Volume 11, Issue 1, 2023

JSFD

Journal of Sport for Development

Special Issue: Indigenous Voices Matter

Guest Editors: Rochelle Stewart-Withers, Jeremy Hapeta, Audrey Giles, and Haydn Morgan

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Editorial

Foreword: Indigenous Sport and Development - Decolonising Sport in Aotearoa New Zealand

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Introduction

This foreword brings together the theoretical analyses of Kaupapa Māori (Smith, 1997) and Decolonising Methodologies (Smith, 2021) alongside an extensive practice-based knowledge of Indigenous sport and Indigenous development in Māori contexts in Aotearoa New Zealand (NZ). We critically examine changing contexts and understandings of both sport and development and how those concepts have been applied to and for Māori in Aotearoa NZ. We argue that many of the taken for granted ideas about sport and development need decolonising, disrupting, and reframing within an Indigenous frame we refer to as Kaupapa Māori. This is necessary if we are to fully appreciate and understand how sport and development might work relationally for the well-being of any Indigenous communities and collectives. We explore the role and relationship between sport and development through four political contexts: (a) a historic context and the role of sport as an organized physical activity in an Indigenous society that held its own sovereignty, (b) an Imperial and colonial context in which sport as conceived and introduced by British colonisation was wielded as an instrument of colonisation, (c) a neo-liberal context in which sport as an activity of market forces, competition and privatisation reshaped the organisation of sport and development as a form of economic neoliberalism, and (d) a decolonising and Kaupapa Māori context in which sport has been reimagined and reframed in terms of Indigenous Māori development. The first two political contexts will be covered less extensively because more is known of these two periods, however, there are threads of important ideas that we wish to draw upon that inform Māori concepts of sports and development in the current context.

In keeping with the theme of this Special Issue on indigenous sport for development, this foreword is written from an Aotearoa NZ, Indigenous perspective. While this paper primarily documents the emergence of Indigenous development 'in' and 'through' sport in Aotearoa NZ, we think its relevance extends to other Indigenous contexts where Indigenous peoples live in the legacy of colonial contexts of dominant and subordinated power expressed and experienced through political, social, economic, cultural, and racial structures. Sport is only one of several social systems through which Indigenous communities have experienced, resisted, and sought to transform colonial relations of power. In the paper, we refer to the term "Māori" as a collective term for an Indigenous Peoples who mostly define ourselves through our own pēpeha (tribal sayings) as belonging to specific geographies marked by our mountains and waterways, to ancestors, and to collective iwi or "tribal" communities. We also acknowledge the co-development of Pacific peoples who have migrated from a range of Pacific Island countries and who now reside within Aotearoa and who also contribute significantly within most sports in NZ. Māori people represent approximately 892,200 or 17.24% of the 5.127 million people in NZ and Pacific people number 381,640 or 8.1% of the NZ population (Statistics NZ, 2022). Both groups have a young demographic with most Māori and Pacific people being under the age of twenty-five years. This youthful population is where the Indigenous engagement in sport and development is primarily being expressed.

While the current growth of access, participation, and success of Indigenous Peoples into sports is an emerging phenomenon – that has not always been the case. In fact, for Māori, w e suggest this growth correlates in interesting ways with two significant movements; firstly, the Māori language and schooling movement that occurred from the early 1980s and, secondly, the neo-liberal economic reform movement that began in the late 1980s and took hold during the 1990s. The sequence and converging of these two movements is important, we argue, because the Māori language and cultural revitalisation movement revolutionized Māori identity and sense of agency and established a momentum that helped Māori engage to a greater extent than otherwise with the sweep of neo-liberal reforms that took effect in the 1990s.

Decolonising and Kaupapa Māori Theory and Methodologies

In approaching this foreword as a collaborative piece of writing, we have drawn on our own theoretical strengths and positionality in Kaupapa Māori and Decolonising Methodologies, and our deep practice knowledge in education and sport for development. Our practice-based knowledge comes from the different roles we have played as educators, coaches, managers, and in governance. Graham Smith was raised in sports, from boxing to athletics and cricket and has been a player, coach, and administrator in rugby in Auckland. He attended St. Stephen's Māori Boarding School which at the time was renowned for its sporting accomplishments. He was the first Māori Club Captain of the University of Auckland Rugby Club, a member of the national NZ Māori Rugby Board, and was on the committee that organized the inaugural Māori sports awards. Linda Smith spent many years trying to avoid sport, which was mostly an impossibility in the NZ school system as physical education (PE) and sports were compulsory. Her parents paid good money for tennis coaching lessons, she did well in athletics and netball, and nearly drowned in swimming. It all caught up with her when she became head of PE and sport at a large intermediate school in Auckland and ended up organizing and coaching netball and soccer teams, overseeing weigh-ins for rugby and rugby league teams, umpiring softball and senior netball games, hosting regional athletic event, and ensuring all students could swim and pass their life saving certificates. Our research spans the role of colonisation in schools, the Native Schools System, the impact of Neo-liberalism, Kaupapa Māori, and Decolonising Methodologies.

We have brought together two theoretical lenses that complement our analysis of Indigenous sport and development. A decolonising approach understands the role and impact of imperialism and colonialism on the world as we know it, in a historical, material, and epistemic sense, and further holds to a set of ideas about ways to critique systems and institutions of power. A decolonising approach also offers ways to think about knowledge and the making of knowledge outside the dominant framing of knowledge and research. Reframing, writing, theory making, and storytelling are just some of the methodologies that decolonising scholars draw upon in their work. One aspect of reframing is to ensure that our research is not focused on 'damage-centered research' (Tuck, 2009) or victim blaming, but focuses instead on knowledge questions that position the colonized, in this case Māori people, as epistemic equals with valid and legitimate questions and solutions that are grounded in their own knowledge systems.

Our Kaupapa Māori approaches to theory and praxis have emerged from a critical understanding of several transformative Māori initiatives that began in the 1980s, as Māori specific theories and methods for generating knowledge, governing research, and working for Māori development were established. These understandings have informed approaches to theory and research that go well beyond methods to addressing systemic attitudes and norms about research, research ethics, and the institution of research itself in the western academy. Kaupapa Māori is much more than Māori leading and carrying out research, but being able to center Māori theorising Māori experiences by drawing insights from Māori knowledge and practices and committing to an agenda of transformative outcomes. We will address some of these understandings more fully later in this foreword as the influence of these insights has spread across Māori society including sport.

The Historic Pre-Colonial Context: When Māori Held Mana Motuhake Māori Played Sport

In both historical and contemporary contexts, the term sport is so deeply associated with European and British imperialism that it can be difficult to imagine the existence of sport in Māori or Indigenous contexts prior to the arrival of Europeans. Yet, we know from other examples such as surfing in Hawaii or the earlier version of Lacrosse in North America that Indigenous peoples invented and played sport. These were often looked down upon or ridiculed by Europeans as mere 'games' that children played, a standard classic ploy of colonisation and racism to diminish native peoples.

When Māori exercised full mana motuhake (autonomy) over their lives, Māori people played sports. Māori were physically active. Māori were competitive. Māori enjoyed physical and artistic achievements. i had fun. Māori had

ideas about the physical body and how it could be trained and prepared. Māori played sport in groups and as individuals. Māori people designed and used equipment for sport. Kite flying, waka races, string games, stick games, poi, running, swimming, climbing, martial arts and weaponry training (Brown, 2008). There were indoor and outdoor sports, daytime, and night-time sports. The environment of Aotearoa was conducive to physical activity and the genealogies of Māori are written into their DNA as are the stories of an ocean crossing people who were strong, adventurous, purposeful, and healthy. Many of our sports could be played by the whole community regardless of age, ability, or gender while others were created specifically to train and prepare people for fishing, hunting,, warfare, carving, or for weaving.

The story of Māori and sport is, however, not just about the activities of sport. It is primarily about a unique world view, a knowledge system or mātauranga and the application of knowledge to practice which we call tikanga that defines how sport was understood. The 'playing fields' of mana Motuhake, unlike the playing fields of the British empire, were written into our cosmology, the earth mother and sky father's embrace of their children from which our concept of whanau or extended family is derived, in the stories of the stars, in the seas, ocean currents and crashing waves, in the rivers and lakes, mountain ranges and plains, forests and villages. Our stories tell of extraordinary physical feats of gods and demi-gods, ancestors, and their human descendants. Sport was sourced in the Atua or "Gods" both male and female and was brought to human beings as knowledge and gifts to help human beings live. Hineraukatauri and Hineraukatamea, for example, were atua sisters. One was the atua of flute music and the other was the atua of music and games. Rongomaraeroa, was an atua of peace within whose realm sports and music were protected. In this sense, sports were an expression of peace (Reed, 1999).

The knowledge of sport and music were part of a knowledge system that was conceptualized and practiced in Wharekura or Schools, such as the Whare Wānanga, the School of Higher Learning, the Whare Pora or School of Weaving, and the Whare Tapere or the School of Sports, Entertainment and Performing Arts. Each of these schools were schools of learning and practice as well as schools that strived for excellence. Each had their own tikanga or protocols. Sports and arts were often grouped together and existed as neutral places of enjoyment. One story tells of the School of Huiterangiora which tells of a man from the underworld called Miru who fell in love with a human, Hinerangi. Miru lived in the human world for some time and then returned to the underworld with some of his family where he taught them the knowledge of sports and arts that they were able to pass on when they returned to the world of light where humans dwelled (Calman, 2015a; 2015b; Reed, 1999).

The conceptual ways that Māori understood and played sport were embedded in the collective way of living as inter-generational and relational groups. One key value that governed most ideas about social life was mana. It can be argued that the role of the individual and the collective was driven by the pursuit of mana (Parsonson et al., 1981). Individual excellence enhanced collective mana. Collective mana gave an individual the mana to behave well and strive to be better. Conversely, individual failure in high stakes contexts diminished the mana of the collective. Being regarded by others as having mana and being respected for mana is an important ethical practice. In this worldview, sport was not associated so much with personal development or societal development but with ideas about community, joy and pleasure and the idea of being a self-determining people. When Māori had mana motuhake, Māori had the freedom to lead lives enriched by sport and recreation that had been gifted by the Atua for collective well-being. The spiritual and ancestral connection to atua, the importance of whānau, the drive to excel, the expression of joy, and the pursuit of mana are important tenets of Māori sports.

The Imperial and Colonial Context: When Sport Was Used to Colonize and Control Māori

Māori land, resources, knowledge, language, and culture came under intense scrutiny and attack once British settlers arrived in Aotearoa in increasing numbers following the signing of Te Tiriti o Waitangi in 1840, and particularly after the NZ colonial Government was formally established in 1852. It may seem unnecessary to repeat the story of British colonisation of Aotearoa, but the impact of colonisation was devastating for Māori. Like other Indigenous Peoples, the impacts of colonialism and colonisation were severe and left Indigenous Peoples struggling to survive for generations with a continuing legacy of social, environmental and economic deprivation, and disproportionately high rates of poor health, incarceration, poverty, and homelessness. Every aspect of their lives was upended and most of their resources were systematically taken and or destroyed and replaced with a vastly different world view, identity and knowledge system through colonial institutions and value systems. Sport was one of the many social mechanisms by which colonialism asserted a different hegemony of what was normal and acceptable in a colonial society.

As others have argued, sport was a way to civilize the natives, to embed concepts of white racial superiority and to orient allegiance both politically and culturally to Britain (Mangan, 2003; Roser, 2016). British ideas of sport deeply entrenched categories of race, class, ability, and gender. These categories were embedded in the school system (McCulloch, 1990, 2011) and in the way settler communities organized themselves including claiming and often taking more native lands and resources for their sporting activities such as racecourses, golf courses, recreational fishing waterways, and hunting activities. The British introduced animals for hunting purposes that threatened NZ's native wildlife. Sporting clubs, like scientific societies, sprung up as settlers gained control and wealth. Sport fully expressed colonial ideas about race and the racial superiority of white settler males. Sport was to be reified as being for "God, King, and Country!" and was to be seen as a 'gift' from Britain to the colonies. Colonial sport idealized 'muscular Christianity', the white male body, and infused it with the character of a civilized man. For example, the courageous, idealized 'heroic' sportsman, who above all obeyed the rules, respected the captain, was a good character, and believed in fair play. Like colonial life in general, the colonial sportsman also made the rules, governed the rules, and refereed the rules. This was the case in Aotearoa NZ throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and only ceasing in recent years.

Māori people did engage in and subvert or indigenize these new colonial sports which were often introduced through the native schooling system and Māori Boarding schools. In many areas Māori had great natural talent and enthusiasm. Even when excluded from participation in some places, Māori established their own clubs including racing clubs and racecourses. Sports were played competitively amongst the different Marae or whanau-based communities. Sports such as rugby, tennis, hockey, and netball took hold in some Māori communities as *their* sport, which they completely controlled in terms of organising and staging tournaments. To this day, many Marae host sports teams and enhance their mana through their generous hospitality. Sport is still seen as a whanau activity. In the early part of the 20th Century, Māori played sports such as rugby, polo, cricket, hockey, golf, and tennis. The first rugby tour of the UK by a national rugby team was in 1888-1889 with an all-Māori team called the NZ Natives and led by Joe Warbrick. In the 1880s there were several Māori rugby clubs. Māori women have also been ground breakers in sport. In 1957 the first NZ woman to play at Wimbledon was a Māori woman Ruia Morrison who has only recently been given a NZ honour in recognition of her achievements in tennis.

Māori were stereotyped as being 'naturally' good at team sports, but not disciplined enough to be successful in individual sports. They were frequently overlooked as suitable candidates for leadership positions, such as team Captain or as coaches, managers, or administrators. While they were often talented, creative and innovative, Māori were viewed through the lens of race as being undisciplined, savage, unruly and un-sportsman like (Hokowhitu, 2004). Even their humour and expressions of joy were often negatively perceived and regarded as symptomatic of ill-discipline.

What were classified as 'traditional' Māori games continued to be played but the opportunities for Māori to play sports in the full context of communal life had been diminished as Māori had become dispersed and living away from their traditional homelands. Traditional Māori sports were often diminished in status and were portrayed simplistically as children's games and or entertainment rather than real sports. Some of these games, such as string games and stick games, were introduced into the schooling curriculum of the Native or Māori schools in the 1930s and continue to be taught to this day. The haka ritual was inaccurately viewed as entertainment (Hapeta et al., 2018) and other Māori martial arts were mostly suppressed until the late twentieth century (Jackson & Hokowhitu, 2002).

Education as a tool of colonization went hand in hand with sport and goes some way to explain why Māori were both colonized by sport and in sport (Simon & Smith, 2001). The school curriculum for Māori schools including the secondary boarding schools from the early to mid-twentieth century emphasized manual subjects, which created and perpetuated myths that Māori were not capable of learning academic subjects. Students were corralled into believing they were only good enough for manual and physical labour. Sport became an area that Māori, especially boys, believed they had a chance to excel.

The sports introduced through colonialism was a form of 'trojan horse' that sought to assimilate Māori by both covertly and overtly undermining Māori cultural ideas and values and replacing them with mono-cultural, 'rule bound' sport institutions and facilities at the local and national levels. Unlike the government-controlled institutions of law, education and public health, sports were organized and overseen by Pakeha civil settler society who also had power and control of sport and development across NZ. Local sports clubs like local governments were dominated significantly by Pakeha or non-Māori people. Players were socialized into sports at schools with top schools producing elite players. There was a 'class hierarchy' related to schools attracting and capturing talented sportspeople, firstly to enhance their own sports programs and secondly, contribute

to the production of elite sportspeople into selected sports. These activities have often been aimed at talented Māori and Pacific youth.

The deep social inequities and racism experienced in quite different ways by Māori and by Pacific peoples (who had migrated to NZ mostly from the early 1960s) boiled over in the 1970s into direct political protests. Pacific peoples had been brought to NZ as migrants to help service the manufacturing industry and urban centres. Māori had moved to urban areas in search of work having been pushed out of their lands and rural communities by Government policies. One of the focal points of political resistance was in relation to rugby and the NZ Rugby Union continuing to play against the apartheid regime's Springboks. The South African Springbok Tour of 1981 brought to a head, among other political issues, the challenges facing colonial ideas about sport and the way sport was organized in NZ. Māori communities and families were divided by the protest action that was used to bring the tour to a halt. However, the protest revealed the deep association and commitment to racism and colonialism that was ingrained, at that time, in the national sport of rugby and the national psyche of many New Zealanders.

The period of colonialism and colonization that spanned the 19th and 20th centuries was a period of great turmoil, loss, and struggle for survival for Māori. Sport offered one of the few opportunities for Māori to excel at what they were good at but even then, their efforts and opportunities were constrained by colonial attitudes and values in relation to sport. Māori were able to engage and resist, often organising their own sports around their own ideas and values. In this period there was extreme underdevelopment of Māori communities and institutions, perhaps more accurately described as deliberate deprivation. Following this period of underdevelopment came a phase focusing on development as assimilation, as coercing and persuading Māori to forgo their cultural ways and adapt to the dominant colonial system. Māori resisted assimilation – Māori still wanted and needed to be Māori. Māori resistance has redefined the notion of development – it has now become a term that is related to cultural, social, and political ideas about Māori self-development, as mana Motuhake or development as more self-determining. The mid-1980s are significant in relation to Māori development as beginning a period of cultural, social and economic revitalisation and fight back. Sport played a role in focussing Māori on addressing systemic institutional barriers to Māori participation and pursuit of well-being.

The Neoliberal Turn: Māori and the Sports Market—Developing Individual Agency vs. The Culturally Connected Sportsperson.

The 1980s in NZ also saw the rise of neoliberal, free market economics and the overthrow of the country's long association with the Welfare State (Kelsey, 1993). This did not mean the end of colonialism but rather signalled a turn of colonialism towards a specific version of liberal economics and a change in the form of colonisation. Until this time, NZ had been highly regarded internationally as being a model of Welfare State provision. In 1984, the Fourth Labour Government led by David Lange came to power and his Minister of Finance at that time, Roger Douglas introduced radical economic reforms drawing on the lessons of Ronald Reagan (influenced by the Chicago School of Economics), and Margaret Thatcher who had initiated similar reforms in Britain. The underpinning thinking here was that increased economic freedom would stimulate increased economic development and social prosperity for individuals.

There were four key themes (Jesson, 1987) in the neoliberal economic agenda:

i. A move away from State ownership of public assets and services to privatisation.
ii. A move to stimulate economic growth by deregulating the corporate sector and by lowering corporate taxes and union influence on wages.
iii. A move to cut public spending and to assert a 'user pays' system.
iv. A move to reinstate an accent on nuclear colonial family values, the primacy of the possessive individual, and moral authoritarianism.

In other words, the neoliberal ideology supported free enterprise, competition, deregulation, and an emphasis on individual responsibilities, rights, choices and freedoms. The ideal neoliberal individual (cf. Hayek, 1974) was someone who was self-interested and competitive, motivated to better themselves and rise above others, was a free agent willing to submit to market forces, and sought to accumulate wealth. One important metaphor of neo-liberalism, especially in regard to equity and the issues facing Māori and other poor and disadvantaged communities, was the sporting metaphor of the 'level playing field'. This implied that everyone should be considered equal with equal opportunities to succeed. Despite this myth, the reality has been that the 'field' was in fact uneven and therefore created outcomes of winners and losers. Neoliberalism gave a 'head-start' advantage to the winners and enhanced their opportunities to maximize their gains. The losers were considered to have been the creators

of their own misfortune because they made poor choices, did not try hard enough, did not achieve required standards, and were therefore responsible for causing their own social and economic disadvantage. There was no real appreciation in this ideology for community or culture. In this sense, neoliberal ideology does not care whether communities or cultures thrive or not, because neoliberalism is focused on outcomes of individual meritocracy.

The impact of neo-liberal politics for Māori communities was initially devastating with state-owned industries being privatized and Māori finding themselves unemployed and ill-prepared to become their own business contractors/ managers (Kelsey, 1995). At one point in the early 1990s, one-quarter of Māori men were unemployed and, furthermore, blamed for their own unemployment. Neoliberalism created several points of tension for Māori and for other groups of New Zealanders by exacerbating their socio-economic and cultural underdevelopment. Those sport codes which had previously been amateur codes became more professionalized as individuals competed to position themselves in the 'marketplace' of sport. There was money to be made in sport. For Māori people, sport provided some talented individuals with the means to develop upward social and economic mobility by being recruited into professional sports both within NZ and abroad. These opportunities presented disadvantaged families with hope that their young people would gain status, employment, wealth, and realize the neo-liberal dream.

The neo-liberal notion of development in relation to sport was primarily the advancement of the self-interested individual rather than the development of community or culture. As the economic and social reforms were implemented, it has become more obvious as the years have progressed that neo-liberal policies in NZ made previous inequalities between Pakeha and Māori even worse despite the efforts of later governments to address some aspects of disadvantage. The safety net of the social welfare system failed many people and helped create an underclass or precariat of marginalized and vulnerable people of which a high proportion were Māori.

Māori development, however, has been carved out of a different set of aspirations and ideas. In some ways neo-liberalism presented opportunities that did not exist prior to the reforms. For example, previously 'submerged' systemic racism within colonial structures and practices were made more overt, and therefore obvious enough to be challenged and managed. Māori economic development was given greater priority than previously. Where neo-liberalism touted individual choice and opportunity, Māori interpreted these ideas as the choice to be Māori, the prospect to develop as Māori, and the opportunity to participate as Māori in all spheres - in the economy, business, education, health, and sport. 'Choice theory' was also a hegemony perpetuated by neoliberal interest groups who falsely sold the belief that everyone had equal choices – what they neglected to acknowledge was the fact that not everyone started from the same place – those who already had more wealth were able to exact more choices than those who were less wealthy.

As they had done from the beginning of colonization, Māori people both engaged with and yet resisted strategies that pushed them towards rejecting their cultural identity and values. Community and cultural identity were at the core of the strengths Māori sportspeople could draw upon and by which they were motivated to achieve. The pursuit of mana for the collective still operated as a cultural reward system. Individual sportspeople wore their identity with pride through their names, their connections to their whanau, sometimes on their skin as tattoos, on uniform insignia, and in the use of te reo (Māori language). Cultural connectivity worked both ways in terms of community embracing their teams, heroes and sheroes and sportspeople acknowledging their communities.

A Decolonising and Kaupapa Māori Approach to Sport and Development

As mentioned at the beginning of this foreword, Kaupapa Māori as a movement of transformation, rather than development, emerged early in the 1980s and prior to the economic reforms of neoliberalism. The movement was stimulated by earlier Māori resistance politics of the 1970s and calls for the honouring of Te Tiriti o Waitangi, and the teaching of Māori language. The Waitangi Tribunal was established in 1975 that began a process of addressing NZ's failure to honour the Tiriti o Waitangi. The Te Māori Art Exhibition to the Metropolitan Museum in New York in 1984 reframed perspectives about Māori as creators of art, not just of artifacts of material culture, and as a culture that had a relationship with its art and environment. The Te Māori exhibition also trained many Māori as Museum docents, so they were able to talk about their culture and their art pieces in more positive and critical ways than they had been used to doing (Mead, 1984).

The development of Kohanga Reo, the Māori language nests, in 1982–essentially a preschool full-day program that only used the medium of Māori language–sparked a grassroots movement as parents and communities immersed their children in the Māori language. Kohanga Reo was

followed by a schooling initiative called Kura Kaupapa Māori, which aimed to continue the philosophy and practices that were successful in the Kohanga Reo. Both these initiatives challenged the status quo of the education system at the time and led to changes in the Education Amendment Act 1989 that recognized their existence (Smith, 1997).

The genuine belief that communities could start their own kohanga reo and develop children as fluent Māori language speakers was part of a wider cultural revolution that stimulated a reclaimation and celebration of Māori culture and identity as something positive and worthy of pride. Kaupapa Māori as an approach to development, as well as a theory and praxis of development, emerged partly from the grounded cultural practices that Māori were using across the spectrum of grassroots initiatives and partly from the insights gained from analysing and theorising why these various initiatives were so successful. During this period, a diverse array of Māori cultural practices were being reclaimed and revitalized across the arts, the performing arts, including some aspects of martial arts, Māori ocean going voyaging, and Māori economic activity and sports.

Kaupapa Māori ways of being and doing things "by Māori and for Māori" fostered self-belief and enthusiasm for going ahead and organising a diverse range of activities that were grounded in Māori values. Not only were Māori participating in the professional sport codes, but they were also creating new approaches to sport. The Haka tradition, for instance, and other cultural elements are now increasingly witnessed in Rugby and some other sports. New sports evolved out of traditional sports (as in Waka Ama emerging as an internationally competitive sport) and insisting on the inclusion of Tikanga Māori - Māori custom into NZ sports (as in the use of cultural elements in national teams such as NZ's Olympic Team), and some of the professional sports (for example, the NZ Team contesting the America's Cup and the New Zealand Warriors Rugby League Team (Hapeta, 2018; Hapeta et al., 2018; Hapeta et al., 2019; Palmer et al., 2022).

Waka Ama, a form of outrigger canoe racing, for example, was introduced by people like Matahi Whakataka-Brightwell in 1985 when he started a canoe club Mareikura in Gisborne and shared his learnings from his time in Tahiti. Waka ama has grown into a national and international Indigenous sport with huge participation across age-groups, and about 50:50 participation by men and women. Māori participation in Waka Ama far outstrips their participation in the more British colonial sport of rowing. Māori identity and culture are a natural and taken for granted aspect of the sport. The national sport organisation values manaakitanga (reciprocity), hauora (well-being), whanaungatanga/ (relationships), and Tū tangata (responsibility). One of the successes of Waka Ama is the involvement of Māori from smaller communities and regions outside the urban centres which have the populations to support most professional sports.

Ki-o-Rahi is another example of a more traditional ball sport that has been revitalized (Brown, 2008). It is based on the story of Rahitutakahina and its rules are based entirely on Māori principles. The ball is referred to as Ki and the game is played on a round pitch. Ki-o-Rahi was what Māori played before colonial ball sports were introduced and when the settlers arrived with these new sports. Ki-o-Rahi went into decline, but Māori readily adapted to the new introduced games such as Rugby. However, Ki-o-Rahi is now making a comeback. Its revitalization journey began during the first World War and has really picked up from the 1970s. It is now played in schools and has national tournaments. Like Waka Ama, this is a sport which is inclusive of gender and age.

Endurance-related sports, like marathon running and triathlons, have been adapted by Māori into a cultural format. An event called Iron Māori is a cultural form of Triathlon that attracts high participation by Māori of all ages and abilities. Its primary purpose is to promote Māori fitness, health, and well-being. Iron Māori began in 2009 in the Hawkes Bay with participants joining as whanau teams, involving people of all ages. Some participants do all the disciplines, while others may form teams or whanau groups who choose to do specific elements of the event. Hundreds of people from across the country prepare for the event and turn up with their supporters wearing matching gear to cheer on their friends and whanau. Elite endurance participants are also present, but the emphasis is on whanau and other holistic benefits of health and well-being.

The story of the Black Ferns, NZ's national women's rugby team, provides another example of how important cultural values were to a team of mostly Māori and Pacific Players. After a disastrous performance in 2021 and allegations of bullying, the NZ Rugby Union conducted an environmental and cultural review. Here is one statement from the Executive Summary (Muir et al., 2022, p.1) of that report:

The Black Ferns team has created a significant whakapapa and legacy in a relatively short period of time. Since the Women's Rugby World Cup was officially sanctioned by NZRFU in 1991, the Black Ferns have won five of the seven Rugby World Cups. The wāhine who wear (and pass on) the Black Ferns jersey, together with those who contribute to the team's performance and success off the field, have bestowed mana on women's rugby in Aotearoa and have much to be proud of and to uphold.

Whakapapa translates to layering one layer upon another. The responsibility to maintain and positively contribute to the Black Ferns whakapapa is clearly evident within all members of the current team.

Māori concepts are used throughout the report as ways to describe what the team means to the sport. The players are referred to as wāhine, or women. The concept of mana is defined as bestowing mana on women's rugby in Aotearoa and Whakapapa is translated as legacy and conveyed as an inter-generational commitment. These elements indicate a broader and deeper commitment by players and managers to tikanga and Kaupapa Māori. Culture is seen in this report as a positive aspect of personal and team development, as well as a means for fostering wider community engagement. Wāhine players had to be treated with mana for the team to have mana and a team with mana is more likely to win than lose. This proved to be the case when the Black Ferns won the Women's Rugby World Cup in 2022 played in front of a packed crowd in the iconic Eden Park in Auckland, NZ.

How does a decolonizing and Kaupapa Māori approach in sport relate to development? Making space for Māori to reclaim their culture and identity through sport as well as being able to create and revitalize ancient sports has unleashed the spirit of Rakautauri and other ancient ancestors/atua who gifted sports and arts for Māori to enjoy. A decolonized approach has enabled participation not just at the level of playing sport but within the system of sport, at governance, management, and coaching levels. Kaupapa Māori normalizes Māori culture and identity and draws on culture and identity as strengths. Cultural identity for Indigenous Peoples is often fraught with the divisive legacy of cultural assimilation and so not all Māori can be assumed to have fluency in Māori language or strong iwi/tribal connections. Sport plays a critical role in facilitating and enhancing identity and cultural development. Sport does not govern or determine what counts as Māori culture but it does provide spaces in which identities can be, and need to be, affirmed and nurtured.

Sport and Development – How Has It Worked for Indigenous Māori?

We have argued that notions of both sport and development need to be interpreted and understood through a decolonising and transforming Kaupapa Māori lens (Smith, 2015; Stewart-Withers & Hapeta, 2021). Such a lens enables us to understand that prior to any European or British influence, Māori had their own world-views and knowledge systems in which sport existed as a natural element of culture. Mana Motuhake or Māori sovereignty meant Māori people had their own control. Colonialism brought with it different ideas about sport and development that attempted to infantilize Māori sports and destroy Māori knowledge, language, and culture. Colonization was the colonial form of development and it basically meant Māori cultural replacement and assimilation into a dominant settler culture. As Māori adapted, engaged, and resisted some of these assimilatory processes, Māori found ways to participate and often excelled in sport when they had the opportunities. Neoliberalism recast development as being shaped by market forces and the rise of professionalized sports, which enabled some Māori to participate at the highest levels. The issues are not about whether or not Māori people can play sport. They can. The issue is whether colonial constructions of sport fully accept Māori sportspeople as Māori to participate in the sports at all levels when they have for so long been marginalized by white power structures. Kaupapa Māori developments have unleashed a range of Māori approaches to sports, including reclaiming and redesigning ancient sports, as well as re-shaping sports introduced through colonialism. When Māori can fully express their culture and identity then they can more fully participate in and transform the role of sport and development. We argue this also applies to the way researchers engage with the field of sport for development, the questions and approaches they have, and the lens they use to understand Māori and Indigenous in sport. It is important from a Kaupapa Māori and decolonizing lens that Māori and Indigenous people are not the objects of research, but rather are able to set their own research agenda and develop research and scholarship that centers Māori knowledge and culture. This provides a challenge for our NZ context – but also by extension for Indigenous Sport for Development more generally.

Table 1: Glossary of Terms.

