance of questions and a move away from the deficit-based perspective taken by

much of Western, health-related research. Further, to support the use of quantitative methods of analysis while doing CBPR with Indigenous research partners, Jaworsky explained:

> It is "the methodology, rather than the method of analysis, [that] contains the cultural, social, and consequently, political meanings of research process and practice (Walter & Andersen, 2013)." Thus, quantitative methods, including the broad range offered in the field of epidemiology, can be used as tools within Indigenous quantitative methodologies. (p. 6)

Fundamental to Jaworsky's (2019) ARP are six equally important and interconnected principles: 1) reconciliation, 2) relationships, 3) perspective, 4) positionality, 5) self-determination, and 6) accountability. Reconciliation entails a critical social consciousness on the part of researchers regarding colonization and its impacts, and a commitment to avoid harmful research. Relationships, as with the approaches discussed in the preceding sections, are critical to any research guided by the ARP. With respect to perspectives, Indigenous knowledge systems are respected and seen as legitimate, and researchers ensure that the work in which they are engaged is seen by community members as beneficial. Regarding positionality, researchers must reflect on their own identities and how those shape their approach to research. Next, researchers must provide support toward the self-determination of Indigenous partners (e.g., through supporting Indigenous partners as they write manuscripts and present research, as suggested by Jaworsky [2019]) and, finally, accountability is similar to the notions explained in the preceding sections and entails a commitment beyond the conclusion of the study itself.

Why I Chose to Follow Wilson's (2001) Indigenous Research Paradigm

My MSc program was in an entirely different field and, as such, I was not exposed to Indigenous research approaches until late in my graduate studies career. Wilson's (2001) IRP was perhaps my first exposure, and much of what he wrote in his article resonated with my own values. For instance, upon moving to Winnipeg, MB, for my undergrad, I quickly realized that meaningful relationships were hard to find in the city. I have had discussions about this phenomenon with many other non-Winnipeggers who moved here and, from what I have been able to surmise, it is a "Winnipeg thing". Speculating why this might be the case would produce another thesis, so suffice it to say that for myself and the other non-Winnipeggers with whom I have spoken, it seems the overwhelming majority of relationships we have made in the city have been superficial, and discussions with strangers are much more transactional here than in our hometowns. And so, my undergrad years, and much of my graduate years, were lonely and

isolating. Yet by following a research paradigm that emphasizes meaningful relationships, I suppose I felt I could do my part to change my environment, like the tea bag that is thrown into the boiling water. And so, prioritizing relational accountability and reciprocity just made sense to me. In addition, the notion of relational accountability to all of our relations, not just the human ones, but outside humanity as well, resonated with my northern, small-town upbringing, in which I was frequently in the bush and on the water. That upbringing is largely what motivated me to pursue my Natural Resources Management Technology diploma and my Environmental Science undergraduate and MSc degrees, and the experiences I garnered in those degrees further strengthened the environmental reverence I brought with me into my new graduate studies program.

As for the other aspects of Wilsons (2001) IRP, that is, knowledge as something that is shared and relational, I figured "why not?". To condense another long story, by the end of my MSc, I had become quite frustrated with the shortcomings of capitalist society (Maté's talk at Altruism_1980, 2014; see also Marx, 1844), and my anger was evident in my interactions with others. Although I owned and continue to own my decisions, I now realize there were reasons those decisions were made (i.e., environmental influences affecting my behavior), and many of those reasons stemmed from capitalism's isolations. And so, I learned that people are, indeed, products of the environments to which they are exposed, and that there is, indeed, interconnectedness between mind, body, emotion, and spirit. With those realizations, I suppose the notion of doing research that opposed superficial relationships seemed somewhat liberating to me, as it would allow me to break free from the destructive ways of being and doing that Western capitalist society had taught me over the course of many years; it would help me move toward a healthier, more meaningful way to live.

Now, I acknowledge that I have made some missteps along the way during my graduate studies career. Attempting to follow Wilson's (2001) IRP was not a misstep, but perhaps not educating myself earlier on in my PhD work with respect to other Indigenous approaches was. Wilson's (2001) IRP seemed to resonate with me so much that I figured I would just go with it. I should be transparent in acknowledging, however, that I had a rudimentary understanding of Kovach's approaches and, to me, they seemed consistent with Wilson's, so I did not investigate them further until much later in my studies. Plus, Wilson (2001) presented his IRP in a way that I think is easily accessible to someone accustomed to quantitative approaches. To me, the

ontology, epistemology, methodology, and axiology were like four bullet points, and their explanations were direct and concise. I learned of the underlying complexities later on, and am still learning about them as I interact with participants and the knowledge they shared with me, but Wilson's (2001) article served as a great introduction.

What about Hart's (2010) IRP? I had not become familiar with this one until late into my PhD, yet I hesitate to believe it would have been a good choice for me early on. Hart's (2010) IRP calls for a strong connection to the spirit through ceremony, and only recently have I been engaging in this type of activity, which has occurred mainly through my mentorship from our university's Director for Indigenous Engagement, Heatherrrr. Thus, I am hesitant to believe I would have been ready for the journey I perceive to be needed in order to follow Hart's (2010) IRP as intended.

Lastly, it may be tempting for readers to consider the significant Euro-Canadian portion of my heritage and ask why I did not choose to follow an approach similar to Jaworsky's (2019). Well, although her ARP is great for people who are in her situation, that is, whose ontology, epistemology, and axiology do not align with Indigenous perspectives, I feel that my beliefs, although still developing, do align. Yet I still question whether the approach that played out during my PhD thesis was actually more similar to Jaworsky's (2019) ARP than it was to Wilson's (2001) IRP. I attempted to find a balance between doing what I wanted to do (i.e., an approach that I felt good about), and getting the research done to the standards set by the university. As a PhD student, I have an entire career ahead of me, and I have tried to choose my battles such that there is balance between personal growth toward who I want to be, and obtaining the degree that will allow me to have a meaningful career in which I can make further contributions to society. That meaningful career, as I foresee it, will require much of me. One important lesson I learned from my competitive running endeavors is that distance running is a game that depends on consistency over the long term, and it is a game of delayed gratification. We cannot continually go to the well in training without burning out; we must be cognizant of the level of intensity we put forth as well as the volume and frequency of our training sessions. We also must accept sub-par workouts and race results while we chase after improved fitness for months and years on end. We do not "play" distance running; we live it, with all its hills and valleys, triumphs and setbacks. Self-compassion is a great strategy in the long game that is distance running, as it allows us to recognize the challenges we encounter, then do what it takes

to overcome those challenges while being kind to ourselves. Indeed, doing what it takes to overcome challenges often means backing off. Similarly, I must have self-compassion during my career progression, realizing that I have a long way to go to become who I want to be, that there will be many battles along the way, and that I must be careful about the investments I make in my work from one day to the next if I wish to be in this for the long game, as that type of commitment necessitates staying well. I must realize there will be missteps along the way, too, but that I can work through them and still make gradual progress in my development.

Strategies for Meeting Relational Accountability and Reciprocity Obligations

Maintaining relational accountability during the research discussed in Chapters 5 through 7 of this thesis entailed a number of strategies. First, interview transcripts and manuscript drafts were shared with participants so they could review these documents and notify me if they had any concerns or wanted any changes made. This strategy was met with varying feedback. At one end of the feedback spectrum were participants that engaged heavily with me in this process, reviewing documents and suggesting revisions, whereas at the other end of the spectrum, some participants ceased communicating with me once their interview had concluded. In all cases, I respected the decisions participants made during the research process.

Second, also with recording the suggestions participants had for improvements (see the Recommendations section of Chapters 5 through 7), following each interview, I asked each participant how they thought results of the study for which they were interviewed should be used. Since I believed these suggestions would be helpful in informing future research dissemination activities, I recorded them in my journal. Third, as is evident in Chapters 5 through 7, I traded brevity in the manuscripts for thoroughness so as not to omit information about which participants may have been particularly concerned. Although any future manuscripts that might arise from this thesis will be bound by the word limits of the journals to which these manuscripts are submitted, this thesis can be cited in those manuscripts as a means to lead readers back to the thorough collection of information. Fourth, I incorporated many participant quotes within the manuscripts to ensure participant voices had a strong presence. Many of these quotes included significant context that I did not want to omit. Thus, many of the quotes are quite long.

As for reciprocity, I met with a First Nations Elder early into the research process to ask for advice regarding this matter. The Elder suggested that first and foremost, I should be sincere

in my expressions of gratitude. In addition, the Elder provided me with a bundle of sweetgrass from which I could give to participants after each interview. I did this at my discretion, with gift cards being used as an alternative in situations such as when the gift had to be mailed, or when I thought participants might prefer gift cards as opposed to sweetgrass.

Importantly, reciprocity, in my perspective, also incorporates giving back in ways that may not benefit participants directly, but can produce benefits in areas of concern to them. With this idea in mind, and in keeping with the reality that knowledge is something that is to be shared (Wilson, 2001), my intention is to move forward in a relevant endeavor during which I will be guided by the knowledge participants and others have shared with me during my graduate studies career. That endeavor, which is summarized through a revised version of a SSHRC Postdoctoral Fellowship application Program of Work that I submitted in fall 2020 (with guidance from Elder Dr. Courchene and his helper Dr. Ijaz, Dr. McRae, Dr. Ferguson, and Dr. Henhawk; see the Appendices section), is called the Front Runner Project (FRP, previously called the Front Runner Initiative). The FRP has been under development for a few years now and has had many contributors (Elders, professors, mentors, work colleagues, students, student-athletes), with the initial idea for the project emerging from the ever busy and wonderful mind of U of M Faculty of Kinesiology and Recreation Management graduate student Breeee Langlais, MA. As this project is close to my heart, I continue to be involved in its evolution, yet because one must earn enough to feed and clothe oneself, the continuance of my involvement into and past Fall 2021 is depending on the SSHRC funding for which I applied.

A Word About Validity and Reliability

Regarding the methodology of his IRP, Wilson (2001) stated, “You are not answering questions of validity or reliability or making judgments of better or worse. Instead you should be fulfilling your relationships with the world around you” (p. 177). Although Chapters 5 through 7 each contain a Quality Standards section, I employed the methods explained in these sections not to help me judge what participants said, but to guide me in accurately conveying and interpreting what was said (i.e., my use of Maxwell’s [1992, 2002] types of validity), as well as to ensure impactful work (i.e., my use of Ellis’ [1998] six criteria for determining whether research questions have been sufficiently addressed). In those ways, these methods helped address my relational accountability and reciprocity obligations.

How Can Future Work Better Follow Wilson’s (2001) Indigenous Research Paradigm?

Should I continue to focus on research, there are three key steps I would take to help me improve upon my adherence to Wilson's (2001) IRP. First, as readers will notice, the studies contained in Chapters 5 through 7 involved me recruiting participants. Considering Wilson's (2001) axiology (i.e., research must benefit Indigenous peoples), I think there is a need for me, being a non-Indigenous researcher, to ensure that I am not always recruiting, but also being recruited (see also Kovach, 2015, p. 55, who discussed the "collective"). In other words, although I still believe non-Indigenous researchers can initiate projects, I also think that it is important we consider opportunities to work in projects that Indigenous leaders (in my case, Indigenous sport leaders) plan to initiate, or have already initiated.

Second, to encourage a more meaningful approach (i.e., one in which I can engage participants in the research more greatly), I would consider moving toward smaller participant sample sizes. In so doing, we (the participants and I) could achieve greater richness in the research, and it would be much easier for me to reach out to participants more regularly, as well as build greater rapport with them. I am relatively new to the social sciences, qualitative research, and Indigenous approaches, as my MSc research occurred in Environmental Science and entailed quantitative work only. In addition, as mentioned in Chapter 8, being a PhD student-athlete imposed certain limitations to my PhD studies, but it had benefits to my development that few PhD students receive. The dual role of student-athlete allowed me to learn about (and continually be reminded of) many of the intricacies of university sport that I would not have learned otherwise, and about which researchers in my field should be aware, and it allowed me to build rapport with university sport staff, which will be very helpful in the future should I continue in my current field. This dual role also provided me with opportunities to apply what I learned through research to the sport context, and also apply what I learned in sport to the research context (see Chapter 8 [*Learning by Experiencing*] for a larger discussion).

Finally, as I continue to unlearn and gravitate toward Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and doing, I feel as though ceremony may become a greater part of my life (both in and outside of research) to remind me to be grateful, to help me connect with spirit and the Earth, and to encourage me in bringing my entire being (not solely my mind) into important activities. This approach resonates with that advocated by Hart (2010), although I am uncertain whether I will go to the extent he described, if my ceremonies will be more like the Sacred Breath ceremony discussed by Wagamese (2019), or if I will find some place in between. In any case, my hope is

that listening to, and learning from, Indigenous Elders remains a part of my development, as doing so thus far has helped me grow in kindness and humility.

Theoretical Frameworks

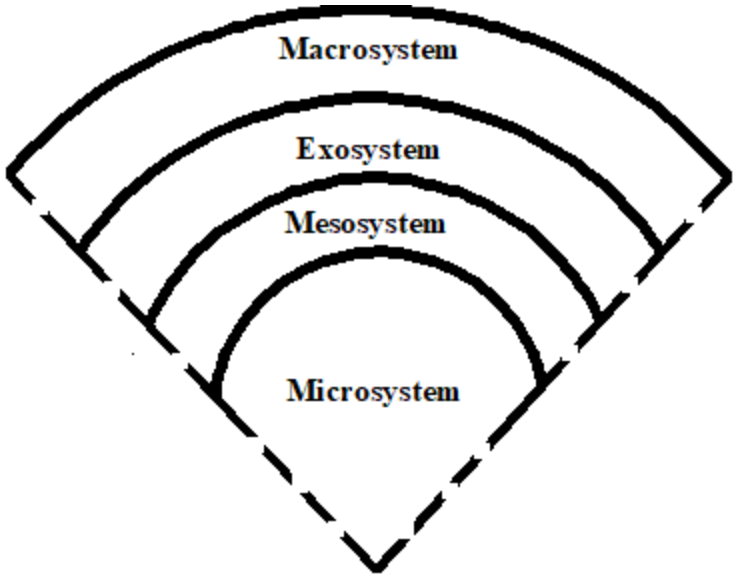
Chapters 5 and 6 used Lavallée and Lévesque's (2013) Integrated Indigenous-ecological Model (IIEM) to contextualize results. The IIEM is one model that has emerged from Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1977, 2979, 2005) and related work. Chapter 7 used a similar socioecological model (see Bennie et al., 2019).

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory

A simplified explanation of Bronfenbrenner's (1977) Ecological Systems Theory is that the environments to which one is exposed influence that person's development as a growing human organism. Bronfenbrenner (1977) identified four types of settings in which influential interactions take place: the Microsystem, Mesosystem, Exosystem, and Macrosystem. Each system, beginning with the microsystem, is nested within the system that proceeds after it (Figure 1). Lavallée and Lévesque (2013) provided concise descriptions of each system:

> In this [Bronfenbrenner's] view, the first and lowest level, the *microsystem*, represents the settings in which the developing person interacts with his or her immediate interpersonal environment (e.g., home, school, workplace). The microsystem is nested within the *mesosystem*, which encompasses the connections that exist between the multiple settings that the person inhabits. The *exosystem* that envelops the mesosystem represents the environment that influences the lower-order settings of the system (e.g., the media, government). Finally, the most distal level, *macrosystem*, represents the explicit and implicit institutional (e.g., economic, educational, political) and cultural environments that influence all of the other systems (Bronfenbrenner 1977, 1979). (pp. 214-215).

Figure 1. *The Author's Depiction of Bronfenbrenner's (1977) Ecological Systems Theory*



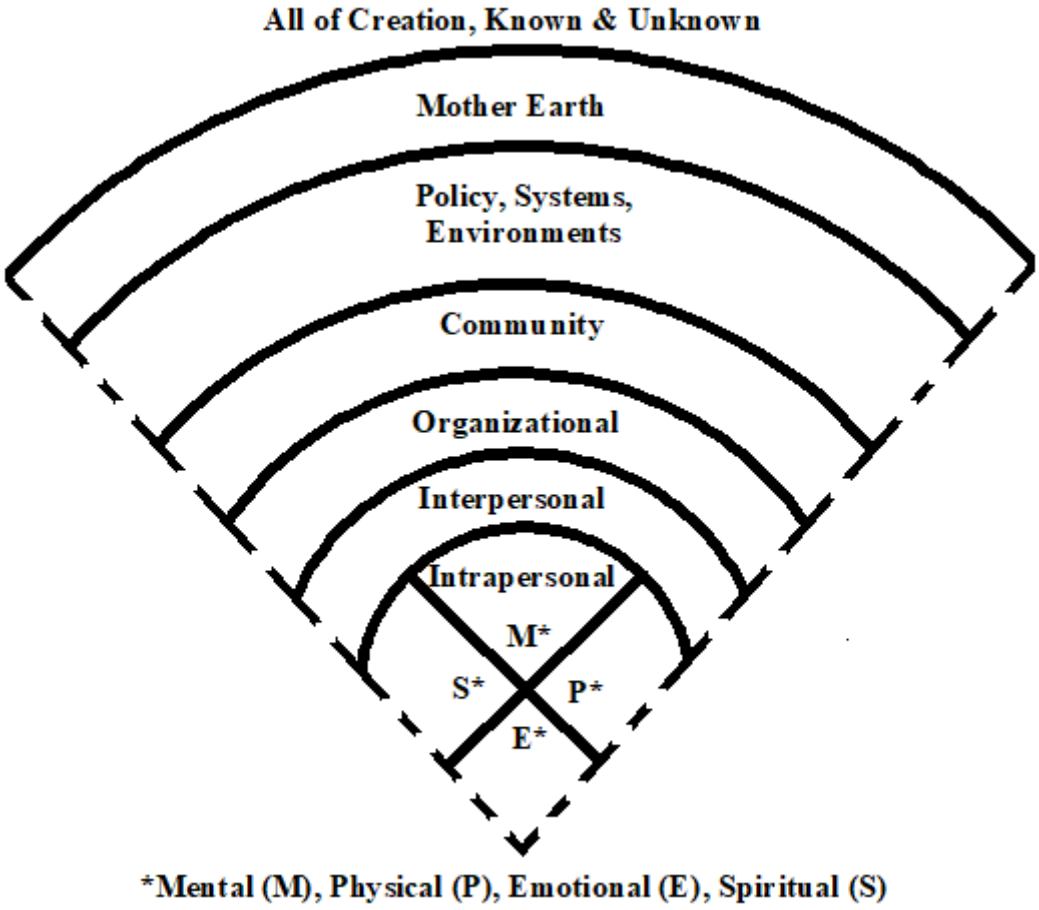
Additions have been made to Bronfenbrenner's model over time. Although the 1977 version remains intact, it is now a smaller component of the process-person-context-time (PPCT) model that may be viewed as the modern version of Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (Bronbenbrenner, 2005; Tudge et al., 2009). The PPCT model incorporates important aspects related to the person, the interactions that occur (i.e., the "process"), and time.

Lavallée and Lévesque's Integrated Indigenous-ecological Model (Used in Chapters 5 & 6)

Bronfenbrenner's (1977, 1979) work, as well as contributions by McLeroy et al. (1988) and Stokols (1992), served as the basis of the IIEM. The IIEM was constructed specifically for sport and physical activity among Indigenous participants, as embedded in the model are Indigenous worldviews of interconnectedness and relationships. Similar to Bronfenbrenner's model, the systems identified in the IIEM are nested within one another. The model (Figure 2) depicts the following levels, from most proximal to most distal: Intrapersonal, Interpersonal, Organizational, Community, Policy/Systems/Environments, Mother Earth, and All of Creation (Known and Unknown). In addition, the IIEM emphasizes the four aspects of wellness (mental, spiritual, physical, emotional) as outputs from, as well as focus points of, sport and physical activity programs. Lastly, the IIEM has four guiding principles Lavallée and Lévesque (2013) borrowed from Morrissette et al.'s (1993) ideas about an Aboriginal framework of social work practice. These four principles help guide sport and physical activity program delivery in decolonizing ways. They include:

> 1) the recognition of a distinct Aboriginal world view, 2) empowerment as a method of practice, 3) the development of Aboriginal consciousness about the impact of colonialism, and 4) cultural knowledge and tradition as an active component of retaining Aboriginal identity and collective consciousness. (Lavallée & Lévesque, 2013, p. 219)

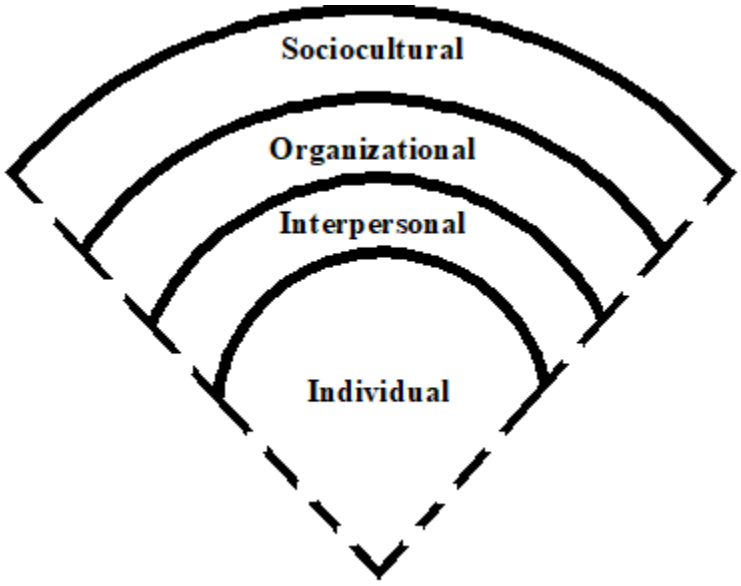
Figure 2. *The Author's Depiction of Lavallée & Lévesque's (2013) Integrated Indigenous-ecological Model*



Socioecological Model Used in Chapter 7

Thesis Chapter 7 relied on the same socioecological model used by Bennie et al. (2019), which includes the following levels: Individual, Interpersonal, Organizational, and Sociocultural (Figure 3). The choice of model used in Chapter 7 was influenced by the desire for comparability (i.e., Canadian versus Australian findings) between Chapter 7 results and the results of Bennie et al. (2019).

Figure 3. *The Author's Depiction of the Socioecological Model used by Bennie et al. (2019)*



Chapter 8 is Different…

Engaging in research following Wilson's (2001) IRP had its challenges. The more one learns about Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and doing, the more one comes to understand how biased many universities are against these ways. In addition, the emotional investment involved in this kind of work is significant, and it can take a very heavy toll on researchers. Support is needed for researchers engaging in work following any kind of Indigenous research paradigm prioritizing relational accountability with participants, yet this support can be limited when people inside and outside of the institution have little or no knowledge of the challenges being imposed. Chapter 8 addressed this topic using a fictional autoethnography.

Through an autoethnography, one explores their own experiences to gain an understanding of culture (Ellis, 2004, and Holman Jones, 2005, as cited in Ellis et al., 2011). Ellis et al. (2011) referred to autoethnography as "both process and product" (p. 273) because the writing process requires deep reflection on the part of the researcher. One motivation behind the emergence of autoethnographic research was to promote empathy by raising awareness of issues through accessible, evocative writing (Ellis & Bochner, 2000, as cited in Ellis et al., 2011). In so doing, autoethnographic researchers recognize they are "self-consciously value-centered" (Ellis et al., 2011, p. 274) as opposed to "value-free" (Ellis et al., 2011). The autoethnography used in thesis Chapter 8 adhered to these general principles, with the addition of creative liberties in the form of fictionalizations. Fiction was used out of respect for the key influencers along the

researcher's graduate studies path. However, although there are some creative liberties in Chapter 8 such that the stories are *based* on true events as opposed to being actual occurrences, the truths of the actual happenings remain unchanged.

Summary of Work

In summary, the research in Chapters 5, 6, and 7 followed Wilson's (2001) Indigenous research paradigm and used socioecological frameworks to examine the factors influencing university sport participation among rural and remote First Nations athletes in Manitoba, and to examine the factors influencing the coaching paths of First Nations coaches in Canada. Chapter 8 used a fictional autoethnography to inform graduate students engaged, or seeking to become engaged, in Indigenous research (i.e., research following an Indigenous research paradigm prioritizing relational accountability and relationality) about the challenges they might encounter along their educational paths. Chapter 8 was also meant to raise awareness among others in the academic setting (faculty, administrators) and beyond (family members, significant others, friends, peers) regarding these challenges in order to create more support for graduate students engaged in Indigenous research.

The insights provided by participants in Chapters 5 and 6 can be used to inform strategies aimed at improving rural and remote First Nations athletes' athletic and academic experiences in Manitoba and beyond. The results of Chapter 7 can be used to inform strategies aimed at alleviating barriers along First Nations coaches' coaching paths. All of these chapters have potential to contribute to the TRC's (2015c) sport-related Calls to Action by making sport environments more conducive to the recruitment and retention of First Nations athletes and coaches. Chapter 8, on the other hand, has potential to contribute to the recruitment and retention of graduate students wishing to become engaged in Indigenous research in colonial academies through its contribution toward raising awareness for the challenges such work might impose.

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Chapter 2: Situating Myself

To communicate the positionality with which I approached the work discussed in this thesis, the current chapter contains an auto-ethnographic piece which explains some of the experiences that have led me to pursuing my current research. Although I have already answered many of the "why" questions one may have about my research, one "why" remains: "why focus on Indigenous (specifically, First Nations) people?" Or, looked at a different way, "why focus on the shortcomings of colonial-capitalist society and how these shortcomings have, and continue to, marginalize Indigenous peoples?" I believe the following auto-ethnography helps address this important query.

Prior to proceeding, however, by this point readers may be wondering about my ancestral and cultural backgrounds. I am not an Indigenous person under the political definition summarized previously. I have been told that there is some Indigenous ancestry in my lineage, which to my understanding is Ojibway on my mom's side of the family, but this ancestry has been blended with significant European representation. According to Stuart Hall, race is a floating signifier in that it is not connected to biology (Media Education Foundation, 2006)[7]; it is contingent upon socio-historical/cultural contexts (Media Education Foundation, 2006). In the case of the political definition of "Indigenous", the government of Canada has established an arbitrary line based on degree of ancestry that distinguishes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people regardless of the cultural activities in which individuals engage or the values individuals hold. As such, we see two groups of people: one whose members meet ancestral criteria determined by the government, and one whose members do not. In this way, "Indigeneity" it political.

There is more than one way to think about Indigeneity, however. Berry (1999)[8] suggested there are four aspects to Indigenous *cultural* identity: 1) the belief one is Indigenous; 2) the feeling of attachment one has to Indigenous people (i.e., social identity); 3) how seeing oneself as Indigenous affects one's self-esteem; and 4) the extent to which one wants to maintain Indigenous identity (i.e., "keep and display" versus "change or hide"; p. 4). Rather than provide an analysis of where I locate myself in relation to each of these four aspects, I think a simple

[7] Media Education Foundation. [ChallengingMedia]. (2006, October 4). Race, the floating signifier: Featuring Stuart Hall [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bMo2uiRAf30
[8] Berry, J. W. (1999). Aboriginal cultural identity. Canadian Journal of Native Studies, 19(1), 1-36.

acknowledgement of my self-location with respect to aspect number 2 is quite telling with respect to the question “who am I?”, yet not completely telling because it still leaves me unlabeled. Although I find what is written about the ways of knowing, being, and doing of Indigenous cultures to be more attractive than what is practiced in Western cultures (and I acknowledge that Western society and science tend to over-generalize), which can likely be attributed to my northern upbringing and the various mental health issues the competition and contradictions of Western ways have brought me, I have lived as little more than an “outsider” in relation to Indigenous peoples and cultures (other than land-based activities). In other words, there has been something preventing me from engaging with Indigenous cultures outside merely the imposition of Western ways upon me. I believe this lack of engagement despite deep admiration stems from a feeling I will not be accepted, and this feeling has roots deeply anchored in gardens of past experiences (for some elaboration, refer to Chapter 8).

Critical Social Consciousness in Secondary Education: Greater Emphasis Among the Non-Indigenous to Better Support Indigenous Students' Academic Success[9]

Abstract

As a man of mainly Euro-Canadian heritage, I draw on my experiences attending a high school of mainly Indigenous student composition, demonstrating the importance of critical social consciousness in secondary schools to overcome the ongoing colonial activities that perpetuate the marginalization of Indigenous students. First, I use auto-ethnographic writing to convey my experiences with Indigenous students at my school. My ignorance at the time exemplifies how a lack of critical social consciousness in the case of colonization can manifest itself in dismissive views that serve to maintain oppression through individuals' complacency with the status quo of colonial-capitalist society. Next, I connect points raised to relevant literature, explaining some of the causal factors and mechanisms perpetuating marginalization. I conclude by challenging secondary schools to more greatly emphasize critical social consciousness development with students to decrease complacent behaviors that perpetuate colonization. I note that for this to happen, critical social consciousness must continue to be part of teacher education in universities.

Keywords: critical social consciousness, culturally relevant teaching, marginalization, Indigenous

Preamble

Gloria Ladson-Billings (1995) described culturally relevant pedagogy as having the following three key characteristics: 1) students' academic success; 2) students' development and maintenance of cultural competence; and 3) students' development of critical consciousness. This paper focuses on the third aspect, critical consciousness, which Ladson-Billings suggested is "a broader sociopolitical consciousness that allows them [students] to critique the cultural norms, values, mores, and institutions that produce and maintain social inequities" (p. 162).

My secondary educational experience was unique in that I attended an institute some might argue was a modern-day representation of a residential school. I should clarify that although students at this school were not subjected to physical and verbal abuse like that experienced in the residential school system, most of the Indigenous students (who, to my

[9]A version of this article has been submitted to the journal *Understanding and Dismantling Privilege* (revisions requested).

estimate, comprised over 80% of the students at the school) had moved away from family, friends, culture, and familiar communities to attend this institution, which adhered strongly to Western ways of knowing, being, and doing. My ancestral lineage is mainly Euro-Canadian, with only mentions of an Ojibway ancestor on my mom's side of the family, so I was raised significantly under the influence of Western paradigms, had unearned White privilege[10] and, in a physical sense, did not appear to have any Indigenous ancestry whatsoever. Thus, I was seen as a "White boy", and I viewed situations at my school through a narrow lens.

Due to a lack of critical social consciousness development during my secondary education, I failed to see the reasons behind the challenges surrounding Indigenous peoples in Canada. This failure to understand situations maintained for me an uncomfortable environment in which I found myself simply trying to avoid interactions with students challenged by marginalization as opposed to interacting with them and being a friend. As a teenager, I maintained an interest in avoiding harmful behaviors, and perhaps because of this, my attitude toward other youth in general, by default, was one of mistrust. If, for some reason (such as a group project, or through a mutual relation) I became friends with an Indigenous student at my school (which was the case in many circumstances), trust would be built. However, my hesitance to trust in the first place made for far fewer Indigenous friends (or friends in general) than would have otherwise been the case. On the positive side, fewer relations meant fewer distractions from schoolwork, in which I seemed to be constantly engaged.

With those disclaimers now conveyed, the first part of this paper contains auto-ethnographic writing I use to convey the ignorance I had in my youth, and how that type of ignorance must be addressed to promote better relationships between non-Indigenous and Indigenous people in Canada. In the second part of the paper, I cite relevant literature to explain underlying causes behind challenges I witnessed among Indigenous students in my high school during my education there, serving to extend the critical social consciousness of those who might be unaware of how colonization continues to marginalize Indigenous peoples. Finally, I conclude by suggesting critical social consciousness must continue to be part of teacher

[10] McIntosh (1989) said the following about White privilege: "I have come to see white privilege as an invisible package of unearned assets which I can count on cashing in each day, but about which I was 'meant' to remain oblivious. White privilege is like an invisible weightless knapsack of special provisions, maps, passports, codebooks, visas, clothes, tools and blank checks" (p. 10). In other words, those with White privilege live in a society where their ways of knowing, being, and doing are reaffirmed, and where they are automatically given the benefit of the doubt in social situations.

education in university settings to promote development of the skills necessary to help secondary students develop this attribute.

Off to the Herons

The night was silent, the wind still, and the clear sky dotted with a million stars that captured my gaze and held me in a spell as I walked. It was December, cold, and the only sounds came from beneath my feet, where my old snowshoes made of wood and sinew creaked as they packed the snow, creating one of the only trails on the frozen lake. The trees on shore were still covered in hoar frost because of the cold, windless day it had been, and the lights of my nana's house were now over a kilometer behind me, but still gave me a warm feeling as I looked back occasionally. My day at school had been a challenging one, and on this day, I also felt the need to avoid the challenges being offered to me, so I suppose I needed the journey upon which I now embarked. I would cross the bay and enter the forest, where the large Balsam Poplar trees would greet me in their own ancient, silent way. Great Blue Herons had built nests in those trees long ago, and I would go see the nests on this night, although the Herons would not be present; the great birds had left a few months ago, down south to where winter's trance had not penetrated as deeply. It was a simple quest, to walk across the bay, through the forest, and to the nests, but it was one that kept my mind from the events of the day while allowing me to connect with nature.

My place of upbringing is situated in what I would call the heart of Canada, away from major cities, out among the spruce trees of the boreal forest and nestled between the rocks and bogs of the Canadian Shield (an area characterized by coniferous and deciduous forests, rock outcrops, bogs, lakes, and rivers). This is an area in which one can hear the wilderness beating, the rhythm of the rivers, and the call of the serene lakes. If you are sufficiently patient, you can be witness to the conifer trees dancing to this beat, swaying in the northwest wind, their ancient roots holding them faithfully in place, locking them to the earth that sustains and nurtures. Two decades of my life were spent in this area, traversing the frozen lakes, escaping into the wonders of the forests, my spirit nurtured by the earth, just as the roots of the conifers. It was a blessing, yet at the same time, it also had its trials and tribulations.

Hours prior to my walk to the Herons, I had wandered down the dreary, gray brick hallway of my high school to my first class of the day. I stayed to the far-left side of the hallway as I walked, my body tight to the lockers along the wall and avoiding the flood of students going

in the opposite direction. They had poured in from the doors that faced toward the middle of campus and which were across from the dorm buildings where many students stayed during the academic year. In contrast, I had entered from the other side, barely having had to walk on campus at all to access the building.

My structural surroundings, as dreary as they were, were something to which I had grown accustomed, so I paid no attention to the poor lighting, the cracking, gray bricks, and the beat up, off-white lockers lining the wall as I walked. Yet although I was not made uncomfortable by the structural atmosphere, I still walked with my shoulders slumped and head low as the flood of students passed me by. I knew I clashed, in a racial sense, against the backdrop of students that flowed past, although the sense I felt of being a misfit was a constant for me that merely occurred in these hallways, as it occurred in many other settings. Indeed, to this day the gurglings of my stomach are audible to anyone within a few meters of me when I am in social settings containing anyone other than my closest family members and friends. Yet outside the social aspects, the school itself was structurally and academically no problem for me in terms of comfort. I had been well-prepared for the academic responsibilities of secondary study from my elementary school days, and that academic setting is where I seemed to shine. It wasn't that I was particularly smart; I didn't have any heightened ability to memorize definitions or taxonomic names. Rather, my academic success was a product of at least five factors.

First, both of my parents worked full-time, with my father working many early mornings, evenings, and weekends, including many summer weeks spent working away from home. I suppose hearing my father get up at 5am to go to work must have had an impact on me, as to this day I get up at that time to get in my first run of the day, even during the cold, Manitoba winters. Similarly, my mother also worked a lot and, partly from my observation of that, I received the impression that money was always a concern in our family. Perhaps because of that concern, or maybe just because my parents liked to seize opportunities that simply seemed wise in an economical sense (as in "why not?"), my younger brother and I received most of our clothing and hockey equipment from older boys in town, and we had no problem with that. It was normal. To this day, due to these events and others during my upbringing, as well as to being surrounded by impoverished students during my high school years, I am very uncomfortable at gatherings with any type of dress code other than "please wear something", I have no desire to vacation anywhere that requires me to board a plane (I'd rather just drive home to northern

Manitoba), and when I spend money on clothing anywhere other than at second-hand stores, I feel like I'm betraying a part of my identity of which I have become very proud. Anyway, because of my parents' devotion to work as well as their frugality, my siblings and I had the necessities of life (healthy food [my mom cooked very well], shelter) as well as the school supplies we needed (maybe not the big boxes of crayons that many of my town-based peers received in elementary school, but you don't really need all of those colors anyway). Further, it seems as though my parents instilled within me their work ethic, and I used that during my high school and college years as I toiled away with homework and studying. Indeed, that work ethic comes from somewhere, but for many Indigenous parents, intergenerational trauma and systemic racism act as barriers to consistent, long-term employment.

Second, I always had a comfortable, quiet place to do schoolwork and study. When things became noisy at my parents' house, I could just go to my nana's house and there would be a room there. That is a luxury that many impoverished Indigenous children living in overcrowded houses on reserves do not have. Third, for a while, my extremely obsessive personality worked to my advantage, as it made it so I *had* to complete all of my homework each day. That obsessiveness eventually became quite a double-edged sword, however, as striving for perfectionism, as opposed to aiming more for excellence, was an unsustainable endeavor that distracted me from making progress in my work years later. Fourth, academics, as we do them in Western society, were presented as a competition and, fifth, I had a chip on my shoulder that mandated that I must be a winner at something. I am not certain as to the origins of that chip, whether I was compensating for personal insecurities, trying to prove myself to people who I felt rejected me in some way (as I indicated before, I was a misfit), or some other reason; whatever the case, it drove me to the point where I neglected other areas of my life. A teacher once told me he thought my motivation stemmed from a desire for scholarships, but that was not at all the case. I just wanted to win; I was chasing the idol that is grade point average (GPA), and who could blame me? We're always told, in mainstream society, to work hard and do well in school. Yet I suppose a desire to compete so heavily in Western academics is harder to manifest for people who are not of Western upbringing, and who, due to systemic poverty and intergenerational trauma, must prioritize immediate needs that are so frequently unmet (see Maslow, 1943).

And so, as I toiled away, preoccupied with school work and generally mistrusting people outside my family and the safe circle of friends I had developed during my primary years of education, I demonstrated little interest in forming new bonds. In addition, although I enjoyed being active, a lot of that activity occurred outside school sports, until grade 12 anyway. I had started running about a year prior to high school, as I had wanted to lose weight. I wasn't bullied very much for being overweight… I was actually bullied more for being underweight, which was a place at which I found myself by about grade 10. Restrictive eating (especially for a teenage male) and a lot of activity had gotten me down to 103 pounds at a height of about 5 feet, 10 inches. Whereas the other boys in high school were benching a plate with ease, I struggled with the bar (that's perhaps an over exaggeration, but it makes for humorous imagery amidst a depressing story). The hurtful comments I received for my appearance, however, came more from well-intentioned, concerned family members than anyone else.

In the school setting, my paler skin, lighter hair, and evident lack of understanding of how things operated in the isolated communities in which many of the other students were raised were features that identified me as a "townie" to all the "rezzies". "Townie" was the word kids used for students who were from town, yet if you were White, it was usually safe to assume you were a "townie" anyway because the "rezzies", who lived in the dorms (formerly called the residence) during the academic year and were mainly from reserve communities, were mostly, if not all, Indigenous. Although the years of "townie-rezzie" feuds had ended long prior to my enrolment at the school, there was still a need for vigilance on the part of the physically diminutive boy. Although being the subject of bullying as a consequence of being White may have occurred some of the time, it wasn't actually that bad, and I didn't perceive my skin color to be an issue in that respect. My 103 pound body, on the other hand, was more of a cause for concern. As such, the only objective I had on my walks down the halls was to filter as quickly as possible out of the stream against which I walked and clashed, and into the classroom where I could kick everyone's ass with my calculator.

As I sat in class eagerly waiting for my teacher to arrive and anxiously hoping a couple of problem students would skip that day, my mind lingered on a story I heard that morning about one of the "rezzies" hanging herself the previous night. Such stories were commonplace, so why was I ruminating so much on this one when I had my own issues with which to deal? The motivations generally driving my cognitive functioning with respect to peer interactions

stemmed from a desire to avoid people in general, including the “rezzies” and the general goings-on on campus after school hours. I had no intention of getting caught up in the violence, drugs, alcohol, and vandalism that was frequent there, and that seemed to link some of the “rezzies” to some of the “townies” who also seemed to seek out those activities. Hence, my mind lingered on the young lady only briefly. It was not my problem.

My teacher entered the room and class began. To my disappointment, one of the problem students, Billy, had indeed shown up. He was an Indigenous boy, one of the “rezzies”, and perhaps a little old for a grade 9 student. Seeing older Indigenous students in lower-level classes was common at my school, though… it was just the way it was, and I didn’t really question it. Like the suicide, it wasn’t my problem. Similar to the issues with violence, drugs, alcohol, and vandalism among the “rezzies”, this was an issue I ignored (only to find out later in life that my mind didn’t ignore it, but just suppressed it) in favor of working on my daily plan of how to avoid interactions with people outside my circle of friends.

While engaged in a somewhat jaunty strut on the way to his desk, Billy passed by a garbage can and, making the entire class aware of the significant amount of phlegm layering his sinuses through irritatingly loud vocalizations attributed to deliberate, forcible clearing of these passageways, spat a decently sized loogie toward the can. The mucus missed the can and hit the wall, but this lack of accuracy didn’t bother Billy, and although my teacher commented angrily on the expectoration, he must not have seen the glob on the wall because he didn’t make Billy clean it up. Billy sat down vehemently in his desk as the loogie succumbed to gravity, oozing downward and creating a trail of viscous, clear-white slime, much like snails do when they scoot around the garden. Much to my disgust, that loogie remained there all year, and it’s probably still there to this day, preserved in a kind of mummified form.

As I watched Billy sit down and slump in his desk, I noticed he didn’t take out any writing materials; in fact, he didn’t even have a backpack in which to carry school supplies. Was he planning on getting kicked out of class, and so didn’t bother to bring school supplies? Indeed, that’s exactly what happened, only minutes later, as a result of his excessive use of profanity aimed at the student sitting next to him. He was creative in his profanity, though, I’ll give him that. My vocabulary of four-letter words had been well established at an early age, thanks to my father and uncle, so I was quite an authority in that sense and, thus, well equipped to make assessments of the profanity used by other people. Anyway, I felt a sense of relief as Billy got

up and left the room, flipping our teacher the middle finger as he walked out the door. I could now relax; my problem was solved, as I didn't have to worry about being picked on… at least for the time being.

Aside from the usual behaviors in which I would engage in an attempt to avoid other students outside my closest circle of friends, most of the remainder of my school day was relatively uneventful, with the exception of health class. I entered the room a few minutes prior to the start of class and sat in a desk near the front. One of the problem "rezzies", Jacob, had arrived early as well, and I watched in bewilderment as he crossed the room. I hadn't seen Jacob in any of my classes in over a week, and with high school curriculum as fast-paced and content-crammed as it was at my school, I wondered why he would even bother to show up now after missing so many lessons.

Jacob sat next to me despite most of the other desks in the classroom being unoccupied, which instantly sparked within me a feeling of anxiety. My mind anticipated an uncomfortable situation looming, and my body began to feel warm as my heartbeat quickened. As I have mentioned, constant vigilance was required on the part of the physically diminutive boy, and months immersed in the high school environment had given me an intuition well-tuned to the signs of potential confrontation. As I sat in my seat sweating, trying to avoid direct eye contact, Jacob went into a pocket of his baggy, black jeans and pulled something out. He extended his closed fist toward me, the back of his hand facing up at first and displaying purple bruising across his knuckles. Having a grandmother who was one of the school's nurses for a time, I frequently heard about "rezzies" punching the walls of their dorm rooms, and now I wondered if his bruising had something to do with this. My mind did not dwell on the bruises for long, though, as Jacob turned his hand over and opened it to reveal two rolls of marijuana. Mockingly, he said to me, "Eh White buoooooy, you wan' sum smoots?" I looked at him, dumbfounded for a moment, then simply replied, "No", returning my focus back toward the textbook in front of me. I knew from Jacob's aggressive presence that his offer was not an attempt at friendship, nor was he just trying to be generous. Rather, he was proudly letting me know he was a badass via his great accomplishment, that accomplishment being the procurement of an illegal substance (or, which was illegal back then) that he likely thought was a signifier of the "badasses" in the world of teenage boys. As such, I did not express to Jacob any kind of gratitude for his offer.

Just then, our health teacher entered the classroom. Jacob quickly put the drugs back in his pocket, replacing the void in his hand with half a pencil, which I figured he only brought to throw at somebody. Surprisingly, he stayed in class for the entire period, pencil in hand the whole time, making my discomfort persist until the end of the lesson. At that time, I watched Jacob get up and leave, yet I stayed in my seat for a couple minutes to reduce the likelihood of interacting with him in the hallway. I still had to go to my locker to pick up my winter coat, and I knew I would feel more comfortable doing so if he was gone. After waiting for this to happen, I breathed a sigh of relief and walked out of the classroom, head low and shoulders slumped.

That evening, as I snowshoed across the frozen lake, I tried to find peace from the goings-on in my life. My breath was visible in front of me and some warmth was beginning to build underneath all my layers due to the physical exertion, yet my face was still cold and stiff. Little did I know the events and stories I tried to push out of my mind would stay with me for years. Like hot coals waiting to ignite, they would eventually grow into a conflagration burning with a passion to melt mainstream societal paradigms that continue to oppress people, particularly youth who are victims of marginalization and perceptions of those at the top of societal hierarchies. Yet to me, the challenges, for the time being, were without reason. And so, on that particular evening years ago, I was simply off to the Herons.

A Call for Critical Social Consciousness

I have heard people ask, "why don't they just get over it?" in reference to certain aspects of colonization affecting Canada's Indigenous peoples, including the residential school system. Such an ignorant question often only originates from those who are ill-informed of the causal factors and mechanisms perpetuating the issues. The following section is organized according to the specific events of which I wrote in the first section, occurrences that were viewed through a narrow lens, and processed by a brain lacking critical social consciousness. For each issue, I cite relevant literature to better inform those who may also be ignorant, like me. By doing so, I explain the causal factors and mechanisms perpetuating challenges among Indigenous peoples in Canada's colonial society, demonstrating how many of the issues are intergenerational and systemic and, therefore, not something people just "get over".

On Not Fitting In

Early in this paper I explained how I felt like a misfit, and although this feeling was consistent across multiple settings, it is now important that I draw attention to my mention of

adjusting well to the structural atmosphere and academic components of the high school I attended. I had been exposed to Western ways my entire life and, looking back, I realize my high school was Western in both its structural features and its curriculum (aside from one Native Studies course that I did not take because it was not mandatory and would only distract from my achievement in mandatory classes). In my teenage years, though, I did not realize there was a particular "culture" in my high school; I simply thought the structural atmosphere and curriculum were "normal". For those raised according to Western ways, many existing paradigms under which we operate, including in education, are believed to be non-discriminatory practices providing everyone with equal opportunity.

Van Ingen and Halas (2006) explained how cultures of Whiteness are experienced through symbolic and physical landscapes in secondary schools, which can make Indigenous students feel unwelcome. Speaking to challenges First Nations students experience, Kirkness and Barnhardt (2001) differentiated between "going" and "coming" to university, where the latter denotes a responsibility placed on the student to adapt to the predominating culture. This is a notion I believe also applies to secondary schools, including, at least during my teenage years, my old high school (I acknowledge that some improvements have been made over the 13 years since my graduation). Never having been one to "fit in", I've always said the world needs to be more accommodating to those who do not fit the ideals of mainstream society. As Erich Fromm (1955, p. 70) stated: "[M]ental health cannot be defined in terms of the 'adjustment' of the individual to his society, but, on the contrary, that it must be defined in terms of the adjustment of society to the needs of man". Although the majority of students at my high school were Indigenous, the predominating culture as perpetuated by staff, including the use of space (until more recently), had significantly Western underpinnings to which students were expected to adjust. I suppose, though, there is a hierarchy that exists at typical high schools in our country, with Indigenous students at the very bottom. Dominant groups set norms in society, including within education, to reinforce their own values and ways of being (Schick & St. Denis, 2005). In Canada, colonial practices have created "winners" and "losers", privileging the colonizers and their descendants while marginalizing Indigenous peoples. Naturally, it is more difficult to identify practices that marginalize certain groups if you are not a member of one of the groups being marginalized, hence the need for critical social consciousness.

On Academic Challenges

I drew attention to the lack of school supplies both Billy and Jacob carried with them to class. Back then, however, I wasn't aware of the high rates of poverty among Indigenous children in Canada (Macdonald & Wilson, 2013). Simply not being able to afford school supplies could explain a lack of it. However, considering it was so common to see older students, such as Billy, in lower-level classes in my high school, I still wonder how motivated some of the Indigenous students there were to take their academics seriously. Poverty is just one of the factors making it difficult for Indigenous children to ascend Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs. For example, many of my Indigenous peers had said "good-bye" to their families at the age of fourteen to attend high school, so family support, especially back then, when few students had cell phones and before social media ruled the world, was limited.

In addition to poverty and separation from family, provincial curriculum caters more to those accustomed to Western ways than it does to those accustomed to Indigenous ways. Practical knowledge of the land often goes unrewarded in traditional Western academia (Preston, 2008), save for a few classes, and traditional assessment measures used in Western institutions fail at identifying students' strengths (Ladson-Billings, 1998). Although our school did have a Native Studies course, I decided to pass on taking it in favor of concentrating on achieving in the courses made mandatory by the province, so I am unable to comment on the content of that course or the delivery. Also important to note is that the reduced funding received by most[11] federally funded (i.e., on-reserve) schools compared to provincially funded (i.e., off-reserve) schools (TRC, 2015a, call to action #8) does little to help prepare Indigenous students raised on reserves for provincial high school curriculum.

In summary, "rezzies" at my school were thrown into a culturally irrelevant environment away from their parents, and where the curriculum was far beyond the level for which many of them had been prepared. They were not given the supports to be successful, and as to the notion of affirming their Indigenous identities, there were little efforts made, back then, to infuse

[11] Funding received by First Nations schools affiliated with the Manitoba First Nations School System (MFNSS), which was recently established by the Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre (MFNERC; MFNSS, n.d.), is increased relative to funding received by First Nations schools not affiliated with the MFNSS (Malone, 2017). According to the MFNSS (n.d., para. 8): "Since starting operations in July 2017, MFNSS has made significant strides in developing an education system reflecting First Nations worldview, culture, and values. As of March 2019, eleven First Nations schools have signed on for an initial term, with several others expressing an interest in joining." Note there is currently a total of 59 First Nations-operated schools in Manitoba (MFNERC, 2018).

Indigenous worldviews, knowledges, and pedagogies into the curriculum. Despite these obvious weaknesses, underprivileged Indigenous students were expected to compete academically against privileged ones for GPA, upon which entrance into university depends. Given Canada's shameful history of colonization via the Indian Residential School (IRS) system, wherein education was used as a tool of assimilation and harm (TRC, 2015b) that negatively impacted generations of Indigenous families and communities (TRC, 2015c), no wonder Indigenous students were disengaged and/or disobedient.

On Suicide, Drugs, and Alcohol

Indigenous peoples have responded to hundreds of years of colonization with incredible resiliency,[12] and many have transcended the systemic challenges that contribute to the equity gaps within Canada's colonial society. Back in high school, I had some understanding of colonial activities, but I had limited understanding of ongoing colonial activity, and no understanding of the mechanisms that make trauma intergenerational. Suicide rates in First Nations communities are double the national average (Government of Canada, 2006) and, considering suicide is often an alternative to a life of pain, these high rates are indicators of severely harmful environments. Unfortunately, we know that Western approaches to suicide prevention are often inadequate for First Nations peoples due to cultural irrelevance, as they focus on individuals' behavior as opposed to viewing individuals as being connected to their environments which, for First Nations peoples, have been trauma-laden (see Barker et al., 2017). Similarly, drugs, alcohol, and other substances society labels as "addictive" can be used as a short-term, although destructive relief from the pain as well, and for the addict, engaging in such behavior is beyond merely a matter of personal choice. Maté (2012) made a case for early childhood adversity as the cause of addiction, suggesting the environments to which children are exposed determine development of brain circuitry related to endorphin and dopamine regulation, as well as presence of chemicals such as serotonin. In essence, drugs provide feelings that would otherwise occur naturally, if not for trauma, such as love and motivation. Canada's colonial environment has imposed multiple sources of trauma on Indigenous peoples (e.g., the IRS system, see TRC, 2015b), and these traumas have been passed down to successive generations

[12] I think we must be careful not to simply state that Indigenous peoples are resilient, as though resilience is merely an innate trait that one either has or does not have, as doing so would be to discount the difficult decisions and perseverance Indigenous peoples have demonstrated, and continue to demonstrate, in the face of colonization.

through a variety of mechanisms including negatively affected parenting behavior and altered social norms with respect to handling issues such as sexual violence (Bombay et al., 2014). Moreover, the isolation inherent in capitalist society (see Marx, 1844) exacerbates the problem by encouraging the compromises in brain development that lead to addiction through a lack of interactions between children and non-stressed, emotionally available caregivers (see Maté's talk at Heartspeak, 2009; see also Maté, 2012, 2013). As Maté (2013) explained, and as supported by other research pertaining to environmental influences on human development (Narvaez, 2013), Indigenous peoples living in community-oriented societies had the right approach to parenting prior to colonial influence.

Bombay et al.'s (2014) research about intergenerational trauma discusses not only mechanisms of perpetuation, but also the plethora of ways in which intergeneration trauma may manifest itself, such as drug use, depression, and learning difficulties. Yet as developmental expert Leonard Sax suggested, the tendency in many instances is to simply drug children so they can perform as needed in school (Fillion, 2008), and all the while, we continue on in the stress-inducing, illness-breeding, capitalist environment that Western society has imposed (see Maté's talk at Altruism_1980, 2014). In other words, as Halas and Hanson (2001) explained, we try to "normalize" the student as opposed to addressing societal shortcomings. Of course, the challenges associated with mental health issues extend into other areas of life as well. For example, within my discussion *Barriers to Indigenous Athletes' Athletic Development in Canada: An Analysis Framed by Daniels' Ingredients of Success, Part 2* (Kosmenko, 2021), I cited Bombay et al. (2014) and other works in a discussion of possible effects of intergenerational trauma on Indigenous athletes' pursuit of sport.

In essence, and as Bronfenbrenner's (1977) Ecological Systems Theory suggests, one's environment plays a crucial role in personal development. Yet we do not teach our secondary students to be aware of the societal shortcomings alluded to earlier that lead to compromised mental health. Instead, we teach them to not complain, to push through pain, and to obey authority without question. In order to look more deeply, students must receive signals from educators that doing so is important and encouraged (i.e., educators must teach students in this way). As we work to develop this critical social consciousness, I believe more people will see the value in structuring school environments to be more inclusive of Indigenous students. I envision school systems and curriculum in which Indigenous peoples are celebrated, the

resilience of Indigenous peoples is emphasized, and Indigenous cultural practices and imagery are included within school pedagogies and campus environments in general to help make Indigenous students feel welcome and that they belong (especially since many are away from home). If this were to happen, perhaps Indigenous students would feel the type of support that Canadian colonial society has failed to provide thus far.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Although my journeys to the Heron nests were a reality in a physical sense, I also used the Heron nests as a metaphor for the place our minds wander when we resist thinking critically about emotionally distressing issues. Balance is important, and sometimes our minds need a break from the more emotionally distressing aspects of life. Hence, sometimes we need to simply let our minds wander off to the Herons. My mind wanders back and forth, and, so far, it has always returned to those emotionally distressing issues upon which I yearn to take action. There are participants and spectators in many aspects of life, and the difference is made in our decision to either push the issues to the backs of our minds, living among the Herons indefinitely, or bring the issues to light and question the status quo. To choose the latter is to choose a path of controversy, periods of depression, frustration and anger, and frequent feelings of loneliness and isolation. As Erich Fromm (Goodreads, 2020) said, “one cannot be deeply responsive to the world without being saddened very often”.

If we want to keep students’ minds fixated on the Herons permanently, then we are currently doing a good job in our academic settings. In education, we do well when it comes to teaching students to perform mathematical and scientific calculations and cram definitions, laws, and theories in preparation for tests and exams. What we often fail to do, though, is teach students how to question what it is they are learning in school and in life, and why they should be questioning it. On the other hand, if we want to address the root causes of challenges we see many Indigenous students battling, we must be honest about what those causes are and how they are perpetuated by current systems at work in Canada’s colonial society. Secondary school teachers must have the knowledge and skills necessary to follow through on these notions. Universities have started adding critical social consciousness to their teacher education curricula, and this must continue if we wish to develop critical social consciousness in secondary students.

Teachers must be able to create environments in which Indigenous students feel a sense of cultural belonging. In addition, teachers need to be able to help non-Indigenous students

understand the underlying causal factors and mechanisms perpetuating the marginalization of Indigenous peoples and how these agents create disparities that result in educational inequities. As this understanding is developing, teachers must provide guidance to non-Indigenous students with respect to how they might help Indigenous students feel welcome in Western academic settings, and how they might help affirm Indigenous students' intellectual identities. In helping students view the world through informed, compassionate lenses, we will reduce avoidance behaviors, trading in these actions of oppression for cooperation and positive personal growth in both Indigenous and non-Indigenous students.

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Chapter 3: Literature Review, Historical and Contextual Factors

Why the History Lesson?

An understanding of where we have been helps direct us with respect to where to go next. Unfortunately, the ignorant question of "why don't they just get over it?" informs us that there are people in Canada who still do not understand colonization and how it continues today and, therefore, are not informed about what steps to now take as we work toward reconciliation (after all, "truth" comes before "reconciliation"). Along with being beneficial to uninformed/misinformed individuals, a brief discussion of some historical colonial events as they pertain to sport may be helpful to Indigenous athletes who do not know this history. Indeed, Lavallée and Lévesque (2013) stressed the importance of a critical consciousness with respect to colonialism in their discussion of the Integrated Indigenous-ecological Model (IIEM). Due to colonial activities, Indigenous athletes often have greater battles to fight than athletes benefitting from White privilege[13]. In any battle, it helps to know who/what your opponent is, as this information informs strategies in your fight against it. As such, this chapter provides background information on past and present colonial relationships in Canada, as well as some aspects of Indigenous revitalization in sport.

Colonization

A definition of colonization is "[t]he action or process of settling among and establishing control over the indigenous people of an area" (Lexico.com, 2020). However, colonization itself is not as simple as its definition, and colonial history in Canada is something still shrouded by a fog of myths and partial truths. As mentioned in the upcoming section *Indigenous Revitalization*, deconstructing these myths and filling the gaps in history are imperative to revitalization. For the present section, however, I focus on explaining some aspects of Canada's colonial history and connecting that context to present-day situations for Indigenous peoples, particularly athletes.

His-story and the Indian Act

[13] McIntosh (1989) said the following about White privilege: "I have come to see white privilege as an invisible package of unearned assets which I can count on cashing in each day, but about which I was 'meant' to remain oblivious. White privilege is like an invisible weightless knapsack of special provisions, maps, passports, codebooks, visas, clothes, tools and blank checks" (p. 10). In other words, those with White privilege live in a society where their ways of knowing, being, and doing are reaffirmed, and where they are automatically given the benefit of the doubt in social situations. See McIntosh (1989) for examples.

"'Who controls the past,' ran the Party slogan, 'controls the future: who controls the present, controls the past'" (Orwell, 2016, p. 42).

As LaRocque (2010) noted, colonization always requires justification. Justification for colonization in Canada was largely based on what LaRocque (2010) labelled the civ/sav (i.e., civilized and savage) dichotomy. In years preceding the colonization of what is now known as Canada, as well as into the early years of colonization, there existed a notion that people progressed, or evolved, from a savage state to a civilized state, passing through various other stages along the way (see LaRocque, 2010; see also Smith, 1999, i.e., social Darwinism). Blaut (1993) discussed the European miracle, which is the belief that people in Europe were naturally, by some act of God, more innovative than people elsewhere on Earth. By geographical diffusionism, this innovation flowed from Europe to other parts of the world (Blaut, 1993). This type of thinking is an example of Eurocentrism, which Blaut (1993) described as "all the beliefs that postulate past or present superiority of Europeans over non-Europeans" (p. 8). In short, early colonizers believed European ways represented civilized society, and Indigenous ways paralleled characteristics of the savage. As LaRocque (2010) explained, the civ/sav model was "doctrinaire and self-serving" (p. 39) because it was based on European criteria. LaRocque summarized the civ/sav dichotomy in the Canadian historical context as follows:

> In Canadian terms, civilization is consistently associated with settlement, private property, cultivation of land and intellect, industry, monotheism, literacy, coded law and order, Judeo-Christian morality, and metal-based technology. Civilization stands for what is illuminated, progressive, and decent, while savagery is its shadowy underside. Such a "civilization" is repeatedly outlined against "Indian savagery," in which savagism is seen as a psychosocial fixed condition, the antithesis of the highest human condition. Indians, then, by contrast, are delineated as wild, nomadic, warlike, uncultivating and uncultivated, aimless, superstitious, disorganized, illiterate, immoral, and technologically backwards. (p. 41)

According to Memmi (1967), racism, as seen in the civ/sav dichotomy described by LaRocque, is an underlying trait of colonization. Memmi explained the relationship between racism and colonization succinctly:

> Colonial racism is built from three major ideological components: one, the gulf between the culture of the colonialist and the colonized; two, the exploitation of these differences for the benefit of the colonialist; three, the use of these supposed differences as standards of absolute fact. (p. 71)

The racism inherent in colonial activities in Canada was recorded by early colonizers, later becoming what would be known as Canadian history. For example, the writings of Alexander Mackenzie were examined by Duchemin (1990), who suggested information about Indigenous peoples in Canada was required to inform the colonizers' strategies of domination. As Duchemin (1990) described, Mackenzie portrayed Indigenous peoples as child-like and less evolved than Europeans, and he treated them that way. He acted as a father-figure, disciplining his Indigenous associates when he thought they were misbehaving. When the Indigenous guides who had been helping with his ventures started to abandon him, Mackenzie wrote of them as being disloyal and lazy.

Differing worldviews between Indigenous peoples and Europeans with respect to concepts of time likely contributed to Mackenzie's ignorant viewpoints (Duchemin, 1990). Smith (1999) explained that Western notions of time differ from traditional notions of many Indigenous cultures, with the former group dividing time between various priorities, especially work (Smith, 1999). Duchemin (1990) noted that the activities of Indigenous peoples on Turtle Island were more in tune with their natural surroundings (i.e., they followed the "diurnal rhythms of a hunting economy", p. 57). Whereas devoting long hours at a time to a single pursuit may have been normal for Mackenzie and his people, it was not the norm for the Indigenous guides who helped him, and Indigenous people as a whole were condemned in writing by Mackenzie for this differing worldview (see Duchemin, 1990).

Charles Dickens was similarly guilty of writing that was prejudiced against Indigenous peoples, as evidenced in his 1854 article *The Lost Arctic Voyagers*. Dickens' article was a response to a report made by an explorer named John Rae, who studied Sir John Franklin's expedition in the Arctic. Franklin led two ships that became icebound and, according to Rae, who gathered evidence from the surrounding area as well as from local Inuit people, Franklin's crew eventually resorted to cannibalism. In his article, Dickens attempted to make a case that the cannibalism incidence reported was a fabrication. He did not blame Rae for misreporting the story. Instead, in addition to suggesting the story may have been distorted due to a language barrier between the local Inuit and Rae's interpreter, or even by exaggerations on the part of the interpreter, he suggested Inuit in general are not to be trusted. According to Dickens, and with respect to the assertion the explorers resorted to cannibalism:

> [N]o man can, with any show of reason, undertake to affirm that this sad remnant of Franklin's gallant band were not set upon and slain by the Esquimaux [Inuit] themselves. It is impossible to form an estimate of the character of any race of savages, from their deferential behaviour to the white man while he is strong. The mistake has been made again and again; and the moment the white man has appeared in the new aspect of being weaker than the savage, the savage has changed and sprung upon him. (p. 362)

Racist attacks against Inuit people occurred multiple times throughout Dickens' (1854) article. Adding to his onslaught, Dickens wrote, "[w]e believe every savage to be in his heart covetous, treacherous and cruel" (p. 362). Such comments are troubling, especially when coming from such a prominent writer.

Other authors, too, have based their assessments of Indigenous peoples on some form of civ/sav dichotomy. Walker (1971) analyzed numerous texts to examine how Indigenous peoples have been portrayed in Canadian historical writing. He found many derogatory terms such as savage, blood thirsty, red devil, hobgoblin, and others. He also found some angelic terms, many contradictions, and some writings that lacked context. In such ways, the civ/sav dichotomy has been reinforced, and as LaRocque (2010) explained, has provided justification for colonial activity. Such colonial activity would begin with attempts to "civilize", but that mission would eventually change to one of "assimilation", and legislation was created to help with this endeavor (Milloy, 2008).

In response to "civilizing" activities (e.g., erecting schools and churches, promoting farming) not having the effect colonizers desired, the federal government decided to change their objective from one of "civilizing" to one of "assimilating" (Milloy, 2008). The first version of the Indian Act was created in 1869 to help achieve this goal (Milloy, 2008). The 1876 document, which Hurley (2009) described as being concerned mainly with "land management, First Nations membership and local government" (p. 1) and still having "the ultimate goal of assimilation" (p. 1), represented a strengthened and expanded version, including a definition for "Indian" (Dickason & Newbigging, 2010). The implication of this definition was, as Milloy (2008) noted, First Nations peoples becoming "a legal construct imposed by Ottawa, with almost no reference to Indian custom and experience" (p. 10). In addition, the 1876 version of the Indian Act included more rules that would help with the overall goal of assimilation, such as increased content regarding enfranchisement (Dickason & Newbigging, 2010). For instance, enfranchisement occurred to status women who married non-status men (Dickason &

Newbigging, 2010), as determining lineal identity patriarchally was the norm in Victorian Canadian society (Milloy, 2008). Similarly, a status woman who married a status man from a different band had her band membership transferred (Milloy, 2008). As Milloy (2008) noted, these two rules meant that many First Nations women would be "exiled from their communities" (p. 12). Among other examples, enfranchisement also occurred to First Nations individuals who obtained a university degree (Milloy, 2008).

Another important implication of the Indian Act was increased control over First Nations governance and daily life in general by the federal government (Dickason & Newbigging, 2010). For a while, First Nations peoples remained self-governed (Milloy, 2008), but the 1876 version of the Act granted Indian Affairs authority to remove chiefs from their positions for reasons including "'dishonesty, intemperance, or immorality'" (Dickason & Newbigging, 2010, p. 198). The Act also outlawed certain ceremonial activities, such as the potlach and sun dance (Milloy, 2008).

Hurley (2009) suggested that despite changes to the document over the years (e.g., 1951 and 1985), the Act still remains fundamentally the same, that is, it still gives control over many aspects of First Nations peoples' lives to the federal government. Yet as Hurley (2009) described, issues pertaining to the Indian Act are complicated because although the Act maintains federal control, it also maintains federal accountability to ensuring protection of the unique rights of First Nations peoples.

Contemporary Implications of His-story and The Indian Act on Relations Between Indigenous Peoples and Sport

Critical race theory seeks to understand how racism can persist in a society despite its widespread condemnation (Harris, 2012). The distortion of history has significant contemporary implications, as it, along with a lack of emphasis on developing critical social consciousness among students today (see Chapter 2) may lead many non-Indigenous peoples to not see the racism plaguing contemporary Canadian society. As Green (1995) stated, "people raised on myths struggle to understand both indigenous alienation and claims of Aboriginal and treaty rights" (p. 87). The manifestations of being raised on myths may be seen among "leaders" of the nation, who still apparently believe they have a right to place pipelines over Indigenous peoples' lands and fill Indigenous students' minds with colonial curricula (Brown, 1998) in which English takes precedence over all Indigenous languages, students must learn colonial geography, and

studies include use of books and films portraying Indigenous peoples as either the enemy or simply as part of the scenery. Thus, the dominant narrative in Canada is still Eurocentrism, and the unquestioned acceptance of Western paradigms over all others simply perpetuates cultural irrelevance. When one wishes to follow a non-Western paradigm in a field such as research, one is often asked to provide justification. For instance, Walter and Andersen (2013) suggested that in this field, scholars engaged in research from an Indigenous perspective are often required to provide justification for their approach, yet scholars approaching research from a traditional Western perspective are not asked for such justification. Western research is seen as the norm, and similar attitudes can be seen throughout Canada's sport history as well. As Forsyth & Paraschak (2013) explained, sport is a socially constructed practice. Throughout Canada's colonial history, Indigenous sport has been marginalized while mainstream sport has been viewed as the norm and, thus, has been privileged.

As explained by Forsyth and Wamsley (2006), an all-Indigenous sport system was created in the 1970s and was meant to remain distinct from the mainstream system. Leaders of the all-Indigenous sport system wanted their teams to be recognized at the provincial level so their athletes could qualify for provincial and national competitions. However, as Forsyth and Wamsley (2006) explained, representatives of the federal government did not like that leaders of the all-Indigenous sport system would not integrate their organization with the mainstream one, and they (the feds) threatened to cease funding Indigenous sport. The federal government chose to focus on elite sport, believing the Indigenous system would not produce elite athletes. By 1981, Indigenous sport was on its own in terms of financial support.

In 1990 the House of Commons drew attention to the need for more federal involvement in Indigenous sport (Paraschak, 2002). With recognition that Indigenous sport differed from Euro-Canadian sport, a federal Indigenous sport body was created in 1995 (i.e., the Aboriginal Sport Circle; Paraschak, 2002). Provincial Indigenous sport organizations were also established. However, despite these advancements, Indigenous sport is still not viewed as being as legitimate as mainstream sport (Paraschak, 2013). Even the North American Indigenous Games (NAIG) have been critiqued on the presentation of Indigenous traditional games, which occur within a distinct cultural program (Forsyth, 2002; Paraschak, 2013), as well as how well the Games align with Indigenous values. For instance, a purpose of NAIG was to help produce elite athletes for mainstream sport (Forsyth, 2002), which some people may view as supporting a colonial system.

This critique – that of "recenter[ing] the colonizer" (LaRocque, 2015, p. 15) – has been used in scholarship as well. LaRocque (2015) asserted that Indigenous peoples have a right to play roles in the modern world of scholarship, and the same argument is asserted with respect to sport through Article 31 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples which states:

> Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their cultural heritage, traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions, as well as the manifestations of their sciences, technologies and cultures, including […] sports and traditional games […] They also have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their intellectual property over such cultural heritage, traditional knowledge, and traditional cultural expressions. (United Nations, 2008, p. 11)

A paper by Maynard (2009) about Australian Indigenous peoples and soccer conveys similar messages to that of the privileging of mainstream sports in NAIG. The paper explored why Aboriginal Australian athletes have historically not played as significant a role in soccer as they have in rugby and football. Maynard (2009) noted that many Aboriginal Australian people were forced to live in areas (i.e., reserves) where soccer was not popular. The author also noted that soccer was not easily accepted in mainstream Australian sport culture. European migrants started to engage in the sport, and then it became viewed as a game for misfits, so it received less media coverage than other sports. Further, soccer authorities had to request permission from the Protector of Aborigines if they wanted Aboriginal players to travel with them on trips. Maynard contended that more recently, however, soccer has become more widely accepted in Australia and the Aboriginal representation in the sport has grown.

In the Canadian context, and despite national and provincial sport organizations, sport policy in Canada is still greatly influenced by colonization. As Green (1995) explained, policy is shaped by Canada's distorted history. The federal government seemed to believe its sovereignty was justified, yet as explained, this justification was contingent upon the myth of the European miracle, along with racist, Eurocentric attitudes (Blaut, 1993). The federal government maintained policies, legislation, and systems that have marginalized Indigenous practices important in passing down Indigenous "cultural practices, traditions, and oral history" (Hanson, 2009, para. 12), as is evident through the funding struggles of Indigenous sport proponents, the assimilative actions by, and control granted to, the federal government via the Indian Act, and the marginalization of Indigenous sport relative to mainstream sport. The historic lack of

funding and recognition granted to Indigenous sport, as well as the prevention of self-government and the limitation of autonomy via the Indian Act, have affected what Indigenous sport communities could/can do in terms of sport and physical activity programming.