1.	Aroha	respect, have regard for.
2.	Atua	god
3.	Haka	a vigorous dance of challenge.
4.	Hapu	sub-tribe
5.	Hakinakina	play sport; enjoy oneself.
6.	Hauora	Health, wellbeing
7.	Iwi	tribe
8.	Kaupapa Māori	Māori philosophy and practice
9.	Kura	school
10.	Mana	status, prestige, power
11.	Mana motuhke	autonomy, self-determining
12.	Manaakitanga	hospitality, generosity, reciprocity
13.	Māori	Native population of New Zealand
14.	Māori Boarding Schools	Residential Boarding Schools run by Churches for Māori youth
15.	Marae	Meeting house and arena
16.	Matauranga	Knowledge
17.	Pakeha	non-Māori New Zealander
18.	Pepeha	Proverb, wise saying
19.	Purakau	Oral narrative
20.	Tamariki	children
21.	Tane	man, male
22.	Te Kohanga Reo	Immersion language nest
23.	Te Tiriti o Waitangi	Treaty between Crown and Māori in 1840, establishing settlement.
24.	Tikanga	Māori cultural practice
25.	Tu Tangata	steadfast, accountability
26.	Wahine	woman, female
27.	Waiata	song,
28.	Waka	canoe; descent group from an original voyager
29.	Whakapapa	genealogy
30.	Whanau	extended family group.
31.	Whanaungatanga	relationships
32.	Whare kura	Immersion Secondary School; school of learning.
33.	Whare Pora	House of weaving
34.	Whare Tapere	House of entertainment
35.	Whare Wananga	Institution of Higher learning

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Editorial

Indigenous voices matter: Graham and Linda's legacy, 'still propping up the sky,' is now lifting to another level!

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Indigenous voices matter:
Graham and Linda's legacy, 'still propping up the sky,' is now lifting to another level!

Over 30 years ago, Graham Hingangaroa Smith (1992) presented a paper titled "Tane-nui-a-Rangi's Legacy: Propping up the Sky" at the joint New Zealand Association for Research in Education and Australian Association for Research in Education conference in Geelong, Australia. In this paper Smith argued that "resistance strategies developed by Māori people, ought to be carefully studied in order to identify the potential intervention factors" (1992, p. 4) inherent within a (Indigenous) Kaupapa Māori approach. In particular, Smith reinforced the need to learn from innovations with a view to the wider application of success indicators embedded within Indigenous responses. Such "radical action," he argued, was necessary to intervene in the "educational crisis" that Māori then faced, trapped within a narrow range of existing mainstream schooling options. Three decades on, similar criticisms could be attributed to sport for development (SFD) initiatives with/for Indigenous communities. Indeed, our plea is for researchers, practitioners, and policy makers operating in the SFD space to take notice of the results and recommendations from the articles in this Special Issue.

In continuing their indigenising and decolonising legacies and elevating their work by applying it to a different field (SFD), Smith and Smith open up the space for light to be shone upon this Special Issue. Through their exploration of the role and relationship between sport and development across four political contexts (historically; imperialism and colonialism; neo-liberalism; Indigenising agenda), they have not just reimagined and reframed SFD in terms of Māori development but also Indigenous development more widely. As Guest Editors, we cannot thank them enough for their time and work in not just "propping up the sky" for light to be let in, but also for lifting the SFD game to another level. No reira, ko tenei te mihi nui ki a kōrua – many thanks and appreciation.

As the guest editors for this Special Issue, we feel very privileged to have collaborated on this project with the authors who have all worked through a difficult time in history (e.g., a global pandemic and the injustices that led to the Black Lives Matter movement) to share their insights – theoretically, empirically, and as practitioners. We are also incredibly humbled to have enjoyed the support for this idea, from the outset, from Distinguished Professors Graham Hingangaroa Smith and Linda Tuhiwai Smith, both eminent and world-leading Indigenous scholars and activists.

This Special Issue is made up of seven articles. Forde, Giles, Nachman, Fabian, Giancarlo, Hayhurst, Rynne, and Henhawk's commentary opens by highlighting that sport and reconciliation research for the most part has seen reconciliation narrowly and problematically defined. Reconciliation has been predominantly understood not as an ongoing process, but as something to achieve within broader attempts at peace building in post-conflict settings. Instead, an understanding of sport for reconciliation that accounts for settler colonialism and foregrounds Indigenous self-determination would allow for more critical engagements with how sport has been and continues to be understood and mobilized within Indigenous communities for truth-telling, relationship building, cultural resurgence, and expressions of sovereignty and self-determination.

Sheppard, Rynne, and Willis's original research from the Australian context explores sport as a site of resistance against state hegemony, examining Indigenous ways of using sport to culturally offset the effects of colonization from Indigenous perspectives. Insights are expolored related to the elements

that encompass Indigenous resistance: racial injustice, the enactment of a sometimes-negative oppositional culture, cultural maintenance, the reformulation of a positive Indigenous identity, the development of Indigenous political movements, and resistance to sport as a weapon in the arsenal of colonization.

Fabian and Giles' discourse analysis builds on the concern that Indigenous games are rarely discussed within the SFD realm. Instead, even when SFD interventions are aimed at Indigenous youth, the focus is typically on the use of "modern" (European-derived) sport. Similar discourses are produced about traditional games in mainstream, and also Indigenous media sources. Problematically, Western-centric sports journalism approaches to coverage of traditional games illuminated a strong SFD ideology within the discourses, despite traditional Indigenous games largely rejecting the logic of Western sport.

In their article, Panqueba and Carreón use a transdisciplinary approach to trace the history of Mayan ball games and how they have been transferred from generation to generation. Building on the first author's experience as a player, the authors also examine contemporary players' experiences with and understandings of the game, which is a part of the recovery of an Indigenous worldview that offers a balance between humans and the natural world. The documenting of a sport genealogy and knowledge transfer systems is Indigenous development.

Seiler and Chepyator-Thomson's commentary draws upon their own culture and ethnic backgrounds, as Oglala Sioux and Kenyan-Kalenjin-Keiyo, enculturated into a Eurocentric pedagogy to examine literature on SFD. Their contribution offers Indigenous-oriented pedagogical strategies and practices to scaffold into SFD programs and policy. They suggest that these types of pedagogical strategies and practices accomplish two objectives: 1. adding to the growing corpus of literature on community-oriented praxis; and 2. providing recommendations for strategic implementation of Indigenous knowledge to facilitate structuring Indigenous pedagogies in program development.

Phillips and Jackson's article is concerned with the issue that in Aotearoa New Zealand, Māori have disproportionately high rates of drowning. While scholarship has begun to examine Maori (and Indigenous) understandings of water safety, Indigenous approaches to water safety continues to be an underdeveloped area, particularly in a SFD context. Participants in this study identified the role of waka (ancestral canoes) as fundamental to learning Indigenous Māori water safety in a New Zealand context. Thus, they argue that the waka provides a (literal and metaphorical) vehicle for educating future aquatic educators about Māori water safety, and offers more meaningful initiatives which focus on drowning prevention for all New Zealanders.

In the final piece, which is again from Aotearoa, New Zealand, Nelson, Jackson, Phillips, Poa, and Skelton's article explores how Otago Māori Rugby incorporated Māori cultural values to enhance Māori identity and wellbeing. The article makes an important contribution to this Special Issue in light of the fact that they used an Indigenous research methodology (i.e., Kaupapa Māori methodology; Smith, 2015) and theory, alongside the fact that the findings make an important contribution to understanding Māori cultural values, identity, and wellbeing within Indigenous sport.

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Commentary

Conceptualizing sport for reconciliation within settler colonial states

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CONCEPTUALIZING SPORT FOR RECONCILIATION WITHIN SETTLER COLONIAL STATES

Globally, research relating to sport for reconciliation purposes has largely been framed as part of "sport for development" (SFD) or "sport for development and peace" (SDP). For example, through their research in South Africa, Höglund and Sundberg (2008) highlighted how reconciliation through sport can take place at the national level, largely through symbolic efforts, at the community level through promoting interpersonal relationships, or at the individual level by trying to shift values and beliefs. International research relating to using sport for the purposes of reconciliation has largely focused on the latter two by examining community-based programs or events to bring groups of people together. Within research on sport and reconciliation, the notion of reconciliation is often undefined, or narrowly conceptualized as bringing people together (Schulenkorf, 2010). A potential reason for narrow understandings of reconciliation is that the bulk of research relating to sport and reconciliation is primarily rooted in theories developed from peace studies that focus on conflict resolution and peace building in contexts where conflict is ongoing or recently ended (Lederach, 2005). Reconciliation is therefore primarily understood not as an ongoing process but rather as something to achieve within broader attempts at peace building in post-conflict settings.

The focus on post-conflict settings and the lack of understanding of reconciliation as an ongoing process in previous research result in tensions when trying to apply notions of reconciliation to SFD/SDP with Indigenous peoples in settler colonial states. Based on our review of the critical scholarship on SFD/SDP, settler colonialism, and reconciliation, we are proposing an understanding of sport for reconciliation (SFR) that accounts for settler colonialism and foregrounds Indigenous self-determination. As explained in The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UN, 2008), "Indigenous peoples have the right to self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development" (p. 8). Importantly, foregrounding self-determination within understandings of SFR acknowledges the ambivalent relationship that Indigenous peoples have with processes of state-led reconciliation. We believe that this conceptualization of SFR allows for critical engagements with how sport has been and continues to be understood and mobilized within Indigenous communities for truth-telling, relationship building, cultural resurgence, and expressions of sovereignty.

Broadening Conceptions of Sport for Development and Peace to include Reconciliation

The idea that sport can contribute to reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples and that

development is a central part of reconciliation requires critical scrutiny. For example, discourses of reconciliation within settler colonial societies often focus on the need to "close the gaps" between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in terms of development outcomes relating to health, education, and income levels. Addressing the health, education, and poverty levels of Indigenous communities is important; however, framing reconciliation in this way serves to position settler colonial understandings of development as the status quo and potentially promotes Indigenous assimilation by foreclosing Indigenous understandings of development and the future. Tuck and Yang (2012) discussed similar processes in terms of outlining how settler "moves to innocence" act as a way to "reconcile settler guilt and complicity, and rescue settler futurity" (p. 3). Within SFD/SDP more broadly, discussions of peace and reconciliation are often subsumed by discussions of development. For example, the SFD/SDP sector has historically been connected to the work of the United Nations, primarily through linking sport to broad development objectives such as first the Millennium Development Goals and now the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs; Morgan et al., 2021). And yet, within these presumably "global definitions" of development, Indigenous conceptualizations of peace, inclusion, and sustainable development within settler colonial societies are rarely considered. Broader literature on peace and reconciliation has similarly obfuscated critical Indigenous perspectives. As Edmonds (2016) explained, research and literature relating to reconciliation, transitional justice, and truth commissions "until recently has tended to ignore the specific conditions of settler states, where reconciliation has been used to address, stabilize and sometimes nullify the demands of Indigenous peoples" (p. 14).

This oversight is indicative of how broader considerations of sport, development, and reconciliation are necessary within SFD/SDP. For example, would scholars and practitioners interested in SFD/SDP come to different understandings of development and reconciliation if they were to engage with the UN's (2008) Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples instead of or in addition to the SDGs? Within the UN's Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples , understandings of development and peace are inextricably linked to the historic and ongoing effects of colonialism and are underpinned by Indigenous self-determination. As noted in the Declaration, "control by indigenous peoples over developments affecting them and their lands, territories and resources will enable them to maintain and strengthen their institutions, cultures and traditions, and to promote their development in accordance with their aspirations and needs" (p. 4). Importantly, self-determination, like development, is not a universal concept. Indigenous nations describe and enact self-determination in different ways, but often around similar concerns relating to sovereignty over their lands, cultures, and political systems. The form of SFR we are putting forward frames development, reconciliation, and peace within understandings of Indigenous self-determination. This is vastly different from dominant neoliberal understandings of development and SFD/SDP that marginalize Indigenous peoples' perspectives and promote narrow understandings of reconciliation (Arellano & Downey, 2019; Hayhurst & Giles, 2013). Attempting development activities, including those related to SDP, within Indigenous communities without critical considerations of sport, reconciliation, and self-determination results in a failure to adequately address the historical and ongoing effects of colonialism.

Settler Colonialism and Reconciliation

Settler colonialism has been described as a system of colonialism that is geared towards "replacing" Indigenous populations (Wolfe, 2006). This replacement can take various forms such as elimination, segregation, or exclusion, but all forms of it aim to disrupt or destroy Indigenous bodies, forms of governance, and the relations between people and between Indigenous peoples and their land.

Engaging with notions of reconciliation requires an analysis that accounts for this context. In settler colonial societies such as Canada, Australia, and Aotearoa/New Zealand, processes of reconciliation have occurred largely as a result of public, political, and legal pressure from Indigenous peoples (Edmonds, 2016). Through state-led processes in Canada and Australia, the concept of reconciliation has been explicitly defined. Within Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (2015) report, reconciliation is described as,

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, an acknowledgement of the harm that has been inflicted, atonement for the causes, and action to change behaviour. (p. 6)

Reconciliation Australia, which was formed in 2001, offers the following: "At its heart, reconciliation is about strengthening relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous peoples, for the benefit of all Australians" (Reconciliation Australia, 2021, para 1). Although the concept of reconciliation is less explicit in Aotearoa/New Zealand, since the 1970s, and as a result of Māori activism relating to upholding the principles

of the Treaty of Waitangi, New Zealand governments have emphasized the concept of biculturalism and the principles of partnership, participation, and protection that are enshrined in the Treaty. Despite increasing rhetoric in settler colonial settings that emphasizes reconciliation and relationship building, there are ongoing tensions relating to how reconciliation is understood and operationalized.

These tensions are largely related to specific understandings of truth and justice, as well as notions of inclusion, sovereignty, land, and self-determination. Numerous Indigenous and settler scholars have noted how state-led processes of reconciliation within settler colonialism have served to maintain the status quo (Coulthard, 2014; Short, 2005; Simpson, 2017; Sullivan, 2016). Further, it has been noted that processes of reconciliation can perpetuate settler colonial aims by encouraging forms of assimilation (Grande & Anderson, 2017). As Simpson (2017) and Grande and Anderson (2017) have argued, reconciliation processes have promoted the inclusion of Indigenous peoples and the celebration of certain aspects of Indigenous cultures in ways that align with understandings of liberal multiculturalism. That is, forms of Indigenous culture are accepted and celebrated as long as Indigenous politics relating to self-determination and sovereignty are eschewed and the status quo remains unchallenged.

In critiquing settler colonial approaches to reconciliation, Corntassel and Holder (2008) explained that state designed reconciliation processes are deficient and that "genuine movement towards recognizing Indigenous human rights and self-determination requires action by governments that systematically examines the past, initiates a process of homeland restitution, and holds institutions, as well as individuals accountable" (p. 487). Subsequently, the SFR that we advocate for moves beyond simply using sport as a way to recognize Indigenous cultures or as a space for professional sport clubs or settler governments to engage in symbolic acts of recognition and apology. SFR needs to be explicitly oriented against the settler colonial status quo in which Indigenous peoples are not afforded their right to self-determination. In some ways, this commentary, and the form of SFR we are advocating for, overlaps with recent work that has called for approaches to sport that focus on Indigenous cultural resurgence and decolonization (Arellano & Downey, 2019; Essa et al, 2021). However, we remain concerned with how forms of cultural resurgence may be appropriated within state-led reconciliation processes. As Henhawk (2018) explained, "the survival of our communities and resurgence of our cultures depends upon our ability to recognize and reconcile the dilemmas of compromise and contradictions that define our existence" (p. 1).

Critically Engaging with Reconciliation in Sport

Professional sport organizations in settler colonial societies have recently engaged in activities that they have framed as facilitating reconciliation. For example, the Canadian national broadcast Hockey Night in Canada recently promoted "Orange Shirt Day," recognizing the impacts of the Indian Residential School system (Douglas, 2020). Ron MacLean, a prominent Canadian sports broadcaster, explained that promoting Orange Shirt Day represented "a true acknowledgement of what took place and chance to fix it. It's just a really, really important aspect of making Canada whole again" (Douglas, 2020, para 11). In Australia, the proliferation of "Indigenous rounds" across a variety of sporting contexts often involve a celebration of Indigenous cultures and Indigenous peoples' contribution to sport. In Aotearoa/New Zealand, Māori practices such as the haka have been adopted within amateur, professional, and national levels of sport. A more critical consideration of SFR raises important questions relating to the role of mainstream or Euro-centric sport within reconciliation processes and how these activities may promote a form of reconciliation that essentially requires Indigenous peoples to assimilate into settler colonial societies.

SDP interventions relying on Euro-centric understandings of sport have promoted the assimilation of Indigenous peoples into neoliberal understandings of land, development, and citizenship (Arellano & Downey, 2019; Henhawk & Norman, 2019; Sheppard et al., 2021). This can be viewed as continuing the assimilative drive of settler colonialism. For example, historically, in Canada the Department of Indian Affairs employed sports and recreation in residential schools and reserve communities in the service of social and economic "progress" (Forsyth, 2020). As Henhawk and Norman (2019) argued, these processes of assimilation are exacerbated by the increasing modernization of sport, "in which Indigenous people can access the boons of modern capitalism by exploiting, taming and overcoming the natural world and, in so doing, overcoming the limits of their traditional cultures" through sport (p. 169). The mobilization of sport for the purposes of assimilation is based on a deficit discourse that delegitimizes Indigenous traditional games and land-based physical activities (Paraschak & Heine, 2019), as well as their cultural and spiritual connotations, in the fanfare and performance principle inherent to mainstream sport.

Symbolic acts at sporting events, and the recognition of Indigenous cultures, can be an important part of reconciliation processes. These acts highlight how particular aspects of Indigenous cultures are now seemingly respected, promoted, and celebrated through sport.

However, as forms of reconciliation, these efforts may also be what Tuck and Yang (2012) have described as settler "moves to innocence" through which discussions of Indigenous self-determination and land rights are obfuscated by forms of settler colonial tolerance and inclusion. Further, the recognition of Indigenous cultures and nationhood can function to reaffirm the authority of governing bodies over Indigenous sovereignty (Coulthard, 2014). Therefore, we need to question how these symbolic sporting acts could further the assimilative aims of settler colonialism. Simpson (2017) explained that through acknowledging and celebrating some forms of cultural resurgence, settler-colonial societies deflect from activities and movements for political resurgence that threaten colonial structures.

If, as noted above, current sport-based efforts towards reconciliation within settler colonial societies are simply promoting the assimilation of Indigenous peoples but are not significantly changing the underlying colonial structures that subordinate Indigenous politics and sovereignty to the state, then we need to ask how other forms of SFR could offer potential alternatives.

Moving Beyond SFD/SDP: Sport, Reconciliation, and Self-Determination

SFD/SDP programming, although intended to work towards developmental goals, have regularly been found to perpetuate harms for Indigenous peoples (Arellano & Downey, 2019; Henhawk & Norman, 2019). As noted above, reconciliation through SDP programming has primarily been understood as something to achieve within broader attempts at peace building and not as contributing to Indigenous sovereignty and self-determination. The form of SFR we are promoting, however, aims for respectful, responsible, relevant, reciprocal, and relationship-oriented sporting initiatives that attend to past injustices as well as the ongoing impacts of settler colonialism. Further, sport in this sense should not simply be viewed as an activity that can bring people together, as a venue for apologies or commemoration, or as a tool to "develop" Indigenous peoples. Instead, any approach to SFR needs to critically engage with understandings of both sport and reconciliation that move to challenge the settler colonial status quo. Fundamentally, the process of reconciliation within settler colonial societies can only really begin once historical truths are recognized and Indigenous sovereignty and self-determination are upheld. In this sense, the form of SFR we are advocating for would include instances of Indigenous peoples using sport or other physical cultural practices for the promotion of resistance, sovereignty, and self-determination. In various settler colonial contexts, Indigenous historians have highlighted the complicated processes of assimilation and resistance for Indigenous peoples within sport (Bamblett, 2011; Judd & Osmond, 2022; Hokowhitu, 2003; O'Bonsawin, 2019). For example, recent work by Downey (2018) explained how the reclamation of lacrosse and the creation of the Iroquois Nationals lacrosse team was part of ongoing efforts to maintain Indigenous sovereignty. Indeed, in her work on Mohawk sovereignty, Simpson (2014) highlighted the Iroquois Nationals team's refusal of state-issued passports when the United Kingdom did not recognize their Iroquois Confederacy-issued passports while the team was travelling to a tournament. More recently, the team called for a boycott of the 2022 World Lacrosse Games after they were excluded from participating despite their competitive ranking; this action received international support (Chidley-Hill, 2020). Forsyth (2020) also showed how Indigenous peoples in Canada were able to use political and sporting organizations, such as the National Indian Brotherhood (now referred to as the Assembly of First Nations) and the Aboriginal Sport Circle, to develop and express forms of Indigenous self-determination through sport (Forsyth, 2020).

These historical examples align with how Henhawk (2018) described reconciliation as "much more than how we utilize cultural activities to create a better human experience but deeply dependent upon the stories we choose to perpetuate that leads to self-determination, to sovereignty and emancipation" (p. 163). Because of racist and colonial histories of sport in settler states, using sport for the purposes of reconciliation and self-determination is a messy and paradoxical process. However, in line with the conceptualization of SFR for which we are advocating, Henhawk (2018) goes on to argue that a critical understanding of the tensions between Euro-centric and Indigenous understandings of and approaches to sport, leisure, and physical activity are essential to "enact a praxis that brings Indigenous notions of sovereignty and self-determination into reality" (pp. 149-150). In this sense, our conception of SFR would also challenge notions of "sport" and would include traditional Indigenous games and other physical and cultural practices such as dance, and even the act of walking. For example, in response to the finding of unmarked graves at the sites of numerous residential schools in Canada, Indigenous people and communities organized "healing walks". These walks ranged from individuals engaging in long distance walks or runs, to Indigenous communities organizing walks within communities, to larger walks involving Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. Engaging with these walks as a form of SFR recognizes how Indigenous communities are "committed to developing their own, preferred approach towards enhancing their lives through physical activity" (Paraschak & Thompson, 2014, p. 1055). A more comprehensive and nuanced understanding

of SFR provides a basis upon which to engage in the praxis that Henhawk has advocated. It also provides a reference point for researchers and practitioners to examine, critique and support reconciliation efforts in sport.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This commentary has come out of an international research project relating to sport and reconciliation in settler colonial states and has developed through collaborative discussions and brainstorming involving Indigenous and non-Indigenous team members. We want to acknowledge the contributions of Avery Holmes, Erin Kohli, Nora McRae, Rochelle Stewart-Withers, and Jeremy Hapeta. Within our project we are committed to a critical Indigenous approach to research that provides a space where we can engage with the tensions inherent in conducting and publishing research in settler colonial contexts and possibly enact our understandings of reconciliation through our collaborations. Therefore, it is important to acknowledge that seven out of the eight authors of this commentary identify as non-Indigenous. Although this illustrates the tensions mentioned above, the commentary also serves as an example of how non-Indigenous and settler scholars need to engage with Indigenous perspectives and critically interrogate settler colonial understandings of reconciliation and development. We are also grateful to the reviewers for their insightful comments.

FUNDING

Funding for this project has been provided by Canada's Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) Insight Grant to the second author.

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Original Research

Sport as a site of resistance against the hegemony of the state

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ABSTRACT

The notion of sport as a cultural offset has gained great popularity over the past few decades as a symbol of self-determination and empowerment for Indigenous peoples in Australia. This article involves an examination of Indigenous ways of using sport to culturally offset the effects of colonization from Indigenous perspectives. As such, this account offers insights into the elements that encompass Indigenous resistance: racial injustice; the enactment of a sometimes-negative oppositional culture; cultural maintenance; the reformulation of a positive Indigenous identity; the development of Indigenous political movements; and resistance to sport as a weapon in the arsenal of colonization. This consideration of sport as a site of resistance against the hegemony of the State is informed by Indigenous voices, including that of the first Author, so as to offer a more nuanced understanding of the intersections between sport, development, and Indigenous peoples in Australia.

SPORT AS A SITE OF RESISTANCE AGAINST THE HEGEMONY OF THE STATE

The notion of sport as a cultural offset has over the last few decades gained great popularity as a symbol of Indigenous self-determination and empowerment. When we speak of sport as a cultural offset in Indigenous Australia, we are talking about how Indigenous peoples have positioned sport "as a way of offsetting a variety of losses [such as socio-cultural, linguistic, political, economic, familial, and, importantly, a loss of connection to Country] that Australian [Indigenous] communities and peoples have experienced and continue to experience" today (Sheppard et al., 2019, p. 1). In this conceptualization, sport is positioned as a cultural offset, going some way to atoning for the historical and ongoing effects of colonization in settler states.

Iconic performances by Australian Indigenous athletes in national and international sporting arenas have helped to drive this notion. For example, Lionel Rose's 1968 boxing world title, Evonne Goolagong's tennis grand slam titles at Wimbledon, the Australian Open and the French Open, Nicky Winmar's defiant on-field stand against racist Australian Football League fans in 1993, Adam Goodes' Australian Football League battle cry, resistance to racist fan abuse and retirement (2013-2015), Johnathan Thurston's stunning National Rugby League career and achievements (2002-2018), Patty Mills' Championship ring in the 2014 National Basketball Association finals, his position as Flag Bearer for Australia at the opening ceremony for the 2021 Olympic Games in Tokyo, and his role in Australia's medal winning performance in men's basketball at those Games, and Ash Barty's tennis wins in women's singles at Wimbledon in 2021, the 2019 French Open and the 2022 Australian Open as well as doubles wins at the 2018 US Open and a bronze medal at the 2021 Tokyo Olympics. Each of these athletes have characterized their Indigeneity,

Keywords: cultural offsets; Australian Indigenous peoples; sport for development; hegemony; yarning

family, and community as sources of strength and determination. Importantly, they have generally been positioned in relation to the broader (i.e. non-Indigenous) Australian population as symbols of Indigenous progress, opportunity and reconciliation—even when their stories have not been representative of this (Morgan & Wilk, 2021; Tatz & Adair, 2009).

Offering some more critical and concentrated understandings, scholars have begun to consider cultural offsetting in the context of the mining industry whereby extractives companies negotiate access to land in exchange for funding sport, recreation and cultural activities (Sheppard et al., 2019; van Luijk et al., 2020). Sheppard et al.'s (2019) article in part spoke to the modern-day corroboree surrounding the annual Indigenous run sporting Rugby League events—the Koori Knockout in New South Wales and the Murri Rugby League Carnival in Queensland. According to Norman (2006), these sporting events "emerged from particular experiences that were both culturally continuous in a traditional sense and historically produced" (p. 170) and are forms of resisting the hegemony of the State. In this paper, we seek to critically evolve the view that in Australia, as elsewhere, sport is solely a site of colonization through elimination of traditional games, 'civilization' / assimilation through Western sports, and ongoing control of participation (Osmond, 2019). Rather, we aim to unpack the idea that despite Indigenous peoples' colonized state of being, they have actively used sport to forge their own positive future pathways to resist the hegemony of the State in various ways.

To achieve our aim, we make use of Broome's (Osmond, 2019) five core elements: (a) injustice in the context of racial injustice, (b) enactment of a sometimes negative oppositional culture, (c) cultural maintenance, (d) the reformulation of a positive Indigenous identity, and (e) the development of an Indigenous political movement in the context of sport. We will show that despite injustices imposed upon Australian Indigenous peoples, and the hardships they endured under foreign rule, Indigenous peoples have reclaimed their Ways of Doing and Being by incorporating European sports, originally introduced to assimilate them into a foreign society, or rejecting SfD interventions in ways that resist the hegemony of the State. We will also show that Australian Indigenous peoples are playing 'games' for their own purposes and enjoyment while appearing to comply with the rules and goals of their colonial oppressors. Resisting in subtle and sometimes overt ways, Indigenous peoples' involvement in 'play' and 'games' is therefore at once a performance of compliance, defiance, resistance, and existential joy.

Injustice

In this section we first speak to three forms of injustice experienced by Indigenous elite athletes and then link this with the ways these same injustices are perpetrated by SfD providers in Australia—racial, epistemic, and cultural injustice. Garcia (2022) defined racial injustice as:

the act of being unjust to an individual or group based on race, particularly concerning legally recognized rights … it includes discrimination based on race or ethnicity in voting, employment, housing, and the administration of justice. In regard to criminal laws, it refers to conduct such as racial profiling.

In 1992 former Prime Minister of Australia Paul Keating's speech on International Human Rights Day in Redfern, New South Wales at the Australian Launch of the United Nations International Year for the World's Indigenous People, referred to racial injustice within sport (Keating, 1993). Prime Minister Keating (1993) asked Australians to "imagine if our [White peoples'] feats on sporting fields had inspired admiration and patriotism [but] did nothing to diminish prejudice?" (p. 11). The question is relevant as the following examples at the elite level show that racial injustice on the sporting field is evident in different ways.

Racial injustice in sport is evident when Indigenous athletes dare to express cultural pride, take a stand against the constant racist barrages they experience on the sporting field, or when non-Indigenous athletes ally themselves in solidarity with their Indigenous team mates to draw attention to the racial injustices experienced by Indigenous peoples historically and today. An example is the public backlash experienced by Cathy Freeman when she expressed her cultural pride by holding the Aboriginal and Australian flags during her victory lap at the 1994 Commonwealth Games in Canada and wrapping the Aboriginal flag around her at the 2000 Olympic Games in Sydney (Gillespie, 2020; Osmond, 2019). Another example: Nicky Winmar's iconic stance of lifting his jersey and pointing "at his skin, while shouting, 'I'm black and I'm proud to be black'" in response to the racial abuse he and other Indigenous players in the AFL had been subjected to by non-Indigenous spectators and some AFL opponents for years (National Museum of Australia, 2021).

Two years later Indigenous AFL player Adam Goodes "was booed into retirement by the same nation who once celebrated him. What was his culpa? He called out a derogatory comment made by a young spectator" (Medibank, 2019). The injustice is evident within the systemic racism Winmar and Goodes experienced and

implicit in Collingwood president Allan McAlister's comment that "as long as they [Indigenous players] conduct themselves like white people, well, off the field, everyone will admire and respect them … As long as they conduct themselves like human beings, they will be all right. That's the key" (National Museum of Australia, 2022). Gorski (2011) refers to the language McAlister used as deficit ideology: "a worldview that explains and justifies outcome inequalities … by pointing to supposed deficiencies within disenfranchised individuals and communities" (p. 153). In this case the deficiencies purportedly inherent within AFL Indigenous players originate from an outmoded but still prevalent non-Indigenous racist paternalistic view of Indigenous peoples as uncivilized savages.

The final example pertains to the Australian Women's Soccer team—the Matildas—being called out as 'un-Australian' for choosing "to [only] pose with the Aboriginal flag in an anti-racism act 'relevant to our country" at the 2020 Olympic Games in Tokyo (Zaczek, 2021). Federal Member of Parliament Pauline Hanson's (a right-wing populist politician and leader of the One Nation political party) condemnation of the Matildas succinctly illustrates the hegemony of the State and the injustices implicit in the non-recognition and 'invisibilizing' of heterogenous Indigenous nations and their cultures when she stated "Indigenous flags don't represent all Australians. There's only one flag which truly represents all of us. Taxpayers don't shell out millions of dollars to send Olympic teams to represent two nations. We're one nation, Australia, indigenous and non-indigenous alike" (Francis, 2021). Hanson's comments impinge upon the rights of Indigenous peoples to remain culturally distinct from the broader Australian society. Her comments also imply that Indigenous peoples are somehow on equal terms and accepted by non-Indigenous society when this is not the case. Indigenous athletes are only on equal terms, accepted by non-Indigenous society, and celebrated for their feats on the sporting field if they toe the non-Indigenous line, and perceived as continuing to:

> *adopt the same customs, values and attitudes as colonial society; as well as to take on, in theory, the racialized social systems of the colonizer. [Essentially, Indigenous peoples are] … expected to use the tools that were instrumental to structuring Indigenous oppression (Rigney, 2020, p. 52).*

The injustices imposed on Indigenous peoples are evident in historical Indigenous Affairs policies such as the policy of Assimilation that continues to permeate today even though 'the word assimilation is rarely mentioned, [there is] more than a trace of its essence [that] remains in official pronouncements on national values, citizenship and the practical integration of Aboriginal communities.' (Haebich, 2008, p.7-8). Overall, historical Indigenous Affairs policies "were designed with the intent to erase the existence and/or visibility of [Indigenous] Australians and assimilate 'part-[Indigenous]' people into the mainstream, white Australia, to stop the survival of [Indigenous] cultural practices and values" (Bodkin-Andrews & Carlson, 2016, p. 787). To achieve its aims, governments continue to utilize sport as a tool to aid its "construction of invader Dreaming—particularly the perceived benefits of sport in healing the wounds of Indigenous people created by ideological policies of segregation, 'protection' and assimilation" (Rigney, 2020, p. 52). However, as the examples show, sport has done little to diminish discrimination and racial injustice on the elite sporting field.

In the context of SfD programs in Australia, readers need to understand that the majority are run by non-Indigenous Non-Government Organizations. These SfD providers' Ways of Knowing perceive that their racial membership—'Whiteness'—is the norm and that their sporting interventions will in some way result in their target cohort, the school-aged children of the colonized peoples of Australia, aligning themselves with the State's expectations (Ganley, 2006; Scheurich & Young, 1997). However, SfD providers market their sporting intervention programs to governments, prospective and ongoing corporate and philanthropic donors in ways that perpetuate epistemic and cultural injustices upon their target cohort.

For example, the marketing associated with SfD providers gives the impression that all Indigenous youths of both genders are 'at-risk' of dropping out of school. The term 'at-risk' has several definitions for Indigenous and non-Indigenous youths. However, the collective term youth and risk "draws our attention to the negative, [and] thus [prevents] us from keeping an eye on the positive … [and that the] terminology [youth at-risk] can keep youth trapped within predetermined perceptions" (Follesø, 2015, p. 241). Significant risk factors impacting Australian Indigenous peoples include "widespread grief and loss; impacts of the Stolen Generations and removal of children; unresolved trauma; separation from culture and identity issues; discrimination based on race or culture; economic and social disadvantage; physical health problems; incarceration; violence; [and] substance misuse" (Beyond Blue, 2022). However, Sheppard (in press) found that these risk factors emanate from historical and present-day political machinations that have impacted Indigenous peoples socio-economically, technologically, legally, and evident in the realm of sport which Tatz (1995) noted "is a mirror of many things. It illuminates political, social,

economic, and legal systems. [And] reflects the [Indigenous] experience, especially since 1850" (p. 43).

Therefore, SfD providers who use deficit language such as 'at-risk' to describe Indigenous youngsters are demonstrating a form of epistemic injustice. Bhargava (2013) defined epistemic injustice "as a form of cultural injustice that occurs when the concepts and categories by which a people understand themselves and their world are replaced or adversely affected by the concepts and categories of the colonizers" (p. 413). SfD providers are aware of the emotive nature of such language in the broader society and focus on the personal attributes of young peoples—such as what is wrong with an individual—instead of what may be wrong in their environment. This sets up "a false distinction between a supposed problematic minority versus a 'normal' majority" (te Riele, 2006, p. 129). Though SfD providers may not admit to knowingly perpetrating epistemic and cultural injustice upon their target cohort, their narratives emphasizing "'children at risk' can be [and are] understood as a struggle for power over how to define children, families, and communities who are poor, of color, and/or native speakers of languages other than English" (Sleeter, 1995, p. ix) by young people who are struggling to stay afloat.

The Enactment of Occasional Negative Oppositional Culture

Broome's "enactment of a sometimes negative oppositional culture" (Osmond, 2019, p. 289) is evident in how Indigenous school aged youths who are on the verge of disengaging, or have already disengaged from school, reject interventions that use sport to lure them back to school. Though these youngsters are generally viewed as 'problematic' by schools, SfD providers, governments, and the broader society, we contend that their opposition and rejection of sporting interventions is an act of resistance, enacted to culturally offset several factors stemming from intergenerational trauma and its impact on themselves and their families, subsequent difficulties in school, and participation in SfD programs as outlined below.

The disintegration of Indigenous cultures and Ways of Doing under non-Indigenous colonial rule has resulted in Indigenous youths no longer necessarily having access to or receiving guidance from "strong male and female leadership" role models (pers. comm. Indigenous Youth Justice Worker). Sheppard (in press) notes that the absence of 'strong male leadership' was an issue raised by Indigenous community peoples, one of whom stated "a lot of these youngster's fathers were absent, dead, in prison, or not in the picture". The breakdown in kinship attachments contributes to social death which Card (2003) describes as "a major loss of social vitality [and] a loss of identity and consequently a serious loss of meaning for one's existence" (p. 63).

The loss of culture, identity, kinship ties, and disintegration of families were factors behind these youngsters giving up and choosing their own path through necessity—including their involvement in sporting activities. For instance, though youngsters in Cherbourg (a former government reserve where Indigenous people were forcibly removed to, now a self-governed shire council) had a passion for playing sport during their childhood. By the time they were tweens, many had begun to walk away from participating in sporting activities because of the lack of support from their parents or caregivers who never made "any time for their children at all—they would rather play pokies, drink, gamble or do drugs—leaving their children to their own devices" (Sheppard, in press).

According to Ryder and White (2022), children trapped in the intergenerational trauma cycle will often repeat learned behaviors they believe are 'normal' Ways of Doing. Their behaviors then become 'problematic' in a school setting because these youngsters, at first, are unaware that the dysfunctional nature of their Ways of Doing will not be tolerated within an education system run and based upon Eurocentric rules, regulations, and values, that are mostly staffed and enforced by non-Indigenous teachers.

Thus, factors between the home and school environments overlap and "impact [youths in crisis] capacity to attend and engage in school [because of the] social issues that youngsters experience in their home environment" (Walker, 2019, p. 59). Other factors also include "at the school level and an individual's previous experiences with school, teacher-student relationships, racism, self-perception of academic ability, transition experiences from primary to secondary school and previous achievement at school" (Walker, 2019, p. 59). For example, a non-Indigenous Youth Justice Worker in Cherbourg noted:

The negative experiences of education … that [then] impacts … their willingness to even [engage in school] … the barrier is actually that our kids don't necessarily fit into mainstream school … or if they do get into mainstream school, their behaviours are often such that it's challenging for them to remain there … The kids I guess that we deal with [have] significant trauma in their background, which obviously impacts significantly on their behaviours. Their behaviours right from when they're little, they [school staff] would have seen in a school setting. [With] some of the kids it leads … to regular suspensions, so it's some of those

policies and procedures I think around those kids. Some kids then miss significant periods of school because of those suspension periods.

Suspension of youngsters was an issue spoken about by an Indigenous Youth Justice Worker and a non-Indigenous Alternative Education representative in Townsville (a major regional town on the North East coast of Australia) who noted that schools were too restrictive and unwilling to re-enroll students who had been kicked out of several schools due to behavioral problems. Factors related to the home environment and intergenerational trauma went unacknowledged by non-Indigenous teachers who—according to an Indigenous community member in Murgon (a small rural town north of Cherbourg)—had spoken about some of their Indigenous cohort who were struggling to stay afloat in school as 'lazy' because they would either 'nod off', or showed 'disinterest' in the education setting. However, these youngsters:

Were not lazy! They [often went] every day with having no showers - sometimes for days - not having breakfast or food for the day, not being able to get a good nights' sleep because of what is going on in their house. They walk out of their houses every morning with all these bags on their backs [that is, problems weighing them down] and it obviously affects their ability to engage in education (Sheppard, in press).

Therefore, it is unsurprising that many of these youngsters turned to their peers in similar situations as a source of:

support, security, membership, autonomy, self-expression and common experiences [where they] inevitably look to their peers for approval and support … [because they share the same interests] and [also provide] mutual defence. [And because their peers provide] nurture in these groups for the gap left by family breakdown (Yavuzer et al., 2014, p. 62).

The non-Indigenous Youth Justice Worker in Cherbourg concurred stating that in their community "peer pressure is definitely a factor, with … those older cohort of kids [aged between 13 to 17 years]. That's developmentally kids at that age, yeah, your friends are really important." However, the influence and pressure exerted by their peers often led them to comply with their peers to gain their approval and support through behaviors such as dropping out of school (Yavuzer et al., 2014). Many of these children and their peers were exposed to, live with, and continued to be affected by violence in their home environments and exhibit psychological and behavioral issues such as:

depression; anxiety; trauma symptoms; increased aggression; antisocial behavior; lower social competence; temperament problems; low self-esteem; the presence of pervasive fear; mood problems; loneliness; school difficulties; peer conflict; impaired cognitive functioning; and/or increased likelihood of substance abuse … eating disorders, teenage pregnancy, leaving school early, suicide attempts, delinquency and violence as potential consequences of child abuse and/or childhood exposure to domestic violence (Richards, 2011, p. 3).

The psychological and behavioral impacts were evident from a yarn Sheppard (in press) had with the non-Indigenous Alternative Education representative in Townsville whose cohort consisted of youngsters that SfD providers purportedly targeted. The youngsters were disenfranchised, expelled from school—a number of times—or totally banned from schools in the area. The cohort comprised "those in the care of the State; on youth court orders; suffered from depression; and … [came] from dysfunctional families" (Sheppard, in press). In Australia, SfD providers target the Indigenous cohort regardless of whether there is an identified need for support or not. Eventually, youngsters enrolled in SfD programs who have the greatest need come under the scrutiny of SfD staff who start to identify "those five to ten percent who are completely disengaged … who hate school [and then] look at that as a percentage [before deciding to] palm them off to the YMCA" (Sheppard, in press). The inability to engage the youngsters who need them most speaks to the failure of SfD programs to build far-reaching community capacity and deliver on their promise. Therefore, the rhetoric of using sport as a vehicle to solve specific or perceived problems created by colonization differs from reality and inadvertently creates exclusionary environments. Youngsters excluded from schools, lured back to an education setting with the promise of sport, and then disenfranchised by the SfD provider leads them to reject the hegemony of the State and its imposition of systemic violence that pervades their life. Rather than follow the rules, these youngsters disengage from school because they see no 'real' advantage of education in their lives.

Overall, the trauma created by the aforementioned factors is the reason why many youths of color choose to enact a negative oppositional culture that rejects non-Indigenous Ways of Knowing and Doing. The subsequent psychological and behavioral issues learned in the home environment and exhibited by youths in crisis in the school environment intersect and are thus factors that contribute to their disengagement and rejection of both home, school, and SfD programs. Thus, the rejection of sporting interventions by youths in crisis is their way of culturally offsetting the impact of colonization, by withdrawing from

involvement in non-Indigenous forms of sport that further assimilationist agendas.

Cultural Maintenance

In Australia, Indigenous peoples' cultural identities and belonging are founded upon their physical, material, and spiritual ancestral connection to Country, kinships, cultural mores and traditions—Law and Lore—, all of which contribute to and define their identities (Hampton & Toombs, 2013; Mooney et al., 2016; Rigsby, 1999). Following the first wave of British colonial settlers on the continent now known as Australia in 1788, the original and heterogeneous peoples' cultural practices, languages, and values across the continent came under inexorable pressure from the foreign State who—as noted previously by Bodkin-Andrews and Carlson (2016)—purposely designed Indigenous policies intended to expunge the existence and visibility of Indigenous peoples in an attempt to absorb them into mainstream White Australia.

For example, in 1937, Australian state and federal governments agreed to adopt the process of assimilation that involved "two distinct forms of integration. The first … 'biological absorption', or the desired removal of Indigenous physical characteristics. The second … 'social integration', whereby Indigenous cultural or social practices would yield to non-Indigenous social and cultural practices" and purportedly ended in the 1960s (Chesterman & Douglas, 2004, p. 48-49). We contend therefore, that the Assimilation Policy took no account of the resilience and strength of values of Indigenous peoples' diverse cultures, nor accept that they would seek to maintain their traditions and languages.

The break-down of Indigenous societies in Australia not only left an indelible mark upon their consciousness but also scarred their "memories forever and [changed their] future identity in fundamental and irrevocable ways", evidenced in such things as a denial of Indigeneity or a failure to identify (Alexander, 2013, p. 6). Indigenous identity frameworks continued to deteriorate due to the settler-colonial logics of elimination in the form of structural violence and the increasing use of interventions such as sport—purportedly for 'their own good' (Bretherton & Mellor, 2006; McCoy, 2009). Structural violence manifests as: the institutionalized established patterns of organized society that are rationalized, sanctioned and prevent the realization of an individual's full capabilities; a constraint of human potentiality via economic and political structures; and the systematic harm of people—such as marginalized persons (Barak, 2003; Bretherton & Mellor, 2006; Parazelli, 2008).

The intergenerational effects of grief, trauma, loss of Traditional Country(s), loss of language, culture, participation in Traditional Games and other traditions, the forceful separation of children from their families, racism, genocidal events, and marginalization are attributable to colonization and the State's Indigenous policies (Banner, 2005; Bretherton & Mellor, 2006; Buchan & Heath, 2006; Cunningham & Beneforti, 2005; Moore, 2016; Senate Community Affairs Committee Secretariat, 2018). The effects of intergenerational trauma have manifested in anxiety-based maladaptive behaviors among Indigenous peoples (Purdie et al., 2010) that could be attributed to Indigenous youths not having a 'sense of self'—a component of racial identity and the sole element that positively and consistently relates to one's self-esteem which acts as a protective factor (Kickett-Tucker, 2009).

Instead, to overcome the fall-out of colonialism, Indigenous peoples' resilience and resistance to the hegemony of the State in the face of such adversity continues to emanate from the unique protective factors inherent in their cultures and communities (Purdie et al., 2010). Aspects of Indigenous cultural resilience and maintenance include storying, narratives, and yarning that Davis-Warra (2017) refers to as 'stories of strength' where strength-based yarns are ways to share information related to the strength and resilience of Indigenous peoples. Yarning aids cultural maintenance because it not only develops accountability to one another but also relationality with one another (Fredericks et al., 2011, 2014). Yarning helps Indigenous peoples to strengthen and grow a strong sense of pride in their collective resilience while forging identities with each other (Davis-Warra, 2017). Other forms of cultural maintenance are referred to by Davis-Warra (2017) as 'kinnections, kinnected' which is a:

> *relational term connecting individuals to specific people and places. Kinnectedness refers to the notion of social mapping and connecting of people to places, names and communities across Australia. For Indigenous Australians this is an integral part of being and living within Indigenous communities—being able to map kinnections—people and families who place you (individually) within context of the broader social or Indigenous community map (p. 11).*

In the context of sport, Indigenous resistance is expressed in

the form of empowering narratives of Indigeneity that emerges through the remembrance of and retelling of a communities sporting stories to give meaning to their past and present social worlds (Bond et al., 2015). Sport not only provides "an outlet to overcome the problems created within Australian society by racism" (Cottle & Keys, 2010, p. 3), it also stokes Indigenous peoples' sense of self-worth and dignity, and can be viewed as a means "of community bonding, self-expression, and heroic exploits—often also because there was nothing else to do!" (Besley et al., 2013, p. 64). This is particularly compelling in Indigenous settlements and Missions that as sites of control were the antithesis of resistance (Osmond, 2019).

For example, while visiting Cherbourg's Ration Shed during a preparation field trip (8 to 15 October 2017), Sheppard (in press) found the history of the former Mission lining the walls in words and pictures—from pre-European contact through to today. It was the history of the former Barambah Mission now known as Cherbourg, as seen through the eyes of community peoples who had lived under the strict controls of the 1897 Aboriginals Protection Act to present day. The pictorial journey represented to the community "the appropriation, transformation, reappropriation of Indigeneity—whether it be objects, identity, children, land or sovereignty … is linear, with each stage directed towards the future. Indigenous reappropriations represent futures redirected" (Sissons, 2005, p. 11).

The Ration Shed also maintains an online pictorial account of the community, including its involvement in sport to show how "many of [their] young men and women [had] excelled in sports and how ordinary people could build a sense of dignity and self-worth amid a regime that denied them of it" (The Cherbourg Memory, 2021). The Cherbourg community used these sporting narratives as a vehicle of resistance to culturally offset the past and redefine the community's future. As Murray et al. (2014) succinctly observed, though the "Janus face of sport—[is] a form of domination [it is also] an important instrument in identity formation—[and] was a key feature of life at Cherbourg" (p. 221).

Reformulating a Positive Indigenous Identity?

The quintessential question is 'are SfD programs aiding the reformulating of a positive Indigenous identity'? Sheppard (in press) found that non-Indigenous-run SfD providers employ Eurocentric rules, regulations, and values. A non-Indigenous ex-SfD worker who, when asked whether their previous program's goals incorporated or included the community's cultural values stated:

Not that I'm aware of. In fact, at [the SfD program] we were continually told that we didn't 'do culture', that was for 'them' not 'us'. We were also directed to make this known when engaging with people around the program. I'm not really sure. [The SfD program] operates in such a grey area anyway. It is hard for the community (Indigenous or otherwise) to understand exactly what the mission is, what ethos is, what the academies are supposed to be doing in general. So, I think it's purposely vague, that way there is less chance to be pulled up on it. I think mostly the community members [they] engaged with on this probably didn't question it because I'm not Indigenous myself … I think sport has the potential to give people some meaning and value in their life. But this is secondary to a person's feeling of value and worth that come from their cultural identity and how their culture and values are celebrated in the wider community. Sport can't help if a community's values are constantly being devalued and ignored and subjugated.

SfD programs that place little-to-no emphasis on incorporating Indigenous culture cannot aid in reformulating a positive Indigenous identity. Instead they discourage Indigenous youths from seeking and maintaining positive racial and ethnic identity - recognized as protective factors that form the basis of self-identity and pride in their "cultural values, kinship, and beliefs" (Woo et al., 2019, p.2). In Indigenous Australia, cultural identity and belonging are founded upon ancestral connections to Country (physically, materially, spiritually) and kinship (Hampton & Toombs, 2013; Mooney et al., 2016; Rigsby, 1999). Cultural mores and traditions (Law and Lore) contribute to and define Australian Indigenous people's identities (Hampton & Toombs, 2013). Taylor (1997) noted, a group's identity and an individual's definition of self is partly shaped by recognition or absence. Misrecognition or non-recognition of identity inflicts harm and is a form of oppression that imprisons individuals in a distorted, false, and reduced mode of being. The non-recognition of culture disables the protective factors inherent within it that play a central part in Indigenous youngster's wellbeing and resilience (Macedo et al., 2019).

On the other hand, Indigenous-run SfD provider, the National Aboriginal Sporting Chance Academy, exercises their limited agency by using sport to foster collective

identities and cultural continuity in ways that reject deficit language. They also actively seek to move away from grievance narratives that frame Indigenous youngsters in deficit discourses that result in the creation of stereotypical inferior identities/victimhood by focusing on their social realities (Bamblett, 2011). The National Aboriginal Sporting Chance Academy (2021) does so by designing its SfD program in ways that "respond to community need, are flexible, and culturally safe" using a whole-of-community approach and are not reformulating a positive Indigenous identity but re-engaging, supporting, and maintaining cultural pride and identity by exercising their Indigenous sovereignty that:

> *arises from Indigenous Traditional Knowledge, belonging to each Indigenous nation, tribe, first nation, community, etc. It consists of spiritual ways, culture, language, social and legal systems, political structures, and inherent relationships with lands, waters and all upon them. Indigenous sovereignty exists regardless of what the nation-state does or does not do. It continues as long as the People that are a part of it continue (Indigenous Environmental Network, 2020).*

Development of an Indigenous Political Movement

The development of an Indigenous political movement speaks to Indigenous peoples using sport as a platform—locally and globally—to express cultural pride, identity, belonging, and to push for social changes in various ways that resist the hegemony of the State and offset the impacts of colonization. For example, Cathy Freeman's expression of cultural pride to affirm her identity was borne from the alienation and shame she felt as an Indigenous youngster growing up in Australia (Jepson, 2020). Carrying the Aboriginal flag was not "so much a political statement, but a statement depicting a First Australian proud to recognize her people and her culture" (Wightman, 2020). Freeman's stand was two-fold: to draw attention to the injustices imposed upon her; and the hardships and struggles of her ancestors (Jepson, 2020). The same is true of Nicky Winmar, Adam Goodes, and the Matildas who, aware of their high profiles on the local and global sporting stage, used sport as a platform to call for social change in Australia surrounding racism and systemic violence impacting Indigenous peoples in Australia generally and on the sporting field. Winmar and Goodes' stands were in response to the racism and systemic injustice reserved for Indigenous peoples in Australia and was not intentionally political in nature. Wightman (2020) observed:

> *It was the public who interpreted the act as political. I find it peculiar when people say that we should not mix sport and politics. It shows scant disregard for history and the platform and power required to make change. Further it is rarely pure politics, rather sport provides a stage for social change that has seldom been achieved by politicians.*

Ultimately, Freeman, Winmar, and Goodes were exercising their sovereignty to negate settler-colonialists' overwhelming belief that Indigenous peoples need to assimilate, integrate and disappear as culturally distinct peoples into the invader's society.

CONCLUSION

This research began with the idea of investigating the extent to which SfD programs functioned as cultural offsets for the damage done to Indigenous lands, communities and cultures by the mining industry who invested in SfD programs as part of their social justice agenda in Australia. The notion of sport as a cultural offset has over the last few decades gained great popularity as a symbol of Indigenous self-determination and empowerment. In this conceptualization, sport is positioned as a cultural offset, going some way to atoning for the historical and ongoing effects of colonization in settler States. Offering some more critical and concentrated understandings, scholars have begun to consider cultural offsetting in the context of the mining industry whereby extractives companies negotiate access to land in exchange for funding sport, recreation and cultural activities (Sheppard et al., 2019; van Luijk et al., 2020).

Our research, informed by a decolonizing lens, and the Indigenous Ways of Knowing of the first author and her Indigenous informants, led inexorably to the question of whether non-Indigenous sport in general functioned as a colonial device to reprogram Indigenous sociality into forms more palatable to non-Indigenous policy makers. We used Broome's (Osmond, 2019) five core elements of Indigenous Australian resistance as a framework to unpack the ways that Indigenous people experience sport as a tool of colonization, and how their resistance manifests in the context of sport.

We unpacked the way that Indigenous elite athletes experienced injustice using the concepts of racial, epistemic, and cultural injustice. Racial injustice in sport is evident when Indigenous athletes dare to express cultural pride (e.g. Cathy Freeman), epistemic injustice is evident

when they take a stand against the constant racist barrages they experience on the sporting field (e.g. Nicky Winmar and Adam Goodes), and cultural injustice is evident when non-Indigenous athletes ally themselves in solidarity with their Indigenous team mates to draw attention to the racial injustices experienced by Indigenous peoples historically and today (e.g. the Matildas). We applied the same analysis to young Indigenous people's involvement in SfD programs and found the experience of injustice mirrored in these programs. We noted, with Rigney (2020, p. 52), the ways that governments continue to utilize sport as a tool to aid their "construction of invader Dreaming—particularly the perceived benefits of sport in healing the wounds of Indigenous people created by ideological policies of segregation, 'protection' and assimilation".

Through an analysis of the operation and deficit discursive environment of SfD programs operating in rural and regional Queensland, Australia, we were able to show the impact of centuries of colonial dispossession and epistemic and cultural violence: how injustice in schooling, youth justice, and sport programs led to young Indigenous people developing cultural formations that opposed their oppression, including opposing and rejecting sports programs designed to lure them back to school. For these children, a combination of traumatic home environments and unsupportive school settings combined to alienate them from all except their peers who provided much-needed support, and the opportunity to feel safe, to be a part of a social group, to make choices for themselves, to express themselves, and to share experiences.

In the same communities, Indigenous resistance is expressed in the form of empowering narratives of Indigeneity that emerged through the remembrance of and retelling of a community's sporting stories. These stories found positive meaning in a shared past that was often characterized by genocidal violence, a thread of resistance and resilience that bound people together. That thread of resistance and resilience informed the way that people wove contemporary sporting prowess—a local football team's success at the Murri Carnival, a local teenager scouted for a major football or netball team, the success of an Australian Indigenous athlete on the World Stage—into a continuing story of Indigenous strength and survival.

Through Sheppard's PhD field research (in press), we discovered something surprising: not only were SfD programs failing as cultural offsets because of their immersion in colonialist methodologies, but Indigenous peoples were making use of sport in their own ways to culturally offset the impact of colonization, rather than allowing their involvement in non-Indigenous forms of sport to further assimilationist agendas. We found that despite Indigenous peoples' colonized state of being, they have actively used sport to forge their own positive future pathways to resist the hegemony of the State in various ways.

Although remaining a highly contested and often traumatic space, sport, for Indigenous Australians, has become a site for the affirmation of collective identity, an opportunity for Indigenous Australians to excel and to give credit for their excellence to the strengths of land, culture, community and family. In one of her post-game speeches at the 2022 Australian Open, tennis champion Ash Barty exemplified this attitude:

Not content to remain just a tennis player at the top of her game, Barty proved the consummate sportswoman and role model yet again in her post match interview, expressing the importance of her Indigenous heritage.

"I'm a proud Ngarigo woman, a very very proud Indigenous woman," she said to cheers from the Open crowd. ... "I love my heritage; I love to celebrate my heritage. It's what connects me to all of you here today. It's what connects me to the land. ... I think it's a beautiful way to express who I am... (and) to stay connected with so many people and First Nations people around Australia." (Butler, 2022)

Barty's celebration of her Indigeneity and its strength at the point of her greatest Australian sporting triumph—winning the 2022 Australia Open—exemplifies the point that we made earlier in this paper: that Indigenous Australians continue to play 'games' for their own purposes and enjoyment all the while appearing to comply with the rules and goals of their colonial oppressors. Like Ash Barty, Indigenous Australians resist in subtle and sometimes overt ways, always combining elements of compliance, defiance, resistance, and existential joy.

This paper makes several contributions that are useful for Indigenous people worldwide. Our use of a decolonizing approach and particularly an Indigenous standpoint approach to understanding sport as a colonial device is novel, and the frameworks we use (Broome's five core elements of Australian Indigenous resistance, as well as the concepts of racial, epistemic, and cultural injustice in sport)

are a useful addition to the analytic repository. Our analysis of sport as a site for Indigenous resistance to colonization could just as easily be applied to Iroquois involvement in Lacrosse, the Olympic careers of Hawaiian swimmer and surfer Duke Kahanamoku or Mohawk marathon runner Tom Longboat, or Māori and Pacifica engagement with Rugby Union.

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Original Research

Reviving culture and reclaiming youth: Representations of traditional Indigenous games in mainstream Canadian and Indigenous media

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ABSTRACT

Indigenous games are rarely discussed within the sport for development (SFD) realm. Instead, even when SFD interventions are aimed at Indigenous youth, the focus is typically on the use of "modern" (European-derived) sport. We sought to analyze how mainstream and Indigenous media in Canada produce understandings of traditional Indigenous games and how, and if, media discourses reflect the idea of traditional games as a form of SFD. Using databases, we searched both mainstream and Indigenous media sources over a ten-year period from 2011 to 2021, identifying 23 articles pertaining to traditional games. Using critical discourse analysis, we noted the (re)production of two discourses in both mainstream and Indigenous media sources: Traditional games keep culture alive; and Indigenous youth can be "reclaimed" through traditional games. In concluding that similar discourses were produced about traditional games in both mainstream and Indigenous media sources, the manner in which the discourses were produced became a focal point for examination. The Western-centric sports journalism approach to traditional games coverage illuminated a strong SFD ideology within the discourses, despite traditional Indigenous games largely rejecting Western sport logic. Our findings suggest the need to appreciate the differences of traditional games from SFD practices for the purposes of cultural and youth development.

Keywords: Indigenous; Canada; media; traditional Indigenous games; sport for development

REVIVING CULTURE AND RECLAIMING YOUTH: REPRESENTATIONS OF TRADITIONAL INDIGENOUS GAMES IN MAINSTREAM CANADIAN AND INDIGENOUS MEDIA

As a form of cultural practice, traditional Indigenous games, like other forms of physical culture, are rooted in the norms and values of the communities from which they hail. Importantly, Rice (2019) explained that, in many instances, "traditional teachings are found in the games of Indigenous peoples" (p. 172). They are localized, ethnically-rooted, and reflect the somatic heritage of distinct cultural groups. Traditional Indigenous games in what is now known as Canada include ball games (e.g., lacrosse or doubleball), hoop games, stick throwing (e.g., snow snake), feats of strength (e.g., pole push), jumping contests (e.g., two-foot-high kick), foot or canoe races, hand games, games of chance (e.g., dice games), and myriad other game forms (Robillard, 2019). In many instances, Indigenous games are based on survival skills. For instance, Heine (2006) noted that Dene games, played by the Dene whose traditional territories are in the Sub-arctic in Canada, are heavily influenced by the connection between travel and life on the land; strength, endurance, speed, and accuracy were necessary for travelling and hunting on the land and were often practiced by playing traditional games.

The distinction between traditional games and modern sport is particularly important in terms of the presentation of

Indigenous games in the media, the framing of the rapidly growing area of sport for development (SFD) programs for/with Indigenous peoples, and the ways in which Indigenous communities and individuals relate to their games. This distinction is based primarily on determinate structures. Mainstream—also referred to as modern—sport is an organized, institutionalized, and decidedly modern phenomena that is often linked to seven characteristics theorized by Guttmann (1978): secularism; equality; specialization; bureaucratization; rationalization; quantification; and obsession with records. Traditional games, on the other hand, do not have some of these determinate structures, including strict rules and regulations, bureaucratic governance, or gender equality, as noted by Giles (2005a, 2005b, 2008) in her work on Dene hand games. A particularly stark example is the appropriation and transformation of lacrosse from a dynamic, spiritual, Indigenous body culture to an "organized" (in the institutional sense), nationalized, neo-colonial sport form in the mid-nineteenth century (Delsahut, 2015; Downey, 2018; Morrow, 1992). There is a constant tension between the historical colonial "nation-building" processes that thrive upon burgeoning notions of modernity and "traditional" Indigenous culture, which have continued into the present and frame our understanding of traditional games vis-à-vis modern sports.

Since the onset of settler colonialism, however, traditional Indigenous games have been marginalized and, in some cases, extinguished. As Indigenous cultural practices, including games, conflicted with Eurocentric culture, settlers often prohibited these practices. Many Indigenous physical cultural practices were actively suppressed and "discouraged as much as possible, and … replaced with Euro-Canadian sports and games" (Forsyth, 2007, p. 99) in an effort to regulate Indigenous culture in the wake of the 1876 Indian Act, which has had long-reaching repercussions on many aspects of First Nations peoples' lives, including traditional games participation, in Canada. Indeed, in contemporary arctic Canada, Heine (2014) lamented that "traditional games now occupy a more marginal position in the daily recreational activities of most Arctic and subarctic communities, having to compete for resources, recognition and volunteer personnel with the community recreational sport competition schedules" (pp. 3-4).

Nevertheless, in the last few decades, traditional Indigenous games have seen a revitalization through cultural programming and games festivals (Ferreira, 2014; Heine & Young, 1997; Vladimirova, 2017), which has enhanced media attention. Moreover, since the publication of the reports of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of Canada (2015), which had an overall objective to "remedy the ongoing structural legacy of Canada's residential schools and to advance reconciliation" (Jewell & Mosby, 2021, p. 2), there has been a greater onus on academics, the media, and the Canadian public to understand Indigenous cultural practices. For instance, the TRC's (2015) 90th Call to Action (of 94) demands "access to community sports programs that reflect the diverse cultures and traditional sporting activities of Aboriginal peoples" (p. 10).[1] As part of its response, the federal government provided funding to the Aboriginal Sport Circle, the national organization for Indigenous sport in Canada, for a program called "Sport for Social Development in Indigenous Communities," which fell under the "reconciliation" component of the federal budget. The program's aim is to help to address the "social development needs of Indigenous communities" through sport (Government of Canada, 2021, para 5). It is here that we see the ways in which sport—including traditional "sports" or games—programs are often expected to have social development outcomes when delivered with/to Indigenous communities. In light of this, in this study, we sought to analyze how mainstream and Indigenous media in Canada produce understandings of traditional Indigenous games and how media discourses reflect the idea of traditional games as a form of SFD.