Fox (2006) explained that there are key differences in perspectives pertaining to leisure between Indigenous and Eurocentric cultures. She noted that knowledge of leisure, as well as its practice, have been built upon Eurocentric epistemologies, and that due to the lack of incorporation of Indigenous knowledges and perspectives, those using existing leisure knowledge and practices must be critical with respect to inclusivity. According to Fox (2006), using Eurocentric understandings of leisure to explain Indigenous understandings of this concept "misconstrues the dynamic, cyclical and verb-based world of Indigenous peoples" (p. 405). Fox (2007) explained the term "Aboriginal leisure" (p. 227) is problematic because both words within it are based on Euro-North American understandings and, as such, may mean nothing to Indigenous people who maintain Indigenous understandings of the interconnectedness and complexity of the world. Further, Fox (2006) highlighted how leisure research as it relates to Indigenous peoples is largely focused on the "goodness" (p. 405) of Eurocentric leisure activities. Yet Euro-North American leisure, according to Fox (2007), has often been damaging to Indigenous people, as it has:

> [L]ed to death and disease for Indigenous peoples, to attempts to assimilate or decimate Indigenous cultures, to repression of Indigenous practices and governance structures, to forced-labour in the service of Eurocentric leisure practices, and to commodification and objectification of Indigenous peoples and practices. (p. 219)

With respect to sport specifically, and after highlighting examples of how sport-related photographs taken in residential schools were often staged in various ways to conceal the reality of abuses toward students, McKee and Forsyth (2019) discussed how sport imagery has been used as propaganda to perpetuate notions of Euro-Canadian sport as being beneficial to residential school students. In the authors' words:

> Photographs of sports in the residential school system were strategically used to reinforce the positive assumptions about schooling, thereby distracting onlookers and silencing critics about the destruction that the schools were causing—and the myriad problems that Indigenous people and Canadians must now address. (p. 185)

Finally, the effects of colonization are also demonstrated by the ignorance perpetuating myths about Indigenous peoples in the minds of too many non-Indigenous people, and perhaps

even some Indigenous people themselves (referring here to horizontal violence) who have not come to understand the effects of colonization on personal development (hence the importance of Lavallée and Lévesques [2013] IIEM, which emphasizes critical consciousness regarding colonialism). Racism and negative portrayals of Indigenous peoples, which continue to be verbalized at sport events (e.g., CBC/Radio-Canada, 2020; see also Monkman, 2018, for a Manitoba example), are factors negatively affecting Indigenous identity (Goodwill & McCormick, 2012).

Forced Relocation

Forced relocation has played significant and very damaging roles in colonization in Canada, and the types of relocations that Indigenous peoples have been forced to undergo are numerous. This section focuses on the reserve system, land development, the Indian residential school (IRS) system, and the 60s scoop. The section concludes with a discussion of contemporary implications of relocation on sport for Indigenous peoples.

The Reserve System

Capitalism was a driving force behind colonization in Canada, including a reason for the relocation of Indigenous peoples onto reserves. As Blaut (1993) wrote, "[e]nterprise in the Americas was from the start a matter of capital accumulation: of profit" (p. 187). In fact, capitalism was a significant component of the National Policy. As Green (1995) described:

> It [the National Policy] was designed to guarantee the conditions for the development of indigenous capital: protected markets, cost-effective (that is, government-subsidized) transportation of resources and goods, and the creation of a population willing and able to produce and consume that on which capital investment depended. (p. 91)

Green (1995) further explained that a component of the National Policy was the building of a railroad across Canada. As resettlers (to borrow LaRocque's [2015, p. 12] term for Euro-White North Americans) began to resettle the west, they would help build the railroad and would consume the goods shipped via the railroad from the east (Green, 1995). The resettlers could also be used as a potential military in case the United States wanted to invade (Green, 1995). Yet, as Green (1995) explained, Indigenous peoples stood in the way of the construction of the coast-to-coast railroad. The reserve system served as a solution to this issue.

Forsyth and Wamsley (2006) described four additional motivations behind the reserve system: 1) tie Indigenous peoples to small parcels of land to discourage subsistence hunting and

fishing, as these activities were not valued by colonizers; 2) educate Indigenous peoples as a means of assimilation; 3) civilize Indigenous peoples; and 4) put a federal officer in charge of reserves and, through initiatives such as banning cultural practices, make it so Indigenous peoples would believe living off reserves and integrating into mainstream society would be a better option.

Forsyth and Wamsley's (2006) reasons for the reserve system in the context of at least three of the four isolations inherent to capitalism that Marx (1844) described provides insight into how physical relocation of Indigenous peoples via the reserve system was not only a relocation of the physical self, but also a relocation of people away from aspects that are inherent to the human organism. These aspects include connection to nature, connection to the self, and connection to others (withheld is connection to the product of one's labor; Marx, 1844). First, discouraging hunting and fishing encouraged isolation from nature, as is the Western capitalist way. Second, considering traditional activities contribute positively to feelings of cultural identity (Berry, 1999), discouraging subsistence hunting and fishing (as well as other cultural activities) encouraged isolation from the once well-understood self. Lastly, although the reserve system may have facilitated some feelings of unity due to the similarity in situations in which residents found themselves, in a way, the system still encouraged isolation from each other through the prohibition of cultural activities, including those with a social component such as the potlatch. The potlatch was outlawed by the federal government at least partly because all the giving involved in the ceremony did not align with capitalist ideals (Forsyth & Wamsley, 2006). Thus, in these three ways, the reserve system discouraged the pursuit of connections that make one human.

Land Development

On top of relocation due to the reserve system, entire communities have been relocated due to land development. In Manitoba, this type of relocation has been spurred greatly by hydroelectric dam development. The present paragraph and the one that follows summarize an article written by Waldram (1988). He discussed relocations that occurred in the 1960s involving the people of Chemawawin Cree Nation and Southern Indian Lake. The people of Chemawawin Cree Nation were relocated to present-day Easterville due to flooding imposed by the Grand Rapids dam. Prior to being relocated, members of Chemawawin provided for themselves through hunting, fishing, trapping, and by working at a sawmill. In exchange for

surrendering their land (again), residents were promised a modern town full of amenities, yet what unfolded had devastating impacts in the years to come. The lack of soil in the area presented a problem with respect to plumbing, and eventually well water became contaminated with human feces due to the porousness of the limestone rock upon which Easterville is situated (Waldram, 1988). In addition, flooding caused by the dam devastated animal habitat in the area, increased mercury concentrations in fish, and made hunting difficult. The road that was constructed to connect Easterville to other communities allowed community members access to alcohol and, in response to cultural disconnect and no longer being able to provide for themselves via hunting, fishing, and trapping, alcohol use became a problem.

According to Waldram (1988), the people of Southern Indian Lake were relocated due to the Churchill-Nelson River diversion hydroelectric project. Similar to the Chemawawin case, the flooding caused by the diversion resulted in increased mercury levels in local fish. Whitefish (*Coregonus clupeaformis*) and Northern Pike (*Esox lucius*) fisheries declined in quality and production, respectively. Trapping also suffered, and the jobs provided to people as compensation were low-paying and of short duration. Waldram (1988) wrote that in addition to these challenges, the houses built for people who relocated were of such poor quality that they did not hold heat well, so hydro bills were substantial. When residents could not pay their bills, Manitoba Hydro would shut off their power. Waldram (1988) concluded his article with the following, powerful statement that helps put the marginalization of Indigenous peoples via land development into perspective: "[a]nd while the White southerner continues to enjoy the benefits of hydro power, the Native northerner is reminded of this bitter legacy every time he looks out his window at his lake" (para. 23).

Today, colonial powers continue to occupy Indigenous peoples' lands with dams and pipelines, just as they continue to occupy Indigenous students' heads with colonial curriculum (Brown, 1998). Through land development, we see how, as Wolfe (2006) argued, colonization is an ongoing process, or structure, as opposed to an event of the past. He explained that as colonizers continue to encroach onto Indigenous peoples' lands, Indigenous peoples become dependent on the industries that emerge. This process should not be construed as a mechanism of assimilation, however (whether assimilation is the intent or not). Even when Indigenous peoples are forced to live within the Western economy, this does not mean they become similar to the colonizers (i.e., assimilation), as the colonizers always remain in control. As Wolfe (2006)

discussed, the goal of colonizers is control of land which, ultimately, is tied to control of the people occupying it. This notion was explained in a discussion about Wolfe's various works by Battell and Barker (n.d.). They suggested colonization is maintained through the promising of certain rights to Indigenous peoples (e.g., the *United Nations declaration on the rights of Indigenous peoples*; United Nations General Assembly, 2008) in conjunction with the ongoing, total control of land by the state. Indeed, as Memmi (1967) suggested, assimilation and colonization are contradictory, although Memmi's reasoning had less to do with rights and land and more to do with social relations. Memmi believed those who are colonized will never allow themselves to betray who they are, that they will refuse to look upon their own people in the same way the colonizers do, and that the colonizers will never accept the colonized as equal anyway.

The Indian Residential School System

According to Milloy (2008), the first two residential schools opened in the late 1840s, yet the Indian Residential School (IRS) system did not become national until 1879. It has been estimated that over 150,000 Indigenous students passed through this system (Government of Canada, 2008). The purpose of the IRS system was summarized by Sir John A. Macdonald:

> When the school is on the reserve the child lives with its parents, who are savages; he is surrounded by savages, and though he may learn to read and write his habits, and training and mode of thought are Indian. He is simply a savage who can read and write. It has been strongly pressed on myself, as the head of the Department, that Indian children should be withdrawn as much as possible from the parental influence, and the only way to do that would be to put them in central training industrial schools where they will acquire the habits and modes of thought of white men. (Macdonald, 1883, pp. 1107-1108, as cited in Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada [TRC], 2015a, p. 6).

Deputy Minister of Indian Affairs Duncan Campbell Scott more succinctly summarized the purpose of the IRS system when he said it was meant to "get rid of the Indian problem" (MacDonald & Hudson, 2012, p. 431).

The traumas of the IRS system, which included various forms of abuse, extended to parents as well, who had their children forcibly removed from their care. Moreover, the trauma experienced has had intergenerational consequences on wellness (Bombay, 2014). People are influenced by the environments to which they are exposed (Bronfenbrenner, 1977, 2005), and as the following content explains, the effects of the IRS system are not something people can simply "get over". As MacDonald and Hudson (2012) stated, "[p]roblems of intergeneration

trauma remain extremely serious, since survivors learned few parenting skills and were often deracinated from their languages and cultures, resulting in a myriad of social problems" (p. 432). The "lessons" the IRS system imposed regarding parenting (i.e., Sir John A. Macdonald's quote, noted previously) resulted in devastating impacts to children of IRS survivors (see Bombay, 2014). In addition, Dr. Gabor Maté explained that sub-optimal developmental environments parents inadvertently provide for their children in response to a preoccupation in having to deal with their own devastating traumas can have detrimental mental health effects – such as addictions – later in children's lives (see Heartspeak, 2009). According to Maté (2012), this link is present because trauma, such as neglect, affects development of important brain circuitry, causing the under functioning of components related to attachment-reward, incentive-motivation, and self-regulation. Narvaez (2013) wrote that small-band gatherer-hunter (SBGH) societies, in which the human genus spent 99% of its existence, were the best type of societies in terms of human well-being due to community-oriented ways of life, which Maté would argue promotes the development of healthy brain circuitry (see Heartspeak, 2009). However, since the time of SBGH societies, capitalism, with its emphasis on the individual and its associated isolations (Marx, 1844), has replaced previous, healthier (in terms of child development) societies. Western capitalism is a way of life characterized by stress and time away from family, making it a breeding ground for improper development and associated health issues (Altruism_1980, 2014). Making intergenerational trauma an even more formidable opponent is the epigenetic pathway through which its effects can be passed down from parent to offspring (Yehuda et al., 2016). These two scenarios, that is, the passing of trauma through environmental as well as biological aspects, have resulted in the IRS system affecting people to this day.

In addition to effects on individuals, the IRS system has perpetuated cultural oppression through discouraging Indigenous leadership in mainstream society. As critical race theorists might suggest (see Harris, 2012), a relative predominance of White leaders has resulted in the suppression of Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and doing. In their article discussing the genocidal aspects of the IRS system, MacDonald and Hudson (2012) explained that during a typical day in residential school, time was divided between studying and either trades-related lessons for boys, or domestic-related lessons for girls. Citing Deiter (1999), they argued this type of curricular agenda was put in place because the federal government did not want Indigenous students to exit residential school and be able to compete with White people for jobs.

Similarly, Grant (1996) wrote, "[c]hildren who were being prepared for assimilation could not be prepared too well, or they would represent a threat to white settlement" (p. 89). Friesen and Friesen (2002) described the IRS situation succinctly: "[t]he bottom line was that Indian children were imprisoned on the pretext of educating them, while in reality their potential to develop fully as members of either Native or nonNative [sic] society was squelched" (p. 110).

Sport was another characteristic of the IRS system, and although some IRS survivors may have some fond memories of sport, its inclusion within the system also had negative consequences. As what would be a precursor to sport, physical activity was introduced to the IRS system in the form of simple callisthenic drills aimed at decreasing the prevalence of illness (Forsyth, 2013). As Forsyth (2007) explained, students in residential schools were overworked, underfed, stressed, and forced to live in crowded areas characterized by stagnant, disease-riddled air. These conditions contributed to rampant illness and even death (Forsyth, 2007). The drills, which were often military-like, were also meant to teach obedience and patriotism, as well as to convince the public the schools were beneficial to students (Forsyth, 2007, 2013). Early on, opportunities to play sports such as basketball and hockey were used as rewards for good behavior (Forsyth, 2007), although it was mainly boys who were allowed opportunities to engage in this type of recreation due to the stereotypical gender roles IRS system staff worked to maintain (Forsyth, 2007). A sports system developed later in response to changes to the Indian Act which removed power over the IRS system from the churches, meaning the federal government began playing a larger role in the system's proceedings (Forsyth, 2007). Athletes in residential schools were given opportunities to play against other residential school students (Persson, 1986, as cited in Forsyth, 2007), as well as against White students from public schools (Forsyth, 2007), as it was thought this would encourage the integration of Indigenous students into mainstream schools as well as the assimilation of Indigenous peoples into mainstream society (Forsyth, 2013).

It was not uncommon for IRS athletes to receive better treatment than other students, such as better food and accommodations, as well as time away from school (Forsyth, 2007). In fact, for some students, sports served as an escape from the abuse and loneliness by which they were often challenged while in the IRS system (Forsyth, 2013). North American Indigenous Games pioneer Wilton Littlechild, for instance, has credited sport with helping him survive the IRS system (Canadian Teachers' Federation, 2018a). In addition, the system helped prepare

some athletes for high-level competition (Dewar, 1986, as cited in Forsyth, 2007). Yet positive reports must not distract us from the cruelty of the underlying motive for the provision of sport opportunities, which was, of course, consistent with that of the IRS system itself (Forsyth, 2007, 2013). As Forsyth (2007) explained:

> The *Report on the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples* (1996) notes how Indian Affairs looked to popular Euro-Canadian sports and games to help bring about fundamental changes in the values and behaviours of its students. It was thought that participation in Euro-Canadian activities would contribute to the breakdown of communal values by fostering a competitive spirit among the pupils, and hopefully, through regulated instruction, the skills they learned would translate into a desire for individual achievement and wealth (Canada 1996). (Forsyth, 2007, p.101)

In essence, sports were used as a means of luring Indigenous students into Western capitalist society, and although people may tout the health benefits of sport participation, mainstream sport, in many ways, can be very detrimental to health. For instance, research on the negative effects of sport on participants (ages 6-18 years) has documented occurrences such as overuse injuries, concussions, issues with nutrition and weight control, alcohol use and substance abuse, burnout and dropout, and issues with motivation (Bean et al., 2014). I think Stan Efferding, former professional bodybuilder and powerlifter, said it best in a YouTube video he titled *If you want to be healthy, don't compete*:

> [H]ealth and fitness are not the same thing. […] The dictionary defines health as being free from disease or pain. Now for starters I don't know any successful athletes whose career is, or ever was, free from pain. […] pain is a normal part of professional competition and the training required to get there. So how about being fit? The dictionary defines fitness as being suitable to fulfill a particular role or task. And that is where being healthy and being fit part ways […] There's concussions, dislocated shoulders, ruptured discs, broken bones, torn tendons, torn rotator cuffs, torn hamstrings, Achilles tendons, and lots more. (Efferding, 2017)

The 60s Scoop

The 60s scoop was a period during the 1960s to mid-1980s motivated by child welfare concerns as well as economic interests of child welfare agencies (Sinclair, 2007). During this time, thousands of Indigenous children in Canada were forcibly removed from their homes by federal and provincial government officials and adopted by other families, many of whom were non-Indigenous, both within and outside Canada (Sinclair, 2007). As suggested by *A Tribe Called Red* in their song *How I feel ft. northern voice, Shad and Leonard Sumner*, relocation

initiatives like the 60s scoop amounted to forms of legalized abduction (Digital Lodge, 2017). This legalized abduction continues today, but under a different veil. Acknowledging that Indigenous children have been removed from their homes for a much longer period of time than the name "the 60s scoop" concedes, Sinclair (2007) stated, "[i]t [the 60s scoop] names one segment of a larger period in Aboriginal child welfare history where, because questionable apprehensions and adoptions figured prominently, a label was applied" (pp. 66-67). Indeed, more recent data indicate there are over 10,000 Indigenous children in care in the province of Manitoba alone (Manitoba Family Services, 2014).

Sinclair (2007) explained that transracial (or cross-cultural) adoption may be problematic because parents who have not experienced racism may not be able to help Indigenous children deal with it. In addition, Sinclair (2007) discussed identity confusion, and how adopted children may be caught between a culture in which they have been raised but were not born into, and a desire to become reacquainted with their birth culture, only to discover that their people are among the most oppressed in the country. Sinclair (2007) noted:

> The conflict that results from the need to constantly adapt is likely a source of angst from which many adoptees engage in destructive and harmful behaviours to themselves, their adoptive family, and their environment (see, for example, Adams 2002; Gilchrist, 1995). (p. 73).

In addition, similar to the trauma of the IRS system, the trauma of the 60s scoop is also imparted on biological parents of relocated children.

Contemporary Implications of Relocation on Relations Between Indigenous Peoples and Sport

The preceding sections illustrated some of the harmful properties of prominent relocations many Indigenous peoples have undergone, including the reserve system, land development, the IRS system, and the 60s scoop. There continues to be a lack of recognition for Indigenous leaders in mainstream society and, as such, a resulting lack of recognition for Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and doing pertaining to sport and other areas. Trauma from colonial activities continues to impact many Indigenous peoples' wellbeing to today (see Bombay et al., 2014), and the lack of emphasis on critical social consciousness development in schools across Canada with respect to issues of colonization does little to facilitate understanding among members of society who see the world through veils of White privilege (see Chapter 2),

thus encouraging the continuance of the stigmatization described in the section *His-story and the Indian Act*. This stigmatization is harmful because Indigenous identity is negatively influenced by exposure to racism and negative portrayals of Indigenous peoples (Goodwill & McCormick, 2012). In addition, Indigenous identity is also compromised by disconnect from family, from other Indigenous peoples, and from cultural practices (Goodwill & McCormick, 2012), all of which have occurred via colonial activity, as discussed in the preceding sections. Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs is relevant here, as it illustrates the importance of meeting basic needs (i.e., physiological needs, safety needs) prior to more complex needs. In other words, dealing with the effects of intergenerational trauma takes precedence over mere sport participation.

Lastly, it is important to remain critical of Western sport's role in not only compromising individuals' health (Bean et al., 2014), but also in instilling Western capitalist values, as was the case in residential schools (Canada, 1996, as cited in Forsyth, 2007). Mainstream sport follows a neoliberal approach emphasizing hierarchies, rewards, individualism, competition, and winning (Coakley, 2011). Pressures to perform well and win money, sponsorships, and prestige are substantial, yet these are some of the idols of Western society and should not completely distract us from the many other benefits sport can provide, or the social issues plaguing our colonial society. Yet if executed in a certain manner, sport can work to draw attention to social issues, which is a concept discussed in the next section.

Indigenous Revitalization

This section draws upon LaRocque's (2010) notion of good scholarship in Canadian historical writing, as this notion applies well to what I term Indigenous revitalization. With respect to the dehumanization of Indigenous peoples, LaRocque (2010) suggested that good scholarship entails both deconstruction and reconstruction. Her analogy of rebuilding a roof is helpful in explaining this concept, and the analogy can be applied to Indigenous revitalization in sport as well:

> Rebuilding a roof entails first deconstructing it, which is to say, taking it apart shingle by shingle. Then, it means reconstructing it. But I find the very frame that holds the shingles is so rotten that it too needs to be gutted, and a whole new structure needs to be built before any new shingles can be nailed in. Simply repairing the roof would be poor carpentry. Good scholarship, in other words, must call for the disassembly of the very frame that houses the roof. (p. 39)

The preceding section (*Colonization*) can be seen as contributing to the deconstruction part of Indigenous revitalization in the sport context. As such, the following discussion focuses solely on the reconstruction part before proceeding to an examination of the implications of Indigenous revitalization on relations between Indigenous peoples and sport today. An important caution must be conveyed prior to proceeding, however: I warn against equating revitalization with decolonization. Wolfe (2006) noted the importance of land to the process of colonization. In essence, the desire for land, and the resources thereupon, is a main driving force behind colonial practices (see Wolfe, 2006). Thus, it is my contention that the process of decolonization would require colonizers' submission of dominion over the land. Revitalization, as it is meant in this section, is likely insufficient to motivate the Crown to surrender its territory. In addition, as Coulthard (2014) cautioned, successes incurred from the fight of Indigenous peoples for recognition still may not overcome the hegemony against which they fight, as the form and extent of recognition is determined by colonial powers.

Reconstruction Through Sport

Sport can be a vehicle for Indigenous revitalization by providing a platform for Indigenous voices to be heard. One example of an Indigenous athlete who used sport in this manner is Alwyn Morris. At the 1984 Olympics, after winning gold in kayaking, Morris raised an eagle feather as he stood atop the podium (Canada's Sports Hall of Fame, 2020), acknowledging his Indigenous heritage. It was only a small gesture, but it was one that remains etched in the slate of Olympic history. Since that time, Morris has contributed in other ways to Indigenous revitalization, such as in helping to recapture some federal attention to Indigenous sport (Paraschak, 2002) as well as with the NAIG (Forsyth, 2002).

At least two relevant examples of reconstruction through sport come from Australia. First, boxer Damien Hooper made a statement when he entered the ring for a fight at the 2012 Olympics while wearing a t-shirt with the Australian Indigenous flag. He revealed that the flag inspired him, yet the International Olympic Committee was not pleased with the display. Hooper apologized later for defying Olympic rules related to racial demonstrations (Barlow, 2012). Second, Cathy Freeman sparked discussions when she wrapped herself in the Australian Indigenous flag at the 1994 Commonwealth Games (Gorman, 2012), and then again when she won 400m gold at the 2000 Olympics (Marlow, 2015). Since her Olympic victory, Freeman has

established the Cathy Freeman Foundation, which is directed toward improving circumstances for Indigenous students (Cathy Freeman Foundation, N.D.).

Not to be withheld from this discussion is 1999 Pan-American gold medalist and 2000 Olympian in water polo Waneek Horn-Miller (Winsa, 2015). After being stabbed by a soldier during the Oka crisis, which was a land dispute in Oka, Quebec (see Marshall, 2014), Horn-Miller realized that to not pursue her athletic ambitions due to the trauma of the event would be to allow herself to be the soldier's victim (Winsa, 2015). Surrendering her athletic ambitions due to the stabbing would have also rendered her a victim of colonization due to the colonial foundations of the incident, as the Mohawk people were defending their land (which was an ancient burial ground) against expansion of a golf course and construction of new condominiums (Marshall, 2014). Along with her great athletic achievements since that time, Horn-Miller has also made a variety of other contributions to Indigenous revitalization, including involvement in NAIG (Paraschak & Forsyth, 2002) as well as many public speaking engagements.

A local example of reconstruction through sport is that of Joe Keeper. Little has been recorded about Keeper, although a short biography was provided by the Manitoba Sports Hall of Fame (n.d.). According to this organization, Keeper was a member of Norway House Cree First Nation and a survivor of a residential school in Brandon, Manitoba. Keeper moved to Winnipeg later where he trained with the North End Amateur Athletic Club. Among his accomplishments were a Canadian record in the 10 mile road race (54:50), a first place finish in the 10,000m race at the 1912 Canadian Olympic trials, and a fourth place finish in the men's 10,000m race at the 1912 Olympics in Stockholm, Sweden (Canada's best ever placing in the event). Keeper also earned a Military Medal for Bravery during his service with the army.

For my last example, I refer to the great Native American runner Billy Mills, who represented the United States at the 1964 Olympic Games in both the 10,000m event and the marathon. To this day, Mills remains the only person from the west side of the planet to win the men's Olympic 10,000m race. He later went on to co-found Running Strong for American Indian Youth, which is an organization aiming to improve the lives of Indigenous youth in the United Sates (Running Strong for American Indian Youth, 2018). An account of Mills' journey was conveyed in the movie *Running brave* (Englander et al., 1983); check it out.

Through their determination, success, and continued commitments, the aforementioned athletes have contributed greatly to Indigenous revitalization. They serve as role models for

Indigenous (and non-Indigenous) athletes today, and their stories deserve to be recognized in sport history, as do the stories of other major contributors to Indigenous sport. One of these other contributors, for instance, is Wilton Littlechild, a residential school survivor and lawyer (Canadian Teachers' Federation, 2018b). Littlechild completed his master's thesis on Tom Longboat (Littlechild, 1975), an accomplished First Nations (Onondaga) distance runner after whom the Tom Longboat award (given to outstanding Indigenous athletes in Canada) is named. The Tom Longboat award may also be seen as a means of Indigenous revitalization, as it honors a past Indigenous athlete while awarding others. Littlechild was instrumental afterward in promoting Indigenous sport in Alberta as well as in helping create the NAIG and the World Indigenous Nations (WIN) Games, the former of which served as a pilot project for the latter (Forsyth & Wamsley, 2006). Wilton's motivation to create the NAIG and WIN Games was spurred, at least in part, by the federal government withdrawing funding from Indigenous sport in 1981, as well as by the dishonorable display at the 1976 Montreal Olympics where half of the "Indigenous" dancers were not Indigenous, and where they danced to *The savage dance* (O'Bonsawin, 2013).

Although the NAIG and the WIN Games may be the most recognized spectacles with respect to Indigenous sport in Canada today due to their statuses as international events, there are also national, provincial, regional, and local sporting events held across the country that contribute to Indigenous revitalization by emphasizing cultural games. For instance, the Arctic Winter Games, although inclusive of non-Indigenous athletes as well, includes cultural activities like the Arctic and Dene games (Arctic Winter Games Nuuk, 2016). With respect to Manitoba, there is the Manitoba Indigenous Games (MASRC, 2018a) as well as Frontier Games. Frontier Games, similar to the Arctic Winter Games, are inclusive to non-Indigenous athletes, as its participants are Frontier School Division[14] students. However, also similar to the Arctic Winter Games, Frontier Games includes traditional cultural activities like snowshoeing and trap setting.

Finally, it is important to recognize organizations working to provide opportunities for Indigenous athletes. The Aboriginal Sport Circle (ASC) was formed in 1995 in response to numerous reports. First, a 1992 report by Alwyn Morris called *Sport: The way ahead* (Minister's Task Force on Federal Sport Policy, 1992) discussed barriers to sport participation and elite

[14] Frontier School Division is a school division in Manitoba, Canada.

athlete development among Indigenous peoples and recommended a federally funded sport secretariat be formed to oversee Indigenous sport in Canada (Paraschak, 2002). Second, a 1995 report called *Comprehensive overview of physical activity and recreation/sport relevant to Aboriginal peoples in Canada* (Winther et al., 1995) highlighted how Indigenous sport differs from mainstream sport in its (Indigenous sport's) wholistic approach (Paraschak, 2002). Third, issues pertaining to Indigenous peoples and sport were also addressed in one section of the *Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples* (see Government of Canada, 2016), after the finalization of which the first meeting of the ASC was held (Paraschak, 2002). According to Paraschak (2002), the ASC was created to oversee "coaching development, the creation of provincial/territorial Aboriginal sport associations, and the North American Indigenous Games" (p. 27). The provincial Aboriginal sport association in Manitoba that is associated with the ASC is the Manitoba Aboriginal Sport and Recreation Council (MASRC).

Contemporary Implications of Indigenous Revitalization on Relations Between Indigenous Peoples and Sport

The importance of role models to aspiring Indigenous athletes has been highlighted previously (e.g., Schinke et al., 2013). There are accounts of Indigenous athletes acting as role models to other, aspiring Indigenous athletes, as was the case with Alwyn Morris and Waneek Horn-Miller (Horn-Miller, 2006). Indigenous role models are particularly important to aspiring Indigenous athletes because the latter can see themselves in the former. In terms of reconstructing, the Indigenous athlete role models mentioned in the preceding section, as well as those involved in creating organizations like the ASC and MASRC, have served to revitalize sport for others, and they have given back to their communities in general (e.g., Mills and Running Strong for American Indian Youth, Freeman and the Cathy Freeman Foundation), thus helping provide sport- and non-sport related opportunities for others.

However, Indigenous athletes do not have the same presence in Canadian sport history as White athletes. In fact, the relative lack of representation given to Indigenous athletes on the walls of athletic facilities was the topic of a conversation at the Sport and Reconciliation Gathering at the University of Manitoba in 2018 (see University of Manitoba, 2020). Space is an important concept, and the way it is used (or not used) is significant in terms of determining who feels included or excluded (Van Ingen & Halas, 2006). It is my contention that most runners in Manitoba do not know who Joe Keeper was, despite his fourth place finish in the men's 10,000m

race at the 1912 Olympics being the best ever placement of any Canadian in that event (Manitoba Sports Hall of Fame, n.d.). Stories such as that of Joe Keeper have potential in inspiring future generations of Indigenous (and non-Indigenous) athletes and, as stated previously, deserve recognition. In fact, the need to recognize Indigenous athletes throughout history was conveyed by the TRC via their 87th Call to Action: "[w]e call upon all levels of government, in collaboration with Aboriginal peoples, sports halls of fame, and other relevant organizations, to provide public education that tells the national story of Aboriginal athletes in history" (TRC, 2015b, p. 10).

Nevertheless, through events like the NAIG, the WIN Games, and the others mentioned previously, as well as through organizations like the ASC and MASRC, Indigenous athletes are provided with opportunities to partake in sport and be recognized for their achievements. These events and organizations provide opportunities for athletes to interact with each other in positive and supportive environments, and can help facilitate cultural pride and, in the case of events allowing both Indigenous and non-Indigenous participants (e.g., the Artic Winter Games, Frontier Games), may encourage cross-cultural awareness.

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Chapter 4: Literature Review, Barriers and Facilitators

In this chapter, I discuss key barriers, conveyed by research, that surround Indigenous athletes' participation in varsity sport in Manitoba. Being a running nerd, I use Daniels' (2014)[15] *Ingredients of Success* as a framework to guide my discussion. Daniels has been a coach of elite and sub-elite distance runners for decades. He holds a PhD in exercise physiology and is an Olympic medalist in modern pentathlon. His *Ingredients of Success* include inherent ability, opportunity, intrinsic motivation, and direction. Extensive discussions could be had regarding most of these ingredients and how they pertain to Indigenous athletes from northern communities. However, it is my contention that inherent ability can be found anywhere there are people, so perhaps this ingredient is an exception. Inherent ability is required for elite-level performance in most (if not all) cases, but is not as much of a necessity if sport participation is the goal. Sport participation at lower levels of competition is most often a prerequisite to competing at the varsity level, so factors influencing sport participation in general among Indigenous people are of significant interest to my research project. Further, although some level of inherent ability is required at the university level of sport, the sub-elite performances of many university athletes (such as myself) are indications that inherent ability is not as much of a determining factor (with respect to entrance into the university league) as it is in elite sport. As such, my discussion here omits this particular *Ingredient of Success*.

[15] Daniels, J. (2014). Daniels' running formula (3rd ed.). Human Kinetics.

Barriers to Indigenous Athletes' Athletic Development in Canada: An Analysis Framed by Daniels' Ingredients of Success, Part 1 (Opportunity)[16]

It was around 6:00am on a Wednesday in mid-January. The location was a small town in northern Manitoba that was home to only 600- or so people, situated in the boreal forest and nestled among the lakes, swamps, and rock outcrops of the Canadian Shield. The morning sky was dark and clear, speckled with a million stars and a touch of aurora-borealis some people wait their whole lives to see. My breath turned to frost before my eyes, and my nose felt that familiar, bittersweet greeting only a minus 34-degree Celsius morning could bring as I walked out the door and looked up at the beauty the Creator had painted above me. For a moment I felt at peace, and I felt privileged to live where I did. Then I went for a run.

As a competitive runner, I knew not all runs are fun, and that there is very little glamour in the world of distance running, a fact that was epitomized in my stride that morning. My feet slipped with each step on the ice beneath the four inches of snow that had fallen overnight, splaying out to the sides as I ran, and there was already a slimy, white trail of mucus trickling from my left nostril down to the corner of my mouth… not exactly the breakfast I had in mind. Luckily for me, however, there was no chilling wind to add to the sting of winter on this morning, nor were there any cars or people to worry about. It was just me, the sound of my footsteps, and that familiar voice in my head that would often ask that same, redundant question: "Why do I do this?"

Winter provided some freedom, however, when it came to running in the wee morning hours. This freedom was, in part, a product of *Ursus americanus'* tendency to sleep during most of the snowy season. I could drop my guard in winter while the bears slumbered, and I didn't have to worry about bugs during that time of year, either. Mosquitoes would keep my running pace honest in the warm months, as they could only swarm me if I stopped. The horseflies, however, could keep up with even the likes of the great Billy Mills in his prime, and during their peak periods in the months of July and August, they would fly circles around me as if to point out the athletic inferiority of humans, landing on me periodically to bite chunks out of my skin.

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[16] This article has been published elsewhere:

Kosmenko, N. J. (2019). Barriers to Indigenous athletes' athletic development in Canada: An analysis framed by Daniels' Ingredients of Success, part 1. In J. Markides & L. Forsythe (Eds.), *Research journeys in/to multiples ways of knowing* (pp. 9-18). DIO Press.

Gratitude is expressed toward DIO Press.

There were few animals to worry about on this day in January, save for the million- or so stray dogs in the community. There was one in particular that would nip at me when I ran. He was only playing, but his antics would become annoying after a while. He also liked to bark from time to time, which would initiate a chorus of off-key labs, huskies, mutts, and the like as we covered ground through town. I'm sure the sleeping townspeople appreciated that.

The point of these anecdotes, to which I could add extensively, is that running in the north is difficult, which I reckon is a reason few great runners come from northern Manitoba. My upbringing in the north and experience training in the south has made me aware of the differences between resources available to athletes (runners, in particular) in small northern- versus large southern locations in Manitoba. Yet although I was immersed in an environment unconducive to training for distance running, the life I was born into, although not storybook, was still fairly accommodating to my athletic aspirations. My parents are hard-working, middle class people and, despite a hint of Ojibwe on my mom's side, are mainly of Euro-Canadian descent. We never experienced systemic racism during my upbringing, racism that, for too many people in Canada, is a concern that takes precedence over athletic aspirations. In that way, I was lucky, but I was nevertheless angry. Coming from a town surrounded by reserve communities, as well as having graduated from a high school with a mainly Indigenous student composition, I was well aware of the consequences of hundreds of years of oppression.

With the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC, 2015) call for an elite athlete development program for Indigenous athletes in mind (Call #90, Part ii), the purpose of this chapter is to discuss some obstacles facing Indigenous athletes in pursuit of sport, particularly in northern communities in Canada that are geographically isolated from large, urban centers. Historic and contemporary systemic racism challenges Indigenous people and affects many areas of life, including access to sport. Although it is beyond the scope of this paper to describe the distorted history (Green, 1995) through which Indigenous people have persevered, yet by which colonization continues, I emphasize the crucial role reflexivity plays in discussions pertaining to colonization, and I encourage readers to wonder why/how colonization, including the racism inherent within it (Memmi, 1967), still continues; in short, to exercise their critical social consciousness (Ladson-Billings, 1995) by seeking deeper understanding. Lastly, I remind readers that Indigenous people are often over-generalized and that, although I discuss issues that affect many Indigenous athletes, I recognize individuals and their situations vary.

On With Business…

Being a running nerd, I use Daniels' (2014) Ingredients of Success as a framework to guide my discussion. Daniels has been a coach of elite and sub-elite distance runners for decades. He holds a Ph.D. in exercise physiology and is an Olympic medalist in modern pentathlon. His Ingredients of Success include inherent ability, intrinsic motivation, opportunity, and direction. Extensive discussions could be had regarding most of these ingredients and how they are withheld from Indigenous athletes in northern communities. It is my contention that inherent ability can be found anywhere there are people, however, so perhaps this ingredient is an exception. Whatever the case, due to the significant depth to which one could delve with respect to at least three of these ingredients, I have chosen to focus this chapter on only one: opportunity. This ingredient, or the lack of it, is obvious in many northern communities, and by writing about opportunity in Part 1 of this (potentially) three-part series, I believe I am addressing what is the "elephant in the room" in terms of barriers to athletic success that should have been dealt with long ago. Subtler, yet more sensitive elephants will be discussed in Parts 2 and 3, if I ever get that far.

Opportunity

Daniels' (2014) wrote about opportunity in terms of factors such as weather, facilities, competition, teammates, money to pay for travel and equipment, and exposure to sport (through watching sports). Although he was transparent about the need for adequate opportunity, he also recognized the benefits of resourcefulness when opportunities are lacking. However, in isolated communities in Canada, it is questionable how far one can go in sport simply by being resourceful due to the numerous barriers that exist. In some ways, too, opportunities can still be relatively limited for Indigenous athletes who move to urban areas, and even when they are not, the foundations built (or not built, due to the "numerous barriers" alluded to earlier) during developmental years may be critical to success later on (Athletics Canada, n.d.). As such, much of this discussion is focused on barriers existing at early stages of athletic development. Let us delve into these issues.

An obvious place to begin is Canadian Heritage's (2005) *Sport Canada's policy on Aboriginal peoples' participation in sport*. The barriers identified in this document relating to opportunity include: financial challenges such as team fees, equipment costs, and funding for travel; distance from programs, facilities, people with expertise (coaches, athletic therapists,

etc.), and competition; and lack of sport infrastructure. In fact, reserve communities have been long underfunded by the federal government in relation to other communities in Canada (Milloy, 2008), which has limited the infrastructure that can be built and maintained. The importance of sport infrastructure is highlighted by the harsh climate in many areas of Canada, which often prevents athletes from safely and effectively training outside. Indeed, some sports, particularly those relying on speed and power, require indoor facilities for at least part of the year. Alas, for many young Indigenous athletes, even though the motivation to pursue sport may be there, the environment is not always on their side and, unfortunately, neither is the government. As such, researchers have sought solutions to overcome opportunity-related barriers.

For instance, Blodgett et al. (2008) highlighted the importance of parents, stating they play key roles in guiding youth to sport and providing opportunities such as travel, financial support, etc. Extended families and role models were also identified as important resources, as they provide support and examples for aspiring athletes to follow. Further, involving the community in sport initiatives is valuable because members can often help provide equipment, finances, and program delivery. In fact, a passionate volunteer base was a suggestion that arose in a follow-up study (Blodgett et al., 2010). Finally, Blodgett et al.'s (2008) research highlighted the importance of educating Indigenous youth about sport opportunities off reserves, as well as the importance of being persistent in the face of challenges. Indeed, relocating to pursue sport may entail an arduous acculturation process (Blodgett et al., 2014) through which one must persevere in order to be successful.

In addition to barriers that affect sport in a direct sense, there are also barriers that affect sport indirectly through its close tie with education, making discussion of barriers to Indigenous students' education relevant here. Halas et al. (2013) argued that culturally relevant physical education (PE) can contribute to success in sport for Indigenous participants by helping affirm cultural identities and facilitating physical literacy. They used Whitehead's (2001) idea of physical literacy, which defined this concept largely in terms of one's ability to survey environments and physically respond in appropriate ways, with imagination, intelligence, and confidence, by drawing upon a set of movements from a larger repertoire. Halas et al. mentioned PE is often the first introduction to sport for many Canadian children. Through affirming identities, facilitating physical literacy, and introducing children to sport, PE plays an important role in early athletic development.

Halas et al. (2013) referred to Côté et al.'s (2007) developmental model of sport participation, which highlights sport sampling as an early stage of one possible pathway to the elite level. By providing exposure to a variety of sports, PE can help in the sampling process, which youth may use as an opportunity to assess which types of sports they prefer, and which align best with their baseline talents. Early sampling may encourage prolonged engagement in sport, and it does not hinder athletes' pathways to elite levels (Côté et al., 2012). In fact, some physiological adaptations are transferable across sports (Côté et al., 2012), so early sampling may increase opportunities with respect to the sports in which one may be able to successfully specialize later on.

Unfortunately, there are numerous challenges affecting PE opportunities for Indigenous youth. Halas et al. (2013) emphasized the need to understand that Indigenous students' PE experiences are contingent upon the colonial contexts shaping their educational experiences in general. The researchers demonstrated how the systematic underfunding of federally- (i.e., First Nations) relative to provincially-funded schools results in insufficient facilities, equipment, and instruction in PE settings. In addition, the authors discussed reduced opportunities for sport participation and competition in schools with fewer students, challenges of geographic isolation such as financing trips to other communities, teacher turnover in remote areas, the discomfort imparted on students by change room atmospheres, substitute teachers with little knowledge of PE, lack of Indigenous teaching staff, the need for teachers to try to fit into the culture of Indigenous communities and develop a critical consciousness with respect to colonization, and culturally irrelevant curriculum.

Some of these issues resonate with my own experiences, as do some of the solutions Halas et al. (2013) suggested. Although I never participated in Frontier Games, which is an annual, multi-day event in which students from Frontier School Division (FSD) in Manitoba take part in a variety of sports and cultural activities (snowshoeing, trap setting), from what I observed as a student in FSD, I agree with what Halas et al. (2013) indicated: it is quite a successful program. The organizers are resourceful, as is needed when holding large events in small towns. For instance, during my primary years of education, I noticed that classrooms would be set aside as sleeping quarters for athletes during the games. A similar type of resourcefulness was emphasized by Halas et al., who suggested using community facilities, such as hockey rinks, as well the land for PE classes. For example, they cited van Ingen and Halas

(2006) who discussed how one First Nations school made use of a trapline in its community. In fact, the high school I attended has its own trapline for students to use. Conversations with a counselor at this school, however, have suggested there are few staff willing to supervise students as they make use of the trapline, thus reducing an otherwise prime opportunity for students to engage in land-based, culturally relevant physical activity that may help develop physical literacy.

Staff play significant roles in school proceedings, and as Halas et al. (2013) suggested, they must be willing to integrate into the culture of the community in order to facilitate cultural relevance in school settings. Drawing on work by Ladson-Billings (1995), Halas et al. (2013) summarized culturally relevant pedagogy as having three main goals, with four steps to reach those goals. The three goals described by Ladson-Billings are: 1) academic success, which necessitates the need for teachers to be cognizant of students' strengths and know how to translate those strengths to success in the classroom; 2) cultural competence, by allowing the cultures of students to be vehicles for learning in classroom settings, encouraging students to "be themselves" (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p. 161); and 3) critical consciousness, which encourages one to question societal norms and their implications. The four steps summarized by Halas et al. (2013) include: 1) meaningful and relevant curriculum, 2) teacher as ally, 3) understanding students' day-to-day cultural landscapes, and 4) supportive learning climates. Assessing these goals and steps, one may argue that serving as a fundamental basis of culturally relevant pedagogy is relationship building, as teachers need to be able to understand the backgrounds of their students in order to implement the four steps appropriately and, eventually, achieve the three goals. Hence the need for staff (including coaches) to integrate into the culture of the community (i.e., in the case of my high school, go trapping).

Although the solutions conveyed here may be helpful, it is also important to recognize that for some Indigenous athletes, getting through primary and secondary school is only the beginning of their educational journeys. University-level sport may be a pathway to elite sport because it can provide elite-level coaches, access to state-of-the-art facilities, sport psychology services, and athletic therapy. Yet as with primary and secondary education, there are many barriers to Indigenous peoples' post-secondary education. Kirkness and Barnhardt (2001) differentiated between coming and going to the university, wherein the latter entails an acceptance of the student as he/she is, but the former requires the student to adjust to the

dominant culture. Similarly, the need to make education culturally relevant for Indigenous students was echoed by Preston (2008) in her discussion of historical obstacles to education. Within the same paper, she also discussed obstacles at the educational level, at social, economic, and geographical levels, at cultural and pedagogical levels, and at the financial level.

For obstacles at the educational level, Preston (2008) highlighted how primary and secondary schools in remote communities struggle to prepare students for university, which is understandable considering the lack of funding these schools receive, as discussed earlier. Other issues discussed include lack of academic counsellors, few role models, and not enough Indigenous teaching staff. Preston (2008) also highlighted one of the many problems of using grade-point average (GPA) as a criteria for entry to university, stating, "[p]ostsecondary acceptance which is wholly dependent upon a grade-point average captures neither the intellect nor the experience of many Aboriginal students" (p. 59), and she suggested schools should accept Indigenous cultural knowledge as legitimate. Finally, she recommended universities provide support for Indigenous students, as well as show greater presence in Indigenous communities during recruitment campaigns. All of these areas present opportunities for improvements with respect to the number of Indigenous athletes reaching the university level.

At the social, economic, and geographical levels, Preston (2008) briefly discussed the effects colonization has had on many Indigenous people, such as poverty, compromised health, increased rates of suicide, and derelict housing. She also explained that Indigenous people in smaller communities often have to move great distances to pursue university education which, for students with children, may necessitate the need to find childcare providers in the new location. Preston (2008) emphasized the need for support in the form of housing, transportation for dependents, on-campus daycares, and counselling (e.g., elders). As a solution, she suggested bringing post-secondary education to rural communities, and she stressed that credits received at these locations should be transferrable to other institutions. However, despite being a step in the right direction, for students interested in athletics, these schools might not provide the same levels of athletic resources as larger universities.

As for obstacles at pedagogical and cultural levels, similar to Halas et al. (2013), Preston (2008) highlighted the need for cultural relevance. She also discussed how Western education is more competition-driven and individual-focused, whereas traditional Indigenous pedagogy focuses on communalism, experimental learning, and being transformative and wholistic. She

suggested universities use culturally relevant content in courses, and that they incorporate Indigenous styles of learning (group work, reflections, story-telling, field trips, work-placements, etc.). As Blodgett et al. (2014) found, significant challenges may arise when Indigenous athletes relocate to pursue sport in mainstream contexts. Including culturally relevant practices into the university environment may help Indigenous university athletes feel more welcome and comfortable.

Finally, with respect to financial obstacles, Preston (2008) explained that students who move to attend university are at a disadvantage financially compared to students who go to school in the communities in which they already live. Preston (2008) also emphasized that it can be difficult for Indigenous students to obtain band funding to attend school, as these funds are not widely available, and she suggested that, due to increasing enrolment of Indigenous students at universities, competition for band funding is increasing. As solutions to financial issues, Preston (2008) suggested more contributions from provincial and federal governments to help alleviate financial burdens experienced by Indigenous institutes, and she highlighted the need for more scholarship and bursary opportunities for Indigenous students. Perhaps scholarships specifically for Indigenous athletes would help, at least to some extent. Whatever the scholarship type, I think Preston's (2008) suggestion that application procedures become less bureaucratic should be strongly considered (Assembly of First Nations, 2005, as cited in Preston, 2008).

Conclusion

An elite athlete development program for Indigenous athletes was one call developed by the TRC (2015). I believe anyone who has experienced the satisfaction that comes with completing a difficult workout, or the comradery and feelings of acceptance common to a team atmosphere, or the empowering feelings that arise when one overcomes defeat to meet a challenge, should be able to see that this call is an important one. In addition, sport provides young athletes with role models, aspirations, and dreams. It presents challenges that can bring out the best in people, it teaches life lessons, and it facilitates friendships that can last a lifetime. For these reasons, all people should be allowed to pursue sport, and for those who find meaning in competitive sport and wish to fulfill their athletic potentials, athletic development should be promoted, and the barriers to it minimized.

Yet there are many barriers to Indigenous athletes' athletic development in Canada. This chapter focused solely on barriers relating to opportunity. I have shown that many Indigenous athletes have higher hurdles to jump than many non-Indigenous athletes in terms of this Ingredient of Success (Daniels, 2014). I have also provided some suggestions for improvements in this area. In short, at the very least, I believe this chapter works to help affirm in the minds of readers that being an Indigenous athlete often entails overcoming far more obstacles than many non-Indigenous athletes ever have to overcome or even think about. In addition, I hope I have conveyed the significant amount of work that remains if we are to level the playing field a bit, providing Indigenous athletes the same opportunities by which many non-Indigenous athletes are privileged.

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Barriers to Indigenous Athletes' Athletic Development in Canada: An Analysis Framed by Daniels' Ingredients of Success, Part 2 (Intrinsic Motivation)[17]

The city was a cage compared to my small, northern hometown, which was situated among the spruce and pines of the boreal forest, nestled among the rocks and lakes of the Canadian Shield. In the city, people were everywhere, regularly infringing on the personal space I had taken for granted throughout my upbringing. The physical closeness in classrooms, city buses, and elsewhere, however, belied the inaccessibility of human-to-human connection. Although surrounded, I was isolated, and that isolation caused problems.

Depression and anxiety set in, tempting me to quit school, which I likely would have done if I had not joined my university's cross country and track teams. The more I focused on running, the more I realized it helped reconstruct an identity that had been disrupted by immersion into a foreign culture. Yet it was only while engaged in the act of running that I felt I belonged to the teams for which I competed. When opportunities arose to interact outside training and racing, it was evident through my lack of ability to connect with my teammates that I was the "other." We had developed in different worlds and had grown to have different values and – outside running – different interests, so although fleeting instances in training and races provided a sense of belonging, other aspects of being on the team exacerbated feelings of isolation.

Now,[18] prior to continuing, I must explain my choice to use the word "other" to describe myself in relation to my track teammates. Miller (2008) defined "otherness" as "the condition or quality of being different or 'other,' particularly if the differences in question are strange, bizarre, or exotic" (p. 587). Although Miller (2008) noted that otherness is a concept occurring across various academic disciplines, readers of my chapter here may be more familiar with its use in describing a racialized, minority group that has been "othered" by an oppressing (White) group. Initially, I had written "other" in my work here with the intended definition being more or less the same as that which Miller (2008) provided. In this way, I would avoid criticism from readers who believe that using the term "othering" to describe the exclusion of a White person

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[17] This article has been published elsewhere:

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Gratitude is expressed toward DIO Press.

[18] The content about my use of the word "other" was added after this article was published, so that content does not appear in the book *Walking together in Indigenous research*, where this article is published.

from a group of mainly White peers is to use it in a light and, therefore, disrespectful manner to those who have experienced more severe forms of othering, such as those leading to cultural genocide. However, upon further reflection, I realized that my use of the word "other" in this chapter, if looked upon in the context of race relations, may actually be quite thought-provoking and revealing. Let us consider what Wolfe (2006) said about the emergence of race, that is, "we cannot simply say that settler colonialism or genocide have been targeted at particular races, since a race cannot be taken as given. It is made in the targeting" (p. 388). In other words, race is socially constructed (Wolfe, 2006). Keeping to White-Indigenous relations in Canada, we observe the oppressing (or White) group, which determines how society operates, and we see the oppressed (Indigenous) group, whose culture is marginalized and whose members are "othered". Now, if we look at my track team as its own, little society, we see an oppressing group (the White athletes who grew up in the same city), and we see an oppressed group (athletes from areas that are culturally different from the city, such as other countries or, in my case, small, northern towns). For certain, I was of the same "race" as the local, White athletes on my team, although I often felt I identified more with newcomer athletes because the culture of the team, as maintained by the oppressing group, worked to subjugate my culture in many of the same ways the cultures of newcomer athletes were subjugated. For example, the oppressing group determined the discourse during warm-up and cool-down runs, speaking of things that were of interest/value to them based on their upbringing, and, of course, their voices dominated the discourse due to strength in numbers. As well, the dominant group chose the social activities in which the team engaged, choosing activities that served them and their fellow group members best. Of course, this comparison is far from perfect, since the oppression of Indigenous peoples in Canada was deliberate, widespread, and severely destructive, yet it is worthy of consideration because, as a friend of mine once told me, nothing good ever comes from marginalizing people. This is a key point because feelings of marginalization are what brought me to my research field (and so, they are an important part of my relationality). Due to being ostracized for being different (either due to my small-town, northern upbringing, or the way I viewed the world, or whatever), in various areas of life, not only sports, I became conscious of how much marginalization can hurt, even on the small scale on which I experienced it. So, by using the term "other" to describe myself in relation to my teammates, I am revealing an important connection that I feel with Indigenous peoples; I am saying, "I had a small taste of what

marginalization feels like, I did not like it, and now I want to work toward improving situations for people who might feel the same way, whether they are Indigenous, newcomer, from the north, or whatever". Without mentioning this very important part of my relationality, and with only providing an acknowledging of the White privilege[19] I have, I would be doing a great disservice to readers, and I would be letting my younger (the self who went through that marginalization) down. Especially now, as I reflect on what I have learned, I think both parts of who I am deserve attention because all too often only one part is recognized. My teammates see the outsider, the small-town, northern fellow, and I have been assumed to be Indigenous by members of this group on multiple occasions. On the other hand, and as I conveyed in my story about Bob (see Chapter 8), Indigenous relations often see me as a White, urban, naive researcher. Tying these two perceptions together, people from either group do not realize that while they are giving me signals that say, "you are not one of us", the other group, when I return to them, is saying the same thing. And so, I fluctuate back and forth, looking for some feeling of belonging. With that said, I now move forward with this chapter.

Relocating to an unfamiliar environment to pursue an activity like sport can pose numerous challenges. For Indigenous (First Nations, Métis, and Inuit) athletes in Canada, challenges are augmented by historic and ongoing colonial activities, such as the systematic oppression of Indigenous ways of knowing and being. I was born into a middle-class family of mainly European descent, and I acknowledge the unearned privileges that lineage affords. Unlike the experiences of many Indigenous people, I have never felt racism's sting. Yet reflections on my own isolating experiences in sport combined with my upbringing in a system that works to subjugate non-white races have given rise to my current work, the importance of which is highlighted by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC, 2015a) call for an elite athlete development program for Indigenous athletes (Call #90, Part ii).

Continuing from Part 1 of my series (Kosmenko, 2019), which discusses opportunity-related barriers to Indigenous athletes' pursuit of sport in Canada, this chapter focuses on motivation-related barriers. Opportunity and motivation are two of four nutriments identified by

[19] McIntosh (1989) said the following about White privilege: "I have come to see white privilege as an invisible package of unearned assets which I can count on cashing in each day, but about which I was 'meant' to remain oblivious. White privilege is like an invisible weightless knapsack of special provisions, maps, passports, codebooks, visas, clothes, tools and blank checks" (p. 10). In other words, those with White privilege live in a society where their ways of knowing, being, and doing are reaffirmed, and where they are automatically given the benefit of the doubt in social situations. See McIntosh (1989) for examples.

famed running coach Jack Daniels as Ingredients of Success, with the other two nutriments being direction and ability (Daniels, 2014). Specifically, this chapter briefly discusses: 1) how historic and ongoing colonial activities may negatively influence motivation to participate in sport; and 2) some strategies for providing climates conducive to motivating participation in sport among Indigenous athletes. Please note the experiences of Indigenous peoples across Canada vary greatly. First Nations peoples comprise much of the population in my home area, so my outlook tends to be First Nations-centric. Remaining cognizant of my positionality and the variability of experiences across Indigenous cultures, the suggestions I provide in this chapter are general in nature. Specifics of sport program implementation become apparent through understanding the day-to-day cultural landscapes of individual participants (e.g., see Halas et al., 2013).

Historic and Ongoing Colonial Activities – Negative Influences on Motivation

Many sources of trauma have been imposed on Indigenous Peoples throughout Canada's colonial history. The Indian Residential School (IRS) system, for instance, affected more than 150,000 students (First Nations, Métis, and Inuit; Government of Canada, 2010) from the 1880s to the 1990s (TRC, 2015b). *The Survivors Speak* (TRC, 2015b) provides examples of traumatic experiences imposed on IRS students, including forced separation from families and traditional cultures, and many forms of abuse. Devastating impacts linger through intergenerational trauma perpetuated by various mechanisms (Bombay et al., 2014). Some outcomes of this trauma include drug use, depression, learning difficulties, and presence of suicidal tendencies (Bombay et al., 2014). Daily stressors have amplified effects on wellbeing in IRS- compared to non-IRS offspring (Bombay et al., 2014), and when wellness is compromised, participation in sport can seem like a distant dream.

Social perpetrators of intergenerational trauma – notably, daily obligations and stressors that limit the duration and quality of time caregivers can spend with children – have been imposed by Western capitalism, and so are under the control of leaders in society. Maté (2013) referred to "[a] study [likely Narvaez, 2013] out of Notre Dame University, last year, [that] showed that the healthiest environment for child rearing is the hunter gatherer society" (para. 24) due to the ample, nurturing child-caregiver interactions available. This type of society, in which the human genus spent 99% of its existence (Narvaez, 2013), was replaced relatively rapidly in Canada by Western capitalism upon initial colonization (Blaut, 1993; see also Maté's seminar at Heartspeak, 2009). Western capitalism is characterized by distractions from nurturing child-

caregiver interactions, such as stress and alienation from others (Marx, 1844; Maté, 2013). Absence of these interactions during early childhood can cause suboptimal development of brain circuitry related to attachment-reward, self-regulation, and incentive-motivation mechanisms, resulting in compromised mental health later in life (Maté, 2012, 2013). For many Indigenous people, toxic effects of Western capitalism have added to traumas imposed by other aspects of colonization (e.g., the IRS system, the Sixties Scoop), contributing to an unequal (i.e., racialized) playing field in Canada with respect to ease of engagement in various pursuits, such as sport.

Outside the context of neurological development are many other factors related to colonial pervasiveness that have potential to decrease one's desire to participate in sport. Considering the impact relatedness has on motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2011), culturally irrelevant atmospheres deserve much scrutiny. Paraschak and Tirone (2015) used the term "whitestream" sport to denote sports defined by rules that "have been primarily shaped by individuals of white European heritage in ways that privilege their traditions, practices, meanings, and sport structures" (p. 104). Paraschak (2013) asserted that whitestream sport, which is an example of institutionalized racism, "constrains Aboriginal participation relative to Caucasian participants" (p. 100). Similarly, Schinke, Peltier, et al. (2013) discussed examples of how mainstream sport often requires Indigenous athletes to adjust. Characteristics of Euro-Canadian communities, for instance, include drill-oriented sport practices, striving to have your voice heard above the voices of others, public critiques of performance, and hierarchies. In contrast, many Indigenous communities value play-oriented sport practices, listening before talking, and a more community-based decision-making approach (Schinke, Peltier, et al., 2013). Overall, a neoliberal perspective emphasizing individualism, competition, winning, and reward plagues mainstream sport (Coakley, 2011), and when Indigenous athletes demonstrate resistant behaviors to this unfamiliar context, their actions/attitudes may be misinterpreted as personal choice rather than cultural fidelity (Schinke, Peltier, et al., 2013), potentially resulting in tensions with coaches and/or teammates.

The adjustment process is part of a larger process called acculturation (Berry, 1999; Blodgett et al., 2014), which involves a struggle to remain loyal to one's own culture while adjusting to the new culture to which the individual is exposed (Berry, 1999). Berry (1999) presented four possible outcomes of acculturation: 1) marginalization, 2) segregation/separation, 3) assimilation, and 4) biculturalism. Other research has suggested acculturation is a fluid

process, with individuals' experiences changing in response to interactions with other people in the host culture (Blodgett et al., 2014; Schinke, McGannon, et al., 2013). In other words, one is never ultimately settled at one of the four outcomes.

Similar to my own experiences, for Indigenous athletes who move from reserves to pursue sport in Euro-Canadian contexts, acculturation may give rise to feeling homesick, anxious, and overwhelmed by change; feelings of isolation and a lack of belonging; and anger, sadness, and compromised self-worth in response to racism experienced in the host culture (Blodgett et al., 2014). The acculturation process can also pose a challenge to one's sense of identity as their connection to their home culture begins to fade while they navigate the complexities of the new culture (Blodgett et al., 2014). Although biculturation sounds like the preferred state in the acculturation process, it can be a challenge when competing groups have contradictory worldviews (Goodwill & McCormick, 2012), as is often the case between Indigenous and Western cultures. Thus, it is easy to understand why some athletes who undergo the acculturation process might choose to give up on their dreams of pursuing mainstream sport (Schinke et al., 2006, as cited in Schinke, Peltier, et al., 2013).

Strategies for Increasing Motivation

There are strategies we can use to make sport programs more conducive to feelings of motivation. Self-determination theory (SDT) suggests motivation fluctuates according to environmental factors (Deci & Ryan, 2011). Self-determined activities providing environments conducive to the development of feelings of autonomy, competence, and relatedness are generally more likely to result in long-term participation than activities not providing environments supporting these needs (Deci & Ryan, 2011; Mack et al., 2015). For the purposes of this chapter, I have chosen to reflect on only the first and last components (autonomy and relatedness).

Regarding autonomy, particularly with respect to young athletes, program leaders can provide opportunities for decision-making by allowing for deliberate play. Deliberate play, characterized by child-led, intrinsically motivated activities, is one of five settings of practice and play for children (Côté et al., 2013). Deliberate play promotes ongoing motivation by ensuring participants are engaged in activities they find enjoyable (Côté et al., 2012). Additionally, since deliberate play puts decision-making onus on the children participating, it is a valuable tool for developing adaptability and creativity (Côté et al., 2013), which are attributes

that are helpful later in life. As an intrinsically motivated activity, deliberate play can also promote a desire to master challenges (Mack et al., 2015), which can result in increased competence (i.e., the second component of SDT), given that athletes have sufficient direction when and where appropriate.

The third component of SDT, relatedness, can be achieved through cultural relevance. According to Kosmenko et al. (2019), "[c]ulturally relevant sport refers broadly to those contemporary sports, games, and traditional physical cultural practices that are relevant to the local Indigenous communities" (p. 46). Principles discussed by Halas et al. (2013) regarding culturally relevant pedagogy in the context of physical education delivery to Indigenous students are useful here. Halas et al. (2013) emphasized being allies to students (athletes), meaningful and relevant programming, creating and maintaining supportive learning (training) climates, and understanding the day-to-day cultural landscapes of individual students (athletes).

Cultural sport psychology (Schinke, Peltier, et al., 2013) can be helpful in making sport programs meaningful and relevant. This concept emphasizes sport's inclusion of role models, traditional medicine people and Elders, maintenance of family connections, and the national Indigenous community. In fact, Goodwill and McCormick (2012) suggested some of the most helpful factors in terms of supporting Indigenous cultural identity (i.e., relatedness) are participating in a cultural gathering, participating in a group of Indigenous people, and connecting with family. Of course, however, it is also important for Indigenous athletes to learn about mainstream sport cultures prior to committing (Schinke, Peltier, et al., 2013).

Indeed, education can go a long way, and both parties have roles to play. Athletes and coaches should learn about Canada's colonial history and its associated impacts, developing an understanding of how certain practices in our society marginalize Indigenous peoples (Blodgett et al., 2008; Lavallée and Lévesque, 2013). It is important coaches respond to athletes' individual needs, and that athletes see themselves as human beings that react, in one way or another, to the environments to which they are exposed. With this understanding comes a realization that many challenges facing Indigenous athletes in pursuit of sport and other activities are not predisposed traits of the self, but systemic issues in society.

Conclusion

Colonization has imposed a number of challenges to motivation to participate in sport among Indigenous athletes. Strategies for overcoming these challenges have been discussed, and

the need for education, for both coaches and athletes, has been emphasized. Indeed, we are better prepared to overcome obstacles if we first understand them. Although discussions about historic and ongoing colonial activities are emotionally difficult, dialogue must happen if we are to move forward in providing athletic environments that encourage motivation. As this chapter, as well as the first part (Kosmenko, 2019) of my series, have illustrated, the playing field isn't level with respect to who gets to participate in sport and, unfortunately, it will remain that way as long as people continue settling for the status quo delivering and perpetuating toxic environments in our colonial society.

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Barriers to Indigenous Athletes' Athletic Development in Canada: An Analysis Framed by Daniels' Ingredients of Success, Part 3 (Direction)

"The altitude here will affect race times, just you wait and see". Those are words I still smile at to this day. Yeah, altitude does affect race times in longer events, but the difference from 1000- to 1300 feet above sea level is basically negligible, as both altitudes are still close to sea level anyway. Yet I heard those words, or words to that extent, when I was an assistant track and field coach at a high school in northern Manitoba. Our small team of three athletes had travelled to a community in the southern part of the province for the provincial track and field championships, where the altitude was slightly higher than it was in our hometown. That statement, made by the other chaperone who, to his credit, was very friendly and cared a lot about the youth he supervised, continues to remind me that knowledgeable track and field coaches are very hard to find in the northern part of the province. In fact, I was not coached in my own running endeavors by anyone trained in the art until I was 21 years of age. By that time, my optimal window to develop speed had long passed (Aboriginal Sport Circle [ASC], 2016). I would not trade my northern upbringing for one in which I had access to knowledgeable coaches, however, as that upbringing had substantial benefits in terms of building resourcefulness and many skills city kids may not learn until much later in life, if ever; I am just saying that some kids in some parts of the province are more privileged with respect to sport direction. With respect to Indigenous athletes specifically, Canadian Heritage (2005) highlighted that a lack of Indigenous coaches is a significant barrier to sport participation. Sinclair (2007) suggested transracial (cross-cultural) placements during the 60s scoop could be problematic because adopters who have not experienced racism may not be prepared to provide guidance to their new children. The same could be said for coaches who lack understanding of Indigenous athletes' lived experiences, hence the need for Indigenous coaches (i.e., Indigenous athletes need to be able to "see themselves" in their role models).

Indeed, challenges are compounded for Indigenous athletes from rural and remote communities where sport direction may be lacking. Through analysis, however, we can better understand the factors impeding access to sport direction among rural and remote Indigenous athletes, and using this understanding, sport programs can work to better promote this *Ingredient of Success*. As such, carrying forward from Parts 1 (Kosmenko, 2019; see also part 1 of the current chapter, *Opportunity*) and 2 (Kosmenko, 2021; see also part 2 of the current chapter,

Intrinsic Motivation) of this series, which focused on barriers related to opportunity and intrinsic motivation, respectively, this chapter focuses on barriers to athletic direction for Indigenous athletes, particularly those from rural and remote communities.

Direction

Prior to discussing the current situation for rural and remote Indigenous athletes with respect to direction, it is important to note the type of direction provided may vary depending on athletes' positions on the ASC's (2016) long-term participant development pathway 1.1 (in other words, where athletes are with respect to the different stages of athletic development). Coaching different age-groups requires different skill sets due to the various changes (e.g., cognitive, motivational, emotional, physical) that occur as athletes age. Many factors, such as why an athlete is participating (e.g., fun versus competition versus any of a number of other reasons), what type of direction to which they respond best, how much constructive feedback they can handle without feeling overwhelmed, how much one-on-one attention they need, and what type of training their body can handle, should not be expected to remain static throughout development. In addition, it should be expected that as athletes begin to specialize later (see the developmental model by Côté et al., 2007), they will require a coach with deeper understanding of their sport as well as of human physiology and response to training stimuli. With that said, I now discuss the barriers to direction for rural and remote Indigenous athletes.

Previous research suggests many First Nations coaches in Manitoba are primarily teachers (see Chapter 7), and Halas et al. (2013) suggested that for many Indigenous students, Physical Education (PE) class is significant in terms of exposure to sport. As such, it is evident that PE can play substantial roles for both Indigenous students and Indigenous (or at least First Nations) coaches. The systematic underfunding of most[20] federally funded (i.e., on-reserve) as opposed to provincially funded (i.e., off-reserve) schools, however results in compromised PE quality in the former (Halas et al., 2013). Not only does lack of funding make paying PE teachers professional wages difficult, it also presents a challenge to hiring enough staff in

[20] Funding received by First Nations schools affiliated with the Manitoba First Nations School System (MFNSS), which was recently established by the Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre (MFNERC; MFNSS, n.d.), is increased relative to funding received by First Nations schools not affiliated with the MFNSS (Malone, 2017). According to the MFNSS (n.d., para. 8): "Since starting operations in July 2017, MFNSS has made significant strides in developing an education system reflecting First Nations worldview, culture, and values. As of March 2019, eleven First Nations schools have signed on for an initial term, with several others expressing an interest in joining." Note there is currently a total of 59 First Nations-operated schools in Manitoba (MFNERC, 2018).

general, so the onus for providing PE instruction may be put on teachers who know little about PE and who, due to having to teach other classes, have little time to designate to PE preparation (Halas et al., 2013). Halas et al. (2013) stated that similar issues affect extra-curricular sport as well, which is a notion to which I can attest via years of experience as an athlete as well as (brief) experience as an assistant coach in northern Manitoba. In addition, although many rural and remote communities contain people who have a passion for working with youth, which is an important factor with respect to sport programming (Blodgett et al., 2008), fulfillment of the need for formal coach training (see Blodgett et al., 2008) can be impeded by the geographic distance between many reserves and places where there are people with sport expertise (see Canadian Heritage, 2005).

Research examining the experiences of Indigenous coaches in Canada is limited. Work in Australia, however, has provided insights that may be helpful in the Canadian context. With respect to opportunities for Aboriginal Australian coaches, it has been argued that stereotypes of Aboriginal athletes as being geared toward more physical-, as opposed to intellectual- and leadership-oriented sport positions, are barriers to coaching opportunities (Apoifis et al., 2018). In their study with Aboriginal Australian coaches working at various levels (i.e., community- to high-performance), Apoifis et al. (2018) discovered that some coaches felt they were excluded from coaching positions because of their Aboriginality. As Apoifis et al. (2018) stated, "[s]ome coaches felt that their talents and potential were not recognized by sporting organisations, and that they were simply not seen in the same way as their non-Aboriginal colleagues" (p. 862). Further, it was conveyed by some participants that Aboriginal athletes are typically not encouraged to become coaches to the same extent that non-Aboriginal athletes are. Although Apoifis et al.'s (2018) study was in the context of Aboriginal Australian coaching, the stereotypes of Indigenous people in Canada are similar, as expressed by Valentine (2012) in the context of the NHL, where Indigenous players have often been typecast into "enforcer" roles.

Racism is just one factor influencing the experiences of Indigenous coaches. Bennie et al. (2019) more generally interviewed Aboriginal Australian coaches from a variety of sports and with varying levels of coaching experience, inquiring about the facilitators and barriers influencing their developmental paths as coaches. Bennie et al. (2019) used a socioecological framework based on Bronfenbrenner's (1977) Ecological Systems Theory. The model included the following levels of influence: Individual, Interpersonal, Organizational, and Sociocultural.

At the Individual level, facilitators included love for sport, passion to stay involved in sport, self-determination, resilience, opportunity to give back to the community, and opportunity to be a role model or leader. Conversely, waning interest or enjoyment was seen as a barrier, as was shyness and a lack of confidence. At the Interpersonal level, facilitators included mentor coaches and support and encouragement from parents and others. Some coaches identified time constraints as a barrier at this level, as well as the need to balance community involvement in addition to family and coaching responsibilities simultaneously.