Sport for Development

SFD refers to the use of sport to address a wide array of social development problems, including but not limited to reducing HIV/AIDS (Nicholls et al., 2011), empowering girls and women (Brady, 2005), and peace building (Schnitzer et al., 2013). Most of the early focus of SFD intervention and research was on countries in the so-called "developing world" (Hayhurst & Giles, 2013). More recently, the gaze has shifted to the ways in which SFD has been employed in the "developed world," especially with Indigenous peoples. Hayhurst and Giles (2013), however, have argued that SFD is merely a new term for a practice that has a long colonial history. Drawing on the work of Miller (1997) and Forsyth (2013), Hayhurst and Giles pointed out that many of the outcomes that contemporary SFD programs attempt to address (e.g., health, education, and self-improvement) are the very outcomes that Indian residential schools also tried to achieve for their (male) Indigenous pupils through the use of sport. Indeed, development as Westernization or colonialism dominates SFD discourses. For example, increasing the number of Indigenous youths who become good Euro-Canadian-styled leaders is often a desired outcome of SFD initiatives (Galipeau & Giles, 2014; Gartner-Manzon & Giles, 2016, 2018), while outcomes such as enhanced Indigenous

self-determination or engaging Indigenous youth in Indigenous cultural resurgence are rarely, if ever, discussed as key components of these programs.

Importantly, traditional games are not often used in, or the focus of, SFD programs. Considering the developmental and even reconciliatory objectives of such programs, one might expect that SFD program providers would champion Indigenous games in Indigenous community programs. Instead, as a neo-colonial entity, SFD tends to employ Western, mainstream, modern sport forms, as opposed to culturally relevant, land-based, traditional game forms. SFD's lack of engagement with traditional games is likely because traditional games may not fit within SFD colonial logic. By employing the notion of reconciliation in the SFD paradigm, particularly in settler-colonial settings, there may be an opportunity to better engage traditional games. Indeed, Halas (2013) argued that traditional games and land-based physical activities are important to reconciliation, specifically by introducing the meaning of games with teachings of traditional cultures. Summed up expertly by Essa et al. (2021), "highly meaningful, legitimate [SFD] programs" are "supportive of resurgence and decolonization … focus on communities' needs, values and worldviews; they integrate sport and recreation-based activities grounded in more holistic views of health and wellbeing; and most importantly, they are land-based" (p. 308). Such an approach foregrounds the importance of Indigenous peoples' relationships with the land. With these tenets in consideration, there may be a number of reconciliatory pathways for the community support of traditional games. However, one of the most important focus areas is the (lack of) media coverage of traditional games. Indeed, what has not been said about traditional games in the media is as crucial as what has been said (Parker, 1992). Focusing on Indigenous games, as opposed to Western sports, may be the crux of future developmental or reconciliatory initiatives within the Canadian SFD landscape. In light of the dominant ways in which SFD has been understood, and the lack of traditional games focus, both mainstream and Indigenous news media coverage of Indigenous traditional games in Canada becomes a compelling site for investigation.

Media Representations of Indigenous Cultures

One way that (neo)colonialism in contemporary Canada is produced is through the media. The Canadian media can be described as regionalized and corporatized. The largest corporation is the Canadian Broadcasting Company (CBC), the national public television and radio broadcaster responsible for producing cultural content, which mirrors the multicultural and multiracial nature of Canada. CBC radio, television, and online broadcasting reflects Canada's cultural identity, and the CBC's cultural narratives are routinely buried behind self-definitions of Canada as tolerant, multicultural, and peaceful (Pegley, 2004), reinforcing dominant colonial subjectivity (and the white hegemonic subject in particular). Newspapers are dominated by several media conglomerates—Postmedia Network (121 newspapers) and TorStar (100 newspapers) own the most daily and community newspapers. The two major national newspapers are *The Globe and Mail*, considered centre-right in its editorial stance and catering more to the intellectual elite, and the *National Post*, a more recent (1998) and conservative option. Although considered a local newspaper, the *Toronto Star* has the largest average daily readership of all newspapers in Canada and is national in scope (News Media Canada, 2020).

Considering the nationalistic imperatives of the CBC, the corporatization of the newspaper industry, and the hegemonic ownership and operation of these media entities by predominantly elite, white, male, settler Anglo-Canadians, it is no surprise that colonial representations of Indigenous peoples and cultures persist in mainstream Canadian media, thus protecting dominant power structures from the threat of Indigenous interests.[2] Mass media frames are not only influenced by the context, themes, and words used by journalists but also by influential businesses, political leaders, and media owners themselves, creating structural sources of bias that privilege certain perspectives, modes of production, journalistic styles, and what receives (and does not receive) coverage. On many topics and issues, an almost primitivist lens is used by mainstream media to frame Indigenous cultural activities as exotic or authentic—a mode of representation which has widespread consequences (Prins, 2002). Indeed, the 1996 Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, a report that covered a range of issues, noted that "many Canadians know Aboriginal people only as noble environmentalists, angry warriors, or pitiful victims" (Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1996, para. 2). Stereotyping of Indigenous peoples in the Canadian media is far from a thing of the past (Beauregard & Paquette, 2021; Clark, 2014; Fleras, 2011, 2012; Harding, 2005). Moreover, in a summative study on the historical representations of Indigenous peoples in the Canadian mainstream news media, Harding (2006) wrote, "although the views of aboriginal people are now routinely included in the news, their impact is diluted through techniques of *deflection, de-contextualization, misrepresentation* and *tokenization*" (p. 225). In this regard, the coverage of Indigenous topics by mainstream media has been limited in its ability to provide a balanced perspective (Love & Tilley, 2013). The importance of critical media literacy, in this context, is

crucial to distill the negative effects of pervasive colonial media representations of Indigenous peoples in Canada.

Following Nemec (2021), we understand Indigenous media as "media made by Indigenous people, that tells Indigenous stories for Indigenous people and hence is as diverse as those who identify as Indigenous" (p. 998). Indigenous-produced content has a distinct Indigenous sensibility in which seeing, hearing, knowing, speaking, and performing are signified and represented (Ginsburg, 1991; Hanusch, 2013). Self-determined Indigenous media coverage in Canada became more prominent during the 1970s and 1980s with the proliferation of Indigenous communications societies (Alia, 2009)—including the Wawatay Native Communications Society (1974), Inuit Broadcasting Corporation (1981), and Aboriginal Multi-Media Society (1983)—culminating with the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network in 1999. These efforts of Indigenous reporting, news outlets, and media have reaped rewards. Not only is such media an assertion of Indigenous identity, but it is also a means of cultural and political intervention in the "mainstream," and countering the more often than not negative representations of Indigeneity in the media. Nemec (2021) explained that "Indigenous media, as in all alternative media, has a role to play in questioning or challenging accepted thinking and to present counter hegemonic discourses to all citizens in participatory democratic societies" (p. 998). Indeed, there are key differences between Indigenous and mainstream media, and Indigenous media producers use both forms of media to combat discrimination and preserve their cultures and traditions (Jeppesen, 2021; Wilson & Stewart, 2008). As noted by Lowan-Trudeau (2021) in an article about Indigenous environmental media coverage, "the efforts of Indigenous and allied media scholars and practitioners have also begun to influence the ethics and practices of non-Indigenous media and publishing entities in their coverage of Indigenous topics" (p. 93). With this in mind, we were interested in investigating the similarities and differences in mainstream and Indigenous news coverage pertaining to traditional Indigenous games in Canada.

METHODS

Discourse Analysis

Prior to describing our approach to data analysis, it is important to situate ourselves. Both authors are white, non-Indigenous settlers in Canada of European descent. To analyze our data, we used critical discourse analysis. Within the critical discourse analysis, discourse refers to all forms of talk and text and can be understood as providing the meanings that constitute everyday practices (Henriques et al., 1984). Discourse and society are seen in a dialectical relationship, with social structures affecting discourse and discourse affecting social structure. Employing "critical" discourse analysis means that we aim to not only describe discursive practices, but also to show "how discourse is shaped by relations of power and ideologies" (Fairclough, 1992, p. 12). Certainly, issues of power are pervasive in relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, as well as within SFD and traditional games for/with Indigenous peoples. Tuck and Yang (2012) have pointed to the ways in which Indigenous peoples have been produced—in the media, in educational institutions, in government policies—as being "at risk" of a host of issues. Most of what Canadians know about Indigenous issues comes from the mainstream media and research has demonstrated that media discourses have had a great deal of influence over the attitudes of mainstream society towards "racialized" groups (i.e., negative discourses about Indigenous people have the power to negatively influence the general public's understanding of Indigenous people).

Researchers have shown that media reporting on SFD appears to reinforce racist, colonial discourses concerning Indigenous people in Canada; in particular, researcher have found that media portrayals of SFD programs may perpetuate inequalities in marginalized communities by focusing on "deficit-based" discourse and by focusing on the role of "improving" health and conduct rather than challenging the power relations underpinning marginalization and inequality (Coleby & Giles, 2013). It is therefore important to consider how both Indigenous and non-Indigenous media representation of SFD and Indigenous games reproduce and/or challenge (neo)colonial discourses concerning Indigenous peoples.

Producing Indigenous peoples, and especially youth, as being at risk has been used to justify the targeting in SFD programs, including those funded by the Government of Canada. The government's Sport for Social Development in Indigenous Communities program has four targets, including "reduced at-risk behaviour" (Government of Canada, 2020, para, 5). In examining media coverage of a SFD program in northern Ontario, Coleby and Giles (2013) noted that sport was discursively produced in mainstream media as a way of "saving" Indigenous youth and that the reporting focuses on Indigenous communities' apparent deficits. Importantly, however, the authors found that Indigenous news sources produced discourses that focused more on Indigenous communities' strengths. When examining texts about sport, traditional games, and Indigenous peoples, critical discourse analysts thus must ask specific questions, such as those posed by Parker (1992): "Why was this said and not that? Why these words, and where do the connotations of the

words fit with different ways of talking about the world" (pp. 3-4). As noted in the previous section, themes and texts used in the media can influence, shape, and reflect unequal power relations.

Sample

We identified news articles from both mainstream and Indigenous media sources: the top national television broadcasting news websites, the top three national newspapers, and ten regional news sources—selected based on geographic representation and readership—for both mainstream and Indigenous news sources. We selected regional news sources based on their national scope, re-printing in national newspapers, and readership. In the mainstream category, the CBC's website was a valuable resource, as it featured a number of articles on Indigenous games. We also selected the *Toronto Star*, the *Globe & Mail*, and the *National Post*, the three largest national-scope newsprint media by circulation numbers. In addition, regional mainstream news sources consulted included The *Chronicle Herald* (Halifax), *Hamilton Spectator*, *Montreal Gazette*, Northern News Services (an umbrella organization for six weekly northern newspapers: *NWT News/North, Nunavut News, Yellowknifer, Hay River Hub, Inuvik Drum, and Kivalliq News), Nunatsiaq News* (Nunavut and northern Quebec), *Ottawa Citizen, Vancouver Sun, Winnipeg Sun, and Winnipeg Free Press*. To note, although both Northern News Services and *Nunatsiaq News* provide reporting for many predominantly Indigenous communities in the Canadian Arctic and Sub-arctic, based on our criterion for Indigenous news sources, which required Indigenous news services to be owned and operated by Indigenous stakeholders, these two news services were categorized as mainstream.

In the Indigenous media category, we identified Indigenous news sources and corroborated them through three university library catalogues: University of British Columbia, University of Toronto, and Ryerson University. As the only Indigenous national television broadcasting company, we selected the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network for this category of news source (web articles). We also included the top three nationally focused Indigenous news sources: *Windspeaker, Turtle Island News*, and *First Nations Drum*.[3] The regional Indigenous news sources we consulted included *Anishinabek News* (Union of Ontario Indians), *the Eastern Door* (Kahnawake, Quebec), *Ha-Shilth-Sa* (British Columbia), *Ku'ku'kwes* (Atlantic Canada), *Mi'kmaq Maliseet Nations News* (Nova Scotia and New Brunswick), *Métis Voyageur, Two Row Times* (Six Nations, Ontario), *Wawatay News* (northern Ontario), as well as the Aboriginal Multi-Media Society's *Alberta Sweetgrass* and *Saskatchewan Sage*.

We used the ten-year period from 2011 to 2021 to narrow the focus of the study on more recent developments in media discourse. We used the key search terms "traditional games" and "Indigenous traditional games." The 23 articles (Table 1) mentioned or discussed Indigenous traditional games at length. To note, we did not include references to the Arctic Winter Games or North American Indigenous Games in this study, as the articles we identified on these topics were informational (dates, results, names) and did not provide meaningful content (i.e., interview quotes or commentary) about traditional games. We read accessed all news articles through each source's website.

Overview of Articles

We begin with a descriptive overview of the articles that we included for analysis to promote readers' understandings of the games prior to sharing the results of our discourse analysis. Of the 23 articles we reviewed, 15 were from mainstream news sources and eight were from Indigenous news sources. Notably, there were no mentions of Canadian Indigenous traditional games in the Globe & Mail, Toronto Star, or National Post during the ten-year period investigated. The only article concerning traditional games (Nolen, 2019) that appeared in the Globe & Mail, which boasts one of the largest subscription bases in Canada (News Media Canada, 2020), was about the resurgence of the ancient Mesoamerican ball game ulama in Mexico. Additionally, only the two northern and two Winnipeg-based mainstream news sources published articles about traditional games during the period studied.

It is unsurprising that the crowded sports sections of mainstream newspapers made no mention of traditional games, as they are often not considered sports (Parlebas, 2020). The majority of the mainstream news stories (six) about traditional games were from the CBC (Bailey, 2016; CBC News, 2020; Desmarais, 2021; Hennig, 2019; Stefanovich, 2018; Strong, 2019) and five (Bickford, 2019; Burnett, 2017; McCarthy, 2018; McKay, 2018; Short, 2018) fell under the Northern News Service umbrella. In the Indigenous news category, two of the three Indigenous national newspapers (*Turtle Island News* and *First Nations Drum*) also did not publish articles about traditional games during the ten-year period, nor did a majority (7/10) of the regional Indigenous news sources. *Windspeaker* (Kataquapit, 2018; Laskaris, 2018; Smith, 2016; Windspeaker, 2019) and its affiliate, *Alberta Sweetgrass* (Narine, 2013), published five articles dedicated to traditional games.

Table 1. Overview of articles.

Source	Title	Author	Year	Type
Alberta Sweetgrass	First Treaty 8 Traditional Games a success	Bridget A. Fanta	2010	Indigenous
Alberta Sweetgrass	Littlechild pushes for recognition of Indigenous games in sports halls of fames	Shari Narine	2013	Indigenous
Nunatsiaq News	Nunavut students promote healthy living through Inuit games	Lisa Gregoire	2016	Indigenous
Windspeaker	Hunters' endurance, strength and agility boosted by games	Andrea Smith	2016	Indigenous
Inuvik Drum	Gwich'in elder speaks on hand games and destruction of culture	Stewart Burnett	2017	Indigenous
Inuvik Drum	Youth show skills at 2018 Dene Games Summit in Inuvik	Samantha McKay	2018	Indigenous
Ha-Shilth-Sa	Intuitiveness, perception key to the game of Lahal	Karly Blats	2018	Indigenous
NWT News North	Simpson students take on traditional games	Dylan Short	2018	Indigenous
NWT News North	Weledeh roars to the top at Traditional Games	James McCarthy	2018	Indigenous
Windspeaker	Indigenous-themed games for Indigenous youth held in northern Alberta	Sam Laskaris	2018	Indigenous
Windspeaker	Traditional teachings a feature of Wabun Youth Gathering	Xavier Kataquapit	2018	Indigenous
Hay River Hub	Five days of training on Hay River Reserve for Dene and Northern games	Paul Bickford	2019	Indigenous
Windspeaker	Indigenous students attend summit to strengthen community resilience	Unknown author	2019	Indigenous
APTN	Strengthening unity of the Dene Nation through hand games	Charlotte Morritt-Jacobs	2020	Indigenous
Two Row Times	Northern-style hand game competition makes its debut at Alberta Indigenous Games 2021	Unknown author	2021	Indigenous
Nunatsiaq News	Coral Harbour school showcases traditional Inuit games	Mélanie Ritchot	2021	Indigenous
CBC	Ancient Mi'kmaq game of Waltes makes a comeback	Sue Bailey	2016	Mainstream
MacLean's	How Indigenous people in Canada are reclaiming lacrosse	Meagan Campbell	2017	Mainstream
CBC	Indian Relay sport giving youth a 'chance to become something	Olivia Stefanovich	2018	Mainstream
CBC	Legacy of a Nation: Tlicho hand games, drumming and the elders	Walter Strong	2019	Mainstream
CBC	'Our culture is going to survive': traditional Indigenous hand games make a comeback in northern B.C.	Clare Hennig	2019	Mainstream
CBC	This Hopedale man is writing a manual of traditional games before they're lost forever	Unknown author	2020	Mainstream
Winnipeg Sun	Manitoba Indigenous Games set to return in May	Nicole Wong	2020	Mainstream
CBC	Meet the Fort Good Hope hand game family dynasty	Anna Desmarais	2021	Mainstream
Winnipeg Free Press	Landing young leaders	Julia-Simone Rutgers	2021	Mainstream

Eleven of the 23 articles (three mainstream sources and eight Indigenous sources) reported on Dene or Inuit games. Two articles focused on Dene games training camps: McKay (2018) reported on the sixth annual Dene Games Summit in Inuvik, NWT; while Bickford (2019) described a similar event in Hay River, NWT. The articles about Inuit games were somewhat more diverse: Gregoire (2016) described a traditional games program for Nunavut youth in Ottawa; Smith (2016) interviewed an Inuk traditional games athlete and cultural educator about the links between Inuit games and survival skills; and Ritchot (2021) reported on a traditional games kit designed by school teachers and Elders in Coral Harbour, Nunavut. The remaining six articles focused specifically on Dene hand games (Blats, 2018; Desmarais, 2021; Hennig, 2019; Morritt-Jacobs, 2020; Strong, 2019; Two Row Times, 2021). Hand games is a team activity in which one team tries to bluff, jest, and deceive another team by hiding a single small object in their hands to the accompaniment of rhythmic drum music (Bussidor & Bilgen-Reinart, 2000). As can be gleaned from this majority of articles, there has been an increased focus on hand games in recent years, which was the specific focus of Hennig's (2019) article for the CBC, which reported on the revival of the game in northern British Columbia. The article by Blats (2018) in *Ha-Shilth-Sa*, a newspaper published by the Nuu-Chah-Nulth Tribal Council, was a more descriptive piece on *lahal* (a British Columbia variant of hand games). The article in the Two Row Times, a Six Nations publication, reported on the inclusion of hand games in the 2021 iteration of the Alberta Indigenous Games. The other three articles about hand games (Desmarais 2021; Morritt-Jacobs 2020; Strong 2019) reported on the meaning of hand games amongst the Dene people of the NWT. Interestingly, both Morritt-Jacobs (2020), writing for the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network, and Strong (2019), writing for the CBC, covered hand games in the Tłı̨chǫ Nation, specifically since the inception of high-stakes tournaments for men by the Tłı̨chǫ government in 2005.[4]

Outside of Dene or Inuit games, the twelve remaining articles covered an array of topics about traditional games. Narine (2013) interviewed Wilton Littlechild, founder of the Alberta (1971), North American (1990), and World Indigenous Games (2015), about the inclusion of Indigenous traditional games in sports halls of fame.[5] In the only article focused on Saskatchewan, Stefanovich (2018) reported on the (re)introduction of Indian Relay, a bareback horse-racing relay event, to the area and its effect on Indigenous youth's self-identity. Burnett (2017) interviewed Fort McPherson, NWT, Elder Charlie Snowshoe about the loss of traditional games, while Wong (2020) reported on the inclusion of traditional games within the Manitoba Indigenous Games programme. An article by the CBC (CBC News, 2020) focused on the work of Boas Mitsuk in compiling a traditional games manual by interviewing Elders in Newfoundland and Labrador. Three articles

(Laskaris, 2018; McCarthy, 2018; Short, 2018) focused on Traditional Games Championships in the Alberta and the NWT school systems, while three articles (Kataquapit, 2018; Rutgers, 2021; *Windspeaker*, 2019) only briefly mentioned the inclusion of traditional games in Indigenous youth summits. Finally, Bailey (2016) reported on the "comeback" of the Mi'kmaq bowl-and-dice game of Waltes in the Maritimes.

The articles covered Indigenous games in seven of the thirteen provinces and territories of Canada—BC, NWT, Nunavut, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Newfoundland and Labrador, and Nova Scotia. Based on this geographic distribution, the focus on Indigenous traditional games seems to be in the Western, Northern, and Eastern regions of the country, with surprisingly no mentions in Central Canada (Ontario and Quebec), a region of Canada that encompasses over 60% of the population, including about one third of the Indigenous population of Canada. In terms of dates of publication, one article was published in 2010, one in 2013, three in 2016, two in 2017, seven in 2018, four in 2019, three in 2020, and four in 2021. Based on these dates, the temporal distribution of the articles is skewed towards the last five years, with 20 of the 23 articles published since 2017. The outbreak of COVID-19 likely decreased opportunity for many traditional Indigenous games to be played from 2020 onwards due to restrictions on gathering that were put in place across Canada to decrease transmission.

RESULTS

Traditional Games Keep Culture Alive

The first discourse apparent in both Indigenous and mainstream news sources is the notion that traditional games keep culture alive. The "keeping culture alive" discourse was equally represented in both Indigenous and mainstream media, apart from two CBC articles (Bailey, 2016; Hennig, 2019), which leaned on the trope of cultural revival. As opposed to keeping culture alive (or continuous), cultural revival is the notion that traditions, rituals, and customs that are no longer practiced can be reintroduced as a novel yet indistinguishable cultural form.

The discourse of keeping culture alive through games was an important touchpoint in the news articles from Indigenous media. In an interview, a traditional games athlete stated, "it's important to learn Inuit culture and keep it alive. It's strong in different places, but like everything else, it's getting modernised" (Smith, 2016, para. 17). The promotion of culture via traditional games can also be seen in an *Alberta Sweetgrass* article (Narine, 2013) about the Alberta Indigenous Games, a week of competitive sports, traditional games, special events, and cultural education for Indigenous youth in Alberta. In the article, Wilton Littlechild commented that "in order to reignite our (Alberta) games, we're heavily involved now in promoting culture and traditional teachings plus the sports" (Narine, 2013, para. 6). Indeed, the authors of articles in Indigenous news sources highlighted the ways in which traditional games can promote culture, by ostensibly advertising it, but also keeping culture alive through participation and repetition.

Within the mainstream news articles, the "keeping culture alive" discourse was similarly strong, especially as quoted from Indigenous interviewees. Comments on keeping their "ancestors' cultural practices alive" (Desmarais 2021, para. 10) and preventing "the games from dying out" (CBC News, 2020, para. 13) were prevalent. In Short's (2018) article, Carson Roche, an Aboriginal Sport Circle (ASC) program coordinator, summed up this particular discourse quite aptly when stating, "this is what our ancestors did, and we want [youth] to know it's part of our culture and we're trying to keep these games alive" (para. 11). Mainstream news sources emphasized traditional games' role in cultural vitality. Traditional games that have declined "over the last century with the cultural onslaught of residential schools, television and computers," noted Bailey (2016), are being revitalized again as Indigenous peoples "increasingly seek out customs that once tightly bound their communities" (para. 6).

Tony Rabesca, a cultural practice manager with the Tłı̨chǫ government in the NWT, underscored the fact that hand games allowed "for healing and full participation in Tłı̨chǫ community life" (Strong 2019, para. 17), a "way of life based on respect for what elders have passed down through uncountable generations" (para. 21). This rendering of cultural vitality through traditional games was an integral aspect of this discourse and of the mainstream articles in general. In this vein, Colin Pybus, the 2018 Dene Games Summit organizer, conveyed that traditional games are "an awesome opportunity for family and friends to get together and share in this amazing aspect of the two Indigenous cultures that are inherent to the area that we live in" (McKay 2018, para. 5). He further remarked that "being able to live one's culture and compete in that environment … I can only imagine the pride and the desire to do games like this" (McKay, 2018, para. 3). Emphasizing a sense of strength and unity through traditional games, Tyson Head remarked that the Indian Relay promotes "nations all running together and becoming as one" (Stefanovich, 2018, para. 8). Similarly, Ritchot (2021) noted that "games help build a sense of pride in being Inuk" (para. 13). As can be

gleaned from the mainstream articles, many Indigenous communities experience a sense of community healing, pride, and unity through traditional games and the communal values inherent to them. Interestingly, the notion of community revitalization not a theme that was not found within Indigenous media.

Reclaiming Youth through Traditional Games

Both mainstream and Indigenous news sources paid particular attention to the role of Indigenous youth in traditional games. The mainstream articles noted the importance of traditional games tournaments for Indigenous youth. For instance, Desmarais (2021) wrote, "as more youth tournaments were organized, more and more young men … started to gravitate to [traditional games]" (para. 13). Similar to the previous discourse, intergenerational knowledge of traditional games was also apparent in the mainstream news coverage. Steve Cockney Sr., an Elder from Inuvik, commented that "we hope that they can carry on throughout the years and pass it on to the next generation" (Bickford, 2019, para. 16). Shawna McLeod, community development manager for the NWT arm of the ASC, noted that "people are really excited to bring [these games] back to their communities … People want to bring it back to introduce it to the youth" (Bickford, 2019, para. 5), as they provide a way for youth to "connect to their roots" (para. 11). Further, Boas Mitsuk, a traditional games coordinator with the Newfoundland and Labrador division of the ASC, explained his mission to compile a traditional games manual as hoping to "bring these games back, that we can get the youth involved, so that we can keep that tradition" (CBC News, 2020, para. 3). In this sense, the "reclaiming youth" discourse intersects with the "keeping culture alive" discourse, as the engagement of youth in traditional games both connects them with their culture while simultaneously keeping culture alive through intergenerational knowledge transmission.

In the mainstream news, traditional games were also produced as being an ideal site for reclaiming Indigenous youth by fostering a sense of belonging, Indigenous self-identity, and cultural pride. In commenting on the importance of connection to the land and traditional culture, Rylee Nepinak, founder of the Winnipeg volunteer group Anishiative, observed that "a lot of youth lacked a sense of belonging. They lacked learning their culture and they didn't have a connection to the land, and mother earth, and I think that's so important" (Rutgers, 2021, para. 5). Indian Relay national champion Tyson Head noted that the sport gave "the youth a chance to become something" (Stefanovich 2018, para. 13). In general, many of the mainstream articles reflected the sentiment that such games, and the preparation for them, would "help youth explore their Indigenous self-identity as well as create meaningful internal connections" (Wong, 2020, para. 13). The connection between traditional games participation and youth engagement in pro-social activities—thus presumably keeping them away from anti-social activities—as well as the need for intergenerational knowledge transmission were key components of the discourse about the importance of youth in traditional games.

Traditional games tournaments for Indigenous youth were also a regular topic in the Indigenous news articles (Laskaris 2018; Morritt-Jacobs 2020). Alfonz Nitsiza, Chief of Whatì, in the NWT, commented on the power of youth tournaments in Morritt-Jacobs' (2020) article: "We are trying to keep it alive … and really encourage younger ones with youth tournaments. It is part of our culture, we lost quite a bit in the past, so it is good to have it back" (para. 4). Deen Flett, who has coordinated multiple traditional games days for Indigenous schools in Alberta, commented that "it is vital to stage Indigenous-themed games for Indigenous youth" (Laskaris, 2018, para. 9). As noted by Laskaris (2018), in Alberta, "these Games were staged to create awareness and promote Indigenous cultures and values in the youth" (para. 4). The authors of the articles in Indigenous news sources produced a discourse that traditional games tournaments are a means for youth to reconnect with their culture. For instance, Kataquapit (2018) described how Lamarr Oksasikewiyin, a traditional knowledge keeper and teacher from Sweetgrass First Nation, Saskatchewan, introduced youth to traditional games and activities at a Wabun Youth Gathering for senior youth in Elk Lake, Ontario. An article in the Two Row Times (2021) also highlighted the importance of traditional games to youth, explaining that the mandate of the Alberta Indigenous Games is to "reclaim our youth through sport development, educational empowerment, career opportunities, and cultural connection" (para. 4).

DISCUSSION

Through the 23 articles reviewed in this study, two key discourses were (re)produced and reflected by mainstream and Indigenous media sources. The first discourse maintained that traditional games—or, more specifically, participation in traditional games—keep culture alive. The notion of cultural continuity was prevalent in this discourse,

specifically through the engagement and empowerment of youth through traditional games. As implied by this discourse, like all cultural activities, the only way in which to safeguard their continued practice is by engaging the next generation, thereby keeping the culture alive. The second discourse positioned youth as key guardians of traditional games and traditional games as being key sites for youth culture and identity development, as well as ways to give youth an alternative to their supposed participation in anti-social behaviours. This line of thinking is informed by SFD ideology that situates sport as a "hook" to engage deviant youth in cultural programming (Coakley, 2011).

Notably, the results of our investigation found that discourses produced in both Indigenous and mainstream media coverage of traditional games (re)produced similar understandings of traditional games. Given the comparative nature of this study, we initially expected to identify noteworthy divergences between Indigenous and mainstream media coverage of traditional games in Canada. This was not the case; rather, the coverage of traditional games tended to be uniform, taking a Western-centric sports journalism approach (Boyle, 2006), and the discourses that were (re)produced had negligible differences in that both mainstream and Indigenous media portrayed traditional games in similar ways. This may be due to several reasons, including editorialization, local media coverage, or the framing of traditional games as sports.

In terms of editorialization, we are referring to the positive responses of interviewees, as opposed to the editorial decisions of individual news outlets. For instance, people attending events (whether participants or administrators) tend to promote their events, especially when interviewed by the media, which leads to boilerplate platitudes about the mission and positive outcomes (to participants and community) of the event (Schulenkorf et al., 2011). Such platitudes can also be ascribed to interviews about SFD programming and the optimistic lens through which sport contributes to "value education" (Whitehead et al., 2013). Moreover, this sport event or program promotion approach can be construed as a pragmatic usage of discourse by organizers of Indigenous events. In this sense, Indigenous communities are producing the discourses—traditional games keep culture alive and reclaim youth—that news outlets are merely re-presenting and reproducing, without producing a new discourse in and of themselves. This may result in a lack of nuance in understandings of traditional Indigenous games. Moreover, we must also consider that journalistic conventions, often attributed to Western modes of media production and training, can shape representations and reflect a Western worldview even in Indigenous media.

A second contributing factor to negligible differences in mainstream and Indigenous media discourses may be the local, as opposed to national, mainstream media coverage of traditional games. Indeed, an interesting result from Gardam and Giles' (2016) study, which focused on media representations of Indigenous educational policies, pointed to the ways in which local non-Indigenous media "mirrored" (p. 9) discussions in Indigenous media about the need to address colonial legacies. Although this was not the focus of their research, and thus they recommended future research on the matter, they did note that the readers of local non-Indigenous media—in their case, the Chronicle Journal (Thunder Bay)—"have a stronger relationship to the [Indigenous] issues that occur in Thunder Bay" (p. 7). Many of the mainstream news sources that reported on traditional games in this study were local news services and the discourses presented in the articles examined mirrored those within Indigenous new sources. Perhaps the closeness and sensitization to the issues, as illustrated by Gardam and Giles (2016), is a reason for such similar viewpoints between local mainstream and Indigenous media.