A variety of factors were identified by Bennie et al. (2019) at the Organizational level. Facilitators included ties to sport clubs (which provided career support), financial support from organizations, policies promoting inclusivity of Aboriginal participants in sport, coaching opportunities, all-Aboriginal coaching clinics, and coaching accreditation courses. Barriers at this level included inflexibility of coaching accreditation courses, cost and location of accreditation courses, perceptions that Aboriginal-specific coaching programs are not as legitimate or valuable as mainstream programs, and institutional racism, as similarly conveyed by Apoifis et al. (2018). Bennie et al.'s (2019) study identified the following facilitators at the Sociocultural level: inclusive environments, socioeconomic background and values, and the importance of sport in Aboriginal communities. A barrier identified at this level was the sociocultural norm of perceiving Aboriginal people as being geared toward physical- as opposed to intellectual activities which, again, was a topic discussed by Apoifis et al. (2018).

Bennie et al. (2019) claimed that their work with Aboriginal Australian coaches was one of the first studies of its kind, as most research thus far has focused on Aboriginal athletes. The Canadian context also contains a dearth of research related to the factors influencing Indigenous coaches in their coaching roles, although much of what was discussed by Bennie et al. (2019) can be applied to situations in Canada, where racism and stereotyping are still issues of concern. As such, not only can Bennie et al.'s (2019) work inform future, Canadian-based research, the findings from their work can be applied in the meantime.

One relevant Canadian study is that of Sirant (2010), who focused on Manitoba's Interlake region. Although Sirant's (2010) study was broad with respect to barriers and supports affecting participation in hockey in the area, some of his findings were related to factors affecting coaches in their roles. For instance, with respect to facilitators, he found that coaches felt gratification for being positive influences in the lives of youth, and that coaches were

grateful for the support they received from parents (e.g., transportation for youth, equipment costs, operating canteens). Contradictorily, however, coaches also noted a lack of support from some parents. Through his discussions with coaches, Sirant (2010) gathered a number of suggestions for meaningful, relevant coach education in the community. He categorized these suggestions under three headings: 1) what a new coach in the community needs to coach hockey (i.e., patience, caring, commitment, and respect); 2) necessary content to be included in coaching education (i.e., leadership, technical/tactical, and health and fitness); and 3) best delivery (teaching/coaching) approaches (i.e., a mentoring approach, coaching resources, achievement awards for athletes).

Conclusion

In conjunction with my sections on opportunity and intrinsic motivation, this section serves to further support the need for improvements with respect to the athletic developmental environments being provided to rural and remote Indigenous athletes in Manitoba. As Canadian Heritage (2005) noted, Indigenous coaches are important with respect to encouraging sport participation among Indigenous peoples. Although limited, research on the factors influencing Indigenous coaches in their coaching roles can be helpful in terms of the recruitment, retention, and development of future Indigenous coaches, which will ultimately have positive implications on Indigenous peoples' participation in sport.

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Chapter 5: Factors Influencing University Sport Participation Among Rural and Remote First Nations Athletes in Manitoba, Part A[21]

Abstract

Five of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's 94 Calls to Action relate to sport. University sport can serve as a pathway to elite sport via the resources provided, suggesting potential in addressing Call to Action 90(ii): "[a]n elite athlete development program for Aboriginal athletes" (TRC, 2015a, p. 10). Barriers to both university and sport for Indigenous students/athletes, however, are many. Indigenous peoples comprise almost 18% of Manitoba's population, suggesting measures to address barriers will have considerable impact in this province. Using a socioecological framework and guided by Wilson's (2001) Indigenous research paradigm, this research examined factors influencing university sport participation among rural and remote First Nations athletes in Manitoba, including solutions for change. Part A of this research, discussed here, examined the experiences of First Nations high school athletes as well as their coaches and teachers. Some of the topics highlighted were: support from family and others; the prevalence of racism; the significance of cultural relevance in school settings; the need for high school decision-makers to heed advice of staff; strengths and weaknesses regarding academic and sport opportunities and direction in high schools and, more generally, in communities; and challenges associated with being away from home. These results can be used by academic and sport organizations seeking to provide environments conducive to the success of First Nations students/athletes from rural and remote communities.

Keywords: First Nations athletes, sport, high school, university

[21] This research was approved by the University of Manitoba Research Ethics Board, Protocol #E2018:103 (HS22470).

Factors Influencing University Sport Participation Among Rural and Remote First Nations Athletes in Manitoba, Part A

The federal government of Canada recognized the importance of sport and physical activity to culture and society in the country, including the many health/wellness, social, linguistic, economic, and cultural benefits in their Sport and Physical Activity Act (*Physical Activity and Sport Act*, S.C. 2003, c. 2). Section 4(2) of the Act highlighted the sport-related commitments prioritized by the government, including increasing participation and building capacity in Canada's sport system (*Physical Activity and Sport Act*, S.C. 2003, c. 2). Five of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's (TRC's) 94 Calls to Action relate to improving sport situations for Indigenous peoples, including in the areas of participation and capacity (TRC, 2015a), and the federal government has committed to addressing all the Calls:

> During the TRC's final event on December 15, 2015, the Prime Minister reiterated the Government of Canada's commitment to work in partnership with Indigenous communities, the provinces, territories and other vital partners, to fully implement recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, starting with the implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. (Government of Canada, 2015, para. 5)

The current research focused specifically on Call to Action 90(ii), which calls for "[a]n elite athlete development program for Aboriginal athletes" (TRC, 2015a, p. 10).

The importance of the sport-related Calls to Action is highlighted by the numerous barriers imposed on Indigenous peoples in pursuit of sport. Some of these barriers include racism, economic circumstances among Indigenous families, a lack of cultural relevance in sport programs, and few Indigenous coaches and coaches who are sensitive to Indigenous cultures (Canadian Heritage, 2005). Additional barriers include a lack of sport facilities in reserves, confusion over government jurisdiction/responsibility regarding sport program delivery, and large geographic distances between reserves and communities with facilities and people of expertise (Canadian Heritage, 2005). Many of these challenges can be avoided, however, if one is willing to, and capable of, moving to areas with sufficient resources. For example, university-level athletes have access to expert coaches, athletic therapists, sport nutritionists, sport psychologists, and high-quality facilities and equipment. These resources can be instrumental to athletes pursuing elite levels of sport participation.

Unfortunately, there are a plethora of challenges confronting Indigenous students in

pursuit of post-secondary education. Systemic underfunding of most[22] federally funded (i.e., on-reserve) primary and secondary schools greatly inhibits educational quality, compromising learning outcomes (Halas et al., 2013). In addition, many Indigenous families face challenging socioeconomic circumstances (e.g., poverty, unemployment) resulting from historic and ongoing colonization (Preston, 2008). Even if one is successful in primary and secondary school and acquires funding for post-secondary, persisting within the university atmosphere until degree completion can be a significant challenge. Many universities across Canada favour Western ways of knowing, being, and doing while subjugating Indigenous ways (see Kirkness & Barnhardt, 2001, for a discussion specifically relevant to First Nations students). In addition, Indigenous students often must deal with daily challenges such as racist comments within their classes, othering from peers, lack of Indigenous faculty, marginalization of Indigenous research methodologies, isolation, and a lack of cultural awareness among non-Indigenous students (Bailey, 2016).

For proponents of the virtues of sport especially, it may be tempting to think that sport participation makes the university experience more bearable for Indigenous student-athletes. For example, research suggests sport may be a source for feelings of family and community among Indigenous participants who relocate to urban areas (Lavallée, 2007). Yet sport environments can also be places where cultural exclusion is pronounced. Sport is a socially-constructed practice (Forsyth & Paraschak, 2013), meaning what constitutes sport differs from one culture to another. This variation is particularly evident when looking at mainstream versus Indigenous sport. Forsyth and Paraschak (2013) used a double helix model to depict these two sport systems and how they interact. The double helix illustrates the systems as separate entities that inform each other at various points. One way the two systems are unique is in their philosophical stances. Mainstream sport generally assumes a neoliberal perspective emphasizing competition, individualism, winning, hierarchies, and rewards (Coakley, 2011). In contrast, Indigenous sport

[22] Funding received by First Nations schools affiliated with the Manitoba First Nations School System (MFNSS), which was recently established by the Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre (MFNERC; MFNSS, n.d.), is increased relative to funding received by First Nations schools not affiliated with the MFNSS (Malone, 2017). According to the MFNSS (n.d., para. 8): "Since starting operations in July 2017, MFNSS has made significant strides in developing an education system reflecting First Nations worldview, culture, and values. As of March 2019, eleven First Nations schools have signed on for an initial term, with several others expressing an interest in joining." Note there is currently a total of 59 First Nations-operated schools in Manitoba (MFNERC, 2018).

is more values-based, emphasizing positive attributes that can be demonstrated through sport, but which are important in life in general (Rice, 2019). Examples of such values are the Anishinaabe 7 teachings: respect, courage, humility, giving/love, honesty, truth, and wisdom (Benton-Banai, 1988, as cited in Rice, 2019), and teachings that emphasize harmony between body, mind, spirit, and emotion (Rice, 2019). The "doing" of sport can also vary between mainstream and Indigenous versions. For example, drill-oriented practices often characterize the former, and play-oriented practices are common in Indigenous communities (Schinke et al., 2013). Further, hierarchical decision-making processes are seen in the former, whereas sport in Indigenous communities often emphasizes community-oriented decision-making processes (Schinke et al., 2013). Sport psychology practices may be different as well, with mainstream approaches being led by consultants who have been formally educated in mainstream techniques and, thus, likely to privilege those techniques (Schinke et al., 2013). On the other hand, many Indigenous athletes may prefer to seek guidance from Elders (Schinke et al., 2013).

Challenges also exist outside the university and sport settings for Indigenous athletes who relocate to Euro-Canadian communities. Blodgett et al. (2014) identified some of these challenges, including culture shock, feeling overwhelmed by change, living with non-Indigenous billets, lacking meaningful engagement from host culture members, dealing with racism, and confronting attitudes that Indigenous people can't "make it". Blodgett et al. (2014) also identified challenges such as being distanced from family, losing loved ones while away from home, missing Indigenous culture, and dealing with on-reserve rejection due to some community members feeling the athlete has betrayed them by leaving. The challenges related to confronting attitudes Indigenous people can't "make it" and dealing with on-reserve rejection were also relevant in Blodgett and Schinke's (2015) work with Indigenous student-athletes at secondary and post-secondary levels of education. Blodgett and Schinke (2015) also found that although moving away to pursue sport and academics posed many challenges, athletes grew wholistically from the transition, forming positive outlooks regarding their Indigenous roots, and finding new purpose in wanting to give back to Indigenous communities.

Although university sport has the potential to address Call to Action 90(ii), the aforementioned challenges associated with university attendance and mainstream sport participation are highly problematic to this goal, particularly for Indigenous athletes who relocate from areas that are culturally diverse from university-harboring cities (i.e., rural and remote

communities). Solutions are needed, and recognizing what Smith (1999) noted about non-Indigenous researchers too often determining both what Indigenous peoples' problems are as well as how to go about solving those problems, an exploration into the matter of university sport participation among Indigenous athletes from rural and remote communities must privilege the concerns and solutions of local Indigenous peoples.

To that end, the larger project associated with this study asked: what are the factors (i.e., facilitators [opportunities/supports] and challenges [reduced opportunities/obstructions]) influencing university sport participation among rural and remote First Nations athletes in Manitoba as seen through the eyes of some First Nations athletes as well as their coaches and teachers? What are some strategies for improvements? This study (Part A) examined discussions held with high school athletes as well as their coaches and teachers. Part B (Chapter 6) examined discussions held with university athletes their coaches, and university athlete alumni.

It is important to note that this research focused on First Nations student-athletes specifically (i.e., excluded Métis and Inuit student-athletes) due to the extremely diverse histories and cultures across populations of Indigenous peoples. As well, this research focused specifically on Manitoba because, according to a 2016 census, this province has a relatively high proportion of First Nations people (10% of the population; Statistics Canada, 2020), over half of which live on any of Manitoba's 63 reserves (Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada, 2014). In addition, the terms "rural" and "remote", as used in this research, are designations for communities not containing a U Sports member university, as U Sports is the governing body with respect to university sport in Canada. The distinguishing factor between "rural" and "remote" communities, as used in this research, is the presence of all-weather road access in the former type of community. Finally, although the definitions for "rural" and "remote" were based on the absence of U Sports member universities, recruitment of participants for Part B (Chapter 6) of this research was not restricted to this system, as the Canadian Collegiate Athletic Association also plays a significant role in post-secondary sport in Canada.

Methods

To help ensure a respectful, meaningful approach, the research team, which was

comprised of two non-Indigenous scholars,[23] sought to follow the tenets of Wilson's (2001) Indigenous Research paradigm (IRP). As Wilson (2001) noted, the IRP is fundamentally different than any Western research paradigms and is comprised of four key aspects: the ontology (what we believe is real), the epistemology (how we think about reality), the methodology (how we go about doing research), and the axiology (morals or ethics). Under the IRP's ontology, knowledge is seen as something that is not owned by an individual, but shared among people as well as with all of creation. As such, the IRP's epistemology focuses on relationships (with participants, the knowledge shared, and all of creation), and relational accountability is the driving force behind researchers' choice of methodology. Lastly, the axiology in the IRP is that the research must be of benefit to Indigenous people.

Recruitment

This research used a maximum variation sampling approach (Patton, 2002) because sport opportunities and direction vary greatly across Manitoba in terms of availability and quality. Maximum variation sampling, which is a type of purposeful sampling technique in which researchers attempt to capture diversity (Patton, 2002), allowed for recruitment of participants with varying experiences, but who were all very knowledgeable with respect to the research topic. Snowball sampling helped expand the participant group in the larger research project, including across individual studies. In snowball sampling, which is another type of purposeful sampling technique, researchers ask current participants whether they know anyone who may be helpful in contributing information to the research (Patton, 2002).

Athletes recruited for the larger research project associated with this this study varied with respect to years involved in sport, sport(s) played, gender, age, hometown, current school, and the nation to which they belonged. Athletes recruited for this study specifically were all from the same high school and were approximately the same age, yet differences were observed in years involved in sport, sport(s) played, gender, and hometown. Two of the high school athletes were Ojibway, and the third did not disclose her nation. Other participants in the larger research project as well as in this study (i.e., teachers and coaches) varied with respect to sports

[23] Care must be taken by non-Indigenous researchers when working with Indigenous research participants so as not to engage in extractive research processes. For more information on the research approach followed in this study, see Chapter 1 of the lead researcher's PhD Thesis: Kosmenko, N. J. (2021*). Factors influencing university sport participation among rural and remote First Nations athletes in Manitoba* (Publication No. TBD) [Doctoral dissertation, University of Manitoba]. Faculty of Graduate Studies (Electronic Theses and Dissertations).

coached/classes taught, gender, age, hometown, current community, role (teacher or coach), racial identity, and, for First Nations participants, the nation to which they belonged.

Participants

Seven participants contributed to this study, including three current high school student-athletes (all First Nations) and four high school teachers/coaches (three First Nations, one non-Indigenous). Among the student-athletes, Sky moved to Winnipeg from a rural reserve over a decade ago (when she was about four years old), and Jeremy had lived in Winnipeg his whole life. Unfortunately, Liz joined the talking circle late so much of her background information (including hometown) was not collected. Although the lack of representation of student-athletes from rural and remote communities was a limitation of this research (see the Limitations section for further discussion), the voices of the student-athletes involved were still important with respect to elucidating facilitators and challenges for First Nations student-athletes in general (e.g., racism, cultural (ir)relevance in schools).

Collectively, participants in this study represented two high schools (belonging to separate school divisions), both of which receive First Nations students from reserves across Manitoba, and one of which has an on-campus dormitory in which students live throughout the academic year. Table 1 presents participants' background information, including participant pseudonym, category (athlete or teacher/coach), activity played/taught/coached, gender, and racial identity. Note that in Manitoba it is common for high school coaches to also be teachers, so the "teacher" and "coach" categories were combined into one category ("teacher/coach") here. This is not to say, however, that any of the teachers/coaches in this study were inexperienced with respect to sport. Each teacher/coach was well practiced in the activities they taught/coached, with some even playing at high levels when they were younger.

Table 1. *Chapter 5 Participant Information*

Participant pseudonym	Category	Activity played/taught/coached	Gender	Racial identity	Community category
Sky	Current high school student-athlete	Volleyball	Female	First Nations, Ojibway	Rural reserve/Urban
Jeremy	Current high school student-athlete	American football	Male	First Nations, Ojibway	Urban

Participant pseudonym	Category	Activity played/taught/coached	Gender	Racial identity	Community category
Liz	Current high school student-athlete	Hockey	Female	First Nations, not disclosed	Not disclosed
Tom	Current high school teacher/coach (non-dormitory school)	Various courses, hockey	Male	First Nations, Cree	Urban
Chuck	Current high school teacher/coach (dormitory school)	Physical Education, basketball	Male	Mixed Euro-Canadian	Rural non-reserve
Abel	Current high school teacher/coach (dormitory school)	Cultural activities, hockey	Male	First Nations, Swampy Cree	Rural non-reserve
Robyn	Current high school teacher/coach (dormitory school)	Cultural activities	Female	First Nations, not disclosed	Rural non-reserve

Knowledge Sharing

Knowledge sharing involved an in-person talking circle (Wolf & Rickard, 2003) with the high school athletes, and individual yarning sessions (Bessarab & Ng'andu, 2010) via telephone with the coaches and teachers (see the appendices section for the interview guides used). Talking circles fit well under Wilson's (2001) IRP because they are rooted in traditional Indigenous cultures and give equal credence to what is said by each individual participant (Wolf & Rickard, 2003), helping dismantle perceived hierarchies between researchers and participants. Chhin (2015) used a talking circle in her research examining cultural relevance of Physical Education and Health, stating that the talking circle she used differed from traditional sharing circles in that the former was designed specifically for classroom discussions, following a semi-structured format while still being conversational in nature. The current research followed a similar approach, as the lead researcher felt he had not built the rapport required to elicit deep

responses often observed in a traditional sharing circle. In addition, the researcher was unfamiliar with the cultural protocols followed in each participants' respective cultures. Further, due to the shyness of the high school participants, the lead researcher found he had to use probing questions as the conversation made its way around the circle. At its conclusion, and recognizing the questions asked may not have addressed all concerns among the participant group, the researcher asked participants if they had anything else to add. To further meet relational accountability obligations, the research also asked participants how they thought results of the study should be used, and responses were recorded to be acted upon later (one participant, Jeremy, had to leave early, so he missed the concluding questions). Finally, as an act of reciprocity, each talking circle participant was given a $10.00 Tim Horton's gift card.

Yarning, which is a type of conversational interview (Bessarab & Ng'Andu, 2010), was deemed appropriate for this research for two reasons. First, yarning allows participants control over the direction of the conversation despite the main questions often being pre-determined, so participants have the freedom to discuss issues of importance to them (Bessarab & Ng'andu, 2010). Second, yarning typically involves a rapport-building phase (the "social yarn") in which the researcher-participant relationship is built or strengthened (Bessarab & Ng'andu, 2010). In addition, to further address relational accountability obligations, at the end of each yarning session the lead researcher asked participants whether they had anything else to add. The researcher also asked all participants, either at the conclusion of yarning sessions or in follow-up communication, how they thought results of the study should be applied. Answers to this question were recorded to allow for future follow-up. Lastly, as an act of reciprocity, all yarning session participants received either a braid of sweet grass or a $10.00 Tim Horton's gift card. The idea to provide sweetgrass was the suggestion of a local First Nations Elder which whom the lead researcher met for guidance prior to interviewing research participants. First and foremost, however, the Elder suggested that the lead researcher be sincere in his expressions of gratitude toward participants so that his thanks would truly echo his feelings. Guidance from Elders was particularly important to the lead researcher throughout this project, not always in a direct sense, as Elders were not consistently consulted for this work specifically, but in ways that encouraged a respectful research approach through teachings of humility and kindness the lead researcher learned as he listened to Elders for work outside this study.

At least two recording devices were used to record the talking circle and yarning sessions. The talking circle audio recording was transcribed verbatim by the lead researcher, and the yarning recordings were transcribed verbatim by the transcription company Rev.com. Once transcripts were produced, the lead researcher sent each participant an electronic copy of the transcript from their talking circle or yarning session. Each participant was given 25 days (i.e., until the end of the month in which copies were emailed) to notify the lead researcher of any changes they wanted made to their transcript. No participants requested changes to their transcript.

Transcript Analysis

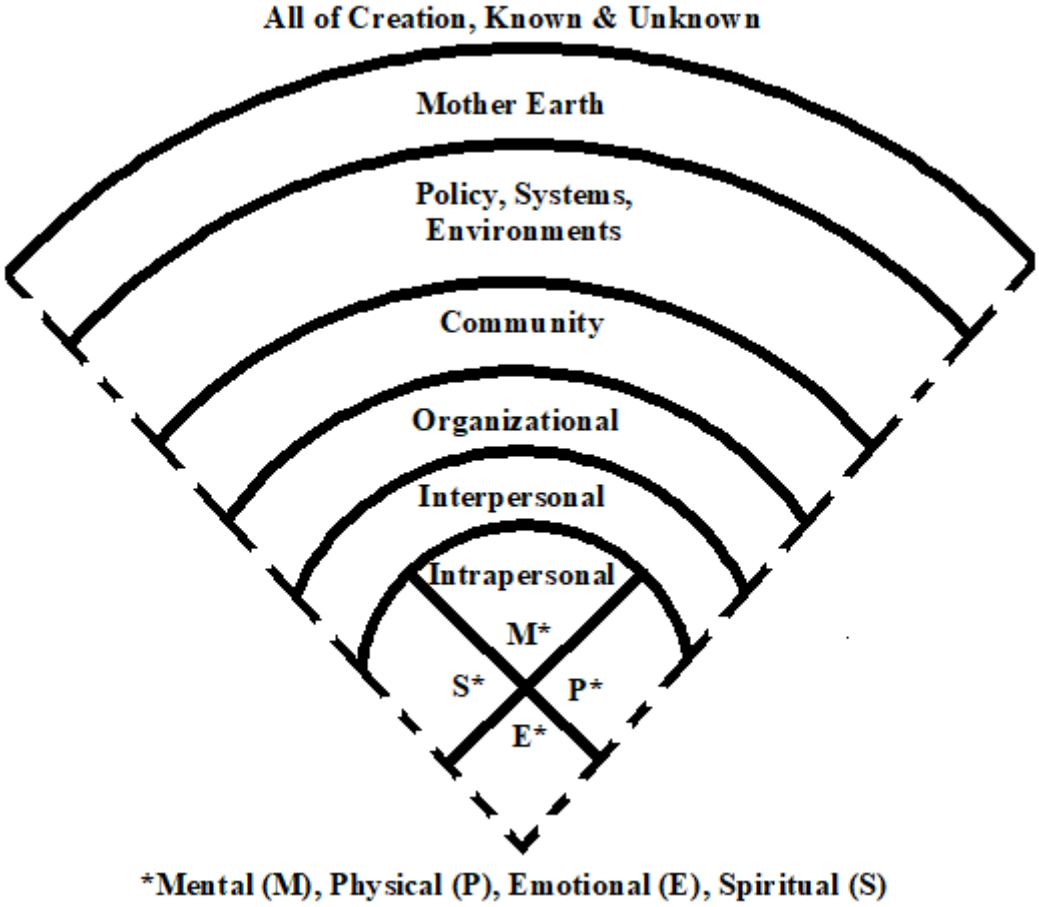
Using NVivo 12 software, transcript analysis followed the six-step process explained by Braun and Clarke (2006). Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis was acceptable for this research because it is theoretically flexible and recognizes that researcher subjectivity influences the analysis process, thereby requiring researchers to reflect on their own positionalities while immersing themselves in the messages conveyed by participants (Braun & Clarke, 2020). In so doing, the lead researcher was able to maintain relational accountability by prioritizing content that seemed most important to participants. As well, the Braun and Clarke (2006) thematic analysis process can be used with both inductive and deductive approaches (Braun & Clarke, 2020), which was helpful in the current research. Similar to the process followed by Bennie et al. (2019) in their work with Aboriginal Australian coaches, codes in the current research were first labelled as either facilitators (opportunities/supports) or challenges (reduced opportunity/obstructions), and then sorted deductively into the leverage points of a socioecological model. In keeping with what Smith (1999) mentioned with respect to prioritizing the solutions of Indigenous participants, an additional category was created to accommodate suggestions for change. Items under each leverage point/category were then analyzed inductively, creating multiple levels of themes.

The leverage points under which codes were deductively analyzed were derived from Lavallée and Lévesque's (2013) Integrated Indigenous-ecological Model (IIEM), which has been used elsewhere in sport-related research with Indigenous participants (see McHugh et al., 2015). The IIEM has its roots in Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory and associated model which demonstrate that human biopsychological development is influenced by environmental factors (Bronfenbrenner, 1977, 1979, 2005). The IIEM builds upon McLeroy et al. (1988) and

Stokols's (1992) contributions by adding the Mother Earth and All of Creation (Known and Unknown) leverage points, as well as physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual aspects of the Intrapersonal leverage point. Since these aspects are important in many Indigenous cultures, their additions make the IIEM more culturally relevant to Indigenous peoples than Bronfenbrenner's (1977, 1979) model.

The IIEM's levels, which are depicted as a series of circles nested within one another (Figure 4), include (from the inside moving out): Intrapersonal (physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual aspects of the individual), Interpersonal, Organizational, Community, Policy/Systems/Environments, Mother Earth, and All of Creation (Known and Unknown). These are the levels, or environments, which interactions occur, and under which codes from interview transcripts were categorized. Once results were compiled, a copy of the manuscript draft was emailed to participants. Participants had a total of 18 days (i.e., until the end of the month in which the copy was emailed) to provide any suggestions for changes/omissions. Except for one participant (Chuck – see the discussion regarding quality standards, below), no participants requested changes to the manuscript outside of corrections to the participant information displayed in Table 1.

Figure 4. *The Lead Researcher's Depiction of Lavallée & Lévesque's (2013) Integrated Indigenous-ecological Model*



Quality Standards

Similar to Blodgett et al.'s (2008) research with Indigenous athletes and Indigenous community members, Maxwell's (1992, 2002) types of validity were considered in the current research. In Maxwell's (1992) view, validity refers to accounts as opposed to methods and data, and he discussed five considerations for qualitative work. First, descriptive validity refers to whether information has been recorded correctly and, in the current research, was addressed by using multiple recording devices and listening to audio recordings while comparing them to transcripts. One participant, Chuck, preferred to engage in follow-up discussions via phone and email after viewing a draft copy of the manuscript, choosing to engage the lead researcher in a more reciprocal approach in which he made clarifications to the quotes (from his own transcript) that appeared in the results section of the draft, sending the revised quotes back to the lead researcher via email to be incorporated into the manuscript, replacing the old quotes.

Second, Maxwell's (1992, 2002) interpretive validity refers to the interpretation of participants' dialogue. Interpretive validity was addressed in the current research by providing participants with copies of their transcripts as well as a copy of the draft manuscript, allowing for review and comment. Third, theoretical validity refers to how well the researcher's account serves as a theory for the phenomenon being examined. Similar to interpretive validity, theoretical validity was addressed by providing transcript copies and a copy of the draft manuscript to participants. Fourth, generalizability refers to the extent to which the research can be applied broadly. Blodgett et al. (2008) did not address generalizability (their research was focused on sport development in one reserve specifically), but this was addressed in the current research through the maximum variation sampling technique employed (Patton, 2002). Fifth, evaluative validity refers to the evaluations researchers make in their work (e.g., assessments of right- or wrongdoing, as in "Coach Bob was wrong to bench goaltender Billy for being outspoken about racism on their hockey team"). Blodgett et al. (2008) did not address evaluation validity, and neither did the current research, as the current research focused on exploring and contextualizing participants' experiences, not on providing evaluations of them.

A second measure employed in the current research to achieve high quality standards was Ellis' (1998, pp. 30-31) 6 question assessment, which can be used to evaluate the extent to which research questions have been addressed. The six questions include: 1) Is it plausible, convincing? 2) Does it fit with other material we know? 3) Does it have the power to change practice? 4) Has the researcher's understanding been transformed? 5) Has a solution been uncovered? 6) Have new possibilities been opened up for the researcher, research participants, and the structure of the context? In reflecting upon the analysis process, the lead researcher asked himself these six questions and concluded that the research was indeed sufficiently rigorous to have produced meaningful outcomes.

Results and Discussion

The talking circle with high school athletes (n=3) was 36 minutes in duration, and the yarning sessions with teachers and coaches ranged from 32 to 54 minutes in duration, with a mean of 40.5 minutes and a median of 38 minutes. The following sections are organized according to the leverage points of the IIEM (Lavallée & Lévesque, 2013), with facilitators discussed prior to challenges. Table 2 provides a summary of themes and sub-themes from the results of the talking circle and yarning sessions. Table 3 provides a summary of themes, sub-

themes, and second level sub-themes from the recommendations discussed during the talking circle and yarning sessions.

Table 2. *Chapter 5 Summary of Results – Themes and Sub-Themes*

Socioecological leverage point	Facilitator (F) or challenge (C)	Theme	Sub-theme
Intrapersonal	F	1. Helpful personal attributes	a. Talent
			b. Worth ethic, resilience
			c. Balance, self-awareness
		2. Personal benefits from sport	a. Immediate personal benefits from sport
			b. Long-term personal benefits from sport
	C	1. Some students are uninterested in university	
		2. Disrespectful attitudes among students	
		3. Challenges with motivation	
Interpersonal	F	1. Family involvement in sport	
		2. Staff and coaches looking out for students' wellbeing	
		3. Encouragement and support from teachers	
	C	1. Racism from others	
		2. Reduced / unequal frequency / quality of interactions between high school staff and athletes	a. Staff workloads and organization / communication
			b. Trouble connecting with different personalities

Socioecological leverage point	Facilitator (F) or challenge (C)	Theme	Sub-theme
		3. Limited family support for university	
Organizational	F	1. High school responsiveness to the lives of students	a. Cultural relevance
			b. High schools looking out for students' wellbeing
			c. High schools advertising post-secondary
		2. Appropriate and helpful sport opportunities	a. Manitoba Junior Hockey League
			b. Practices in communities structured to promote fun
			c. Sport opportunities at high schools
		3. Academic opportunities in primary and secondary schools	
	C	1. Adjusting to the high school setting	a. Lack of opportunities for high school students to go back home
			b. Cultural irrelevance
			c. Feeling overwhelmed
		2. Lack of sport opportunities at high schools	
		3. Band funding for post-secondary is competitive and limited	
Community	F	1. Previous exposure to aspects of the anticipated environment	
		2. Community (home or away) support	a. Supportive, welcoming teammates and friends
			b. Fan base at home or in the city
			c. Role models

Socioecological leverage point	Facilitator (F) or challenge (C)	Theme	Sub-theme
		3. Strengths in communities	a. Academic direction
			b. Sport direction
			c. Ease of getting equipment (when you live in a city)
	C	1. Acculturation	a. Being away from home
			b. Adjusting to your circle of teammates
		2. Challenges in communities	a. Limited sport opportunities
			b. Limited sport direction
			c. Limited academic direction and support
Policy / Systems / Environments	C	1. Systemic racism resulting in impoverishment in First Nations communities	
Mother Earth	C	1. Challenges with the weather	
All of Creation (Known and Unknown)	F	1. Connection to culture	
	C	1. Disconnect from culture	

Table 3. *Chapter 5 Summary of Recommendations – Themes, Sub-Themes, and Second Level Sub-themes*

Theme	Sub-theme	Second level sub-theme
1. For athletes	a. Living in a good way	
2. For staff and program/community leaders	a. Within the school setting	i. More staff
		ii. More accountability required from students
		iii. Cultural relevance
	b. Relationships, outreach	i. Inviting people into communities

Theme	Sub-theme	Second level sub-theme
		ii. Relationships between school and home or billet parents
	c. Stepping up	
3. Where the funding goes	a. More funding to sport and education	i. Subsidies for Indigenous athletes ii. Funding to facilities and programs iii. Funding to education
	b. Accountability for where the funding goes	
	c. Increased consciousness regarding funding inequalities	

Results – Intrapersonal

Facilitators

1. Helpful Personal Attributes. The three categories of helpful personal attributes for rural and remote First Nations athletes to possess included: *Talent; Work Ethic, Resilience;* and *Balance, Self-Awareness.*

a. Talent. Chuck emphasized the significant amounts of talent that exist in communities across Manitoba. He stressed that although many of the students at his school come from disadvantaged backgrounds and were not given opportunities students from more populated areas were given, they can still compete in sport at high levels when they receive the appropriate direction.

b. Work Ethic, Resilience. Despite challenges in rural and remote communities with respect to facilities and equipment, Chuck and Abel both mentioned there are young athletes in communities that are driven with respect to engaging in sport. Chuck said there are highly motivated young athletes in communities, and Abel said the following:

> Uh, like, coming from... I lived in [remote reserve] for three years. They don't have a rink. A lot of the kids just scrape the ice and do what they can with that. Um, you see a lot of them out there playing hockey. Some have the bottom half of their equipment, but no upper half. The others have the upper half, but no bottom half. So they... Like, it’s kids

> making it work to the best they can without having the proper gear to do so. [. . . .] So like it shows that they're, they're really committed to learning, the ones that want to learn. They're committed to making it work however they can. (Abel)

Resilience was an important attribute in Liz's case as well. Liz had switched hockey teams but had experienced racism on her new team (see *Racism from Others* in the Interpersonal section). Instead of allowing this experience to disrupt her goals, Liz moved back to her old team where she felt more accepted, continuing to play hockey.

c. Balance, Self-Awareness. Robyn discussed how important it is that students live in a balanced way and know who they are:

> [T]o live a good life we have to try and walk balanced, mentally, emotionally, physically, spiritually. And to remember where we come from no matter who you are, you know. [. . . .] You find out who you are that way. And the rest will fall into place. Like if you- if you try and live that- that way things will come. You'll start understanding more, or maybe you'll find out more about your history, your culture, and- and see, you know, um, your roots. We need to be rooted. (Robyn)

2. Personal Benefits from Sport. Participants discussed several benefits First Nations athletes from rural and remote communities may receive through pursuing sport. These benefits were placed under the Intrapersonal leverage point because they help explain the personal desires that drive athletes to participate in sport. These benefits are divided into *Immediate Personal Benefits from Sport* and *Long-term Personal Benefits from Sport.*

a. Immediate Personal Benefits from Sport. Participants mentioned a number of immediate benefits from sport including enjoyment, a sense of happiness, an escape from stressors in life, spending time with friends, belonging to a group, feelings of accomplishment, confidence, and positive self-image, opportunities to go on trips and see new things, and as an outlet for one's competitive spirit. With respect to feelings of accomplishment, Tom had this to say:

> [I]f we're talking about isolated communities like, uh, you know, First Nations communities or reserves is, you know, it's a chance for them to, you know, be really good at something [. . . .] or just for that really good feeling of being really good at something. (Tom)

b. Long-term Personal Benefits from Sport. In addition to immediate benefits, participants mentioned two main long-term benefits rural and remote First Nations athletes may accrue from pursuing sport. These included sport as a way out of home communities, and

prospects of playing at the university level or even professionally (e.g., the National Hockey League).

Challenges

1. Some Students are Uninterested in University. Information shared by participants indicated varying interest among First Nations students from rural and remote communities regarding university attendance. Robyn, who works with both athletes and non-athletes, said about half of the students she interacts with seem interested in post-secondary (either university or college). Chuck mentioned that for students who are interested, university selection may depend on city size and class size, with smaller cities and universities often more attractive to students from rural and remote areas. Lastly, Abel mentioned that university sport may be a significant part of the reason athletes choose to go to university because for some sports, university may be the only option for athletes after high school.

2. Disrespectful Attitudes Among Students. There was concern among a couple of participants regarding the rebellious attitudes of many students toward high school staff. In his own experience, Abel noticed a growing reduction in the respect students demonstrated toward staff over the years. Similarly, Robyn suggested it would be helpful if her organization allowed teachers to be stricter with students to facilitate positive behaviors more conducive to success in school.

3. Challenges with Motivation. In contrast to the high levels of motivation among rural and remote athletes discussed in the Facilitators section, a concern regarding a lack of motivation among students was also conveyed. Robyn mentioned that many students do not want to go outside and find their own entertainment; instead, many are distracted by their phones. Robyn discussed how this technology did not exist when she was in her youth and that, back then, her parents were helpful in encouraging her to get outside.

Discussion – Intrapersonal

Talent and motivation have been identified by elite distance running coach Jack Daniels as two of four *Ingredients of Success* in running (Daniels, 2014), with the other two Ingredients being opportunity and direction. The *Ingredients of Success* are applicable to other sports as well, and although the talent and motivation attributed to rural and remote First Nations athletes by participants in the current research is valuable when it comes to any sport, the other Ingredients need to be in place for athletes to reach their greatest potential. As discussed in part

1 of Chapter 4, the opportunity (see also Kosmenko, 2019) and direction required to nurture talent is often reduced in many rural and remote First Nations communities relative to busier centers. Motivation, which was also discussed in Chapter 4 (part 2), can be affected by environmental factors such as historic trauma (see also Kosmenko, 2021). In addition, Robyn's mention regarding the encouragement she received from her parents to get outside when she was younger is important in the context of this research, as most of the students Robyn interacts with in her current position are not from the community in which they attended primary school. As discussed in the Interpersonal section, it is challenging for Robyn to look after the many students for which she is responsible in her work, and as conveyed by Abel in the Community section, despite dormitory staff working very hard to ensure the wellbeing of students, nothing can fill the void created by being away from one's parents.

It is evident from previous research that many benefits can be accrued when Indigenous youth choose to engage in sport (Bruner et al., 2016), and the current research supports the notion of sport as a vehicle for many positive outcomes. Understanding participants engage in sport for reasons other than the thrill of victory can be helpful in developing programs conducive to retaining athletes. As Chapter 7 discusses, many of the First Nations coaches interviewed in that research spoke of long-term, positive experiences with sport beginning when they were athletes. In the current research, participants emphasized the feelings of belonging and accomplishment that can develop through pursuing sport. Previous research has discussed the importance of belonging (relatedness) and accomplishment (competence), as well as autonomy, to motivation with respect to participating in an activity (Deci & Ryan, 2012; Mack et al., 2015). In essence, prolonged participation is more likely to occur in programs/environments that nurture these values. Belonging and accomplishment (mastery) also resonate with two of the four Circle of Courage™ values discussed by Brokenleg and Van Bockern (2003), with the other two values being independence (autonomy) and generosity. As these authors discussed, the four Circle of Courage™ values are important with respect to positive development in children.

Lastly, disrespectful attitudes among students, as discussed in the current research, is not a novel finding. Chapter 7 discussed behavioral issues as a challenge to First Nations coaches in their coaching roles. Some of these issues may be rooted in historic and ongoing colonial activity, as Chapter 7 suggested, but it is important to note what Abel said in the current research about rebellion being more the norm now than when he was young. Colonial activity has been

ongoing for generations, which prompts curiosity into what other mechanisms might be influencing behavior among First Nations youth.

Results – Interpersonal

Facilitators

1. Family Involvement in Sport. One high school athlete mentioned the support her family provided with respect to sport. Specifically, Liz explained that she started playing hockey by playing with her cousin. Liz also told of how her mom was instrumental in helping her switch hockey teams to distance herself from the racism she was experiencing on her old team. With respect to northern Manitoba specifically, Chuck suggested that family members play a crucial role in sport, explaining that young athletes in northern communities are often coached by their parents.

2. Staff and Coaches Looking out for Students' Wellbeing. The two high schools from which teachers and coaches were interviewed were both similar in that each had representation from First Nations students who had moved away from their home communities, with students at one school living in dormitories, and students at the other living with billet parents. Staff at both schools continue to prioritize the wellbeing of students, including trying to provide a strong sense of community. Staff at these schools understand that the transition for First Nations students from out of town is very difficult. For example, Tom, who worked at the school without dormitories, had this to say:

> So, I think that's probably, that's probably how schools all across the country are doing it, they're, at least I'd like to think that they are doing their best to make the kids feel comfortable being at school there and recognize that they are going through a very, a huge transition in their life, and transition is never easy, so you really have to be mindful of the stress and- and anxiety that they're probably going through. (Tom)

3. Encouragement and Support from Teachers. One high school athlete, Sky, mentioned that her start in volleyball was encouraged by a teacher who noticed her height and suggested she try the sport.

Challenges

1. Racism from Others. Only one of the three high school athletes spoke of experiences with racism. Liz left her previous hockey team due to the negative experiences she was having there, including her coach benching her for no apparent reason, and the other girls on the team making her feel unwelcome:

> Umm, I was playing this game, and, I wa- this was my old hockey team I was the only like Indigenous person there, and I heard, [inaudible] I dunno, they didn't like me cuz I was the only Indigenous person there. And all those girls knew each other already and I got like, I left the team cuz I didn't feel welcomed. (Liz)

2. Reduced/Unequal Frequency/Quality of Interactions Between High School Staff and Athletes. In some cases, frequency or quality of interactions between staff and students were not as plentiful as staff would have liked. This outcome was generally caused by two factors: *Staff Workloads and Organization/Communication*, and *Trouble Connecting with Different Personalities.*

a. Staff Workloads and Organization/Communication. Leaders of extracurricular activities, such as sports, at high schools in Manitoba are usually teachers, meaning these activities are above and beyond staff members' full-time roles. This can be stressful for staff. For the dormitory school specifically, dormitories are supervised by counsellors who often have important roles after school hours. Each counsellor is responsible for several students, and it can be hard to keep up to date on how each student is doing. For example, Robyn had this to say:

> And we do our best at [high school] to, you know, try and be there the best way we can for them. But it's- it's- it's hard at times too, because each counsellor has 30+ students sometimes. And, you know, there's always gonna be I think one, maybe two, that kinda slip through the cracks that no- um, nobody's connecting with them that- that they need.

Abel echoed Robyn's sentiment, referring specifically to parent-teacher meetings, where counsellors must meet with teachers to see how students are doing academically:

> To try to get to every single teacher and touch base and go into detail for all 30 students and every single teacher, there's not enough time. So it'd be nice to see Parent Teachers kinda strung all over, say, two days or something like that to make, make it work for your kids. 'Cause a lot of times, you get through the first 10 teachers or so, and then you're down to the last 15, or you have 15 to go, and you're looking up, and there's, like, a half an hour left to Parent Teachers. And then you get to the rest of the teachers. Um, you're just basically going in to get names and get marks. There're no details about anything. [. . . .] So, and then, like, you then try and get back to the campus and apply that to the student and tell them that, "Okay, you're failing. We need to work on this." And then when they go, "Well, I need help," and you don't really know exactly what they're struggling in or which areas they need help in, other than from them, you're kinda, like I said, uh, left in the dark. (Abel)

Abel also raised a concern regarding the limited communication between dormitory staff and academic staff at his school, saying:

> Um, we've come a long, long way since then. [. . .] even within the last year and a half, it's come a long way. But I still see room for improvement in communication between, uh, the campus staff and school staff, um, really, really lacking communication. There's a lot of times where things are missed or details are missed [. . .] And things get... Kids get left behind because of it, and it's, it's hard to see.

Lastly, Robyn discussed how stressful work in the dormitories can be:

> Yeah. Yeah. It can be tiring. Like, um, especially for, um, when you work an area. And there's good days where, you know, it goes by real fast and you have a good day. But then you have days where, say, one or two students decides to drink. Um, the drugs are not so bad. Like you can kinda tell sometimes. [. . . .] And you try and catch 'em that way. But when they drink, and say they drink too much, they act up, or, you know, there's all kinds of things that can go wrong that we have to pretty much babysit them, you know. Like sit right in their room and make sure they fall asleep okay, put them in, you know- [. . . .] recovery position, that kind of thing. [. . . .] So those- those days are a little more stressful maybe. Or, you know, you're- you're dealing with 32 personalities, and- and they're not all having a good day. That's pretty rough. (Robyn)

b. Trouble Connecting with Different Personalities. With respect to her work in the dormitories, Robyn mentioned that some students receive more attention from others due to some being more independent. This was a concern for Robyn because it meant she was unable to connect as deeply with some students.

3. Limited Family Support for University. Tom spoke about the limited support and guidance many First Nations students receive from family members with respect to university attendance, suggesting that many First Nations students are the first in their family to go to university:

> So, [. . .] of the 15 or 20% of the students who are someday hoping to go to university [from Tom's school], they have people at home telling them, "You're a smart kid. You have, you can do this with your life." And they will believe it. They either have that in their, in their ear, or they also have somebody in their family who's done that. Maybe they have a mom, or an auntie, or an uncle, or a dad, or even a grandfather, that attended university, got a degree, and made a career out of it, and that's another unfortunate thing, that not very many of our students coming from First Nations communities have those in their lives. (Tom)

Discussion – Interpersonal

Family members can play important roles in encouraging and supporting one's participation in sport (see, for instance, Côté, 1999; see also Schinke et al., 2010), and it is possible the current research, in which only one of three athletes mentioned the role of family in

their sport pursuits, may represent an underestimate of this phenomenon. Chuck's mention about the important roles parents play as coaches in many northern communities resonates with previous research suggesting the sport participation of one's child/children is a motivator for First Nations parents to become coaches and continue in their coaching roles (see Chapter 7). Similarly, although only one high school athlete spoke of racism, frequent media reports of racism at sport events in Canada indicate this issue is more widespread than the current research suggests (e.g., CBC/Radio-Canada, 2020; see also Monkman, 2018, for a Manitoba example). As such, either the high school students involved in this research were, for the most part, able to avoid overt racism in their lives, or they felt some level of discomfort in talking about such experiences with the lead researcher. If the latter scenario was the reality, a possible explanation is that the researcher, being perceivably not of the same culture as the participants, failed at building sufficient rapport with participants in the early stages of the talking circle.

Lastly, what Tom mentioned about family support for university (i.e., that it is important, yet not a lot of rural/remote First Nations students have it) has been suggested by other research as well (see Preston, 2008). Relationships with Western academic settings have been very destructive for Indigenous peoples in the past (i.e., residential schools, see TRC, 2015b). In addition, cultural irrelevance has long marginalized Indigenous students attending Western academic institutions (Brown, 1998; see also Kirkness & Barnhardt, 2001, for a discussion specifically relevant to First Nations students), and the ongoing cultural irrelevance (despite progress in the right direction in some cases) suggested in the Organizational section of the current research does little to mend relationships. These reasons, combined with systemic impoverishment as a result of colonial activities, provide some understanding as to why there may be few academic role models in some First Nations communities. Yet the current research suggests school staff in Manitoba do what they can to support students beyond solely their academic pursuits. Indeed, it takes a community to raise a child, and such support is crucial for First Nations students who move away from home for school. Unfortunately, it is not uncommon for the frequency and quality of interactions between staff and students to be compromised due to the hectic work schedules among the former group resulting in feelings of overwork and stress.

Results – Organizational

Facilitators

1. High School Responsiveness to the Lives of Students. Participants spoke of ways in which high schools in Manitoba are responsive to the lives of First Nations students from rural and remote communities. Strategies were sorted into three categories: *Cultural Relevance, High Schools Looking out for Students' Wellbeing,* and *High Schools Advertising Post-secondary.*

a. Cultural Relevance. Two ways in which high schools promoted cultural relevance was by including Indigenous staff members, and by offering culturally relevant curriculum. One teacher, Tom, spoke about the Indigenous-enriched classes he teaches:

> Yeah, so I teach courses that are, like the actual course title is Indigenous Enriched. So, I teach English and geography. I teach Indigenous enriched English and I teach Indigenous enriched geography. We also have social studies and hopefully next year we're gonna have history for grade 11, where everything is Indigenous enriched. Basically, what that looks like is English class for example, we read Indigenous authors, so Indigenous literature. All of the short stories, and poems, and things like that, have to do with, you know, things that are happening in Indigenous communities or to Indigenous people. And one of the benefits from that is, so, they, all of the students in that class, most of them, I think all of them are Indigenous kids, a lot of them are coming from northern communities. They can see themselves in the writing. (Tom)

And when the topic of culturally relevant curriculum was brought up with Abel, he had this to say:

> We have actually the same thing, a geography teacher who ties... A lot of his, uh, um, courses have a lot to do with Aboriginal, um, background as well. And we do actually offer a Native Studies course. (Abel)

Further, Tom spoke about a cultural credit option for students at his school. Although Tom conveyed that he would like the program to be a bit more demanding by requiring a greater level of commitment, he still considered it to be a step in the right direction. Yet Jeremy explained that a lack of time was a potential barrier for some students with respect to participating in cultural activities outside class hours. Being a student-athlete, Jeremy found himself too busy with sports and regular classes to engage in more activities.

b. High Schools Looking out for Students' Wellbeing. Tom spoke about the measures staff at his school take to ensure First Nations students from other communities are doing well. Creating a sense of community was particularly important, to him:

> Well in our, in the school that I work in, we really recognize when students are coming from communities and one of the things as a staff that we do is we check to make sure that they're feeling comfortable here, and we check to make sure that they're connected with people that are, you know, quote-unquote, like them. And, what I mean when I say

> like them, I mean like people who have lived that experience before and we meet with them as a whole and we meet with them as a group to, you know, let them know that there are people here who are aware of their situation and if they need extra help and, you know, we have after school programs that they're immediately admitted to and a part of. Um, we check in on their home placements and we, you know, kinda check to make sure that where they're living is a place that's gonna help them become successful here and it's a lot of behind the scenes kind of stuff. The- the classes themselves, we try to put them in classes where they're with a wide-range, or not a wide-range, but a large group of students that they feel comfortable around because it's- it's difficult when you've lived in a community where 100% of the citizen- 100% of the people who live there are like you, and when I say like you I mean First Nations, coming to a school like- like this one where it's very, very low population of First Nation's students and a very, very high population of immigrant students. (Tom)

Regarding billet homes specifically, Tom mentioned that billet parents were most often Indigenous, having similar experiences as those through which First Nations students at his school must progress. Tom cautioned, however, that placing students with Indigenous parents does not guarantee a comfortable atmosphere conducive to success:

> Nine times out of ten they are [placed with Indigenous billet parents], very rarely do I see a student come from up north and live with a family that isn't Indigenous, but that could be a good or a bad thing. It's, it could be a good thing because it would, it would make them feel more comfortable being in the school for one thing because once they got to know that family, you know, obviously pending if- if that family is, you know, a loving, caring family, then you're gonna get along with them and you guys are gonna get along and have fun, but it'll also expand their horizons, the student's horizons to seeing other cultures and things like that, so that- that might help. It could also, the fact that they don't live with other families, other Indigenous families, can be a bad thing because sometimes those houses are extremely overcrowded. You could have, it's not uncommon to have five or six students living under the same roof, and you might have four students living in the basement. I don't know what your life was like when you were 16, but if I was, when I was 16 and there was 16 of us living in one house, the last thing on your mind is school, the last thing on your mind is going to bed at a decent hour, and the last thing on your mind is following the rules. That sounds to me like it's a party, and you're not gonna achieve much when you're surrounded by five of your, you know, people your age, and you're a teenager, and you're having fun. (Tom)

In the case of the high school with the on-campus dormitories, dormitory counsellors are permitted to select students for their floors each year (i.e., they can select the same students that they supervised in a previous year), helping ensure long-term relationships. Accommodations are also made if floor arrangements are producing negative outcomes. Yet Abel said that although his school is heading in the right direction, there is still more they can do to help

students feel comfortable (as conveyed in the Challenges section). One concern Robyn mentioned was that students in the dormitories had become more rambunctious in recent years. To address this concern, however, the school started having two dormitory staff on duty at all times, as opposed to just one. As well, Robyn mentioned that parent-teacher interviews between dormitory staff and teaching staff were helpful in keeping everybody informed, and that dormitory staff were all recently given computers to aid communication with other staff members across the school division.

c. High Schools Advertising Post-secondary. Robyn mentioned that the high school at which she worked would advertise post-secondary opportunities to students. She stressed that although not all students were interested in post-secondary, there was usually a few that were, including some very bright and independent ones with positive ambitions regarding their future careers.

2. Appropriate and Helpful Sport Opportunities. There were numerous ways in which organizations provided sport opportunities that were both appropriate and helpful. The following sections discuss three broad categories: the *Manitoba Junior Hockey League, Practices in Communities Structured to Promote Fun,* and *Sport Opportunities at High Schools.*

a. Manitoba Junior Hockey League. Abel explained that the Manitoba Junior Hockey League (MJHL; see MJHL, 2020) is unique in that it does not follow academic levels. As an entity separate from the educational system, the MJHL provides (male) hockey players the opportunity to develop their skills for a couple of years after graduating high school which, as suggested in Part B of this research (Chapter 6), can help with the transition to university hockey (note that the MJHL allows players from 16- to 20 years of age; MJHL, n.d.).

b. Practices in Communities Structured to Promote Fun. Tom explained that many First Nations communities prioritize participation and fun when structuring sport programs. He explained that instead of forcing youth to engage in activities they hate simply to provide education, program leaders first find what students like to do, then let the learning take place once students are already engaged and enjoying whatever sport it is that they are playing.

c. Sport Opportunities at High Schools. Participants spoke of several ways in which high schools provide sport opportunities. Robyn mentioned the gym at the school at which she works is open on occasion after school hours so students can play. Jeremy, who was from the non-dormitory school, spoke of how his high school's football advertisements made him aware

of, and interested in that opportunity, and how he has gotten to go on plenty of trips to competitions out of town. Travel to competitions was also mentioned by Abel, who said the school at which he works offers a lot of these opportunities. Abel also explained that the gym and equipment at his school are in good working order and that, overall, the school takes sports seriously. Indeed, the presence of a hockey academy at Abel's school was a testament to the school's devotion to sport, or at least hockey. Abel told of how the hockey academy, which is a very popular program in which students receive credits for learning and playing the game, provides incentive for students to attend classes. Chuck, the basketball coach at the school, echoed Abel's statement about how the hockey program motivates students. Liz was involved in a similar program at her school and, being a hockey player already, found the program enjoyable.

3. Academic Opportunities in Primary and Secondary Schools. In addition to the hockey academy at his school, Chuck also spoke of the many other unique credit opportunities available to students. For example, Chuck highlighted that the school offers electives, such as carpentry, that are not typically offered at smaller high schools, and which serve to attract students. He also commented on the partnership his high school's power mechanics program has with a local college, offering a smoother transition to post-secondary for students interested in that field. In addition, Abel and Robyn both spoke about the ample opportunities provided at their school for students to receive academic support, including a study hour five days per week in the dormitories, as well as more educational assistants than there have been in the past.

Challenges

1. Adjusting to the High School Setting. Adjusting to new environments can be a challenge for students who move away from home for high school. The following three categories summarize challenges participants discussed that relate to: *Lack of Opportunities for High School Students to go Back Home, Cultural Irrelevance,* and *Feeling Overwhelmed.*

a. Lack of Opportunities for High School Students to go Back Home. Staff at the dormitory high school expressed concern about the limited opportunities for students to go back home during the school year. Some students have the option of visiting home on weekends, but students from more isolated, fly-in communities can only visit home for Christmas and spring break. This high school recently removed their Thanksgiving break, meaning one less opportunity for students to see their families during the year than what was previously permitted. Abel discussed the implications of this decision:

> And they tell me they got rid of that. I don't know if it's another funding issue thing, but that they don't do it anymore. And that's the hardest point for a lot of these grade nine students that are coming here. And it's a four-month stint from start of September till end of December. But that's a very long time for them to be… the first time that they're away from home for any period of time, let alone four months. And it's, it's really hard on a lot of 'em. [. . . .] But like, even, uh, like, Thanksgiving break is a perfect example, 'cause it splits the first four months into two separate two-month stints, which, it's still hard, but I mean, it's, it's now more manageable and more doable for them, because they can have something to look forward to, like, "Just have to get through two months. I'm gonna go home. I'll get to visit. I'll get my family, and then I'll come back with a fresh start and rejuvenated." (Abel)

Further, Abel expressed the importance of students being able to see their families:

> But, um, as much as we try, we just can't replace a mom and a dad. [. . . .] That's... Th- the simple hard truth of it is that as much as we want to, as much as we try to, and as much work as we put in with them, we just, uh... That's something that's just unreplaceable. (Abel)

b. Cultural Irrelevance. Despite the aforementioned facilitators regarding cultural relevance, participants discussed a number of ways in which schools were still very culturally irrelevant. Concerns related to a limited number of Indigenous teachers, culturally irrelevant curriculum, barriers to Indigenous cultural activities, and the concerns of staff regarding students' wellbeing going unheard.

Regarding a lack of Indigenous teachers, it was clear that students in the talking circle appreciated having Indigenous teachers at their school, although they had only mentioned two names. Overall, the predominance of culturally irrelevant curriculum was mentioned more by staff than students, although Sky mentioned that she would like to see more Indigenous content offered at her school. Along the same lines, Abel mentioned that traditional language course offerings at his school would be beneficial, as such classes could encourage success among students who primarily speak First Nations languages, and it could also facilitate a sense of community. Traditional languages among the student population at Abel's school vary, so, according to Abel, providing students with opportunities to learn different languages could help them connect with new friends as well as their new friends' families.

Robyn, who had been working at her school for numerous years, had explained how she tries to provide opportunities for students to engage in culturally relevant activities on campus, but how her school division is often slow in addressing her suggestions. During the interview

process, Robyn demonstrated a deep understanding of the significance of cultural connection to wellbeing, and she explained that she had advocated for years for a smudging facility at her school. Unfortunately, to this day she cannot smudge with students in any building at her school unless she first gets special permission. Robyn expressed similar concerns with sweat ceremonies and the red tape imposed by her organization regarding those. In addition, at one time her school was considering hiring three therapists to help deal with mental health challenges confronting students. Robyn suggested two therapists and one Elder, yet the administration chose not to take her advice. Robyn summarized the overall situation by saying:

> It's like, um, you know, we have probably 99% Aboriginal students come to our school. But we- we can't- it's like we're- we're behind the times by [not] letting them practice their culture, like their way of life. (Robyn)

Robyn acknowledged that Indigenous cultures are to be shared, suggesting the incorporation of more Indigenous cultural aspects at the school could be beneficial for the 1% of non-Indigenous students there too. Yet despite strong rationale, Robyn felt that her voice was not being heard in the decision-making process, and the resistance to her suggestions over numerous years demonstrated this. Overall, Robyn felt there was a disconnect between dormitory staff and decision-makers, explaining that, in the past, there has been little consultation with her regarding aspects of school operations in which she was directly involved.

c. Feeling Overwhelmed. Chuck described the overwhelming transitions First Nations students at his high school go through:

> I don't know much about the dormitory because they're two totally different worlds, [. . .] the teaching and then the dormitory life and I don't normally like dabble into the that life, but I imagine it would be a hard transition for them. We're talking about some kids as early as 14 years old leaving their home communities to come live in a dormitory, for the first time. [. . .] I looked at it with like 14 and 15 year olds like leaving home for the first time and trying to make that adjustment period. And it's tough. And then compound that by having a roommate that you, they try to room you together with community members because you will know someone, but sometimes it doesn't work out that way. And then sometimes it doesn't work out with even rooming with your own community member. I think at the transition for our kids is very tough. And then the demanding pace that, you know, high school life is it, I think it's difficult for them. [. . . .] I give them props for sure because I don't think I'd be able to. I looked back on my own life. I don't think I'd be able to leave home and come to a school like this and be successful. I don't think so. (Chuck)

Both Abel and Robyn added to Chuck's concerns, saying that educational outcomes vary from one school to the next in Manitoba, meaning that some students may feel overwhelmed by the curriculum when they arrive at the school at which Abel, Robyn, and Chuck work. Abel expressed how high school is often more demanding than the education to which students have been exposed in their home communities, and he highlighted how, for some students, English is a second language, yet they are nevertheless required to do well in that class to graduate. Robyn noted that students often must be placed in modified classes when they are not performing well academically, which can be a distressing experience.

Similarly, Tom recognized the overwhelming transition experiences of First Nations students at his school:

> So, it's a completely different world for them, and we try to make kind of like a school within a school with our classes, it's something that we've tried in the last few years and it seems to be working pretty good. So, we definitely think about what they're going through and we try to cater to them because all we wanna see is them become successful. It's definitely got its challenges still, we definitely deal with attendance issues, and we deal with things that, you know, uh, students aren't comfortable coming to school. So, we definitely deal with those things on a daily basis still, but we are, we try every day to make things better for them because we just wanna see them happy to be here and, you know, confident in themselves and, and those kinds of things. [. . .] So, I think that's probably, that's probably how schools all across the country are doing it, they're, at least I'd like to think that they are doing their best to make the kids feel comfortable being at school there and recognize that they are going through a very, a huge transition in their life, and transition is never easy, so you really have to be mindful of the stress and- and anxiety that they're probably going through. (Tom)

2. Lack of Sport Opportunities at High Schools. As with cultural (ir)relevance, sport opportunities in high schools were seen in both a positive and negative light. Regarding the latter, participants discussed a lack of sports offered, lack of transportation to competitions, and lack of adequate facilities and facility access. For example, Jeremy mentioned that he had wanted to play hockey, but that his school did not have a hockey team. With respect to travel, Sky mentioned how her school did not provide bus transportation to volleyball competitions, and that it was stressful having to look for a ride from someone. Finally, with respect to facility access, Abel spoke about the lack of artificial ice in his community. Natural ice meant Abel's athletes had to wait until well into autumn for ice time. They would occasionally make the half-hour drive to the next town to use the ice there, but funding constraints limited the amount of times this could be done. Abel stressed that athletic development for hockey players is severely

limited in off-ice compared to on-ice training. Further, he highlighted that the lack of available ice not only limits the hockey team, but also the hockey academy at his school.

3. Band Funding for Post-secondary is Competitive and Limited. Funding for university is another challenge for many First Nations students. As Chuck mentioned, band funding is not guaranteed to all First Nations students because the amount a band has for distribution is limited relative to the number of students who wish to move on to post-secondary education.

Discussion – Organizational

The general emphasis on cultural relevance within school landscapes in the current research supports previous work (e.g., Ladson-Billings, 1995; Van Ingen & Halas, 2006). Seeing aspects of one's culture reflected in their surroundings can help them feel comfortable. In contrast, a lack of cultural representation can do the opposite. The current research shows that staff at both the dormitory and non-dormitory schools strive to create culturally relevant settings, but that there are still opportunities for improvement. In the case of the dormitory school specifically, more communication between staff, as well as greater consideration of staff concerns by decision-makers would be helpful in creating settings more culturally appropriate for the student population at the school.

In addition to the general use of space on campus (Van Ingen & Halas, 2006), cultural relevance can be facilitated within classrooms by teachers. Culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1995) consists of three goals: 1) student success; 2) student cultural competence; and 3) student critical social consciousness. More recently, Halas et al. (2013) discussed 4 ways of meeting these three goals: 1) teachers fulfilling ally roles with respect to supporting students; 2) teachers understanding the day-to-day cultural landscapes of students; 3) teachers providing supportive learning climates; and 4) teachers offering culturally relevant curriculum. The teachers and coaches interviewed in the current research seemed to have an intuitive understanding of culturally relevant pedagogy as it pertains to First Nations students from rural and remote communities. The intuitive understanding harbored by teachers and coaches, garnered through years of experience working with rural and remote First Nations students, must be acknowledged by decision-makers when teachers and coaches present concerns and recommendations. For instance, Robyn's advice regarding the hiring of an Elder at her school (as opposed to just therapists) demonstrates a significant understanding on her part about

the role connection to culture plays in wellbeing. In many First Nations cultures, mental health[24] is seen as being connected to emotional, physical, and spiritual health, as well as to traumas of the past (Government of Canada, 2006). According to the Government of Canada (2006), healing from past traumas may entail:

> [E]fforts to re-connect with family and community, to live on the land, to recollect and preserve traditional knowledge, and to affirm cultural values and identity. It includes active efforts to regain political control and find creative ways to embrace spiritual values while meeting the challenges of a globalizing world. This process of healing does not involve Aboriginal people alone, but calls for reflection and action by the larger society. Health, then, is not a static state of well-being, but a process of achieving harmony, balance and connectedness within oneself and in relation to others. (p. 163).

For example, it is recognized that Western approaches to suicide prevention often fail Indigenous youth due to the cultural irrelevance of these measures, as Western approaches focus on behavior change of the individual as opposed to addressing the contextual issues with which people of Euro-Canadian descent have never had to deal (see Barker et al., 2017). Evidence for the significant value of connecting individuals to culture, termed "culture as treatment", is seen in the interrelationship between culture/identity and health (see Barker et al., 2017); and this culturally relevant approach is particularly important considering suicide rates in First Nations communities are double the national average (Government of Canada, 2006). Hence, the resistance to Robyn's suggestion to include an Elder at her school is problematic and raises ethical questions about the school's commitment to truth and reconciliation.

Although it is important to acknowledge that some steps are being taken to increase cultural relevance at schools, it must also be understood that the educational system, at its core, remains biased toward Western ways of knowing (i.e., Indigenous knowledges are largely omitted/ignored). Some examples of situations in which this bias is manifested include English being considered mandatory but traditional language courses being options only, and geography favoring the understanding of colonial boundaries over traditional territories. Another example is citations from peer reviewed literature being considered more credible than if one were to cite the words of an Elder. For the sake of efficiency, it makes sense to infuse Indigenous content

[24] Mental health has been defined as, "the capacity of each and all of us to feel, think, act in ways that enhance our ability to enjoy life and deal with the challenges we face. It is a positive sense of emotional and spiritual well-being that respects the importance of culture, equity, social justice, interconnections and personal dignity" (Government of Canada, 2014).

into classes, as Tom explained he does. This strategy is particularly important considering what Jeremy mentioned about a lack of time to engage in activities that are not part of regular classes, in addition to Chuck's comment on how overwhelming and fast-paced high school can be for some students.

Regarding Indigenous teaching staff and billet parents with similar experiences to those of students, it is particularly important that students are able to see themselves in their mentors. In the context of the 60s scoop, Sinclair (2007) discussed how transracial placements may be problematic because some parents may not know how to deal with the racism with which Indigenous children are confronted due to never having dealt with it themselves. Yet although the lived experiences of mentors are important, this consideration should not take precedence over the caution Tom provided about the suitability of billet homes, that is, that staff must ensure homes will be conducive to the wellbeing and academic success of students. In addition, the sheer significance of the transition rural and remote First Nations students go through when moving away from home for high school must not be overlooked. Participants in the current research highlighted how overwhelming this transition can be for young students. It is well understood that separation from parents was a traumatic event for students in residential schools (TRC, 2015b), so it is disheartening that students must still undergo this process in pursuit of education.

In the section *Previous Exposure to Aspects of the Anticipated Environment* under the Community leverage point, Chuck indicated that students who have moved away for high school may be better prepared to move away again for university. On the other hand, as Abel discussed in the section *Limited Academic Direction and Support* under the Community leverage point, and as supported throughout this research, making it through grade 12 can be significantly challenging for many rural and remote First Nations students, meaning many students may be too emotionally exhausted to take the next step with respect to academics. Indeed, and as was communicated in Chapter 6, to encourage successful enrollment in, and completion of, university academics among rural and remote First Nations students, measures must be taken to address the challenges occurring prior to this level. The facilitators in place for post-secondary attendance, such as university Indigenous student centers (see Chapter 6) and band support (which Chuck mentioned is limited to certain qualifying students; see Monkman, 2016), are of no use to students who do not graduate high school. According to a 2016 census, of the approximately

82,600 First Nations people aged 20-24 in Canada, approximately 36% (29,745) do not have a high school diploma or equivalency certificate (Statistics Canada, 2019).

Regarding sport opportunities offered by high schools, the current research suggests that improvements can be made in the areas of sports offered, travel to competitions, and facility quality and access. In schools, many of these opportunities are restricted by funding limitations, which is disheartening considering the school system offers a low- or no-fee alternative to club sports. This characteristic, that is, minimal cost, means school sports have potential to be helpful in the athletic development of youth from impoverished families. For athletes who are sufficiently skilled and who can afford it, though, the MJHL is a popular option. The MJHL is part of the Canadian Junior Hockey League (MJHL, 2020) and provides male athletes from 16- to 20 years of age (MJHL, n.d.) the opportunity to hone their skills prior to university, if they choose to go that route. Part B (Chapter 6) of the current research contains a longer discussion of the roles the MJHL can play in preparing rural and remote First Nations hockey players for participation at the university level. In short, the MJHL can introduce rural and remote First Nations athletes to a more neoliberal version of sport (see Coakley, 2011). The MJHL provides opportunities to travel and engage with people from different cultural backgrounds, and it presents an opportunity to develop one's hockey skills beyond the high school level. Importantly, individuals do not age out of the MJHL until 21 years of age, meaning that if they then transition to university hockey, they are starting in that system at an older age than many university athletes competing in other sports. As Part B (Chapter 6) of the current research project emphasized, starting university later, when one is more mature, can be beneficial. Yet the equivalent female league, the Manitoba Junior Women's Hockey League (MWJHL), although beneficial to the development of female hockey players aged 18- to 21 years, does not provide travel opportunities to the same extent as the MJHL, as the MWJHL operates out of Winnipeg (MWJHL, n.d.).

The role of the MJHL in introducing rural and remote First Nations athletes to a more neoliberal version of sport is particularly important, as sport in Indigenous communities is often carried out differently than it is in the mainstream. Schinke et al. (2013) explained that sport practices in Indigenous communities are often play-oriented, whereas mainstream sport practices tend to be drill-oriented. In the current research, Tom's discussion about practices in First Nations communities being structured to promote fun resonates with Schinke et al.'s (2013)

claim, as well as with the observations Jordan conveyed in Part B (Chapter 6) of the current research project (see the section *Getting Things Right Early on* under the Organizational leverage point in Chapter 6). Côté et al. (2013) referred to intrinsically-motivated activities led by adults, such as play-oriented practices, as Play Practice. Côté et al. (2013) stressed the importance of exposing young athletes to all types of play and practice environments (Deliberate Practice, Play Practice, Spontaneous Practice, Deliberate Play, and Organized Competition), noting that each type of environment has unique strengths. Play Practice, for instance, provides a fun environment with the presence of adults to provide advice and feedback. In other words, the enjoyment-oriented sport practices in many First Nations communities can play positive roles in athletic development. Following the advice of Côté et al. (2013), however, sport leaders should be cautious not to neglect other types of play and practice environments.

Results – Community

Facilitators

1. Previous Exposure to Aspects of the Anticipated Environment. Participants discussed two ways in which high school students are exposed to aspects of the university setting while still in high school, including career fairs, and trips to university campuses. In addition, Chuck mentioned that high school students who have experience moving away from home and living in dormitories, as is the case for many of the students at Chucks' school, may be better prepared for those aspects of university than students who have never had to move away from home.

2. Community (Home or Away) Support. It was evident from the interviews that having community support is helpful to rural and remote First Nations athletes pursuing university sport. Three aspects of community support, as discussed by participants, were: *Supportive, Welcoming Teammates and Friends; Fan Base at Home or in the City;* and *Role Models.*

a. Supportive, Welcoming Teammates and Friends. Teammates with shared experiences seemed to be important for high school athletes. Jeremy mentioned that he appreciated having other Indigenous teammates on his team, and he told of trips with his teammates where they would have a lot of fun interacting on the bus. Liz, who had experienced racism in the past, mentioned that it did not matter to her if she had Indigenous teammates; she

stressed that her main concern, as noted in the Interpersonal leverage point (see the section *Racism from Others*) with respect to team settings was racism.

b. Fan Base at Home or in the City. Tom and Abel both mentioned that community pride is one motivator for First Nations athletes. Abel added that making family proud is probably an even greater motivator.

c. Role Models. Abel mentioned that role models are a significant motivator for rural and remote First Nations athletes. He emphasized that television and social media make it easy for athletes to follow their idols, and a lot of rural and remote First Nations athletes are motivated by seeing their sport heroes through such media.

3. Strengths in Communities. Participants discussed several strengths existing in rural and remote communities, with an emphasis on reserves, but also an acknowledgement for the ease of access to equipment in the city. Three general topics were *Academic Direction, Sport Direction,* and *Ease of Getting Equipment (When You Live in a City).*

a. Academic Direction. One participant, Chuck, mentioned that students from other communities who attend his high school generally seem to have received a good education in their hometowns. A certain level of education attainment in high school is necessary, as without it, the transition to university academics can be very challenging.

b. Sport Direction. Chuck mentioned that the high school at which he works has coaches that are knowledgeable of certain sports, and who are proficient at getting athletes up to par on the fundamentals if they are behind in those areas. Chuck explained that, overall, the coaches at his school do well at teaching sport, that is, providing athletic direction to athletes in ways that are easily understood.

c. Ease of Getting Equipment (When You Live in a City). Liz, who actually lived in a city, said that it was easy for her to trade some of her old hockey equipment in for new equipment, as there is a business in her city that will do this.

Challenges

1. Acculturation. Participants spoke of acculturation in two capacities: *Being Away from Home,* and *Adjusting to Your Circle of Teammates.*

a. Being Away from Home. Robyn mentioned that homesickness is a significant challenge for high school students from reserves who must live in the dormitories at her school. Robyn explained that many First Nations students are raised to prioritize family, so spending ten

months of the year away from home can be exceedingly difficult. Abel summarized this situation succinctly and powerfully when he said, "as much as we try, we just can't replace a mom and a dad" (Abel). Tom, who worked at the non-dormitory high school, had the following to say about how his school tries to create a sense of community for First Nations students (note the following quote is reiterated from *High School Looking out for Students' Wellbeing* under the Organizational leverage point):

> The- the classes themselves, we try to put them in classes where they're with a wide-range, or not a wide-range, but a large group of students that they feel comfortable around because it's- it's difficult when you've lived in a community where 100% of the citizen- 100% of the people who live there are like you, and when I say like you I mean First Nations, coming to a school like- like this one where it's very, very low population of First Nation's students and a very, very high population of immigrant students. (Tom)

b. Adjusting to Your Circle of Teammates. Referring to the situation at the school at which he coached, Chuck explained that it often takes athletes from different communities a length of time to learn how to play with each other as a team. As Chuck discussed, individual athletes on his team may be the best players in their communities, but when they move away for high school, they often find they are no longer the best, and now they have to learn how to be team players. With respect to team culture, Liz's experience illustrates that a positive team setting is important in athlete retention. Liz, who played hockey in a city, had switched teams briefly but returned to her old team shortly after due to feeling excluded, including experiencing racism. In Liz's words:

> I was playing this game, and, I wa- this was my old hockey team I was the only like Indigenous person there [. . .] they didn't like me cuz I was the only Indigenous person there. And all those girls knew each other already and I got like, I left the team cuz I didn't feel welcomed. (Liz)

2. Challenges in Communities. Challenges within rural and remote communities, as discussed by participants, related to *Limited Sport Opportunities, Limited Sport Direction,* and *Limited Academic Direction and Support.*

a. Limited Sport Opportunities. Abel mentioned that people in some reserve communities still live largely traditional lives, so they are more focused on going out to the land to harvest food for their families than in helping to provide sport opportunities in their communities. Participants also explained that many rural and remote communities have limited resources, such as facilities and equipment, and that the lower population in such communities

means less competition for athletes. Chuck explained that athletes with access to sport clubs, as well as the financial support to join such clubs, are at a significant advantage compared to athletes without these resources, the latter of which describing many First Nations athletes from rural and remote communities. In Chuck's words:

> With that money you get access to probably a pretty good coach and access to practices and games and stuff like that that you normally won't see in a high school setting. We certainly do not see that in the north. [. . . .] It's really tough to compete with the south in regards to things that we just talked about. [. . . .] most northern communities, do not have clubs [. . .] is there a volleyball club in [remote reserve]? I don't think so. You know, and it's, it's really tough. So that's why I, I like going down south and I like to see the kids and they like it too. [. . .] some of these kids will surprise you from the north and they can compete with the South. (Chuck)

Tom added to this discussion by explaining that even the presence of clubs, as is the case in larger cities, does little for athletes from impoverished First Nations families, which Tom contended are not being accommodated by sport organizations as well as they could be.

b. Limited Sport Direction. Participants' concerns regarding sport direction in communities related to few coaches with expertise in certain sports, lack of sports staff, and a lack of a volunteer base. Chuck noted that basketball in northern communities, for instance, tends to be less organized than it is in the south, and that athletes he coaches at his school are often behind on the fundamentals. Chuck expressed the need for schools to recruit coaches with backgrounds in specific sports, and to provide sport practices on long-term, consistent bases. One way to improve credentials of coaches is to offer coaching clinics, although Abel mentioned that leaders in some communities may be hesitant to reach out to sport organizations to ask for these clinics because leaders are often too busy seeing to other community priorities, and/or may be too proud to reach out.

c. Limited Academic Direction and Support. Tom explained that attending university requires a great deal of financial and emotional support that many First Nations students do not have. As Tom stated:

> I'd say about 15-20% of my students that come through the Indigenous programs that I run at the school are interested in university. And I say that because I think having a goal like university and being willing to take on that task, especially coming from where a lot of these students are coming from, takes a huge amount of home and family support, and without making it sound like I'm criticizing or sounding negative, right now, our communities don't have that home support and they also don't have that mentorship to get it done. Uh, we talk a lot about privilege when we talk about, when we talk about, uh,

> you know, First Nations kids and how they're underachieving and things like that. Privilege plays a huge role in whether or not somebody is able to go to university because you need that foundation in order to pay those bills and to, and to have that support behind you, and unfortunately, a lot of the guys, a lot of the kids from our communities aren't privileged in that way. So, of that, of the 15 or 20% of the students who are someday hoping to go to university, they have people at home telling them, "You're a smart kid. You have, you can do this with your life." And they will believe it. They either have that in their, in their ear, or they also have somebody in their family who's done that. Maybe they have a mom, or an auntie, or an uncle, or a dad, or even a grandfather, that attended university, got a degree, and made a career out of it, and that's another unfortunate thing that not very many of our students coming from First Nation's communities have those in their lives. So, the numbers are low. Now, do I think that any one of the students in my classes could attend and be successful in university? Absolutely. Any one of them could. However, attending and completing university takes an immense amount of support, financial and, you know, emotional, and we just don't have those types of things at our disposal. (Tom)

In addition, participants mentioned that it is difficult to recruit teachers to teach in rural and remote communities in the north. Abel mentioned that it is expensive to live in the north, and the salaries teachers receive do not make living in the north very cost-effective, especially if they want to save for the future. Further, Abel explained that the adjustment to living in a small northern town can be a complete shock to teachers who are from more populated, less isolated areas, and the experience can be even more challenging for teachers who have moved away from their families. As well, both Tom and Abel commented on the quality of education in some reserve communities. Abel explained that students are often pushed through the primary years of education with little accountability being required of them, and that the decision to pass or fail a student is dependent upon the students' parents' opinions. In Abel's experience, often when students are not doing well academically, their parents may become upset with the students' teachers as opposed to taking greater responsibility for their children's academic progress. Abel further explained that pushing students through the primary years is problematic because it means students will not be adequately prepared when they reach secondary school, and then they will feel very overwhelmed when they get there:

> [W]hat happens is you get a lot of these kids up to grade nine level, they're confused. And for the first time in their lives, they're being graded, and they're failing. And they don't understand why. And it's, it's overwhelming, and it's stressful. And a lot of kids end up dropping out because they can't deal with the stress of actually being graded. [. . .] Like, a lot of these communities have to send their kids away after grade nine to come to a school basically on their own. It's their first taste of adulthood, and they're already

> set up with less than required for them to succeed. [. . . .] Like I said, the, the education part of it is what I really struggle with here, is, like, it, it really hurts me to see kids get here and it's, it's completely overwhelming to them, really stressful, and they can't understand it. And like, I, I do sympathize with them, because it's, it's not their fault. It, it really isn't. It's that they're being pushed through, and it's, it's set... they, they're set up for failure right from the start, basically [. . . .] I have two young kids that are about to go through the school system, and it frustrates me that that's what they're set up for. (Abel)

As Abel explained, simply the challenge of getting through high school may act as a disincentive for rural and remote First Nations students with respect to going to university:

> [I]t kind of touches base on that they're getting pushed through school, I think. And this is just a personal opinion, that I don't... haven't heard this from anybody. Um, but my guess is that it's, um... that they're pushed through school, they get here, and then it's completely overwhelming. And, and it's a total struggle just to get through to their grade twelve. [. . .] Why would they want to, um, struggle much harder? (Abel)

Discussion – Community

The current research suggests family and community support, as well as role models, are important to rural and remote First Nations athletes. These findings echo those of Blodgett et al. (2008) who worked with elite Indigenous athletes and Indigenous community members. In the case of the current research, it seems that sport supports are not always available in reserves due to few coaches and a limited volunteer base. Canadian Heritage (2005) noted fifteen years ago that a lack of Indigenous coaches was a barrier to Indigenous athletes' pursuit of sport. This emphasis is quite troubling when viewed in the context of the current research (i.e., it seems as though little progress has been made in this regard). Moreover, although there were conflicting views regarding the extent of academic preparedness among rural and remote First Nations students with whom teachers/coaches in the current research interacted, the concerns raised (e.g., students being pushed through school despite not being academically prepared for it) still warrant attention. Preston (2008) explained over a decade ago that limited academic supports and few academic role models were barriers to post-secondary education for Indigenous students, and the aforementioned concerns regarding academic preparedness may imply that Preston's (2008) analysis is still relevant.

Although participants mentioned some important strengths existing in communities, much of the dialogue pertaining to strengths had to do with the sport direction available at the dormitory school. Although this school serves as a hub with respect to the secondary education

of rural and remote First Nations students from across Manitoba, thereby providing sport opportunities and direction to many of the province's First Nations youth, these opportunities come at the expense of significant acculturation challenges. The two sub-themes of acculturation in the current research, *Being Away from Home* and *Adjusting to Your Circle of Teammates*, are consistent with the two main acculturation themes examined by Blodgett et al. (2014) in their work with elite Indigenous athletes pursuing sport in the mainstream: *Becoming Disconnected from Home* and *Culture Shock*. Although challenges adjusting to one's circle of teammates is only one component of culture shock, other components were alluded to in the section *Limited Academic Direction and Support* (e.g., feeling overwhelmed in a new school setting).

Results – Policy/Systems/Environments

Facilitators

None.

Challenges

1. Systemic Racism Resulting in Impoverishment in First Nations Communities.

Many of the challenges discussed under the other leverage points in this research can be traced back to systemic racism. Tom noted that impoverished communities need to prioritize where the limited money they receive is being spent, and often that means education and sports get short-changed. Tom emphasized the impoverished situations in which Indigenous people have been placed by policies of the federal government. Since sports cost money, systemic poverty means Indigenous peoples are placed at a disadvantage in this regard. Abel echoed similar thoughts, explaining that families in some remote reserves prioritize sustenance through land-based activities over sport. Further, Tom delved more deeply into the issue of systemic racism by explaining how, as a society, we simply do not seem to care:

> [W]hat we're looking for when we're talking about Indigenous athletes and you know, academics and things like that, we're trying to find out why, we're trying to find out why Indigenous people, Indigenous students aren't successful in school. We're trying to find out why they aren't represented in professional sports or even college sports or university sports. And the answer is because of the country that we're living in. It's a systemic issue, and a systemic issue is not an easy fix. You have to go back in history to understand where the roots are. You have to be able to pinpoint all throughout our history where we could've made decisions that would've fixed things, but now what we have to do is we have to step out of our box and pinpoint at our own moment in history right now the types of changes we're gonna have to make in order to stop this systemic issue that we can see across the country. Unfortunately, that pinpointed spot in our history where

> we can fix things, all of the things that we can do to fix them cost a lot of money, and as a society, we complain about 1% tax changes, so we are not willing to put forth the amount of money that it's going to take to change this country. And that, in my opinion, it really, really sucks because we know what the problem is. We've had scholars and research people tell us for years of what it's, of what it's gonna take to fix this issue, just as a society, as voters, and as tax-payers, we as a collective group, are not willing to do that. (Tom)

Discussion – Policy/Systems/Environments

Tom's comments about systemic racism resonate with Critical Race Theory, which seeks to understand how racism can persist in a society in which it is strongly condemned (Harris, 2012). Green (1995) provided an answer to this question in her discussion about how Canadian history has been distorted to favor colonizers and marginalize the colonized. LaRocque's (2010) discussion on good scholarship in the context of Canadian history is relevant here. Comparing good scholarship to rebuilding a roof, LaRocque (2010) stated that we must first deconstruct the foundations, that is, the distorted history upon which scholarship in Canada has been built. This distorted history takes the form of the "civ/sav" dichotomy (LaRocque, 2010, p. 39), which positioned Europeans as civilized and Indigenous peoples as savages through self-serving criteria stemming from belief in Eurocentric diffusionism (Blaut, 1993; LaRocque, 2010). As Tom stated, to address systemic racism, we must look at Canada's history and pinpoint the root causes of past and current issues. To start, we can recognize the civ/sav dichotomy discussed by LaRocque (2010) and realize that, as Memmi (1967) discussed:

> Colonial racism is built from three major ideological components: one, the gulf between the culture of the colonialist and the colonized; two, the exploitation of these differences for the benefit of the colonialist; three, the use of these supposed differences as standards of absolute fact. (p. 71).

In the Canadian context, Alexander Mackenzie's writings about First Nations peoples exemplify Memmi's (1967) observations. Mackenzie suggested First Nations peoples are childish, disloyal, and lazy (Duchemin, 1990), and similar sentiments about First Nations peoples have been conveyed through history textbooks (Walker, 1971), and even by the prominent author Charles Dickens (Dickens, 1854). Such has been the case in Canada's colonial history, and although the civ/sav dichotomy (LaRocque, 2010) is blatantly racist, the marginalization of Indigenous peoples has for too long been the norm and, collectively as a country, we now seem to be complacent with it.

Results – Mother Earth

Facilitators

None.

Challenges

1. Challenges with the Weather. The only references made to challenges with Mother Earth were with respect to facility access. Abel explained how the hockey team he coaches must wait until the natural ice in the community's arena forms before they can practice, with the exception of trips to the next town to use the artificial ice there. These trips, however, were dependent on road conditions which, of course, are beyond human control.

Discussion – Mother Earth

The lack of information conveyed under the Mother Earth leverage point warrants attention. Refer to the Limitations section for elaboration on this matter.

Results – All of Creation (Known and Unknown)

Facilitators

1. Connection to Culture. Robyn, who was the only participant to discuss connection to culture, explained the importance of cultural connection, and she highlighted ceremony and connection to the land as being important in the lives of First Nations peoples. She explained that First Nations youth she works with are interested in ceremony, and it was clear from the interview that Robyn goes above and beyond in her position to help students grow in this area.

Challenges

1. Disconnect from Culture. Robyn expressed concerns about the cultural disconnect in many reserve communities. She explained that First Nations youth need to be connected to their culture to achieve wellness in life.

Discussion – All of Creation (Known and Unknown)

The All of Creation (Known and Unknown) leverage point was subject to the same limitation as mentioned for Mother Earth (refer to the Limitations section for elaboration). Regardless, the content that was captured under this leverage point, although not plentiful, is important to consider. Robyn spoke with respect to this leverage point without being prompted to do so, which highlights the importance of the topic about which she spoke (i.e., cultural connection). As noted in *Cultural Irrelevance* under the Organizational leverage point, Robyn had once suggested that her school hire an Elder to help deal with the mental health challenges

that were occurring because, and as mentioned in the discussion that followed that section, cultural connection is considered important to mental health by many First Nations people (see Government of Canada, 2006). With respect to suicides specifically, which are double the national average in First Nations communities (Government of Canada, 2006), researchers now recognize that the cultural irrelevance of Western approaches is a barrier to successful prevention (see Barker et al., 2017). This recognition speaks to the need for culturally relevant approaches toward mental health issues.

Recommendations

Smith (1999) explained that throughout history, Indigenous peoples have been told not only what their challenges are, but also how to go about solving those challenges. Indigenous research participants often have solutions for change, and researchers should prioritize the communication of these solutions because they are likely to be the most culturally appropriate. For this reason, the following sections highlight the recommendations participants conveyed in the current research. These recommendations are presented under three main categories: *For Athletes; For Staff and Program/Community Leaders;* and *Where the Funding Goes.*

1. For Athletes

a. Living in a Good Way. Robyn spoke of the importance of knowing who you are and maintaining a balanced life throughout the interview process. Referring to the medicine wheel, Robyn said, "[t]o live a good life we have to try and walk balanced, mentally, emotionally, physically, spiritually" (Robyn). Athletes may have different approaches for walking balanced in the four aspects that Robyn emphasized. For Liz, who experienced racism on her hockey team, dealing constructively with racism was one way to lead a good life, and she encouraged other athletes to keep persisting during such troubling times.

2. For Staff and Program/Community Leaders

a. Within the School Setting. Three categories of suggestions participants discussed that are relevant to the high school setting included *More Staff, More Accountability Required from Students,* and *Cultural Relevance.*

i. More Staff. All the teachers interviewed expressed the need for more staff in schools in some form. Robyn stated more staff are needed in the dormitories at her school, Chuck emphasized the need to recruit high school coaches with specific expertise in certain sports, and Tom said his school needs to work with First Nations students and their families more, and that

the school setting could benefit from more Indigenous programs, but that more resources and staff – Indigenous staff in particular – are needed to make these things happen. One way to improve recruitment and retention of staff, at least in northern communities, as suggested by Abel, is for schools to partner with Northern Stores to provide discounts to teachers, as this would make living in northern communities more economically feasible.

ii. More Accountability Required from Students. Both Robyn and Abel spoke of the need for school staff to be allowed to be stricter on students, holding them more accountable for unfinished schoolwork. Abel mentioned that this accountability must take place in schools within their home communities as well.

iii. Cultural Relevance. Suggestions for how to make school settings more culturally relevant for First Nations students included more celebrating of Indigenous cultural activities, more traditional language courses offered, more Indigenous enriched classes (i.e., classes with content that is culturally relevant to Indigenous students), and more sport academies. Robyn and Abel also suggested bringing back the Thanksgiving break at their (dormitory) school so students can go home to be with their families. Robyn also emphasized the need to work together to make such initiatives happen.

b. Relationships, Outreach. Participants addressed two main topics with respect to relationships and outreach: *Inviting People into Communities,* and *Relationships Between School and Home or Billet Parents.*

i. Inviting People into Communities. Robyn highlighted that it is important to have motivated people working within communities to help teach students. In the case of her school, she conveyed the need for staff to keep reaching out to knowledgeable people, inviting them in to teach cultural lessons, such as land-based education. Similarly, Abel said leaders of communities should be reaching out, inviting people in to teach sport skills athletes can then practice on their own. Lastly, Chuck highlighted how northern Manitoba is particularly isolated from sport resources, suggesting sport organization outreach activities in the province should target that region more.

ii. Relationships Between School and Home or Billet Parents. Tom emphasized that the school at which he works needs to build better relationships with First Nations students' home communities, and that they must also work more with billet families to ensure First Nations students are comfortable in their new homes. In Tom's words:

> So, I would just like to see all of those, um, things increase where the environment that our students are coming into when they leave home is a lot more welcoming and a lot more catered to make them feel better about being here and coming to school here. (Tom)

c. Stepping Up. Abel recognized leaders of First Nations communities have priorities other than sport, but also acknowledged that small projects, such as outdoor hockey rinks, can help aspiring young athletes, so community leaders should try to make room for such initiatives.

3. Where the Funding Goes

a. More Funding to Sport and Education. Participants expressed the need to direct increased funding toward three general areas: *Subsidies for Indigenous Athletes, Funding to Facilities and Programs,* and *Funding to Education.*

i. Subsidies for Indigenous Athletes. Sport participation is expensive, and Indigenous peoples represent the most impoverished racial group in Canada. As such, Tom suggested funds be put toward subsidies for highly skilled Indigenous athletes.

ii. Funding to Facilities and Programs. Abel explained that investing money into the rink in the town in which he works would be beneficial in the long-term. Currently hockey coaches at Abel's school must drive to the nearest city, located 30 minutes away, to access artificial ice during months when natural ice is not available. Not only does this require more time on the part of staff and athletes, it also requires money for vehicle upkeep, fuel, and rink access. Tom spoke more generally for the need to put more funding into sports in general for Indigenous athletes:

> So, I would like to see more money for programs that allow them to get put into these, you know, a bigger pool where they can have better competition and they can learn more, they can get better coaches, and they can get more opportunities to become better at the game. (Tom)

iii. Funding to Education. Tom spoke of the need for more funding to be directed to education in reserve communities. He acknowledged that more money would mean more teachers, more support staff, and more resources, all of which would help improve education in reserves.

b. Accountability for Where the Funding Goes. Along with his call for increased funding to reserves, Tom also emphasized that there needs to be accountability for how the money is being spent in the communities.

c. Increased Consciousness Regarding Funding Inequalities. Tom highlighted the need for an increased consciousness in Canadian society regarding the historic and continued systemic racism against Indigenous peoples that results in inadequate funding to schools on reserves. This suggestion resonates with what Tom said in *Systemic Racism Resulting in Impoverishment in First Nations Communities* under the Policy/Systems/Environments leverage point, that is, that Indigenous peoples are not prioritized in Canadian society.

Limitations

This research was subject to three limitations. First, although the information conveyed by the three First Nations student-athletes was helpful in examining facilitators and challenges to sport and academics among First Nations students generally (e.g., racism in sport, cultural (ir)relevance in schools), voices of youth who had spent most of their lives in rural or remote communities would have contributed more understanding regarding situations in these types of communities. Although the teachers and coaches interviewed discussed many such aspects, differing perspectives may have been obtained from younger participants from rural/remote communities.

Second, a limited amount of information was conveyed under the Mother Earth and All of Creation (Known and Unknown) leverage points in this research. These two leverage points are among the features that make Lavallée and Lévesque's (2013) IIEM more culturally relevant to Indigenous participants than Bronfenbrenner's model (see Bronfenbrenner, 1977, 1979). Although interview questions were general in nature to encourage participants to speak about issues of most importance to them (e.g., participants were not specifically asked about spiritual aspects), even the mere incorporation of the Mother Earth and All of Creation (Known and Unknown) leverage points – in 2013 – is telling with respect to the historic and present marginalization of Indigenous participants by Western researchers. It is possible that participants were not comfortable discussing Indigenous cultural aspects that have historically been, and continue to be, oppressed within the academy and beyond. In the future, researchers should specifically ask participants questions related to the leverage points while still allowing participants to speak about issues of most importance to them, thus realizing a better balance between prompting conversation and surrendering control than what was observed in the current work. In addition, and with respect to some of the in-person information sharing sessions, the lead researcher (a PhD student) did not have sufficient time to develop the amount of rapport

with each participant that would have been required to overcome the racialized meanings associated with his physical appearance combined with his status as a researcher from a Western academic setting. Thus, this research serves as a call for longer-term approaches with participants. For graduate student-athletes' who, in addition, are new to not only Indigenous research paradigms but also qualitative research approaches in general, as was the case with the lead researcher of the current study, learning about and engaging in long-term approaches can be very challenging.[25]

A third limitation in the current research pertained to the thematic analysis method used (i.e., Braun & Clarke, 2006). The lead author realized that breaking apart participants' stories and trying to categorize the resulting segments was not always an efficient way of presenting results. For instance, the current research displays the same quote by Tom in two sections: *High Schools Looking out for Students' Wellbeing* under the Organizational leverage point, and *Being Away from Home* under the Community leverage point. In the first case, Tom's quote demonstrates the positive efforts his school is taking to help make First Nations students feel comfortable, yet in the latter case Tom's quote explains that the need for this positive effort is due to the difficult nature of the transition for students. Breaking this quote apart would serve to ignore important context needed in either case. As well, Liz's quote in the section *Racism from Others* under the Interpersonal leverage point was reiterated in the section *Adjusting to Your Circle of Teammates* under the Community leverage point because it was relevant in both areas.

This issue, that is, the interconnectedness of topics, relates to what Lavallée (2009) discussed: that breaking apart participants' stories is not consistent with Indigenous ways of knowing which emphasize interconnectedness. In her own work, Lavallée (2009) addressed this problem "by writing about the participants as characters in a play and using the principles of Anishnaabe symbol-based reflection to develop a symbol representing the collective story" (p. 34). A similar approach could have been used in the current research as well, although the significance of this issue was not realized until well into the writing process, and the large number of themes identified in the current research might have complicated Lavallée's (2009) approach greatly, rendering the analysis difficult to comprehend.

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[25] For further elaboration, refer to *How Can Future Work Better Follow Wilson's (2001) Indigenous Research Paradigm?* in Chapter 1 of the lead researcher's PhD Thesis: Kosmenko, N. J. (2021). *Factors influencing university sport participation among rural and remote First Nations athletes in Manitoba* (Publication No. TBD) [Doctoral dissertation, University of Manitoba]. Faculty of Graduate Studies (Electronic Theses and Dissertations).

Conclusion

This research explored many of the facilitators and challenges confronting rural and remote First Nations athletes in their pursuit of university sport in Manitoba, including solutions athletes had for change. University sport has potential to contribute to Call to Action 90(ii), which calls for "[a]n elite athlete development program for Aboriginal athletes" (TRC, 2015a, p.10), yet it is evident that many obstacles stand in the way of this goal. It is hoped the current research will help inform academic and sport programs at all levels leading to and including university as program leaders strive to facilitate success of rural and remote First Nations student-athletes.

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Chapter 6: Factors Influencing University Sport Participation Among Rural and Remote First Nations Athletes in Manitoba, Part B[26]

Abstract

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada called for "[a]n elite athlete development program for Aboriginal athletes" (Call to Action #90(ii), TRC, 2015, p. 10). The resources provided by university sport programs can help athletes reach elite levels of sport participation, meaning the university sport setting has potential and a role to play in addressing Call to Action 90(ii). Yet significant challenges are imposed on Indigenous students/athletes pursuing post-secondary academics/sport. Almost 18% of Manitoba's population identifies as Indigenous, highlighting the importance of addressing these barriers in this province. Guided by Wilson's (2001) Indigenous research paradigm, this research used a socioecological framework to explore factors influencing university sport participation among rural and remote First Nations athletes in Manitoba, including solutions for change. Building from Part A (Chapter 5), which examined experiences of First Nations high school athletes as well as their coaches and teachers, this study explored the experiences of First Nations university athletes, their coaches, and university athlete alumni. Some topics highlighted included: helpful personal attributes; successful sport recruitment/retention strategies; the importance of support; various interpersonal challenges; strengths and weaknesses regarding sport and academic opportunities and direction in communities and at university; the importance of exposure to aspects of the anticipated environment; challenges adjusting to new settings; and the need for more/better relationships and outreach between universities and communities. The results of this study can be used to inform academic and sport programs seeking to create environments conducive to the development of rural and remote First Nations student-athletes.

Keywords: First Nations athletes, sport, university

[26] This research was approved by the University of Manitoba Research Ethics Board, Protocol #E2018:103 (HS22470).

Factors Influencing University Sport Participation Among Rural and Remote First Nations Athletes in Manitoba, Part B

In 2015 the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) developed 94 Calls to Action, five of which relate to sport (TRC, 2015). Highlighting the importance of the Calls to Action, the federal government committed to addressing all 94:

> During the TRC's final event on December 15, 2015, the Prime Minister reiterated the Government of Canada's commitment to work in partnership with Indigenous communities, the provinces, territories and other vital partners, to fully implement recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, starting with the implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. (Government of Canada, 2015, para. 5)

The current research focused specifically on Call to Action #90(ii), which calls for "[a]n elite athlete development program for Aboriginal athletes" (TRC, 2015, p.10). The importance of this Call is highlighted by the numerous barriers affecting Indigenous peoples' sport participation, including racism, financial impoverishment, lack of cultural relevance in sport programs, few Indigenous coaches and coaches who are sensitive to Indigenous cultures, lack of sport facilities in reserves, uncertainties regarding government jurisdiction/responsibility pertaining to sport program delivery, and distance between reserves and places with sports facilities and experts.

University sport can serve as a pathway to elite sport participation, thus helping to address Call to Action #90(ii), through the resources it provides (e.g., expert coaches, athletic therapists, sport nutritionists, sport psychologists, and high-quality facilities and equipment). However, as with barriers to sport, there are numerous barriers challenging Indigenous students pursuing post-secondary education. For instance, the systemic underfunding of most[27] federally funded primary and secondary schools limits access to academic resources, resulting in reduced educational experiences in many reserves (Halas et al., 2013), and the socioeconomic disparities caused and perpetuated by colonization make university attendance all the more challenging (Preston, 2008). Even when these obstacles are overcome, Indigenous students still must face

[27] Funding received by First Nations schools affiliated with the Manitoba First Nations School System (MFNSS), which was recently established by the Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre (MFNERC; MFNSS, n.d.), is increased relative to funding received by First Nations schools not affiliated with the MFNSS (Malone, 2017). According to the MFNSS (n.d., para. 8): "Since starting operations in July 2017, MFNSS has made significant strides in developing an education system reflecting First Nations worldview, culture, and values. As of March 2019, eleven First Nations schools have signed on for an initial term, with several others expressing an interest in joining." Note there is currently a total of 59 First Nations-operated schools in Manitoba (MFNERC, 2018).

the subjugation of their traditional knowledges, cultures, and values while living within the university setting (see Kirkness & Barnhardt, 2001, for a discussion specifically relevant to First Nations students). Moreover, Bailey (2016) discussed numerous daily challenges confronting Indigenous university students, such as instances of racism in classroom settings, few Indigenous faculty members, othering from peers, a devaluing of Indigenous research methodologies, isolation, and a lack of understanding among non-Indigenous students regarding Indigenous cultures and history.

Although interpersonal ties (sense of family, community) can be formed through sport (Lavallée, 2007), mainstream sport atmospheres can also be culturally exclusive places. As Forsyth and Paraschak (2013) noted, sport is a socially-constructed practice. The relationship between mainstream and Indigenous sport can be viewed as a double helix, with the rungs between the two strands, or systems, representing points at which one system may inform the other (Forsyth & Paraschak, 2013). The two systems are different philosophically, as mainstream sport assumes a neoliberal perspective with its emphasis on hierarchies, individualism, competition, winning, and rewards (Coakley, 2011). Conversely, Indigenous sport emphasizes values that are important in and outside sport, such as the Anishinaabe 7 teachings (Benton-Banai, 1988, as cited in Rice, 2019), as well as an emphasis on balance between physical, mental, spiritual, and emotional aspects of wellbeing (Rice, 2019). Further, there are often key differences in how sport is carried out in Euro-Canadian versus reserve communities. Sport in the former is characterized by hierarchical leadership structures, drill-oriented practices, and Western sport psychology sessions led by formally educated consultants. On the other hand, sport in reserve communities often involves more community-based leadership structures and play-oriented practices, and Indigenous athletes may prefer to seek guidance from medicine people or Elders (Schinke, Peltier, & Yungblut, 2013).

Not to be overlooked are the challenges occurring outside the university and sport settings for Indigenous athletes who relocate to Euro-Canadian communities. Blodgett et al. (2014) discussed challenges related to culture shock, feeling overwhelmed by change, living with non-Indigenous billet families, lack of meaningful relationships with peers, racism, stereotypes of Indigenous people not being able to "make it" outside the reserve, isolation from family, losing loved ones while away, disconnect from Indigenous culture, and confrontations with home community members who felt betrayed by the athletes leaving the community. Other research

demonstrated that some of these challenges (stereotypes and on-reserve rejection) are shared by Indigenous secondary and post-secondary student-athletes as well (Blodgett & Schinke, 2015). Although such challenges are daunting, Blodgett and Schinke (2015) suggested moving away for academics and sport can encourage positive personal development among Indigenous student-athletes, with athletes possibly growing in their appreciation for their heritage and developing strong desire to give back to their home communities.

The challenges facing Indigenous athletes in pursuit of post-secondary academics and sport need to be confronted if the full potential of the university sport system to address Call to Action 90(ii) is to be realized. Explorations into these challenges must privilege both the concerns and solutions of Indigenous people, as researchers have historically imposed their own solutions (Smith, 1999), subjugating Indigenous peoples and ignoring beneficial strategies for change. With those considerations in mind, the larger project associated with this study asked: what are the factors (i.e., facilitators [opportunities/supports] and challenges [reduced opportunities/obstructions]) influencing university sport participation among rural and remote First Nations athletes in Manitoba as seen through the eyes of some First Nations athletes as well as their coaches and teachers? What are some strategies for improvements? This study continued from Part A (Chapter 5), which examined discussions held with high school athletes as well as their teachers and coaches. This part (Part B) examined discussions with university athletes, their coaches, and university athlete alumni.

It is important to note that this research focused specifically on the experiences of First Nations student-athletes. There is significant diversity with respect to history and cultures across Indigenous peoples, so Métis and Inuit student-athletes were excluded from this research. Moreover, this research focused specifically on Manitoba, which is a suitable province due to its relatively high proportion of First Nations people (10% of the population according to a 2016 census; Statistics Canada, 2020), as well as its significant proportion of on-reserve First Nations people specifically (over 50% of all First Nations people in the province) who are distributed across Manitoba's 63 reserves (Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada, 2014). Lastly, "rural" and "remote", as defined in this research, mean communities not containing a U Sports member university (U Sports is the governing body for university sport in Canada), with the distinguishing factor between the two community types being all-weather road access (available for the former but not the latter). Also important to note is that although the definitions for

"rural" and "remote" were based on the absence of U Sports member universities, the Canadian Collegiate Athletic Association also plays a significant role in post-secondary sport in Canada, so participant recruitment was not restricted to the U Sports system.

Methods

Following Wilson's (2001) Indigenous research paradigm helped the non-Indigenous research team[28] work in ways that respected Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and doing. Wilson (2001) emphasized that the IRP is fundamentally different from Western paradigms in its ontology, epistemology, methodology, and axiology. With respect to the IRP's ontology, knowledge is seen as something that is shared not only among people, but with all of creation. Appropriately, the epistemology of the IRP emphasizes relationships (with participants, knowledge, and all of creation), and in their selection of a methodology, researchers following the IRP prioritize approaches that will be effective in maintaining relational accountability. Lastly, the axiology (morals or ethics) of the IRP emphasizes that research must be of benefit to Indigenous peoples.

Recruitment

Access to sport opportunities and direction, as well as quality of opportunities and direction received, vary greatly across Manitoba. As such, this research used a type of purposeful sampling technique called maximum variation sampling (Patton, 2002). Through maximum variation sampling, researchers strive to capture diversity with respect to participant experiences, and since this type of sampling is a purposeful approach, researchers are permitted to recruit individuals who are knowledgeable about the research topic (Patton, 2002). Snowball sampling, which is another type of purposeful sampling technique (Patton, 2002), added to the size of the participant group. In snowball sampling, researchers rely on participants as key informants, asking them whether they know anyone they think might be helpful in contributing information to the research (Patton, 2002).

With respect to athlete participants, the larger research project associated with this study captured variation in terms of years involved in sport, sport(s) played, gender, age, hometown,

[28] Care must be taken by non-Indigenous researchers when working with Indigenous research participants so as not to engage in extractive research processes. For more information on the research approach followed in this study, see Chapter 1 of the lead researcher's PhD Thesis: Kosmenko, N. J. (2021). *Factors influencing university sport participation among rural and remote First Nations athletes in Manitoba* (Publication No. TBD) [Doctoral dissertation, University of Manitoba]. Faculty of Graduate Studies (Electronic Theses and Dissertations).

current school, and the nation to which participants belonged. This diversity was also reflected in this study specifically. Similarly, this study reflected most of the diversity captured in the larger research project with respect to other participants (in the case of this study specifically, coaches), including sports coached, gender, age, hometown, and racial identity. Similarities across participants in this study were seen in current community and role (since all non-athlete participants were coaches). Regarding racial identity among coaches, two coaches were of mixed Euro-Canadian descent, and one was Métis.

Participants

Ten participants were interviewed for this study, including three current university student-athletes (all First Nations), four university student-athlete alumni (three First Nations, one Métis who previously worked in student recruitment at a post-secondary institute), one previous university coach (non-Indigenous), and two current university coaches (one non-Indigenous, one Métis). Among the student-athletes and alumni, all were from rural or remote communities except for Jennifer, although Jennifer had experience working in student recruitment at a university, which was an experience that provided her with deep insights relevant to this research. Table 4 displays participants' background information, including participant pseudonym, category (athlete or coach), sport played/coached, gender, racial identity, and, for the athletes, a community category describing whether their hometown was urban, rural (reserve or not), and remote (reserve or not).

Table 4. *Chapter 6 Participant Information*

Participant pseudonym	Category	Sport played/coached	Gender	Racial identity	Community category
Brooke	Current university student-athlete	Volleyball	Female	First Nations, Cree	Rural reserve
Sara	Current university student-athlete	Volleyball	Female	First Nations, Cree	Rural reserve
Jordan	Current university student-athlete	Hockey	Male	First Nations, Cree	Rural reserve

Participant pseudonym	Category	Sport played/coached	Gender	Racial identity	Community category
Heather	University student-athlete alumnus (final season: 2015-2016)	Swimming	Female	First Nations, Cree	Rural non-reserve
Jennifer	University student-athlete alumnus (final season: 2009-2010)	Swimming	Female	Métis	Urban
Matt	University student-athlete alumnus (final season: 2016-2017)	Hockey	Male	First Nations, Ojibway	Rural reserve
Will	University student-athlete alumnus (final season: 2016-2017)	Hockey	Male	First Nations, Saulteaux	Rural non-reserve
Wayne	Current university coach	Hockey	Male	Mixed Euro-Canadian	-
Angela	Current university coach	Volleyball	Female	Métis	-
John	Previous university coach (final season: 2017-2018)	Volleyball	Male	Mixed Euro-Canadian	-

Knowledge Sharing

Knowledge sharing involved conversational interviews called “yarning” (Bessarab & Ng’andu, 2010), completed either in person or via telephone (see the appendices section for the interview guides used). Bessarab and Ng’andu (2010) posited that yarning is an appropriate Indigenous research method because although the main questions may be pre-determined, it

allows participants control over much of the conversation, permitting them to speak about topics important to them (i.e., relational accountability is prioritized). As well, yarning sessions typically start with a "social yarn", which is used to build or strengthen rapport with participants (Bessarab & Ng'andu, 2010) and, as Wilson (2001) discussed, relationships are first and foremost under his IRP. In the case of the current research, two additional measures were used to meet relational accountability obligations. First, at the conclusion of each yarning session, the lead researcher asked participants if they had anything else to add to the interview. This measure helped ensure all participant concerns were addressed during the discussion. Second, at either the conclusion of the yarning sessions or in follow-up communication, participants were asked how they thought results of the study should be used. The researcher recorded answers to this question to permit follow-up later. Finally, to help meet reciprocity obligations, the lead researcher gave all participants either a braid of sweetgrass or a $10.00 Tim Horton's gift card. The lead researcher was provided with the idea to give sweetgrass (as well as with the sweetgrass itself) by a local First Nations Elder. The lead researcher met with the Elder for guidance prior to interviewing participants for this research. The Elder's primary suggestion, however, was for the researcher to be sincere when expressing gratitude toward participants. Moreover, although Elders were not consulted specifically about this study consistently throughout the research process, the lessons the lead researcher learned from listening to Elders in the course of other work were helpful in developing his understanding of how to go about research in respectful ways (humility, kindness).

A minimum of two recording devices were used to record yarning sessions, with the first yarning session (with Heather, and in which only one recording device was used) being the only exception. Recordings were transcribed verbatim by the transcription company Rev.com, and the lead researcher sent each participant an electronic copy of their interview transcript. The lead researcher gave each participant 25 days (i.e., to the end of the month in which the transcripts were sent) to inform him if they wanted any changes made to their transcript. The only exception to this 25-day window occurred in the case of Jennifer's transcript, as the lead researcher did not receive her email address until 14 days prior to the end of the month (thus, she was given 14 days). Except for one participant, Wayne, no participants requested changes to their transcript. In Wayne's case, the changes he requested were simple edits that he made himself and emailed to the lead researcher.

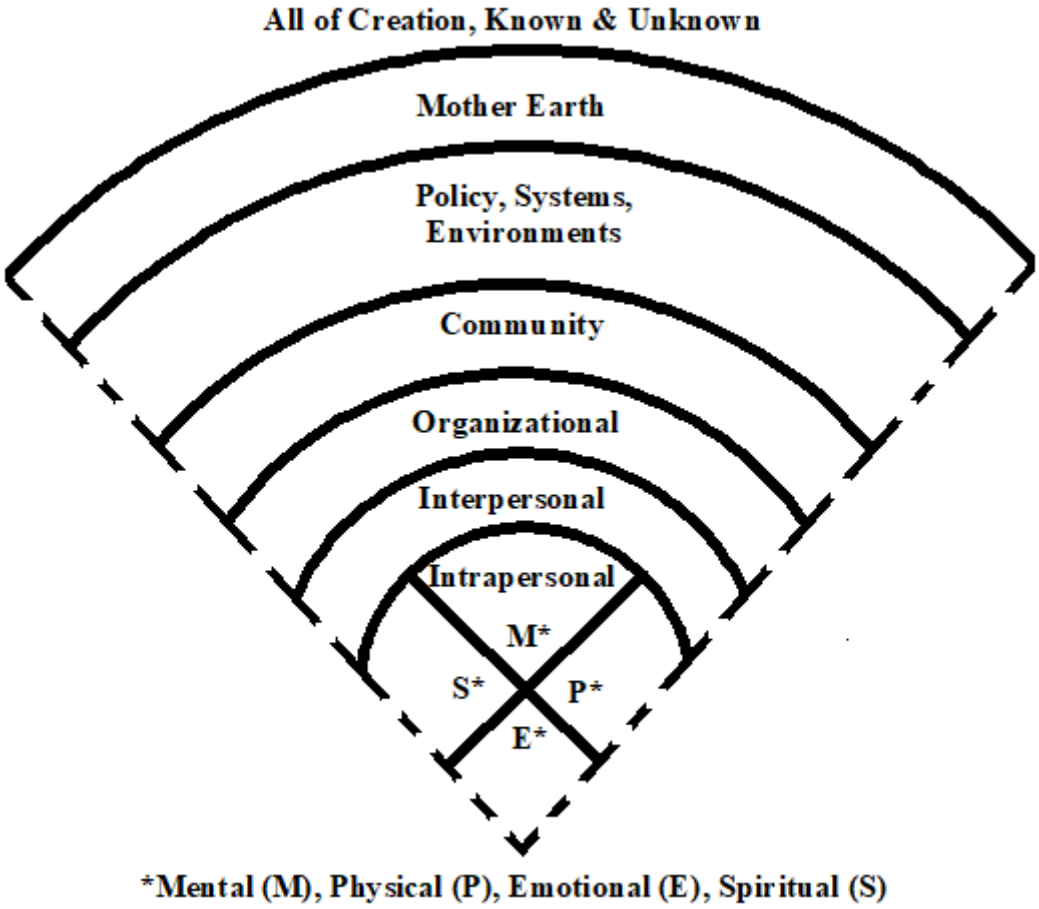
Transcript Analysis

Using NVivo 12 software, thematic analysis was guided by Braun and Clarke's (2006) six step process. Braun and Clarke (2020) explained that their thematic analysis process (i.e., Braun & Clarke, 2006) is theoretically flexible and requires researchers to reflect on their own positionalities while immersing themselves in the content provided by participants, as researchers' own subjectivities influence the analysis process. This reflexive approach helped the lead research meet his relational accountability obligations by encouraging him to think not only on what participants said, but what content they emphasized. In addition, the Braun and Clarke (2006) process is suitable for use in both inductive and deductive analyses (Braun & Clarke, 2020), both of which were used in the current research. In a fashion similar to that used by Bennie et al. (2019), codes were first classified as either facilitators (opportunities/supports) or challenges (reduced opportunity/obstructions), and then analyzed deductively, with the leverage points of a socioecological model serving as the categories under which codes were sorted. In consideration of what Smith (1999) said about the need to prioritize solutions of Indigenous participants, an additional category was created and used as a depository for recommendations for change. Next, inductive analysis was used to create multiple levels of themes under each category.

The socioecological model used in the current research was the Integrated Indigenous-ecological Model (IIEM; Lavallée & Lévesque, 2013), which has been used previously in sport-related research with Indigenous participants (see McHugh et al., 2015). Consistent with Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 2005), socioecological models are useful in identifying the environments in which interactions that influence an individual's biopsychological development take place, meaning they recognize that environmental factors play significant roles in development. Various socioecological models have their origins in the work of Bronfenbrenner (1977, 1979, 2005). Specifically, the IIEM builds upon contributions by McLeroy et al. (1988) and Stokols (1992). The IIEM's leverage points, which are depicted as a series of circles nested within one another (Figure 5), include (from the inside going outward): Intrapersonal (divided into mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual components of the individual), Interpersonal, Organizational, Community, Policy/Systems/Environments, Mother Earth, and All of Creation (Known and Unknown). The last two levels, along with the incorporation of mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual aspects of the individual, are what

make the IIEM more culturally relevant to Indigenous peoples than Bronfenbrenner's (1977, 1979) model, as many Indigenous cultures prioritize these aspects. Once results were compiled, a copy of the manuscript draft was emailed to participants. Participants had a total of 17 days (i.e., until the end of the month in which the copy was emailed) to provide any suggestions for changes/omissions. No participants requested changes to the manuscript. One issue encountered during this process was that Brooke's email account sent an automatic reply to the lead researcher notifying him that the message could not be delivered because her inbox was full. The lead researcher attempted to contact Brooke via direct message on social media the same day (14 December 2020), yet did not receive a reply until approximately six months after sending the message (14 June, 2021). Brooke was emailed a copy of the manuscript draft the next day (15 June 2020) and was given that day, plus two more, to provide any suggestions for changes/omissions. This timeline was short because the lead researcher's thesis defense, in which he would be presenting the current research, was scheduled for later that same week (18 June 2021). Brooke did not provide any suggestions.

Figure 5. *The Lead Researcher's Depiction of Lavallée & Lévesque's (2013) Integrated Indigenous-ecological Model*



Quality Standards

The first consideration employed in the current research to ensure high quality research was similar to that used by Blodgett et al. (2008), who worked with Indigenous athletes and Indigenous community members, examining sport programming on a reserve in Ontario. Blodgett et al. (2008) referred to Maxwell's (1992, 2002) five types of validity to help ensure valid research accounts (as opposed to valid data and methods; Maxwell, 1992). First, descriptive validity, which refers to whether information has been recorded accurately, was addressed in the current research using multiple recording devices, and by comparing transcripts to audio recordings. Second, interpretive validity, which refers to the researcher's interpretation of participants' statements, was addressed by sending participants electronic copies of transcripts as well as an electronic copy of the manuscript draft, allowing them time to review and suggest changes. Third, theoretical validity, which refers to the validity of the researcher's account as a

theory for the phenomenon being examined, was addressed using the same strategies used to address interpretive validity. Fourth, generalizability, which refers to the usefulness of the research with respect to broader application, was addressed through the maximum variation sampling technique (Patton, 2002) that was employed to recruit participants. Note that Blodgett et al. (2008) did not address generalizability (their work focused on sport programming in one reserve only). The fifth type of validity, evaluative validity, refers to evaluations made by researchers (e.g., assessments of right- or wrongdoing, as in "Coach Bill was wrong to bench his star center, Bobby, for being outspoken about racism on their basketball team"). Evaluative validity was not addressed in the current research (or in Blodgett et al.'s [2008] research) because the lead researcher's goal here was to examine and contextualize participants' experiences as opposed to evaluating them.

The second consideration made in the current research with respect to quality standards entailed reflecting on the six criteria used to determine whether research questions have been sufficiently addressed, presented by Ellis (1998, pp. 30-31). These six criteria, which take the form of questions, include: 1) Is it plausible, convincing? 2) Does it fit with other material we know? 3) Does it have the power to change practice? 4) Has the researcher's understanding been transformed? 5) Has a solution been uncovered? 6) Have new possibilities been opened up for the researcher, research participants, and the structure of the context? Upon reflecting on these questions after the analysis process was finalized, the researcher concluded that the current research was indeed successful in producing meaningful outcomes.

Results and Discussion

The yarning sessions ranged from 26 to 42 minutes in duration, with a mean of 33.6 minutes and a median of 33.5 minutes. The following sections are organized according to the leverage points of the IIEM (Lavallée & Lévesque, 2013), with facilitators discussed prior to challenges. Table 5 provides a summary of themes and sub-themes from the results of the yarning sessions. Table 6 provides a summary of themes, sub-themes, and second level sub-themes from the recommendations discussed during the yarning sessions.

Table 5. *Chapter 6 Summary of Results – Themes and Sub-Themes*

Socioecological leverage point	Facilitator (F) or challenge (C)	Theme	Sub-theme

Socioecological leverage point	Facilitator (F) or challenge (C)	Theme	Sub-theme
Intrapersonal	F	1. Helpful personal attributes	a. Maturity, independence, resourcefulness, initiative, resilience
		2. Personal benefits from sport	a. Immediate personal benefits from sport
			b. Long-term personal benefits from sport
	C	1. Unconstructive thoughts regarding academic challenges	
		2. Unprepared for the transition	a. Fear of leaving the reserve
			b. Priorities unconducive to success
		3. Intergenerational trauma	
Interpersonal	F	1. What coaches and sports staff do right	a. Cultural awareness
			b. Meaningful outreach
			C. Wholistic approaches
		2. Support from teachers and billet parents	a. Billet parent attributes
			b. Teacher attributes
		3. Support from family	a. Continual, general support from family
			b. Family involvement in sport
	C	1. Reduced / unequal frequency / quality of interactions between university staff and athletes	a. Lack of meaningful outreach from university sports staff
			b. Coach workloads
		2. Ignorance	a. Racism from others
			b. Cultural unawareness
		3. First in your family to go to university	

Socioecological leverage point	Facilitator (F) or challenge (C)	Theme	Sub-theme
Organizational	F	1. University sport organization responsiveness to the lives of students	a. University recruiting and hiring priorities
			b. Cultural relevance
		2. Appropriate and helpful sport opportunities	a. Sport opportunities at university
			b. Getting things right early on
			c. Opportunities outside school
		3. Academic opportunities in and for post-secondary	a. Band funding for post-secondary
			b. Academic support
			c. Academic component meshing with the sport component
	C	1. Adjusting to university (setting, academics, sport)	a. Adjusting to the university setting
			b. Academic challenges
			c. Adjusting to university sport (high-performance, mainstream)
		2. Lack of sport opportunities at high schools	
		3. Lack of university outreach at high schools, in communities	
Community	F	1. Previous exposure to aspects of the anticipated environment	a. Relocating or travelling to other communities
			b. Connections between universities and high schools
			c. Helpful connections made through clubs and teams

Socioecological leverage point	Facilitator (F) or challenge (C)	Theme	Sub-theme
		2. Community (home or away) support	a. Supportive, welcoming people
			b. Fan base at home or in the city
			c. Role models
		3. Strengths in communities	a. Sport opportunities
			b. Sport direction
			c. Academic direction
	C	1. Acculturation	a. Being away from home
			b. Adjusting to your new community
			c. Adjusting to your circle of teammates
		2. Challenges in communities	a. Limited sport opportunities
			b. Limited sport direction
			c. Limited academic direction and support
Policy / Systems / Environments	C	1. Insufficient funding going to reserves	
Mother Earth	C	1. Challenges with the weather	
		2. Being away from nature	

Table 6. *Chapter 6 Summary of Recommendations – Themes, Sub-Themes, and Second Level Sub-themes*

Theme	Sub-theme	Second level sub-theme
1. For athletes	a. Personal attributes	i. Mental and emotional
		ii. Living like an athlete
		iii. Academics
	b. Understanding what's required, doing what it takes to get there	i. Understanding the calibre of university sport
		ii. Willing to leave your community

Theme	Sub-theme	Second level sub-theme
		iii. Willing to put in the work
	c. Exposure	i. Seek out opportunities for exposure
		ii. Organizations providing more opportunities for exposure
2. For staff and program/community leaders	a. Relationships, outreach	
	b. Ongoing education	i. Identify who the onus is on
		ii. Cultural awareness
	c. In communities	i. Stepping up
		ii. More sport opportunities and direction
		iii. Greater academic direction
3. Where the funding goes	a. Funding going to communities first	

Results – Intrapersonal

Facilitators

1. Helpful Personal Attributes. Participants mentioned numerous personal attributes that were helpful in their sport pursuits. Many of the attributes mentioned are not unique to rural and remote First Nations athletes (e.g., self-compassion, balance, patience, optimism). The more general attributes have been withheld from the current research to facilitate a refined discussion. The attributes discussed here include *Maturity, Independence, Resourcefulness, Initiative,* and *Resilience.*

a. Maturity, Independence, Resourcefulness, Initiative, Resilience. Two of four athletes from the alumni group (Will and Matt), and one of three athletes from the current university athlete group (Jordan), did not start university immediately after high school. Similarly, although Heather started university soon after high school, she withdrew after a short period of time, returning to university (and university sport) seven years later. Starting university later in

life allowed these athletes time to mature, and this maturity and the professionalism with which they approached sport and life in general was made evident during the interview process. In addition, it was evident that athletes interviewed had demonstrated significant initiative in finding supports themselves at university, and even at the high school level. For example, Jennifer mentioned that while in high school, she would put forth greater effort than students in general to connect with teachers, working to get her teachers on the same page with respect to her sport obligations.

Athletes also spoke about the resourcefulness and independence they developed from positively responding to the limited sport opportunities and/or direction in their home communities. For instance, when Heather was young, she insisted on competing against boys due to the limited female competition in the north (her home area) at the time. As well, both Heather and Brooke mentioned having to coach themselves in some regards and how that helped them develop independence. Brooke had this to say:

> Yeah, I felt like it made me like feel more independent, because I knew I could do that by myself. I don't need certain people to develop that skill, or ... I found it helped actually, by like doing it by myself. (Brooke)

Resilience was another important attribute discussed by participants. Sara had missed her goal of representing Manitoba's North American Indigenous Games (NAIG) volleyball team, which had been a motivator for her to work hard in practice. She explained how it was disheartening to not make the team, but was determined to continue playing. Heather demonstrated great resilience during her university career as well. She had withdrawn from university early into her post-secondary education, but later returned when she was older and more focused, finishing her degree and becoming one of the best university-level swimmers in Canada.

2. Personal Benefits from Sport. The many personal benefits participants derived from sport can be viewed as motivators for participation. These benefits are divided into two categories here: *Immediate Personal Benefits from Sport*, and *Long-term Personal Benefits from Sport.*

a. Immediate Personal Benefits from Sport. Many of the immediate personal benefits university athletes and alumni received from sport were the same as those mentioned for the high school athletes interviewed as part of the larger research project with which this study is

associated (Part A, see Chapter 5). These benefits included: enjoyment; feelings of accomplishment, confidence, and positive self-image; sport as a vehicle for self-expression, as a way to deal with stress, and as an outlet for one's competitive spirit.

b. Long-term Personal Benefits from Sport. As in Part A (Chapter 5), a desire to leave one's home community and aspirations of playing sport professionally were mentioned by some athletes as motivators for pursuing sport.

Challenges

1. Unconstructive Thoughts Regarding Academic Challenges. One university coach, Angela, mentioned that a First Nations athlete she coached blamed themself and their home community for their current academic struggles in university. This athlete seemed to think she was alone in her struggle, but Angela explained that many students, regardless of where they come from, find themselves behind in some areas when they get to university.

2. Unprepared for the Transition. Participants mentioned two main ways in which rural and remote First Nations athletes may be unprepared for the transition to university sport: *Fear of Leaving the Reserve,* and *Priorities Unconducive to Success.*

a. Fear of Leaving the Reserve. A fear of leaving one's home community was mentioned by Will as a reason some First Nations athletes do not move on to university.

b. Priorities Unconducive to Success. Athletes and coaches in the participant group mentioned that some athletes attend university mainly for the sport aspect, and that it can be difficult for them to take academics as seriously as they take sport. Wayne, a university hockey coach, mentioned that this imbalance is common among athletes in general:

> [O]ften high school students from any community, whether it's urban, rural, doesn't matter, will... will focus too much on, on sports and... and neglect the academic side and... obviously it doesn't work if you can't get admitted to university. (Wayne)

3. Intergenerational Trauma. Jennifer explained that intergenerational trauma still affects First Nations communities, and for youth experiencing this, the transition to university can cause significant added stress:

> [T]here's pretty much ten decades of trauma that they have to deal with, their community, and their friends, and their family, um, and then you're just gonna kinda throw them into this huge city that, that's like, "okay, I guess I'm just gonna, trying to figure it out". So, I think the connections and things that need to be worked on have to be prior to university overall. (Jennifer)

Discussion – Intrapersonal

Preston (2008) discussed many of the barriers to post-secondary education for Indigenous students. One of those barriers was being the first in their families to attend university. Although over a decade has passed since Preston's (2008) discussion, this barrier is still not uncommon, at least for rural and remote First Nations students (see the Interpersonal section). This lack of guidance makes the fear Will spoke of very understandable, and it necessitates more initiative on the parts of First Nations students in seeking resources on campus and elsewhere in their new communities. Doing so requires a great deal of maturity, independence, resourcefulness, initiative, and resilience, and these traits were common to all athletes involved in the current research. Brooke's suggestion in the Recommendations section (under *Willing to Leave Your Community*) is relevant here. She encouraged athletes not to think they are restricted to their home communities, and to go after sport opportunities elsewhere if they think they are sufficiently skilled to do so.

There are avenues that can be helpful to athletes who follow Brooke's advice. For example, it is not uncommon for high schools to play roles in preparing students for the post-secondary transition by scheduling trips to university campuses that may help alleviate some anxieties. *Previous Exposure to Aspects of the Anticipated Environment* was a theme under the Community leverage point in Part A of this research (Chapter 5), and it is also a theme under the same leverage point in this chapter (Part B). Better preparation among rural and remote First Nations athletes for the rigors of university sport can also be facilitated by coaches through meaningful outreach and wholistic coaching styles (see *What Coaches and Staff do Right* under the Interpersonal section).

On the positive side, this study corroborates the importance of sport in the lives of athletes in terms of the many benefits received, as illustrated in Part A (Chapter 5). Also as discussed in Part A, as well as in Chapter 7, research with First Nations coaches found that positive experiences as athletes were common amongst the participant group. To be sure, positive experiences help with long-term engagement in an activity, so in constructing sport programs, it is helpful to understand which benefits are most significant to athletes. The current research provides some insight in this regard.

Lastly, Jennifer's thoughts about intergenerational trauma need to be taken into consideration by universities looking to recruit and retain First Nations students. Indeed, as

Jennifer suggested, effort to address these issues must take place early and within communities. As Abel said in Part A (Chapter 5), current challenges in many reserves set First Nations students up for failure from the start. Yet universities can play significant roles once students reach post-secondary. Indigenous student centers can provide academic direction/support (see *Academic Opportunities in and for Post-secondary* under the Organizational leverage point), a sense of community (see *Supportive, Welcoming People* under the Community leverage point), as well as Elders students can listen to for guidance. Further, it is important that university faculty receive cultural awareness education (see *Cultural Unawareness* under the Interpersonal leverage point; see also *Cultural Awareness* in the Recommendations section) that enhances critical social consciousness to facilitate inclusive classroom settings.

Results – Interpersonal

Facilitators

1. What Coaches and Sports Staff do Right. Participants spoke of numerous positive actions taken by coaches and sports staff with respect to providing environments conducive to First Nations athletes' athletic development. These actions are divided into three categories: *Cultural Awareness*, *Meaningful Outreach*, and *Wholistic Approaches.*

a. Cultural Awareness. Two university coaches highlighted the importance of cultural awareness. John told about his experiences overseas and how that influenced his perspective regarding coaching athletes from non-Western cultures:

> And of course, when I was in [other country], that was different because there I was immersed in a culture. So every bit of certification that I went through was geared towards their culture. Right? So, you know, any bit of education I had in [other country] was geared towards the [other country's] culture, [local] people. [. . . .] So that's where I learned some, some great stuff about how to deal with cultures 'cause I was coming at it from an outside culture. [. . . .] Like, that was different. [. . . .] So it, that was, this is how [local] people talk, this is how [local] people communicate and it wasn't being done for me, it was being done for the [local] coaches in the room. [. . . .] Right? So that [immersion] helped me a ton. (John)

Another university coach, Angela, spoke of how she had educated herself regarding Indigenous peoples' history and cultures:

> First of all, in [education program], like there's so many courses that everybody just has to take, but pretty much any time I had an option, I took like the course that allowed me to learn about Aboriginal, um, yeah. I just really focused on like Aboriginal issues in [education program] and worked with a lot of Indigenous communities through

> [education program], through sport. I've also just done a lot of reading on my own and kind of, you know, well you know how you kinda like teach yourself what you want to teach yourself. Like, I've read all of the stuff that is like anti-colonialism and acknowledging the ongoing trauma and stuff rather than reading the stuff that like says, you know, Indigenous people should buck up and start paying taxes. (Angela)

b. Meaningful Outreach. One athlete, Heather, mentioned how her former coach recently began taking on more athletes, including those from rural areas who may be a little behind skill-wise due to reduced sport opportunities and direction in their communities. For Heather, her relationship with her coach started very early and included her coach connecting with her parents. John's recruitment method was similar in that he understood the importance of connecting with the families of athletes, and it was clear that Angela's approach to coaching also involved significant relationship-building well prior to recruitment. Angela had been very involved with the NAIG as well as in providing coaching clinics in reserves throughout Manitoba. Similarly, Brooke and Sara had both had made connections with their university coaches prior to university. In Brooke's case, not only was her coach instrumental in finding her financial support for university, her coach also made her feel *wanted,* whereas representatives from another university team that had been trying to recruit her merely advertised their team as an option:

> [I]t seemed like they're more, they looked at the city kids first, or they looked at like anywhere else. It was always like [urban sport club], or like all those other track clubs, like, they looked at first before up north. [. . . .] And it's also like they showed more interest in wanting me than [other university]. It's just like, "You can come here and we'll take you, but we won't like really help you that much when it comes to like money, and practices." (Brooke)

c. Wholistic Approaches. Some participants spoke about wholistic coaching approaches. For example, Angela discussed how, as a coach, she takes into account athletes' life circumstances: "I just, uh, I'm just being like open-minded to everyone's unique circumstances and like being willing to put time aside in your sport program to address things other than sport" (Angela). John's thoughts echoed those of Angela; John emphasized learning about individual athletes to coach them constructively. Heather's coach took this approach too. Heather mentioned that her coach changed her training program to better accommodate Heather's other obligations, and it paid off because she was swimming just as fast as before. Lastly, university

coach Wayne explained that he puts Indigenous athletes he recruits in touch with his university's Indigenous student center and encourages them to continue making use of that resource.

2. Support from Teachers and Billet Parents. Due to the restrictions imposed on familial support by geographic distance, it is important that rural and remote First Nations students/athletes receive support from the teachers and billet parents with which they interact regularly. The following sections describe beneficial *Billet Parent Attributes* and *Teacher Attributes.*

a. Billet Parent Attributes. Jordan discussed the attributes of the billet parents with whom he was living while competing away from home, prior to university. His billet parents had an understanding of Indigenous cultures, were very caring, and were also involved in (Jordan's) sport within the community. Overall, Jordan explained that his experience with his billet parents was positive.

b. Teacher Attributes. Athlete participants mentioned that many of their teachers were understanding and supportive of their sport pursuits. Jordan, for instance, had moved to a community (prior to moving again for university) that often served as a training ground for athletes from other areas, so the teachers at Jordan's high school were understanding of Jordan's sport commitments. Will, who moved to the United States to play hockey prior to university, acknowledged that the small class sizes at his school in the U.S. allowed him to connect with teachers more easily than would have been the case if his class sizes were larger. Finally, Heather and Jennifer both mentioned teachers being supportive of their sport obligations, such as having to miss classes due to travelling to sport competitions.

3. Support from Family. Geographic distance can be a barrier for families who are striving to provide academic and athletic support to their children, yet familial support is nevertheless important. Participants spoke of two general ways in which they received such support: *Continual, General Support from Family,* and *Family Involvement in Sport.*

a. Continual, General Support from Family. Athlete participants generally maintained connections with their family members through phone calls, visits back home, and/or their families coming to visit them in the city. Jordan called home regularly to talk with his father, and his family would attend home games in the city on occasion. Brooke had family in the city, and visits with them would prevent homesickness. Dinner visits were especially enjoyable for Brooke because they provided some respite from the cafeteria food at her university. Among the

factors influencing Brooke's decision regarding which university to attend was her father's location in the city, as Brooke wanted to be close by him while he was in care. In addition, Brooke's mom would also visit the city regularly.

b. Family Involvement in Sport. It was apparent from the interviews that family involvement in athletes' sport pursuits was a factor contributing to athletic success. Family involvement included exposing athletes to sport at early ages (this was the case for many athletes in this research), being role models (i.e., also being athletes; e.g., Brook's mom, Matt's father), encouragement to start and continue in sport (many of the athletes mentioned this), siblings being involved in sport at the same time (e.g., Heather's sister), family helping with travel to competitions and facility access (e.g., Heather's mom provided transportation for her; Matt's father worked at a hockey arena, so had access to that facility), providing support during challenging times (e.g., Jordan would talk to his father for this type of support), and helping athletes develop their skills outside team practices (e.g., Brooke's family helped her with this).

Challenges

1. Reduced/Unequal Frequency/Quality of Interactions Between University Staff and Athletes. As in Part A (Chapter 5), participants in the current research discussed a variety of ways in which interactions between university staff and athletes may be compromised with respect to frequency and/or quality. This section is divided into two categories: *Lack of Meaningful Outreach from University Staff,* and *Coach Workloads.*

a. Lack of Meaningful Outreach from University Sports Staff. Effective recruiting strategies used by coaches seeking to recruit rural and remote First Nations athletes were discussed in the Facilitators section. As the current section illustrates, however, not all university sport programs succeed in this regard. Wayne explained that many university sport staff are time-stressed, and there is limited funding for athlete recruitment. John echoed Wayne's explanations:

> [A]nd I understand that you're, you need to take your path the easiest way that you can so, you know, you look for those potential barriers. Can I recruit a kid financially? Can I deal with what they're bringing to the table? All that stuff has to be weighed upon by a coach, I understand that, but the quickest reason we say "no" is because we just don't know, we don't know the resources to help those families, we don't know the resources to help those athletes. I don't know the resources to communicate, all that stuff comes into play. (John)

Brooke's recruitment experience, as discussed in the Facilitators section, exemplifies what Wayne and John said. Whereas one school made Brooke feel wanted, the other merely presented their team as an opportunity, and Brooke felt as though the latter team favored athletes from the city.

In addition, both John and Angela mentioned that racism also affects recruiting decisions. John said the following:

> There was no real desire and I would speak to, speak openly after about it, the prejudice at that time was very much, "Well what are we going to do?" You know, "They probably don't have money", you know, "Can they even get into university, that's just not a battle I want to get into." (John)

And Angela said:

> I'll just give you one example. I coach provincial teams through the mainstream sport system and I coach the Indigenous provincial teams, and when we go to the mainstream nationals with, there, there are like so many university and college scouts, you can't even like, you know, you have to push your way through the hallways and like, and there are scholarships being offered left, right, and center, and yada, yada, yada. Which is great but then, at North American Indigenous Games, there was not one, not even one university or college scout from across the country at that competition. [. . . .] Not because the athletes are lesser in skill, or ability, or potential, just, that's just like, to me, that's just unacceptable I guess. [. . . .] And I don't know why that is, like lack of, lack of effort on the coaches' parts, just lack of disseminating the information, I don't know, but like there's something systemic there that like is a problem. [. . . .] And I don't know, I just, first of all, people should make an effort to like bridge that Indigenous stream sport and post-secondary opportunities, um, but also like selfishly, university and college coaches would benefit from making that effort, because there's tons of good athletes that aren't-aren't tapped into, you know? So, I don't know, it's just like a really weird thing. Um, that kinda pisses me off, but yeah. (Angela)

b. Coach Workloads. As was the case in Part A with high school staff (Chapter 5), coach workloads were a concern mentioned in the current research. Some university coaches in Manitoba are in their roles full-time, but many are not. Angela, for instance, is a head coach at a university, but that is not her full-time job, and her obligations elsewhere limit the amount of time she can dedicate to her team.

2. Ignorance. It was apparent from the interviews that ignorance from others in the forms of *Racism from Others* and *Cultural Unawareness* are challenges facing First Nations athletes in Manitoba.

a. Racism from Others. Two of the athletes interviewed discussed their experiences with racism. Jordan discussed a situation that occurred while he was in high school, staying with billet parents: "Um, I guess I was sleeping in the basement and this guy came over and I guess my billet was a hockey president and then uh, yeah this guy came over and just started bashing on natives pretty bad" (Jordan). Similarly, Brooke said the following:

> Like, I didn't like it. Sometimes I did want to quit because of it, but it's really like, it comes down to more of skill I thought. Like sometimes like being referred to like a rez mutt, like, dirty Indian, and all that, like not to let it bother you because really it's like you're being a role model for like other Indigenous people, like being at that level. Like for other youth in the community. So you shouldn't like let that get you down. [. . . .] It was more of like tournaments sometimes. Like with [rural town], like there was a soccer game, and then like no one can really hear it besides like the two people. Like refs wouldn't hear it or anything. Or, stuff like that. Volleyball has been pretty good, and track, it was just like... Some sports, like, if a team like lost to us they'd be upset and calling us like dirty, like those kind of rac-racist slurs. (Brooke)

In addition, Angela, who had not seen any overt racism against her athletes, said she is aware that it happens all the time elsewhere. Jordan shared similar thoughts, saying that he has not experienced racism in the city himself, but knows it happens there.

b. Cultural Unawareness. Cultural unawareness was another challenge mentioned by participants. Matt discussed a situation he had with a professor at his university that illustrated some professors either lack understanding of the differences in educational outcomes at secondary institutes across Manitoba, or that some simply do not know how to respond to it in a supportive, respectful way:

> I remember I was taking a math course at [university] and, and the professor says to me, "oh you should have learned this in grade five." And you know like I, like I never, I never learned that ever you know. [. . . .] Yeah, just understanding like you know, some kids are like coming from uh, they're coming from all different kinds of backgrounds and they had like some kids had more opportunity than others. So, like I think that needs to be brought into light I guess. (Matt)

Angela mentioned that on the volleyball team she coaches, many non-Indigenous athletes have little experience with First Nations communities, and they may be hesitant to ask questions because they do not want to appear ignorant. John illustrated the importance of cultural awareness on teams when discussing how misinformed perceptions of the "other" may lead to tensions between athletes:

> I started running Sunday morning kind of drop-in practices, right? Well that was huge, all of a sudden that was huge so now, you know, they were picking things up on the Sunday. Then I started practicing Friday night at 4 o'clock when nobody else would practice. Then quickly I learned that my teams were starting to hang out together so, you know, all of a sudden girls in grade nine or eight would have a 4 o'clock practice then they'd all get together and watch a movie and have a sleepover at somebody's house from the team. [. . .] So we've created an entire team culture, right? [. . . .] And once they, once they bought into that, well that's when they became phenomenal. Like because they were just this whole culture, right? [. . .] and we'd have kids every year from different schools come in, that, that was not a problem, but when this young First Nations lady joined us, you know, she wouldn't attend any of the sleepovers. [. . .] right towards the end of the season she wrote me a letter and I, um, I still have that letter. [. . .] She handed me this letter and in the letter it went, you know, [John] you're a great coach [. . .], but the reason why I never [. . .] went to those parties was where I'm from, when girls go to parties they get pregnant. I know what goes on at parties and I have bigger dreams, kind of thing. And I was like, "Oh my goodness." I didn't ever take into account her background, right? [. . .] Oh, like my thought was, "oh yeah, I know cultures, I get along well. That's okay. It's okay. Well, maybe she's being standoffish, maybe the girls don't like her," whatever, I tried to accept. But I never really understood where she had come from, what she had experienced, right? So her thought process was, like, in her community young girls would get pregnant when they went to parties, right? So her only experience with parties was drinking parties and whatever, right? She was, for her it was avoiding that, that's not what those sleepovers were, that's what she knew, right? [. . . .] So it was then that I kind of developed that philosophy of, oh, I get it. Like I can't coach you how I think I should coach you, I can't coach you how I really want to coach you, I need to coach you how you're going to learn. And to coach how you're going to learn I need to know a little bit about you, right? (John)

After telling of his experiences with tensions between athletes, John added a very important caution about the danger of trusting your own perceptions about teammates: "it's what we think we know that will get us hurt. 'Cause we often think we know more than we do" (John).