The third contributing factor may be the lack of distinction between Indigenous games and mainstream sports in the reporting. One of the key reasons for the Western-centric sports journalism approach to all the articles is the Western sporting framework that is used to frame both Indigenous and mainstream media stories about sport and traditional games. Both types of media tended not to differentiate between mainstream sports and traditional games. Indeed, the language used to describe mainstream sport was, in the case of the mainstream media, applied to traditional games. The incorporation of "sport" is only one aspect of a "wholistic" (Lavallée & Lévesque, 2013, p. 208) understanding of traditional games by Indigenous peoples; other aspects may be considered the health, culture, social connection, or spirituality of traditional games. Yet, those dimensions were missing from both sets of reporting.

There are important tensions that exist within the notions of Indigenous cultural restoration and revitalization (Corntassel & Bryce, 2012; Scott & Fletcher, 2014). Handler and Linnekin (1984) aptly summarized these tensions: "one of the major paradoxes of the ideology of tradition is that attempts at cultural preservation inevitably alter, reconstruct, or invent the traditions that they are intended to fix" (p. 288). Indeed, to safeguard in a

contemporary setting is to imbue the element of cultural heritage—games, in our case—with contemporary qualities. Examples abound in the context of Indigenous multi-sport events, in which traditional games, such as the Dene game stick pull at the Arctic Winter Games, are included in predominantly Western sport programmes, thus transposing traditional games "from a habituated, lived experience into an object of conscious political intervention, transforming them into a 'museum piece' in the process" (Mrozek, 1987, p. 38) and conforming them to the norms of the dominant culture's sporting system. One of the reasons why traditional games have been ignored within the SFD framework is because of its adherence to the hegemonic position of the Western sport model. As a result, traditional games often fall within the sphere of cultural—as opposed to sport—programming and, indeed, the articles investigated alluded to the promotion of culture via traditional games as an important means to keeping culture alive.

Cultural Revival

The beginning of the revival—or increased awareness—of Indigenous games in what is now known as Canada fell within a broader global Indigenous resurgence (Hall & Fenelon, 2009). As noted by Heine (2014) in his discussion of Dene games, "the aboriginal [sic] political activism of the 1970s … led to … a renewed concern for the strengthening of cultural practices; aboriginal games and physical activity practices came to be influenced by these developments" (p. 3). Indeed, the Arctic Winter Games, Alberta Indigenous Games, and Mi'kmaw Summer Games (Nova Scotia) were all also founded during the 1970s, which informed the development of the North American Indigenous Games in 1990. The groundwork of these multi-sport events is a telling development of Indigenous voices being asserted. Yet, the threats to Indigenous cultures in Canada have exposed the ways in which colonialism informs traditional games. Dubnewick et al. (2018) explained that a part of the colonial process "is the discrediting of traditional Indigenous games in public discourse around what is an appropriate and legitimate form of sport and physical practice" (p. 219). SFD ideology, along with media coverage, reinforces the universal position of Euro-centric sports over Indigenous traditional games, even though Indigenous communities may position them differently (Paraschak, 1998).

In an effort to understand the relationship(s) between Indigenous games and discourses of revival, it is important to understand the loss of culture in the first place. Edwards (2009) noted that "usually the first activities 'suspended' when a culture comes under threat are the traditional games that require inter-group interactions or are associated with certain social and cultural practices" (p. 35). Indigenous cultures have suffered systematic and systemic erosion since settler contact—from cultural appropriation (Mackey, 1998) to the residential school system (Milloy, 1999) to the homogenizing influence of Western culture (MacDonald & Steenbeek, 2015). Within this cultural milieu, traditional games tend to be marginalized in lieu of settler sports. For this reason, many of the news articles investigated framed the revival of traditional games as a means of keeping culture alive, as opposed to a facet of a continuous games culture.

Keeping culture alive, or safeguarding traditional games, falls between the notions of cultural continuity and cultural revival. In this sense, change in Indigenous culture is at the core of this discourse. Nagengast (1997) explained that

> *"culture" is not a homogenous web of meanings that a bounded group creates and reproduces and that can be damaged by change, but, rather … "culture" is an evolving process, an always changing, always fragmented product of negotiation and struggle that flows from multiple axes of inequality. (p. 356)*

There are two sides to this discussion on cultural change. On the one hand, cultural continuity refers to a fluidity or evolution of culture. On the other hand, cultural revival supposes a discontinuity in culture, therefore requiring a revitalization or resurgence. Despite its national and regional importance, however, very little research exists on either of these settler colonial phenomena—cultural continuity and games revival—which underscores Frank's (2003) observation that traditional Indigenous culture has "never been lost. It's still right here … All we've got to do is uncover it and just start to work" (p. 56). In line with Bamblett's (2011) observation that the "continuity of culture is a frequent theme in Indigenous writing on sport" (p. 15), both the Indigenous and mainstream articles investigated in this study reflected cultural survival or continuity through a positive lens. Although culture is changing, it is the way in which cultures adapt to change that marks their resiliency. As noted by Heine and Young (1997),

> *many of the tensions and colliding identities emerging from contemporary versions of Dene games-festivals point not to simple processes of domination and control, but to a recognition in aboriginal communities of the importance of*

maintaining some level of cultural integrity in the face of changing social conditions and globalizing influences. (p. 369)

Cultural continuity assumes change, and it is within this change that culture stays alive.

Although many of the articles reported on culture from a continuity perspective, two articles from the CBC (Bailey, 2016; Hennig, 2019), in particular, were quick to label the playing of traditional games as revival. The notion of revival stipulates that the culture was absent or lost for a time, and therefore the discourse of keeping the culture alive—which implies a continuous trend—should be nuanced slightly. Both articles use the term comeback within their titles. Hennig's (2019) article focuses on the "comeback" of hand games in Fort Nelson First Nation, BC, commenting that games are "vital to the survival of [the] nation" (para. 10). Terms, such as "revival," "resurgence," or "revitalization," especially in mainstream media's reference to Indigenous culture, can reproduce a deficit discourse. This type of "deficit thinking" (Shields et al., 2005), projected within Hennig's article, is based on assumptions of lost or marginalized cultures. It reproduces the trope of the "vanishing Indian" (Maroukis, 2021), which supposes dying Indigenous cultures, as opposed to changing Indigenous cultures. In terms of cultural continuity, a strength-based approach (Paraschak, 2013; Paraschak & Thompson, 2014) could be used to recognize the ways in which these terms are often actually very positive in Indigenous communities in terms of responding to the material consequences of colonialism. As a result, these terms can be used to highlight Indigenous peoples' strength and resiliency of culture, as opposed to its marginalization and revival. This deficit discourse is also apparent concerning Indigenous youth and the need to "save" them from a negative future through the SFD framework.

Reclaiming Youth

A second, parallel, discourse in the articles is the notion of reclaiming youth through traditional games and, thus, keeping culture alive. Some of the articles' interviewees (Laskaris, 2018; Stefanovich, 2018; Two Row Times, 2021) referred to the critical role of traditional games in reclaiming or "saving" Indigenous youth from self-destructive behaviour including suicide (Barker et al., 2017), violence (Ansloos, 2017), substance abuse (Liddell & Burnette, 2017), and disengagement in community life (Islam et al., 2017; Mellor et al., 2020). The suggestion that Indigenous youth can be "reclaimed" through traditional games seems to be in response to the (deficit) discourse that Indigenous youth can expect a negative future. Traditional games are seen, in the articles investigated, to be an ideal site for saving Indigenous youth from an apparently inevitable negative life trajectory. Certainly, some research in SFD suggests there is an evidential basis for such a discourse. In the broader SFD literature, sports are deemed a tool to help "development" in all its forms: social, cultural, economic, youth, etc. Practicing and participating in traditional games, those played for generations, has several benefits. Notably, Dubnewick et al. (2018) suggested that "traditional games can enhance the participation of Indigenous peoples in sport by (a) promoting cultural pride, (b) interacting with Elders, (c) supporting connection to the land, (d) developing personal characteristics, and (e) developing a foundation for movement" (p. 213). For this reason, traditional games have been used in efforts to promote cultural connectedness (Kiran & Knights, 2010; Thompson et al., 2014), inclusion and engagement (Louth & Jamieson-Proctor, 2019), and address social justice (Williams & Pill, 2020) in physical education programs. As can be gleaned from this array of scholarship, and the articles investigated, participation in traditional games augments the relationship between Indigenous youth and their cultures and communities.

The answer to the underlying question of "from what or whom are youth being reclaimed through traditional games?" needs to be framed in a way that broaches broader cultural phenomena. The answer, in short, is from colonialism. The aforementioned risky behaviours, which are often the focus of community, government, and academic intervention efforts, are consequences of colonialism. Certainly, concerns for the material effects of colonialism on Indigenous youth should not be ignored. Nevertheless, the discourses produced about traditional games bringing youth back into their cultures and that such reclamation will have certain effects (i.e., keeping culture alive) that will steer youth off the path of self-destruction seems like a tall order. It is asking much of sports and games to create such drastic cultural and societal changes, especially as it fails to deal with the root issue of colonialism. In this light, SFD programming is rather problematic: sport is not a developmental tool; it is, as Coakley (2011) noted, a "hook" to attract youth into cultural programs, with an objective to "create healthy, productive people; decrease deviance and disruptive actions; and alleviate boredom and alienation" (p. 307). The discourse in question refers to traditional games bringing

youth closer to their cultures and communities, which is reminiscent of SFD ideology. The "hook" is the games, and the outcome is community connection. The outcomes of such meaning-making processes may, indeed, be considered developmental, but, as traditional cultural elements, traditional games may also be seen as both the "hook" and the outcome. This stands in contrast to Euro-centric SFD programs whereby the "hook" is disconnected from the outcome.

CONCLUSION

The two primary discourses produced in the 23 Indigenous and mainstream news articles we analyzed—traditional games "keep culture alive" and help "reclaim youth"—both rely on a SFD approach to Indigenous culture and youth; however, traditional games are not often considered within the SFD paradigm—be they a "hook" or the outcome. Indeed, the lack of coverage of traditional games in Canadian media, in general, points to a Western notion of sport and its hegemonic position in the physical cultures and recreational practices of all Canadians. Yet, the Indigenous voices featured in the articles suggest that traditional games may be able to provide an outlet that mainstream sports cannot. In this sense, we must consider the polysemic nature of texts; these articles may have many possible meanings depending on who has access, how Indigenous cultures are portrayed, or audience demographics. Although beyond the scope of this study, a critical media analysis should also consider distribution and accessibility when evaluating the impact of texts. For instance, there is a jarring digital divide when about half of Indigenous households in Canada do not have broadband (Buell, 2021). Who has access to media coverage of traditional games, and how they "read" the texts—either critically or at face-value—is an important follow-up to this current study.

The original intent of this study was to illustrate the divergences in the representations of traditional games in mainstream and Indigenous media; however, in concluding that similar discourses were produced about traditional games, the manner in which the discourses were produced became a focal point for examination. The Western-centric sports journalism approach (Boyle, 2006) to traditional games coverage illuminated a strong SFD ideology within the discourses. As we argued, traditional games have been ignored as an intervention by SFD providers because of the hegemony within the field of Western sport and Western sport models. Therefore, through this discourse analysis, a need to differentiate traditional games from SFD practices for the purposes of cultural and youth development has emerged as a potential direction for future research on Indigenous traditional games. Another area for future research on this topic is the relevance of digital technologies in the changing nature of journalism. The new media landscape provides Indigenous media producers a much-improved opportunity to make Indigenous voices heard, relay their communities' stories, and influence the representation of Indigenous culture. Although self-determined Indigenous media coverage has, in line with the TRC Calls to Action, promoted Indigenous culture and ways of being, the hegemony of mainstream sport persists in marginalizing traditional games coverage. The lack of visibility of traditional games within both mainstream and Indigenous media has repercussions for how traditional games and Indigenous cultures are understood and SFD is employed.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors would like to thank the reviewers and editor for their insightful feedback. This research was funded by a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada Insight Grant to the second author.

NOTES

1 "Traditional sporting activities" and "traditional sports" are often used interchangeably with the term "traditional games."

2 We employ the term "mainstream" media to denote the settler media landscape. Indigenous media is used to distinguish media entities that are owned by and targeted at Indigenous peoples.

3 *Windspeaker* was established in 1983 as the aforementioned AMMSA and includes a number of regional monthly publications, such as *Alberta Sweetgrass, Saskatchewan Sage, Raven's Eye* (published in British Columbia and Yukon), and *Ontario Birchbark.*

4 Hand games have always involved an element of gambling. Originally, stakes included material possessions, such as materials, tools, and even sled dogs. As of 2005, in an attempt to increase youth participation, the Tłı̨chǫ government introduced big money tournaments, with some cash pots as large as $100,000. Tournament participation has thus increased, drawing participants from throughout Arctic and Subarctic Canada.

5 J. Wilton Littlechild, a Cree lawyer and former Grand Chief of the Treaty 6 First Nation in Alberta, is a two-time Tom Longboat Award Winner, the first Indigenous

Albertan to obtain a law degree, and a former Member of Parliament. Littlechild was instrumental in the implementation of the Alberta Indigenous Games (1971), the North American Indigenous Games (1990), and the World Indigenous Games (2015). He has also been inducted into the Canadian Sports Hall of Fame and was appointed as a commissioner to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

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Original Research

Chaaj, Pok-Ta-Pok and Chajchaay: Rubber ballgames from Middle America to the World

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Chaaj, Pok-Ta-Pok and Chajchaay: Rubber ballgames from Middle America to the World

For the Xibalbans desired the gaming thingsof One Hunahpu and Seven Hunahpu their leathers, their yokes, their arm protectors, their headdresses, and their face masks—the finery of One Hunahpu and Seven Hunahpu.
- Popol Wuj

ABSTRACT

This paper addresses the modern rubber ballgames of Middle America and traces their genealogy to before the Spanish Conquest. It follows a theoretical framework to register contemporary players' point of view. On the field, the focus is on recent initiatives materialized in the Maya region of Mexico and Guatemala around the play of three games: *chaaj, pok-ta-pok,* and *chajchaay*. Studied from the social sciences and historical anthropology, to confront academic sources arguing the disappearance of the ancient rubber ballgames, it offers a transdisciplinary intercultural assessment of initiatives surrounding their play, emerging from indigenous Mayan communities in the recovery of a worldview that offers a balance between human beings and the natural world.

INTRODUCTION

Today three rubber ballgames are played in the Maya Region: *pok-ta-pok, chajchaay,* and *chaaj*. In the countries of Guatemala, Belize, and the Mexican states of Chiapas, Tabasco, Campeche, Yucatan, and Quintana Roo, *pok-ta-pok* and *chajchaay* players strike a solid rubber-ball with a diameter between 6 - 7.5 inches weighing approximately 4 - 8 pounds, squarely with their hip, whereas *chaaj* players use their forearm to hit a hollow inflatable rubber ball measuring approximately 6.26 inches in diameter. Played in an "I" shaped court, the games feature portable rings set across the short axis. To score in *pok-ta-pok* and *chajchaay,* the ball must pass through the double ring suspended 13 feet above the ground, and in *chaaj* the hollow ball is sent through a vertical ring fixed to a backboard standing at eight feet. These ballgames are currently gaining importance throughout the Maya region and share traits that can be traced to pre-Hispanic models. They find their direct antecedent in *ulama de antebrazo* (forearm-ulama) and *ulama de cadera* (hip-ulama), terminology derived from *ullamaliztli*, the game's appellation in Nahuatl, the lingua franca of Middle America at the time of the Spanish conquest in the early 16th century.

Keywords: interculturality, ethnicity, ludo-diversity, indigenous peoples, heritage

Figure 1
Chaaj Game

Note. Mayan forearm rubberball game in the central park of Guatemala City, February 12, 2012. Players from left to right: Erwin Castro Mulul and Jairzinho Panqueba (Ministerio de Cultura y Deportes of Guatemala team), Henry Xalpot Quiej and Jhony Otoniel Rodriguez (*Silonem Tijonïk* team from the Dirección General de Educación Física of Guatemala). For two periods of 20 minutes each, players pass the ball through the ring (*laqäm*). The referee (*ilonel*) keeps track of the scoreboard by adding and subtracting points. This scoring system ensures that during the match, one of the teams always leads the scoreboard. A zero tie only stays until a player scores *laqäm*. From this single point sum, other scores are by addition and subtraction. Image source: Record file belonging to the lead author.

Figure 2
Eighth chajchaay championship

Note. Maya hip ball game in the towns of Xesampual, Tzolojyá, Iximulew in the department of Sololá, Guatemala, December 11, 2015. The player Jun Ajchay Josué Cristal (deceased) strikes the solid rubberball with his hip to send it through the ring marker (*nupjom*). In the foreground José Toc Saloj, from Chaquijyá, acting as referee (*Ilonel*). Once a player passes the ball through the ring (*laqäm*), his team automatically wins the game. Image source: Record file belonging to the lead author.

Figure 3
Hip Strike

Note. The player, Jairzinho Panqueba, performing a hip strike with the solid rubber ball (called: *topada or male por arriba*), a characteristic move to the play of hip *ulama* and *pok-ta-pok*. Shot taken in San Cristobal de las Casas, Chiapas, México, during practice on March 17, 2017. Image source: Record file belonging to the lead author.

Contemporary ulama players propel a solid rubber ball with their forearm or hip through a long and narrow playing alley measuring 30.5 yards by 3.28 yards. In arm ulama the ball measures 4 inches and weighs 10.5 ounces and in hip ulama it can measure between 6 and 7.5 inches and weigh as much as 8.8 pounds. The games are played between two teams of three, five, or seven players each, and the method of keeping score is by addition and subtraction. In hip ulama if the ball touches a player's leg, thigh, knee, foot, hand, head, or above the iliac crest, it constitutes an illegal hit and infractions deduct one point from the score. A point is scored once the team's players reach the opposite end of the field with the ball.

Table 1

Comparison of Middle American Rubber Ballgames

Ballgame	Features			
	Ball size	Ball type and weight	Body Striking equipment	Ring hoop
Pok-ta-pok	Circumference: 19.6 inches Diameter: 6 - 7.5 inches	Solid rubber; between 2 - 4 kg.	Only with the hip; leather protectors from ulama remained for safety	No hoop; recently a suspended hoop is used 4 meters above the ground
Chajchaay	Circumference: 16 inches Diameter: 5 inches	Solid rubber; between 2 - 3 kg.	Mainly with the hip; sometimes with the knee; leather protectors from ulama remained for safety	Suspended double ring 4 meters above the ground
Chaaj	Circumference: 19.6 inches Diameter: 6 - 7.5 inches	Hollow rubber; 0.45 kg	Mainly with the forearm and eventually with the thigh and hip	Backboard single ring 2 meters above the ground
Hip Ulama	Circumference: 19.6 inches Diameter: 6 - 7.5 inches	Solid rubber; between 2 - 4 kg.	Only with the hip; leather protectors remained for safety	No
Forearm ulama	Circumference: 13 inches Diameter: 4 inches	Solid rubber; 0.45 kg.	Only with the forearm	No

Forbidden and forgotten, yet preserved in the state of Sinaloa, Mexico where archaeological courts known to date from the beginning of the 7th century are found, *ulama* passed from the rural rancherias in Northwest Mexico to the Mexican Caribbean in the 1990s, to be showcased in the Riviera Maya. Subsequently it evolved to be *pok-ta-pok*, *chajchaay* and *chaaj* in Southeastern México and Guatemala. In the context of tourism and culture, the games developed in private enterprise, governmental, and non-governmental institutions, as well as through efforts sustained by non-profit movements and organizations and collaborative actions linked to sports and education.

Between 2001 and 2014, the Encuentros Lingüísticos y Culturales del pueblo Maya (ELCPM) incorporated the rubber ballgames to inclusive programs of cooperation between Mayan youths from Mexico, Belize, and Guatemala. This process was framed by ethnic political-cultural movements, characterized as "Pan-Mayism" by academic literature (Fisher & Brown, 1996; Warren, 1998; Watanabe, 1997). In this context, rural and urban Mayan communities in 2010, led by teachers and community leaders, recovered *chaaj, pok-ta-pok,* and *chajchaay* as a sport (Panqueba, 2020), a cultural practice (Panqueba, 2012), and exercise fitting to basic education (Panqueba & Pacach, 2019). In 2015, the Asociación de Juegos y Deportes Autóctonos y Tradicionales de Yucatán (AJDATY) and the Asociación Centroamericana y del Caribe del Deporte Ancestral de la Pelota Maya (ACCDAPM) brought together *pok-ta-pok* players in Yucatán. Subsequently in 2018, the Consejo Superior Universitario de Centroamérica (CSUCA) integrated the play of *chaaj* as an exhibition game that flourished in Guatemala, and disseminated to other latitudes.

Contemporary expressions of the rubber ballgames are unknown to sports studies and sport for development programs, although their link to *ulama* has been recognized. Evidence roots the game in Middle Americas' pre-Columbian past (2500 BC), and research has traced the survival and continuity of the game to Northeast México. Families, historically practicing the game as recreation in rural areas, passed the knowledge from generation to generation, surrounding the elaboration of the ball and the technique and rules of play. Nevertheless, the games' development in the Maya region has been forsaken by scholarship. It disregards its direct antecedents as well as the nature of the game that germinated in the Riviera Maya in 1990, as promoted by tourism and leisure consortiums, and its repercussions. From this perspective we ask: How were these games transferred from generation to generation despite Academia's doubts about their authenticity?

Our interest in the Middle American rubber ballgames and their genesis in the contemporary world of sports led to the conformation of an approach that merges archaeological and historical data with ancestral knowledge and the traditional meanings the games hold. As interdisciplinary research, joining the social sciences and historical anthropology, our approach privileges the players' voices in search of fields where indigenous identity can be ascertained. The theoretical framework strengthening our study (Clevenger, 2017; Vigarello, 2002) contests research that fits indigenous games and sports to concepts and values belonging to Western axiologies (Carreón, 2013), and is methodologically determined by the lead author's experience and active participation as a player. Focusing on the principles behind the rubber ballgames' practice, it is interested in describing their play between different ethnicities and identities: their diffusion within contemporary Maya collectivities, sharing a spiritual relationship, and promotion among young players who foster Mayan cultural awareness.

To counter the lack of academic interest in most aspects linked to the contemporary play of rubber ballgames in the Maya Region, this paper presents an overview aimed at recovering their history. It recognizes evolving long-term historical structures linked to them, discusses their common antecedents, and focuses on the nature of their development. It then turns to practical approaches. It reports on the play of the three contemporary rubber ballgames to center on their transmission. In terms of the player's concepts and sensibilities, it describes the processes linked to the games learned and experienced by the lead author on the playing field.

Historical Background

The Permanence of the Rubber Ballgame Until the 1990's

More than 500 years ago, when Europe reached America, the rubber ballgames she saw, first among the Taino (called *batey*), and successively among the Totonac, Nahua, Zapotec, Purepecha, Chichimec, and Mayans, did not pass unnoticed. In reports from the end of the 16th century on, they warranted amazement with its play described as never seen movements of the body. Also unique was the bounce of a solid elastic ball made of latex rubber from a tree until then unknown to Europe (Carreón, 2006). Unlike the balls used for European games, America's volleyed a rubber ball with the swing of the hip, following a singular movement. To portray it, early modern Europeans compared the games they encountered to their own, generally presenting the balls and their corresponding technique of play as a derivation of the games familiar to them (Carreón & Panqueba, 2018).

The conquest destroyed the masonry courts and banned the game's play (Cervántes de Salazar, 1985; Pomar 1982). In central Mexico, friars and secular priests never saw it played. Nevertheless, between the 17th and 19th centuries, the game is described in historical sources (Stern, 1996) and its practice accounted for. Beginning in the 1930's and well into 1960's, its play is reported in Northeast México by scholarly circles (Kelly, 1943). Otherwise, historical references to the rubber ballgames played in the Mayan region are lacking, yet knowledge of their practice survived alongside sacred beliefs during a period of upheaval that would continue into the twentieth century (Martínez, 2014).

The second half of the century saw the hip game in the context of the 1968 World Olympic Games, when players from Sinaloa played an exhibition rubber ballgame in Mexico City (Ramírez Vázquez, 2003), and the search for its antecedents became a research topic (Leyenaar & Penalosa, 1980). The more than 1,500 ballcourts in a region spanning from as far south as Nicaragua, and possibly as far north as the American Southwest were registered (Taladoire, 1981), while interested scholarship came together in a Symposium (Litvak & Castillo, 1972) and presented research surrounding the games' symbolism, ritual function, equipment, and playing field.

European notions of play and games prevail in modern scholarship when describing the rubber ballgames (Carreón & Panqueba, 2018; Carreón, 2015). The interpretations link them to European games and sports, and to the spectacle surrounding them, particularly soccer (Zarebski, 2016). Presented in the 12th FIFA World Cup, *ulama* was part of the cultural events staged the summer of 1982 in Spain (Richmond & Mejía, 1982).

Independently, pioneering research begun in 1979 by Roberto Rochin Naya gave way to his filming of *Ulama: el juego de la vida y la muerte* (1986)[1]. Documenting the game's continued play in Sinaloa while highlighting the traditional manufacture of the rubber ball, Rochin collaborated with experienced players from Los Llanitos and Escuinapa, Sinaloa. On their home field the Sinaloan players were filmed wearing regulation *ulama* equipment; whereas, in the games they played in Maya archaeological ballcourts, passing the ball through tenoned stone rings, they were filmed dressed as players represented on paintings and sculptures of the Maya Classic period (250-900 A.C.).

The film was screened in Mexico City alongside an exhibition game in which *ulama* players from Sinaloa were showcased in cultural events belonging to the 13th FIFA World Cup. Following, they played in conjunction with the film's showing at the National Museum of Anthropology and History in Mexico City (Castro-Leal, 1986). Four years later, at the 4th Cultural Festival of Culiacan in Sinaloa in 1990, experienced players from Sinaloa presented exhibition games and conversed with an audience of scholars, sharing knowledge about the game their ancestors played (Uriarte, 1992).

Coetaneous, academic reunions on the rubber ballgames took place and their findings were published (Scarborough & Wilcox, 1991; Van Bussel et al., 1991). The festival and film ushered initiatives for the players from Sinaloa to present the game in several venues, mostly sponsored by government initiatives at a state and local level (Turok, 2000). In Mexico City, the interest in pre-Hispanic games would grow to be the Federación Mexicana de Juegos y Deportes Autóctonos y Tradicionales (FMJDAT).

The Rubber Ballgame in the Western Paradigms of Sports and Academia

Taking from Rochin's film, private enterprise seized the rubber ball game as a commodity in the 1990's. Grupo Xcaret, a tourism consortium in the Riviera Maya presented a show featuring Mexico's traditional dances, music, and games: *uarhukua ch'anakua,*[2] and the hip rubber ballgame *pok-ta-pok*, from the Yucatec Maya verb to 'play ball' (Stern, 1996). Working with choreographers, musicians, artists, designers, stage managers, advisors from academia, and players from Sinaloa, some of whom had been in the movie filmed by Rochin, the rubber ballgame was performed in a replica of a ballcourt with retractable rings. As conceived in the film, reformulated in repetition, the game and its players were portrayed as in Maya sculptures and paintings. It was a scenic montage that would conform the game's representation and fix it in the image of the Classic Maya Period.

Building on Xcaret's montage, in the 18th FIFA World Cup held in 2006, the rubber ballgame was presented in several German cities. A group of artists and athletes from San Juan Teotihuacán, dressed as Maya nobles, presented a version of *pok-ta-pok*, striking the ball with their hip and sending it through a portable vertical ring. Unlike the 1968 Olympics, and the 1982 and 1986 FIFA demonstrations in which *ulama* players had presented the game dressed in the traditional equipment from Sinaloa, the modality *pok-ta-pok* was now paraded as a primordial form of football.

Stemming from two collective initiatives developed in the Maya region of México, in a parallel manner, *pok-ta-pok* and *ulama* were promoted in the field of sports. The first in 2011 in the municipality of Chapab, Yucatán, linked to activities carried out by the AJDATY, supported players traveling to Italy to present exhibitions of *uarhukua ch'anakua* and *pok-ta-pok* at the Tocati Festival organized by the Associazione Giochi Antichi. The second in 2018, in Quintana Roo, once entrepreneurs and players from Sinaloa who had performed in Rochin´s film and in Xcaret, established a Mexican federation of hip ulama, the Federación Mexicana de Ullama de Cadera (FEMUC).

The continued involvement of players from Sinaloa, once they stepped off the stage between 1986 and 2014, gave way to the game's revitalization in its different modalities. Today, in 2023, the practice of rubber ball games, hip, and forearm modalities, finds teams formed in the Mexican states (Sinaloa, Querétaro, Jalisco, Michoacán, Mexico City, Tabasco, Chiapas, Yucatan, Quintana Roo), Belize, Guatemala, Honduras and Panama, as well as in the San Fernando Valley in California and Las Vegas, Nevada. As masters of the hip rubber ballgames, the Sinaloan players' collaboration with artists, dancers, and players of other sports and games interested in learning to be *ulama* and *pok-ta-pok* players, is interconnected to movements born in different latitudes through collective processes and presents the rubber ballgames before new audiences.

Current scholarship, viewing the games' play from the sidelines, collaborates with official and private initiatives that showcase the game, acting as dynamic advisor to tourism, culture, and sports. Yet its research and publications disregards, and passes judgement on understandings coming from the players themselves. An attitude perhaps explained by the fact *pok-ta-pok* developed in the context of tourism, and is described as a spinoff, *mise en scene* or performance, while *chaaj* and *chajchaay*, are viewed as simulated varieties of the pre-Hispanic game, judged as lacking authenticity since the game's unwritten rules are guarded in oral tradition. The rubber ballgames recovered by modern players in the Maya region are harnessed by this understanding. Academia overlooks the relevance of their current play and contemporary players (Rico et al., 1992; Scarborough & Wilcox, 1991; Uriarte, 2015; Van Bussel et al,. 1991; Whittington, 2001). Rather, the diaspora of Sinaloan players as masters of hip play teaching the game in Maya lands has been the object of criticism and mockery in projects that contend it is lost and that they are 'recovering' the play of *ulama* in Northwest Mexico (Aguilar Moreno, 2015; Leyenaar & Penalosa, 1980). The complete lack of understanding of practices that promote game and play further academia's disregard for the survival and evolution of play with a rubber ball. Misunderstanding, ignorance, prejudice, and discrimination are obstacles to its development, and our review signals their current dynamizations has been overlooked. Its play, linked to local recuperations and evocations belonging to indigenous Maya groups, is hindered by misunderstanding.

METHODS AND ANALYSIS

On the Playing Field of Pok-Ta-Pok, Chaaj and Chajchaay

This research followed a multi-site transdisciplinary approach that recovered testimonies and documents through in-situ ethnographies. Built around shared experiential learning, it engaged players during participant observation. Integrated and developed with community members, players formulated narratives, contextualized in lived experiences. The indigenous origin of the lead author, who is also an athlete and physical educator, allowed him to interact with the players and become an active member/player of the host teams. His cultural knowledge and experience in teaching games and sports were essential to the process.

The players live and work in rural communities, towns, and cities across the Maya region. In their communities they are primarily engaged in agricultural, educational, and community work. At the same time, many find employment in technical and commercial fields, in governmental and nongovernmental offices, or private enterprises involved in cultural promotion, most directly or indirectly linked to not-for-profit, volunteer citizen's groups organized at a local and national level. Together, to encourage Maya cultural practices and spirituality, they actively participate in the play of rubber ballgames. Their decision to share in our project was strengthened by the biased processes and general disregard they encounter as described above.