3. First in Your Family to go to University. As in Part A (Chapter 5), attending university can be very challenging when you are the first in your family to do so, and this is still the case for many First Nations students. Jennifer mentioned this, saying: "my parents never went to university, so it was pretty much I was going in blind as to what to expect" (Jennifer). Jennifer was the only athlete participant in the current research who was from the city in which she attended university, so what she said here suggests that being the first in your family to go to university can still be challenging regardless of whether or not you have to move for post-secondary.

Discussion – Interpersonal

Principles of culturally relevant pedagogy can be applied to sport settings to make them more culturally appropriate for First Nations athletes. The goals of culturally relevant pedagogy as they relate to students are: 1) student success; 2) development of a critical social consciousness; and 3) cultural competence (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Halas et al. (2013) described four ways of meeting these goals: 1) supportive learning climates; 2) teacher as ally; 3) understanding students' day-to-day cultural landscapes; and 4) meaningful and relevant curriculum. Although these principles can be quite helpful, there is an educational component that is helpful to have prior to their application. In other words, addressing all four strategies begins with the development of a critical social consciousness by the teacher/coach. As John and Angela suggested, coaches must first become educated on First Nations peoples' histories and cultures. Unfortunately, courses related to coaching First Nations athletes are not mandatory in most coaching positions in Manitoba, with one exception being for the NAIG. The importance of such education is emphasized by the work of Schinke, McGannon, et al. (2013), who highlighted the benefits of using a shared acculturation approach when coaching athletes from diverse cultures. Unlike shouldered acculturation, in which athletes shoulder the burden of acculturation themselves, in shared acculturation the acculturation experience is carried by multiple people, such as coaches and teammates who work to learn about the cultures of athletes from other areas and then incorporate cultural aspects into the team setting (see Schinke, McGannon, et al., 2013). As John said, "it's what we think we know that will get us hurt. 'Cause we often think we know more than we do." A shared acculturation approach can be helpful in preventing the hurt John was speaking about.

The current research suggests family support is important to rural and remote First Nations athletes, which resonates with findings from Schinke et al.'s (2010) research on a reserve in Ontario, as well as with Schinke, Peltier, and Yungblut's (2013) discussion about cultural sport psychology (CSP). In the context of Indigenous athletes, CSP involves four components: 1) family, 2) medicine people and Elders, 3) the national Indigenous community, and 4) role models. The current research suggests meaningful relationships should also exist within team environments to effectively recruit and retain rural and remote First Nations athletes. Consider, for instance, Brooke's recruitment experience where she was passively recruited by one school and more actively recruited by another. She had felt wanted in the latter case, and more effort was made (by her now-present coach) in the latter case to find her financial support.

Further, Angela commented on a severe lack of presence of post-secondary sport program staff at NAIG, which is a venue at which connections could begin to be made with potential, future recruits. At the very least, NAIG is a venue at which university sport staff could follow through with the outreach goals Wayne mentioned in the Recommendations section (see *Relationships, Outreach*): community development (i.e., help develop sport programs in communities); introduce people to, and raise awareness of, university and university sport; and inspire goals. Angela herself had attended/coached at NAIG on multiple occasions, making genuine efforts to form positive relationships with athletes. Indeed, John, Angela, and the individuals who coached Heather, Sara, and Brooke all understood the importance of strong relationships, and they went above and beyond to make university sport work for the athletes they coached, which also included connecting with their families and/or beginning the recruiting process early. In building relationships and trying to understand the cultural landscapes of athletes, these coaches were fulfilling allyship roles (see Halas et al.'s, [2013] "teacher as an ally", p. 197).

Lastly, being the first in one's family to go to university was discussed by Preston (2008) over a decade ago as a barrier to university attendance for Indigenous students. Similarly, Part A of the current research project also mentioned this barrier (Chapter 5). Participants in the current research were not specifically asked if one or both of their parents had attended post-secondary, so it is possible this was a barrier to more participants than what has been suggested here. Whatever the case, the discussion of this barrier in both Parts A and B of this research project demonstrate that Preston's (2008) decade-old concern is still relevant today.

Results – Organizational

Facilitators

1. University Sport Organization Responsiveness to the Lives of Students.

Participants spoke of two main ways university sport organizations are responsive to the lives of rural and remote First Nations students: through *University Recruiting and Hiring Priorities*, and through *Cultural Relevance.*

a. University Recruiting and Hiring Priorities. One university coach, Wayne, explained that when recruiting, he not only looks for talent, but also the character and values within athletes. He noted that veteran athletes on his team are welcoming of new athletes and willing to help them navigate the university setting. Wayne also spoke about the importance of having

sport staff with good character and values, explaining that a positive, inclusive, welcoming team environment starts with this step.

b. Cultural Relevance. Cultural relevance in the current research occurred through two different avenues: use of space, and culturally relevant curriculum. Regarding use of space, Angela discussed how the university at which she coached was very open to ideas she had regarding the inclusion of Indigenous cultures. Specifically, with her university's support, Angela was allowed to create an Indigenous student lounge on campus to help develop a more welcoming feel for Indigenous students. The second avenue mentioned, culturally relevant curriculum, was achieved in some instances through classes related to Indigenous societies. Sara was in one such class, and she explained how eye-opening it was to learn of the racism related to Canada's foundation as a nation:

> I find I'm really interested in it. I didn't know a lot that I know now. And truly mind blow- mind blowing. So I really enjoy that class. [. . . .] I learned that Indigenous people weren't seen- weren't part of a human family- [. . . .] ... for like the longest time. So I was like, "Whoa." (Sara)

2. Appropriate and Helpful Sport Opportunities. Participants discussed three main topics related to appropriate and helpful sport opportunities: *Sport Opportunities at University*, *Getting Things Right Early on,* and *Opportunities Outside School.*

a. Sport Opportunities at University. Matt, Will, and Jordan, who were all hockey players, discussed the ways in which their university provided opportunities for athletic development. Both Matt and Will spoke highly of the facility upgrades recently made to the arena in which they used to train while competing as university athletes. In addition to the obvious direct benefits, Will hoped that the upgrades would help bring in more fans, as he believed that a larger crowd at home games could be beneficial for athletes. Moreover, Jordan discussed some ways in which university hockey was better than hockey in the Manitoba Junior Hockey League (MJHL), explaining that his university team conducts periodic fitness testing and includes within their program aspects such as VO2 max analyses, breathing exercises, and yoga (note that the MJHL is a league for male hockey players aged 16- to 20 years; MJHL, n.d.).

b. Getting Things Right Early on. Of the athletes interviewed, most had begun playing sport at young ages, some as early as age 4. Contrarily, Sara and Brooke did not start playing volleyball until grade 9, although Brooke had been involved in gymnastics prior to volleyball,

and was exposed to the volleyball environment at an early age when her mom was competing in tournaments.

Jordan explained that back in his community, sport leaders do well at promoting enjoyment in sport programs, letting young athletes have fun and learn as they go. Similarly, Matt discussed how many of his old teammates shared positive views of their early sport experiences: "I talk to all my, like my old teammates from that team and they're, like they still remember and like that was like the best time of their lives I guess" (Matt).

c. Opportunities Outside School. Various sport opportunities exist outside the school system in Manitoba, such as the MJHL (see MJHL, 2020), in which Jordan, Matt, and Will all competed. Participants highlighted the benefits that participation in the MJHL can provide in terms of personal growth. Wayne explained that Canadian universities recruit largely from the MJHL or similar leagues, meaning participation in the MJHL or a similar league is virtually a pre-requisite for hockey players seeking university-level participation.

The Manitoba Aboriginal Sport and Recreation Council (MASRC) was also mentioned as a facilitator with respect to sport opportunities. MASRC provides sport clinics in reserve communities, and it also delivers the Aboriginal Coaching Modules, which can be helpful for coaches who work with Indigenous athletes. Unfortunately, as discussed in the following Challenges section, these modules are largely not mandatory for coaches in Manitoba, with an exception being NAIG coaches.

Two other sport opportunities outside the school system include NAIG (overseen in Manitoba by MASRC) and various clubs. Both of these opportunities played some role in Sara's athletic career. Sara was on her current coach's volleyball club prior to being recruited to her university team, allowing her to adjust to high-performance sport prior to competing at the university level. In addition, Sara also motivated herself by setting the goal of making Manitoba's NAIG team. NAIG was important in the lives of Brooke and Jennifer as well, who both had experience competing at the Games. Jennifer commented on how impactful that experience was for her, saying:

> Like for me, like when I grew up, um, my parents, they're both Métis, um, they grew up in a time where like you were to suppress that type, that part of your life because it wasn't what people wanted to hear or, um, you know? You were judged if you were Indigenous, so um, I didn't grow up in life with cultural experiences in my culture, um, so when I was able to experience the NAIG games, it was an experience that I'll never

> forget because I knew I was Métis, but it wasn't until experiencing the NAIG games where I actually felt connected to it, and it was a very good feeling that definitely sparked something in me to continue learning about my culture. (Jennifer)

3. Academic Opportunities in and for Post-secondary. Participants discussed three key ways academic opportunities are helpful to rural and remote First Nations athletes pursuing university sport: *Band Funding for Post-secondary, Academic Support,* and the *Academic Component Meshing with the Sport Component.*

a. Band Funding for Post-secondary. Heather, Matt, and Jordan all mentioned band funding was helpful to them as they pursued university academics and sport. Jordan mentioned the application for band funding is easy to fill out; he also explained that certain grades must be maintained to be eligible for the funding.

b. Academic Support. Participants mentioned several academic supports at their universities, including advisors, peer tutors, and programs specific to Indigenous students. Jordan, who was involved in one of the Indigenous academic programs, mentioned that he had regular meetings with his student advisor. He also praised the Indigenous student center at his school for how helpful staff there were (see *Supportive, Welcoming People* under the Community leverage point). Similarly, Jennifer had this to say about the program from which she received support:

> Um, and then it wasn't until I found, um, I guess at [the] school it's called Indigenous [program] now, um, I found that, um support group, or I guess support program at the [omitted] School of Business, and ever since that connection that I made, um, they definitely helped me, um, I guess with my confidence as to applying to the business school, and then I eventually graduated. (Jennifer)

In addition, Heather's university had an on-campus day-care, which was very convenient for her. Heather's daughter lived with her in the city while she (Heather) was in university, and as a busy student-athlete, Heather found the on-campus day-care to be very helpful.

c. Academic Component Meshing with the Sport Component. Participants discussed a few ways in which the academic component of their school experiences meshed well with the sport component. Will mentioned how online courses offer athletes more flexibility in their schedules, allowing them to accommodate training commitments. Angela, who coached at a university with many college-type programs, mentioned that the four- to five-year programs offered at her university allow athletes the opportunity to fulfil all years of their athletic

eligibility. Lastly, participants discussed measures their sport programs took to ensure athletes were meeting their academic obligations. For instance, when Jordan was in high school, leaders in his hockey program (which was an entity separate from his high school) were able to view hockey players' grades given the athletes signed a form allowing this access. Jordan explained that hockey staff would ensure athletes were performing well academically by providing mandatory tutor sessions and by benching players who were not earning adequate grades. Other measures participants discussed included university coaches being strategic about practice times and durations, university sport programs requiring athletes to maintain a certain course load and grade point average to be eligible, and university sport program staff connecting athletes with academic supports.

Challenges

1. Adjusting to University (Setting, Academics, Sport). University-related adjustments participants discussed were sorted into three categories: *Adjusting to the University Setting, Academic Challenges,* and *Adjusting to University Sport (High-performance, Mainstream).*

a. Adjusting to the University Setting. Despite attempts at cultural relevance in some instances at some universities (as discussed in the Facilitators section), participants explained that university settings can be culturally irrelevant in areas such as Indigenous representation (i.e., lack thereof) among staff/faculty/decision makers, use of space, and, at one university, food available in the cafeteria. For Brooke, courses with Indigenous content sounded appealing, but her university offered only two such options. As such, Brooke was contemplating transitioning to a different university at some point in the future. Further, Angela mentioned that although the university at which she coached was making attempts to be inclusive, one could easily perceive these attempts as "othering":

> I know they are aware and trying to be like an inclusive space, and they do do a lot of activities around reconciliation in this institution. They have a lot of speaker series where they're talking about Indigenous things, um, like I- I truly believe they are doing what they can, but I also don't really think that, I mean it's always from a perspective of like we are settlers trying to learn or like it's, it almost feels like an academic like study, you know? [. . .] So, I'm not sure that like, it's mostly about learning about that like quote-unquote other Indigenous people, you know? (Angela)

When asked whether recruiting athletes to the university at which she coached was challenging, Angela said the following:

> Well like, so it's easy to recruit them because they want those experiences, they want to make their community proud, they wanna make their family proud. What's difficult is A, I mean keeping them here, and B, feeling like I made a decision that's actually beneficial for them by bringing them here. Like, I think if I was the head coach at [other university], I'd feel a lot more, I'd feel more comfortable recruiting Indigenous athletes there 'cause they have Indigenous staff, they have an Indigenous student group, they have like Indigenous nights for things. They have, they are situated in a, in a s-spot in [urban town] where like the population, there's a huge Indigenous population [. . . .] So, I guess I, I could probably recruit an entire team of Indigenous athletes here, but I don't know if I'd hang onto them for very long and I don't know if I'd feel good about that either. (Angela)

In addition to cultural irrelevance, a few participants mentioned how university was very overwhelming at first. Jennifer, for instance, referred to the transition as an "extreme shock". Although Jennifer had graduated from a high school within the same city in which she attended university, not many of her classmates from high school went to the university she did, and of those who did, many withdrew after their first year. Thus, most of Jennifer's connections were with her swimming team. Other challenges mentioned by participants regarding the transition included large class sizes and a larger school in general, having to be much more accountable for their academics than in high school, and the length of time it can take to find supports on campus.

b. Academic Challenges. University academics were challenging for a few of the athletes. Wayne, who had been coaching for numerous years at the university level, said that academic struggles are common to a lot of students irrespective of racial background or hometown. He noted that many athletes struggle to balance academics with sport, which he suggested is one of two main reasons why some hockey players have withdrawn from his team (the other reason being to pursue professional hockey). Heather had withdrawn from university sport (and university in general) partly due to academic reasons as well, although in her case, she was in a degree program that did not suit her well at the time. When Heather came back to university seven years later, she tried a different degree program and was successful.

c. Adjusting to University Sport (High-performance, Mainstream). Participants noted several ways in which rural and remote First Nations athletes must adjust when joining university sport teams. Jennifer discussed the lack of connection in mainstream sport as well as the push-through-the-pain mentality. This adjustment also presents challenges for the university coaches, as they must find ways to help athletes adjust. A wholistic approach is helpful here, but

Angela explained that attempts to apply such an approach in mainstream sport may be perceived by others as double standards. As Angela explained, if a coach demonstrates different treatment toward a rural and remote First Nations athlete who is still learning about the culture of mainstream sport than they demonstrate toward non-Indigenous athletes on their team who have been in that sport system for some time, the non-Indigenous athletes, without some level of critical social consciousness, may simply see this differing treatment as unfair. Angela, Wayne, and John all explained that coaching certifications they were required to take as university coaches had no content related to coaching Indigenous athletes whatsoever (i.e., they sought that knowledge out themselves). John analyzed this situation as follows:

> [W]hen it came to anything Indigenous or multicultural, never. Not a one. Not even a thing when I went through coaching certification. Now the Aboriginal coaching modules, yes, but I had to seek those out myself. [. . . .] And, and today when you coach on our provincial team, they do not ask you to take that. If you're going to coach the North America Indigenous Games, well yeah, then you have to take it. So basically what you're saying out loud is, you probably won't coach an Indigenous athlete if you coach on a provincial team. [. . . .] So when we talk about systematic prejudices, well there's systematic prejudices, there you go. [. . . .] That, and again, not that I'm a fan of having a separate certification, I think it should be all in obviously, but why, why could you go coach for basketball Manitoba and only take (laughs) well, only take one perspective of coach certification? [. . . .] Especially in the provinces that have high Indigenous populations. Why would we not be assuming, or why are we assuming that you're not going to have Indigenous athletes on that team? (John)

John further elaborated on how many coaching certification programs are set up in ways that are unconducive to learning how to interact with people of diverse backgrounds:

> [T]his will be a bias of mine, I guess, but the way they set up those courses are to get coaches through the certification. So it's really just a check mark in a box and you can learn it all online now, right? [. . .] I cannot learn how to deal with people online, can't do it. Can't do it. (John)

Other adjustments discussed included adjusting to the drill-oriented practices characteristic of mainstream sport, adjusting to a higher athletic workload, and adjusting to the high-performance culture (e.g., being warmed up and ready to go at the start of practice). Lastly, Matt mentioned that university sport, combined with academics, leaves little room for time with family and friends:

> Yeah, so, and then like plus study time. Like your day is pretty much booked and like it's then, by the time you get that done it's already like time to [. . .] time to get ready for bed. Get ready for the next day and then do it all over again. So it's, it's, it's straining at times

> and it, it gets busy and like, like uh, like I guess you gotta prior- prioritize. Like sometimes like you don't have time for like family and friends and stuff like that. Especially when you gotta like travel. (Matt)

2. Lack of Sport Opportunities at High Schools. Two athletes in the current research reflected on their high school experiences when discussing sport opportunities. Sara mentioned that her high school only had practical Physical Education classes for grade 9 students; for grade 10, 11, and 12 students, classes were theory-based. Brooke mentioned that her sport, volleyball, did not receive very much attention in gym class, as basketball was favored during most of the school year. In the cases in which volleyball was covered, classes did not go in depth regarding skills and drills.

3. Lack of University Outreach at High Schools, in Communities. Several participants mentioned a lack of outreach from universities to First Nations communities (high schools and communities in general). John had this to say about the situation he observed decades ago, and from the current research, it seems that not much has changed in this regard:

> Like through the late '80s and all through the '90s, I was working in community in, on reservations a lot and I would see phenomenal athletes and I couldn't understand why we weren't getting them at the university level. So the reason why at that time we weren't getting them to the university level was there was really zero outreach. There was no connection between community, athletes, and the universities. (John)

In addition, both John and Jennifer emphasized that outreach activities that do occur are often only short-term. Jennifer had this to say:

> So, um, just from what I've seen and, um, is it's, okay, let's do this one-day thing or this one week, and then it's done. [. . .] it's just like training with swimming, like if I just trained for a week and then it's done, well obviously I'm not gonna be a very good swimmer. Um, so there needs to be like a long-term process. So, for me to be able to get a best time in swimming, I'm gonna have to have, um, a lot of training and consistent training. So there needs, so, to continue a connection and making Indigenous people feel comfortable coming down to the [university] and being a part of [university sport program], 'cause there needs to be a continuum of connection at all times. (Jennifer)

Discussion – Organizational

For the most part, athletes in the current research had quite early starts with respect to their chosen sports. Brooke's success as a volleyball athlete after training in gymnastics is not surprising. Sport sampling is one possible pathway to the elite level of sport participation, as some physiological adaptations may be relevant across different sports (Côté et al., 2007).

Although the interviewer in the current research did not think to ask Brooke how her participation in gymnastics may have influenced her success at volleyball, it is likely some attributes honed through gymnastics would have contributed to her success in the latter sport.

What Jordan mentioned about sport leaders in his hometown prioritizing enjoyment in their sport programs resonates with a finding of Part A (Chapter 5). Intrinsically motivated activities, whether they are Play Practice (adult-led activities) or Deliberate Play (child-led activities), play roles in a well-rounded developmental program by offering unique benefits, in this case, enjoyment (Côté et al., 2013). The role that enjoyable experiences play in one's sport career should not be understated. As explained in Chapter 7, many of the First Nations coaches interviewed in that research had positive experiences as athletes, so it is not presumptuous to think such experiences can help with long-term engagement. However, at some point, athletes interested in university sport will need to adjust to the high-performance, mainstream paradigm. Indeed, Schinke, Peltier, and Yungblut (2013) discussed differences between mainstream sport and sport in many Indigenous communities, including a more drill-oriented approach in the former, and a more play-oriented approach in the latter. In addition, as Jennifer mentioned, high-performance, mainstream sport often entails less connection and more of a push-through-the-pain mentality than Indigenous approaches to sport. These notions relate to Coakley's (2011) discussion about ideology being embedded within sport: mainstream sport follows a neoliberal ideology which prioritizes winning, competition, individualism, and hierarchies. Indigenous sport, on the other hand, prioritizes the demonstration of values desirable not only in sport, but in life in general (Rice, 2019). For examples of how these approaches may collide within Indigenous peoples' sport participation, see Heine and Young's (1997) discussion regarding Arctic Canadian sports and games.

The lack of discussion around high school sport opportunities in the current research is problematic in this respect (for a longer discussion regarding the sport opportunities provided by high schools, refer to Part A [Chapter 5]). Many of the athletes involved in this study had early sport experiences outside the school system. Will, Matt, and Jordan, for instance, played hockey outside the school system, and Jennifer and Heather both swam outside this system as well. In addition, Sara was involved in club volleyball prior to university volleyball. As such, it is evident that sport opportunities outside high school can be instrumental in rural and remote First Nations athletes' athletic development. One important sport opportunity that exists for males

aged 16- to 20 (MJHL, n.d.) outside high school (and outside university) is the MJHL, which is part of the Canadian Junior Hockey League (see MJHL, 2020). As Wayne mentioned, university-level hockey is exceptionally competitive because many recruits have experience competing in the MJHL or similar leagues, so participation in such a league is virtually a pre-requisite to university hockey. The independence and balance required to compete at the university level while maintaining sufficient grades can take time to develop anyway. Athletes age out of the MJHL once they turn 21 (MJHL, n.d.), meaning athletes who age out and wish to pursue university hockey are a few years older (and hopefully more mature) than many other first-year athletes competing in university sport. As well, the MJHL provides First Nations athletes from rural and remote communities opportunities to travel and interact with people from different cultures, as well as practice at being away from home for extended periods of time. The equivalent female league, the Manitoba Women's Junior Hockey League, which encourages the development of female hockey players aged 18- to 21 years, however, does not provide quite the same experiences as the MJHL, as the MWJHL operates out of Winnipeg (see MWJHL, n.d.), thereby not providing the same opportunities for travel and the associated cultural experiences.

MASRC also makes significant contributions to Indigenous peoples' participation in sport in the province of Manitoba (and beyond, in the case of NAIG). Although NAIG, which, in Manitoba, is overseen by MASRC, has been critiqued for prioritizing mainstream sport over Indigenous cultural "games" (Paraschak, 2013), it nevertheless plays an important role in helping connect Indigenous athletes with their cultures. It seems that in some cases, MASRC and other sport organizations outside the university system are filling voids that many university programs ignore, such as outreach to First Nations communities. Further, as mentioned in the Interpersonal section discussion, NAIG is a venue in which connections could begin to be made with potential recruits. Yet as Angela mentioned (see *Lack of Meaningful Outreach from University Sports Staff* in the Interpersonal section), post-secondary sport program staff presence at NAIG has been lacking in the multiple years she has attended. Based on Brooke's recruitment experiences (see *Lack of Meaningful Outreach from University Sports Staff* in the Interpersonal section), this lack of effort on the part of university sport programs to connect with Indigenous athletes is problematic. To summarize, Brooke was recruited by two universities, and she chose her current university largely because the person doing the recruiting made her feel wanted at

that school. In addition, Brooke mentioned that the other school had already allocated their scholarship funding, so there was no financial support offered from them, but that her now-current coach went above and beyond to find her funding.

When recruitment is successful, rural and remote First Nations athletes can reap the benefits of the helpful sport opportunities university sport programs provide, as suggested in the current research. Indeed, universities have access to the expertise, facilities, and equipment that can help athletes reach elite levels. Further, it is evident that steps are being taken by some university sport coaches to create positive team environments. What Wayne mentioned about positive, inclusive, welcoming environments beginning with sport staff is particularly important in the case of acculturation. In a study examining the acculturation experiences of immigrant athletes, Schinke, McGannon, et al. (2013) found that coaches play an instrumental role in helping immigrant athletes adjust to their new team setting. Two beneficial practices mentioned in that study included learning about athletes' home cultures to understand what the athletes are used to (and then being mindful of that while coaching), and greeting athletes using the athletes' native languages (Schinke, McGannon, et al., 2013). Coaches can work to make such strategies (which represent "shared acculturation"; Schinke, McGannon, et al., 2013) part of their team's culture while encouraging athletes from the host culture to get on board. With respect to the recruitment and retention of any athletes who are not used to high-performance, mainstream sport, it is important that coaches understand that sport is a socially-constructed practice (Forsyth & Paraschak, 2013), as discussed earlier in the case of mainstream versus Indigenous sport.

Along with encouraging an inclusive tone in the team setting, sport staff can work to create inclusive spaces in the larger university setting as well, as Angela did when she created the Indigenous student lounge at her university. Angela's efforts in this regard illustrate that she is fully aware of how important the built environment is with respect to cultural inclusion/exclusion (see Van Ingen and Halas; 2006). Universities have historically been culturally exclusive places (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 2001), and racist attitudes are still prevalent today in these institutions (see Bailey, 2016), highlighting the need for more efforts such as those taken by Angela. It is important to note, however, that like Angela, the other coaches interviewed in this study (Wayne and John) were well-informed with respect to Indigenous cultures, and all shared a passion for creating inclusive environments. Unfortunately, these attributes are not shared by all coaches in the university sport system, so there may be a

significant learning and adjustment period for those who are seeking (or encouraged by athletic directors) to create sport environments that are more inclusive. There are educational resources available, such as MASRC's Aboriginal Coaching Modules (see MASRC, 2020), although currently the universities at which Angela, Wayne , and John coach(ed) do not make these modules mandatory. As John said, by failing to require coaches to become educated with respect to coaching Indigenous athletes, sport programs send the message that such education is not important (i.e., that coaches will not likely be coaching Indigenous athletes on their teams).

With respect to the academic opportunities discussed in the Organizational results, band funding was helpful to some of the participants in the current research when it came to educational expenses. It is not uncommon for non-Indigenous people to criticize this measure, ignorantly claiming that all First Nations students get their tuition paid for. In reality, band funding is limited because the demand outweighs the availability (Monkman, 2016). In addition, as Jordan mentioned, students must maintain certain grades while in university to receive funds. As research has demonstrated, there are many barriers to university attendance confronting Indigenous students (see Bailey, 2016; see also Preston, 2008), and these barriers do not make attaining high grades any easier.

Luckily, many universities have on-campus supports for Indigenous students, and Indigenous student centers are instrumental in providing guidance in this regard. It was evident in the current research that athlete participants made use of such services at their respective universities. The on-campus day-care at Heather's university was particularly helpful for her, which supports previous research regarding this type of facility on campus (Preston, 2008). In addition, although Wayne made an important point in that academic struggles are common across racial backgrounds (which resonates with Angela's point in the section *Unconstructive Thoughts Regarding Academic Challenges* under the Intrapersonal leverage point), this insight should be recognized in such a way that does not distract from the reduced educational outcomes in many reserve communities that are the result of funding disparities between most federally funded (i.e., on-reserve) and provincially funded (i.e., off-reserve) schools (see Halas et al., 2013). Hence, programs specific to Indigenous students play important roles in addressing challenges imposed by unequal distribution of funds.

Results – Community

Facilitators

1. Previous Exposure to Aspects of the Anticipated Environment. Previous exposure to aspects of the anticipated environment (e.g., high-performance, mainstream sport away from home; university coaches) was helpful to athlete participants in the current research. This exposure occurred through three main avenues: *Relocating or Travelling to Other Communities, Connections Between Universities and High Schools,* and *Helpful Connections Made Through Clubs and Teams.*

a. Relocating or Travelling to Other Communities. All athlete participants in this research had experience competing in communities outside their hometown prior to university. Will, Matt, and Jordan all relocated from home to pursue hockey before committing to their university teams. Brooke went to school in a nearby city from grade 1 through grade 12 to pursue academic and sport opportunities not offered in her hometown. This decision was also inspired by her mom, who worked in the town Brooke moved to. Sara joined a volleyball club in a city and would commute from her hometown to the city regularly. Heather would travel a lot for competitions, including outside Manitoba, and Jennifer, who was from the same city in which she went to university, also had experience travelling away for competitions.

b. Connections Between Universities and High Schools. One athlete, Sara, mentioned that some universities would send representatives to her high school for outreach, although her current university was not one of them. Speaking hypothetically, Wayne noted that any outreach activities in which he would be involved would be more about community development and merely awareness regarding university and university sport as opposed to recruiting athletes, although the latter could be a more long-term outcome. It should be noted, however, that as a university men's hockey coach, Wayne recruits athletes from very competitive hockey leagues (e.g., the MJHL) for his team.

c. Helpful Connections Made Through Clubs and Teams. John discussed the importance of people who know how to get athletes recruited to university teams. In many cases, such people can be found through lower-level clubs and teams. Heather, for instance, had this to say:

> So my mom, like even um, my mom knows a lot of the swim coaches everywhere because she's the one who would bring me to [swimming championship] because like [swimming championship] is provincials and I would be the only one like qualifying for [swimming championship]. So you just kind of get to know, she would get, well even me, I know all the swim coaches if I were to go to a swim meet, is it's like a very small

> community. Everybody knows everybody. But yeah. Even she, she knew a lot of people. (Heather)

Similarly, Jennifer, who was also a swimmer, explained how the progression from club swimming to university swimming was normal among her peers. In Sara's case, her volleyball club was actually coached by her current university coach.

2. Community (Home or Away) Support. The main facilitators participants discussed with respect to Community Support included *Supportive, Welcoming People; Fan Base at Home or in the City;* and *Role Models.*

a. Supportive, Welcoming People. Having a community of supportive, welcoming people was very important to athlete participants. Participants discussed the contributions of their teammates in creating positive and hardworking team cultures, the direction they provided with respect to on-campus supports, and the interest they demonstrated in learning each other's backgrounds. Athlete participants also spoke positively about having other Indigenous athletes on their teams and in their classes. For example, Matt said:

> [I]t was always so easy because like [. . .] when I played with [rural town] and then when I moved to [urban town] I had um, like I had my Indigenous friends who like I kinda like it brought me comfort to like to have them and to be on the team with them and they were like more like my crowd kinda. (Matt)

Similarly, Will had this to say:

> [B]ut obviously it's nice having someone that, you know, is from a First Nation background and all of those struggles that- that you've both gone through to get where you are today, and all the sacrifices that your family and you had to make for yourself. So, you kinda feel a sense of accomplishment for each other. (Will)

In the context of a pre-university team he had coached, John explained that practices can be deliberately structured to promote team cohesion. John learned this lesson when he started holding practices for his volleyball team on weekends to help athletes maintain and build upon skills learned during the week. These weekend practices facilitated hangouts after training hours:

> Then quickly I learned that my teams were starting to hang out together so, you know, all of a sudden girls in grade nine or eight would have a four o'clock practice then they'd all get together and watch a movie and have a sleepover at somebody's house from the team. [. . .] So we've created an entire team culture, right? [. . . .] And once they, once they bought into that, well that's when they became phenomenal. Like because they were just this whole culture, right? This whole belief, they had created their whole community in.

> It was that whole mentality of, you know, if, if I'm the best I can be and you're the best you can be, how great are we making our community? Well, now our community is great, right? (John)

Although in John's example the athletes created team cohesion without being directly prompted by their coach to do so, John emphasized that coaches can play more direct roles in creating positive team cultures:

> And depending on who your coach is, your fourth- and fifth-year players are mimicking that, the messages and the treatment they've received, that's what's being handed down. [. . . .] If the leader of the community is, is an ass, well, odds are there's a group behind that leader that are asses as well and that's, that's got a big trickledown effect. (John)

Lastly, many participants mentioned the important roles on-campus Indigenous student centers can play in not only providing academic support, but also general support and feelings of community. For example, Jordan had this to say about the Indigenous student center on his campus:

> They make everything just feel like you're at home. They're like one big family and they just ask you how you're doing and the people that work there are just loving and caring people. And that's exactly what we need to transition from a small, small town to the big city. (Jordan)

b. Fan Base at Home or in the City. Angela contended that a desire to make one's community and family proud is a motivator for many First Nations athletes. In addition, Will emphasized the importance of a good fan base and getting to play home games, and Matt explained that the prospect of being able to give back to his community after completing his degree motivated him in school. Lastly, Jordan discussed how he uses pressure from community members as motivation to do well, as the uncommonness of an athlete from their community playing university-level hockey is exciting for them:

> Being from a small town I feel like I have more pressure on me to, to do good and then I use that as motivation to help me work harder than anyone else [. . . .] Yeah, a lot of people back home look up to me and always asking me how I'm doing. I just feel like that, that's pressure right there and then I try to, I try to keep on top of things (Jordan)

c. Role Models. One participant, Will, explained that First Nations role models playing hockey professionally provide a lot of inspiration to young First Nations athletes, especially those from the same communities as their role models.

> [T]he ones that have made it out like the Brady Keepers of the world and the Mike Ferlands of the world. Those guys are- are huge role models for young guys in the community, and uh, for young guys living on- on reserve in those communities, those are, those are guys that they can look up to. (Will)

3. Strengths in Communities. The community-related strengths participants discussed related to *Sport Opportunities, Sport Direction,* and *Academic Direction.*

a. Sport Opportunities. Depending on the community and the sport, opportunities for sport participation in Manitoba can be plentiful. Angela explained that through the presence of teams and clubs, competitive volleyball can be played all year. Matt explained that he had plenty of opportunities to travel for competition when he was playing sport back home, and his team did well. Jordan explained that hockey is very popular in his hometown, and the team in the community he moved to prior to university travelled a lot for competition. Finally, Wayne explained that two MJHL teams in Manitoba are located on reserves, making it possible for some First Nations players in that league to play home games that are truly at home.

b. Sport Direction. Two participants spoke about sport direction. Jordan mentioned that there are people in his community willing to assist with sport programs, including volunteers who have taken coaching requirements. Similarly, Heather explained that there are knowledgeable swim coaches in her home community.

c. Academic Direction. Some light praise was offered by two participants for the academic direction they received in their home communities. Sara mentioned the contributions of her English teacher to her academic development, and that a coach of hers helped her with her university application. Overall, though, Sara was not impressed with the direction she received prior to university. Jordan mentioned that the school in his hometown hires teachers from all over the country and that the academics there are adequate. On the other hand, he also mentioned that the school in the community he moved to prior to university does a better job at preparing students for university than the school in his hometown does.

Challenges

1. Acculturation. Aspects of acculturation discussed by participants included *Being Away from Home, Adjusting to Your New Community,* and *Adjusting to Your Circle of Teammates.*

a. Being Away from Home. Many participants discussed the transition to university as being lonely at first. Participants explained that it is hard moving away from family and friends. For athletes especially, there are limited opportunities to go home due to sport commitments. Some participants discussed feelings of homesickness, and Sara said she limits phone calls home because they can initiate these feelings within her.

b. Adjusting to Your New Community. There were many aspects participants mentioned having to adjust to when they moved to the city for university. Jordan and Sara both mentioned how the city is much noisier than their hometowns. Jordan said:

> Well, I'm still adjusting to it. It's still annoying, especially around three [o'clock] and five [o'clock] traffic is crazy. [. . . .] back home you just rip it around and get- get to A to B quick. [. . . .] Yeah, yep. The sirens freak'n uh, whipping by and yep. It's pretty much my alarm clock now. (Jordan)

Jordan added to this discussion by explaining the distractions in the city can make it hard to focus on hockey. In addition, he mentioned that when he first moved away from home for hockey (to a larger center, but not an urban area as defined in this research), adjusting to the many different cultures in his new town took some time. Angela also commented on the challenge First Nations athletes from reserve communities might have adjusting to multi-cultural settings, saying "I mean I think that's one of the hugest flaws of the reserve system is that you grow up in a uni-cultural environment, so anyone different from you is, doesn't feel like home, you know?" (Angela). Adding more context to Angela's statement, a few participants mentioned a lack of Indigenous teammates, or a lack of Indigenous representation on their university campuses. John understood this challenge, and added that, in his experience, historically there has been limited attention to helping Indigenous university athletes adjust.

> Just general, overall wellbeing, mental health. Everything from how are you surviving as a human being mental health-wise, physically, to how are you surviving as an athlete? You know, and those, those are two different strings to approach but they, they were all challenges that weren't identified and the needs were not being met. (John)

c. Adjusting to Your Circle of Teammates. There were several challenges participants overcame when adjusting to their university teams. Brooke said that, at first, it was intimidating playing alongside highly skilled athletes who had vast club volleyball experiences and were in their third or fourth year of university volleyball. For Heather, who returned to her university team after a seven-year absence, the sense of community she felt upon returning was different

than it had been previously, as she was now older than many of the other athletes and, with a daughter to care for, had different priorities than many of the other athletes on her team. Sara, who was around the same age as her teammates, mentioned that it took her a while to become close with them, and Angela, who had coached many First Nations athletes at different levels of volleyball, questioned the extent to which some Indigenous athletes may (or may not) feel free to be themselves while in largely non-Indigenous settings:

> I guess like, so I've seen my Indigenous athletes in Indigenous and non-Indigenous contexts, and like, they mesh as far as like a team needs to mesh, but they're not, I don't think that they're ever fully- fully like themselves. [. . . .] They, uh, like you know, they get along, and they laugh, and tell jokes, and are nice to each other and whatever, but it's just like ... I mean, I'm sure we all experience this to a certain degree, but just where you're like your most authentic version of yourself like in a, in a certain context and not in others. So I think that there's just always that little bit missing I guess. (Angela)

Responding to the perceptions of others may be another challenge for athletes when adjusting to a new team setting. John discussed how choices made by athletes from other cultures may be seen by some teammates as resistance to being part of the team, yet may actually be due to other reasons, such as triggers due to past harms (see John's discussion under *Cultural Unawareness* in the Interpersonal section). Jordan commented on this topic as well, saying that when he must miss a practice for other obligations, he is concerned that his teammates may misinterpret this as him not wanting to be a part of the group.

Lastly, John discussed activities on teams that may drive athletes away, such as hazing and rookie nights, and coaches turning a blind eye toward these events. He emphasized that damaging team hierarchies are often instigated by athletes that are suffering with personal issues. John explained that although what is considered socially acceptable on teams seems to be evolving for the better, yet in many cases, there is still room for improvement:

> I would say I seen a slight shift in that, um, through the '90s I saw very... you know, rookie initiation mindset, right? And even down to the slightest degree, like, [. . .] it may not have been hazing but in the term that we think of it being abusive, but it would be you know, "A rookie should carry our bags." [. . . .] Stuff like that. Well, you know, "No, rookies can't do this." Or, you know, the, the fear of a rookie night weighs, weighs heavily on young athletes, right? So I would say it was... uh, fifty-fifty would be generous but, you know, those really top of the line athletes that got it in their fourth and fifth year would look out for rookies and understand that we make a team better by empowering rookies- [. . . .] and that there is no- nothing good that ever came out of marginalizing anybody. And it was often those individuals that didn't get that, they were some way suffering themselves, dealing with their own issues, they're the ones that wanted to

> instigate a kind of rookies are a this low on the, on the status, you know? And, and then back in the day, you know, coaches kind of turned a blind eye, blind eye to it. And I think I still see that today, I see coaches minimalizing the rookie status of it but they're still a stepping stone, right? Like you've got to earn your stripes kind of thing. [. . . .] Um, and, and a lot of coaches still want their veterans to do that, they don't know the best way to go about it I would say, but I would, I would say that, like in the out, up, like right in your face in the in your face world, it's very low. There's no rookie-ing, no, there's no initiation piece to it, but there really is a cultural initiation to every group you enter into, right? So I would say that your fourth and fifth year veterans, depending on how the coach has set up the program, they're either helping or hurting that program 'cause they're on their way out, right? [. . . .] So, I, I think in that fifty-fifty world, that's what happens is those that are on their way out, they kind of feel they're supposed to be doing this and, and kids deserve this and then the ones that want to see a program growth and feel they've been really nurtured and empowered by a coach, they, they try, and instigate that. [. . . .] So, yeah. I, I would say it, you know, and I, because I've been involved in a number of sports at our elite and high-performance level, I wouldn't call it sport by sport, I would call it program by program. As in what, what is the coach doing? What are the coach's beliefs, right? [. . . .] Because the coach drives that bus, really. (John)

2. Challenges in Communities. Similar to in the Facilitators section, community-related challenges discussed in the current research included *Limited Sport Opportunities, Limited Sport Direction,* and *Limited Academic Direction and Support.*

a. Limited Sport Opportunities. Two participants mentioned that training while back home can be challenging due to reduced accountability (i.e., being away from your team and coach). Matt added that, lately, it seems like fewer people in his home community want to go to the rink. Other concerns related to a lack of people working to provide equipment and opportunities to athletes freely in rural and remote communities (i.e., they often want to be compensated for their time and efforts), and a lack of sports clubs in communities. Brooke explained that a lack of sport clubs in communities means that players from rural and remote areas may receive less playing time in championships such as NAIG due to less experience in their sport than their urban teammates. Further concerns included limited exposure in terms of sport variety, lack of competition, limited facility access, lack of equipment, and lack of advertising about sport competitions. Heather mentioned that the swimming pool in her community closed down recently for safety reasons, meaning that local swimmers either had to drive to another community (nearly four hours away), or relocate entirely. Angela explained that areas close to urban centers have a significant advantage in terms of sport opportunity: "the closer you grow up to an urban center, [. . .] the more likely you are to have had elite coaching,

or to have like year-round programming, or to have access to like weight training, or physiotherapy" (Angela).

With respect to the lack of people willing to provide opportunities for athletes, Matt explained that this was not a problem in his home community in the past, but more recently it seems as though a lot of people are preoccupied in dealing with their own traumas:

> Yeah, so like [. . .] the big thing is like drugs in, in rural communities like [rural home reserve] and like there's a lot of trauma that people, like who use drugs and alcohol as a coping mechanism I guess. (Matt)

b. Limited Sport Direction. Concerns participants discussed relating to sport direction in rural and remote communities included a lack of knowledgeable coaching staff, lack of awareness in First Nations communities regarding how to get athletes recruited to university teams, lack of volunteers, lack of support to help athletes reach high levels in their chosen sports, few role models in First Nations communities in terms of healthy nutrition and physical activity, lack of awareness about how to get connected with sport organizations like MASRC, and lack of access to programs that get athletes exposure to university teams (i.e., the entire onus is placed solely on the athlete and their family), especially in communities with limited or no internet access.

c. Limited Academic Direction and Support. With respect to academic direction and support, Jennifer explained that there is a lack of experienced teachers in some northern communities, and often the quality of education in these communities is not on par with that which is realized in cities, with students often being pushed through the system in the former regions. Moreover, Jennifer explained it can be hard to recruit teachers up north, and any teachers that do teach in First Nations communities need to be educated about First Nations history. Jennifer explained that colonial tensions can compromise relationships between First Nations community members and non-Indigenous teachers. Moreover, as Jennifer highlighted in the Intrapersonal section (under *Intergenerational Trauma*), many First Nations students must deal with the effects of intergenerational trauma, so Jennifer emphasized that although strategies to promote academic success among First Nations students at the university level are beneficial, more focus must be placed on alleviating challenges within communities, and at early (i.e., pre-university) ages.

Sara's experiences illustrate what Jennifer mentioned with respect to educational quality in some northern communities. Sara expressed frustration with her school for not preparing her well for university. She commented on the fast pace of high school, saying new topics would be introduced before students had much time to absorb previous topics. Similarly, Matt said there is much to be desired regarding educational quality in his hometown, including a lack of quality teachers. He mentioned that whereas education in his community used to be overseen by a provincial school division, it is now overseen by the local band, and it seems that this change has had a negative impact in terms of the quality of teaching staff hired. In addition, Matt mentioned that when he was a student in his hometown, there was a lack of awareness in his school regarding the expectations of university, which resulted in a significant adjustment period when he arrived on campus. In Matt's words:

> Like I didn't know anything about university until I actually got to university. No one like, like uh, like for, for kids going from rural communities in Manitoba it's like a huge change. (Matt)

Discussion – Community

The results under the Community leverage point illustrate the importance of exposure to different communities prior to university, the roles of pre-university teams and clubs in making connections with coaches, and the significance of support systems (teammates, community members) to athletes' success. It is evident there is room for more university outreach by universities, as relationships between universities and high schools could be strengthened. As for the connections between lower-level clubs/teams and university teams, these vary from one sport to another. Sara's case represents a strong connection since her university coach was also her club coach. For hockey athletes, however, who are recruited from leagues that are not connected to university sport systems, relationships with university coaches may not be strong until athletes start their university hockey careers.

Regarding supportive team climates, John's story of holding practices on weekends is one example of how coaches can strategically facilitate team cohesion. In addition, what John said about coaches setting the culture, or atmosphere, on teams resonates with what Wayne said in the Organizational section (under *University Recruiting and Hiring Priorities*). As mentioned in the discussion following that section, coaches can set a positive tone by engaging in a shared acculturation approach (Schinke, McGannon, et al., 2013), and they can work to make this

approach the norm on their teams. In addition, the results of the current research related to perceptions of teammates resonate with what Schinke, Peltier, and Yungblut (2013) wrote with respect to Indigenous athletes pursuing sport in mainstream contexts. These researchers said that attempts made by Indigenous athletes at cultural fidelity are often misinterpreted by coaches and teammates as defiance, and when this happens over the course of a season it can lead Indigenous athletes to withdrawing from their teams. All that it would take to alleviate this issue, though, is understanding on the part of coaches and teammates. As discussed in the Organizational section, Schinke, McGannon, et al. (2013) expressed the need for coaches to learn about the backgrounds of athletes, and to take this information into account when coaching. As John said (in *Cultural Unawareness* under the Interpersonal section), "I can't coach you how I really want to coach you, I need to coach you how you're going to learn. And to coach how you're going to learn I need to know a little bit about you, right?" (John).

Angela's concern regarding the possible suppression of authenticity among First Nations athletes on her team warrants consideration. Thomaes et al. (2017) found a connection between authenticity and subjective wellbeing in adolescents. Their research suggested that authenticity acts as a mediator between the three psychological needs of human beings (relatedness, competence, and autonomy) and wellbeing. Although they found only a covariance between authenticity and the fulfilment of the needs of relatedness and competence (which they mentioned warrants more research), they discovered a causal relationship between authenticity and the fulfilment of the need for autonomy. With those findings in mind, coaches should prioritize the creation of environments that are conducive to fulfilling the basic psychological needs.

Along with issues related to relationships, team cohesion, and authenticity, the current research highlights that many of the barriers related to sport participation for Indigenous athletes that were discussed by Canadian Heritage (2005) fifteen years ago are still present today for rural and remote First Nations athletes specifically. For example, some of the results included under the Community leverage point were challenges related to cultural insensitivity (i.e., what John said about positive team environments), coaching capacity, geographic distance from reserves to areas with sport resources (i.e., what Angela said about communities located close to urban areas), and sport infrastructure. Economic circumstances and racism were other barriers mentioned by Canadian Heritage (2005). Economic circumstances were discussed under the

Interpersonal leverage point (see Brook's scholarship experience in *Meaningful Outreach*) and Organizational leverage point (see *Band Funding for Post-secondary*). Racism was discussed under the Interpersonal leverage point (see *Racism from Others*).

Similarly, many of the challenges related to academic direction and support in rural and remote communities, as discussed in the current research, have been discussed previously in the context of rural/remote Indigenous communities specifically by Preston (2008). In the current research, Jennifer stressed that more focus must be directed to addressing concerns in communities, and while children are still young. This suggestion resonates with Abel's concerns in Part A of the current research project (see *Limited Academic Direction and Support* under the Community leverage point of Chapter 5). As Abel said, in many ways rural and remote First Nations students are set up for failure from the start due to the existing educational challenges in reserve communities, many of which relate back to funding disparities between most federally funded (i.e., on-reserve) and provincially funded (i.e., off-reserve) schools (see Halas et al., 2013). A change in funding situations may at least partially explain Matt's observations regarding the quality of teaching staff at the school in his hometown now, under band management, versus years ago, when education there was overseen by a provincial school division. As well, Matt's concern may be related to organizational tenure, meaning the length of time an organization has overseen education in an area, with more tenure meaning more time to improve upon weaknesses. Lack of tenure was discussed in Chapter 7 as a barrier to sport delivery among organizations. Perhaps the same could be said for the delivery of education.

Results – Policy/Systems/Environments

Facilitators

None.

Challenges

1. Insufficient Funding Going to Reserves. One athlete in the current research, Brooke, mentioned that scholarship opportunities greatly affected her post-secondary plans. As mentioned, Brooke's coach was instrumental in finding her support for university. Since some First Nations students receive band funding for post-secondary, the need for Brooke to look beyond her band is an indication that funds going to reserve communities are not adequately covering post-secondary costs for students.

Discussion – Policy/Systems/Environments

It is a common misconception that all First Nations students receive free education. As Brooke's situation illustrates, and as has been discussed elsewhere (see Monkman, 2016), this is simply not the case. Brooke's post-secondary pathway was largely influenced by scholarship opportunities. Although there were aspects of her university that Brooke greatly appreciated (her coach, for instance), Brooke had also expressed interest in going elsewhere later because her current university offered few courses related to Indigenous cultures, suggesting that limited funding meant Brooke had to compromise in at least one area of her university experience.

It should be noted that although there was only one theme under the Policy/Systems/Environments section, many of the challenges categorized under other levels can be traced to this one. For instance, both Angela and John discussed institutional racism within sport organizations. Both mentioned how universities do not require coaches to take courses related to coaching Indigenous athletes, which John said sends the message that university coaches likely will not coach Indigenous athletes (see *Adjusting to University Sport [High-performance, Mainstream]* under the Organizational leverage point). Angela commented also on the lack of representation from post-secondary sport organizations at NAIG, saying there are many talented athletes at NAIG that could contribute well to post-secondary teams (see *Lack of Meaningful Outreach from University Sports Staff* under the Interpersonal leverage point). Although these issues are examples of institutional racism, it is evident they are a product of systemic racism in society in general, where the realities of Indigenous peoples are simply not prioritized, and oppression of Indigenous cultures is the norm.

Results – Mother Earth

Facilitators

None.

Challenges

1. Challenges with the Weather. Heather, who was from a northern community, mentioned that weather plays a role in limiting sport opportunities. She had explained that the pool in her home community was recently closed down for safety reasons, meaning athletes had nowhere in the community to train during the winter months. In Heather's area, lakes often do not become ice-free until mid- to late May, and they can take many weeks to warm. In addition, autumn sets in early in northern Manitoba, making for a very short summer and necessitating an indoor pool in which swimmers can train for most of the year.

2. Being Away from Nature. Sara explained that one aspect she misses while in the city for university is the natural environment in the vicinity of her home community. She was used to being around nature and could go for a walk through the forest whenever she wanted. Now, however, she no longer has access to this kind of nature, which adds to the challenge of adjusting to the urban environment.

Discussion – Mother Earth

All the athletes in the current research were involved in sports typically played inside during harsher months of the year (hockey, volleyball, swimming), which could be one reason why there was limited discussion related to Mother Earth outside Heather and Sara's concerns. Pending facility access (which, as emphasized by the Community results, can often be very limited in rural and remote communities), hockey, volleyball, and swim athletes can still engage in high quality training all year. For athletes of other sports, however, such as long distance running (see part 1 of Chapter 4, *Opportunity*; see also Kosmenko, 2019), weather may play a more important role. Further, Sara's concern about being isolated from nature while living in the city is important and was likely shared by other athletes. Refer to the Limitations section for further elaboration on what factors may have contributed to the lack of content under the Mother Earth leverage point.

Results – All of Creation (Known and Unknown)

Facilitators

None.

Challenges

None.

Discussion – All of Creation (Known and Unknown)

Refer to the Limitations section for a discussion regarding the lack of content under the All of Creation (Known and Unknown) leverage point.

Recommendations

Smith (1999) emphasized that, historically, Indigenous peoples have not only been told what their challenges are, but also how to overcome those challenges. Along with being insulting, ignoring the solutions of Indigenous research participants is to ignore perhaps the most culturally appropriate strategies for improvements. For this reason, the recommendations of participants are prioritized here. These recommendations have been categorized under three

sections: *For Athletes; For Staff and Program/Community Leaders;* and *Where the Funding Goes.*

1. For Athletes

a. Personal Attributes. Participants discussed several personal attributes that are helpful for rural and remote First Nations athletes pursuing university sport to possess. These attributes have been categorized under three headings: *Mental and Emotional, Living Like an Athlete*, and *Academics.*

i. Mental and Emotional. Mental and emotional attributes discussed by participants included independence and initiative in seeking out opportunities, knowing you are not limited to your community, and keeping a positive attitude. Further attributes included persisting despite racism and not letting it stop you from being a role model for other Indigenous people, being open minded about opportunities that arise and taking things as they come (i.e., living in the moment), and thinking critically about the advice you receive from others. In addition, participants discussed finding ways to motivate yourself to succeed, and remembering that challenges, such as university, are part of life. With respect to taking initiative and persisting through racism, Brooke had this to say:

> Well I would say like, if you really want to, you also have to get out there, like put yourself forward. Like if you do have to be independent and go on doing that stuff by yourself, like how I did, that helps a lot. And [. . .] sometimes there may be like racism in like sport, which there shouldn't be, but there sometimes is, like just to ignore it. Like don't let it stop you [. . . .] you're being a role model for like other Indigenous people, like being at that level, like for other youth in the community. So you shouldn't like let that get you down. (Brooke)

With respect to staying positive and living in the moment, Matt said:

> Like being in school, going to class, like being part of a team [. . .] it's a very good experience and, and like you also gotta think too, like not everybody has an opportunity to experience that so, like just kinda like live in the moment. (Matt)

ii. Living Like an Athlete. Angela explained that being an athlete is a 24/7 job, meaning that practice is only one aspect. In Angela's words:

> I would say to like maintain and prioritize your fitness and health. I- I find that like a lot of the athletes that I find have like so much potential and stuff, it's like I only get to spend so much time with them because I'm not living where they are, and when I'm there, they're like focused and you know, working hard, and then when I leave, you know, they're, they have like terrible eating habits, or like are pretty sedentary, aren't just

> like staying active every day, you know? And, that's totally their choice, but while they're doing that, there are athletes other places that are like getting ahead every day by eating vegetables and like going for jogs and lifting weights, you know? So, two people can have like the same amount of huge potential when they're twelve, but then you know, six years later by eighteen, the person that was active every day and ate healthy every day is probably gonna have lived up to that potential a little more. (Angela)

iii. Academics. Two coaches, Angela and Wayne, stressed the need for athletes to prioritize academics, maintaining good grades while balancing their sport obligations. This is important because university athletes need a minimum grade point average to be eligible to compete.

b. Understanding What's Required, Doing What it Takes to Get There. Three main topics related to understanding what's required and doing what it takes to get there included: *Understanding the Caliber of University Sport, Willing to Leave Your Community,* and *Willing to Put in the Work.*

i. Understanding the Caliber of University Sport. Jennifer and Wayne both stressed that university sport is hard work, so athletes must show up to university prepared. Recall that Jennifer had competed in club swimming within the city prior to university, so she had a thorough introduction to higher-level sport prior to competing at the university level. Wayne, who coached men's hockey, emphasized in the interview that he recruits from the MJHL or Western Hockey League, meaning it is very rare for men's hockey players to go straight from the high school level to the university level. As Wayne said:

> The second thing would be, from a hockey perspective is that, to get an awareness or familiarity with the caliber of hockey that's played at the university level, I think a lot of um... um, students, again, regardless of being from urban or rural backgrounds um, don't really understand how good the caliber is here and they think it's just a continuation of high school and uh, level but as we know it's... it's a tremendous uh... um, jump from... from high school competition up to the university level, it's not one or two levels, it's... it's several steps higher, so that they have to have an understanding of... of how good the sport is at the university level so that better prepares them to, to train and... and, and be able to try out to compete at this level. (Wayne)

Wayne also emphasized that in the very rare case an athlete is sufficiently talented to go directly from high school hockey to university hockey, it would only seem reasonable that that athlete would be prioritizing a career in the National Hockey League, so would likely opt to stay in a junior league until that time.

ii. Willing to Leave Your Community. Brooke, who was from a northern, rural reserve, spoke of how athletes should go after sport opportunities outside their communities if they think they have the athletic skills to do so. Brooke emphasized that it is better to give sport elsewhere a try now as opposed to passing it by and potentially regretting it later:

> If you think you're like good enough to like, to leave your reserve, then you should reach out to try to play at like a higher level than just in your community, I think. Because you, you don't want to be stuck there like thinking, like, "Oh, I could've [. . .] done that back then." Like you should reach out and do it before you're like that. (Brooke)

Similarly, and in the context of what he had said in the previous section regarding the level of hockey played at university, Wayne also recommended athletes seek sport opportunities outside their communities. He emphasized that this is very often required of athletes due to the caliber of hockey played at university.

iii. Willing to Put in the Work. Matt provided a caution to prospective university athletes, saying that university sport is very challenging. Yet he also mentioned that, for him, it was one of the best experiences he has had, making it all worthwhile. Wayne echoed Matt's sentiments regarding the commitment required of university athletes, saying that hockey athletes must train year-round, including off-ice training, and make many sacrifices along the way.

c. Exposure. One participant, John, discussed two aspects of exposure related to reaching the university level of sport participation: *Seek out Opportunities for Exposure,* and *Organizations Providing More Opportunities for Exposure.*

i. Seek out Opportunities for Exposure. John spoke about the need for athletes to reach out to sport programs themselves, although he recognized that this is not always easy to do in remote communities:

> I would say you need to be connected in some way to a program or a university that would get them exposure. [. . . .] So that's where the outreach piece is massive, right? [. . . .] Like how is that coach supposed to see you? [. . .] And a lot of coaches are just too busy to do that, right? [. . . .] So like to tell athletes they need to reach out, they need to find that exposure, that's a big key to it. But how do you tell somebody in a very remote community that? 'Cause there's no accessibility for them, right? [. . . .] Like some communities don't have, you know, I've been in communities where they don't have internet. People have a hard time believing that, right? [. . . .] (John)

ii. Organizations Providing More Opportunities for Exposure. Continuing from his discussion about athletes seeking out opportunities for exposure, John added that, ideally, all of the onus should not be being placed on them:

> But, you know, that's a lot of onus on them, right? The onus should be on Manitoba Sports Society, like what are we doing, the Manitoba Sports Federation, like what are we doing to allow athletes that window of opportunity? (John)

2. For Staff and Program/Community Leaders

a. Relationships, Outreach. Several suggestions were presented by participants regarding relationships and outreach, including connecting First Nations athletes to Indigenous student services on campus; consistent outreach by sport organizations, preferably using the same staff and making sure staff are educated about First Nations history and cultures; and more long-term outreach by university staff to First Nations communities to provide connections and raise awareness about what being a university student entails and the opportunities available at university. Wayne, in particular, emphasized that although outreach may help with future recruitment to university sport programs, the primary focus of such activities should be community development (i.e., help develop sport programs in communities), to introduce people to, and raise awareness of, university and university sport, and to inspire goals. Lastly, Jennifer mentioned that university outreach activities should be conducted by individuals educated about First Nations history and cultures and should involve Indigenous cultural presence in order to resonate with athletes.

b. Ongoing Education. Two categories of recommendations participants shared regarding ongoing education included: *Identify Who the Onus is on,* and *Cultural Awareness.*

i. Identify Who the Onus is on. John emphasized the need to know who the onus is on with respect to recruitment. He questioned the commitment of sport organizations, including universities, in this process.

ii. Cultural Awareness. Jordan conveyed the need for everyone to be treated with respect, and it is evident cultural awareness is needed at various levels in order for this to happen. Matt's experience with a university professor (see *Cultural Unawareness* under the Interpersonal leverage point) illustrates the need to educate university faculty about Indigenous histories and cultures. Wayne explained that all sport staff need to be educated with respect to cultural awareness and that this education needs to be sustainable.

c. In Communities. Three recommendation topics discussed by participants related to what can be done in rural and remote communities included: *Stepping Up, More Sport Opportunities and Direction,* and *Greater Academic Direction.*

i. Stepping Up. Matt stressed that recruitment and retention of rural and remote First Nations athletes is a collective process and there is a need for people at different levels to step up to provide opportunities (communities, high schools, and universities).

ii. More Sport Opportunities and Direction. Jordan noted that more sport resources are needed in First Nations communities. For example, he explained more focus should be placed on helping athletes in rural and remote communities get to higher levels in hockey, and that hockey camps in communities would help with this.

iii. Greater Academic Direction. From her own experiences, Sara understood the importance of proper preparation at the high school level to ease the transition to university academics. Although she acknowledged that students have a responsibility to take academics seriously, she also highlighted that teachers in First Nations communities must make sure they are teaching the appropriate content so that students do not feel they are too far behind when they arrive at university.

3. Where the Funding Goes

a. Funding Going to Communities First. Jennifer worked for some time at a university as a student advisor after her university sport career. She commented on how the university would receive donations from people looking to contribute financially to the education of Indigenous students. Although she appreciated the generosity and concern, Jennifer realized that a lot of the challenges Indigenous students face occur much prior to the post-secondary level of education:

> I think they should change their focus on, you know, earlier years like middle school or high school and putting the money towards something in Indigenous communities as opposed to putting it towards the university section because, um, I think what needs to be fixed first and the connections that need to happen first have to happen earlier in the years, before, before the student even hits university. (Jennifer)

Limitations

Two main limitations were encountered in the current research, both in this study as well as in Part A (Chapter 5). First, a dearth of information was conveyed under the Mother Earth and All of Creation (Known and Unknown) leverage points. These two leverage points make

Lavallée and Lévesque's (2013) IIEM more culturally relevant to Indigenous participants than Bronfenbrenner's (1977, 1979) model, yet due to the historic marginalization of Indigenous cultures throughout Canada's colonial history, including within research academies, it is possible participants assumed their cultural understandings would not be considered valid in the current research. The interview guide used in this research consisted of questions that were very general, allowing participant to speak of issues of most importance to them. It is recommended that researchers in the future, however, strive for a better balance of asking questions specific to the leverage points while still encouraging participants to speak to their concerns. Importantly, it would have been beneficial to this research if the lead researcher had spent more time building rapport with participants to overcome the barriers imposed by his status as a non-Indigenous scholar from a Western research academy. This research serves as a reminder that long-term approaches need to be taken when working with Indigenous participants. However, when one is a graduate student-athlete and, in addition, is relatively new to not only Indigenous research paradigms, but qualitative research in general, as was the case with this study's lead researcher, learning about and engaging in long-term approaches can be a significant challenge.[29]

The second limitation encountered in this research related to the thematic analysis method employed (i.e., Braun & Clarke, 2006). As Lavallée (2009) found in her work with Indigenous participants in a martial arts program, separating participants' interviews into codes in the current research served to tear apart participants' stories, which is inconsistent with Indigenous perspectives on interconnectedness. Specifically, as in Part A (Chapter 5), there was an instance in the current study in which a quote was used twice, as it contained important context necessary for both themes under which it occurred. This quote, by John, can be found in *Cultural Unawareness* under the Interpersonal section, as well as *Supportive, Welcoming People* under the Community section. In the former case, the quote is used to help set the context of a story used to convey the dangers of cultural unawareness on sports teams. In the latter case the quote is used as an example of how coaches can facilitate a sense of cohesion on their teams, and how a positive team culture can contribute to team success. In essence, although the coding process used was helpful in identifying patterns to discuss, it was not ideal. Lavallée (2009)

[29] For further elaboration, refer to *How Can Future Work Better Follow Wilson's (2001) Indigenous Research Paradigm?* in Chapter 1 of the lead researcher's PhD Thesis: Kosmenko, N. J. (2021). *Factors influencing university sport participation among rural and remote First Nations athletes in Manitoba* (Publication No. TBD) [Doctoral dissertation, University of Manitoba]. Faculty of Graduate Studies (Electronic Theses and Dissertations).

dealt with this issue in her work by writing "short stories that demonstrated the interconnection between the nine themes" (p. 34). She also created an image to tell the collective story captured in her research. A similar approach might have been helpful in the current research had there been fewer themes, as Lavallée's (2009) approach might have been complicated in the current research by the breadth of results captured, rendering the final product difficult to comprehend.

Conclusion

With the TRC's Call to Action #90(ii) in mind, which calls for "[a]n elite athlete development program for Aboriginal athletes" (TRC, 2015, p. 10), this research explored many of the factors (facilitators and challenges) facing rural and remote First Nations athletes pursuing university sport in Manitoba, including solutions for change. The information shared by participants in this research serves to both raise awareness (i.e., truth) and pave a way forward (i.e., reconciliation) for education and sport programs that exist along rural and remote First Nations athletes' academic and athletic developmental continuums. It is hoped that education and sport program leaders will take the knowledge and experiences shared here into account as they work toward facilitating the success of rural and remote First Nations student-athletes, helping prepare them for elite-level sport participation.

References (Chapter 6)

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Chapter 7: Exploring the Experiences of First Nations Canadian Sport Coaches[30]

Abstract

A lack of Indigenous coaches in Canada garnered federal attention in the past (Canadian Heritage, 2005), although to date there has been limited research concerning the factors impeding or supporting Indigenous coaches in their roles. With consideration of Forsyth and Paraschak's (2013) double helix model, an environmental scan of Canadian National Sport Organization (NSO) websites was used to determine the extent to which NSOs are contributing to the model's rungs in terms of ongoing programs exclusively for Indigenous coaches and/or Indigenous athletes. The environmental scan revealed few contributions by NSOs to the rungs of the double helix model. Next, following Wilson's (2001) Indigenous research paradigm and using a socioecological model based on the work of Bronfenbrenner (1977), the lead researcher engaged First Nations coaches in discussions regarding the facilitators and barriers experienced along their coaching paths. Some of the topics highlighted by participants included the importance of wholistic coaching approaches, coaches' ability to overcome racism and female under-representation in sport atmospheres, challenges with respect to support from schools in which some participants worked, appreciation for coaching clinics, and a desire for more clinics in communities. The results of this research can be used by sport organizations seeking to provide more developmental opportunities to First Nations coaches, and to inform First Nations individuals wishing to become coaches.

Keywords: First Nations coaches, sport

[30] This research was approved by the University of Manitoba Research Ethics Board, Protocol #E2019:024 (HS22766).

Exploring the Experiences of First Nations Canadian Sport Coaches

The federal government recognized that sport and physical activity are "integral parts of Canadian culture and society and produce benefits in terms of health, social cohesion, linguistic duality, economic activity, cultural diversity and quality of life" (*Physical Activity and Sport Act*, S.C. 2003, c. 2). This recognition comes with many commitments, including that which is outlined in section 4(2) of the *Physical Activity and Sport Act*:

> (2) The objectives of the Government of Canada's policy regarding sport are
> (a) to increase participation in the practice of sport and support the pursuit of excellence in sport; and
> (b) to build capacity in the Canadian sport system.

The federal government's commitment to improving sport situations for Indigenous participants specifically was highlighted by their commitment to addressing all 94 Calls to Action put forth by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC, 2015a; see Government of Canada, 2015). Five of the Calls to Action (#87-91) relate specifically to sport and highlight the need for education about Indigenous athletes throughout history, support for the development of Indigenous athletes and the North American Indigenous Games, inclusive sport practices, respect for Indigenous peoples' territorial protocols during sport events, and the engagement of Indigenous communities when planning such events (TRC, 2015a).

Indeed, the reduction of equity gaps in sport, whereby challenges imposed on Indigenous athletes by the mainstream system are addressed, is long overdue, as many of the barriers to Indigenous peoples' participation in sport, as identified by Canadian Heritage (2005) fifteen years ago, persist. These barriers include racism, financial concerns among Indigenous families due to lingering effects of colonization, lack of cultural relevance in sport programs, lack of Indigenous coaches and coaches who are sensitive to Indigenous cultures, lack of sport infrastructure in Indigenous communities, debate over government jurisdiction/responsibility regarding sport program delivery to Indigenous peoples, and large geographic distances between Indigenous communities and communities in which there are adequate facilities and people of expertise (Canadian Heritage, 2005). The current research focused specifically on Indigenous coaches and was aimed at informing strategies addressing Call to Action #89:

> We call upon the federal government to amend the Physical Activity and Sport Act to support reconciliation by ensuring that policies to promote physical activity as a fundamental element of health and well-being, reduce barriers to sports participation,

> increase the pursuit of excellence in sport, and build capacity in the Canadian sport system, are inclusive of Aboriginal peoples. (TRC, 2015a, p. 10)

Indigenous sport leaders play crucial roles in making sport programs inclusive (i.e., culturally relevant), as their lived experiences inform sport delivery methods that resonate with Indigenous participants. Culturally relevant sport for Indigenous children and youth has been defined by Kosmenko et al. (2019) as:

> [T]hose contemporary sports, games, and traditional physical cultural practices that are relevant to the local Indigenous communities. Culturally relevant sport is embedded in Indigenous ways of being and knowing and should exhibit an Indigenous understanding of wholistic well-being that focuses on the spiritual, social, mental, and physical aspects of one's being without exclusively focusing on one aspect over another. Culturally relevant sport is also connected to Indigenous communities in culture and language. In other words, it is community identified and culturally appropriate. (p. 46)

To date, there has been limited research concerning the factors supporting or obstructing Indigenous coaches in Canada. Some studies with relevant findings, though not focused on Indigenous coaches specifically, include research by Blodgett et al. (2008) and Sirant (2010). As well, Halas et al. (2013) discussed the funding disparities between provincially funded (i.e., off-reserve) and most[31] federally funded (i.e., on-reserve) schools and how this can pose challenges to Physical Education programs (e.g., quality of instruction, facility and equipment costs). In the Australian context, Bennie et al. (2019) used a socioecological framework to examine the facilitators (opportunities/supports) and barriers (reduced opportunity/obstructions) to Aboriginal sport coaches. Among the findings, Intrapersonal facilitators included a love for sport, resilience, desire among participants to give back to their communities, and desire to be role models. Intrapersonal barriers encompassed shyness, lack of confidence, and waning interest or enjoyment. Interpersonal facilitators included mentors, parents of athletes, and family. Conversely, family commitments were reported as an Interpersonal barrier to coaching due to the time constraints imposed. Organizational facilitators consisted of clubs, accreditation bodies,

[31] Funding received by First Nations schools affiliated with the Manitoba First Nations School System (MFNSS), which was recently established by the Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre (MFNERC; MFNSS, n.d.), is increased relative to funding received by First Nations schools not affiliated with the MFNSS (Malone, 2017). According to the MFNSS (n.d., para. 8): "Since starting operations in July 2017, MFNSS has made significant strides in developing an education system reflecting First Nations worldview, culture, and values. As of March 2019, eleven First Nations schools have signed on for an initial term, with several others expressing an interest in joining." Note there is currently a total of 59 First Nations-operated schools in Manitoba (MFNERC, 2018).

steps organizations take toward cultural inclusivity, and Aboriginal-specific teams/events, including culturally relevant coaching clinics. Organizational barriers reported were inflexibility of coaching accreditation courses, lack of funding for coach development, administrative challenges, and institutional racism. Sociocultural facilitators mentioned were a perceived decrease in racism in Australia over the years, coach socioeconomic background, and the significance of sport in Aboriginal communities. Lastly, the main Sociocultural barrier was negative stereotypes of Aboriginal peoples.