In 2011, the lead author teamed up with young Maya players in Guatemala City, searching for a player to join a *chaaj* team, and other games followed. He encountered players and Mayan officials from the Dirección General de Educación Física (DIGEF), training teachers to play *chaaj* and promoting its play in school events, and others playing and studying the game. Between 2012 and 2014, procedural material aimed at teaching rubber ballgames and to provide Maya youth with more options regarding sports was developed. In interaction with teachers from 22 regions of Guatemala, he engaged in play with a Mayan teacher then coordinating intercultural programs, and with a Mayan professional who at the time was president of the *Chaaj* National Sports Association.

In 2014, the lead author encountered *chajchaay* players from Chimaltenango, Guatemala belonging to the Kukulkan Institute, in a program teaching Mayan epigraphy and vigesimal mathematics, and interested in the revitalization of the ancestral rubber ballgames *chaaj* and *chajchaay* in Physical Education curricula. Play continued in Sololá, Guatemala. Training with groups of players, tournaments took place, moreover once members of AJDATY and *pok-ta-pok* players from Chapab, Yucatán, entered the field.

In the progress of the project the authors consolidated earlier research and in 2015 had the opportunity to work with seasoned players from the FMJDAT promoting the ancestral games and with docents from the Universidad Intercultural de Chiapas (UNICH) promoting *chaaj* and *chajchaay*, and training players. One year later, retired teachers belonging to the intercultural educational system (ELCPM), joined our research, and teamwork was strengthened by ulama players from Sinaloa, who had played *pok-ta-pok* in the Riviera Maya, and by the collaboration of players and sports marketing entrepreneurs in Quintana Roo.

Co-Elaboration in Play

On the field, reflective and effective dialogue moved our play through three paths: contemplation, description, and comprehension. Its organization and activities called for a pedagogy of physical education open to the human experience, as developed in Chinchilla's study (2005). Thus, integrated into the educational system and joined by players, we explored modalities of learning and teaching in a construction designed around sensory and bodily experiences. Alternate thresholds for teaching and learning to promote the play of ancestral games in pedagogical, artistic, cultural, and academic contexts helped us acknowledge the active and organized promotion of Maya cultural practices that have risen in the field of Mayan spirituality in which the play of rubber ballgames is vital.

The Path of Contemplation

The many interlocutors involved, answering to our eagerness to play and learn, to in turn teach and play modern rubber ballgames, evoked two concepts belonging to the Kaqchikel language: *B'ochinïk*, which refers to an act of persuasion, and *Nik'onïk* which relates to super-vision, the ability to be amazed and the emotion brought on by the sight of something extraordinary. The terms transmuted understandings and defined the relationships between the viewer and the viewed, spectators and players, to either interact momentarily and disappear or interact recalling previous experiences, a wonder that transcended and grew to be a memorable experience. Encounters on the playing field in kinesthetic play[3] determined the changes as well as the continuities the rubber ballgames' play sustained, and helped recognize their evolution once transferred from Northeastern Mexico to the Maya Region.

Convened around the ancestral ballgames, bridging cosmogonic and spiritual heritages, players shared their thoughts on the game and engrained memories. Their words brought together and convey the sensitive experience behind the games' practice. Collected by the lead author, he focused during daily training to learn the games, joined Mayan ceremonies in the development of pedagogical activities surrounding the game, attended team building and tournaments, and learned to make the equipment (attire and balls) needed to play the rubber ballgame in its contemporary modalities.

The Path of Description

Building on the experience lived, to better portray the rubber ball games among the Maya and document the stories surrounding them, the players' thoughts are woven into this collaborative account. To position their play in

contemporary Maya, building on a detailed and critical examination of historical, archaeological, and anthropological sources, an historical path was tracked. It revealed "the presentation of events of the past...is not only objective—according to the actual facts recorded by the observation or in documentary data—but useful for the purposes of political and cultural education" (Fals-Borda, 2002, p. 55B).

The participation from within enabled up-to-date registers of the game, photographic and audiovisual, as well as semi-structured interviews, in which reactions to the game and its play were shared by the players. The exchange of *b'ochinïk* and *nik'onïk* (persuasion and amazement) commanded further play, inquiries, conversations, proposals, and discussions between the players and the authors. The encounters evidenced the relevance of women's participation in the games history (Panqueba, 2016), and revealed their development in the context of Maya communities holding ceremonial and sacred elements linked to self-recognition and identities. They also disclosed the epistemological problems raised by the study and understanding of contemporary ancestral games in Mexico and Guatemala with respect to historiographical sources. Fundamentally, they show that the portrayal of the rubber ballgames derived from academia, saturated by notions belonging to Western games and reaching Maya communities does not accurately represent them, neither as players nor at play in spaces that do not belong to them.

Apprehending the Game

The knowledge gathered on the playing field advanced four lines of analysis: the ethnic experience linked to spirituality, educational opportunity, cultural expression, and tourist management. The procedure followed methods and community components, projected and recognized internationally, implemented to present the rubber ballgames before groups and communities, and to contribute to their dissemination.

Our approach made patent the circumstances and processes that surround their play among contemporary Maya communities. It showed them to be presented as a competition sport, and as a viable physical activity shared by the Maya people, especially the young, while it also advanced the fact that their practice is a source emanating knowledge and ancestral heritage. The approach determined the processes by which the rubber ballgames, as physical education open to the human experience, structured around sensory and bodily experience, are actively used by Maya communities and groups to share ancestral knowledge. It showed the games to be a practice vying for a place alongside sports and games of the West, and conventionally practiced in the world.

Sharing Engrained Memories

The multiple processes and practices that followed our serious play of the rubber ballgames on different courts came together in an exercise, prioritizing an intercultural perspective, able to integrate the many interpretations, understandings, and knowledges of the rubber ballgame as expressed by the players, during the moments of playful interaction. While recording the life stories belonging to the games' players and promoters, many with no self-ascribed ethnicity, who actively participated in the development of the initiatives to promote the rubber ballgames as a sport, a comparative approach, bearing in mind available historical and archaeological sources on the Ancient rubber ballgames, helped assess the adaptations made to this knowledge and to understand how they developed.

RESULTS: Scores and Effects in Three Motions

Understanding the notions that envelope the ancestral rubber ballgames to decolonize their practice and rid them from the ignorance and prejudice surrounding them was the purpose of our first exchange. It entailed the analysis of historical and archaeological data and the recognition of the processes that carried the rubber ballgame from Northern Mexico to the Maya region. Only thus did we re-discover the games' play, enabling us to move beyond stereotypes that bind them, as modeled by academia, sports, and cinema, to play the game in everyday life.

The second exchange determined how once Mayan communities spearheaded manifestations fighting for indigenous and ethnic recognition in Southwest Mexico, their efforts escalated to curtail the appropriation of traditional elements (mis defined as ethnic) and sought to administer the use of elements that characterize Maya art and rituality. Once Mayan indigenous movements evolved and were confronted with the notions that prevail in the games' presentation as entertainment, linked to sports, culture, and nationalist discourses repeated in school curricula, they took possession of the places for the game's play, its equipment and attire. In their self-representation, contemporary Maya players followed depictions gathered from portraits of ancient Maya ballplayers to model their play yet channeled them entirely disengaged from the ideal that links the game to Maya nobility and conceived the ancestral community practice as an ancestral sport, instead of as a game.

This is linked to the third movement, the re-claiming and re-learning of the rubber ballgames as nurtured in the Maya region. The process, in the context of physical education, embracing sensory and bodily experiences, was interlaced with ancestral knowledge. It occurred in contexts where imaginaries belonging to ethnic identity are narrated in family histories and personal experiences, and paradoxically engaged in political, economic, educational, and cultural systems.

Yoman Felipe Ilocap, from the Xesampual area, department of Sololá, Guatemala, presents an experience that finds parallels in other player's understandings and recollections:

I'm 23 years old. I was born to a Catholic family and with the passing of time, they changed world views to the Mayan belief, one year before I was born. At birth I was introduced to Mayan culture, I was not part of any religion; we live the/our/worldview. I began to grow in the culture; that's why I know all about Nahuales. I work curing and healing animals, I like nature and try to do things that other people don't do, such as recycling and things like that...I started to play chajchaay in 2007; October 27th was the first time I trained with my cousins who'd been playing for six months with the Sotz'il group. They started teaching us. We played for almost an hour, and for about 15 days I couldn't walk. It's not an ordinary game; it's not like playing football. After a year playing, Tata Lem Mucía Batz began to take us to presentations and performances held in different places. We went to Belize twice, though the third time I couldn't go because of my job. We also went to Quiché and to other places. People kept staring at us because they didn't understand it. Then, if it wasn't my dad, there was another man who explained the game before we started to play so they would understand. They became excited when they touched the (rubber) ball; they were surprised because they imagined that it was an inflatable ball that weighed nothing, because that's what it looks like.

Insomuch as forms belonging to organized sports show up on the field when teaching and learning of the rubber ballgames, young generations of players in their day-to-day play practice in an atmosphere of Mayan ceremonialism. Ritual activities signal the games' link to Maya religiousness and spirituality, and anchor the resignifications afforded to them by their present-day practitioners (Panqueba, 2015). Transcendental to the spirituality and ceremonialism imbued in daily observances (cooking, planting, etc.), their play too is linked to Maya ancestrality causal to the preservation of traditions.

Encouraged to play through individual and collaborative efforts, teachers, promoters, and players reactivated the ancestral game. Their words show that it became a catalyst of energies. They composed and structured contemporary rubber ballgame play into the history of their ancestors which in turn enabled players to incorporate their personal generational experience into the Mayan cosmovision and the world surrounding them. By the same token, the ballplayers' body in play became the means through which to learn the game's praxis.

Lem Mucía Batz, one of the games' earliest promoters in Guatemala and author of *Chajchaay, pelota de cadera* (2004), reveals how personal experiences, described as sensory and bodily, are fostered by ancestral knowledge:

The elders when they speak explain that they are replicating what they saw with their grandparents; it is not only about dialogues but about actions. Then they say b'anob'äl; a word that comes from b'an: fact and b'äl: instrument. This refers to the imitations that are made while following what is done in the dances, the gestures, or the steps we take, which are b'anob'äl. The steps to be followed are not written on a piece of paper, but those who saw the grandfather in action, dancing or in ceremony, repeat it. It is a manner of body code that can be seen, replicated and imitated. This word b'anob'äl is used to name a factor some action of importance that is only seen. Then the son, the grandson, repeats it because he saw it: if I saw it, that's how it is done. From an exercise he saw, he replicates it. So, I consider it is the replication of a learned code in movement that he reduplicates for his grandchildren to carry on.

While the rubber ballgames became a primary reference, they can be linked to the planting of maize corn, a staple food in the region. In certain occasions, kernels and cobs are exchanged by the representatives of different teams, to bring forth and elevate the moments of play and reciprocity between players that travel from distant localities. They congregate to celebrate a game in the summer and winter solstices, its play an offering presented alongside maize corn, incense, music, dance, and feathers. And in these experiences lived sport, *etz'anib'äl*,[4] is enriched by *b'anob'äl*, the replication and re-creation of bodily codes, in spirituality, *xamanil nimab'ey,*[5] to play the game of *chajchaay*.

This practice and concept, *b'anob'äl*, stands as the basis of the contemporary play and re-creation of *chajchaay*; it complements and enriches the structures it holds that belong to conventional modern sports, *etz'anib'äl*. Various processes propel the game's play in spirituality in a space *nimab'älk'u'x*, of consultation, gratitude, and learning. Thus, *chajchaay* championships, *ch'akoniḱ*, are not only meant to be where the games' technical advances are shown and different team's prowess displayed, nor fields for confrontation and competition, they are where the fabric holding *b'anob'äl, etz'anib'äl* and *xamanil nimab'ey* is woven.

In this setting embracing ethnic management, the development set forth by the ELCPM stands out and achieving global recognition for its approach focused on strengthening Mayan languages and cultural manifestations. Its originators, sharing concerns, created the encounters between Mayan People in answer to their experience as teachers working in the bilingual intercultural system, but due personal concerns; their familiarity with the problems disturbing the Maya Region and its people, they lived and witnessed since childhood.

Bartolomé Alonzo Caamal, a retired teacher, professor in the Intercultural Bilingual program in the State of Yucatan and one of the founders of by the ELCPM, explains:

One of our goals...was for a Maya-speaker from Itza, Mopan, or Keqchí, to meet with Mayan people of Yucatan to talk. There were spaces for us to express ourselves culturally and those encounters were the opportunity...Aware of the importance of strengthening the use of our language, the meetings were held in the language of the community, although it had to be translated for speakers of the other Mayan languages. We were pleased to hear the languages expressed...Even though we were all Mayans, our views on the Mayan problem were diverse, but there were also great coincidences; for example, on the importance of strengthening the culture and languages of Maya-speaking communities...José Mucía and Eduardo Takatik from Guatemala, came to [Quintana Roo, Mexico in 1998], to do research with ball players in Xcaret. They came to Valladolid [Yucatan] and looked me up. I was then president of the Mayan Association; we met to talk, and established contact with the idea to continue sharing information and our cultural concerns. Furthermore, Don Valerio Canché Yáh [Yucatecan Maya], a professor of indigenous education, on his part had met people from Belize: Don Angel Sek and the Chayax brothers from Petén [Guatemala]. It was Don Valerio's idea for promoters, some who already knew each other, to meet in Patchacan, Belize...We got together in 1999...and the hosts were: Don Anastasio Poot´s family and a family named Dzul. Six people from different regions of Guatemala also assisted. We talked for two days. A ceremony was held and from those meetings grew the idea to create the Linguistic and Cultural Meetings for the representatives of the Mayan languages, mainly from Guatemala, Belize, and Mexico, to assist.

The rubber ballgames' development in the flow of its academization, performance, and management in modern day sports differs from contemporary initiatives that place the ball in the field of education, where its play is generated and administered by and for ethnicities and regulated in educational contexts as a sport as well as a ritual game. As ancestral sports, contemporary rubber ballgames have been heavily tackled, suffering the ideological and symbolic interferences inherited from the historical stages of the development of modern countries where they were once played. Alongside other games coming from the West, such as baseball, Maya people play rubber ballgames and participate in the production of knowledge surrounding them, selecting elements that migrate through time and space, in interpretations, and re-interpretations.

Players in an active manner build on this tradition that signals the games' link to Maya religiousness and spirituality, and anchors the resignifications their present-day practitioners grant them.[6] Spirituality reflected in a constellation linked to Maya ancestrality, daily observances (cooking, planting, etc.), contribute to the preservation of traditions and this is where the transcendence of the play of rubber ballgames rests. In their communities, players are protagonists, taking charge of the ballcourts, equipment and attire, and providing the rubber ball. For the game's re-creation, suspended portable rings and movable walls holding a single ring are made and ornamented by the players' community to evoke the pre-Columbian past through fragments of mural paintings preserved in archaeological sites close to their communities, and images from museum catalogues, mass media and scholarly research. While important efforts are being made to set in writing the games' different rules, some learned from the lips of the players from Sinaloa and others passed on in oral histories of Maya players, the protagonists in teaching the rubber ballgames played by many generations in Middle America recover lost knowledge.

The narratives surrounding the games in play, reflecting ideological and symbolic transformations conceived by official processes linked to the formation and cohesion of the Guatemalan state, a multicultural nation holding a legacy, shared with Mexico, show that, set in motion by Mayan ethnicities and communities, across modern borders, the rubber ballgames became a catalyst of energies. Woven into the history of their ancestors, players incorporated personal narratives to the ancestral games' contemporary play, which once seized and subjectively apprehended as an sport, provides newfound spaces for the circulation of ethnic consciousness and identities.

Salvador Pacach Ramírez, advisor to the DIGEF, appraises the formation of the Unidad de Interculturalidad of Guatemala´s Ministry of Education to provide a comprehensive physical activity program for schools to promote strong and sustainable growth and create unity in which the role and objectives of play are evident.

One of the Unidad's primary tasks was to station the cosmogonic meaning of the Mayan ballgame, as related to physical education...It was the government's aim, with the idea, purpose to promote a sport or game with Mayan identity. So, the intercultural experience as a part of physical education provided the Mayan ballgame with an added value because to playing basketball they said yes, playing football yes, cycling yes, athletics yes, playing chess yes, handball yes, volleyball yes, any of those sports, but none of them as part of Guatemalan culture or in this case Middle America - the vast historical region spanning from Mexico to Costa Rica. From then on, the Maya ballgames' incursion to physical education gathered strength. That was the objective, whether they thought it up in the vice ministry, or the people brought it here, finally it was part of the task. For example, to identify ethnic, cultural, and linguistic affiliation when carrying out technical, administrative and I think financial processes.

Efforts to revitalize the ancestral game and promote its play in circuits dominated by the games of the West are encumbered by historical chains forged during the conquest and evangelization of America. While the rubber ballgames have been structured in school curricula belonging to Intercultural Universities and practiced in community play in the development of Maya identity in answer to national (Mexico, Guatemala) and local initiatives (Yucatán, Guatemala, Chiapas), mostly presented to identify and determine different indigenous, cultural, and national affiliations, its players and promoters all acknowledge the need to present the game as more than a side show to a spectator sport or as a tourist attraction.

CONCLUSION: Playoff

These games and play described are in fact the reflection of collective wisdoms, immortalized in images and texts belonging to pre-Hispanic America, incorporated into personal narratives and spiritualities belonging to contemporary Maya players. As traditional games, curricula in physical education and as sport, their integration to governmental funded organizations and institutionalization efforts, launched unexpected debates as to the statutes that govern these matters.

Set in motion during ethnic social movements, identities, and traditions, grounded in a shared ancestral, collective, knowledge,[7] the rubber ballgames' play and dynamization faces many paradoxes. The ancestral game forbidden and then exploited to be misunderstood as a spectacle for culture and tourism, it is now played in novel fields belonging to sports and education. In this setting, the ancestral ballgames are exercises relevant to intercultural collaboration and education.

Our position in this paper is to acknowledge that the Maya people, as well as other Amerindians, played games different from those of the West. Its aim is to analyze contemporary rubber ballgames of the Maya as another ritual form presented in their daily life, to understand the reception and resignification of the games' play and elements (ball, equipment, attire). We look at the games' play in a context broader than that of mainstream scholarship. Inspired by the exploration of alternate thresholds for teaching and learning, and to encounter the processes behind the promotion of ancestral games in pedagogical, artistic, cultural, and academic contexts, we tracked the play of the rubber ballgames among different groups of players, over an extended historical timeline, to understand their transformations.

Our research shared the sensory and bodily experience of playing the rubber ballgame and making the rubber ball while learning and teaching ancestral knowledge in new contexts. Physical education – more so in intercultural contexts – requires discovering the experience of participation and solidarity, living the sensorial and creative experience while learning (Chinchilla, 2005). Articulated with territorial pedagogy, adopting interculturality as vital to every educational project, the practice, dissemination, and study of ancestral games to educate people and share knowledge is an exercise that brings forth the contemporary emergence of initiatives flourishing in the world. In the context of intercultural education, our project follows paths that will take the

games' spectators and players to feel and think the roots and itineraries of the ancestral rubber ballgames.

This discussion explores a particular pedagogy in the learning and teaching of traditional games, student-teacher projects, and presents the processes behind its development and impact in the Maya region. Flórez Rojas and Mecha Forastero (2020) have found that ancestral practices belonging to migrant communities are endangered by population movements, and our review shows the resettlement of the Maya region had potential consequences on the play of the rubber ball games. In new fields, belonging to sports and education, the rubber ballgames and the ancestral, collective knowledge they hold, conform to unknown conditions. Transformed, their bearers play to preserve spiritual, familiar, and community ancestral knowledge.

Contemporary rubber ballgames have steadfastly followed the path belonging to ancestral practices, sharing knowledge, recuperated, protected, and transformed by commitments with Mother Earth in the development of educational projects (Stócel, 2011), and can be found in intercultural education, in initiatives carried out in geographical, cultural, and social contexts other than those that gave origin to the games.

End Score

Conventional studies on rubber ball games foresee their disappearance (Aguilar Moreno, 2015; Kelly, 1943; Leyenaar & Penalosa, 1980), seldom mention their contemporary play among the modern Maya (Il Joc, 1992; Uriarte, 2015; Whittington, 2001), and often judge it to be a show and consider it a reconstruction (Aguilar Moreno, 2015). Proposals interested in sharing the ancestral game and promoting its play in higher education and matters surrounding it (the balls' manufacture, the equipment, the games' sacrality endorsed by feathers, music, dance, the meanings) are often left aside. This epistemic tension challenges the games' continuity because it essentially disregards efforts born from communities of contemporary players, in this case Mayan, to project and propel their ancestral rubber ballgames. Sharing *chaaj, pok-ta-pok,* and *chaj chaay,* players recall lived experiences, replicating and re-creating body codes. As one player noted, "I feel that my ancestors play, borrowing body," when summoned to the ballcourt. Today in varying contexts, the play of the ancestral ballgame offers Maya communities the opportunity to become part of an evolving cyclical past. Traditional experiences, integrated to daily life linking personal histories, family experiences, and identities, relate the game to a Mayan legacy. An experience contributing to the games' play where it was once lost, in fields distant from where it was preserved, yet where hundreds of archaeological masonry courts remain. The Sinaloa players' diaspora and the spread of *ulama* to the Mayan region contributed to its revitalization. Energized by the events showing it in the Riviera Maya as a spectacle, or as a sacred game in Merida, Yucatan, it is linked to ethnicities and sacrality but also to government-sponsored educational programs where their play recovers and recreates gestures and technical movements. Linked to the performance of sacred Mayan ceremonies in many contexts, today it is played in different scenarios and fields. The kinesthetic practices belonging to *ullamaliztli* and then to *ulama* were transported to the Maya region, under the practice of *pok-ta-pok, chaj,* and *chaj chay* combining elements belonging to modern sports and the performing arts, while embracing Mayan ancestral processes and beliefs.

Future research will study the rubber ballgames of pre-Hispanic America. However, to better understand the processes that lead to their play in the 21st century and the beliefs that surround them, requires critical analysis. The game, carried from Sinaloa to the Riviera Maya, monopolized by culture, sports, and advertising, sponsored by private enterprise and government programs, advised by academia, has been framed by exhibitions and representations in diverse contexts, and sorely misunderstood. Our research, associated with the social groups and identities that share the games, considers the self-categories operating from different latitudes that bonded, to project and promote its play. It underscores the relevance of the reconfiguration of ancestral games in a globalized world that supports hegemonic sports and sanctions certain corporal practices, yet disregards the play of indigenous games, rooted in tradition, that foster the embodiment of alternative subjectivities.

Funding

Our research was benefitted by funding from several institutions. UNAM - PAEP grant; Agencia Mexicana de Cooperación Internacional Genaro Estrada grant for Mexicanist scholars; Department of Gender and Interculturality, Universidad Intercultural de Chiapas and Secretaría de Educación Distrital of Bogotá grant. In its final stages it received funding from UNAM -PAPIIT grant IN403619 "Aby Warburg y los estudios precolombinos: reconstrucción historiográfica y desarrollo teórico" and UNAM-PAPITT grant IN106420. "Fabricación de la pelota de hule del juego de cadera mesoamericano. Recuperación de las técnicas a partir de su caracterización material".

NOTES

1 In 2010, the film was released in digital version together with a book under the same title. See: Rochin, Solis and Velasco, 2010.

2 A Purépecha ballgame from the State of Michoacán, México; a contemporary practice joining teams and holding tournaments in different regions of the country.

3 Kinesthetic intelligence, which was originally coupled with tactile abilities, was defined and discussed in Howard Gardner's Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences (1983). In it, he describes activities such as dancing and performing surgeries as requiring great kinesthetic intelligence: using the body to create (or do) something.

4 Neologism adopted to the Kaqchikel language for the concept of sport. The word also translates into Spanish as playing field (Comunidad Lingüística Kaqchikel, 2012).

5 A compound term that denotes spirituality: xamanil (espíritu, spirit) and nimab'ey (camino principal, primary path). It is different to nimab'äl k'u'x, neologism belonging to the Comunidad Lingüística Kaqchikel (2012, p. 125) meaning religion.

6 While this religiousness is reflected in a mythologized vision emerging from Academia, carrying notions of ballplayers and kings, which implied a character and consequences, it is to be found in the formal and aesthetic assimilation by players carrying it out and in the re-signification of certain elements. It is materialized in feathers but also in the imaginaries that in turn, feed artistic production, as well as its reception.

7 Modern science has not validated the existence and importance of a collective knowledge surrounding game intelligence, which provides an open field to explore the promotion of the ancient game as modern sport.

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Commentary

Decolonizing Sport for Development Through Integration of Indigenous Knowledge and Pedagogy

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Abstract

Indigenous voices are an emerging area of interdisciplinary research and praxis within sport for development (SFD). However, the growing body of literature on SFD indicate program curriculums can conflict with Indigenous ways of knowing, which can undermine cultural sustainability and revitalization. The purpose of this commentary is therefore to reflect on contemporary SFD programming through the lens of Indigenous knowledge and pedagogical practices. In doing so, we identify strategies and practices to scaffold into existing SFD programs and policy. Such pedagogical strategies and practices accomplish two objectives: (1) adding to the growing corpus of literature on community-oriented praxis and (2) provide recommendations for strategic implementation of Indigenous knowledge to facilitate structuring Indigenous pedagogies in program development. These strategies and practices are informed by our own culture and ethnic backgrounds, an Oglala Lakota and Kenyan-Kalenjin-Keiyo, enculturated into a Eurocentric pedagogy which guides our positionality.

Decolonizing Sport for Development Through Integration of Indigenous Knowledge and Pedagogy

The purpose of this commentary is to reflect on contemporary Sport for Development (SFD) programming alongside Indigenous knowledge and pedagogical practices. We rely on our cultural and ethnic backgrounds (Oglala Lakota and Kenyan-Kalenjin-Keiyo) enculturated into the Eurocentric pedagogies. Across decades, we have formed internal dialogues regarding ways in which programs can constitute and constrain ones' sense of self through a specific worldview and pedagogical practices structured around it. This includes, but is not limited to, the Eurocentrism of meritocracy and neoliberalism. After brief look at the literature on SFD, specifically Indigenous programs, we recommend a set of pedagogical strategies and practices to scaffold into SFD programs. While not comprehensive, the literature was selected in order to provide context for our commentary and situate SFD literature within Indigenous knowledge and pedagogical practices. Such an approach accomplishes two objectives: (1) adding to the growing corpus of literature on community-oriented praxis in SFD and (2) provide recommendations on strategic implementation of Indigenous knowledge to scaffold into programs, especially in Indigenous communities.

By praxis, we mean the ways in which an embodied experience (i.e., action) is created around Indigenous ways of knowing (i.e., reflection and theory) in order to transform (i.e., decolonization). This is important because praxis, as mediating 'theory-practice nexus', "remains politically marginalized by many disciplines due to a lack of acceptance and understanding about other ways of first, knowing and second, knowledge production and sharing" (Hapeta, 2019, p. 490). As such, specific ways to indigenize sporting pedagogies and programming towards cultural revitalization are offered. This is informed by the community-oriented praxis of Austin F.C., which overpoweringly resonated with us and was inspirationally instrumental for this commentary.

In March 2021, three representatives from Austin F.C. shared their pedagogical approach to coaching and teaching low-income youth at a virtual U.S. Soccer Foundation conference. Their approach to pedagogy and youth soccer programming is derived from Indigenous traditions, specifically Navajo, called Restorative Practices. Jordan Johnson, a Navajo and Director of Youth Development for

Keywords: sport-for-development, talking stick or talking feather, storytelling, language

the 4ATX Foundation attached to Austin FC, called Restorative Practices "an Indigenous practice, something that's been done for centuries and centuries" (West, 2021, p. 1). For Johnson, "it's an approach to a way of living, a way of coaching, a way of being. It's also a toolkit, it's a way of handling different things that are going on, whether it's building relationships or addressing harm that's been done" (West, 2021, p. 1).

The general idea of Restorative Practices and Indigenous pedagogies is to reposition normative forms of coaching that have focused on discipline and punishment, which have been shown to be toxic (Payne et. al., 2013) and traumatically affect youth athletes' experiences in sport (Battaglia et. al., 2020). Austin F.C. attempts to subvert those normative coaching practices with 'nalyeeh', in Navajo, or talking circles (Yurth, 2020; West, 2021). The practice of nalyeeh is a non-hierarchical approach to conflict resolution, facilitating communication, collaboration, and dispositional empathy amongst peers, and "ideally to feel heard and empowered in the process" (West, 2021, p. 1). The program session usually finishes with a 'Mindful Close' of guided breathing exercises as a practice to self-calm and refocus oneself throughout daily life.

Literature Review

Sport for Development and Indigenous Knowledges

Within academia and public policy, sport is an instrumental ideological and practical means for social development (Arellano & Downey, 2019; Hayhurst et. al., 2016). One of the main applications to achieve social outcomes is SFD. The field of SFD can be conceived as a way to harness the hegemony of sport to develop an individual or community through what is considered pro-social objectives. While public health, education, and economic objectives have been at the forefront of pro-social objectives, other areas include coaching, equipment and infrastructure, and community development. Such diverse applications and outcomes of SFD allowed Levermore (2008) to create a SFD typology consisting of five categories. The five categories were: (1) conflict resolution and inter-cultural understanding; (2) building physical, social and community infrastructure; (3) social consciousness, particularly through education; (4) impact on physical and psychological health and general welfare; and (5) economic development. SFD programming, with these pro-social objectives, are often implemented in underserved areas, including Indigenous communities, targeting populations in which sport, educational programs, and other resources are regarded as scarce. However, within recent decades, various scholars have begun to debate the design, structure, and implementation of SFD programs (Arellano, & Downey, 2019; Hayhurst et. al., 2016; Kay, 2009; Spaaij, 2009). In particular, the ways in which power and knowledge constitute a hidden curriculum of values and beliefs within a durable network of institutions, volunteers, and discursive policy formation that define specific types of behaviors and social capital obtained.

For the most part, it is the hegemony of neoliberal capitalism which constitutes such a curriculum in an attempt to integrate participants into the axiologies, epistemologies, and ontologies of a neoliberal economic system. Critiques of existing SFD practices include, but is not limited to, the socialization and conditioning pro-social behaviors (i.e., education, financial literacy, physical activity) and enculturation into a neoliberal meritocracy (i.e., hard work, personal responsibility) (Arellano & Downey, 2019; Hayhurst et al., 2016). Such a perspective often obscures the systemic structures which exploit or burden communities and their knowledges (e.g., epistemologies and axiologies) (Harvey, 2007; Hayhurst et al., 2016) while referentially reproducing colonial scripts on Indigenous bodies (Hayhurst et al., 2016, McGuire-Adams, 2020). That is to say, imposing a top-down SFD program without community integration, shared ownership, or participatory action, which has specific consequences in Indigenous communities.

Arellano and Downey (2019) noted contemporary issues within SFD programs in Indigenous communities regarding epistemologies and axiologies. First, there have been a general lack of respect for localized Indigenous cultures. For example, SFD reports and activities do not specify any localizable Indigenous knowledge. Indigenous knowledge is often replaced (or suppressed) with neoliberal paradigms of employment and the marketplace, the latter is merely articulated as a development program in which sport is instrumental (Hayhurst et al., 2016). SFD programming has also in many cases assumed specific Indigenous knowledges are non-transferable skills, and do not enhance integration (or assimilation) or employment in a neoliberal marketplace. Localized Indigenous epistemologies and axiologies related to elder engagement, kinship knowledge, language recovery, ecological renewal and knowledge, ceremonial knowledge are generally not regarded as measurable goals of SFD programming (Arellano & Downey, 2019). The aforementioned issue, for the most part, can be attributable to a phenomenon known as a 'displacement of scope' between macro-, meso- and micro-level impacts in which communities (i.e., meso-level) are

regarded as resource poor (Hapeta et. al., 2019). In turn, it is SFD programs, rather than the extant community, that are the crux for pro-social behaviors and resources constituted around the norms of neoliberalism. Such a tautological position produces a 'deficiency' paradigm (Hapeta et. al., 2019) which mutes local knowledge in the "flattening of Indigeneity" (Arellano & Downey, 2019, p. 470).

While the exact definition of Indigenous knowledge can vary, Akena (2012) identified the concept as a complex and multifaceted amalgamation of context-driven knowledge that "embraces the essence of ancestral knowing as well as the legacies of diverse histories and cultures" (p. 601). The strategic embracing and implementation of Indigenous knowledge is instrumental in reclaiming context-driven ways of knowing that have deliberately been suppressed by Eurocentric programs. Akena (2012) argued research into Indigenous knowledge, and by extension praxis, should emphasize the systematic deconstruction and overcoming of power relations which "have assured the dominance of particular ways of knowing" (p. 601). The challenge for SFD programming in Indigenous communities is to embrace Indigenous knowledge by scaffolding pedagogies into the curriculum. This strategy repositions SFD curriculums toward ways of knowing and becoming that are outside the contemporary neoliberal paradigms.

DISCUSSION

When reviewing literature on Indigenous education practices (Biermann & Townsend-Cross, 2008; Madden, 2015) as a source of praxis for SFD, there are six themes in which Indigenous pedagogies can be focused: identity, relatedness, inclusiveness, reciprocity, nurturance, and respect. These six themes underscore many of the strategies mentioned in Levermore's (2008) typology of SFD programs and addresses the displacement of scope (i.e., Indigenous knowledge) identified above. The following discussion will focus on three inter-related forms of praxis involved in Indigenous ways of knowing and becoming.

First, talking circles can be mediated by a symbolic artifact known as a 'talking feather' or 'talking stick'. The importance of the talking stick is instrumental to a talking circle. It provides a material symbol that defines 'who can speak' and 'who is listening'. Often, in group settings, some individuals have a tendency to dominate dialogue, and, at worst, talk over others. The latter of which is a form of bullying. People also have different intra-personal communication comfort levels (i.e., introverts and extroverts, or affective or controlled) in group settings. The talking stick, as a strategic intervention, mediates the different comfort levels of intra-personal communication as a material arbiter for group-based dialogue. The talking stick practice connects back to inclusiveness, reciprocity, nurturance, and respect (Biermann & Townsend-Cross, 2008) since it structures a social environment in which there is a clearly defined 'speaker' and 'listener' towards a non-hierarchical encounter with peers. The non-hierarchical approach (i.e., talking circles with talking stick or talking feather) disrupts the latent power dynamics amongst peers and a social environment oriented toward inclusive reciprocity, nurturance, and respect.

Second, the next aspect of Indigenous practice is storytelling. The practice of storytelling is a functional cultural practice that attempts to situate a community of learners in the past as a way to have a renewed relationship with the present. Such a practice has been mentioned in Auger (2021), Hapeta et. al. (2019), and McGuire-Adams (2017; 2020). Storytelling can take many forms (e.g., songs, music, poetry and dance) which reaffirm connections amongst members of a group and a way to actualize their history. However, storytelling is much more than repositioning the past in the present or reaffirming a collective identity. For example, alongside sharing circles, it can be a conduit for self-reflection and critical consciousness (McGuire-Adams, 2020). The practice of storytelling and its connection to cultural material or non-material praxis, such as a talking stick or talking feather, is a monocle into an entire worldview that is produced, reproduced and, to an extent, preserved in a narrative form. This situates storytelling as instrumental in cultural revitalization.

Sports and games have already been shown to "strengthen language skills, listening skills, and judgment skills" in Indigenous communities (Lyoka, 2007, p. 353). However, storytelling adds an additional layer within the scope of community-oriented praxis and SFD. For example, in the Indigenous Keiyo community of Kenya, ways of thinking and knowing are grounded in evidence-based storytelling with technical and rhetorical language intended produce and reproduce knowledge, guide behaviors, and constitute a localized social reality (Chepyator-Thomson, 1990). Similar to sports and games then, storytelling, based on localized Indigenous knowledge, can serve three functions: (1) socialization, (2) cultural preservation, and as a (3) non-material historical record of the community (Chepyator-Thomson & M'mbaha, 2013).

Fernández-Llamazares and Cabeza (2018) argued cultural revitalization through storytelling is a highly valuable

scaffolding praxis towards sustainability and conservation for practitioners: in this case, for SFD. Specifically, the authors identified five key themes from focusing on storytelling, as articulated through policy, that can be beneficial to SFD. First, storytelling connects development into Indigenous worldviews. Second, storytelling can encourage meaningful connections between people and their landscapes. Third, a SFD policy focused on Indigenous language and storytelling could assuage the transfer of intergenerational Indigenous knowledge. This is immensely important considering many Indigenous languages are in danger. In the United States, there are around 575 federally recognized tribes, most of whom languages are near extinction. The Esther Martinez Native American Languages Preservation Act (2006) has attempted to counteract that by providing financial resources to help preserve languages. However, it is a highly competitive grant process with few actually receiving funding (Nagle, 2019). For example, 29 percent of all applications received funding in 2018 (i.e., more than two-thirds projects towards language revitalization were left without funding (Nagle, 2019). SFD can fill in the gap of inadequate funding or programming initiatives to counteract language extinction. Fourth, storytelling promotes local participation in dialogues with Indigenous communities. That is to say, go to the elders of local tribes and form a collaborative dialogue on Indigenous literacy. Last, storytelling is done through collaborative dialogue with which a connection to the last theme is established: localized epistemologies.

The importance of local epistemologies in SFD has been argued for elsewhere (e.g., Chepyator-Thomson et. al., 2021). According to Tom et. al. (2019), such epistemologies (i.e., worldviews, languages and cultural practices) are crucial for cultural sustainability, and, in the case of Indigenous populations, an important collective source for self-determination. For example, nalyeeh is a specific cultural practice to the Navajo which is communicated through a local language. However, this practice can go by different epistemologies based on bands, tribes, and local legends. For example, 'Legend of the Talking Feather: Kanati and Asgaya Gigagei Bestow the Gift of The Talking Feather' from Cherokee is from the practice called 'Donelawega' meaning "a coming together of people for a special purpose" (Wilbur et. al., 2001, p. 369). That is to say, as an outcome of this position, staff designing SFD programs should collaboratively co-create a program that is situated in localized knowledge.

Third, an emphasis on localized epistemologies would place SFD staff members into communication and collaboration with Indigenous communities (i.e., dialogue) as a community-oriented praxis towards cultural sustainability. One must understand, in the planning and implementation of programs and policy, that nation-states throughout the world have historically had programs and policies which suppressed Indigenous language and culture. Language is instrumental in retaining the epistemologies, ontologies, and axiologies of local Indigenous culture and storytelling, especially in talking circles, and effective cultural practices for language and culture to be 'alive'. In this case, through SFD, program and policy should attempt to be structured around Indigenous language and practice.

Inclusion of Indigenous pedagogical approaches and epistemological content benefit both Indigenous communities and non-Indigenous communities considering such approaches can enhance interpersonal communication and collaboration within and across cultural differences (McInnes, 2017). None of the aforementioned strategies based on Indigenous knowledge and practices are at odds with Levermore's (2008) typology of SFD programs. In fact, the typology intersects with Arellano and Downey's (2019) issues of minimal localizable Indigenous knowledge and Fernández-Llamazares and Cabeza's (2018) cultural revitalization through storytelling. Most of the strategies address conflict resolution and inter-cultural understanding as well as social and community infrastructure (i.e., cultural sustainability). Specifically, the strategies emphasize connecting people with their landscapes, promoting cultural consciousness of Indigenous knowledge and worldviews, targeting the improvement of physical and psychological health, and enhancing the general welfare of the community through sport.

CONCLUSION

This commentary offered our perspective on SFD programs structured by pro-social behaviors (e.g., education, financial literacy, physical activity) and enculturation into a neoliberal market capitalism and meritocracy without attention to the ontologies, epistemologies, and axiologies of the communities in which programs are implemented, specifically as it relates to Indigenous communities. These practices have produced a phenomenon known as displacement of scope which regards communities as resource 'deficient' while muting local Indigenous knowledges. In doing so, SFD programs have tended to work against rather than with Indigenous communities and local knowledge.

While not working exclusively with Indigenous populations nor a traditional SFD program, The Restorative Practices initiative by Austin F.C. highlight potential strategies to incorporate Indigenous epistemologies and axiologies

regarding conflict resolution and inter-personal and cultural understanding into SFD program design SFD programs can begin to work collaboratively with local Indigenous communities towards cultural revitalization. This includes, but is not limited to, a focus on material and non-material Indigenous culture, storytelling, and language as a form of community-oriented praxis rooted in localized epistemologies and axiologies.

'Maybe I'm not working with a Navajo population, but these are the pieces I'm bringing from my own family and my own culture," Johnson told the *Navajo Times*, "I keep who I am at the forefront of what I do and how I do it" (Yurth, 2020, p. 1). We finish the commentary with this specific quote from Johnson for a reason. Similar to Johnson, we, at the time of this special issue, are not actively working with Indigenous communities, but write in accordance with our cultural and ethnic backgrounds and ways of being that ground our existence while trying to address challenges derived from neoliberal ideology in sport, development, and society. We continue to keep that aspect of our identity at the fore of other aspects of our life: family, friendships, teaching and research. As Indigenous voices are increasingly seen as important, attempts need to be made that create dialogues with Indigenous populations rather than against, while being aware that many may perceive SFD through a critical monocle. This is especially relevant for those who have participated in development programs that are conflicting with the Indigenous component of themselves and begin to advocate for more indigenized forms of programs and policies that may be antithetical to the predominate neoliberal paradigm in SFD.

Conflicts of Interest

We do not have any actual or potential conflicts of interest of note.

Funding

There was no external funding used to support this paper.

Acknowledgements.

I would like to acknowledge my advisor for supporting this commentary and guiding my spirit through the doctoral program as well as the editors, special issue organizers and peer-reviewers for their instructive feedback and help publishing this commentary.

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Original Research

Waka, Whanaungatanga and Water Safety: Using Indigenous Knowledge to Educate Future Aquatic Educators about Māori Water Safety in Aotearoa, New Zealand

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ABSTRACT

Waka (ancestral canoes) and water are central to Māori, the Indigenous people of Aotearoa, New Zealand, yet Māori have disproportionately high rates of drowning. New research has begun to examine Māori and Indigenous understandings of water safety; however, Indigenous approaches to water safety continue to be an underdeveloped area, particularly in a sport for development (SFD) context. In this study, we demonstrate how waka as an "Indigenous-plus" approach to SFD can provide important insights for a field in which Indigenous views are often absent or marginalized. Underpinned by a kaupapa Māori approach (generally, but not exclusively, research by Māori, for Māori, with Māori), we surveyed 74 future aquatic educators of primarily Pākehā descent (New Zealand European) who participated in a Māori water safety wānanga (cultural space of learning) led by Hauteruruku ki Puketeraki Waka Club, an Indigenous canoe club based in New Zealand's South Island. Through our thematic analysis, we found that the participants identified the role of waka as fundamental to learning Indigenous Māori water safety in an Aotearoa, New Zealand context. In this paper, we argue that waka provides a vehicle for educating our future aquatic educators about Māori water safety, which will support more meaningful drowning prevention for all New Zealanders.

Ko au te waka
Ko te waka ko au
I am the canoe
The canoe is me

(A Māori proverb, cited in Mita, 2014, p. 4).

Māori have a deep and inherent connection to waka (ancestral canoes) and water. They are considered taonga (treasure, prized possession) with physical and spiritual properties attached to them. For Māori, this connection derives from whakapapa (genealogy), the genealogical links that trace Māori back to the creation of the natural world and to the ancestral canoes that brought the ancestors to the shores of Aotearoa, New Zealand (Phillips, 2020). As the late waka builder and traditional navigator Hector Busby stated, "[Māori] trace our genealogies back to the names of our ancestral canoes" (Evans, 2015, p. 91). The recital of genealogies "was an established technique in social life and served as a chronology of historical events associated with the sequence of ancestors" (Buck, 1938, p. 23). Stories of waka migration to Aotearoa, New Zealand depict the early social structures of Māori, which saw the creation of iwi (tribe) and hapū (sub-tribe) as Māori populated the land. Waka are therefore fundamental to Māori identity and, as such, critical for conceptions of health (Mita, 2014, 2016). Mita (2014) claimed, "Through reintroduction of the whakapapa that surrounds the waka we use, and the water we embark on … I believe that communities will benefit hugely, not only physically but through a revitalisation of mental, emotional, spiritual and environmental health" (p. 10).

Keywords: Māori water safety, Indigenous drowning prevention, traditional canoes, Indigenous sport for development

In a contemporary context, waka was revived in Aotearoa, New Zealand, in 1985 when waka ama (outrigger canoe) was introduced as a sport by waka exponent Matahi Brightwell (Mita, 2014). Brightwell saw the opportunity of waka ama as a sport to "develop not only seamanship but physical fitness for whānau [families] of all ages and ethnicities" (Mita, 2014, p. 7). Brightwell added,

> *Māori people haven't had the opportunity for nearly seven generations to enjoy the world of Tangaroa [Māori deity of the sea]. Wind, sea, canoe, air – it's massaging the whole being of a person. It's giving the person a completely new feeling of what nature is all about on the sea and that's Tangaroa.*
> *(as cited in Nelson, 1998, p. 60)*

Despite this inherent connection to waka and the water, Māori have disproportionately high rates of drowning, accounting for 20-25% of all preventable recreational (i.e., intending to be in the water) and non-recreational (i.e., not intending to be in the water) drowning fatalities (Phillips, 2020; WSNZ, 2021). Sadly, in 2021 Māori drowning fatalities rose to a record 31% of drowning fatalities despite comprising only 16.5% of Aotearoa, New Zealand's population (WSNZ, 2021). In the same year, boating deaths accounted for 24% of all fatalities, an 80% increase from the previous year (WSNZ, 2021). The increase in boating deaths and Māori overrepresentation highlight that "water safety in New Zealand has become disconnected from Māori views to water and … its important link to notions of health and wellness derived from the relationship Māori have to water" (Phillips, 2020, p. 1). In this paper, we present a specific case study with Hauteruruku ki Puketeraki Waka Club members (referred to herein as Hauteruruku) who taught water safety from their unique worldview to 74 future aquatic educators of primarily Pākehā descent (New Zealand European). Underpinned by a kaupapa Māori approach (generally, but not exclusively, research by Māori, for Māori, with Māori), we argue that waka as an Indigenous-plus approach to sport for development (SFD) provides a vehicle for teaching key aspects of Māori water safety that can provide more meaningful drowning prevention for all New Zealanders whilst also contributing important Indigenous scholarship to the SFD field.

Indigenous Scholarship in the SFD field

Social development through sport has a long history with the principal focus on "sport as a vehicle for broad, sustainable social development, especially in the most disadvantaged communities in the world" (Kidd, 2008, p. 370). The shift toward sport for development and peace (SDP) and sport for social change reflects the contributions made from disciplines such as sport management, international development, and sociology feeding into these discussions overtime (Hapeta et al., 2019; Kidd, 2008). Despite the growth in the SFD field, Indigenous worldviews and perspectives continue to be underrepresented and underdeveloped (Hapeta et al., 2019).

Within the body of SFD literature, Coalter (2013) identified three approaches that can be applied: "sport-only," "plus-sport," and "sport-plus". Sport-only, as its name suggests, focuses solely on the sporting opportunities, while plus-sport concentrates on developing individuals or communities first by enticing them through sport. Sport-plus augments sporting pursuits with other development opportunities, a secondary focus outside of the specific sport outcomes (Hapeta et al., 2019). Despite these three approaches, Coalter and Taylor (2010) accepted that, "within this context it has proven difficult to maintain a meaningful analytical distinction between plus sport and sport plus organisations" (p. 99). From an Indigenous lens, this distinction is especially problematic as how our Indigenous communities define the very nature of "sport" in their context and even the definition of themselves as a sport organisation delivering "development" is not always reflected in their own realities. For example, Hapeta et al. (2019) explained that from an Indigenous lens, "the practice of sport represents one of the most embodied expressions of theory that is relational and reflective of philosophical paradigms that are contested in communities and societies where they exist" (p. 481).

By nature, SFD is inherently deficit-based and marginalized people, such as Indigenous peoples, often bear the brunt of this deficit lens (Hapeta et al., 2019). As Spaaij et al. (2018) warned, "it is imperative the SFD researchers develop a heightened awareness of what types of knowledge are dominating in SFD and what types of perspectives and understandings are being privileged, as well as better understand their limitation, bias, and partialities" (p. 34). The implicit belief behind SFD initiatives, "assumes that deprived communities inevitably produce deficient people who can be perceived, via a deficit model, as to be in the need of 'development' through sport" (Coalter, 2013, p. 3). Indigenous SFD scholars have called for approaches and initiatives that embrace indigeneity and create meaningful transformation, considering instead an "Indigenous-plus" approach "to indigenize the theories that are used in this field of study" (Hapeta et al., 2019, p. 490).

While an Indigenous-plus approach is not explicitly defined or described in the literature, Hapeta et al. (2019) provided a strong starting point. They described a "ground-up" positioning from a distinctive kaupapa Māori perspective, "acknowledging tūrangawaewae (place of standing; place of belonging), which is terrestrially founded upon the whenua (land base, foundation) and celestially in whakapapa (genealogy)" (p. 483). These Indigenous principles of land and genealogy are the basis of a Māori worldview and underpin a kaupapa Māori ethos. Specifically in a research context, kaupapa Māori is described as a distinctive approach that stems from a Māori worldview (Moewaka-Barnes, 2000) and is reflective of underlying principles or aspects based on this worldview (Smith, 2003).

An Indigenous-plus approach in a New Zealand context is therefore grounded in a kaupapa Māori perspective that considers foremost an Indigenous worldview and the kaupapa or shared purpose of importance to Indigenous peoples. This is appropriate as Indigenous peoples can define, for themselves, who they are, and what is of importance to them. According to the *Dictionary of the Māori Language* (Williams, 1992), the word kaupapa can be broken down to "ka ū" meaning "be firm, be fixed, reach the land, arrive by water, reach its limit" (p. 464) and "papa" meaning "ground or foundation" (Marsden, 2003a, p. 66). Kaupapa, therefore, means to holdfast (be firm, be fixed) to your roots, to that which grounds you (papa). In this sense, kaupapa is about a higher purpose, one that grounds you in your own values and is intimately tied to the land, Pāpā-tū-ā-nuku (Earth Mother). Only when this thinking is considered as the central focus, does the "plus" aspect then come in. Waka is an example of an Indigenous kaupapa, a collective vision that can provide positive outcomes for Indigenous communities and indeed all peoples who are connected to waka voyaging and shared migration journeys.

Waka as an Indigenous-plus Approach

Waka are the literal and metaphysical vehicles used by the ancestors to voyage to Aotearoa, New Zealand, appearing throughout Māori cosmology and recorded in numerous traditional lore including Māori songs, incantations, proverbs, and idioms (Matamua, 2017; Mita, 2014, 2016). For example, Māori traversed the great expanse of Te Moana Nui a Kiwa (Pacific Ocean) on double hulled waka, a feat that is "arguably the most remarkable voyage in the history of humanity" (Whaanga & Matamua, 2016, p. 60). On a deeper and spiritual level, "it was their knowledge of the night sky that guided the Polynesians across thousands of kilometres of open ocean to settle in Aotearoa New Zealand" (Whaanga & Matamua, 2016, p. 60). It is within these star constellations that waka are immortalised in the night sky (Harris et al., 2013).

The constellation known to Māori as Matariki (Pleiades) is said to be the prow of a great canoe in the sky (Matamua, 2017). This canoe is known as "te waka o Rangi," meaning the canoe of Rangi, and its captain, Taimaranuku, was said to own a large net. According to Māori lore, this net is cast across the earth and hauls to the sky all those who have died, the spirits of loved ones suspended at the stern of the canoe so that "they hang like the kura, the plumes of decorative feathers that adorn Māori canoes" (Matamua, 2017, p. 63). When it is time, "Taimaranuku gathers the spirits of the year from the stern of the canoe and casts them into the heavens to become stars" (Matamua, 2017, p. 64). This is reflected in a common Māori saying when mourning the deceased, "kua whetūrangihia koe," meaning "you have become a star" (Matamua, 2017, p. 65). This intimate connection to waka elucidates the many roles it plays in our lives: a symbol of great strength and fortitude, a marker of cultural identity and belonging, or a time of sorrow and remembrance for those who have passed.

Returning to the starting point for an Indigenous-plus approach from Hapeta et al. (2019), waka provides Māori with tūrangawaewae, a cultural place of belonging that is terrestrially founded upon the land of Aotearoa, New Zealand, that the ancestors voyaged to and celestially in the whakapapa of waka evident in our night sky from which the ancestors used to navigate with. Waka is a kaupapa that is central to many Māori communities, including Hauteruruku ki Pūketeraki Waka Club.

Hauteruruku ki Puketeraki Waka Club: A Waka Kaupapa

Hauteruruku is a Māori canoe club of Kāti Huirapa ki Puketeraki, a sub-tribe of Ngāi Tahu, the principal tribe of New Zealand's South Island. The vision of Hauteruruku is to connect and reconnect all of its members and wider community with the local awa (river) and moana (ocean) through the heritage of ngā waka (canoes) and Te Ao Takaroa (The world of Takaroa, deity of the ocean) (Flack et al., 2015; Mita, 2016). Waka are a taonga to Hauteruruku who are steeped in their own tribal waka traditions and stories of Ngāi Tahu (Evans, 2015; Flack et al., 2015; Mita, 2016). The importance of waka to Hauteruruku stem from their tribal Ngāi Tahu traditions and stories that explain how waka are imbued within the landscapes of the South Island (Evans, 2015; Flack et al., 2015; Mita, 2016). The Ngāi Tahu story of Aoraki sheds light on the club's spiritual connection to the lands and waters of the South Island that

similarly shapes their waka and water safety practices and beliefs today.

According to the southern tribe, another name for the South Island is Te Waka o Aoraki (The Canoe of Aoraki), which follows the story of Aoraki descending the heavens in a waka to seek out their stepmother Papa-tū-ā-nuku. Flack et al. (2015) provided a shortened account:

One version of the story explains that the brothers explored the land and seas to find empty southern oceans. In their effort to launch their waka and return to the heavens, Aoraki was unable to properly perform the appropriate karakia. This brought misfortune and disaster for the waka causing the waka to fall and smash into pieces. The remnants of this waka now make up many prominent landscapes throughout Te Waipounamu or Te Waka o Aoraki: Te Tau Ihu o Te Waka [the prow of the canoe] or the Marlborough sounds; the hull of the waka making up the rest of the South Island; and Aoraki and his brothers petrified on the hull of their overturned canoe imbedded as the lofty mountains of the Southern Alps. (p. 26)

This brief account shares how Aoraki and his brothers turned to stone on top of their overturned canoe and became the Southern Alps in the South Island, with Aoraki forming the highest mountain peak amongst them (Flack et al., 2015). This story reveals the inherent connection Hauteruruku have with waka, a vehicle that connects them to their ancestral landscapes and the stories embedded within them. It is from this worldview that Hauteruruku encourage a holistic and meaningful connection to water, also described as Māori water safety (Phillips, 2020). The story of Aoraki teaches us to respect the mana (prestige) and mauri (life force) of these special places to Ngāi Tahu and provides important water safety messages in their Southern waters. For example, if we do not adhere to the correct tikanga (cultural practices, customs) and rituals of respect, the story is a reminder that even the mightiest of chiefs can fall. The story of Aoraki demonstrates that waka is an empowering vehicle for teaching Māori water safety, emphasizing the inextricable link between Hauteruruku, waka, and their ancestral landscapes. Derived from the root word "tika" meaning to be "correct", "right", "true", tikanga in a water safety context refers to the practices and protocols that keep you safe in, on and around the water, like reciting karakia to show respect (Phillips, 2020). In a research context, tikanga refers to the correct way of conducting and designing your research (Smith, 2003). The following methods section describes the tikanga of our study, the research design and methods we adhered to that align with a kaupapa Māori approach.

METHODS

This research was underpinned by a kaupapa Māori approach. Marsden (2003b) described kaupapa as deriving from two Māori words, "kau" meaning "to appear for the first time, to come into view" and "papa" referring to "ground or foundation" (p. 66). Hence kaupapa means "ground rules, first principles, general principles" (Marsden, 2003b, p. 66). Methodologically, kaupapa Māori frames the study in the broader aims of our own values as Māori and, moreover, is used to reflect the importance of the natural environment, of which, water is a central part. Further to this, kaupapa Māori is about putting into practice the shared aims and goals of the communities we work alongside of, such as the goals and aspirations of Hauteruruku waka club. Pihama (2015) supported this, explaining that kaupapa Māori is,

a theoretical framework that ensures a cultural integrity is maintained when analysing Māori issues. It provides both tools of analysis and ways of understanding the cultural, political and historical context of Aotearoa. ... there must be a theoretical foundation that has been built from Papatūānuku [Earth Mother], not from the building blocks of imported theories. Kaupapa Māori theory provides such a foundation. (p. 11)

Stemming from a kaupapa Māori foundation, the qualitative methods employed in this research that align to a kaupapa Māori approach include wānanga (cultural place of learning) and surveys.

Research Participants

We surveyed 74 second-year Physical Education students from the University of Otago in Dunedin who participated in a water safety wānanga led by Hauteruruku. Hauteruruku adopted an "educate the educators" approach to water safety and focused on the need to educate New Zealand's future aquatic leaders in Māori water safety and Māori views around the water. Students' ages ranged from 19 – 23 years. Over 81% (n=60) were of European descent and less than 15% (n=11) were Māori. Pacific Island (n=2) and Other (n=1) were also self-identified ethnicities.

Water Safety Wānanga

Wānanga is a Māori cultural method of knowledge sharing and means "to discuss, debate, impart knowledge" (Marsden, 2003a, p. 58). Barlow (1991) described wānanga as esoteric learning that is credited to Tāne (Māori deity of the forest) who ascended the heavens and retrieved the three baskets of knowledge.

Marsden (2003a) explained, "The legend of Tāne's ascent into the heavens provide the sanctions, protocols and guidelines upon which the Wānanga was to be conducted and determined the subject content to be taught" (pp. 57-58). While wānanga in a traditional sense is considered an institution of higher learning steeped in esoteric knowledge, wānanga today can be described as a dedicated space of learning and sharing, as well as the process of knowledge and wisdom. Hakopa (2011) described wānanga as, "special learning sessions set aside for a specific kaupapa or theme, over a number of years where participants would be acculturated with a unique style of learning; a Māori style of learning based on the spoken word without script" (p. 298). It is in this expression that wānanga is the method described here – a dedicated learning space set aside for the specific kaupapa of waka and water safety.

The water safety wānanga took place at the Otago Harbour in Dunedin. Hauteruruku shared the local tribal history of the area and the cultural stories associated with the ocean. The students were told the Ngāi Tahu creation story and learned why water is important to Hauteruruku and their iwi. Stories about the importance of waka for Hauteruruku were also shared. Key water safety practices were adhered to, such as correct fitting of life jackets and wearing appropriate clothing for water activities. A PowerPoint presentation inside the rowing club was also presented by guest speaker Mr. Rob Hewitt, who has close connections with members of Hauteruruku. His presentation focused on the philosophy of Kia Maanu Kia Ora, a Māori water safety message that means to stay afloat to stay alive. Key principles of Māori water safety such as karakia (incantation, prayer) as spiritual life jackets and respecting the water were shared throughout the presentation.

Following the discussion, Hauteruruku then took the students down to the water's edge where members taught students a karakia for Tangaroa (Māori deity of the ocean), a cultural practice of acknowledging and paying respect to the water. Hauteruruku then divided students across multiple waka vessels including waka unua (small double hulled sailing canoe), waka ama (outrigger canoe), and stand-up paddle boards. Students spent 1-2 hours on the water in these various vessels. The wānanga ended with an in-water survival session in which students were taught, from a cultural perspective, the key survival strokes (i.e., side stroke, survival breaststroke) and survival positions (i.e., huddle and Heat Escape Lessening Position – also known as H.E.L.P.) to adopt in emergency situations (Smith, 1982). The in-water survival was an important part of teaching the students about the sudden cold shock response they would experience should they accidentally fall into the water and how to use culturally relevant tools (such as reciting karakia to reduce panic) and messaging (kia tau tō wairua – balance your spirit with the spirit of Tangaroa) to reduce the onset of panic, which decreases the risk of physiological responses to the cold shock response, which has led to numerous drowning fatalities (Barwood et al., 2006; Barwood et al., 2007; Croft et al., 2013; Tipton, 2003).

Survey

Surveys are a form of empirical study based upon questionnaires and are often used in qualitative research (Tomlinson, 2010). The purpose of the survey was to gauge the students' experience of Māori water safety after taking part in the water safety wānanga led by Hauteruruku waka club. The open-ended questions asked in the survey included the following:

1. Do you have a connection to the water (or a particular river/beach)? Please explain/share.
2. How is having a connection to water important/relevant to water safety?
3. What do you know (if anything) about Māori connection to water?
4. What is your understanding of whanaungatanga?
5. How is whanaungatanga important for water safety?
6. What is your understanding of the kaupapa (purpose, goal) of Hauteruruku ki Puketeraki Waka Club?
7. What have you learnt about Māori water safety at the wānanga?

These open-ended questions were formulated alongside members of Hauteruruku, which aligns with kaupapa Māori. Members of Hauteruruku expressed the importance of the Māori concept of whanaungatanga in their water safety knowledge and practice, hence the questions focused explicitly on this key idea. The surveys were provided in a printed format and filled out onsite by the students at the conclusion of their participation in the wānanga. Their written responses were then entered into a digital spreadsheet for inductive coding and thematic analysis (Blackstone, 2012; Saldaña, 2009).

Data Analysis

We employed an inductive thematic analysis of the data (Blackstone, 2012; Saldaña, 2009). The survey responses were coded into key themes and relevant participant quotes were appropriately grouped under these themes. The results of this study are presented under five key themes, each depicted by a word cloud image and supported by a selection of participant quotes. We have bolded key phrases within the participant quotes to add emphasis of the significant ideas.

Inductive Thematic Analysis

Inductive thematic analysis is the process of seeing patterns in the data and drawing out emergent and new themes from these that allows the researcher to draw links between the key themes and the research questions (Mita, 2016). Mita (2016) argued that thematic analysis "is a valuable tool used alongside Kaupapa Māori theory as it allows for the acknowledgment of inherently Māori kaupapa or themes throughout the data" (p. 45). We analyzed the survey responses from our kaupapa Māori lens, meaning we read and unpacked the data from a Māori worldview and placed Māori knowledge at the center of our analysis. This resulted in the emergence of five Māori themes around whanaungatanga as water safety.

Word Cloud Images

Word cloud is an image composed of multiple words from text in which the size of each word indicates its frequency or importance. The purpose of producing word cloud images is to "present a visual overview of a collection of text ... a vernacular visualization" (Veigas & Wattenberg, 2008, p. 49). We produced the word cloud images using a generic online word cloud generator. We entered the survey responses into the online generator, producing a word cloud image of the most frequented words and reflects a content analysis approach. We selected a sailing canoe as the main "shape" of our word cloud image to better represent the experiences of the participants in a visual form. Word cloud images are consistent with kaupapa Māori for two reasons. The first is that it provided a way for all students' voices to be visually represented in the research as not all participants had their quotes showcased. This is important because of the cultural concept of manaaki (care, respect), which is about uplifting the mana (power, authority) of your research community. Secondly, the use of images to depict participants' voices resonated with the importance of symbolism in a Māori worldview. Marsden (2003a) explained,

The world of symbol is a deliberate creation of the human mind. Man creates symbols to depict, represent and illustrate some other perceived reality. Words, formulae, forms, ritualistic ceremonies, legend and myth are created by the human mind as maps, models, prototypes and paradigms by which the mind can grasp, understand and reconcile the worlds of sense perception and the real world behind that. (p. 62)

Word cloud images in the shape of a waka helped us to make sense of the data in a way that resonated with our Māori worldview and reflected the core kaupapa or purpose of the study.