Considering the lack of research focusing specifically on the factors influencing Indigenous coaches' developmental paths in Canada, a study similar to that of Bennie et al.'s (2019), but in the Canadian context, is warranted to help inform strategies addressing Call to Action #89. It must be recognized, however, that the Canadian context is somewhat different from the Australian one. Canada has a national body to oversee Indigenous sport, the Aboriginal Sport Circle, along with many provincial and territorial bodies. Having specific organizations oversee Indigenous sport in Canada is important because the two sport systems in Canada, Indigenous and mainstream, are unique from each other. Forsyth and Paraschak (2013) noted that sport is a social construct, and that Indigenous and mainstream sport can be thought of as two separate entities, or two sides of a double helix. At various points along the double helix are rungs representing points at which one side may inform the other. For instance, programs delivered by mainstream sport organizations to Indigenous coaches and/or Indigenous athletes specifically can be thought of as rungs.

It is this set of rungs that is the focus of the first part of the current research, which involved an environmental scan of Canadian National Sport Organization (NSO) websites to determine the extent to which NSOs are contributing to the model's rungs in terms of ongoing programs exclusively for Indigenous coaches and/or Indigenous athletes. Second, following Wilson's (2001) Indigenous research paradigm and using a socioecological model based on the work of Bronfenbrenner (1977), Bennie et al.'s (2019) study was used as a guide in the current research, the latter of which addressed the questions: what are the factors (i.e., facilitators [opportunities/supports] and barriers [reduced opportunities/obstructions]) influencing the coaching paths of First Nations coaches in Canada as seen through the eyes of some First Nations coaches? What are some strategies for improvements? It is important to note that the second part of the current research focused specifically on First Nations (as opposed to more

generally on Indigenous) coaches because there is significant variability among First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples with respect to historic and present relationships with Canada.

Methods

The research team consisted of two non-Indigenous scholars,[32] so it was critical that its members remained conscious of Western research biases. The current research followed Wilson's (2001) Indigenous research paradigm (IRP) as a way to recognize Indigenous worldviews within the academy and prioritize an approach centred around relationships. Wilson (2001) explained that the IRP is comprised of four components: the ontology, which is what we believe is real; the epistemology, which refers to our thinking with respect to that reality; the methodology, which is how we go about collecting information about that reality; and the axiology, which is our morals and ethics. Further, Wilson (2001) emphasized that the IRP reflects Indigenous worldviews in all of its four components, thereby being fundamentally different than any Western paradigm. Unlike Western paradigms that view knowledge as something to be gained and owned by an individual, the ontology of Wilson's IRP recognizes "that knowledge is relational … is shared with all of creation" (p. 176). In his IRP's epistemology, "relationships are more important than reality" (p. 177). Wilson's IRP methodology, then, puts relational accountability first and foremost, meaning the researcher goes about doing research (i.e., methodology) in ways that work to fulfil the researcher's commitment to their many relationships (with participants, Mother Earth, the cosmos). Lastly, the IRP's axiology dictates that the research must be of benefit to Indigenous peoples.

Environmental Scan

The environmental scan, conducted February 10-17, 2020, involved perusing NSO websites using, where available, each website's search engine. The following keywords were applied: 1) Aboriginal coaching; 2) Indigenous coaching; 3) Aboriginal; 4) Indigenous. In instances where websites did not have a search engine, a manual scan of relevant website sections was conducted (e.g., events page, resources page). Mentions of ongoing programs delivered exclusively to Indigenous coaches and/or Indigenous athletes were recorded. It should

[32] Care must be taken by non-Indigenous researchers when working with Indigenous research participants so as not to engage in extractive research processes. For more information on the research approach followed in this study, see Chapter 1 of the lead researcher's PhD Thesis: Kosmenko, N. J. (2021). *Factors influencing university sport participation among rural and remote First Nations athletes in Manitoba* (Publication No. TBD) [Doctoral dissertation, University of Manitoba]. Faculty of Graduate Studies (Electronic Theses and Dissertations).

be noted that the environmental scan was limited to programs only, so search keywords appearing in news articles were ignored if these articles were not about ongoing programs delivered by the NSO. Similarly, mentions of Indigenous peoples in policy documents, as well as links to the Indigenous Long-term Participant Development Pathway (Sport for Life, 2020a) were also excluded.

Recruitment

Communities across Canada vary in terms of aspects that affect sport coaches' experiences. For example, some communities (or organizations within communities) prioritize certain sports over others, including with respect to the types of facilities and equipment available for coaches to use. As well, some communities are more isolated than others, meaning coaches must travel farther with their teams if they want to compete. As such, recruitment for the current research involved maximum variation sampling, which is a purposeful sampling approach (i.e., it allows for the recruitment of knowledgeable participants) that is aimed at including participants with a diverse mix of experiences (Patton, 2002). Participants in the current research varied with respect to sport(s) coached, gender, level of sport coached (community or high-performance, with the latter meaning post-secondary or national/international level and onward), qualifications, years involved in coaching, nation, age, hometown, and current community.

Participants

A total of 10 participants were interviewed for the current research, including nine males and one female. Table 7 summarizes participants' background information. Pseudonyms have been used in place of names to protect participants' identities.

Table 7. *Chapter 7 Participant Information*

Participant pseudonym	Sport	Gender	Community/high-performance (HP)	Qualifications	Years coaching	Nation

Participant pseudonym	Sport	Gender	Community/high-performance (HP)	Qualifications	Years coaching	Nation
Kobe	Hockey, basketball, volleyball, track and field, wrestling, badminton, power skating	Male	Community (ages 5 to high school); HP (university)	NCCP level 1 (track and field); NCCP level 2 (volleyball and basketball); NCCP level 3 (wrestling); Hockey Canada Skills Academy; Hockey Certification Coach 1	30	Cree
Billy	Badminton	Male	Community and HP (ages 8 to 18)	NCCP level 2	7	Ojibway, Cree
Mario	Hockey	Male	Community (squirts to bantam)	Not disclosed	10	Ojibway
Martin	Soccer, volleyball, basketball, baseball	Male	Community (grades 7 to 8)	NCCP level 1	32	Anicinabe
Jerry	Basketball, volleyball, floor hockey	Male	Community (kindergarten through high school)	Sport, Physical Activity, and Recreation in the Community program[33]	10	Ojibway
Earvin	Basketball, Aboriginal Youth Mentorship Program[34]	Male	Community (grades 7 to high school)	Sport, Physical Activity, and Recreation in the Community program	10	Cree
Winona	Swimming, handball	Female	Community (infants to seniors for swimming, high school for handball)	Not disclosed	4	Swampy Cree, Métis
Gordie	Lacrosse, hockey	Male	Community (high school for lacrosse, various for hockey)	NCCP level 1; Intro to Hockey; Respect in Sport	33	Cree

[33] For more information on the Sport, Physical Activity, and Recreation in the Community (SPARC) program, see: University of Manitoba. (2019, February 1). *New First Nations sport & recreation certificate program launches at U of M.* UM Today News. https://news.umanitoba.ca/new-first-nations-sport-recreation-certificate-program-launches-at-u-of-m/

[34] For more information about the Aboriginal Youth Mentorship Program (AYMP), see: Government of Canada. (2016, August 18). *Aboriginal Youth Mentorship Program (AYMP).* Public Health Agency of Canada, Canadian Best Practices Portal. https://cbpp-pcpe.phac-aspc.gc.ca/aboriginalwtt/aboriginal-youth-mentorship-program-aymp/

Participant pseudonym	Sport	Gender	Community/high-performance (HP)	Qualifications	Years coaching	Nation
Scottie	Volleyball	Male	Community (junior high and high school)	Sport, Physical Activity, and Recreation in the Community program	5	Cree
Abel	Hockey, jigging, square dancing	Male	Community (grades 1 to 12 for jigging and square dancing, grades 9 to 12 for hockey)	Respect in Sport; Body Contact Coaching	5	Swampy Cree

Data Collection

All participants engaged with the lead researcher in conversational interviews called "yarning" (Bessarab & Ng'andu, 2010) over the phone (see the appendices section for the interview guide used). Yarning fits well under Wilson's (2001) IRP because although questions may be pre-determined, participants have significant control over the direction of the conversation, which allows more opportunity for participants to discuss issues of importance to them (i.e., relational accountability is prioritized; Bessarab & Ng'andu, 2010). In addition, yarning sessions typically include a rapport-building phase (the "social yarn"; Bessarab & Ng'andu, 2010, p. 40) at the beginning where a relationship is established (or, in the case of a pre-existing relationship, strengthened) between the researcher and participant. For example, the researcher may wish to provide some background information about themself to initiate conversation, or they might ask the participant to speak generally about their own background, or they may begin the session by speaking about something totally unrelated to the research topic.

The conclusion of each yarning session in the current research involved the lead researcher asking whether the participant had anything else to add. The purpose of this question was to make sure the lead researcher was prioritizing the concerns of participants, which is critical under Wilson's (2001) IRP. Similarly, participants were asked either at the conclusion of the yarning session or in follow-up communication how they thought results of the study should be used. The researcher recorded answers to this question in his journal and, maintaining his relational accountability, has already begun addressing participants' suggestions. Finally, as an act of reciprocity, all yarning session participants received a $10.00 Tim Horton's gift card as a small thank-you (i.e., reciprocity).

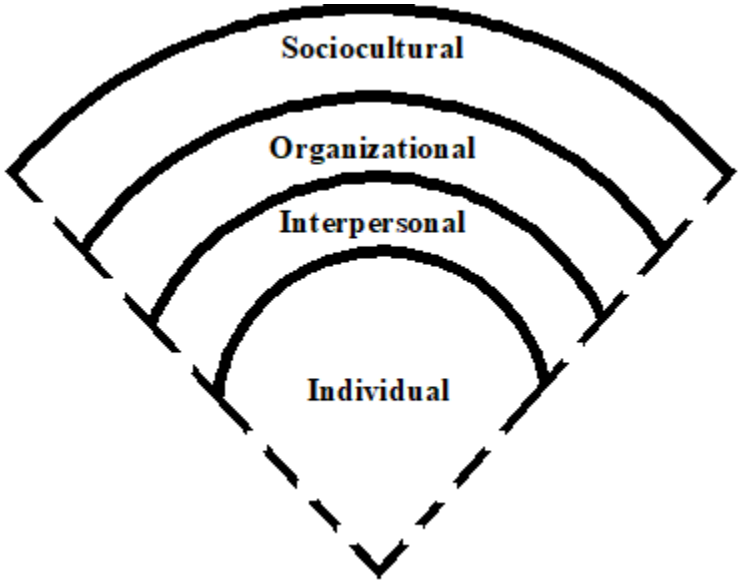
Recording the yarning sessions involved use of two to four recording devices. Yarning session audio recordings were sent to the transcription company Rev.com to be transcribed verbatim. Upon completion of the transcription process, participants were each sent an electronic copy of the transcript from their yarning session. Participants were given 26 days (i.e., until the end of the month in which the transcripts were sent to them) to inform the lead researcher of any changes they wanted made to their transcripts. No participants requested changes to their transcript.

Data Analysis

Transcripts were analyzed using NVivo 12 software following the methods outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006). Braun and Clarke (2020) explained that their thematic analysis process (i.e., Braun & Clarke, 2006) is useful for both inductive and deductive approaches, making it helpful in the current research, which utilized both approaches. Similar to Bennie et al. (2019), codes were first sorted deductively as either facilitators (opportunities/supports) or barriers (reduced opportunity/obstructions) according to the leverage points of a socioecological model. Differing from Bennie et al. (2019), an additional category was created, under which recommendations for change were to be categorized. The idea to add this additional category was driven by what Smith (1999) discussed about Indigenous peoples long being told not only what their problems are, but also how to go about solving those problems. In the current research, prioritizing the recommendations of participants was a way of maintaining relational accountability, which is critical under Wilson's (2001) IRP.

The socioecological model used in the current research was the same as that used by Bennie et al. (2019). Socioecological models, the origins of many of which can be traced back to an early model by Bronfenbrenner (1977), are useful in identifying the environments in which interactions that influence an individual take place (i.e., they recognize that people are affected by the environments to which they are exposed). In the case of the current research, these environments included Intrapersonal, Interpersonal, Organizational, and Sociocultural leverage points (Figure 6). After categorizing codes under these leverage points, multiple levels of themes were found within each leverage point, as well as within the Recommendations category, using an inductive approach. The idea to use a deductive approach followed by an inductive approach was borrowed from Bennie et al. (2019).

Figure 6. *The Lead Researcher's Depiction of the Socioecological Model used by Bennie et al. (2019)*



LaRocque (2015) argued in support of borrowing "the master's tools" (p. 15), emphasizing that "there is no master here – unless we give it that power" (p. 15). This argument supports the use of Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis in the current research, as does Braun and Clarke's (2020) assertion that their process (i.e., Braun & Clarke, 2006) is theoretically flexible. Moreover, the Braun and Clarke (2006) process requires researchers to reflect on their own subjectivities, and how those subjectivities might influence the analysis process, while thinking deeply on the meanings (i.e., not simply the words) conveyed by participants (Braun & Clarke, 2020). In the current research, the lead researcher worked toward meeting his relational accountability obligations by considering the context behind the content (i.e., who each participant *was*, including what their primary concerns were). This was accomplished by referring back to the notes the lead researcher made in step 1 of the Braun and Clarke (2006) process. The lead researcher worked to include these main concerns in the results section, given they were relevant to the research topic.

Once results were compiled, the lead researcher emailed a copy of the manuscript draft to participants, asking them to provide any feedback (i.e., requests for changes/omissions) they had to the lead researcher within a period of 20 days (i.e., until the end of the month in which the copy was emailed). There was only one exception to the 20-day window, as the email address of one participant (Abel) had changed, requiring the lead researcher to contact him (using an

alternative method) to request his new email address. Thus, Abel was given 19 days to respond to the lead researcher with request for changes/omissions. No participants requested changes to the manuscript outside of corrections to the participant information displayed in Table 7, although Abel made an addition to his quote in the section *Desire to Stay in Your Community, Pride*, under the Intrapersonal leverage point.

Quality Standards

Two considerations were made in this research to ensure quality work, with the first one being Maxwell's (1992, 2002) types of validity. Procedures to address Maxwell's types of validity in the current research were similar those of Blodgett et al. (2008). Descriptive validity was addressed by using multiple audio-recording devices during the yarning sessions, and by ensuring transcripts were accurate by re-listening to the audio-recordings and comparing them to what had been written. Second, both interpretive validity and theoretical validity were addressed by providing participants copies of transcripts and a draft version of the final manuscript so they would have a chance to review and inform the researcher of any concerns. Next, differing from the work of Blodgett et al. (2008), generalizability was addressed through the maximum variation sampling technique (Patton, 2002) employed in the current research. Finally, similar to the work of Blodgett et al. (2008), evaluative validity was not addressed; it was never the intention of the current research to provide evaluations; rather, the intention was to convey and contextualize participants' concerns and recommendations.

The second consideration made in this research to ensure quality work was Ellis' (1998) six criteria for determining whether research questions have been sufficiently addressed. These 6 criteria, which take the form of questions, include: 1) Is it plausible, convincing? 2) Does it fit with other material we know? 3) Does it have the power to change practice? 4) Has the researcher's understanding been transformed? 5) Has a solution been uncovered? 6) Have new possibilities been opened up for the researcher, research participants, and the structure of the context? The lead researcher asked himself these six questions at the conclusion of the analysis process, determining that the study was sufficiently rigorous to achieve meaningful and relevant outcomes.

Results and Discussion – Environmental Scan

The NSO website search involved perusal of 57 websites of sport organizations that are nationally funded through Sport Canada. Of the 57 websites, 15 did not have search engines. Table 8 summarizes the results of the environmental scan.

Table 8. *Ongoing Indigenous Coaching/Sport Programs Listed on Canadian National Sport Organization Websites as Found Through Site Search Engines or Manual Searches of Websites*

National Sport Organization	Indigenous coaching programs	Non-coaching related Indigenous programs	Non-coaching related Indigenous competitions or championships
Alpine skiing	n	n	n
Archery	y	n	n
Athletics	n	n	n
Badminton	n	n	n
Baseball	n	n	n
Biathlon	n	n	n
Bobsleigh	n	n	n
Boccia	n	n	n
Boxing	n	n	n
Bowling - 5 & 10 pin	n	n	n
Broomball	n	n	n
Canoe and kayak	y	y	n
Cricket	n	n	n
Cross country skiing	n	n	n
Curling	n	y	n
Cycling	n	n	n
Diving	n	n	n
Equestrian	n	n	n
Fencing	n	n	n
Field hockey	n	n	n
Figure skating	n	n	n
Football	y	y	n
Freestyle skiing	n	n	n
Goalball	n	n	n
Golf	y	y	n

National Sport Organization	Indigenous coaching programs	Non-coaching related Indigenous programs	Non-coaching related Indigenous competitions or championships
Gymnastics	n	n	n
Ice hockey	n	n	n
Judo	n	n	n
Karate	n	n	n
Lacrosse	y	y	n
Lawn bowls	n	n	n
Luge	n	n	n
Racquetball	n	y	n
Ringette	n	n	n
Rowing	n	n	n
Rugby	n	n	n
Sailing	n	n	n
Shooting	n	n	n
Skeleton	n	n	n
Snowboard	y	y	y
Soccer	n	n	n
Softball	n	n	n
Speedskating	n	n	n
Squash	n	n	n
Swimming	n	n	n
Swimming - artistic	n	n	n
Table tennis	n	n	n
Taekwondo	n	n	n
Tennis	n	n	n
Triathlon	n	n	n
Volleyball	n	n	n
Water polo	n	n	n
Water ski and wakeboard	n	n	n
Weightlifting	n	n	n
Wheelchair basketball	n	n	n
Wheelchair rugby	n	n	n
Wrestling	n	n	n

National Sport Organization	Indigenous coaching programs	Non-coaching related Indigenous programs	Non-coaching related Indigenous competitions or championships
Totals	6	7	1
Percentage	10.5	12.3	1.8

y = one or more programs were found
n = no programs were found

Canada's Aboriginal Sport Circle and provincial/territorial Indigenous sport organizations take much of the onus off NSOs and provincial sport organizations with respect to programs for Indigenous coaches and athletes. However, as results of part 2 suggest, there is a need to get everyone on the same page when it comes to creating opportunities for Indigenous athletes and coaches.

Results and Discussion – Yarning Sessions

A total of ten First Nations coaches were interviewed for the current research, including nine males and one female. The yarning sessions ranged from 41 to 104 minutes in length, with an average of 61 minutes and a median of 57 minutes. Table 9 provides a summary of themes and sub-themes from the results of the yarning sessions. Table 10 provides a summary of themes, sub-themes, and second level sub-themes from the recommendations discussed during the yarning sessions.

Table 9. *Chapter 7 Summary of Results – Themes and Sub-Themes*

Socioecological leverage point	Facilitator (F) or barrier (B)	Theme	Sub-theme
Individual	F	1. Focus on the athletes	a. Desire to give back
			b. Providing opportunities
			c. Providing positive environments
		2. Resilience	a. Constructive perspectives

Socioecological leverage point	Facilitator (F) or barrier (B)	Theme	Sub-theme
			b. Dealing constructively with negative experiences
			c. Leading a good life
		3. Other beneficial personal traits	
	B	1. Learning curve, adjustments	a. Adjusting to ways of being outside your own
			b. Learning effective coaching strategies
		2. Desire to stay in your community, pride	
		3. Pressure to win	
Interpersonal	F	1. Relationships	a. With peers and mentors
			b. With athletes
			c. With others
		2. Rewarding contributing to the success of others	
		3. Family involvement in sport	a. Children
			b. Other family members
	B	1. Opportunities for relationship building	a. With peers and mentors
			b. With and between athletes
			c. With others
		2. Youth not interested or not willing to commit to sport	
Organizational	F	1. Accessible opportunities to gain coaching experience	a. Through education

Socioecological leverage point	Facilitator (F) or barrier (B)	Theme	Sub-theme
			b. Through work
			c. As an athlete
		2. Positive, long-term relationship with sport	a. As an athlete
			b. Natural progression from athlete to coach
		3. Assistance from organizations	a. From your own organization
			b. From other organizations
	B	1. Coaching is above and beyond other obligations	
		2. Opportunities for improvements within organizations	a. In universities
			b. In sport organizations
			c. Within your own organization
Sociocultural	F	1. Teaching	
		2. Contributions from other cultures	a. Knowledge from the internet
			b. Cultural awareness and inclusion
		3. Influences from one's own culture	a. Community cohesion
			b. Lessons, inspiration
			c. Opportunities and direction available
	B	1. Racism	a. Government underfunding
			b. Valued at home but abused when away
			c. Need for more coach and public education

Socioecological leverage point	Facilitator (F) or barrier (B)	Theme	Sub-theme
		2. Geographic distances 3. Limited (female) Indigenous representation	

Table 10. *Chapter 7 Summary of Recommendations – Themes, Sub-Themes, and Second Level Sub-themes*

Theme	Sub-theme	Second level sub-theme
1. For organizations and others	a. Organizations stepping up	i. Growing the club system ii. More coaching clinics iii. Getting others on the same page
2. For ourselves (First Nations coaches)	a. Asking more of ourselves	
	b. Learning to navigate the double helix	

Results – Individual

Facilitators

1. Focus on the Athletes. It was evident from the interviews that participants took a very athlete-centered approach to coaching. This approach emphasized *Desire to Give Back, Providing Opportunities,* and *Providing Positive Environments.*

a. Desire to Give Back. A primary motivation for participants in their coaching roles was giving back to their communities by sharing the knowledge and experience they gained through years of sport participation. Abel, in particular, recognized that his unique position coaching youth from a variety of communities made it possible for his contributions to be spread throughout his province (Manitoba):

> And like my- my biggest hope is that they go home and pass on what they learn here to their younger cousins, friends, brothers, and sisters. That's- that's my biggest goal. (Abel)

b. Providing Opportunities. Another motivator for coaches was a desire to provide athletes with athletic opportunities that they (the coaches) might not have had, or that athletes in other areas were getting. For instance, Kobe spent much of his coaching career working to improve the sports programs at his organization in northern Manitoba, including advocating for athletes there:

> Why is the kid in [remote town] not as important as a person in downtown [urban town]? You know, like, they, we should be able to have the same type of things. Just 'cause of where you are doesn't mean you can't be a good athlete. (Kobe)

c. Providing Positive Environments. Coaches emphasized the importance of providing positive environments, including looking out for the wellbeing of individuals on their teams. Many coaches spoke of a wholistic approach to coaching that took into account not only athletes' sport performances, but also the circumstances occurring in athletes' day-to-day lives outside sport. Winona's approach exemplified this philosophy:

> Like, if they're late, or they're tired, like, ask them why. Like, you don't know what's-what's affecting their performance as an athlete. Like, it seems like, kind of like that old way of coaching and training some, it's being very black and white. Whereas, humans are... we're grey. (Winona)

2. Resilience. Resilience was a characteristic common to all participants. Participants demonstrated this through *Constructive Perspectives*, *Dealing Constructively with Negative Experiences*, and *Leading a Good Life*.

a. Constructive Perspectives. Although many challenges were presented throughout participants' careers, many of them did not consider these challenges as "barriers". As well, coaches recognized that "winning" is not just about points. For example, Abel emphasized how sport can teach lessons that are valuable off the field of play, and Martin spoke of winning in terms of developing athletes, seeing them progress, and being a good leader, concluding by asking the following philosophical question: "like for me, I know winning is very important. I love to win too, but aren't you winning the other way?" (Martin).

b. Dealing Constructively with Negative Experiences. Participants had dealt with numerous negative experiences in and outside of their athletic and coaching careers, such as conflicts with their own coaches, racism, stress, and systemic, racialized sexism (i.e., the predominance of White males in sport environments), yet they had learned to deal with these challenges constructively. Winona used the lack of female First Nations representation in sport

as motivation for being a positive role model for other female First Nations athletes and coaches. Scottie spoke about negative experiences he had with his coaches and how that motivated him to provide regular and frequent practice opportunities for his athletes. Lastly, all coaches had experience dealing with racism in some way (see *Racism* under the Sociocultural leverage point), but they used racism more as a reason to continue coaching than as a reason to stop.

c. Leading a Good Life. It seemed as though participants viewed coaching and teaching as vocations as opposed to merely jobs, realizing they were setting examples for young athletes/students and needed to maintain a professional approach even while off the field of play or outside the classroom. Martin, for instance, had this to say:

> That's my philosophy. I mean, uh, if you're a good person on the court then you should be a good person off the court or off the ice or whatever sport you, you play. (Martin)

Similarly, Jerry said the following:

> Like even in how you behave yourself. I can't go around town being drunk around here all over town because I'm a teacher. You know what I mean? You have a reputation to uphold and stuff like that. And like I said all along, you're… once a teacher you're not only a teacher during the day; you're a teacher all the time. (Jerry)

3. Other Beneficial Personal Traits. Finally, participants shared numerous other traits that were helpful to them in their coaching roles (such as leadership, adaptability, and resourcefulness, among others).

Barriers

1. Learning Curve, Adjustments. Participants had to learn and adjust to different circumstances as they developed as coaches. Although learning should not be considered a "barrier", as it is part of developing, it can certainly be challenging, especially if appropriate supports are not put in place. Specifically, participants mentioned *Adjusting to Ways of Being Outside Your Own* and *Learning Effective Coaching Strategies.*

a. Adjusting to Ways of Being Outside Your Own. The participant group contained a mix of coaches who were raised on- and off-reserve, meaning some were more exposed to Western ways of knowing, being, and doing than others. This was the case for Kobe, who found that the Western ways under which he was raised (specifically, with respect to view of time) occasionally conflicted with the approaches of First Nations community members he worked with:

> I'm used to it being, "Okay, we're here at 9:00, gone at 9:10". It doesn't always run like that [with more Aboriginal sport agencies], I find. But that might just be me. I don't know. But [. . .] I could learn a lot more from that if I, you know, if I spent more time doing that. (Kobe)

b. Learning Effective Coaching Strategies. Some participants mentioned a learning curve to coaching where it took them a while to determine which strategies worked best. Some participants attributed this to being young when they started in their coaching roles. Earvin, for example, had this to say about the learning curve he experienced:

> [W]hen I first started, I always- I always got mad at the kids, but, uh, I didn't understand. I thought they would be like well-coached along the way. [. . . .] But some kids are just, they're just finally learning how to play basketball in the high school level. [. . . .] And then I would get mad and get frustrated and eventually kick everyone out of the gym and then tell 'em not to come back until they're ready to play. But that wasn't the right approach. And then, I don't know, just experience I guess, just learning from mistakes. (Earvin)

2. Desire to Stay in Your Community, Pride. One coach, Abel, shared important insights as to why some First Nations coaches may choose to stay in their communities (i.e., why we may not see many First Nations coaches in other communities, or at higher levels of sport):

> Sort of a sense of pride, I guess. [. . . .] there's a lot of pride involved in it. [. . . .] you wanna teach your youth before expanding it to other youth. And when you get to higher level hockey, you- you leave where you came from and you hope that you bump into one of the guys you grew up with, or, well, that you seen grow up where- where you ended up. Whereas when you have those small town leagues and native tournaments, you get kids together from your home reserve from wherever you're from. You put them together, and you teach your youth. [. . . .] So ... And also a sense of connection. Like you- you know all the kids' parents that you're coaching. And it's- it's not as- as stressful I guess. (Abel).

Adding to this in a follow-up discussion, Abel discussed how staying in one's own community to coach is, in many ways, beneficial for the development of First Nations athletes:

> [A]s you get to higher and higher levels of hockey you see less and less people of color. And one thing that can't be ignored is talent, so by doing as much as I can back home and on reserve I may be able to help get more people of Native descent farther in their sport which in turn makes it easier for younger Aboriginal athletes leaving home, and it's less of a culture shock for them and also alleviates a lot of pressure because when you're the only brown face on your team or there is only a few natives, you feel a lot more pressure and when you mess up, you feel a lot more eyes on you full of disappointment. It was a key factor in me moving back to [remote home reserve]. (Abel)

3. Pressure to Win. One participant, Martin, explained that the constant pressure to win can be very stressful, and that the consequences of losing can be challenging. Although many coaches across racial backgrounds must deal with the pressure of winning and the implications of losing, these concerns carry unique significance in the context of the current research, as explained in the following discussion section.

Discussion – Individual

At the Individual level, participants in this study emphasized a wholistic coaching style motivated by a desire to give back to their communities and guide athletes in their overall development as not only athletes, but as human beings. Such a coaching style was also emphasized by Blodgett et al. (2008) in their work with Wikwemikong First Nation, and it resonates with the values of many First Nations cultures (Rice, 2019). As well, traditionally, First Nations peoples lived in societies with strong community structures (see Narvaez, 2013). In the current research, ties to one's community was identified as a reason many First Nations coaches chose to stay in their communities to coach. Although staying within one's community was considered a "barrier" (at least to higher-level coaching) in this research, the desire to do so is reasonable considering the positive aspects, discussed by Abel. In addition, many participants had dealt with racism at some point, and staying within their communities to coach was one way they could pass down their wisdom about how to navigate racist environments to young First Nations athletes. For an example of this, see Jerry's comment in *Racism* under the Sociocultural leverage point.

Abel recognized the importance of First Nations representation in high level sport to encourage younger First Nations athletes to pursue sport opportunities outside their communities, which adds to the findings of Chapter 6 regarding role models and the importance of having First Nations teammates. In Abel's case, these aspects were important motivators influencing his decision to move back to a remote reserve in which he lived previously. This is a particularly important finding because although a desire to stay in one's own community was categorized as a "barrier" to the development of First Nations coaches, Abel's comments highlight that it can actually be very beneficial to First Nations athletes.

The emphasis some First Nations coaches placed on *Leading a Good Life* in *and* outside sport resonates with the values-based system characteristic of Indigenous sport approaches (Rice, 2019) and supports previous research discussing the importance of role models in the lives of

young Indigenous athletes (Blodgett et al., 2008). Contrasting this "values-based" approach, however, was the imposed pressure to win about which Martin spoke. In another context, pressure to win could be dismissed as a normal part of coaching. However, in the context of the current research, we must recognize the differences between the more values-based Indigenous sport (see Rice, 2019) and the more competition-driven Western neoliberal sport, the latter of which places significant emphasis on winning (Coakley, 2011). What Martin said speaks to the pervasiveness of Western neoliberal sport and how the pressure to conform to that model can be stressful when one's beliefs do not align with it (recall Martin's quote about "winning the other way").

As Abel explained, pressure to perform can be significant for First Nations athletes who are competing on mainly non-First Nations teams outside their home communities. This insight adds to the discussion in Chapter 6 regarding the stress First Nations athletes may feel with respect to performing well to make members of their home communities proud, as it demonstrates that First Nations athletes who move away for sport are under multiple pressures (i.e., from multiple groups). Whereas the athlete in Chapter 6, Jordan, used the pressure he felt from his own community as motivation to do well, Abel's comments reveal a type of pressure not so much about doing well, but more about proving one's worth off-reserve (i.e., in other communities), which can only add to the acculturation challenges confronting First Nations athletes competing away from home (see Chapter 6).

Finally, Kobe's experience adjusting to an unfamiliar perception of time serves as a reminder of the cultural diversity within Canada. It is important to remember that Western ways of viewing space and time may contrast ways common in many Indigenous cultures (Smith, 1999). For Kobe, adjustment to the differences was still challenging after 30 years of coaching, suggesting coaching outside the system you are used to may never be easy, especially when your organization expects you not to stray from their ways.

Results – Interpersonal

Facilitators

1. Relationships. Discussions pertaining to relationships involved three main groups: *With Peers and Mentors, With Athletes,* and *With Others.*

a. With Peers and Mentors. Throughout the interviews, participants often referred to positive relationships they had with peers (teammates, co-coaches) and mentors (coaches,

teachers, community members) that helped them along their coaching journeys through passing down values, sharing helpful advice, and providing opportunities. The importance of relationship-building was particularly evident in Billy's case, as his prowess at this seemed to compensate for any barriers that may have been imposed by the class-status aspects of his sport (badminton at a private club) that can be hindrances to First Nations athletes and coaches:

> It's, it's about relationships where [. . .] I was very respectful. I, uh, you know, was very congenial. I was [. . .] someone who, you know, it I was very positive, you know, a good motivator. (Billy)

b. With Athletes. A couple of coaches highlighted the important roles athletes have in coach development. When asked about people who helped him in his coaching role, Mario had this to say:

> Uh, I'd probably say uh, the players I've coached, [. . .] I guess they uh... I wanted them to get better so, uh, I would uh... research different uh, different way... different ways to practice them or whatever, you know? (Mario)

Similarly, Winona had this to say:

> Like, I think the athletes that I worked with, they- they taught me a lot about how to connect, and kind of, um, reword things. So, then they can understand so, it's in simple language and not so wordy. (Winona)

c. With Others. Not to be overlooked are the numerous interactions coaches have with administrators, organizers, and spectators. Many participants in the current research spoke about interactions with parents; some coaches had mostly positive interactions, while others had experienced some confrontational encounters. Kobe noted that such confrontations can be problematic for athletes, as parents publicly venting their frustrations can be embarrassing for their children. Billy mentioned that having documents to share with parents, such as the Long-term Development framework (Sport for Life, 2020b), is a good way of getting them on the same page.

Outside parents, coaches also interact with community members of various occupations (teachers, administrators, lodging staff). Kobe shared some words of wisdom when discussing how he dealt with a confrontation he had while at a tournament with his team. He and his team had been blamed for vandalism in the room in which they were staying. Upon arrival, however, Kobe had taken footage of the room, which he later used to prove the vandalism occurred prior

to the occupancy of him and his team. Kobe contextualized the occurrence by saying the following:

> But it, but it's all based on who's there. The person that was there [in the coaching role] before me, they weren't very can- nice. And that's why they treated them like that. That, the, years later as we got closer with those people, they told me that. And I said, "Well, not everyone's like that, you know?" [. . . .] But it's all about friendships and those connections and, and that moving forward, how, you know, how you grow like that. And you know, now those people are, they, you know, they're lifelong friends. [. . . .] It could've went either way, though, I could've c- you know, I could've felt, "Oh, this is bull, this is brutal. I don't like being treated like this." And I could've quit doing what I do. But, you know, I'm bigger than that, rose to the occasion and, and, you know, put- you know, they're gonna learn from this and so am I, that, you know, we can do better because we can all do better for our kids. (Kobe)

2. Rewarding Contributing to the Success of Others. Although coaches appreciated recognition from parents and community members, seeing athletes do well seemed to be perhaps the most rewarding part of being a coach in their eyes. For example, Scottie realized coaches can play important roles in the lives of youth, and his efforts to be a positive role model to the athletes he coached was evident:

> And a good example that I can share is I had one student in my school and he was quiet and whatnot so and he was uh, a Junior High so now that um, like the students started coming to practice, practice and he was scared. He was scared to go on the court but I just told him like "you have to get engaged, you have to get in, you know you have to get used to it". So and every time when he served he couldn't get his serve over but the more practice he came, he was able to get his serves over. So now, right there I felt like I, you know, that was a good example of a student developing because now he could get his serves over and now when he played he doesn't get anxiety. He, he actually wants to play the game and that's where for me I feel like I did my part. (Scottie)

3. Family Involvement in Sport. Participants' *Children* as well as *Other Family Members* played instrumental roles in their (the participants') sport paths.

a. Children. Some of the coaches interviewed were motivated in their roles by their children becoming involved in sport. Mario, for instance, started coaching when his son started playing hockey at age 4, then Mario got back into coaching more recently because his grandson started playing. Jerry emphasized that this is not an uncommon occurrence, and when combined with other factors (i.e., coaches also being physical education teachers in the community, thereby having knowledge in addition to connection), it can help produce a successful sports program:

> [L]ike for example, like I said with that school there next, uh- next community, those two guys are from that community. They're native. They're both Phys Ed. teachers. And they both have kids that play in the sport. So everything is going good. And you could see it by the program. You know? (Jerry)

b. Other Family Members. Having other family members involved in sport, outside children, was common among most of the participant group. For Billy, family involvement entailed being active in various aspects, from spectating to volunteering to coaching to even effecting policy change. Even when family members are not involved in sport, they can still provide significant amounts of encouragement that help coaches along their career paths. For example, Kobe spoke of how his mom encouraged him to go to university, and how doing so opened many doors:

> And, and I, uh, I wasn't sure what I wanted to do and you know, university was my mom's, my mom's plan, not mine. But I ended up going and I'm glad she bugged me to go, 'cause, by going to university, it opened up a bunch of doors for me. You know, in terms of meeting people, uh, what I've done over my life, all stem from that one moment of putting my application in. And then, you know, uh, I went to [university], where I got my, uh, my four-year bachelor of education degree. And, uh, in that time, I got involved with the basketball program and I met [mentor] and, uh, he was a mentor. He, um, he opened up a lot of doors for me too in terms of getting jobs and that and, you know, he, he showed me a different side of education that I fell in love with and then, you know, I just kept doing the same thing, you know? I thought that, you know, served the community's greatest needs, you know, as a volunteer. (Kobe)

Barriers

1. Opportunities for Relationship Building. Having strong relationships was seen as a facilitator among the participant group. Appropriately, compromised relationships were seen as challenges. The following relationship categories largely mirror those in the Facilitators section: *With Peers and Mentors*, *With and Between Athletes,* and *With Others.*

a. With Peers and Mentors. Some connections participants had with peers and mentors that may not have been as strong as participants would have liked included those with staff of provincial sport organizations, those with coaches in different communities, and those with participants' own coaches during their (the participants') athletic careers.

b. With and Between Athletes. One coach, Jerry, noted that students' behaviors on the reserve on which he worked (commuted to) were not as favorable as students' behaviors in the town in which he lived. He mentioned that some teachers leave reserves to work in town for this

reason. In addition, Abel, who worked at a school with athletes from many different communities, spoke of a learning curve where athletes who do not know each other must learn how to play together as a team.

c. With Others. School administrators are gate-keepers with respect to providing sport opportunities to youth, and some participants expressed concerns about administrators not being on the same page in terms of working to better students' sporting experiences. In addition, participants spoke about troubles finding volunteers to help, dealing with angry parents, and the need to get parents more involved in their children's sport activities (aside from hockey, in which parents often become *too* involved). Kobe and Jerry, both of whom worked in many communities outside their hometown, did not always feel welcome when working in First Nations communities. Kobe was involved in the 60s scoop when he was young, and he mentioned that past attempts to learn more about his First Nations culture were not always embraced by community members. Kobe did not consider this a barrier to his coaching, yet it was still not an easy situation. Jerry, added to this discussion by emphasizing the need for parental support to make things run smoothly, but that such support can be difficult to get if you're not from the community in which you are working.

2. Youth Not Interested or Not Willing to Commit to Sport. Finding athletes sufficiently motivated to challenge themselves to reach higher levels in sport was an issue Abel discussed. He noted that many young athletes today seem content merely participating and do not want to put in the hard work required to progress beyond that level of engagement:

> Um, I- I see like I see a lot of them like at the start they're- they're really gung-ho for it, but then when they realize how much effort actually goes into it, and not only effort but like staying out of trouble, um, keeping- keeping yourself away from bad situations, things like that, they tend to lose interest. It's, um… I don't know if maybe it was I hung around with a different group of kids when I grew up, but it seemed like everybody I was around was willing to make those sacrifices to be a part of a- a team. (Abel)

Abel attributed this phenomenon to an overarching culture in North American society that often fails to challenge (i.e., exercise) youths' resourcefulness, and one in which mere participation receives significant praise relative to that seen in years gone by.

Discussion – Interpersonal

The importance of relationships to coaches' development highlights the appropriateness of the community-centered approach illustrated in the Intrapersonal section. Billy's initiative in

making connections, and the proactive measures Kobe took to address accusations made to him and his team demonstrate that coaches need more than just coaching skills; they need public relations skills too. Stereotypes of First Nations peoples abound and have been perpetuated through history in school texts (see Walker, 1971). Unfortunately, old stereotypes can affect relationships today, and First Nations peoples are often not given the benefit of the doubt. In addition, First Nations coaches in rural and remote communities are at a further disadvantage when it comes to making connections with provincial sport organization staff (in cities), as geographic distance can be quite a hindrance, as discussed in the Sociocultural section.

Regarding support from family, through interviews with families of elite Canadian rowers and a family of an elite Canadian tennis player, including discussions with parents, siblings, and the athletes themselves, Côté (1999) found that parents played significant roles in their children's athletic development beginning in the sampling years (ages 6 to 13) and proceeding through the specializing (ages 13 to 15) and investment years (ages 15 and older). Support included many non-coaching activities, such as introducing their children to sport opportunities, providing financial support, providing guidance with respect to fitness and career direction, and providing emotional support. Similarly, Schinke et al. (2010) found that family support played a critical role in sport participation in a reserve in Ontario, including lessons from family members (siblings, aunts, uncles, grandparents) with respect to certain sports skills and advice. Some of the first Nations coaches in the current research provided opportunities, direction, and support to their own children (as well as others) by fulfilling coaching roles. As discussed in Chapter 5, it is not uncommon for parents to do this in some (especially northern) communities in Manitoba. Parents' engagement in coaching roles may be due to the limited sport direction in many rural and remote communities (see Chapters 6 and 5) motivating some parents to pursue coaching roles when their children enroll in sport. School settings often serve to introduce on-reserve First Nations children to sport (Halas et al., 2013), meaning much of the sport opportunities and direction realized in reserve communities are contingent upon the limited funding most on-reserve schools receive from the federal government (Halas et al., 2013). As well, coaches working in school settings in Manitoba are often full-time teachers, and since teaching is already more than a full-time job, teacher-coaches are limited with respect to how much they can contribute to sport outside class hours. Thus, there is often a need in reserve communities for volunteers to engage in coaching roles.

As indicated in the results section, relationships with peers, mentors, and others were also important to participants in their coaching roles. *Grooming* was a term used by Blodgett (2008) to refer to more veteran coaches mentoring new generations of coaches. Bennie et al. (2019) found that grooming was also an important facilitator among Aboriginal Australian coaches, and a similar importance was placed on grooming by coaches in the current research. With respect to relationships with others, primary and secondary schools have staff with expertise across different areas, and some staff (e.g., administrators who may be gatekeepers in terms of sport opportunities) may not understand the benefits sport can have in the lives of youth, especially youth who may come from troubled backgrounds (Halas, 2001) as many First Nations youth do. Moreover, due to the distortion of Canadian history over time (Green, 1995), questions regarding the critical social consciousness of staff members, especially those who are non-Indigenous, with respect to the effects of colonization are not unwarranted. As such, there is a need to educate staff so schools can operate in a more student-centered manner.

Behavior issues among students, as discussed by Jerry in the current research, was also a finding of Chapter 5. This challenge is, of course, not unique to reserve communities, although environmental influences can affect human behavior, and it is possible that the behavior of some First Nations youth today has been influenced by historic and ongoing colonial activities. In her article *The 99 percent* (title shortened here), Narvaez (2013) discussed moral development in small-band gatherer-hunter (SBGH) societies versus Western societies. With respect to the former, Narvaez (2013) stated:

> SBGH didn't need a commandment to "love your neighbor" because one does so when one is raised with kindness and compassion, with early needs fully met, when secure attachment is formed along with a resilient brain and psyche (Sills, 2009). Ancestral parenting practices and social conditions foster a natural morality that follows Piaget's (1932/1965) notion that "morality is the logic of action." In the ancestral context, this is a truism. Virtue and survival go hand in hand. Cooperation is essential for life. (pp. 348-349)

A main impetus for colonization was capital accumulation (Blaut, 1993). Capitalist society became the "norm" in much of North America, replacing the more SBGH-style societies that existed previously (see Maté's seminar at Heartspeak, 2009), and which Narvaez (2013) argued are more conducive (than Western societies) in terms of encouraging moral actions. The residential school system, in particular, which was a substantial component of colonial activity in

Canada, has resulted in significant intergenerational trauma with present-day implications (Bombay et al., 2014). Maté explained that parental trauma acts as a severe hindrance to the fulfilment of children's early needs, as opportunities to provide the nurturing child-caregiver interactions that facilitate development of healthy brain circuitry are compromised when parents are distracted by dealing with their own traumas (Heartspeak, 2009; see also Maté, 2012). Hence, behavior issues can be seen, at least partly, as manifestations of historic abuse by colonial powers, and since this is a systemic issue, it is one coaches will have to deal with for many years to come as relationships between Canada and Indigenous peoples continue to be tumultuous (for a discussion of how human developmental environments may influence athletic development in terms of motivation, and in the context of Indigenous athletes in Canada, see Chapter 4 (part 2, *Intrinsic Motivation*; see also Kosmenko, 2021).

Results – Organizational

Facilitators

1. Accessible Opportunities to Gain Coaching Expertise. Participants in the current research highlighted three key avenues through which they gained coaching expertise: *Through Education, Through Work,* and *As an Athlete*.

a. Through Education. University education (e.g., Physical Education programs), high school credits for coaching, clinics provided by sport organizations (e.g., the Manitoba Aboriginal Sport and Recreation Council [MASRC]), and the National Coaching Certification Program were the main educational avenues through which participants had strengthened their coaching credentials. One participant, Billy, had been exposed to the mainstream sport system at an early age, but through his university education he learned a great deal about Indigenous athletes' sport experiences, which later translated to him working in both sport systems (Indigenous and mainstream). As well, a few participants spoke highly about the University of Manitoba's Sport, Physical Activity, and Recreation in the Community (SPARC) program, through which a culturally relevant approach is used to enhance physical education teaching credentials among students from northern communities (University of Manitoba, 2019). For example, Scottie had this to say:

> [T]aking that program made me you know, I guess like the person that I am right now because it, it had so many useful techniques, useful uh, skills and made me understand more on how to coach and how to interact with students and how to engage and how to be a perfect role model for these youth. (Scottie)

b. Through Work. Simply being a coach provided participants with opportunities to grow in their roles. Many participants referred to experience and learning along the way as avenues through which they developed as coaches. Other participants found opportunities to not only coach, but also referee and/or announce games, organize events, and be a part of developing policy. Lastly, participants mentioned opportunities along their coaching paths to coach athletes of different ages and from different cultures.

c. As an Athlete. Having an athletic background was common to all participants interviewed and certainly helped when it came to understanding sport and the pressures of being an athlete. Participants also spoke of many beneficial intrapersonal attributes they gained through pursuing sport (work ethic, leadership, life lessons). Moreover, for some participants, being an athlete presented opportunities for getting involved in sport in other ways, such as referee duties. Winona explained the connections between being an athlete, a coach, and a referee as follows:

> I think understanding kind of the flow of the sport... helped, and then also being able to learn to give feedback in a positive and like, effective way. It was helpful learning through coaching and being an athlete to be- to eventually being a ref. (Winona)

2. Positive, Long-term Relationship with Sport. Participants had many positive experiences with sport, and all of them had been engaged in sport over a long period of time, resulting in quite natural progressions into coaching roles. This section discusses some positive experiences *As an Athlete*, and the *Natural Progression from Athlete to Coach* that many participants experienced.

a. As an Athlete. For many participants, their sport paths started early and were lifelong, and some even had early introductions to coaching, announcing, and/or refereeing. It was also evident from the interviews that participants had many positive experiences along their sport paths, including learning lessons, growing as people, making friends, travelling, and experiencing athletic success. Some participants attributed their academic success at least in part to sport. For example, Gordie had this to say:

> I don't think I woulda went to university if I didn't play hockey. I don't think I woulda got, well I definitely wouldn'ta got my teaching degree if I didn't play hockey so, to me hockey is more, and sports in general are more than just a game. (Gordie)

This philosophy is one which Gordie brought into his coaching role, recognizing there is a lot more to sport than just competing, and that young athletes should be exposed to the whole experience offered:

> You know what, like sometimes it's not always about the sporting events it's actually the stuff that goes around. You know, like some kid, you know you take 'em for example, they come to [urban town] for the Cross Country Meet, I'm hoping the kids are staying at the hotel, I'm hoping they're going swimming along the way, I'm hoping they go to McDonald's and people might say, well it's not necessarily the healthiest food. Well if you're coming from a community that doesn't have many restaurants you see McDonald's on TV, experience it, you know it's part of life you know. It's not the best food but if you don't have McDonald's in your community it's a treat you know to take advantage of all the opportunities that you can get out there. And sports can open many doors for kids. And I hope kids realize that, that there's a big world out there you know. (Gordie)

Similarly, Abel expressed how sport has led to improved behavior among many of the athletes he has coached:

> Like, um- um, that like one parent from up north, when he stopped in to check how his kids were doing, he ... not only for his kid. [. . .] He kind of oversees the education back home a little bit. [. . . .] Not, um- not in the school-wise, but he's a big part of the community. [. . . .] And he noticed how much the kids have, um, with myself and the other coach and being a part of this hockey team, how much it's improved their- their general output back home. They seem a lot more, um, active and like involved in things. And they- they bond more with like- [. . . .] each other more. (Abel)

b. Natural Progression from Athlete to Coach. As mentioned, all participants had experience as athletes. For many participants, this experience translated naturally into coaching. The story Abel shared about becoming a jigging coach illustrated how natural the progression from athlete to coach can be:

> For starters, a- a little bit of a panic button like, "How am I gonna teach somebody this? I can't even explain how to do it." And then the next day when I ... like next morning when I went in to start teaching, it just kinda… everything just kinda floated out, and it was just... it wasn't as much thinking about it as just showing slowly and explaining it. I don't know. It became very easy once the person was there to actually learn it. (Abel)

3. Assistance from Organizations. Many participants found assistance along their coaching paths from their own organizations (i.e., *From Your Own Organization*) and *From Other Organizations.*

a. From Your Own Organization. The assistance participants received in their coaching roles from their own organizations varied. Some coaches spoke positively about the facility access, financial help, support to attend coaching clinics, and recognition they received. In some cases, it seemed as though participants and their organizations were on the same page. With respect to his own organization, Kobe explained that his organization had been around for a while, meaning it had a lot of time to refine its structure and delivery with respect to sport.

b. From Other Organizations. The Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre (MFNERC) received attention from some coaches when discussing support from other organizations. In addition, university outreach was briefly mentioned by one participant, Billy, who said universities are beginning to engage more in outreach activities to Indigenous communities. Importantly, Billy also mentioned Indigenous sport programs that act as feeder programs into mainstream ones, referring specifically to a prominent Métis, high-performance volleyball coach and her club Agoojin Volleyball Club, which was specially designed for young Indigenous women:

> And so, what I thought that's what we need to do more of, we need more [prominent Métis coach] and we need more [teams like hers]. (Billy)

Barriers

1. Coaching is Above and Beyond Other Obligations. Many First Nations coaches in Manitoba are in their roles voluntarily and in addition to their full-time careers. Although many participants were happy to be doing both, it was evident in the interviews that doing so requires a lot of time and energy. One participant, Winona, referred to time and energy as limiting factors when it came to coaching:

> So, it's, I think one of the barriers just comes down to, like your time and energy, and where like, your priorities lie. (Winona)

2. Opportunities for Improvements Within Organizations. Alongside the aid received from organizations, participants identified opportunities where organizations could do more to help First Nations coaches. The following discussion pertains to improvements *In Universities, In Sport Organizations,* and within participants' organizations (i.e., *Within Your Own Organization).*

a. In Universities. As Billy mentioned, universities have started reaching out more to Indigenous communities, which could be beneficial to sport programs in communities when

outreach initiatives are sport related. However, Billy also explained that larger universities may have more trouble with outreach because it is difficult in large institutions to get everyone on the same page. Yet, as he mentioned, pressures are being exerted, as Indigenous initiatives are becoming more common in university strategic plans.

b. In Sport Organizations. As discussed, some sport organizations in Manitoba work diligently to provide opportunities for First Nations athletes. Kobe, however, raised a concern about the lack of tenure (i.e., experience) some organizations have. In addition, many participants expressed a desire for more coaching clinics in their communities, with clinics being offered for a wider variety of sports.

c. Within Your Own Organization. Participants shared concerns regarding a lack of equipment, funds, facility access, and support in going to coaching clinics (including a lack of understanding among administrative staff regarding the benefits of such clinics). One participant, Abel, discussed how his community ice rink relied on natural ice, requiring the hockey team to drive to the next community a couple of times per week (weather permitting) to use the rink there, and presenting a severe restriction in the amount of ice time the team received overall. Another participant, Earvin, told of how facility access was restricted due to there being so many teams in his community, yet only one gym.

Organizational red tape was implied in some conversations, once in reference to the requirements needed to take students on sports trips, and once with respect to facility access during the summer months. In the first case, Scottie expressed some frustration in not being able to take athletes to tournaments in southern Manitoba because he was not a full-time teacher. In the latter case, Kobe mentioned that because most students at his school are not from the community in which the school is located, the gym closes for the summer, preventing access for students from the community. Other concerns included a hesitance among leaders of some organizations to address pertinent issues, such as racism; a lack of incentive for teachers to live and teach in northern communities, including high teacher turnover in such areas; and schools lacking the right connections when it comes to providing sport opportunities.

Discussion – Organizational

Although there are opportunities presented through education, work, and along one's athletic career to enhance one's coaching credentials, accessing these opportunities can be difficult if one lives in a rural or remote community. MFNERC and MASRC work diligently to

provide resources and opportunities (e.g., coaching clinics) to communities in Manitoba (i.e., the current home province of all participants in this research), but limited staffing and a large geographic jurisdiction make outreach challenging. Growing the club system in the province could help in this regard, especially if clubs are guided by Indigenous leaders. A great example of a club that works is the Agoojin Volleyball Club (see Da Silva, 2020). This club, designed for young Indigenous women, can be a helpful step toward university volleyball for female Indigenous athletes from throughout Manitoba. Through the Agoojin Volleyball Club, coaches can build relationships and trust with athletes over time, helping to develop athletes' skills. If athletes from the club choose to go to university, they may have a chance at playing for the varsity team that the head coach of the club also coaches, as opposed to going elsewhere and having to build a relationship with a new coach who may not be as culturally aware.

Agoojin Volleyball Club coaches are well versed in both Indigenous and mainstream sport. Similarly, Billy's experience in mainstream sport, followed by his study of Indigenous sport as well as his work in that area, heightened his awareness regarding the differences between the two systems. As Billy conveyed during the interview, it is important that coaches and athletes learn how to navigate both sides of the double helix (i.e., both mainstream and Indigenous sport; see Forsyth & Paraschak, 2013), especially if coaches want to prepare rural and remote First Nations athletes for university (i.e., high-performance, mainstream) sport.

Regarding the positive experiences that participants discussed during the yarning sessions, such experiences obviously encourage long-term engagement in an activity. What Gordie and Abel said about sports being more than just games, however, may not be fully understood by those who do not engage. For example, Arriagada (2015) found a link between sport participation and graduation success among First Nations males. Further, in discussing her work at a treatment center, Halas (2001) explained that sport can serve as a vehicle for expression, as a way to deal with anger, as an outlet for energy so students can focus in class, and as a way to build confidence.

Finally, organizational support is important in helping coaches perform their roles. Although recognition for coaches is important (Blodgett et al., 2008) and was something coaches in the current research appreciated, organizational support must extend beyond this. Indeed, funds are limited, and sports often get short-changed. Yet in many cases barriers that are imposed relate to organizational bureaucracy (e.g., Scottie not being permitted to take his team

on trips, and the gym at Kobe's school closing for the summer months). The tendency to justify limitations with respect to quality and access of certain services to Indigenous peoples harkens back to what LaRocque (2010) wrote about mechanisms perpetuating colonization. Comparing the restriction of sport opportunities within organizations to the widespread oppression of Indigenous peoples serves as a reminder of the lesson LaRocque (2010) shared: that we too easily justify the marginalization of Indigenous peoples (in this case, First Nations coaches and athletes). As Kobe said during the yarning session, "we can do better because we can all do better for our kids".

Results – Sociocultural

Facilitators

1. Teaching. Many participants were full-time teachers who also coached at the schools at which they worked. One participant noted that because of this connection, a growing number of First Nations teachers also meant a growing number of First Nations coaches. One participant mentioned that working in a school provided exposure to a lot of talented athletes that could be recruited, and another participant explained that teaching (especially physical education) and coaching are very similar. Moreover, one participant, Earvin, mentioned that being a teacher helped him keep informed about the wellbeing of his athletes, as they were students at the school at which he worked.

2. Contributions from Other Cultures. Two key areas were discussed regarding contributions from other cultures to participants' coaching paths: *Knowledge from the Internet;* and *Cultural Awareness and Inclusion.*

a. Knowledge from the Internet. Online learning was common among the participant group. Most notably, coaches used the internet to learn drills they could teach their teams.

b. Cultural Awareness and Inclusion. Cultural awareness was an attribute some coaches gained through exposure to different sport systems (mainstream and Indigenous) and/or by coaching athletes from various cultural backgrounds. On the other hand, the cultural awareness and inclusion *experienced by* participants varied. For instance, although not many Indigenous athletes or coaches were involved in Billy's sport, badminton, he believed that the strong representation of coaches from other minority groups helped create an inclusive culture. Billy also discussed the growth of a more values-based sport system in which athletes are asked to do

more than just perform athletically. Further, in some cases, participants mentioned a decrease in racism over the years, although it was evident from the interviews that racism was still perverse.

3. Influences from One's Own Culture. Participants' cultural backgrounds, including traditional cultural teachings as well as aspects of the communities in which they were raised, seemed to have many positive impacts regarding coach and athlete development. This section is divided into three topics: *Community Cohesion; Lessons, Inspiration;* and *Opportunities and Direction Available.*

a. Community Cohesion. Some participants expressed a great sense of community cohesion in their towns. For instance, Earvin spoke about the friendliness of community members in his hometown:

> Oh, also like say if you're- it's raining, pouring, you can literally knock on someone's door and wait for the rain to stop. And people usually tend to try to help each other in our community eh? (Earvin)

And Abel spoke about annual Treaty Days in some communities, discussing how Treaty Days can help pass the skills he shares with his square dancers on to their family and friends:

> And, um, 'cause every... well, a lot of reserves up north, I can't say every reserve, but a lot of 'em have Treaty days and summer days, and they have these little square-dancing competitions that you get like a fairly good amount of money for winning these things. So they can go home and put teams together for things like that at home with friends and family. (Abel)

b. Lessons, Inspiration. Some participants were inspired in their coaching roles by their cultural background. Gordie, for instance, mentioned that the community-centered way of being in many First Nations cultures was something he brought with him into his coaching role. Additionally, Winona spoke about being a role model for Indigenous women who want to become involved in sport:

> And I think being Indigenous and be able to coach is a privilege, and to have those main skills to do that. And I wanted to be able to give back in that way, but also, be able to- to represent and hold... like, pick up space in sports, because it's predominantly White males. (Winona)

c. Opportunities and Direction Available. There is significant variation across First Nations communities in Manitoba with respect to sport opportunities and direction available. Some communities prioritize sports more than others, and the sports prioritized are not always the same. Winona had this to say about the community in which she was raised:

> I think I was pretty- I was pretty lucky to grow up in a- in a town with Indigenous parents, that- that had opportunities, to like, progress their career and be supported, and there was opportunities in town. But I didn't grow up in a community where like things weren't offered. (Winona)

Barriers

1. Racism. All participants interviewed had something to say about racism. Three key areas are highlighted here: *Government Underfunding; Valued at Home but Abused when Away,* and *Need for More Coach and Public Education.*

a. Government Underfunding. One participant, Martin, referred to a need for more financial support in reserves, suggesting that little funding can be allocated to sport now relative to allocations in previous years:

> [B]ack then [. . .] money was available, you know, but as time goes on, uh, the government is getting less, we're getting less. The government's giving us less. [. . . .] You know, uh, the money is very tight. (Martin)

b. Valued at Home but Abused when Away. Racism from individuals was something almost all participants had to deal with at some point in their careers, and for some coaches, it was a regular occurrence. Jerry had dealt with it his whole life and shared a story that illustrated his approach to teaching his athletes how to deal with it:

> So no, I would tell them about it without a doubt, to behave. But I wouldn't say, "Oh, well, you guys better be careful. They're all racist here." No. Basically I said, "If something goes wrong, if somebody says anything to you, come and tell me about it," because it's- it's not something that's ah Native people know that. Especially when you're on the reserve when you go somewhere you know right away. You know what I mean? [. . . .] Right away. We'll po- we'll go ski- we'll go swimming in [rural hometown]. We'll go to McDonald's on the way back. While we're at McDonald's a little car pulls up with some non-native boys, and "I fuckin' hate Indians." You know what I mean? [. . . .] Then I have to tell the kids, "Oh, you know what? This is how it is here. But at the same time you'd like to go there and punch them out, but you know you're no- that's not gonna happen. So you have to try and be the civilized one." But that's the kind of stuff that they go through. (Jerry)

Also referring to racism experienced outside reserves, Martin discussed why First Nations coaches may prefer to stay within their communities to coach:

> They don't take you serious, eh. [. . . .] when they do take you serious is, uh, right, right at your home. It- it's different there. It's, they value it. [. . . .] They, they appreciate you doing the things you're doing for the, for the kids in their community. [. . . .] But you go elsewhere, it's totally different. Just, so, uh, that's how it is. (Martin)

What Martin said about discrimination keeping First Nations coaches out of coaching roles outside reserves was echoed by Gordie and Abel in the context of athletes. Gordie had this to say:

> I think it was, I don't like to use this word but you know, like being an Aboriginal athlete like you almost have to work twice as hard as the next guy. You know, like and, it's the old stigma you know what, this guy's not gonna be late or this guy you know what, and it's awful. Like growing up you know, playing sports I've heard racism my whole life playing sports. You know, some people won't believe that but I'm like, no, like you know, I know first-hand I've seen racism my whole life playing sports. (Gordie)

And Abel shared this experience regarding racism in the context of selecting athletes for a team:

> 'Cause there was a couple other kids, and me... Like I was on... It was weird because the team had like an, uh, black and a gold team. So you had one that was full of the top line guys. And then the- the... it's kind of like a B team almost. [. . .] And so I had already made the upper team. And I had a few friends that were trying out for the B team who were very talented hockey players. Like, um... And also like sitting up in the crowd and hearing people talk about it and who's gonna make the team, and, "Well, those two should make it over there," and things like that. All of a sudden, we go on a tournament, [. . .] and neither guy's there. (Abel)

c. Need for More Coach and Public Education. It was evident from the discussions on racism that more public education is needed regarding Canada's colonial history. Yet as Billy discussed, there is a lot of resistance to using sport as a vehicle for truth and reconciliation:

> And, and so it's really difficult, um, for people to see that for some reason, and yet, you could talk to any sports person, and you can, you know, if you change the sort of conversation and say, "Like, like, what has sport done for you, and what would you do for sport" you know, out there [. . .] Like, "how could you be an ambassador of sport", right? [. . . .] And they're all like, "Oh, great. Yeah. I can do this, you know I would love to have more young people involved in hockey", or whatever [. . . .] And a lot of people would agree, but as soon as you have this sort of Indigenous lens they just sort of like shut down or something, right? (Billy)

2. Geographic Distances. Travel was an issue for some participants, as some lived in different communities than the ones in which they coached. One participant, Martin, mentioned that housing on some reserves can be difficult to find. Lastly, Earvin mentioned that in his community it can be challenging for some athletes to find transportation to and from practices, which is especially important during the winter months.

Some participants worked in communities that were quite far from other towns, presenting a challenge regarding competition. In Abel's case, his job involved coaching students from a variety of communities, which posed a problem because he was unable to connect regularly with athletes' parents. Lastly, Kobe explained that it can be challenging for sport organizations to provide coaching clinics to First Nations coaches in Manitoba because reserves are spread throughout the province (which has a large geographic area) and many are located in isolated regions.

3. Limited (Female) Indigenous Representation. Some participants expressed concerns regarding limited Indigenous representation in sporting spaces. Billy helped put things into context by explaining that, historically, relationships between Indigenous peoples and the school system in Canada were very poor, resulting in reduced educational outcomes for Indigenous students. Specifically, Billy referred to the residential school system, explaining that sport in this system was a tool of assimilation. Billy expressed that compromised relationships between Indigenous peoples and the school system is problematic due to the important roles the school system plays in introducing Indigenous students to sport:

> So if we look at how [. . .] in a public school system at least anyways [. . .] many of us, our first experiences in sport and coaching was through school sport, [. . . .] we weren't even graduating high school at the time, [. . .] we were the first real cohort to go into public school, [. . . .] And so, so very few of us were graduating high school. [. . .] so we never really saw a lot of First Nations coaches back then, [. . . .] and one of the reasons why we don't have a lot of coaches is that school system, right? (Billy)

In addition, Billy spoke about the intersection of class status and sport, saying that most of the athletes involved in his sport (badminton) in Canada are White. Gordie mentioned that becoming a coach may not be an attractive option for some First Nations people due to the discomfort of working in a setting where there are so few people sharing your background. Abel added to this discussion by explaining that the presence of Indigenous cultural activities, such as jigging (which he coached), has been diminishing in Canada, and Winona spoke about the few Indigenous women in coaching roles in her province, Manitoba.

Discussion – Sociocultural

It is common for coaches in primary and secondary schools in Manitoba to also be full-time teachers at the schools at which they teach. Provincially- (i.e., off-reserve) and federally funded (i.e., on reserve) schools are no different in this regard, although the funding disparities in

general between the two school systems can make filling roles in the latter more difficult (see Halas et al., 2013). Nonetheless, teaching provides an avenue through which people can take on coaching roles, and for coaches from First Nations cultures who may prioritize wholistic coaching approaches (as discussed in *Providing Positive Environments* under the Individual leverage point), being able to provide guidance in both athletics and academics may be particularly fulfilling.

For coaches who live outside of the communities in which they work, however, building relationships with community members who may be able to contribute to the operation of sport events/programs can be challenging, as was discussed in *Opportunities for Relationship Building* (part c., *With Others*) under the Interpersonal leverage point. Marvin's concern regarding the challenge of finding housing in reserve communities is relevant here, as a lack of available housing makes it more difficult to become a member of the community. Thus, in combination with the demands of commuting, a lack of housing can be a significant obstacle to coaches.

Many strengths exist in First Nations communities, and a lot of inspiration can be drawn from the different First Nations cultures. Similarly, there are strengths in the mainstream as well, and participants in this study took lessons from there too. Drawing upon the strengths of different cultures is one way of learning to navigate both sides of Forsyth and Paraschak's (2013) double helix, and as LaRocque noted with respect to scholarship, borrowing tools from other cultures is reasonable, as cultures should not be expected to remain static (LaRocque, 2015). Billy's thoughts on values-based sport resonate with a more Indigenous approach, as traditionally, Indigenous cultures viewed sport as a vehicle to develop values important in life in general (Rice, 2019; see also Heine & Young, 1997, for examples of how contrasting approaches collide within Indigenous peoples' sport participation in, specifically, Arctic Canadian sports and games). Mainstream sport, on the other hand, is largely guided by a neoliberal perspective emphasizing competition, winning/reward, individualism, and hierarchies (Coakley 2011). Yet as illustrated in the current research, mainstream sport resources found on the internet can be a valuable tool for learning drills (sport in Indigenous communities tends to be more play-oriented; see Schinke et al., 2013). It must be recognized, however, that this resource may be very limited in some remote communities.

It was also common during the yarning sessions to hear about racism, and although always frustrating for participants, many of them had been exposed to it from early ages and had

learned how to deal with it professionally. There is a great deal of irony in what Jerry said about asking athletes he coaches to be the civilized ones when they encounter racism, as the "civ/sav" dichotomy, where colonizers viewed themselves as "civilized" and viewed Indigenous peoples as "savages", was used to rationalize colonization (LaRocque, 2010). From Jerry's story, however, we see that, in many cases, First Nations peoples must take the high road when it comes to confrontations with non-Indigenous folk. As the current research highlighted, there is a need for education, but as Billy discussed, there is often significant resistance among non-Indigenous people when the word "Indigenous" is mentioned with respect to ideas for initiatives.

Billy's thoughts regarding the effects of the tumultuous relationship between First Nations peoples and the school system in Canada are important to consider, as what he suggested about the important roles schools play in introducing Indigenous students to sport resonates with previous literature (see Halas et al., 2013). The cultural irrelevance of schools, discussed in Chapter 5 and elsewhere (e.g., Kirkness & Barnhardt, 2001; Van Ingen & Halas, 2006), does little to help build more positive relationships. Further, Abel's concern about the presence of Indigenous cultural activities diminishing relates to the historic oppression of these activities by colonial powers and a sport system that is biased toward "mainstream" activities (e.g., see Forsyth, 2007). Lastly, Winona's observation regarding few Indigenous females in coaching positions is reflected by the lack of gender diversity displayed in the current research and in research by Bennie et al. (2019) in Australia. Similar to the historic oppression of Indigenous cultural activities by colonizers, part of the reason for a lack of representation of female Indigenous coaches in Canada may have its roots in colonization. It was common for First Nations women to participate in traditional sport activities prior to colonization, including female-only activities as well as some mixed-gender events (Hall, 2013). Colonization, however, introduced Victorian ideals that generally discouraged women from participating in sports to the extent demonstrated by men, and this discouragement was perpetuated for Indigenous women by the residential school system which, for the most part, excluded girls from sport activities (Hall, 2013). In addition, recognition for Indigenous women who were successful in sport despite the aforementioned barriers has been severely limited, meaning female Indigenous athletes have largely been erased from sport history in Canada (Hall, 2013).

Recommendations

Smith (1999) stressed that, historically, Indigenous peoples have been told not only what their challenges are, but also how to go about solving those challenges. Participants in the current research made several recommendations for change. To honor and respect the knowledge and lived experiences of participants, it is this set of recommendations that is discussed here. These recommendations have been divided into two categories: *For Organizations and Others,* and *For Ourselves (First Nations Coaches).*

1. For Organizations and Others.

a. Organizations Stepping Up. Participants discussed three main ways organizations can provide assistance with respect to encouraging more opportunities for First Nations coaches and athletes: *Growing the Club System, More Coaching Clinics,* and *Getting Others on the Same Page.*

i. Growing the Club System. Billy mentioned (*in Limited [Female] First Nations Representation* under the Sociocultural leverage point) that school programs have often served to introduce sport to Indigenous students, and this claim has been supported elsewhere (Halas et al., 2013). Yet Billy recognized that the school system has its limitations when it comes to delivery of academic and sport programs to Indigenous students due to the historically poor relationships between schools and Indigenous peoples. To address these concerns, Billy stressed the need for increased capacity in the sport club system. He emphasized that an Indigenous club system would give First Nations athletes who have not been given opportunities to play on school teams a chance to develop in their chosen sports and potentially compete at NAIG and elsewhere.

ii. More Coaching Clinics. Many participants said they would like more coaching clinics delivered in their communities, as it is often not feasible for coaches to travel to urban centres to partake in these learning opportunities. Emphasis was placed on having a wide variety of sports covered through the clinics, and incorporating lessons related to wholistic coaching.

iii. Getting Others on the Same Page. Participants expressed the need to get different groups on the same page with respect to the provision of sport opportunities to Indigenous athletes and coaches. This included creating more incentive for school coaches, such as compensating coaching hours through more time off; creating more space for Indigenous people to feel comfortable and learn; and institutional (e.g., university) and government support in Indigenous communities. Increased education regarding the rationale for these initiatives may be

important in making them happen (see Billy's comments in *Need for More Coach and Public Education* under the Sociocultural leverage point). Additionally, and as Billy mentioned, we need to take the TRC (2015a) recommendations pertaining to sport seriously, as the shared values characteristic to sport atmospheres can facilitate connection between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples:

> [T]he intended outcome of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was really to look at a renewed relationship with Indigenous people, based on mutual recognition and respect. [. . . .] the recognition part is probably [. . .] the part that I think could help us delve into these complicated relationships, because we need to recognize the shared history [. . . .] And then how do we overcome this shared history and th- part of it could be this respect part [. . . .] Because at the end of the day, sport could be something that could restore a relationship with Indigenous people, with mutual recognition and respect [. . .] Because at the end of the day, reconciliation is about a restoration of relationship. [. . . .] It's about, it's about friendships, right, through sport. (Billy)

2. For Ourselves (First Nations Coaches).

a. Asking More of Ourselves. In addition to recognizing the important roles organizations play in providing sport opportunities, participants also stressed the need for First Nations coaches as well as athletes to continue taking initiative and giving back to their communities and elsewhere. Participants acknowledged the important roles coaches play in being influencers with respect to Indigenous sport. For instance, Billy discussed the need for Indigenous role models in order to grow the Indigenous sport system:

> [W]e need to develop more First Nations coaching in our own systems, so that we can develop our own children, so that they can play maybe in our own systems like NAIG [North American Indigenous Games] and stuff like that, and that certainly needs to get b- better, right? (Billy)

Having a positive attitude as well as the confidence and motivation to make connections and use resources available was also encouraged by participants in this research. The inspirational words Winona shared are relevant here:

> I would say that there's space there. There's space there for us and I think that, um, sport is, uh... sport and recreation is a vehicle that can be used in a really positive way. And that we're- we're worthy of being part of that. (Winona)

And with specific emphasis on female Indigenous athletes and coaches, Winona said:

> I would say that I think it's- I think it's gonna be women, like Indigenous women that continue to change- change the way that sport in the world is kind of evolving. [. . . .] And I think by being confident in your body, and as an athlete... And then eventually as a

> coach, I think would- it allows other younger ones to see that it's- it's an option and an opportunity for them to eventually be there as well. (Winona)

b. Learning to Navigate the Double Helix. Billy emphasized the importance of First Nations coaches learning to navigate both sides (Indigenous and mainstream) of Forsyth and Paraschak's (2013) double helix. Being well versed in both Indigenous and mainstream sport encourages cultural connection on the one hand, and growth (for both coaches and athletes) on the other. As such, Billy suggested that a knowledge of both systems is important to coaches seeking to prepare First Nations athletes for university sport.

Limitations

Potential limitations of this study generally resemble some of those encountered in Bennie et al.'s (2019) research. First, the choice to use a Western socioecological framework may have bounded the realities captured during the interview process. For instance, Lavallée and Lévesque's (2013) Integrated Indigenous-ecological Model (IIEM) includes Mother Earth and All of Creation (Known and Unknown) as leverage points, and it emphasizes physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual aspects in its Intrapersonal leverage point. Due to the incorporation of these aspects, the IIEM resonates well with Indigenous worldviews. Yet it was a deliberate choice to use the same socioecological model used by Bennie et al. (2019) because the current research also used the same interview guide (with minor adjustments) to facilitate future comparisons between study findings; Bennie et al.'s (2019) interview guide was specifically designed with the socioecological model they used in mind.

A second limitation in the current research, and that also occurred in Bennie et al.'s (2019) work, was the disparity between male and female participants (nine to one in the current research). Based on what Winona said during the yarning process (see *Lessons, Inspiration* under the Sociocultural leverage point), this disparity could be a reflection of racial and gender biases existing in sport in Canada. It is recommended that future research prioritizes a more gender-balanced participant group. Future research should also seek to more greatly understand the mechanisms to which this gender disparity may be attributed.

Lastly, nine of ten participants in the current research were from Manitoba, with the tenth participant having moved to Manitoba. First Nations cultures vary greatly across Canada, as do relationships between First Nations communities and provincial governments. For instance, we should not assume outreach activities between MASRC and First Nations communities in

Manitoba are exactly the same as those between Indigenous provincial sport organizations and First Nations communities in other provinces, as community needs, organizational staffing, geography, and other factors will result in differences. Research in Manitoba should be ongoing, but there is ample room for research in other provinces as well.

Conclusion

Canadian Heritage (2005) suggested that a lack of Indigenous coaches is a barrier to Indigenous peoples' participation in sport. In addition, the TRC emphasized the need for Indigenous coaches by highlighting the importance of inclusivity with respect to policies aimed at increasing capacity in the Canadian sport system (i.e., Call to Action 89; TRC, 2015a). Despite its limitations, this study has contributed to this area by elucidating some of the factors influencing the career paths of First Nations coaches in the country (specifically, Manitoba), including recommendations for change. In addition, this research has identified NSOs as one avenue through which mainstream sport can better contribute to the development of First Nations coaches and, by extension, to Indigenous sport. Results of this research can also be used by sport organizations striving to support the development of First Nations coaches, and by First Nations peoples who are seeking to become coaches, or to progress in their coaching roles.

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Chapter 8: Autoethnographic Reflections on Engaging in Indigenous Research in a Colonial Academy[35]

Abstract

In this fictional autoethnography, the author, a student-athlete of mainly Euro-Canadian heritage, explores the challenges he encountered during his graduate studies career engaging in Indigenous research (i.e., research following an Indigenous research paradigm prioritizing relational accountability and reciprocity) in a Western academic setting. Using a story-telling approach, the author takes readers on a journey through struggles related to emotional toil, identity, learning by experiencing, harmful research, and self-assessments of worth as a researcher. The author contextualizes his experiences by connecting them to literature related to human development, colonization, sport, and racism. It is hoped this research will be informative to graduate students engaged, or seeking to become engaged, in Indigenous research. As well, it is hoped this research will raise awareness among others in the academic setting (faculty, administrators) and beyond (family members, significant others, friends, peers) to create more support for graduate students engaged in this type of work.

Keywords: Indigenous research, colonial academy

[35] This research was approved by the University of Manitoba Research Ethics Board, Protocol #E2020:042 (HS24092).

Autoethnographic Reflections on Engaging in Indigenous Research in a Colonial Academy

How can I even write this thing? I've spent the last half decade undergoing a rigorous brainwashing procedure seemingly designed to impose boundaries on my thinking with respect to what constitutes good work in our field. From the conference presentations that seem to always follow the same, tiring pattern (intro, methods, results, discussion), to the exceedingly bureaucratic ethics process, to the vocabulary we use in the academic setting, to even the unspoken dress code… the more I think of it, the more I realize the institution works to mold us. Indeed, we are influenced by the environments to which we are exposed (Bronfenbrenner, 1977), and as we become more and more like children of the institution, we relinquish more and more of ourselves in exchange for degrees that move us closer toward those lofty goals of meaningful careers and long-term financial security. Within the realms of graduate studies, in particular, our academic bank accounts continue to grow beyond their undergraduate levels as we continue to make withdrawals from our very souls, sacrificing our creative, authentic selves in favor of versions that more appropriately fit within the rigid bounds of the indifferent academy.

Graduate school is a strange thing. At the end we celebrate the work we have put in, what we have learned, and how we have grown, yet we don't really reflect on what we have lost. The teachings of the medicine wheel emphasize balance (Bell, 2014), and schools far and wide could benefit from incorporating such medicine wheel teachings. Indeed, balance seems to be a concept completely lost in the academic setting, as evidenced not only by the lack of emphasis on spiritual, emotional, and physical components of wellbeing, but also by the institution's lack of transparency in the midst of its prolific self-promotion. Similarly, if I stay on my present course, a "balanced" PhD defense would entail both a celebration of my growth as a researcher as well as a funeral for the creative inner child who has been flogged throughout the grad studies process. It's a sad, sad thing, as I liked that inner child, and I'd be lying if I said I liked the (still very novice) researcher who replaced him. Back in the early days of my post-secondary endeavors, I had one professor tell me that I kept her from becoming too jaded because I had not yet settled for bankruptcy of the imagination. I feel a little ashamed as I reflect on this sentiment because I am not confident this professor would feel the same way about me now; I certainly don't. Yet maybe this autoethnography can sway things a bit; maybe I can recapture some of the creative magic I once had; maybe the only funeral at my defense will be the one celebrating the passing on of my status as a university student.

And now I sit here, thinking about how this autoethnography will be viewed by others in the academy. This paper goes against the grain entirely, and as I try to unlearn what I have learned about how to do "science", I struggle to fire up the creative parts of my brain that have been dormant for far too long. The deadline is approaching, however, so I really need to pour some gas into the cylinders now. How can I do that? I've been told to paint or read fiction, which are good suggestions, but in order to really put passion on paper I need to reconnect with what fired me up in the first place: anger. Here we go again.

It Began With Anger, It Continues With Purpose

Fueled by the adrenaline of rage and with all sorts of angry song lyrics flowing through my head, I ran hard down the dimly lit, asphalt bike path next to the river as the rain poured from the dark, cloudy sky. It was an "angry run" this time; usually they are "training runs" aimed at helping me become faster. This run, however, was like a scream; it was meant to get the frustrations out all in one go. The previous day I had met with my master's thesis advisors who, for the second time, suggested I re-do an entire chapter of my thesis. I was hoping to graduate and move on to a new university within a couple of months, but since the project on which I had been working for my master's had not bared the fruit my thesis committee hoped it would, it had been suggested that I embark on a new study for chapter 2 of my thesis, and so I had been feverishly working – over and over again – to complete that new study. This type of thing is normal, though. Grad school can be stressful and a lot of work, just like so many other endeavors out there. However, my experience moving from the post-positivistic, quantitative, natural sciences to doing qualitative, social sciences work under an Indigenous research paradigm has taught me that the ways in which grad students are stressed are not always the same across disciplines.

The "angry run" occurred toward the end of a project in which I was looking for relationships between rates of oxygen consumption and physiologic, ecologic, and morphometric traits in fish. There was much to understand, and a lot of work had been done, yet the work was straightforward once I had learned the theory and skills necessary to complete the project. A lot of quantitative science is like a recipe book. You have to learn the lingo and sometimes have to be creative in your approach, but the general directions are there for you already. This isn't to say that this work is not challenging. It is indeed challenging, but in a different way than qualitative work, especially qualitative work in the social sciences following an Indigenous

research paradigm. Indeed, as Wall (2008, p. 44) stated, "[i]n the world of traditional science objective distance seems to protect researchers and readers from the emotional and intimate details of human lives (Muncey, 2005)". With Indigenous research, this protection is non-existent. Moreover, there are intricacies about Indigenous research that people who have not engaged in this type of work often do not fully grasp. An awareness among people inside the institution (faculty, administrators) as well as outside (family, significant others, friends, peers) regarding the challenges unique to Indigenous research could facilitate understanding that leads to support for those engaged in this type of work. As well, such a discussion would prepare future graduate students seeking to become engaged in Indigenous research by helping them anticipate the challenges they will very likely encounter, including strategies that may be helpful (or unhelpful) in dealing with those challenges.

With those purposes in mind, this article, which takes the form of a fictional autoethnography, takes readers on a journey through my experiences as a graduate student engaging in Indigenous research in a colonial academy. According to Ellis et al. (2011), "autoethnography is both process and product" (p. 273), as it combines autobiography and ethnography (Ellis et al., 2011) to provide an understanding of culture through self-reflection (Ellis, 2004, and Holman Jones, 2005, as cited in Ellis et al., 2011). Ellis et al. (2011, p. 274) described a primary motivation behind the emergence of autoethnographic research:

> Gradually, scholars across a wide spectrum of disciplines began to consider what social sciences would become if they were closer to literature than to physics, if they proffered stories rather than theories, and if they were self-consciously value-centered rather than pretending to be value free (Bochner, 1994). Many of these scholars turned to autoethnography because they were seeking a positive response to critiques of canonical ideas about what research is and how research should be done. In particular, they wanted to concentrate on ways of producing meaningful, accessible, and evocative research grounded in personal experience, research that would sensitize readers to issues of identity politics, to experiences shrouded in silence, and to forms of representation that deepen our capacity to empathize with people who are different from us (Ellis & Bochner, 2000). Autoethnographers recognize the innumerable ways personal experience influences the research process.

The autoethnography I have written here conveys many of the revelations I have had along my graduate studies path. Yet out of respect for the people who have influenced that path, the events themselves, which are less important in the context of this autoethnography than are the revelations (i.e., the "truths"), have been fictionalized. Nevertheless, from discussions I have

had with mentors and lab mates, I am not alone in the revelations about which I have written here. Thus, I believe this autoethnography will resonate with many people who are engaged in Indigenous research.

Now, by "Indigenous research", I mean research following Wilson's (2001) Indigenous research paradigm (IRP) or similar paradigms that recognize and respect participants, placing them and their concerns first and foremost through maintaining relational accountability and engaging in reciprocity. The way in which I have approached this autoethnography is reminiscent of the way in which many Indigenous Elders tell stories meant to teach: I leave out explicit explanations of the "lessons" to encourage readers to think deeply on what I have written and discover the explanations themselves, and in the context of their own lives. Moreover, as is the tendency in many stories, this autoethnography seemingly meanders at times, but each thread of the yarn spun here is important to the topics being discussed (see Bessarab & Ng'andu, 2010).

There have been many occurrences over my graduate studies career that I could write about, but as a graduate student, I am bounded by timelines. Many very educational experiences have been withheld from this autoethnography, experiences that probably deserve a place somewhere in here, but as a mentor of mine so wisely told me, the best PhD is one that's finished. With that said, within this autoethnography I have chosen to focus on topics related to emotional toil, identity, learning by experiencing, harmful research, and self-assessments of worth as a researcher.

Before proceeding, I must recognize the unearned privileges that have helped on my path to where I am today. With respect to documents such as this one, I would be among the first to criticize the White guy for complaining, as he doesn't actually have to deal with the racism his work attempts to address. I do not mean to recenter the narrative on the White man; I simply feel that open discussion pertaining to the challenges of engaging in Indigenous research in the colonial academy could be helpful in creating supportive environments. With that said, we begin…

Emotional Toil: The Crying Corner

We never really did identify one corner of the lab space as the "crying corner", but regardless, just the existence of the idea is somewhat telling. Indeed, some sort of space set aside for therapeutic reasons would have been well used in our lab. I recall one morning in particular…

The day started as they often do, with an eighty-minute run followed by a weight session, then stretching and foam rolling. The obligations of a student-athlete consume a lot of time, so I often tried to get much of them out of the way in the wee morning hours, keeping the afternoon sessions shorter (yet still a couple hours in duration). A typical day would start at 5am and training would take me to around 8am, at which time the fueling process would start. My hunger seemed to never go away when I was running 100-plus mile weeks, and on this day, as I vehemently shoveled food into my mouth while simultaneously chewing food that still had not been swallowed, I felt as though my stomach was some sort of portal, transporting food into dimensions unknown instead of filling up.

As I tried in vain to fill that unfillable void, I scrolled through social media posts on my old laptop as its screen and keyboard were bombarded by food particles that refused to stay in my mouth. Ah yes, many an oat has been lost beneath the keys of that old computer, and specks of the honey once used to flavor my oats remain firmly glued to places on the screen that they would happily call home, if only specks of honey could talk. Warmed by the power of the monitor, the honey remains to this day somewhat supple and gooey, and I am sure those specks of honey quiver each time I open my laptop, thinking that perhaps this will be the day I succumb to my immense and never-ceasing hunger, licking them off the screen as a dog would lick the carcass of a dead deer. Hmmm… satisfying.

What was not satisfying, however, and which did not make me feel warm and gooey like the honey speckled on my computer's screen, was the collection of depressing topics I perused on a local Indigenous news organization's Facebook page. Although many positive things are covered by this news organization, there is often a counterbalance of negative things as well. The topics I scrolled through that morning, however, seemed to weigh more toward the negative. Topics ranged from young First Nations boys being bullied at school over their braided hair, to racist taunts directed at First Nations hockey players, to protests over industries and governments intruding on First Nations peoples' lands, to alarming suicide rates on reserves, to, finally, stories of First Nations parents' turmoil regarding whether or not they should be sending their kids south for school, where many First Nations students in the past have lost their ways, or even their lives. And so I managed to undue the positive tone I had set via my run and weight session that morning simply by scrolling through Facebook. I guess choosing to stick my earphones in on

my walk to school that day was a way of not thinking about it, or going "off to the herons", as it were (see Chapter 2).

But that didn't help. As I walked across the old golf course on the single-track, snow-packed trail, my cheeks numbed by the cold and my legs wishing I would have worn snow pants (or any type of pants, for that matter), the shuffle function on the Ipod that was buried deep and warmly inside my mitten selected Eminem's *Sing for the Moment* (Mathers et al., 2003), and my mind returned to the north as soon as I heard the lines, "That's why we sing for these kids who don't have a thing except for a dream and a fuckin' rap magazine [. . .] Or for anyone who's ever been through shit in they lives 'til they sit and they cry at night, wishing they die".

My brain fired at the great injustices that had been done, and continue to be done, oppressing First Nations peoples into positions of poverty, broken homes, and suicide. I thought of the content and quantity of messages that would have to be conveyed to convince someone that suicide is a better option than continuing forward in this world. These messages have been directed toward First Nations peoples for hundreds of years, saying you're not valued, you're not wanted, you're not human. Indeed, much of Canada's biggest mistake includes the creation and perpetuation of such discouraging lies (see Duchemin, 1990; see also Walker, 1971). By choosing not to take a stand against issues, we choose to let those issues persist (McRae, 2012). On that day, as on many before, I knew I could not ignore the issues, for they stung my heart too harshly and frequently. Sternly, I pressed on along that single-track, snow-packed trail, toward that dreary, grey building. Another day at work.

Thinking of the injustices done toward First Nations peoples, especially youth, always made me angry, but thinking of First Nations peoples' collective response to it all humbled me. When it comes to the "successes" valued in Western society, many First Nations youth are born into disadvantage due to intergenerational trauma stemming from and perpetuated by colonial activities (Bombay et al., 2014). Yet despite being born on the "wrong" side of a country divided by race, First Nations peoples continue to occupy space in leadership positions and other positions of power, and press on persistently and peacefully. So although thinking of injustices can create anger that motivates one in their work, it is often thinking of the strengths of First Nations peoples, particularly youth, that humbles and inspires me to be a better person and gives me more than enough courage to continue on in my role as a researcher engaging in Indigenous research in a colonial academy.

Although discussions of racism and profanity-laden, frustration-driven critiques of the colonial academy were tossed around by my lab mates and I throughout the day, the workday concluded quite uneventfully. After getting another run in, this time in the vicinity of the university, I returned to my apartment. I had gone from feeling positive after my morning training session, to feeling angry during breakfast and on my walk to school, to feeling humbled and inspired by thinking about the strengths I saw in many First Nations people. Now, however, after the venting had been done for the day and I sat alone in my apartment, my mind's pendulum swung to sadness. Indeed, as Fromm once said, "one cannot be deeply responsive to the world without being saddened very often" (Goodreads, 2020).

There was no one in my apartment to help me decompress, as I lived alone, so the thoughts and emotions just stayed within, adding to those that were already stored there and waiting for their freedom via some kind of outlet. Even if there had been someone there, it is very likely that person wouldn't have understood what was occurring in my head. Yet although my apartment lacked the presence of other humans, what it did have was the old table I would carve very deep cuts into with my very dull knife when I was very upset. The knife was too dull, in fact, to break skin, so the table was its canvas instead. Like a drug addict keeping their cupboards empty, I kept the knife dull.

Things were manageable, at least for the time-being, and they had to be. Any counseling would be a distraction from my obligations as a student-athlete in a progress-driven, colonial academy that cared only for my business as a student and not for my wellbeing. As time went on, I would begin to question whether the flame I had in my heart when I started graduate studies had begun to die, as I began to feel emotions less and less, and my personality became duller and duller, just like my old knife. I had become cold, like the concrete and steel that formed the foundations of the city in which I was living, or, I suppose, merely existing. I became less human simply because the environment in which I had put myself provided no other option. According to Gair (2013, p. 137), "too close an identification with another person's experiences (over empathizing) might lead to self-protective disengagement, compassion fatigue, and burnout, according to some literature (Alma & Smaling, 2006; Astell, 2004; Figley, 2002)". Was I already heading down this path? Over the long-term, perhaps it helps to take a step back from time to time to engage in activities that help preserve mental health (e.g., CTV News Winnipeg, 2020).

Connecting the Dots with Ecological Systems Theory

I started learning about Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (EST; Bronfenbrenner, 1977, 2005) when I began my master's program at the University of Manitoba. Although the theory and associated model have evolved over time, the message has remained the same: that people are influenced by the environments to which they are exposed. It is a wonder why EST is not being taught widely and, in a simplified form, introduced at early ages. This theory sheds significant light on human behavior. Although baffling to the point of near unbelievability, there are still people who maintain the "why don't they just get over it?" attitude toward the experiences of Indigenous peoples with respect to Canada's colonial history. Curriculum about residential schools and other heinous acts is important, yet is it sufficient on its own?

Empathy is a complicated phenomenon. Not only does the definition or empathy vary across the relevant literature, so does the opinion on whether empathy can be taught (see Gair, 2013). Recognizing the importance of empathy (i.e., "accurately perceiving the experiences and emotions of another person"; Gair, 2013, p. 137) among social workers working with Indigenous peoples, Gair (2013) analyzed Australian social work students' responses to a real-life vignette—a statement by Australian Aboriginal leader Charles Perkins. Gair was seeking understanding of the students' interpretation of empathy as well as their perceived levels of empathy for Perkins, including the students' thoughts on what influenced those levels. From the results, Gair noticed that empathy was influenced largely by whether students had similar experiences to those of Perkins. In Gair's words:

> Yet a commonly repeated response in this inquiry was that the students could not feel empathy because they had not experienced the situation. This finding may suggest that telling a heartfelt story alone may not necessarily evoke empathy from some non-indigenous Australians, and a more ongoing, in-depth focus specifically on eliciting empathy may be necessary in social work education. (p. 144)

However, in other work with the same cohort of students, Gair (2009) analyzed responses to three other vignettes, all of which dealt with circumstances not specific to Indigenous peoples. Gair (2013) mentioned that similar experiences were not an influence on empathy levels in any of these other three vignettes, and she cautioned that responses to the Perkins vignette may have been influenced by students' desires to provide the "'safest' response" (p. 144) by claiming they could not compare their own experiences to those of an Indigenous person.

Citing Stein (1917/1989), Gair (2013) suggested that in the absence of similar experiences, deep listening and discovering "the feeling, spirit, and humanity in" (145) oneself may be a precursor to empathy. Indeed, there is a difference between understanding and realizing. For me, reflecting on EST and other works (Maslow's [1943] Hierarchy of Needs, the brilliant and illuminating seminars of Dr. Gabor Maté, and the research of Darcia Narvaez [2013] regarding environmental aspects of human development) in the context of my own life experiences compared to the life experiences of many Indigenous peoples (i.e., similarities and differences between the two) helped me find enough understanding and humanity to realize that marginalizing practices, such as colonization, can produce and reproduce substantial social disparities. I suppose the trick, though, is convincing people to reflect. Reflection can be uncomfortable, especially if it requires one to come to terms with one's own unearned privilege (e.g., White privilege).[36] Indeed, White guilt was an explanation Gair (2013) provided for non-Indigenous students' lack of empathy for Perkins. At this point in Canada's (or Australia's) colonial history, though, it's well past time for White people to get comfortable with being uncomfortable.

Yet as evidenced by my musings here, the understanding I claim to have greatly conflicts with the actions I demonstrated toward myself throughout my graduate studies career. Although I can work to create positive environments for others either by applying the findings of my research or simply by being friendly, it was very difficult during my master's and PhD studies to create such environments for myself. The lab setting offered opportunities to discuss challenges with fellow graduate students and, although I am very grateful for the willingness of my lab mates to listen with open hearts, and to provide helpful insights and wisdom, each individual's own responsibilities as graduate students, teaching assistants, researchers, and family members, in addition to my resistance to cast my personal burdens upon others, were factors that often (but not always) made reaching out seem inappropriate. Moreover, my other peer group – the university's track & field team – was comprised mainly of younger (i.e., 18-23 year old) individuals who had very limited understanding of what my work entailed, meaning outings with

[36] McIntosh (1989) said the following about White privilege: "I have come to see white privilege as an invisible package of unearned assets which I can count on cashing in each day, but about which I was 'meant' to remain oblivious. White privilege is like an invisible weightless knapsack of special provisions, maps, passports, codebooks, visas, clothes, tools and blank checks" (p. 10). In other words, those with White privilege live in a society where their ways of knowing, being, and doing are reaffirmed, and where they are automatically given the benefit of the doubt in social situations. See McIntosh (1989) for examples.

the team were more of a distraction from the challenges than they were opportunities to work through them. The university offers counseling services, yet the time required to make an appointment, attend the meetings, and establish rapport with the counselor distract from a graduate student's work. Graduate studies, even a PhD, is, relatively speaking, a short-term game. So then, we "suck it up" for now and hope we can hang on long enough to make it through without snapping. The counseling can come later, after the thesis is submitted. I'll have time then, right?

Identity: Who Am I?

I can still feel the gaze I received from the community representative (who I'll call Bob) as I handed him the tobacco pouch. I was involved in the Indigenous Recreation and Health Strategy at the time, which was a group focused on researching ways in which our parent organization could better connect with Indigenous communities. Part of our obligations involved hosting various celebrations of Indigenous cultures. We invited Bob to one such celebration to perform the traditional territories acknowledgement. Bob was a well-respected Indigenous leader in the community, and someone who I admired. When I heard he would be attending our celebration, I was both excited and nervous, as one typically is in anticipation for a meeting with someone they admire.

Tobacco is generally meant to be offered prior to making a request, although protocols vary from one culture to the next. Bob had already provided the territories acknowledgement, and I was offering him the tobacco as more of a thank-you. As I held out the tobacco pouch in my hand, Bob, who seemingly stood a foot taller than me, looked down at me with a stern, unimpressed gaze. He accepted the tobacco pouch but seemed to do so reluctantly. Bob didn't scorn me or correct me; he actually remained very silent, so to this day I wonder if he felt as though I was disrespecting his culture by not adhering to the accepted protocol. I truly don't know, yet feelings of inadequacy linger and re-emerge each time I think of the gaze I received that day, and thinking back on that experience reminds me of a similar instance in which I had been told who I was (or wasn't). Years prior to my experience with Bob, an authority figure I had previously revered suggested to me that I should not be facilitating talking circles with Indigenous youth from my hometown because I am not part of that culture. Yet the feelings of rejection I have had since moving to the city have made me understand that I don't belong to the

culture here, either (see my discussion *Schinke, Blodgett, and Brown, Can You Please Come Talk to My Team?*). So then, where do I belong? Who am I?

In the case of my experience with Bob, I was a perceivably White, naïve university student breaking a cultural protocol by offering tobacco after-the-fact; yet I was also someone genuinely trying to do his part to promote the inclusion of Indigenous cultures in the work setting. Actually, it was more than that. I was trying to create an environment in which I felt I would fit. I suppose that's the rub, then. The racialized meanings associated with my physical appearance suggest "White". Indeed, *Person* characteristics can influence the interactions between people (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998). Within the Person characteristics group there are three distinct categories (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998; Tudge et al., 2009): resource characteristics (mental and emotional attributes, social and material resources), force characteristics (temperament, motivation, persistence), and demand characteristics (characteristics that are recognized immediately, such as skin color). Elder et al. (1985, as cited in Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998) provided an example of the role demand characteristics can play in interactions with others by explaining that the psychosocial wellbeing of girls during the great depression was affected by mistreatment from the girls' fathers, with the extent of mistreatment being greater for girls who were considered less attractive. Similarly, my pale skin color suggests to others that I am "White", and this recognition can influence peoples' perceptions regarding my resource characteristics (Tudge et al., 2009), as it implies that I belong to the oppressing group. Indeed, I have much of the ethnicity and privilege associated with the oppressor, yet this assessment is not consistent with the values and affinities I have suppressed in my heart. Bob couldn't see my heart, though, for the exchange was brief, and he likely understood there is a great deal of tokenism that occurs in workplace settings. Perhaps he considered me to be a pawn of that tokenism.

I gravitate toward Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and doing because, to me, they seem healthier than the isolating, competition-driven ways of Western capitalist society (see, for instance, Maté's talk at Altruism_1980, 2014). I could discuss the ways in which I feel I have been cheated by the latter type of society, but perhaps it is more efficient and equally helpful to speak generally. The human genus spent 99% of its existence in small-band gatherer-hunter societies in which communal living was the norm, and where people relied on each other for survival (Narvaez 2013). When we look at the requirements needed for healthy brain

development in humans (see, for instance, Maté, 2012), we see a need for frequent and meaningful child-caregiver interactions. Capitalist society, which often fails to provide these interactions to the extent needed, is truly toxic to the human species (Altruism_1980, 2014; see also Heartspeak, 2009).

I suppose, though, the way we feel inside doesn't really matter, or at least that's the lesson I have learned from the impressions I have received on many occasions, with the Bob scenario being an example. Most of my lineage is Euro-Canadian. Although there have been murmurs of an Ojibway ancestor on my mom's side of the family, this ancestry has not been embraced or even discussed at much length. Colonizers have worked long and hard to convey the message that to be Indigenous is to be inferior (e.g., the civ/sav [civilized/savage] dichotomy; LaRocque, 2010). I was told that my great grandmother would deny our Ojibway heritage when it was brought up in conversation, and now I wonder if that is why this heritage was spoken of so little during my upbringing. Whatever the case, being politically/racially White through a lack of Indigenous ancestors, physically White by having pale skin, yet spiritually Indigenous by believing in Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and doing presents a very difficult situation in which one feels as though they do not belong anywhere.

Memmi, Tell Me Who I Am

Memmi (1967) provided a *Portrait of the Colonizer*, including descriptions of the situations of *The Colonizer who Refuses* as well as *The Colonizer who Accepts*. Although both portraits are relevant to my experiences doing what I call Indigenous research in a colonial academy, the former portrait is more relevant to me personally. *The Colonizer who Accepts* can be found creeping around every corner, it seems, meaning graduate students engaged in Indigenous research will have to deal with this person, in all their White fragility[37] and privilege-denying glory, from time to time. For this section, however, I focus on *The Colonizer who Refuses*, linking that portrait to my own troubled, identity-confused situation. As I conveyed in my Bob story, the White student who aligns him or herself against the oppressor becomes caught

[37] DiAngelo (2006) defined White fragility as, "a state in which even a minimum amount of racial stress becomes intolerable, triggering a range of defensive moves. These moves include the outward display of emotions such as anger, fear, and guilt, and behaviors such as argumentation, silence, and leaving the stress-inducing situation. These behaviors, in turn, function to reinstate White racial equilibrium" (p. 214). With respect to racial stress, DiAngelo (2006) stated, "[r]acial stress results from an interruption to what is racially familiar" (p. 214).

between two worlds. Memmi`s portrait of *The Colonizer who Refuses* does a great job of explaining this predicament.

Memmi explained that *The Colonizer who Refuses* is one who chooses to live in the colonized land, but whose morals do not allow him/her to accept the oppression of the colonized. By opposing colonization yet still privileging from it, *The Colonizer who Refuses* lives in a state of contradiction. Refusing colonization makes this person a traitor to his/her people. As Memmi stated, "His friends will become surly; his superiors will threaten him" (p. 22), and we do indeed see this type of tension between parties in the colonial academy.

According to Memmi, *The Colonizer who Refuses* has three choices: 1) submit to the colonizers, 2) leave the colony, or 3) try to join the colonized group (i.e., become a "turncoat", p. 22). Memmi believed the third solution to be quite problematic. To join the colonized, *The Colonizer who Refuses* would have to reject the privileges automatically afforded to colonizers, which is a very difficult thing to do. I, for instance, am funded for a project that would not exist if not for the oppression of First Nations peoples. I tell myself my PhD project is a way of contributing to "the cause", but I am reminded that colonial acts always require justification (LaRocque, 2010), and so I question who is benefitting most from my work. Being reflexive about our experiences, although important for growth, can result in conflicting feelings that are very hard to reconcile. Ignorance is bliss, as they say.

What differs from my experiences and the portrait Memmi painted for *The Colonizer who Refuses*, however, is that the latter finds that the culture of the colonized does not resonate with him/her, so he/she does not adopt it. In Memmi's words, "Many traits of the colonized shock or irritate him" (p. 25). In my case, First Nations cultures do resonate (or at least the parts with which I have become familiar), and my adoption of cultural activities has only been impeded by me listening to others, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, telling me, in one way or another, that I don't belong to the colonized group. Yet I recognize that we must be careful not to paint any group of people with the same brush. Indeed, generalizations are often necessary if one is to say anything at all, but disclaimers of those generalizations are warranted as a means of respecting the differences within groups (for example, recognizing that the First Nations group includes many distinct nations).

Of relevance here is Memmi's mention that the leftist colonizer, upon learning more about the colonized, condemns some of the methods the colonized use in their struggle for liberty

from the oppressor. Initially I had found myself disagreeing with Memmi, as I was unaware of any methods of liberation used by First Nations peoples that seemed inconsistent with my own ethics. For example, Wilkes (2015) created a database containing information on resistance events, which she defined as "any event involving noninstitutional political tactics conducted by two or more individuals (Olzark 1992)" (p. 114). According to Wilkes, there have been over 500 such events between 1980 and the date of her publication (2015). Examples of events described in her database include "marches, demonstrations, road blockades, rail blockades, land occupations, building occupations, and 'other' events such as hunger strikes and boycotts" (Wilkes, 2015, p. 114; for more recent examples, see Manuel & Klein, 2020). Since the labels provided here do not suggest violence, I could easily claim that I am fully on board with respect to the ways in which Indigenous peoples generally (and First Nations peoples more specifically) have resisted colonialism at least over the course of my own lifetime (i.e., since 1990). However, perhaps this claim would be influenced more by my own desire to belong and identify with a group than it would be by critical thought, as we know that there is conflict regarding issues of resistance even within First Nations, with some people resisting and some siding with the colonizers in certain situations.

For example, in 2020 members of the Wet'suwet'en Nation protested the Coastal Gaslink pipeline via a blockade (see Abedi, 2020). The pipeline was meant to cross unceded territory and had the blessing of elected chiefs from First Nations groups in the area, but the Wet'suwet'en hereditary chiefs resisted. In this circumstance, I would choose to support the Wet'suwet'en hereditary chiefs, but that decision would be based on my own beliefs regarding historic colonial injustices and environmental concerns. If my decision was motivated strictly by a desire to support First Nations peoples, the division among the Wet'suwet'en would be very problematic for me. Thus, we see that the colonial situation in Canada is not as simple as "us versus them", and that, as Memmi suggested, my decisions are contingent upon my own beliefs first and foremost.

As Memmi explained, eventually the leftist colonizer must either reject the methods of the colonized that contrast to his/her own beliefs, or he/she must reject his/her own beliefs. As Memmi stated, "either he no longer recognizes the colonized, or he no longer recognizes himself" (p. 32). What Memmi said here offers some insight into my own experiences, as despite the privileges afforded to me through the (predominant) Euro-Canadian side of my

lineage, I never really did identify with that background. My developmental environment inspired within me a connection to nature and Indigenous traditional ways of livelihood, as well as spirituality. Those aspects were and still are embedded within me. Yet perceptions formed by onlookers likely do not recognize these aspects, as I have felt the need to suppress them while attending a colonial academy. I suppose I have merely been playing the game of the colonizer, as it is success at that game that leads to the financial stability toward which we strive in a capitalist society. I suppose this suppression of the self is another way capitalist society alienates us from ourselves, rendering us captives of the system as opposed to truly free beings (see Marx, 1844).

Yet as Memmi wrote, a challenge remains for the leftist colonizer who succeeds in rejecting colonial ways of being and adopting the ideologies of the colonized. As Memmi said, "[t]o succeed in becoming a turncoat, as he has finally resolved to do, it is not enough to accept the position of the colonized, it is necessary to be loved by them" (p. 37); and, thus, we now see why Bob's gaze had such an impact on my feelings of identity. It felt like a gaze of rejection, and in that moment, I had experienced what Memmi wrote about so many years ago. As Memmi explained, *The Colonizer who Refuses* was born into the oppressor group, and his/her actions do not change that; he/she is automatically excluded from the colonized group: "The colonized in the midst of whom he lives are not his people and never will be" (p. 39). In the end, according to Memmi, *The Colonizer who Refuses* must either forever live in a state of uneasiness, or return to the metropole.

Learning by Experiencing: To Be a Good Social Scientist, You Gotta Get Outta the Lab

It was the midst of the pandemic of 2020. Distance runners near and far had been patient with race cancellations and diligent in their training despite significant uncertainty. With the comments of a prominent elite distance runner regarding love- versus fear-based decision-making floating around in my otherwise empty head, I built up the courage to sign up to race a marathon. The timing was good relative to where I was at in my running career. I had raced on the indoor track, on cross country courses, and on the roads (at shorter distances) numerous times, and I had many half marathons under my belt. I had built my mileage up over the years, and my five years of eligibility with the university cross country and track teams had all been used. In short, I had the strength and freedom to go after 26.2 miles. Unfortunately, as I previously alluded, it was the year 2020, road races near and far had been cancelled. Not

wanting to wait throughout the summer for an official race, I decided to sign up for a late-spring virtual marathon. Although expensive, I had no problem paying the fee because I wanted the result of my first (and likely only) marathon to be recognized online to make it "real" (given the result was sufficiently favorable to submit).

Since it was a virtual marathon, I felt I needed a witness, someone to say I did, in fact, run the appropriate distance in the time I claimed. I immediately knew who to ask: the Captain. No, I'm not referring to some authority figure; I'm referring to a fellow track teammate who, upon making his debut with the university team for which I had been competing for a few years, boasted of his running prowess and exclaimed that the team "now had a new captain, daddio!". Standing 6'3" but otherwise having the "distance runner" build, the Captain was lean and toned. Like me, he was of pale complexion, but unlike me, who, at the time, had long, brown hair often contained in a pony tail and grown, in part, in support of the many young First Nations boys who maintain long hair for cultural reasons often despite abuse from others (see Krugel, 2018), the Captain had a large, bleached blond cloud on top of his head that was usually constrained by, yet still bulged over, a purple sweatband. If not for that sweatband, the Captain's hairdo, at its true, expanded size, would have caught too much of the prairie winds, blowing the Captain out to farmers' fields across the city's perimeter. In such a situation, out in the fields, the Captain's large hairdo, as well as his little 70's moustache and "soul patch", would have been exposed to the blades of all kinds of farming equipment. Thus, it was absolutely necessary that the purple sweatband remain securely in place. To this day I have never seen him without that headband, and I have come to believe it is superglued to his head.

The Captain's ego was as large as his hairdo, yet he was a teammate I could count on. There had been countless times in which I had asked him for favors and he always replied, "You got it, daddio!". Although redundant, the Captain said "daddio" at the end of most of his sentences and, also redundantly, there were a few such sentences that he really liked to say. For instance, at the end of workouts, the Captain would often exclaim, "My legs are noodled, daddio!", and then this would be followed by some silence before another "daddio" line was delivered with the enthusiasm of a cartoon character. It was with this enthusiasm that the Captain agreed to help me out with my virtual marathon. Not only would he be there on his bicycle to witness my run, he would provide encouragement along the way and, at pre-

determined distances so as to mimic a real race, would act as an “aid station”, handing me my fluids as I ran by.

The remaining individuals in what would comprise my support team volunteered upon me mentioning the run. Joaquin was a master of the distance, having run many marathons in the past. He had the characteristic distance runner build, along with long, brown hair and a very full, long, brown beard and moustache combination. His arms were decorated with tattoos right from the wrists up to the shoulders, and he spoke in a relaxed and unassuming tone, using phrases such as “groovy, man,” and “quit harshin’ my mellow, man.” I had met Joaquin at a bowling tournament two summers ago, and I had recently invited him to a 5km time trial in which myself and some fellow runners were partaking. After the time trial Joaquin and I got to discussing my virtual marathon, and he offered to pace me for a good portion of it. When the day arrived, however, he actually went three additional miles than he had offered despite blisters forming underneath his feet. I remain very humbled by his generosity to this day. Judging by his extreme kindness, as well as his beard, long hair, and excellent pacing skills, I still believe that Joaquin may be the second coming of Jesus.

“Supe”, which was a shortened form of “Supervisor”, had offered to cycle alongside Joaquin and I as we ran. That moniker, “Supe”, had emerged maybe sixth months prior, when I had told him I would be travelling out of town on business. Appreciating my companionship so much, he had replied that I could only stay away for one week. I told him he wasn’t my supervisor, and without hesitance, he said that yes, in fact, he was. He and I had known each other for a few years now and had become quite close. Supe was also an alumnus of the university track team and, being from South Africa, understood the struggles of newcomer athletes. He and I had discussions regarding these challenges on numerous occasions, and I had seen many parallels between the challenges he mentioned and those facing First Nations athletes from rural and remote communities who pursue mainstream sport away from home. In that way, Supe and I shared some common ground; and despite such challenges, Supe maintained a joyful demeanor when around others, and he had a delightful sense of humor. This occasion was no different, as Supe provided a great deal of comedic relief during the early portions of the run, claiming over and over again that the Captain’s big hair was blocking his field of view as he cycled.

Similar to Supe, Linda had also offered to help with my virtual marathon by cycling alongside. Linda was another alumnus from the university track team and, although born and raised in the city, her parents had immigrated from Kenya. Her enthusiasm and positive attitude had long impressed me, and I remain grateful for her willingness to leave her home at the far northeast end of the city in the wee hours of the morning to be at our start line in the south end of the city by about 6:00am. Although Linda missed the start of the run, she was able to catch up with us down the road. Her encouragement, however, was realized long before she caught up, as she began yelling as soon as we were within her view. The road was long and straight, and I reckon we must have been about a half mile or more away when we first heard her. Indeed, Linda's encouragement started early and, despite my somewhat unpleasant demeanor at times, it didn't cease until all 26.23 miles had been run. After the run I actually had to apologize to Linda for an event that took place at around mile 13. Linda had handed me the wrong fluid bottle (one without a gel taped to it) and I angrily threw it into the bushes, saying, rather bluntly, "not that one". Although the issue was quickly remedied, I still regretted snapping at her, especially considering how she was sacrificing much of her Saturday morning to help me out. Linda was quick to forgive, though, and she understood that I was taking the run seriously.

And then there was Nicole. Nicole was working on her PhD in biology, studying the mating rituals of urban skunks, after having spent some time as a student-athlete in the deep south. Nicole had completed a master's degree, also in biology, while down south. Her master's project examined the mating rituals of bullfrogs, and to this day I still don't know why Nicole was so passionate about animal mating rituals, but then again, I never bothered to ask. Anyway, although swimming was her main sport, Nicole had long dabbled in running and had decided to join our university training group the previous winter. It wasn't long until I noticed Nicole's great leadership qualities, and it seemed to me that she had a lot of potential as a distance runner, so I would encourage her to make contributions to the team in both respects. Due to the lack of experience her teammates had with accents other than their own, many of her running companions quite enjoyed the small ways in which Nicole's accent had been influenced by her time in the deep south. For instance, prior to races, and much to the bemusement of everyone within earshot, Nicole would often, and very enthusiastically, say, "y'all have a good race now, ya hear!?" Although her accent was much appreciated for how it lightened the atmosphere of otherwise nerve-wracking cross country and track meets, the amusement her teammates felt

didn't distract them from also feeling a great sense of appreciation for the encouragement and direction Nicole provided. It's hard to be a leader though, so I would encourage Nicole to keep making such contributions by highlighting how much that sort of thing mattered in team settings. With respect to running, however, I'm not sure if Nicole needed any encouragement, as she took her performance quite seriously. She approached my virtual marathon in a similar fashion, remaining dialed into the task at hand for the duration of the run, even jumping in front of busses to keep them out of our path, cursing the drivers in her deep south accent.

Lastly, Dyler, my long-time training partner and dog-sitter, had come out to watch the final stages of the virtual marathon. The way in which my dog, Draco, would act when Dyler dropped him off at my place after I returned from trips made me well aware that Dyler's prowess as a dog-sitter was unparalleled. Draco's sadness to be separated from Dyler always outweighed his excitement to be reunited with me, although he'd return to his usual, happy self after a few games of harass-the-neighbor's-baby. Anyway, in addition to being an expert dog-sitter, Dyler, much like myself, was an alumnus of the university's track team. He had been born and raised in the city and had stayed there right through medical school, save for one semester abroad. Standing about my height (6'2"), Dyler was of Euro-Canadian descent and had short, black hair that, for some reason, he liked to dye green. Dyler and I had been through many workouts together, and in all types of situations: outdoor track, indoor track, on the road, on treadmills, and through city parks during cross country seasons. If there was anyone who knew how to inspire me in the final stages of a race, it was him.

And so that was the team: the Captain, Joaquin, Supe, Linda, Nicole, Dyler, and me. There was a mix of personalities in the group, and no individual's background was the same. Six of us either had competed or were currently competing with the university's track team. Five members of the group were from Winnipeg, whereas Supe and I were from areas that were culturally vastly different from the city in which we now lived. Linda, who was among the five from Winnipeg, had the mixed experience of being from the city, yet having parents who immigrated and maintained certain aspects of their culture while in their new home. Yet despite all of our different upbringings, all seven of us came together on the day to work toward a common goal. If I had been given the chance to select any team I wanted from all of the runners with which I had interacted over the years, that team would have been almost no different than this one. The only difference would have been one old teammate who had moved away years

prior. This team was incredibly special, as it had taken me years to find and bond with this group of people. To be transparent, I must acknowledge that I bonded to different extents, and in different ways, with members of that marathon group, and I realize that not all of those bonds were destined to be long-term. Yet the experience I shared with this group was a very positive one that shines brightly among the sea of disheartening experiences wherein I felt disconnected from my university teammates. I remember one story in particular…

It happened after the last track meet of the year. It was an okay showing on both sides, with the men coming in third and the women taking fifth. Although some athletes were disappointed with their individual performances, we all recognized that another track season had come to a close, and that was reason enough to celebrate. I decided that it was about time I try to fit in to the culture of the group. For years I had dodged most of the social activities, as my social anxiety, discomfort in crowded, noisy environments, and penchant for sleep always convinced me to opt out. Yet after the meet, toward the evening hours, I found myself waiting outside the hotel as my teammates showed up one by one, dressed in all sorts of weird party clothes. I knew it would be uncomfortable for me, but I was willing to give the after party a shot if it would help me bond with the team.

As we gathered, one of my teammates noticed my presence and, with a slight look of puzzlement on his face, asked me if I was going with them to the party. I replied with a nod, saying that yes, this year I would see what the after party was all about. Without hesitance, my teammate commended me for my decision, saying he was pleasantly surprised because he hadn't expected me to come along. To this day I ask myself what he meant by that. Did he recognize that I was going out of my comfort zone by attending an after party that would see attendance from hundreds of athletes, most of them half corked even before entering the dingy, dimly lit, noisy, smelly, cramped building? Indeed, for someone with social anxiety and who had grown up in a rural town of approximately 600 people, such an atmosphere was both foreign and uncomfortable. On the other hand, perhaps he meant that his opinion of me had changed from what it had once been. In other words, did he think lesser of me beforehand because I had avoided all the after parties until now? In his eyes, was I not, back then, a member of the group?

Schinke, Blodgett, and Brown, Can You Please Come Talk to My Team?

Sport allowed me to live some of the experiences with which First Nations athletes from rural and remote communities (i.e., my research population), as well as newcomer athletes, must

deal. I recognize that I was born into White privilege, never had to deal with racism, and never had to adjust to living in a new country, but I still struggled greatly with acculturation, including feelings of isolation and not being valued. I dealt with depression and other mental health challenges exacerbated by my feelings of isolation, and I realized how cold the city environment could be compared to my small hometown. As well, being more Indigenous than Western in spirit allowed me to see the racism embedded in post-secondary institutions perhaps more easily than many other White students would see it. Pursuing university sport, having the aforementioned opportunities, and feeling the aforementioned feelings was critical to me truly understanding the phenomena I studied. Not all researchers have that same privilege.

As suggested by my story above, the running community to which I belonged was comprised of individuals from a diversity of backgrounds. Indeed, people from diverse backgrounds can still cooperate and work together toward a common goal. Yet we know that mainstream/university sport can also be a very isolating environment for Indigenous (Blodgett, 2014; Schinke, Peltier, et al. 2013) and newcomer (Brown, 2020) athletes. When I was running with my teammates stride for stride, breath for breath, and heartbeat for heartbeat, they and I were exactly the same. Yet it was interactions off the track and away from the cross country course that made me feel like an outsider. Supe had shared similar sentiments with me over the years, and so had a few other athletes from outside the city. A mentor of mine once told me that it's what we think we know that causes hurt... not what we know, what we *think* we know. In other words, instead of either living with mystery or asking for more information when we see teammates resisting certain aspects of our team's culture, sometimes we form perceptions about the "other", and the "other" can feel these perceptions because they influence the interactions we have with them.

Schinke, Peltier, et al. (2013) wrote that when Indigenous athletes resist certain aspects of mainstream sport culture, this resistance may be viewed by some as deviance rather than what it truly is: cultural fidelity. Acculturation is a complicated process in which one is engaged in a negotiation between accepting aspects of the new culture and keeping aspects of their own (see Berry, 1999). The university sport system, however, can be very unaccommodating to athletes undergoing this process. For example, in his work with newcomer university athletes in Manitoba, Brown (2020) found that coaches, staff, and teammates play important roles in either helping newcomer athletes feel welcome or unwelcome. Brown (2020) highlighted the varying

degrees to which acculturation among athletes in his study was shared versus shouldered (see Schinke, McGannon, et al., 2013). As opposed to shouldered acculturation, where athletes shoulder the burden of acculturation themselves, shared acculturation involves coaches and teammates learning about the cultures of athletes (Schinke, McGannon, et al., 2013), which can facilitate more inclusive sport settings. With respect to the university setting, the athletes in Brown's (2020) research called for "more discussions around cultural sensitivity and awareness as well as more events that allow for culture expression or exchange in the varsity setting" (p. 87).

In my own experience, shared acculturation has been very rare, yet it has helped to some extent. I once had a teammate question me about trapping in the north. I still remember the interest he had in the activity, and how non-judgmental he seemed with his questions. On the other hand, when discussing such harvesting activities with people in the city, there have been occasions where I have felt the simple dismissal of who I was (for instance, in the reply "I don't think I could ever kill an animal"). Although there was never any harm intended, this type of response nevertheless suggested to me that perhaps they did not understand what such activities mean to many people "like me". In short, I suppose I felt that my efforts to share aspects of my culture were simply dismissed due to differing beliefs and values. Fair enough? I'm not so sure. Many Indigenous people in Manitoba still rely quite heavily on food from the land, and it can sometimes be hard to find people in the city who really understand that type of livelihood. That type of dismissal can exacerbates feelings of isolation that occur while living away from home, in a largely culturally irrelevant setting.

That Sweet Obsession

Back to the virtual marathon now…

There I stood in the gravel parking lot, enveloped by the darkness of the wee morning hours, quiet and calm. Wisps of clouds drifted overhead, but many of the stars remained uncovered, visible. I held in my hand the red tobacco tie my mentor and good friend Heatherrrr had given me a couple years prior. Now was the time to use it. Saying a prayer, I opened the tie and made the offering. A task lay ahead, and I needed strength, for this would be my last ride.

And that was it. Although it took just over two and a half hours, looking back, it was an instant in time, and the finish of my virtual marathon marked my retirement from competitive distance running. I really had no other option than to use a virtual race as my retirement race due

to the cancellations caused by the pandemic. Whatever. It really didn't matter to me. I ran the distance in a decent time, and I had GPS data and witnesses (the Captain, Joaquin, Supe, Linda, Nicole, and Dyler) to vouch for me. Due to my tobacco offering, I also had the spirits with me the whole way. I had never made a tobacco offering on my own before, but this was a very important day, so it warranted a request to the Creator. In addition, during the race I had worn my special orange singlet. Our university cross country team had been lent those orange singlets by the University of Saskatchewan (USask) the previous fall. Back in that era, USask would host an annual cross country meet and, just over three years prior to the date of my marathon, had gotten their athletes to wear orange singlets in honour of residential school survivors, as their cross country meet was always close to Orange Shirt Day. The next year USask had singlets made for all university athletes competing in their meet, and the meet that year involved the presence of Elders as well as ceremony and drumming to kick things off in a good way. My coach, knowing the significance of the proceedings to me, had negotiated with USask to allow 5th (i.e., final) year athletes on his team to keep their singlets. I cherish mine to this day, and I also cherish the opportunity my coach gave me to speak to the team about the significance of the orange singlets and Orange Shirt Day in our team meeting the evening before the race – another example of my role as an athlete supplementing my role as a graduate student engaging in Indigenous research… or maybe it's the other way around. Indeed, Rice (2019) wrote that Indigenous sport is about the values we demonstrate through the doing of sport, and my own experiences, plus the research in which I have engaged as a graduate student, has taught me that there are ways we can contribute to our teams in addition to the athletic performance component.

The athletic performance component, although obviously important, can be a real bastard, and that's why the virtual marathon, my retirement race, was so significant to me; that's why I made the tobacco offering and wore the orange singlet. I had been obsessing over my performance for years now; it had gotten to the point where if there was a shoe, a (legal) supplement, a recovery tool, or some other piece of equipment that I thought could help me improve my race times, I was buying it. It was a matter of being professional, of taking things seriously. In addition, the weekly mileage I was making, combined with all the strengthening exercises, stretching, and foam rolling, would consume significant amounts of time, with some days (at the expense of my academic studies) being totally devoted only to training, resting, and eating, and the eating part got to be expensive… around $150 per week. Those grocery bills

would hurt every time. Needless to say, I tried to compensate by not spending in other areas. I still only own two pairs of casual pants.

Indeed, I was prioritizing running at the expense of family, friends, and school. There were instances in which I would slip out of conference sessions to either run or take a nap (so I could run more), and naps were especially prioritized when I felt a cold coming on. Being sick meant compromised training, so it was essential that I did what I could to prevent illness. My guess is that focusing so much on athletics added a couple semesters to my PhD. I dealt with strong feelings of guilt when comparing myself to other graduate students who seemed to be in the lab all the time, and eventually I learned to stop comparing myself to them. We all have our obligations outside school. I felt I was making beneficial connections through mine, connections that facilitated opportunities for me to make my team setting better by applying what I was learning through my research. The Orange Shirt Day discussion at my team's pre-race meeting was one such contribution. The axiology of Wilson's (2001) Indigenous research paradigm (i.e., the paradigm I followed in my PhD work) is to give back, and my commitment to sport facilitated meaningful opportunities for me to do that. For me – a northern rube who often does not feel valued in the city environment – meaningful work is critical.

Lastly, through my university sport pursuits, I also learned about, and was constantly reminded of, the intricacies of university-level sport (workout structure, competitions, travel logistics, and so forth), and I build much rapport with university-level coaches. As such, I have a true understanding of what university-level athletes go through, and a true understanding of the duties university-level coaches are required to perform. This knowledge will help me better connect with both athletes and coaches in the future, should I continue in my current field. In addition, I understand that it really takes a team effort to improve university sport settings. Although improvements may begin with the coach (but don't have to), I have long believed that coaches keep the ship afloat, while athletes are the wind in its sails. In other words, coaches are very occupied with the duties they already have, and although we must work with them as we strive for improvement, athletes can make a significant difference when on board.

Coakley and Rice. Listen to These Men.

Much of sport in the mainstream follows a neoliberal model which emphasizes competition, individualism, hierarchies, winning, and rewards (Coakley, 2011). It's easy to get caught up and swept away when performance is your sole focus. Although my coach helped us

set and work toward performance-related goals, he never put any unhealthy pressure on me or, to my knowledge, anyone else on the team. Victories were celebrated briefly, and we learned and moved on from losses quickly. Much of the pressure I felt came from my own view of what it meant to be an athlete. If I wasn't obsessing over the minutiae, I wouldn't have felt I had the right to call myself a serious athlete and, if anyone could understand the chip I had on my shoulder, they would understand why I was so driven. Yet along the way, my view of what it meant to contribute to a team broadened. As noted earlier, Indigenous sport is more about values than performance (Rice, 2019). In the sport of distance running, there is always only one "winner" (unless you're on a relay or cross country team), but this nature presents middle- and back-of-the-pack runners an opportunity to rethink what "winning" is. Although personal bests tend to be the automatic focus when one is not in a position to win, there are also things we can do to strengthen the performances of our teammates and, with Rice's (2019) sentiments regarding Indigenous sport in mind, I would consider contributing to the success of teammates to be a "win". We each have things to contribute outside performance, and Indigenous sport, in Rice's (2019) perspective, emphasizes this notion.

Not everyone is familiar with Indigenous approaches to sport, however, but such unfamiliarity presented me with the opportunity to engage in some knowledge translation during my time as a university athlete. Recognizing the cultural unawareness on my own team, as I discussed previously, as well as recent reports of abusive sport environments (e.g., Carty, 2020), I began to develop the Front Runner Project (FRP). After meeting with Elders, scholars, and having discussions with both Indigenous and non-Indigenous student-athletes, the FRP evolved from its inception to become a five-year passage of rites in which university athletes irrespective of race embark on journeys of personal development, engaging in ceremony, learning from Indigenous Elders, and giving back to Indigenous communities through coaching clinics, which recent work suggests there is a desire for (see Chapter 7). The athletes are asked to apply what they learn to their team environments, making those environments more inclusive for present and future Indigenous athletes, as well as for non-Indigenous athletes. In this way, the athletes will be carrying forth the flame that the original Front Runners carried from St. Paul, MN, to Winnipeg, MB, for the 1967 Pan American Games, as well as the flame the remaining original Front Runners carried into the stadium for the 1999 Pan American Games. Like many of the

other engagements I have had, this project would have never been inspired if I didn't get out of the lab.

Harmful Research: I Know You Forgive Me, But I Don't

I still cringe when I think back to the community night. There we were, me, the teacher who helped facilitate the research, and a few of the research participants, all seated around tables set up in the common area outside classrooms on the fourth floor of the school. It was after school hours, so traffic through the area was almost non-existent. The monitor and sound system had been set up by a couple of teacher-volunteers, and we were ready to show the video we had put together to convey the findings of our research examining the experiences of urban Indigenous youth regarding positive youth development through sport/physical activity. I had met with the students only a couple of times, and although some seemed candid in their replies to my interview questions, I knew more work could have been put in to build rapport prior to the interview process, and to maintain connections after (recognizing that the latter is largely facilitated through the former). On top of that, the film added to the evidence of my ineptitude for this type of work.

I felt the cool dampness of sweat trickling beneath each arm as I sat there listening to the collection of experiences that, at the fault of solely the producer (me), were weighted heavily toward deficit-based thinking. I had directed the entire project without considering the implications of having an overall deficit-focus to the video, including how the students themselves would feel about it. I had offered the youth a chance to make suggestions to the video prior to it being finalized, but perhaps I had not done enough to deconstruct the researcher-participant hierarchy to the extent that it would allow the youth to feel comfortable suggesting changes. Regardless, this is a mistake I should have caught.

There are a great deal of strengths youth possess. Many Indigenous youth have been confronted by systemic, institutional, and overt racism throughout their young lives. For example, to this day we still hear reports of racist slurs being spewed at hockey games (e.g., Moore, 2019). Yet through it all, the resilience and optimism I have seen from Indigenous youth is inspiring. And now, sitting there in front of the screen, watching the film and turning periodically to see the unimpressed expressions on the faces of the youth, I realized I had made a monumental error, and one that would continue to haunt me. I realize an apology is not enough. An apology is what the conservative government offered years ago (The Canadian Press, 2008),

and to this day neither they, nor any other political party has succeeded in closing equity gaps between Indigenous and White Canadians (meaning bringing the Western group up to speed, as Indigenous peoples have simply been expected to adjust to Euro-centric norms). Although progress in this area has been made, there have also been steps taken in the other direction. Mistakes can hurt us and others, but they can also open our eyes to the destructive behaviors we maintain. Through reflexivity and meta-cognition, we can grow and do better. There have been many such "losses" along my graduate studies career, and I expect there will be more as I continue to learn and grow in other roles. I just hope that if any hurt is caused, I am the one feeling it, not the research participants.

Self-Assessments of Worth as a Researcher: Imposter Syndrome and the White Savior

I rambled away, trying to articulate myself as the letters went back and forth. I knew it wasn't right, and I knew vaguely why, but I didn't know well enough to explain it succinctly. I cringed at the thought of my image – very uncharacteristically dressed to the nines – being displayed in their journal… being used as promotional material. Yet we must hold our ground, and with that string of letters, I managed to hold mine. I still don't regret it, and I don't think I ever will. I think dodging the Vanier promotion was one of the best decisions I have ever made. At last I had followed my heart as opposed to succumbing to the pressures of the institution. My heart despised how some students, the ones who seemingly fit the university's mold, are celebrated while other students, who are equally as hard working, or even more so, are never the cause of such folderol. Much like Preston's (2008) sentiments about GPA (i.e., that it is biased against Indigenous students due to its favoritism for Western epistemologies), I had recognized that the university demonstrates favoritism for its own values. There are many brilliant minds among students in the institution, yet the university is narrow with respect to which type of "brilliance" it chooses to celebrate. In my decision, I was also concerned about being seen as a "White saviour", as we know history in Canada has been distorted in such a way as to turn colonizers into heroes (see Green, 1995). Even when truly giving back in our research, we must do so with humility, as reciprocity without humility fails to recognize that we researchers are benefitting, in our careers and via personal growth, from the knowledge participants share with us.

In the context of heroes and villains, it seems we're either putting statues up or taking them down, and in the case of the Vanier promotion, I refused to let my statue be erected. To

tout my accomplishments without also recognizing not only the White privilege that is behind much of them, but also the other (villain) side of me, is to convey a very altered image of reality. Indeed, in the background there lingers a very lucky, yet obsessive, angry, insecure, people-pleasing basket-case with a plethora of mental health issues. I had been hard working at one point, but being forced to compete for grade-point-average, like a horse being forced to race for a carrot, started to take its toll on my wellbeing, and it continues to affect me to this day. I'm not sure I'd be able to take another class or study for another test, and there have been nights where I dreamt I was back in those situations, only to wake up thankful that that part of my life is over. These days I can barely write, and I question whether I deserve to be working in a field where I am outgunned in numerous areas by other graduate students. Imposter syndrome, they call it.

Yet like the value-focused qualities of Indigenous sport (see Rice, 2019), we can also contribute in diverse ways to our research fields. I suppose it just takes time to realize what our strengths are, and this is especially the case for younger graduate students. For example, one of the studies I was planning for my PhD entailed assessing Rathwell and Young's (2016) University Sport Experience Survey (USES) for cultural relevance to Indigenous athletes. The USES was designed to measure the extent to which university sport environments contribute to personal development among athletes, with the target age group being 18 to 25 years, inclusive. According to Rathwell and Young (2016, p. 209), this age range "is characterized as a time period where emerging adults gain independence from parents and explore new opportunities and possible identities (Arnett, 2000, 2006)". For me, this stage seemed to be prolonged, and I am not confident it is over. My graduate studies career, which began in 2013 and is only ending now (2021), has facilitated much growth. I suppose finding our place in our research fields is one of the many ways in which our education as graduate students helps us grow. Indeed, it takes time, but much like watching an elite athlete do their "thing", the person who has found their place and knows it demonstrates a beauty that is unparalleled. With that in mind, I end with the following sentiment:

Have you ever seen a Great Blue Heron flying? It's majestic. It's wings don't beat erratically like those of a duck; rather, it beats its wings slowly. It's a large bird, and it's majestic, taking up space and drawing your gaze. It doesn't seem like it's flying in the sky, fighting the air currents and winds; rather, it seems like it's flying *with* the sky, like how a paintbrush, in the hands of a true artist, works *with* the canvas. It is only from time to time that

we get to witness a true artist, a Great Blue Heron. While all of us ducks stumble about, caught between the air currents and winds that are the institutional pressures of the Western academic setting, the Great Blue Heron lets those currents and winds glide off its mighty wings as it holds its position in the sky. I suppose that, in the end, the goal is to be like the Great Blue Heron. Alas! I am still a duckling.

Conclusion

In the early part of this paper, I said that I would adhere more to a story-telling format as opposed to directing readers toward what is "right", thereby letting readers determine the lessons on their own and in the context of their own unique circumstances. I have told stories related to emotional toil, identity, learning by experiencing, harmful research, and self-assessments of worth as a researcher, including my thoughts on all of those topics in the context of engaging in Indigenous research (i.e., research following an Indigenous research paradigm that prioritizes participants through relational accountability and reciprocity) in a colonial academy. I suppose it's only natural to grow with time, however. My present thoughts are only as permanent as my perspective, and my perspective changes with new experiences. It would be arrogant, and just wrong of me to say that what is written here constitutes wisdom; rather, what is written here is just reflection. My hope, though, is that the reflections I have provided, although just a sampling of the larger collection, will be helpful to other graduate students engaged, or seeking to become engaged, in Indigenous research. I also hope these reflections create some awareness among others in the academic setting (faculty, administrators) and beyond (family members, significant others, friends, peers) regarding some of the challenges faced by people engaged in Indigenous research in colonial academies. Hopefully this awareness leads to understanding, and hopefully that understanding leads to support from members of the aforementioned groups.
Hopefully.

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Chapter 9: General Discussion

In 2015 the government of Canada committed to addressing all 94 Calls to Action created by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC, 2015a; Government of Canada, 2015). According to the TRC:

> [R]econciliation is about establishing and maintaining a mutually respectful relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples in this country. In order for that to happen, there has to be awareness of the past, acknowledgement of the harm that has been inflicted, atonement for the causes, and action to change behaviour. (TRC, 2015b, pp. 6-7).

In keeping with the TRC's (2015b) definition of reconciliation, and after introducing the purpose of this thesis in Chapter 1 as well as conveying my positionality in Chapter 2, Chapter 3 of this research acknowledged the truths of colonization in Canada, connecting these truths to present-day sport situations for Indigenous peoples. After setting this context, Daniels' *Ingredients of Success* was used as a framework in Chapter 4 to discuss barriers to Indigenous athletes' athletic development in terms of sport opportunity, intrinsic motivation, and sport direction. These two chapters served to address the "truth" component of truth and reconciliation while also providing strategies to help address the reconciliation component.

To further help address reconciliation, Chapters 5 and 6 focused on Call to Action #90(ii) (TRC, 2015a, p. 10):

> 90. We call upon the federal government to ensure that national sports policies, programs, and initiatives are inclusive of Aboriginal peoples, including, but not limited to, establishing:
> ii. An elite athlete development program for Aboriginal athletes.

Specifically, Chapters 5 and 6 asked: what are the factors (facilitators and challenges) influencing university sport participation among rural and remote First Nations athletes in Manitoba as seen through their eyes, as well as the eyes of their coaches and teachers, and what are their solutions for change? Chapter 5 examined discussions held with high school athletes as well as their teachers and coaches, and Chapter 6 examined discussions held with university athletes and their coaches, as well as university athlete alumni. Due to the need for Indigenous coaches with respect to facilitating Indigenous athletes' participation in sport (see Canadian Heritage, 2005), Chapter 7 of this research was aimed at informing strategies addressing Call to Action #89:

> We call upon the federal government to amend the Physical Activity and Sport Act to support reconciliation by ensuring that policies to promote physical activity as a fundamental element of health and well-being, reduce barriers to sports participation, increase the pursuit of excellence in sport, and build capacity in the Canadian sport system, are inclusive of Aboriginal peoples. (TRC, 2015a, p. 10).

To do so, Chapter 7 asked: what are the factors (i.e., facilitators [opportunities/supports] and barriers [reduced opportunities/obstructions]) influencing the coaching paths of First Nations coaches in Canada as seen through the eyes of some First Nations coaches? What are some strategies for improvements?

Numerous lessons were learned in the process of compiling Chapters 1 through 7, as certain aspects of the research journey evoked revelations that were transformative in nature. As discussed in multiple locations throughout this work, I followed Wilson's (2001) Indigenous research paradigm (IRP) throughout my PhD work. The decision to use Wilson's (2001) IRP was motivated not only out of respect for Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and doing, but also out of conviction. Yet following Wilson's (2001) IRP in the context of a colonial academy can be a significant challenge. As such, the fictional autoethnography in Chapter 8 was written with two purposes in mind: 1) to inform graduate students engaged, or seeking to become engaged, in Indigenous research (i.e., research following an Indigenous research paradigm prioritizing relational accountability and reciprocity), and 2) to raise awareness of these challenges among others in the academic setting (faculty, administrators) and beyond (family members, significant others, friends, peers) as a means to generate more support for graduate students doing Indigenous research.

What was Uncovered?

I have chosen to synthesize the results of Chapters 5 and 6 (collectively), Chapter 7, and Chapter 8 by discussing what I have learned and what actions I would take, based on the results of these studies, to 1) strengthen recruitment and retention of rural and remote First Nations athletes to/in university sport, and 2) encourage the development of First Nations coaches, and 3) create awareness (for both graduate students and people in positions to support them) regarding the challenges of engaging in research following an Indigenous research paradigm (i.e., any Indigenous research paradigm that prioritizes participants through relational accountability and reciprocity).

Toward Recruitment and Retention of Rural and Remote First Nations Athletes to/in University Sport

It is evident from Chapters 5 and 6 that rural and remote communities often do not have the same sport opportunities and direction available in urban areas. For most on-reserve schools in particular, limited funding only exacerbates issues (see Halas et al., 2013). As Tom mentioned in Chapter 5, subsidies for talented First Nations athletes would be helpful, yet in the short-term there are other strategies that can be employed by individuals to encourage sport participation among rural and remote First Nations athletes. Experiences examined in the current research support previous work emphasizing the roles family members play in facilitating children's sport participation (Côté, 1999; Schinke et al., 2010). In the case of the current research, it seemed as though efforts of family members somewhat compensated for disparities created by the federal government. Indeed, along with introducing their children to sport, parents can provide transportation to practices (either club or school) and competitions, providing opportunities for their children to travel and learn about mainstream sport and cultures within other communities, such as in urban environments (i.e., begin learning to navigate the double-helix; see Forsyth & Paraschak, 2013). As well, families can work to make connections with coaches from clubs and universities teams. The importance of club teams as well as exposure to high-performance, mainstream/university sport was highlighted in Chapter 6, and it should be noted that no university athletes (current or alumni) interviewed in this research had went directly from high school sport in a reserve community to university sport; in all cases, there was some exposure off-reserve, either through a club or league that was not affiliated with a school system, and/or through athletes receiving access to more sport opportunities and better athletic direction by relocating to, or already living in, more affluent, yet still rural communities.

In terms of what club and university coaches and other staff can do to facilitate the recruitment and retention of rural and remote First Nations athletes, participants in this research highlighted that long-term, consistent outreach activities are important, and that engaging in such activities in respectful ways requires cultural awareness. When cultural awareness education is present (or if coaches/staff take it upon themselves to become educated), coaches/staff are better prepared to work to create inclusive team environments, engaging in wholistic, culturally relevant strategies (see Halas et al., 2013) and a shared acculturation approach (see Schinke, McGannon, et al., 2013) in which they incorporate aspects of First Nations athletes' cultures into

team settings, encouraging other athletes to follow suit. Such an approach can help alleviate many of the acculturation challenges by which First Nations athletes are confronted upon moving away from home to pursue mainstream sport (see Blodgett et al., 2014; see also Schinke, Peltier, & Yungblut, 2013).

Regarding academics, priority should be given to providing adequate funding to First Nations schools, and to funding programs that provide educational opportunities to local teachers (and local aspiring teachers) so they can work to obtain the degrees necessary to provide quality education in their own communities (e.g., the Sport, Physical Activity, and Recreation in the Community program at the University of Manitoba; Kozier, 2019). In the meantime, schools could explore strategies to incentivize recruitment and retention of teachers either locally or, if needed, from elsewhere (e.g., agreements with Northern Stores in communities where the cost of groceries is a disincentive with respect to staying in northern communities for the long-term, as Abel suggested in Chapter 5). Moreover, decision-makers at schools must listen to staff members that have been working "on the ground" for multiple years (e.g., Robyn's experience in Chapter 5), especially regarding cultural (ir)relevance in school settings, as cultural exclusion has long been an issue at off-reserve schools (see Kirkness & Barnhardt, 2001). Cultural relevance extends to use of space as well (see Van Ingen & Halas, 2006), as emphasized by Angela in Chapter 6 when she spoke of the Indigenous student lounge she created at her university. Indigenous student centers are one culturally relevant source of academic support as well as community at universities and, as indicated in Chapter 6 of the current research, can be instrumental to First Nations student-athletes' success. Ideally, First Nations students would be automatically connected to these services, but in the case they are not, they need to take initiative in seeking them out. Indeed, in many cases, First Nations athletes must "want it" more than non-First Nations athletes when it comes to university sport, as the former group is quite often given less in terms of both academic and sport opportunity and direction.

Toward the Development of First Nations Coaches

There has been little research in Canada examining the factors influencing First Nations coaches in their coaching roles. Bennie et al. (2019) explored this topic in an Australian context, highlighting numerous facilitators and barriers at Individual, Interpersonal, Organizational, and Sociocultural levels. Chapter 7 of this thesis was inspired by Bennie et al.'s (2019) research and provides an opportunity for comparisons/contrasts to be made. Such an analysis was beyond the

scope of the current research, however, as the current research prioritized the examination of situations in Canada first and foremost.

It is evident from Chapter 7 that the First Nations coaches interviewed had significant experience as athletes prior to becoming coaches. As such, encouraging a greater representation of First Nations peoples within coaching roles begins with making sport settings more conducive to the recruitment and retention of Indigenous athletes (through, for instance, the recommendations provided in Chapters 5 and 6). Although many coaches spoke of positive experiences, it was clear that all had been exposed to negative aspects of sport as well, both as athletes and as coaches. Whereas the positive experiences served as warm memories, the negative experiences, such as racism and, in Winona's case, a lack of female representation in sport, served as obstacles that needed to be overcome on an ongoing basis. Through experience, the coaches learned how to deal with these issues constructively, developing a wisdom they now pass down to the athletes they coach. For example, Jerry explained that he talks to his athletes about racism they might experience on trips, and Winona stressed the importance of encouraging female Indigenous athletes, saying that there are important roles for them within sport. In addition, several coaches in the current research discussed how role models helped them when they were athletes, as well as during their coaching roles, by providing lessons and opportunities. Indeed, previous research has highlighted the importance of role models in inspiring young Indigenous athletes and teaching lessons about persistence and athletic achievement (see Blodgett et al, 2010).

In addition to relationships with role models, coaches also highlighted the importance of relationships with organizations. As indicated by the environmental scan in Chapter 7, there is ample room within the collection of National Sport Organizations (NSOs) to contribute to Indigenous peoples' participation in sport. Only 10.5% of NSOs listed Indigenous coaching programs on their websites, only 12.3% listed non-coaching related Indigenous programs, and only 1.8% of NSOs listed non-coaching related Indigenous competitions or championships. In other words, it appears the current contributions of NSOs to the rungs of the double helix model (see Forsyth & Paraschak, 2013) are limited. Indeed, Chapter 7 emphasized the importance of support from organizations, and the apparent lack of contribution from NSOs (i.e., prominent mainstream organizations) is troubling considering that learning to navigate the double helix was one of the recommendations for coaches communicated in Chapter 7.

Other organizations, such as schools, clubs, and Indigenous sport organizations, also have important roles to play in providing support and recognition for coaches (the latter being a suggestion conveyed by Blodgett et al., [2010] as well). Participants in Chapter 7 discussed how helpful organizations such as the Manitoba Frist Nations Education Resource Centre have been in providing guidance and resources. Participants also expressed how much they appreciated coaching clinics and educational opportunities such as the SPARC program at the University of Manitoba, which provides educators from First Nations schools in Manitoba opportunities to strengthen their credentials in various sport and physical activity related areas (see Kozier, 2019). Yet Chapter 7 also expressed coaches' desires for more coaching clinics in communities, including greater emphasis on sports that are often under-emphasized, as well as the need for more organizations to become involved, and the need for more education in broader society regarding racism. Participants also looked inward, recognizing that First Nations coaches must do their parts to give back to sport, and that they should be taking initiative in seeking out opportunities and helpful connections.

Toward a Healthier Way of Engaging in Research Following an Indigenous Research Paradigm

Research such as that which is discussed in Chapters 5 through 7 is important to the TRC's (2015a) sport-related Calls to Action. As Smith (1999) indicated, however, Indigenous peoples have not only historically been told what their challenges are, but also how to go about solving those challenges (Smith, 1999). Due to the marginalization of Indigenous peoples by researchers in the past, it is important that meaningful research approaches are prioritized in the present and future. I chose to follow Wilson's (2001) Indigenous research paradigm for this reason, as well as because the principles of his IRP resonate with my own beliefs. Following an Indigenous research paradigm is difficult work, though, as it challenges researchers on an emotional level. As such, I wrote Chapter 8 to raise awareness regarding some of the challenges that may confront researchers following an Indigenous research paradigm, as well as to hopefully garner support for present and future researchers engaged, or seeking to become engaged, in this type of work.

Before proceeding, I will reiterate that by "Indigenous research paradigm", I mean any Indigenous research paradigm that prioritizes participants through relational accountability and reciprocity (e.g., Wilson's [2001] Indigenous research paradigm). As conveyed in Chapter 8, for

me, engaging in this type of research entailed difficult lessons about emotional toil, identity, learning by experiencing, harmful research, and self-assessments of worth as a researcher. To summarize everything succinctly, I would tell present and future researchers who are doing Indigenous research to have support systems in place and to continually be reflexive in their thinking. Doing things in a respectful way and avoiding harmful research can entail a lot of consultation with mentors and research participants, which prolongs the research process; this is simply the nature of Indigenous research. You may also question your place, as well as your worth as a researcher, but education should be transformative, and questioning is part of the growing process. Lastly, seek out opportunities to get out of the office and experience things in the "real world", as doing so can add great meaning to the learning process.

Conclusion

After briefly explaining the purpose of this thesis (Chapter 1), communicating my positionality (Chapter 2), and providing some background information (Chapters 3 through 4), the first three studies contained in this thesis (Chapters 5 through 7) contributed to addressing TRC (2015a) Call to Action #90(ii), as well as informing strategies addressing Call #89, by discussing the factors influencing university sport participation among rural and remote First Nations athletes in Manitoba (Chapters 5 and 6), and by discussing the factors influencing the coaching career paths of First Nations coaches in Canada (Chapter 7). To promote this sort of work, Chapter 8 discussed the challenges of engaging in research following an Indigenous research paradigm prioritizing relational accountability and reciprocity. Finally, the current chapter (Chapter 9) provided a succinct summary of the entire thesis and reiterated its importance.

As there is significant variation across First Nations groups in Canada, similar research as that discussed in Chapters 5 and 6 of this thesis could be beneficial to academic and sport programs in other provinces. Similarly, since most coaches interviewed for Chapter 7 were from Manitoba (and since all coaches interviewed for Chapter 7 were living in Manitoba at the time of this study), future research should seek to engage First Nations coaches from other provinces. In addition, as there was only one female coach interviewed for Chapter 7, future work should aim for more female representation. It is also important that any research aimed at creating and/or evaluating programs addressing the facilitators and/or challenges/barriers identified in Chapters 5 through 7 be informed through ongoing collaboration with the relevant First Nations groups.

Finally, all researchers are encouraged to reflect on their own journeys and consider sharing their revelations and feelings, as I did in Chapter 8, because the tendency Western capitalist society has to measure our worth based solely on what we consume and produce is utter bullshit. Readers will care to hear your stories, so take care to write yourself into your work just as you care about the work you write, and in the writing of your work just take care, because the world needs you for the long term.

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Appendix A: Background Information about the Front Runner Project (Initiative)[38]

Doctoral Thesis: Factors Influencing University Sport Participation among Rural and Remote First Nations Athletes in Manitoba (Kosmenko, 2021)

My PhD research involved conversations with rural and remote First Nations athletes competing at high school and university levels in Manitoba (MB), as well as discussions with First Nations alumni of university teams. I also spoke with coaches and teachers of First Nations athletes to obtain a robust understanding informed by diverse perspectives. The goal of the project was to elucidate the barriers and facilitators influencing rural and remote First Nations athletes' pursuit of sport in MB, with an emphasis on participation at the university level, but also incorporating factors existing prior to that level. Further, my thesis also included a study examining the experiences of First Nations coaches in MB. A lack of Indigenous (First Nations, Métis, and Inuit) coaches was identified by Canadian Heritage (2005) as a barrier to Indigenous athletes' participation in sport. My own work was aimed at obtaining insight into this barrier for First Nations coaches specifically, including solutions for change, using an approach similar to that of Bennie et al. (2019) who worked with Aboriginal Australian coaches.

Historically, Western academic and mainstream sport settings have been exclusive with respect to Indigenous students and athletes (see Kirkness & Barnhardt, 2001; see also Schinke, Peltier, et al., 2013), meaning relocating from a reserve to pursue academics and/or sport can pose many challenges. For example, Blodgett et al. (2014) discussed a growing disconnect from home among Indigenous athletes who had moved, in addition to feeling overwhelmed by change and being subjected to racism. Participants in my PhD research expressed similar feelings, along with also discussing challenges they encountered prior to university while pursuing sport and academics in their home communities. Participants highlighted that sport and academic opportunities and direction are limited in many reserves despite a few dedicated individuals working diligently to provide for athletes/students. Moreover, from my study with First Nations coaches it is clear there is a desire for coaching clinics in reserves to help increase coaching expertise (e.g., knowledge of drills and skills). The Front Runner Initiative (FRI), the evaluation of which will serve as the basis for my postdoctoral work, is a response to the findings I have discussed here. Whereas my PhD work examined the factors influencing First Nations athletes' pursuit of university sport, as well as the factors influencing the career paths of First Nations coaches, my postdoctoral work will examine the efficacy of the FRI in addressing many of the barriers and extending upon many of the facilitators discussed in my PhD studies.

Postdoctoral Work: A Better Way to do Sport? Exploring the Front Runner Initiative's Impact on Cultural Awareness, Indigenous Inclusion, and Community Outreach among U Sports Teams

Among U Sports 2019-2024 Strategic Priorities (U Sports, n.d., all p. 9) are: "advance awareness of the diversity within Canadian university sport" through "more inclusive representation", and "advance student-athlete health and safety" through the establishment of "best practice plans to support core relevant issues of abuse, mental health … driven by expert recommendations and guidance". The need for a more values-based system in high performance

[38] Note: This document is a revised version of a Program of Work submitted to SSHRC's Post-doctoral Fellowship competition. That version received guidance from Elder Dr. Courchene and his helper Dr. Ijaz, Dr. McRae, Dr. Ferguson, and Dr. Henhawk. In addition, the initial idea for the Front Runner Project emerged from University of Manitoba Faculty of Kinesiology and Recreation Management graduate student Breeee Langlais, MA.

sport in Canada is highlighted by many recent reports of abusive and disrespectful sport atmospheres (see Bell, 2020; see also Carty 2020). Unlike mainstream sport, which takes a **neoliberal** approach by emphasizing competition, individualism, hierarchies, and rewards (Coakley, 2011), **Indigenous sport** emphasizes positive values that are demonstrated through sport but are important outside sport as well (see Rice, 2019). These values not only have potential in contributing to the respectful atmospheres U Sports staff strive to create on university teams, they also show promise in making teams more **culturally relevant** and **inclusive** for Indigenous athletes from rural and remote communities, as there are often significant **acculturation challenges** (culture shock and disconnect from home) experienced when Indigenous athletes transition to mainstream sport environments (Blodgett et al., 2014; Kosmenko, 2021).

One way to facilitate these improvements is through a **shared acculturation** approach where teammates (both Indigenous and non-Indigenous) learn about Indigenous cultures and subsequently ease Indigenous athletes' acculturation loads by incorporating cultural aspects (e.g., values) into their team settings (see Schinke, McGannon, et al., 2013). The learning process can be accomplished through athletes' exposure to, and engagement in, Indigenous communities. With an emphasis on reciprocity, this process of exposure could benefit not only athletes, but Indigenous communities as well. For example, my PhD work identified a desire for coaching clinics in reserves in MB. Although provincial Indigenous sport organizations work diligently to provide such clinics, limited capacity and large geographic areas restrict outreach. Cooperation from universities would address this issue. Specifically, the postdoctoral work here would be conducted with full transparency between myself and the MB Aboriginal Sport and Recreation Council (MASRC), which oversees Indigenous Sport in MB.

Named in honour of the original Front Runners, who were a group of 10 Indigenous athletes selected to run the 1967 Pam American Games torch from St. Paul, MN to Winnipeg, MB (CBC, 2020; Yates, 2020), the FRI was designed by Elders and University of Manitoba (U of M) staff with **cultural awareness, inclusion,** and **reciprocity** in mind. Through a 5 year passage of rites involving rolling recruitment of new athletes each year, the FRI will: 1) through teachings (i.e., learning sessions) led by local First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Elders and knowledge keepers, increase cultural awareness among athletes to create more inclusive atmospheres for Indigenous athletes; 2) ask athletes to bring Indigenous values taught by local Indigenous community members into university sport to create more respectful and culturally relevant settings; and, 3) ask athletes to give back in some way to an Indigenous community (e.g., lead sport clinics, mentor an Indigenous athlete).

Purpose

- This postdoctoral project seeks to provide an evaluation of the FRI, including suggestions for improvements, by conducting group interviews with FRI participants, including athletes and Indigenous community members, to answer the following **research questions:**

From the start to end of athletes' first year (from September through August) in the FRI:

1. In what ways has their **awareness of Indigenous cultures** evolved?
2. To what extent have they brought **Indigenous values** into their sport settings, and what changes did this produce to their team atmospheres?
3. What was the extent of **benefits** received from the reciprocity activities in which athletes engaged?
4. What are some suggestions athletes and **Indigenous community members** have for improving the FRI?

Methodology

Guided by ceremony and led by original Front Runner and Anishinaabe **Elder Dave Courchene**, this research will follow Wilson's (2001) Indigenous Research Paradigm (IRP) to ensure a respectful, empowering approach emphasizing **relational accountability** and **reciprocity**. Relational accountability refers to the obligations researchers have to participants. In the proposed research, these obligations will include prioritizing participants' concerns and ensuring participants approve of how the research is being conducted at all stages of the process. Relational accountability as it relates to the FRI has already begun, as a strong relationship has been established with community Elder Dave Courchene, who has agreed to guide the FRI (e.g., provide strategies for engaging with community members, lead learning sessions, provide ongoing feedback with respect to analyses and publication drafts). Reciprocity refers to giving back to participants through gifts of thanks for the knowledge and time they share, as well as through acting upon participants' recommendations for change, where possible.

Knowledge sharing will involve conversational group interviews informed by Indigenous cultural practices. Interviews will be audio-recorded with participants' permission, transcribed verbatim, and thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006) will be used to generate codes and themes. Content will be analyzed deductively first using a socioecological model based on Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (2005). Ecological models allow researchers to analyze the environments (i.e., the ecological leverage points) in which interactions influencing individuals occur. Codes will be sorted into the ecological leverage points of the chosen model, and then content under each ecological leverage point will be analyzed inductively, creating themes. This procedure, that is, deductive followed by inductive, has been used with success elsewhere (e.g., Bennie et al., 2019; Kosmenko, 2021).

I refer to LaRocque (2015) in defense of using Western techniques for analyzing information, as she highlighted the normalcy of cultures borrowing tools from one another. In addition, the ecological model to be used in this work, the Integrated Indigenous-ecological Model (IIEM; Lavallée & Lévesque, 2013), was designed specifically with Indigenous cultures in mind. In addition to ecological leverage points seen in other models (*Intrapersonal*, *Interpersonal*, *Community*, *Organizational*, and *Policy/Systems/Environments*), the IIEM extends beyond previous work (e.g., Bronfenbrenner, 1977; McLeroy et al., 1988; Stokols, 1992) by including *Mother Earth* and *All of Creation*. These two ecological leverage points make the IIEM culturally relevant for work with Indigenous participants by facilitating the inclusion of the realities of Indigenous cultures. In addition, the IIEM emphasizes mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual Intrapersonal attributes of individuals, further increasing cultural relevance to Indigenous participants.

Project Timeline

The proposed postdoctoral work is scheduled to begin in September 2021. Ethics applications will be submitted in fall 2021 and rapport will be developed between myself and all athlete FRI participants during this time. Sessions will be held between myself, other facilitators, and athlete participants during fall 2021 to provide an introduction to the FRI (e.g., expectations, timelines). Fall 2021 will also involve the identification of sport leaders in Indigenous communities who wish to participate in the FRI, as well as the building/strengthening of rapport. Work in winter 2022 will involve the beginning of athletes' participation in learning sessions at Turtle Lodge. Athletes' outreach activities to Indigenous communities will begin in spring 2022. Interviews with athletes and community members will occur throughout summer 2022, with interviews taking place within three weeks of community outreach so as to capture participant's

recent experiences while still allowing them time to reflect. Interview transcription and analyses will occur on an ongoing basis as interviews take place, concluding in winter 2023. Publications will be written in spring 2023 (examples of target journals: *Sociology of Sport Journal*; *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health*). Progress will be communicated at various conferences (e.g., the Canadian Society for Psychomotor Learning and Sport Psychology conference, the U of M's Rising Up conference, the Sport Canada Research Initiative conference).

Ethics

This research will adhere to Chapter 9 of Tri-Council Policy Statement 2, *Research Involving the First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples of Canada* (Government of Canada, 2019), including the principles of *Ownership, Control, Access and Possession* (OCAP®; FNIGC, 2020).

Significance

In addition to the aforementioned benefits to U Sports teams and Indigenous communities, and along with addressing strategic priorities at the U of M (see "Proposed research environment", below), the FRI addresses two of the **Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's** sport-related Calls to Action (#87, and parts ii, ii, and iv of #90; TRC, 2015). Moreover, evaluation of the FRI through my postdoctoral work will contribute to the development of Ecological Systems Theory (see "Methodology") within the context of Indigenous athletes and university sport by elucidating the factors most beneficial to incorporate into U Sports team settings to create inclusive environments. My postdoctoral work will also help in providing further validation for Lavallée and Lévesque's (2013) IIEM. Although the IIEM has been used with success elsewhere (e.g., McHugh et al., 2015), my PhD research found a hesitance among participants to speak to aspects relevant to the *Mother Earth* and *All of Creation* leverage points, prompting questions as to whether this hesitance was in response to the prolonged subjugation of Indigenous cultures in Canada, or if participants had not developed strong ties to these cultural aspects.

Proposed Research Environment

MB leads the Canadian provinces in terms of Indigenous population, with the proportion of Indigenous peoples in MB being 18% (Statistics Canada, 2019), making the province suitable for my postdoctoral work. In addition, the U of M has prioritized initiatives related to inclusion of Indigenous peoples and cultures. Specifically, the Faculty of Kinesiology and Recreation Management (FKRM), which oversees Bison Sports at the U of M, has outlined 5 priorities in their 2015-2020 Strategic Plan (FKRM, n.d., p. 2). My postdoctoral work relates to the priority "Creating Pathways to Indigenous Achievement", including most of the 7 goals listed (pp. 12-15).

Further, my long-term goal is to continue working on the FRI with Indigenous communities in MB after completion of my postdoctoral work as a way to maintain relational accountability and fulfill reciprocity obligations to participants from my PhD and postdoctoral studies. Focusing my postdoctoral project on MB will strengthen and expand upon existing connections I have within communities, FKRM, and Bison Sports in preparation for my career. Plentiful, strong relationships will be crucial in continuing to improve the FRI. Also, the U of M is the birthplace of the FRI and, currently, is its only home, so it is critical efforts related to the FRI focus on MB first and foremost prior to expansion.

Lastly, the U of M is home to my **intended supervisor, Dr. Dan Henhawk** (FKRM). Dr. Henhawk's research interests revolve around the multiple conceptualizations of leisure and the

socio-cultural study of sport and recreation. Specifically, he is interested in troubling Western conceptualizations of leisure through a critical Indigenous lens to understand the impact on Indigenous communities and Indigenous ways of knowing and being. His research also broadly engages Indigenous research paradigms alongside narrative inquiry and narrative theory. Dr. Henhawk's guidance will help ensure this project is conducted in a meaningful and respectful way. In addition, working alongside students in Dr. Henhawk's lab will provide me with mentorship experience while further broadening my understanding of current research being conducted in the field of leisure, sport, and recreation. Throughout my postdoctoral term I will also have opportunities to assist Dr. Henhawk and other professors in FKRM with teaching duties as well as collaborative projects.

How the Research will Contribute to My Career Goals

The evaluation of the FRI through my postdoctoral work will help prepare the initiative for uptake at other Canadian universities. This expansion will create opportunities for scholars across the country to work with athletes to increase cultural awareness on their own teams. Educating these scholars about the FRI, including effective delivery strategies identified through my postdoctoral work, will provide me with a meaningful role in which I will be continuing to utilize the knowledge shared with me throughout my PhD and postdoctoral studies. In essence, the concerns and suggestions shared with me by Indigenous participants will be guiding my contributions for the long-term. Further, the future of the FRI over the long-term includes the development of courses pertaining to the initiative that university students in general can take to receive academic credits. This expansion outside solely university athletes will provide more teaching opportunities for myself and others, while also working to share the Front Runner story (see CBC, 2020; see also Yates, 2020) with a wider audience.

Finally, currently Elder Dave Courchene is writing a book to tell the Front Runner story. This book will set the stage for primary and secondary school athletes wishing to engage in the FRI upon university entry, and it will raise cultural awareness among students in general. The development of primary and secondary school curriculum based on this book will provide university athletes participating in the FRI with teaching opportunities to be included in their outreach work. By elucidating and addressing weaknesses, the evaluation proposed for my postdoctoral work will be instrumental in helping the FRI reach the stage where these additional undertakings can happen.

Financial Support Available for the FRI

FKRM and Bison Sports at the U of M recently approved the FRI, with FKRM supplying $25,000 to cover start-up expenses.

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Appendix B: Topics and Sub-topics for Chapter 4

Part 1: Opportunity

Curriculum in School/PE

- Culturally Relevant Teaching 3 Goals
  - Cultural competence (Ladson-Billings, 1995)
  - Student success (Ladson-Billings, 1995)
  - Critical social consciousness (Champagne, 2006, i.e., among teachers; thesis Chapter 2; Halas et al., 2013; Ladson-Billings, 1995)
- Culturally Relevant Teaching 4 Steps
  - Teacher as ally (Halas et al., 2013)
  - Meaningful, relevant curriculum (Halas et al., 2013; Sutliff, 1996, e.g., learn about successful Indigenous athletes)
  - Supportive learning climates (Halas et al., 2013)
- Do teachers engage in cultural activities? (Halas et al., 2013)
- Substitute PE teachers (Halas et al., 2013)
- Do students/athletes learn about colonization? (Blodgett et al., 2008; Halas et al., 2013; Lavallée & Lévesque, 2013)
- Barriers to land-based education (Munroe & MacLellan-Mansell, 2013)

Facilities Back Home

- Neighbourhood/community facilities (Canadian Heritage, 2005; Kerpan & Humbert, 2015; Milloy, 2008)
- Opportunities for deliberate play (Côté et al., 2013; Côté et al., 2012; Johnson et al., 2007)
- Opportunities for sampling (Côté et al., 2007)
- Equipment at home (Lemstra et al., 2013)

Support Back Home

- Parents and extended families, community support, educated about opportunities off reserves, being persistent (Blodgett et al., 2008)
- Role models (Blodgett et al., 2008; Wan et al., 2018)
- Volunteers in communities (Blodgett et al., 2010)

Opportunities Back Home

- Opportunity in early years may be critical to success later on (Athletics Canada, n.d.).
- Are there weekend programs? (Brusseau et al., 2013, i.e., found most activity accumulated during the week)
- Opportunities for: deliberate play, deliberate practice, spontaneous practice, play practice, organized competition (Côté et al., 2013)

Other Barriers Back Home

- Change rooms (Champagne & Halas, 2002; Halas et al., 2013)
- Travel distance (Halas et al., 2013; Canadian Heritage, 2005)
- Enough people for teams (Halas et al., 2013)
- Availability and quality of school sports equipment (Halas et al., 2013)

- Teacher turnover (Halas et al., 2013)
- Lack of Indigenous teaching staff (Halas et al., 2013) and coaches (Canadian Heritage, 2005)
- Equipment costs (Canadian Heritage, 2005)
- Distance from people of expertise, e.g., coaches, therapists (Canadian Heritage, 2005)

Successful Practices Back Home

- Partnerships and making use of community facilities for school activities (Halas et al., 2013; Patel et al., 2015; Van Ingen & Halas, 2006)
- Relationship between PA and cultural activities (Bersamin et al., 2014)

Barriers to University

- Barriers to university (Preston, 2008): funding for schools, cultural relevance of GPA, childcare, transportation for you and your child, daycares, counselling, experience filling out scholarship/bursary forms, guidance when planning to attend university, prepared for university curriculum, educational role models, teaching staff, school funding

Supports to University

- Credit transfer agreements between universities (Preston, 2008; Wall, 2008)

Part 2: Intrinsic Motivation

Self-determination Theory (SDT)

- Intrinsic/extrinsic goals and motivation in school and sport, SDT (Deci & Ryan, 2012; Mack et al., 2015)
- Autonomy, competence, relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 2012; Mack et al., 2015)
- Circle of courage® values for dignity and respect (Brokenleg & Van Bockern, 2003; Halas, Carpenter, et al., 2017, and Halas, McRae et al., 2017, i.e., Rec and Read/AYMP): independence, mastery, belonging, generosity
- 4 A's of resilience (Brokenleg & Van Bockern, 2003): autonomy, achievement, attachment, altruism
- 4 benchmarks of self-worth (Brokenleg & Van Bockern, 2003; Coopersmith, 1967): power, confidence, significance, virtue

Environments

- Healthy environments (Bombay, 2014; Marx, 1844; Maté, 2012; Narvaez, 2013; Yehuda, 2016)
- Relationship between PA and stress (Bersamin et al., 2014)
- Culturally relevant programs (Halas et al., 2013; Halas, Carpenter, et al.; 2017, and Halas, McRae et al., 2017)
- Deliberate play, as it facilitates intrinsic motivation (Côté et al., 2013; Côté et al., 2012)

Adjustment to university setting

- Was there an adjustment to make? (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 2001)
- Acculturation (Blodgett et al., 2014): 1) culture shock = feeling overwhelmed by change, living with non-Indigenous billets, lacking meaningful engagement from host culture

members, dealing with racism, and confronting attitudes that Indigenous people cannot succeed; 2) disconnect from home = being distanced from family, losing loved ones while away from home, missing the Indigenous culture, and dealing with on-reserve rejection

Identity

- Indigenous cultural identity: marginalization, segregation/separation, assimilation, biculturation (Berry, 1999)
- Factors influencing identity (Goodwill & McCormick, 2012): 1) negative = living with separation from Indigenous people/culture, experiencing racism and prejudice, and experiencing negative portrayals of Indigenous people; 2) positive = participating in a cultural gathering, participating in a group of Indigenous people, connecting with family, and others
- Role of groups in forming one's identity (Tajifel & Turner, 1979)
- Renegotiate cultural identity due to modern pressures (Fox, 2007), including within sport itself (Schinke et al., 2013)
- Contradictory worldviews between Western and Indigenous cultures (Goodwill & McCormick, 2012; Memmi, 1967)

Differences between Mainstream and Indigenous Sport and Cultures

- Differences between mainstream and Indigenous sport (Schinke et al., 2013)
- Differences between mainstream and Indigenous cultures (Schinke et al., 2013; Schinke et al., 2006)
- The lens of Western society in terms of what constitutes sport (Fox, 2006, 2007; Paraschak, 2013)
    - "Goodness" of Western sport (Fox, 2006)
- Cultural sport psychology (Schinke et al., 2013): role models, traditional medicine people and elders, maintaining family connections, and the national Indigenous community

Sport-specific Barriers to Being Motivated

- Racism (Canadian Heritage, 2005)
- Being typecast into certain positions (Apoifis et al., 2018; Valentine, 2012)

Perceptions of Indigenous People Toward PA/Sport

- Reasons for engaging in sport/PA (Critchley et al., 2006)
- Structured/organized vs. unstructured activities (Critchley et al., 2006; Lemstra et al., 2013)
- PA can include many things (Henderson & Ainsworth, 2001)
- Wholistic view of PA (Henderson & Ainsworth, 2003; Tang et al., 2016)
- Activity embedded in life when young, but more of a decision when you age (Henderson & Ainsworth, 2001; Wan et al., 2018)
- Exercise viewed negatively by some Indigenous adults (Henderson & Ainsworth, 2001)
- Excuses for not engaging in PA (Henderson & Ainsworth, 2003; Macdonald et al., 2012; Wan et al., 2018)
- PA among boys vs girls (Macdonald et al., 2012)

- Social networks can help or hinder PA (Henderson & Ainsworth, 2003; for help: Kerpan & Humbert, 2015; Lemstra et al., 2013; Perez et al., 2011; Wan et al., 2018)
- Family passes down values, and harder to be active when family is not active (Kerpan & Humbert, 2015)
- Traditional activities important to provide cultural connection and confirm identity (Kerpan & Humbert, 2015; Tang et al., 2016)

Part 3: Direction

General

- Lack of Indigenous coaches and culturally sensitive coaches (Canadian Heritage, 2005)
- Lack of opportunity for Indigenous coaches to become certified/trained (Canadian Heritage, 2005)
- Funding for coaches and PE teachers (Halas et al., 2013)
- Substitute PE teachers with little knowledge and/or time (Halas et al., 2013)
- Enjoyment for working with youth, knowledge of sport, passion for sport (Blodgett et al., 2008)
- Support and recognition for coaches (Blodgett et al., 2010)
- Stereotypes of Indigenous athletes as being geared toward more physical-, as opposed to intellectual- and leadership-oriented sport positions (Apoifis et al., 2018)
- Being excluded from coaching positions because of Indigeneity (Apoifis et al., 2018)
- Level of encouragement received to become a coach (Apoifis et al., 2018)
- Factors influencing coaching roles (Bennie et al., 2019): 1) facilitators = love for the sport, passion to stay involved in the sport, self-determination, resilience, opportunity to give back to the community, opportunity to be a role model or leader, mentor coaches, support and encouragement from parents and others, ties to sport clubs (which provided career support), financial support from organizations, policies promoting inclusivity of Indigenous participants in sport, coaching opportunities, all-Indigenous coaching clinics, coaching accreditation courses, inclusive environments, socioeconomic background and values, and the importance of sport in Indigenous communities; 2) barriers = waning interest or enjoyment, shyness, lack of confidence, time constraints, balancing community involvement with family and coaching responsibilities simultaneously, inflexibility of coaching accreditation courses, cost and location of accreditation courses, perceptions that Indigenous-specific coaching programs are not as legitimate or valuable as mainstream programs, institutional racism, and the sociocultural norm of perceiving Indigenous people as being geared toward physical- as opposed to intellectual activities

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Appendix C: Informed Consent Form for Parents/Guardians of Participants <18 Years of Age (First Nations high school athletes; Chapter 5)

Research Project Title: Factors influencing university sport participation among rural and remote Indigenous athletes in Manitoba (Study 1)

Principal Investigator and Contact Information: Nickolas Kosmenko

Email: umkosme2@myumanitoba.ca Phone: XXX-XXX-XXXX

Research Co-advisors and Contact Information:

Dr. Leisha Strachan: XXX-XXX-XXXX Dr. Joannie Halas: XXX-XXX-XXXX

This consent form, a copy of which will be left with you for your records and reference, is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your child's participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

Purpose of Research

This research seeks to identify the factors influencing university sport participation among rural and remote Indigenous athletes in Manitoba, including suggestions for change. Perspectives will be gathered from 1) Indigenous high school athletes who are from rural or remote locations in Manitoba, as well as some of their teachers, coaches, and counselors; 2) current Indigenous university athletes at the University of Manitoba who are from rural or remote locations in Manitoba, as well as their coaches; and 3) past Indigenous university athletes from the University of Manitoba who are from rural or remote locations in Manitoba.

As a research participant, your child will be asked to either participate in a one-on-one interview with the principal investigator, or a talking circle led by the principal investigator and involving a number of other athletes who are Indigenous youth from rural or remote areas of Manitoba. Specifically, your child will be asked to share their experiences pursuing academics and sports in their home and school environments, as well as their feelings toward moving to an urban environment, such as Winnipeg, to pursue post-secondary education. The interview or talking circle will take no longer than 1 hour and, in the case of an interview, will be conducted either online (e.g., Skype, Facetime, email), by phone, or at a location that is convenient for your child. In the case of a talking circle, efforts will be made to ensure the location is convenient for your child. What is said in the interview or talking circle will be audio-recorded and later transcribed verbatim by a transcription company. A debriefing of no more than 30 minutes will

be conducted immediately after the interview or talking circle. During the debriefing, your child will be informed of the principal investigator's intent with respect to the proceeding steps involved in the research. Your child will be given the principal investigator's contact information should they wish to add additional information or ask any questions. The principal investigator will engage in follow-up information analyses, and results will be confirmed with your child prior to being disseminated.

Benefits to Participants

Your child will be acknowledged in the final report, any conference presentations, and any publications that may arise from information they provide.

Risk of Harm

There is no foreseen risk of harm associated with participation in this research than would be greater than that expected in day-to-day life. During the analyses processes, information will be kept by the principal investigator and security measures (i.e., lock and key or password) will be used to ensure information remains inaccessible to the public. To protect participants' identity, names used in transcripts will be replaced with pseudonyms in documents released to the public. The exception to this, however, is the case in which a participant wishes to use their own name. In this case, the participant acknowledges that what they say during the interview process might be conveyed alongside their name in my PhD dissertation, publications, and presentations. Prior to public dissemination of results or submission of any resulting, potential publications, the principal investigator will check with your child to see if they agree and are okay with content associated with the information they contributed. Public dissemination of results and submission of potential publications will not occur unless your child is content with how their information has been represented and interpreted. If any confidential information is collected, it will be destroyed by Sept. 1, 2021 via shredding in the case of paper copies, or deletion in the case of electronic copies. Disclosures of abuse will be reported to authorities as per legal requirements. If a participant experiences distress during the interview/talking circle process and indicates they would like help, they can contact: the University of Manitoba's Indigenous Student Centre (phone: 204-474-8850), the staff of which can connect them with an elder; the University of Manitoba's Student Counselling Centre (phone: 204-474-8592); or an elder or therapist in the community in which the participant is currently living.

Withdrawing from Participation

Your child may withdraw from participation in this research at any point on or before Dec. 1, 2019 by informing the principal investigator (via the email address provided on this form) of their desire to no longer participate. There will be no consequences for choosing to withdraw.

Dissemination of Research

This research will be disseminated for public consumption via my PhD dissertation, which may include a summary of findings as well as direct quotations. There is also potential for dissemination through presentations to relevant organizations, at research conferences, and through publication of research findings in peer-reviewed journals (which also may include a summary of findings as well as direct quotations).

Summary of Results

Your child will have the opportunity to receive a summary of research findings no later than Jan. 1, 2020, and they will have the option of being sent these findings via mail or email. If they are interested in this option and you are okay with it, please check the appropriate circle (below) and provide an email address (below) so I can follow up with you and your child later to ask about your preference for receiving the results (i.e., email or mail).

Your signature on this form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project and agree to allow your child to participate. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the researchers, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. Your child is free to withdraw from the study at any time, and /or refrain from answering any questions they prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. Your child's continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your child's participation.

The University of Manitoba may look at your research records to see that the research is being done in a safe and proper way.

This research has been approved by the Education/Nursing Research Ethics Board (ENREB). If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Coordinator at 204-474-7122 or humanethics@umanitoba.ca. A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

Participant's Signature _____ Date _____

○ Yes, my child wishes to receive a copy of the results. Here is their email address:

_____

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Appendix D: Assent Form for Participants <18 Years of Age (First Nations high school athletes; Chapter 5)

Research Project Title: Factors influencing university sport participation among rural and remote Indigenous athletes in Manitoba (Study 1)

Principal Investigator and Contact Information: Nickolas Kosmenko

Email: umkosme2@myumanitoba.ca Phone: XXX-XXX-XXXX

Research Co-advisors and Contact Information:

Dr. Leisha Strachan: XXX-XXX-XXXX Dr. Joannie Halas: XXX-XXX-XXXX

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Participant's Signature _____ Date _____

○ Yes, I wish to receive a copy of the results. Here is my email address:

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Appendix E: Informed Consent Form for Participants ≥18 Years of Age (First Nations high school athletes; Chapter 5)

Research Project Title: Factors influencing university sport participation among rural and remote Indigenous athletes in Manitoba (Study 1)

Principal Investigator and Contact Information: Nickolas Kosmenko

Email: umkosme2@myumanitoba.ca Phone: XXX-XXX-XXXX

Research Co-advisors and Contact Information:

Dr. Leisha Strachan: XXX-XXX-XXXX Dr. Joannie Halas: XXX-XXX-XXXX

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verbatim by a transcription company. A debriefing of no more than 30 minutes will be conducted immediately after the interview or talking circle. During the debriefing, you will be informed of the principal investigator's intent with respect to the proceeding steps involved in the research. You will be given the principal investigator's contact information should you wish to add additional information or ask any questions. The principal investigator will engage in follow-up information analyses, and results will be confirmed with you prior to being disseminated.

Benefits to Participants

You will be acknowledged in the final report, any conference presentations, and any publications that may arise from information you provide.

Risk of Harm

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Withdrawing from Participation

You may withdraw from participation in this research at any point on or before Dec. 1, 2019 by informing the principal investigator (via the email address provided on this form) of your desire to no longer participate. There will be no consequences for choosing to withdraw.

Dissemination of Research

This research will be disseminated for public consumption via my PhD dissertation, which may include a summary of findings as well as direct quotations. There is also potential for dissemination through presentations to relevant organizations, at research conferences, and through publication of research findings in peer-reviewed journals (which also may include a summary of findings as well as direct quotations).

Summary of Results

You will have the opportunity to receive a summary of research findings no later than Jan. 1, 2020, and you will have the option of being sent these findings via mail or email. If interested in this option, please check the appropriate circle (below) and provide an email address (below) so I can follow up with you later to ask about your preference for receiving the results (i.e., email or mail).

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The University of Manitoba may look at your research records to see that the research is being done in a safe and proper way.

This research has been approved by the Education/Nursing Research Ethics Board (ENREB). If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Coordinator at 204-474-7122 or humanethics@umanitoba.ca. A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

Participant's Signature _____ Date _____

○ Yes, I wish to receive a copy of the results. Here is my email address:

_____

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Appendix F: Informed Consent Form for Participants ≥18 Years of Age (coaches/teachers of First Nations high school athletes; Chapter 5)

Research Project Title: Factors influencing university sport participation among rural and remote Indigenous athletes in Manitoba (Study 1)

Principal Investigator and Contact Information: Nickolas Kosmenko

Email: umkosme2@myumanitoba.ca Phone: XXX-XXX-XXXX

Research Co-advisors and Contact Information:

Dr. Leisha Strachan: XXX-XXX-XXXX Dr. Joannie Halas: XXX-XXX-XXXX

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Purpose of Research

This research seeks to identify the factors influencing university sport participation among rural and remote Indigenous athletes in Manitoba, including suggestions for change. Perspectives will be gathered from 1) Indigenous high school athletes who are from rural or remote locations in Manitoba, as well as some of their teachers, coaches, and counselors; 2) current Indigenous university athletes at the University of Manitoba who are from rural or remote locations in Manitoba, as well as their coaches; and 3) past Indigenous university athletes from the University of Manitoba who are from rural or remote locations in Manitoba.

As a research participant, you will be asked to participate in a one-on-one interview with the principal investigator. Specifically, you will be asked to share your thoughts about the factors influencing rural and remote Indigenous athletes in their pursuit of academics and sports in their home and school environments, including potential university environments. The interview will take no longer than 1 hour and will be conducted either online (e.g., Skype, Facetime, email), by phone, or at a location that is convenient for you. What is said in the interview will be audio-recorded and later transcribed verbatim by a transcription company. A debriefing of no more than 30 minutes will be conducted immediately after the interview. During the debriefing, you will be informed of the principal investigator's intent with respect to the proceeding steps involved in the research. You will be given the principal investigator's

contact information should you wish to add additional information or ask any questions. The principal investigator will engage in follow-up information analyses, and results will be confirmed with you prior to being disseminated.

Benefits to Participants

You will be acknowledged in the final report, any conference presentations, and any publications that may arise from information you provide.

Risk of Harm

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Participant's Signature _____ Date _____

○ Yes, I wish to receive a copy of the results. Here is my email address:

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Appendix G: Informed Consent Form for Participants ≥18 Years of Age (current First Nations university athletes; Chapter 6)

Research Project Title: Factors influencing university sport participation among rural and remote Indigenous athletes in Manitoba (Study 1)

Principal Investigator and Contact Information: Nickolas Kosmenko

Email: umkosme2@myumanitoba.ca Phone: XXX-XXX-XXXX

Research Co-advisors and Contact Information:

Dr. Leisha Strachan: XXX-XXX-XXXX Dr. Joannie Halas: XXX-XXX-XXXX

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Purpose of Research

This research seeks to identify the factors influencing university sport participation among rural and remote Indigenous athletes in Manitoba, including suggestions for change. Perspectives will be gathered from 1) Indigenous high school athletes who are from rural or remote locations in Manitoba, as well as some of their teachers, coaches, and counselors; 2) current Indigenous university athletes at the University of Manitoba who are from rural or remote locations in Manitoba, as well as their coaches; and 3) past Indigenous university athletes from the University of Manitoba who are from rural or remote locations in Manitoba.

As a research participant, you will be asked to participate in a one-on-one interview with the principal investigator. Specifically, you will be asked to share your experiences pursuing academics and sports in your home and school environments. The interview will take no longer than 1 hour and will be conducted either online (e.g., Skype, Facetime, email), by phone, or at a location that is convenient for you. What is said in the interview will be audio-recorded and later transcribed verbatim by a transcription company. A debriefing of no more than 30 minutes will be conducted immediately after the interview. During the debriefing, you will be informed of the principal investigator's intent with respect to the proceeding steps involved in the research. You will be given the principal investigator's contact information should you wish to add

additional information or ask any questions. The principal investigator will engage in follow-up information analyses, and results will be confirmed with you prior to being disseminated.

Benefits to Participants

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Risk of Harm

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Withdrawing from Participation

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Dissemination of Research

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Summary of Results

You will have the opportunity to receive a summary of research findings no later than Jan. 1, 2020, and you will have the option of being sent these findings via mail or email. If interested in this option, please check the appropriate circle (below) and provide an email

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Participant's Signature _____ Date _____

○ Yes, I wish to receive a copy of the results. Here is my email address:

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Appendix H: Informed Consent Form for Participants ≥18 Years of Age (coaches of First Nations university athletes; Chapter 6)

Research Project Title: Factors influencing university sport participation among rural and remote Indigenous athletes in Manitoba (Study 1)

Principal Investigator and Contact Information: Nickolas Kosmenko

Email: umkosme2@myumanitoba.ca Phone: XXX-XXX-XXXX

Research Co-advisors and Contact Information:

Dr. Leisha Strachan: XXX-XXX-XXXX Dr. Joannie Halas: XXX-XXX-XXXX

This consent form, a copy of which will be left with you for your records and reference, is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

Purpose of Research

This research seeks to identify the factors influencing university sport participation among rural and remote Indigenous athletes in Manitoba, including suggestions for change. Perspectives will be gathered from 1) Indigenous high school athletes who are from rural or remote locations in Manitoba, as well as some of their teachers, coaches, and counselors; 2) current Indigenous university athletes at the University of Manitoba who are from rural or remote locations in Manitoba, as well as their coaches; and 3) past Indigenous university athletes from the University of Manitoba who are from rural or remote locations in Manitoba.

As a research participant, you will be asked to participate in a one-on-one interview with the principal investigator. Specifically, you will be asked to share your thoughts about the factors influencing rural and remote Indigenous athletes in their pursuit of academics and sports in their home and school environments. The interview will take no longer than 1 hour and will be conducted either online (e.g., Skype, Facetime, email), by phone, or at a location that is convenient for you. What is said in the interview will be audio-recorded and later transcribed verbatim by a transcription company. A debriefing of no more than 30 minutes will be conducted immediately after the interview. During the debriefing, you will be informed of the principal investigator's intent with respect to the proceeding steps involved in the research. You will be given the principal investigator's contact information should you wish to add additional

information or ask any questions. The principal investigator will engage in follow-up information analyses, and results will be confirmed with you prior to being disseminated.

Benefits to Participants

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Risk of Harm

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Withdrawing from Participation

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Dissemination of Research

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Summary of Results

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address (below) so I can follow up with you later to ask about your preference for receiving the results (i.e., email or mail).

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This research has been approved by the Education/Nursing Research Ethics Board (ENREB). If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Coordinator at 204-474-7122 or humanethics@umanitoba.ca. A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

Participant's Signature _____ Date _____

○ Yes, I wish to receive a copy of the results. Here is my email address:

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Appendix I: Informed Consent Form for Participants ≥18 Years of Age (former First Nations university athletes; Chapter 6)

Research Project Title: Factors influencing university sport participation among rural and remote Indigenous athletes in Manitoba (Study 1)

Principal Investigator and Contact Information: Nickolas Kosmenko

Email: umkosme2@myumanitoba.ca Phone: XXX-XXX-XXXX

Research Co-advisors and Contact Information:

Dr. Leisha Strachan: XXX-XXX-XXXX Dr. Joannie Halas: XXX-XXX-XXXX

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Purpose of Research

This research seeks to identify the factors influencing university sport participation among rural and remote Indigenous athletes in Manitoba, including suggestions for change. Perspectives will be gathered from 1) Indigenous high school athletes who are from rural or remote locations in Manitoba, as well as some of their teachers, coaches, and counselors; 2) current Indigenous university athletes at the University of Manitoba who are from rural or remote locations in Manitoba, as well as their coaches; and 3) past Indigenous university athletes from the University of Manitoba who are from rural or remote locations in Manitoba.

As a research participant, you will be asked to participate in a one-on-one interview with the principal investigator. Specifically, you will be asked to share your experiences pursuing academics and sports in your home and school environments. The interview will take no longer than 1 hour and will be conducted either online (e.g., Skype, Facetime, email), by phone, or at a location that is convenient for you. What is said in the interview will be audio-recorded and later transcribed verbatim by a transcription company. A debriefing of no more than 30 minutes will be conducted immediately after the interview. During the debriefing, you will be informed of the principal investigator's intent with respect to the proceeding steps involved in the research. You will be given the principal investigator's contact information should you wish to add

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Benefits to Participants

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Risk of Harm

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Participant's Signature _____ Date _____

○ Yes, I wish to receive a copy of the results. Here is my email address:

_____

Appendix J: Talking Circle Guide for First Nations High School Athletes (Chapter 5)

1. Let's start with a bit about yourself, including where you're from, your age, cultural background (including nation), what sports you like to play, and if you are considering attending university in the future.

2. What motivates you to play sports?

3. With respect to **sports** in your **home** community:
    a. What are the good things? What isn't working?

    b. What do you think could be improved and how?

4. Same question as #3, but in relation to your **current** community:
    a. What are the good things? What isn't working?

    b. What do you think could be improved and how?

5. With respect to **school** in your **home** community:
    a. What are the good things? What isn't working?

    b. What do you think could be improved and how?

6. Same as question as #5, but in relation to your **current** community:
    a. What are the good things? What isn't working?

    b. What do you think could be improved and how?

7. Have you considered going to university? Why or why not?

8. Is there anything else you would like to add?

Appendix K: Interview Guide for First Nations High School Athletes (Chapter 5)

1. Let's start with a bit about yourself, including where you're from, your age, cultural background (including nation), what sports you like to play, and if you are considering attending university in the future.

2. What motivates you to play sports?

3. With respect to **sports** in your **home** community:
    a. What are the good things? What isn't working?

    b. What do you think could be improved and how?

4. Same question as #3, but in relation to your **current** community:
    a. What are the good things? What isn't working?

    b. What do you think could be improved and how?

5. With respect to **school** in your **home** community:
    a. What are the good things? What isn't working?

    b. What do you think could be improved and how?

6. Same as question as #5, but in relation to your **current** community:
    a. What are the good things? What isn't working?

    b. What do you think could be improved and how?

7. Have you considered going to university? Why or why not?

8. Is there anything else you would like to add?

Appendix L: Interview Guide for Coaches/Teachers of First Nations High School Athletes (Chapter 5)

1. Let's start with a bit about yourself, including where you're from, your cultural background, what your job is, and how long you've been working in that position.

2. What is it that motivates Frist Nations athletes/students from rural and remote communities to play sports?

3. With respect to **sports** in First Nations athletes'/students' **home** communities:
    a. What is being done well? What isn't being done well?

    b. What do you think could be improved and how?

4. Same as question as #3, but in relation to First Nations athletes'/students' **current** community:
    a. What is being done well? What isn't being done well?

    b. What do you think could be improved and how?

5. With respect to **school** in First Nations athletes'/students' **home** communities:
    a. What is being done well? What isn't being done well?

    b. What do you think could be improved and how?

6. Same question as #5, but in relation First Nations athletes'/students' **current** community, and including **residence life**, if applicable:
    a. What is being done well? What isn't being done well?

   b. What do you think could be improved and how?

7. Among the athletes/students you work with/teach, are many interested in university? Why or why not?

8. Is there anything else you would like to add?

Appendix M: Interview Guide for Current First Nations University Athletes (Chapter 6)

1. Let's start with a bit about yourself, including where you're from, your age, cultural background (including nation), what sport(s) you play as a university athlete, and how long you've been competing at the university level.

2. What motivates you to play sports?

3. With respect to **sports** in your **home** community:
    a. What is being done well? What isn't being done well?

    b. What do you think could be improved and how?

4. Same as question #3, but in relation to the **community in which you attended high school** (if different than the community in which you attended primary school; if it's the same, please skip this question)
    a. What is being done well? What isn't being done well?

    b. What do you think could be improved and how?

5. Same as question as #3, but in relation to your **current** community:
    a. What is being done well? What isn't being done well?

    b. What do you think could be improved and how?

6. With respect to **school** in your **home** community:
    a. What is being done well? What isn't being done well?

   b. What do you think could be improved and how?

7. Same as question #6, but in relation to the **community in which you attended high school** (if different than the community in which you attended primary school; if it's the same, please skip this question)
   a. What is being done well? What isn't being done well?

   b. What do you think could be improved and how?

8. Same as question as #6, but in relation to your **current** community:
   a. What is being done well? What isn't being done well?

   b. What do you think could be improved and how?

9. Tell me about the transition from high school to university.
   a. What were the challenges with respect to **sport** and how did you overcome them?

   b. Do you have any suggestions for what universities could do to help ease the transition for other students?

   c. Same as question 9a but with respect to **school**.

   d. Same as question 9b but with respect to **school**.

10. What is it like balancing school and sport here in the city with obligations you may have back home?

11. Do you enjoy going back home? What are the positive and negative aspects?

12. Do you have any advice for other First Nations athletes from rural and remote communities who are interested in pursuing university-level sport?

13. Is there anything else you would like to add?

Appendix N: Interview Guide for Coaches of First Nations University Athletes (Chapter 6)

1. Let's start with a bit about yourself, including where you're from, your cultural background, what sport(s) you coach (past and current), and how long you've been coaching at the university level.

2. How often do you have First Nations athletes from outside Winnipeg compete on your team(s)?

3. Of the First Nations athletes from outside Winnipeg you have coached:
    a. Have many of them fulfilled all 5 years of eligibility?

    b. For those who did not fulfill all 5 years, what have been the reasons for their departures?

    c. Similar to the previous question, in you your experience, have you noticed any barriers to athletic performance that are unique to First Nations athletes from outside Winnipeg?

    d. What do you think must be done to increase retention rates of First Nations athletes from outside Winnipeg?

4. What are the attitudes of veteran athletes on your team(s) toward new athletes (Indigenous and non-Indigenous)?

5. How much experience did you have coaching First Nations athletes from outside Winnipeg prior to being hired for your current position?

6. Has any of your training to become a coach or upgrade your credentials focused on coaching First Nations athletes? If yes, what organization(s) provided this training?

7. What advice would you give to young First Nations athletes from outside Winnipeg who are interested in pursuing university-level sport?

8. Is there anything else you would like to add?

Appendix O: Interview Guide for Former First Nations University Athletes (Chapter 6)

1. Let's start with a bit about yourself, including where you're from, your age, cultural background (including nation), what sport(s) you played in university, and how long you competed at the university level.

2. What motivates/motivated you to play sports?

3. With respect to **sports** in your **home** community:
    a. What is being done well? What isn't being done well?

    b. What do you think could be improved and how?

4. Same as question #3, but in relation to the **community in which you attended high school** (if different than the community in which you attended primary school; if it's the same, please skip this question)
    a. What is being done well? What isn't being done well?

    b. What do you think could be improved and how?

5. Same as question as #3, but in relation to the **community in which you attended university** (if different than the community in which you attended high school; if it's the same, please skip this question):
    a. What is being done well? What isn't being done well?

    b. What do you think could be improved and how?

6. With respect to **school** in your **home** community:
    a. What is being done well? What isn't being done well?

b. What do you think could be improved and how?

7. Same as question #6, but in relation to the **community in which you attended high school** (if different than the community in which you attended primary school; if it's the same, please skip this question):
    a. What is being done well? What isn't being done well?

    b. What do you think could be improved and how?

8. Same as question as #6, but in relation to the **community in which you attended university** (if different than the community in which you attended high school; if it's the same, please skip this question):
    a. What is being done well? What isn't being done well?

    b. What do you think could be improved and how?

9. Tell me about the transition from high school to university.
    a. What were the challenges with respect to **sport** and how did you overcome them?

    b. Do you have any suggestions for what universities could do to help ease the transition for other students?

    c. Same as question 9a but with respect to **school**.

    d. Same as question 9b but with respect to **school**.

10. What was it like balancing school and sport here in the city with obligations you may have had back home?

11. When competing in university, did you enjoy going back home? What are the positive and negative aspects?

12. Are you still active in your sport? Why or why not?

13. Do you have any advice for other First Nations athletes from rural and remote communities who are interested in pursuing university-level sport?

14. Is there anything else you would like to add?

Appendix P: Email Correspondence with Dr. Andrew Bennie, re: Permission to use Interview Guide (Bennie et al., 2019[39]; Chapter 7)

From: Andrew Bennie [mailto:A.Bennie@westernsydney.edu.au]
Sent: September 17, 2018 12:05 AM
To: Leisha Strachan <Leisha.Strachan@umanitoba.ca>
Subject: Re: question…

Hi Leisha,

Great to hear from you.

Attached is the guide but I just wondered if you were planned on adapting aspects of the guide to suit your context/community as ours was pretty broad in terms of coaches across the country rather than one specific site. Also, because we've already published our article with the guide, I wasn't sure how much new data you'd get, albeit with the Canadian focus – I still think there's merit in seeking the input of First Peoples from Canada but perhaps with a slight tweak of questions.

Alternatively, would you like me to add you and your doctoral student to our existing ethics application? That might be an option for collaborating on this as we've got the Canadian context for the research, I'd just need to update locations to suit your needs. No worries if you've got your own application

Happy to chat if you'd like.

So great you've got your Associate Dean on board, I really appreciate it. I'm pretty close to being able to confirm dates so will keep you in the loop as soon as I know!

Kind regards,

Andrew.
I acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples as the Traditional Custodians of the Lands on which we work and live. I recognise their strength and resilience and pay my respects to Elders past, present, and future.

Dr Andrew Bennie | Director, Academic Program
Health and Physical Education | School of Science and Health
Kingswood Campus, Building K, Room 06. D
P: + 61 2 4736 0590 | Ext: 2590 | westernsydney.edu.au

Publications: Andrew Bennie - Google Scholar; Twitter; Coaching Unlimited

[39] Bennie, A., Apoifis, N., Marlin, D., & Caron, J. G. (2019). Cultural connections and cultural ceilings: exploring the experiences of Aboriginal Australian sport coaches. *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health, 11*(3), 299-315.

__Recent Article__: Cultural connections and cultural ceilings: exploring the experiences of Aboriginal Australian sport coaches

From: Leisha Strachan <Leisha.Strachan@umanitoba.ca>
Date: Friday, 14 September 2018 at 4:50 AM
To: Andrew Bennie <A.Bennie@westernsydney.edu.au>
Subject: question...

Hi there,
I hope all is well.

A quick question: My doctoral student would like to have permission to use the same interview guide that you used in your study with Indigenous coaches. Is that OK with you? Could you send the guide if it is indeed OK that we use it?

Oh and as an update – I have spoken to Todd Duhamel (our Associate Dean Research) about your visit and he is on board with you doing a talk while you are here and I am sure that we can get you some office space for the week. Once you have more specific dates in June, just let me know and we can pick a date and arrange some things over here.

Thanks!
Leisha

Leisha Strachan, PhD, Sport Psychology (CSPA member)
Associate Professor, Faculty of Kinesiology and Recreation Management
http://www.umanitoba.ca/faculties/kinrec/about/strachan.html
204-474-8378
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The University of Manitoba campuses are located on original lands of Anishinaabeg, Cree, Oji-Cree, Dakota, and Dene peoples, and on the homeland of the Métis Nation.
"Do the best you can until you know better. Then when you know better, do better" (Dr. Maya Angelou)

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Appendix Q: Informed Consent Form for Participants ≥18 Years of Age (First Nations coaches; Chapter 7)

Research Project Title: Factors influencing university sport participation among rural and remote Indigenous athletes in Manitoba (Study 2)

Principal Investigator and Contact Information: Nickolas Kosmenko

Email: umkosme2@myumanitoba.ca Phone: XXX-XXX-XXXX

Research Co-advisors and Contact Information:

Dr. Leisha Strachan: XXX-XXX-XXXX Dr. Joannie Halas: XXX-XXX-XXXX

This consent form, a copy of which will be left with you for your records and reference, is only part of the process of assent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

Purpose of Research

This research seeks to identify the factors influencing university sport participation among rural and remote Indigenous athletes in Manitoba, including suggestions for change. Due to the importance of Indigenous coaches and coaches sensitive to Indigenous cultures in the athletic development of Indigenous athletes (Canadian Heritage, 2005), this part (2) of the larger research project seeks to understand the factors influencing Canadian Indigenous coaches along their career paths.

As a research participant, you will be asked to participate in a one-on-one interview with the principal investigator. Specifically, you will be asked to share your experiences becoming a coach as well as relevant experiences during your coaching career. The interview will take no longer than 1 hour and will be conducted either online (e.g., Skype, Facetime, email), by phone, or at a location that is convenient for you. What is said in the interview will be audio-recorded and later transcribed verbatim by a transcription company. A debriefing of no more than 30 minutes will be conducted immediately after the interview. During the debriefing, you will be informed of the principal investigator's intent with respect to the proceeding steps involved in the research. You will be given the principal investigator's contact information should you wish to add additional information or ask any questions. The principal investigator will engage in

follow-up information analyses, and results will be confirmed with you prior to being disseminated.

Benefits to Participants

You will be acknowledged in the final report, any conference presentations, and any publications that may arise from information you provide.

Risk of Harm

There is no foreseen risk of harm associated with participation in this research than would be greater than that expected in day-to-day life. During the analyses processes, information will be kept by the principal investigator and security measures (i.e., lock and key or password) will be used to ensure information remains inaccessible to the public. To protect participants' identity, names used in transcripts will be replaced with pseudonyms in documents released to the public. The exception to this, however, is the case in which a participant wishes to use their own name. In this case, the participant acknowledges that what they say during the interview process might be conveyed alongside their name in my PhD dissertation, publications, and presentations. Prior to public dissemination of results or submission of any resulting, potential publications, the principal investigator will check with you to see if you agree and are okay with content associated with the information you contributed. Public dissemination of results and submission of potential publications will not occur unless you are content with how your information has been represented and interpreted. If any confidential information is collected, it will be destroyed prior to Sept. 1, 2021 via shredding in the case of paper copies, or deletion in the case of electronic copies. Disclosures of abuse will be reported to authorities as per legal requirements. If a participant experiences distress during the interview/talking circle process and indicates they would like help, they can contact: the University of Manitoba's Indigenous Student Centre (phone: 204-474-8850), the staff of which can connect them with an elder; the University of Manitoba's Student Counselling Centre (phone: 204-474-8592); or an elder or therapist in the community in which the participant is currently living.

Withdrawing from Participation

You may withdraw from participation in this research at any point on or before Nov. 1, 2019 by informing the principal investigator (via the email address provided on this form) of your desire to no longer participate. There will be no consequences for choosing to withdraw.

Dissemination of Research

This research will be disseminated for public consumption via my PhD dissertation, which may include a summary of findings as well as direct quotations. There is also potential for dissemination through presentations to relevant organizations, at research conferences, and through publication of research findings in peer-reviewed journals (which also may include a summary of findings as well as direct quotations).

Summary of Results

You will have the opportunity to receive a summary of research findings no later than Mar. 1, 2020, and you will have the option of being sent these findings via mail or email. If interested in this option, please check the appropriate circle (below) and provide an email

address (below) so I can follow up with you later to ask about your preference for receiving the results (i.e., email or mail).

Your signature on this form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project and agree to participate. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the researchers, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, and /or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation.

The University of Manitoba may look at your research records to see that the research is being done in a safe and proper way.

This research has been approved by the Education/Nursing Research Ethics Board (ENREB). If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Coordinator at 204-474-7122 or humanethics@umanitoba.ca. A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

Participant's Signature _____ Date _____

○ Yes, I wish to receive a copy of the results. Here is my email address:

_____

Appendix R: Interview Guide for First Nations Coaches (Chapter 7)

Since Study 2 of my research is based on the work of Bennie, Apoifis, Marlin, and Caron (2019),[40] I believe it is necessary to follow the interview guide they used, as doing so will allow for comparisons between studies (i.e., Australian versus Canadian context). Below is their unaltered interview guide, borrowed with permission from Bennie. In addition, from perusal of Bennie et al.'s study, it is clear that certain background information about each coach must be collected. This background information, displayed in their Table 1, includes: sport coached, sex, whether they are community or high performance (HP) coaches, qualifications, and number of years of coaching experience.

Indigenous Sport Coaches Interview Guide

Introduction

The purpose of this interview is to discuss your experiences about being a sport coach. I hope to learn about your experiences growing up playing sport followed by your choice to go into sport coaching. I'd like to explore your views about the things that helped, and obstructed or got in the way of your (1) decisions to coach, (2) opportunities to coach, and (3) ability to progress in the field of coaching I'm only interested in your honest and personal opinions. Please don't feel that you have to answer the question the way you think I would like to hear, it's most important that you talk about your honest beliefs about the topics. Your identity will only be revealed in the write up if you consent to this. Alternatively, your identity will not be revealed in the write up of these results if you do not wish for it to be revealed. Either way, it'd be great if you could use specific examples of particular situations throughout the interview. I'm not here to evaluate your knowledge and this is not a journalistic style interview where I'll sensationalise your opinions. I am just interested in your honest opinions and thoughts about sport coaching, from an Indigenous perspective.

Opening Questions – Involvement in Sport Coaching

1. Tell us a little about your life growing up and initial experiences with sport.

a. How did you get involved in sport?
    i. What are some of your past experiences as an athlete, including other sports played
    ii. Describe some of your athletic accomplishments while growing up
    iii. Describe how your participation in the sport influenced you as an athlete and person (if applicable).

b. How long have you been coaching (in any sports)?

c. What prompted your decision to enter the world of sport coaching? When did this occur?
    i. What levels of sport have you coached?

[40] Bennie, A., Apoifis, N., Marlin, D., & Caron, J. G. (2019). Cultural connections and cultural ceilings: exploring the experiences of Aboriginal Australian sport coaches. *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health, 11*(3), 299-315.

ii. How did you acquire most of your knowledge about sport coaching?
iii. What qualifications do you currently hold in sport coaching (and other fields)?

Key Questions:

For the next set of questions, I would like you to answer all of the questions solely based on your experiences that helped or got in the way of your career in sport coaching.

Becoming a Coach

a. Who had the largest impact on your decision to become a coach?
    i. In what ways did this individual influence you? Why?
    ii. In what ways did you interact with this individual? Why? What lessons did you learn from this individual? Why?
    iii. How has this individual shaped your coaching style? Why?

b. Were there any significant factors that helped your ability to become a coach?
c. Were there any significant factors that got in the way of your ability to become a coach?
d. Were there any other career or life experiences that influenced your decision to become a coach?

Progressing in Your Career as a Coach

a. Who had the largest impact on your development as a coach?
    i. In what ways did this individual influence you? Why / How?
    ii. In what ways did you interact with this individual? Why / How?
    iii. What lessons did you learn from this individual? Why? / How?
    iv. How has this individual shaped your coaching style? Why? / How?

b. Were there any significant factors that helped your ability to progress beyond your initial experiences as a coach?
c. Were there any significant factors that got in the way of your ability to progress beyond your initial experiences as a coach?

For Current Coaches

a. What, if any, are the significant factors that currently help your ongoing role as a coach?
b. What, if any, are the significant factors that currently obstruct or challenge your ongoing role as a coach?

For Former Coaches

a. What, if any, are the significant factors that got in the way of your ability to maintain an ongoing role as a coach?

Individual Factors

a. What do you believe are some key personal characteristic traits that are important for coaches to possess?
    i. How do you learn about and / or develop these traits?

b. In general, what are your coaching beliefs and philosophies?
    i. How did you develop these (i.e., mentoring and experiences in and out of sport, coaching clinics and symposium, internet, other coaches?)

c. Describe for me what you see as your role as a coach?
    i. What are your primary duties on and off-the field/court? For example, tasks in training sessions and competitions, including adjustments for athletes based on their age/ability/personal context, tasks related to supporting athletes.

Interpersonal Factors

a. In what ways, if any, has your cultural background shaped your decision to coach?

b. Which, if any coach(es), have had the most influence on you while you were an athlete?
    i. How did they influence you and your decision to participate in coaching?
c. Which, if any relatives, had the most influence on you while you were an athlete?
    i. How did they influence you and your decision to participate in coaching?

d. Were there any other friends, support networks or social groups that helped your decision to coach? If yes, tell us a little about how they influenced your decision to coach.
e. Were there any other support networks or social groups that got in the way of your decision to coach? If yes, tell us a little about how they influenced your decision to coach.

Organisational Factors

a. Were there any organisations that helped your decision to coach? If yes, tell us a little about how they influenced your decision to coach.
b. Were there any organisations that got in the way of your decision to coach? If yes, tell us a little about how they influenced your decision to coach.

Sociocultural and Environmental Factors

a. Were there any environmental factors (e.g., built environment, connection to country, distance, nature of built or natural environment) that helped your decision to coach? If yes, tell us a little about how they influenced your decision to coach.
b. Were there any environmental factors (e.g., built environment, connection to country, distance, nature of built or natural environment) that got in the way of your decision to coach? If yes, tell us a little about how they influenced your decision to coach.

c. Were there any racist notions that helped spur on your decision to coach? If yes, tell us a little about how they influenced your decision to coach.
d. Were there any racist notions that got in the way of your decision to coach? If yes, tell us a little about how they influenced your decision to coach.

Concluding Questions

a. Why do you think there are so few Indigenous coaches working at the community/representative/high performance level [or do you think this[41]]?
    i. i.e., locally based or professional sport or high performance context
b. What, if any, recommendations do you have for young people, current athletes, administrators about better creating opportunities for Indigenous people to coach?
c. What, if any, recommendations do you have for young people, current athletes, administrators about minimising the barriers for Indigenous people to coach?

d. Are there any other comments you wish to add?

e. Do you have any final questions or comments?

Thank you for your time.

[41] For the current research, this component of the question was added to the original interview guide used by Bennie et al., 2019.

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Appendix S: Informed Consent Form for Participants ≥18 Years of Age (Chapter 8)

Research Project Title: Autoethnographic Reflections on Doing Indigenous Research in a Colonial Academy

Principal Investigator and Contact Information: Nickolas Kosmenko

Email: umkosme2@myumanitoba.ca Phone: XXX-XXX-XXXX

Research Co-advisors and Contact Information:

Dr. Leisha Strachan: XXX-XXX-XXXX Dr. Joannie Halas: XXX-XXX-XXXX

This consent form, a copy of which will be left with you for your records and reference, is only part of the process of assent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

Purpose of Research

In personal communication, Dr. Halas has suggested research should be transformative, yet unfortunately, traditional graduate theses capture mainly only the academic component of one's growth as a researcher, leaving many of the transformative experiences omitted. In some cases, the omitted material would be helpful in preparing other students about to embark on their own journeys through graduate studies. My previous research (E2018, 103 and E2019, 024) is no exception here. Specifically, my work involved following Wilson's (2001) Indigenous research paradigm to 1) examine the factors influencing university sport participation among rural and remote First Nations athletes in Manitoba, and 2) examine the barriers and supports along First Nations coaches' paths to becoming coaches and continuing those roles. Doing this research in the university setting was problematic because universities still favor Western ways of knowing, being, and doing (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1991), so I was required to justify certain choices I made (that deviated from the Western model) on numerous occasions. Dr. Lavallée, who recently resigned from work at the U of M, mentioned in her blog that she had to still break down barriers in her role as Vice Provost of Indigenous Engagement despite other Indigenous leaders doing this years prior to her being hired at the U of M. Her blog shed light on how colonial practices continue to dominate in the academy, and I believe the study I am currently proposing can do something similar to what her blog did, but in the context of graduate studies specifically. This isn't to say my proposed study will be only helpful to graduate students; many of the barriers I came across were guarded by administrators who did not understand that

university practices tend to provide more space for Western ways of knowing, being, and doing than they do for ways of other cultures. As such, it is likely the study I propose will be helpful throughout the institution.

Specifically, this research will utilize an autoethnographic approach to address the following question: Along my graduate studies path, what were the challenges of doing Indigenous research in a colonial academy, and how did I deal with these challenges?

For this work, I would like to write about a conversation you and I had a while ago, as that conversation is particularly relevant and played an important role in my growth as a graduate student. I won't be specifically incorporating anything you have written me; I will more so be referring to it generally. Your name will be anonymized and I will refer to you using a general descriptor (e.g., professor, or whatever your role is). You will have the opportunity (1 week) to review what I have written and, if you wish, I will withdraw and destroy, or modify the material prior to making my autoethnography public. Note that content can no longer be removed from this study after Aug. 31, 2020.

Benefits to Participants

Participants will benefit from this research by knowing they contributed to greater awareness regarding the challenges of doing Indigenous research at the colonial academy, as well as to the knowledge of future and current graduate students who are navigating such challenges during their academic careers. Greater awareness can lead to changes that make the university setting more inclusive of non-Western ways of knowing, being, and doing (i.e., make it more inclusive of people from non-Western cultures).

Risk of Harm

There is no foreseen risk of harm associated with participation in this research than would be greater than that expected in day-to-day life. During the analyses processes, information will be kept by the principal investigator and security measures (i.e., lock and key or password) will be used to ensure information remains inaccessible to the public. To protect participants' identity, participant names will be anonymized in the final document. Prior to public dissemination of the autoethnography, the principal investigator will provide you the opportunity to check content associated with the information you contributed. Public dissemination of the autoethnography will not occur if you inform the principal investigator that you are not content with how your information has been represented and interpreted. If a participant experiences distress upon reviewing what the principal investigator wrote and indicates they would like help, they can contact: the University of Manitoba's Indigenous Student Centre (phone: 204-474-8850), the staff of which can connect them with an elder; the University of Manitoba's Student Counselling Centre (phone: 204-474-8592); or an elder or therapist in the community in which the participant is currently living.

Withdrawing from Participation

You may withdraw from participation in this research at any point on or before Aug. 31, 2020 by informing the principal investigator (via the email address provided on this form) of your desire to no longer participate. There will be no consequences for choosing to withdraw, and the content associated with the conversation the researcher had with you will be destroyed. Note that content can no longer be removed from this study after Aug. 31, 2020.

Dissemination of Research

This research will be disseminated for public consumption via my PhD dissertation. There is also potential for dissemination through presentations to relevant organizations, at research conferences, and through publication of research findings in peer-reviewed journals.

Summary of Results

You will have the opportunity to receive a copy of the autoethnography no later than Jan. 1, 2021, and you will have the option of being sent the document via mail or email. If interested in this option, please check the appropriate circle (below) and provide an email address (below) so I can follow up with you later to ask about your preference for receiving the results (i.e., email or mail).

Your signature on this form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project and agree to participate. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the researchers, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, and /or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation.

The University of Manitoba may look at your research records to see that the research is being done in a safe and proper way.

This research has been approved by the Education/Nursing Research Ethics Board (ENREB). If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Coordinator at 204-474-7122 or humanethics@umanitoba.ca. A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

Participant's Signature _____ Date _____

○ Yes, I wish to receive a copy of the results. Here is my email or mailing address:

_____