RESULTS

The results of this study recognized waka and whanaungatanga (a Māori concept of relationship building) as critical for teaching and learning Māori water safety. Students identified that waka ultimately facilitated a whanaungatanga connection to water and that whanaungatanga was relevant to Māori water safety in five key ways: (a) whanaungatanga strengthens connection to the environment, (b) whanaungatanga builds connection to people, (c) whanaungatanga encourages a knowing and understanding of the water, (d) whanaungatanga elicits a sense of respect, and (e) whanaungatanga promotes water confidence. These findings are presented first by word cloud images that depict the most frequently mentioned words in the survey responses, accompanied by a selection of student quotes.

Waka Facilitates a Whanaungatanga Connection to Water

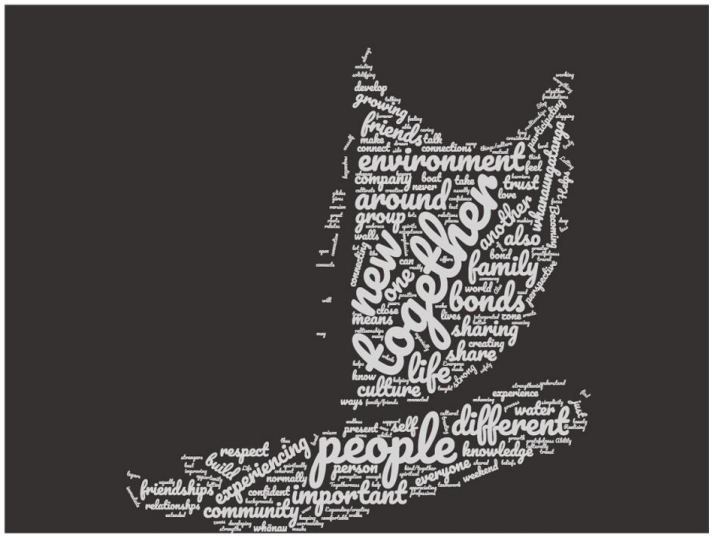

Figure 1

In response to the survey question asking about students' understandings of Hauteruruku and what they believed was the core kaupapa of the club, the primary concepts of waka, whanaungatanga, and Māori beliefs about water emerged. One student explained that Hauteruruku "give people **a visual representation of whanaungatanga with the waka**.

[They] teach history about how they used to sail. Get some people out of their comfort zone" (Male, 19).

Another student shared her belief that the purpose of Hauteruruku is "to help bring people together through their sport and help **teach the Māori culture and beliefs through being out on the waka**" (Female, 20).Another claimed their kaupapa is "to get everyone to **work together as one, paddle together**, working (have to work together to achieve greatness)" (Female, 19).

These quotes highlight the interconnectedness of waka, whanaungatanga, and cultural beliefs around the water that shape Māori water safety from a Hauteruruku perspective. For example, one student's response that Hauteruruku gives "a visual representation of whanaungatanga with the waka" is a powerful illustration of the intimate relationship between whanaungatanga and waka. This is exemplified further by the quote that Hauteruruku encourages "everyone to work together as one, paddle together" and how it is their mission to "help bring people together … help teach the Māori culture and beliefs through being out on the waka." Waka in this sense facilitates whanaungatanga because it requires teamwork and kotahitanga (unity) to make the waka move smoothly through the water. Hauteruruku member Ngahuia Mita agreed, claiming,

whanaungatanga extends beyond our connections to one another and into those connections to the environment so it's really awesome because when the students get out and get on the waka and with Hauteruruku they're able to see that embodied. It becomes more than a concept, it's actually a process of engaging safely with the environment and so they're able to see that at the core of everything we do, it's whanaungatanga. (Hauteruruku member N. Mita, personal communication, September, 2017)

This quote from Ngahuia reveals that whanaungatanga is "more than a concept" and that it is "at the core of everything [Hauteruruku] do, it's whanaungatanga." This primary idea is how waka facilitates a whanaungatanga connection to water. For Hauteruruku, their connection is grounded on this concept of whanaungatanga. The remaining results from the survey data signal the five key ways whanaungatanga was interpreted by the students.

Whanaungatangaa Strengthens Connection to the Environment

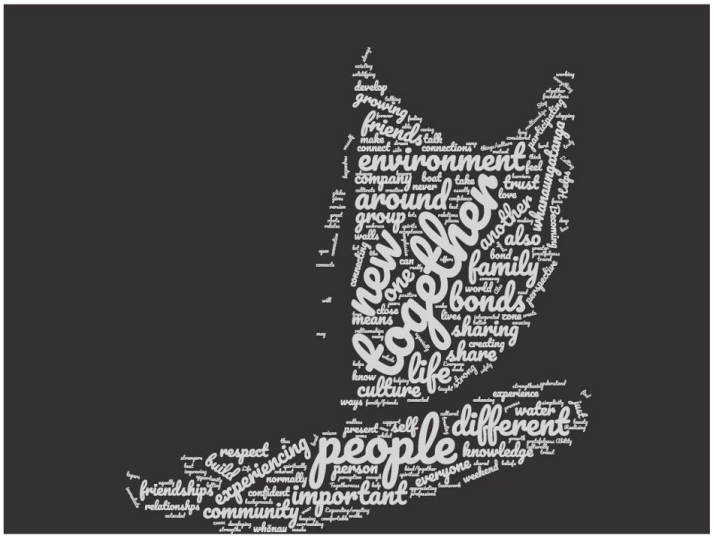

Figure 2

The first theme of whanaungatanga that emerged from the survey data was that whanaungatanga strengthens connection to the environment. This is evident in the sample below when students answered what their understanding of whanaungatanga was. One student claimed it is "**relationship** building between **people** and **environment**" (Male, 19). Similarly, another student wrote it is about "building **relationships** with **people**, **places** and **spirit**" (Male, 19). Whanaungatanga also strengthens connection to the environment because it's about "understanding that the **world is bigger than just you**. Building and maintaining a **healthy** and **respectful relationship with the water**" (Female, 20). In addition to the descriptions here, the survey data illustrated that having this relationship to the environment was significant for water safety. Students argued, "if your **relationship** is **strong,** you will be **safe**" (Male, 20), "having a **relationship** with the ocean or river or lake can **help** you know how to **prepare** yourself and **know what to do**" (Male, 20) and "you have to build a **relationship** and **understanding** between yourself and the water. You have to **understand its power**" (Female, 21). These quotes from students highlight the importance of connection to the environment and water, which is paramount to notions of Māori water safety.

Whanaungatanga Builds Connection to People

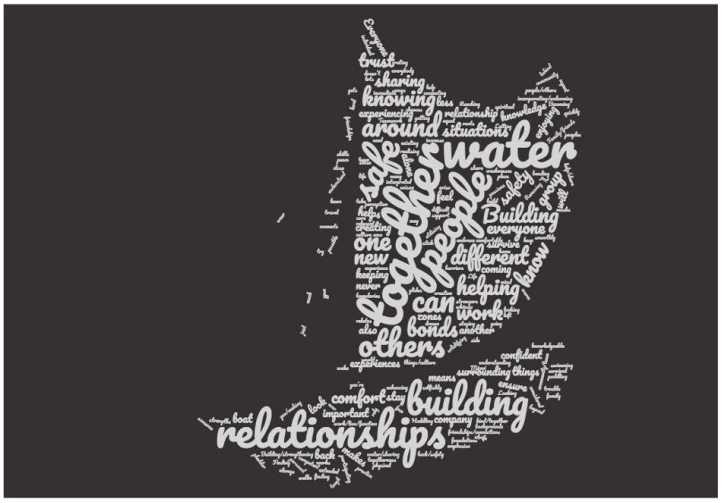

Figure 3

The importance of building connections to people was the second theme of whanaungatanga derived from the survey data. Like the importance of building a relationship to the environment, whanaungatanga created opportunities for constructing relationships between people who then engage in water activities together. Emerging from the survey data was the idea that building better relations between your peers had positive results when engaging with the water. For example, when asked how whanaungatanga was important for water safety, students responded that water safety is about "**creating bonds** with **people**" (Male, 22). Another student explained water safety is about "realising there is **more to the world than just yourself** and that **others** need to be considered" (Male, 19). In addition "**building relationships** and **connecting** with **others** to share how the water works and emphasize the safety surrounding it" (Female, 19) is how whanaungatanga was important for water safety understandings. These responses reflect the multiple iterations of people-to-people relationships which can be bonds amongst friends, immediate and extended whānau/family, team, and others. Some students identified the practical side of a whanaungatanga connection between people regarding power in numbers. They noted you need to "stick **together**, work as a **team** in the water as difficult situations can arise very quickly" (Male, 20). Another student argued that whanaungatanga "is about **utilising everybody** to **increase survival** chances" (Male, 19) and it is also about **"not swimming alone**" (Male, 26). These examples highlight the pragmatic aspect of working with others to increase your chances of survival. Others commented that whanaungatanga was about helping others and supporting the collective. Students described the impact of whanaungatanga for water safety as "**helping** those around you **to survive**, huddling keeps you warm" (Female, 19). Similarly, it "can take a **community/team** to ensure safety of the individual" (Female, 19). Whanaungatanga as helping others is an important water safety consideration as one student noted "in tough situations that people may face it is important to **work together** and **help each other** to ensure **everyone** is safe and **makes it home**" (Male, 19). These quotes shed light on the role of whanaungatanga for supporting the safety of the individual and the collective.

Whanaungatanga Encourages Knowing and Understanding of Water

Figure 4

The third theme focused on how whanaungatanga encouraged a knowing and understanding of the water. One survey question asked students how having a connection to water was relevant or important for water safety. They explained that being connected to water helped them to know and understand the water more. For example, one student stated "**knowing the tides** and also **water hazards** is important to water safety" (Male, 20). Similarly, another student added "I think **knowing more about different types of waterways** and the danger they can bring can really help with water safety" (Female, 20). This resonated with another student who wrote "**knowledge of your environment and surroundings** and **realising that having a connection to the water can improve your odds of safety** if you know how to manage yourself in the water" (Male, 19). Closely linked with knowing the water is the importance of understanding the water. Students explained, "if you can **understand and accept the water** and what it can do, you will have a better chance of surviving and staying safe" (Male, 20).

Another wrote that you need to "know that you will **never understand the true power, danger and beauty** it holds; which is important to your safety" (Female, 21). One student summed up this theme beautifully when she responded, "with a **connection** you are able to **understand the risks and limitations** of the beach that day and it can constantly change so it helps to know how far out to go before it's unsafe" (Female, 19). Knowing and understanding your water environments
keeps you safe based on appropriate decision making (knowing the water hazards or dangers) and a wisdom that keeps you safe based on intuition, emotional intelligence, and a sense of spirituality (understanding the water). In line with this, is the notion of respecting the power of nature, and thus respecting the power of the water.

Whanaungatanga Elicits a Sense of Respect for Water

Figure 5

The fourth theme identified was how whanaungatanga elicited a sense of respect and duty of care for the water. Like the preceding theme, whanaungatanga as respect emerged from the survey data when we asked students how having a connection to water was relevant or important for water safety. A number of students touched on the role of respect and reciprocity when describing their thoughts on connection to water and water safety. They wrote "you have to **respect** the **water** and it will **respect you**" (Male, 19), "having a **relationship** with the water **means respect** for it so when the conditions aren't good for swimming we won't swim" (Male, 19), and "**respecting the power** and **enormity** of the water and being able to have a **positive connection** to the water will help people be **safe** in the water" (Male, 19). The students' comments here reflect the notion that building a relationship or whanaungatanga with the water elicits a sense of respect for it.

Whanaungatanga Promotes Water Confidence

Figure 6

The final theme focuses on how whanaungatanga promotes water confidence. A number of students expressed confidence when asked how whanaungatanga was important for water safety. Students responded that whanaungatanga was important because it is about "being able to be **confident** in the water" (Male, 22), " [it] helps with being **comfortable** and being more **present**, therefore **safer**" (Male, 20), and "feeling **confident** in a place or **knowing it well**, **not being frightened** by the feeling of being in the water is important for situations that could turn bad, [so you] don't stress yourself out" (Female, 20). Whanaungatanga to some students was important for water safety because it enabled them to gain confidence in the water as they focussed more on being present, on knowing the area they entered, and on being more comfortable, all of which were helpful to their safety.

DISCUSSION

These results speak from the "ground up" in terms of reflecting the kaupapa of Hauteruruku and thus an Indigenous-plus approach to SFD. Three key findings emerge from our synthesis of the results presented above, concluding that waka is a vehicle for Māori water safety as: (a) waka facilitates a whanaungatanga connection to water; (b) waka fosters connections to people; and (c) waka encourages respect, understanding, and confidence in the water. The findings demonstrate the "plus" aspect, whereby the kaupapa of Hauteruruku and their worldview is central and from this stems the secondary outcome of Māori water safety teachings and learnings. Phillips (2020) stated, "Māori water safety is ultimately grounded in a Māori worldview and is centered on connection to water" (p. 1).

The synthesized findings align to Phillips' (2020) description.

Finding 1: Waka is a Vehicle for Māori Water Safety as it Facilitates a Whanaungatanga Connection to Water

A whanaungatanga connection to water is about understanding our relationship to water and treating this taonga as we would our family. Marsden (2003a) explained,

Māori thought of himself as holding a special relationship to Mother Earth and her resources … Man is an integral part therefore of the natural order and recipients of her bounty. He is her son and therefore, as every son has social obligations to fulfil towards his parents, siblings and other members of the whānau, so has man an obligation to Mother Earth and her whānau to promote their welfare and good. (p. 66)

Whanaungatanga is a fundamental principle that embraces whakapapa and places value on maintaining and preserving relationships and connections (Duncan & Rewi, 2018; Kidd, 2015). Derived from the root words "whānau" meaning "family" and "whanaunga" meaning "relative, blood relation", whanaungatanga encourages us to treat all relationships as if they were a member of our own family (Duncan & Rewi, 2018; Patterson, 1994). For Māori, the value of maintaining and preserving relationships and connections also extends beyond people. Whanaungatanga includes our connection and relationship with nature, as whakapapa dictates the genealogical ties Māori have with the natural world. This resonated with the responses shared earlier, including one that stated whanaungatanga is about "building relationships beyond person to person, also building a strong spiritual and cultural relationship."

A whanaungatanga connection to water encourages everyone to consider their relationship with and connection to the water – which is crucial for Māori water safety (Hauteruruku et al., 2016; Phillips, 2020). One student agreed, "if your relationship is strong, you will be safe." Despite most students not being of Māori descent, it was encouraged that "within all of us is a connection to Tangaroa. We are all descended from seafarers. Part of our role as kaitiaki (guardians) is to re-awaken that connection" (Hauteruruku et al., 2016, p. 26). As one student noted above, the kaupapa or vision of Hauteruruku is "to help bring people together through their sport and help teach the Māori culture and beliefs through being out on the waka." Waka is a vehicle for Māori water safety as it facilitates a whanaungatanga connection to water and also permits others to consider their own creation stories and migration journeys that illuminate their distinct connection to water.

Finding 2: Waka is a Vehicle for Māori Water Safety as it Fosters Connections to People

Waka is a vehicle for Māori water safety as it fosters connections to people, which helps to keep people safe. On a waka, whanaungatanga encourages a sense of cooperation and working together to move seamlessly *with* the water as well as with one another. As one of the students noted above, Hauteruruku taught them to "work together as one, paddle together, [we] have to work together to achieve greatness." This is supported further by a well-known Māori proverb,

Kaua e rangiruatia te hāpai o te hoe;
E kore tō tatou waka
E ū ki uta
Do not lift the paddle out of unison
Or our canoe
Will never reach the shore.

(A Māori proverb cited in Mead & Grove, 2001, p. 193).

Whanaungatanga is an essential mechanism for survival and water safety education as described through the collective responsibility. According to Thompson et al. (2017), "whanaungatanga embodies the values of sharing, unity and collective responsibility, and is built upon the foundations of support, caring, aroha [love], and tūrangawaewae [standing place/home]" (p. 35). Kidd (2015) endorsed this, explaining whanaungatanga "means connecting, [and] establishing your identity in relation to others, a process of finding common ground" (p. 135). She expressed its primacy, "like breathing; the need to connect with people and to understand where they come from" (p. 135). This act of bonding and connecting with others is reflected in the students' survey data. As one student noted above, whanaungatanga was about "building relationships and connecting with others to share how the water works and emphasize the safety surrounding it." From a Māori perspective, this idea of bonding and connecting with others while on the water is about being good kaitiaki (protectors, guardians) of the people around you. One student echoed, whanaungatanga is "helping those who are less competent in the water and sharing skills that you know to others." This statement is a clear example of being a good kaitiaki and using your knowledge and skills to help those less competent in the water.

Another student claimed that whanaungatanga was "helping those around you to survive, huddling keeps you warm." From this statement, being a good kaitiaki or guardian is about helping those around you to survive, but there is also an element of being kaitiaki of yourself, ensuring you are

also safe and protecting yourself. The student's comment that "huddling keeps you warm" is one example of helping others and yourself to ensure everyone gets home safely. During the in-water survival portion of the wānanga where students jumped off the waka into the water to simulate an accidental immersion, students were told to adopt the appropriate heat conserving positions whilst Hauteruruku members communicated cultural concepts to enhance the retention of these formations. For example, when teaching the huddle position, Hauteruruku encouraged the concept of whanaungatanga and the importance of looking after one another. While this position is foremost about conserving heat and energy (Smith, 1982), from a Māori perspective, it is more so about whanaungatanga and ensuring that everyone in your group is warm and alert. These examples validate how waka fostered the collective responsibility of whanaungatanga, which reinforced Māori water safety practice.

Finding 3: Waka is a Vehicle for Māori Water Safety as it Encourages Respect, Understanding, and Confidence in the Water

Waka is a vehicle for Māori water safety as it encourages respect, knowing and understanding, and confidence in the water. This relationship Māori have to water is why the idea of respect is vital. While the foundation of respect afforded comes from a spiritual connection between Māori and the environment, the students' responses demonstrated the practical implications respecting the water had for their physical safety in, on, and around the water. For example, the young woman who explained that through respecting the "sheer power and untamedness that the water presents, only then can you appreciate and take safety seriously." From a Māori perspective, respect is referred to as manaaki (to support, take care of), which is closely associated with whanaungatanga. Kawharu and Newman (2018) concurred, "because it is inclusive, the functioning of kinship is, therefore, concerned with manaaki (or manaakitanga) which in turn invokes responsibilities and duties to care for" (p. 54). Carter (2018) added, "manaakitanga also governs the moral obligations and responsibilities that go hand-in hand with respect and care" (p. 351). Water is to be given the utmost respect, as one student claimed, "you have to respect the water and it will respect you."

One way to respect the water is by deepening your understanding and knowledge of it. Knowing and understanding your water environments on a mental and spiritual level provides a manner of wisdom that influences your actions or behaviours within these spaces, a wisdom that keeps you safe based on appropriate decision making (knowledge of the head), and a wisdom that keeps you safe based on intuition, emotional intelligence, and a sense of spirituality (knowing of the heart) (Marsden, 2003a). As one student cautioned, "you will never understand the true power, danger and beauty it [water] holds; which is important to your safety." Wisdom in the context of water safety encompasses the notion of truly understanding your place within nature. Indigenous philosopher Māori Marsden claimed,

> *When illumination of the spirit arrives … then one truly knows, according to your ancestors. When the illumination of the spirit arrives in the mind of the person that is when understanding occurs – for knowledge belongs to the head and knowing belongs to the heart. When a person understands both in the mind and in the spirit, then it is said that that person truly "knows." (Marsden, 2003a, p. 79)*

Knowing and understanding water is critical for water safety. As another student commented, "knowledge of your environment and surroundings and realising that having a connection to the water can improve your odds of safety if you know how to manage yourself in the water." Further to this point, respect for the water and knowing/understanding it subsequently cultivates water confidence.

Water confidence is perceived as an important aspect of water safety because it correlates to having a stronger connection to the water. According to Jackson, "if we can get to a place where whānau are confident, with a strengthened relationship to the water, then we can see if we can solve this issue of drowning" (as cited in University of Otago, 2019, n.p). One student noted, "feeling confident in a place or knowing it well, not being frightened by the feeling of being in the water is important." The first half of this quote highlights that confidence means knowing the water well. As an added benefit, waka provides a safer way to engage on water to help build one's confidence and connection overtime. Particularly for young kids who may be scared to get in the water, engaging with waka provides another mode to nurture their connection.

CONCLUSION

In this paper, we argued that waka as an Indigenous-plus approach to SFD provides a vehicle for teaching key aspects of Māori water safety that can provide more meaningful drowning prevention for all New Zealanders

whilst contributing important Indigenous scholarship to the SFD field. From a Hauteruruku perspective, waka and whanaungatanga are vital to Māori water safety and to life.The multiple iterations of whanaungatanga provided a medium for students to learn about Māori views on the water and water safety. For Hauteruruku, waka is their kaupapa, a collective vision for bringing people together, and bringing people closer to Tangaroa and the water. Waka expresses their Indigenous-plus approach for Māori water safety and drowning prevention in Aotearoa, New Zealand. The findings of this paper demonstrated the "plus" aspect, whereby the kaupapa of Hauteruruku and their worldview comes first, and the outcome of Māori water safety teachings and learnings second. The premise of kaupapa, holding to the core and center of who you are, is embraced in the closing proverb,

E kore e ngaro he takere waka nui
The keel of a great canoe cannot be lost

(A Māori proverb cited in Pomare, 1987, p. 224)

Funding

This research was funded by the University of Otago and New Zealand Health Research Council.

Acknowledgements

And what is it to work with love? It is to weave the cloth with threads drawn from your heart, even as if your beloved were to wear that cloth. It is to build a house with affection, even as if your beloved were to dwell in that house. It is to sow seeds with tenderness and reap the harvest with joy, even as if your beloved were to eat the fruit. It is to charge all things your fashion with a breath of your own spirit, and to know that all the blessed dead are standing about you and watching (Khalil Gibran, 1926, p. 34).

To Brendan and Suzi Flack, Hinerangi Ferrall-Heath, Khyla Russell and the rest of the whānau of Hauteruruku ki Puketeraki waka club, thank you for showing us what it is to work with love. Our aroha and deepest thanks for all your support in this research and beyond. Ngā mihi matakuikui ki a koutou.

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Original Research

Te Papa Tākaro o te Tuakiri: The Field of Identity in Indigenous Māori Rugby

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Kōrero Whakarāpōpoto: Abstract

This paper describes findings from an Indigenous student's postgraduate research alongside an Indigenous rugby organisation, Otago Māori Rugby. The aim of this research was to explore how Otago Māori Rugby incorporated Māori values to enhance Māori identity and welRlbeing. This research utilised Kaupapa Māori Theory and methodology (Smith, 2015). Five semi-structured interviews were completed with members of Otago Māori rugby on topics related to Māori identity and wellbeing. Deductive and inductive analysis was used. The main findings are presented in "Te Papa Tākaro o te Tuakiri: The Field of Identity". The two primary deductive themes were the application of: taonga tuku iho (cultural aspirations principle) with the subthemes of whakapapa (genealogy), identity, Te Reo Māori (Māori language) and tikanga (custom); and whānau (extended family structure) with the subthemes of whanaungatanga (relationship building) and community involvement. The four primary inductive themes that emerged were: (a) whakaurunga (engagement); (b) tangata whenuatanga (people of the land); (c) influence of cultural values for mainstream; and (d) safe avenue for rangatahi (youth). The findings will contribute towards understanding the importance of Māori cultural values, identity, and wellbeing within Indigenous sport.

Keywords: Māori, cultural identity, wellbeing, rugby

Te Papa Tākaro o te Tuakiri: The Field of Identity in Indigenous Māori Rugby

Māui[1] was born premature; his mother threw him into the sea wrapped in a tress of hair from her topknot. The waves of Tangaroa (god of the ocean) supported Māui ensuring he survived. His grandfather Tama-nui-ki-te-Rangi then found him on the beach, covered by swarms of flies and gulls, it was at this moment Tama-nui-ki-te-Rangi decided to nourish Māui to adolescence. Tama-nui-ki-te-Rangi raised him, teaching Māui his whakapapa (genealogy) and tribal traditions, so he could stand strong and proud as an adult.

This pūrākau (cultural narrative) tells the narrative of one of the great Polynesian demigods Māui. Pūrākau are located within Māori worldview and contain whakapapa and mātauranga (Māori knowledge and practice) which provide anchors for cultural identity and wellbeing. This pūrākau is significant for the first author as it was an opportunity to see himself within his own cultural identity. The first author is a child of whāngai (Māori adoption practice), but his upbringing was largely disconnected to his taha Māori (Māori side). This pūrākau is one of the first expressions of tamaiti whāngai (adopted child). The pūrākau conceptualises the values within the process of whāngai and the importance of identity. During the upbringing, he sought out team sports as a coping mechanism to gain a sense of belonging and identity due to this cultural disconnection. From a personal perspective of whāngai and reconnection to Māori culture, team sports had created an avenue where cultural aspects could be taught. Two years ago, the lead author became a volunteer trainer, coach and Board member of Otago Māori Rugby for the rangatahi

(youth) men's team. Through this experience, he saw how Indigenous sports teams, such as Otago Māori Rugby, could be an opportunity to enhance Indigenous cultural identity and wellbeing. This then led into his graduate research which forms the basis of this paper.

Aotearoa (New Zealand) has a proud history of Indigenous Māori rugby (Mulholland, 2009). Part of that proud history is Otago Māori Rugby. Otago Māori Rugby is a regional Māori sport organisation based in the southern part of Te Waipounamu, Aotearoa (South Island of New Zealand). Otago Māori Rugby is affiliated to the Te Waipounamu Māori Rugby Board (South Island Māori Rugby Board), and to the New Zealand Māori Rugby Board. Otago Māori Rugby also has a close association with its mainstream counterpart Otago Rugby Football Union. Otago Māori Rugby is a small group of volunteers attempting to inspire whānau (family), hapū (subtribe) and iwi (tribe) through rugby. Māori players, coaches, managers, trainers, volunteers and whānau from the Otago region are encouraged to participate in Māori rugby, cultural activities and āhurei (rugby festivals and tournaments).

Otago Māori Rugby is a vehicle for the transmission of Indigenous knowledge and practice through a sport that is popular for Māori in Aotearoa. To provide context for this paper, we will describe Otago Māori Rugby in more detail. In 2022, there were 1256 registered Māori rugby players in the Otago region across all ages and grades, with approximately 70 coaches. The activities centre on recruiting, selecting, training and then playing at the Te Waipounamu Ahurei where teams from across Te Waipounamu come together in a tournament. All practices, games and Board meetings are led with tikanga or specific Otago Māori Rugby protocols which are embedded from the ancestral landscapes of Ngāi Tahu (the traditional landowners of Otago). These protocols include karakia (prayers), paki mahi (relationship building energisers for unification), pepeha (cultural introductions) and the normalisation of our Indigenous language Te Reo Māori for example. It is very normal to have intergenerational whānau (family) members present at all activities from young children through to our Indigenous elders. Kai (food) is an important part of our cultural practices, and we will often share in food after practices and certainly games whether hosting or visiting. The games are played with an intent of expression for ngā kare ā-roto (innermost emotions) that is unique to Indigenous peoples, and often very much captures the spirit of Māui (our eponymous ancestor). Māori rugby is a positive vehicle for rangatahi to be rangatahi and to engage in their culture and identity through a sport they love. Rangatahi make friendships for life and are inspired to be themselves. They are exposed to all different people from different walks of life who are there to support them to be the best that they can be. Although not the focus, nor the interest explicitly in this paper, many Indigenous Māori youth are positioned negatively in society and one of our foundational pillars of Otago Māori Rugby is rangatahi ora or flourishing youth wellness and we instead position rangatahi and indeed all Māori and Indigenous peoples as full of limitless potential.

The aim of this research was to explore how Otago Māori Rugby incorporated Māori values to enhance Māori identity and wellbeing. In this paper firstly we explore ngā āhuatanga Māori Māori values and identity focusing on mātauranga Māori, tikanga (protocols) and whakapapa. Secondly, we outline ngā hātepe, the methodology and methods. Namely, we utilised kaupapa Māori theory as the methodological approach. Semi-structured interviews were completed. The transcripts were analysed deductively through the application of kaupapa Māori theory and inductively through examining themes that emerged from the data. Thirdly, we present the data in ngā hua results. The results are then described in whakamārama o ngā hua where we outline the main themes from the analysis with supporting literature.

Ngā Āhuatanga Māori: Māori Values and Identity

Māori values, identity and wellbeing are located within Māori worldview. Māori worldview is the construct that holds the values and principles of how Māori interact within the world (Marsden, 2003). Marsden (2003) explains that we as Māori are derived from atua, the supreme beings, which establishes our connection to the world. Māori worldview inspires our mātauranga, tikanga, and whakapapa (Mead, 2016).

Mātauranga Māori is a knowledge tradition that had its genesis in ancient Polynesia (Sadler, 2007). Tikanga are the protocols in which Māori abide by to live in a respectful manner that preserves the mana (prestige, authority) of the atua and the people around them (Mead, 2016). Whakapapa are the genealogical links that tie us to the atua of this world, it is the layering of ancestor upon ancestor all the way down to your individual line of being (Hudson et al., 2007).

Māori identity includes any person who has Māori ancestry and chooses to identify as Māori. Identifying as Māori suggests having, living, recognising, and acknowledging a whole range of beliefs and practices that vary over time and within the appellation known collectively as Māori (Erueti & Palmer, 2014). Houkamau & Sibley (2010) explain Māori identity as embedded in history, traditions,

customs, language, songs, and ceremonies of an individual's culture. These factors are often positively influenced within Māori communities such as marae (sacred place) and create the foundation of one's Māori identity. However, in terms of self-identity, the relevance of so-called traditional values is not the same for all Māori, and not all share the same cultural experiences or understandings for language, beliefs, or place of residence (Erueti & Palmer, 2014). Therefore, it is crucial to support and strengthen Māori identity. Some of these concepts are further unpacked in the whakamārama o ngā hua sections where we have incorporated literature within the primary themes and subthemes of this research. In addition, it is important to understand that the needs of individual identity will vary.

Understanding the importance of building culturally safe communities allows others to explore cultures and enhance their individuality. Pitama et al. (2002) believe by utilising the environment concerning communities and whānau will equip youth with the knowledge to strengthen their cultural identity. According to Te Huia (2015) language and culturally safe environments are essential in developing confidence within Māori identity. Engaging in mātauranga will enhance cultural identity and give Māori the ability to self-affiliate based on what they have gained, which helps build a sense of belonging (Pitama, et al., 2002; Te Huia, 2015). These studies indicate how obtaining mātauranga Māori is significant towards identity and connection with culture. In the next section we discuss ngā hātepe methodology and methods that were used in this study.

Ngā Hātepe: Methods

Kaupapa Māori theory and methodology was used in this research (Smith, 2015). Kaupapa Māori theory and methodology refers to a body of knowledge integral to Māori epistemological and ontological constructions of the world (Hapeta, Palmer & Kuroda, 2019). Smith (1997) highlights six key principles of kaupapa Māori theory and methodology: (a) tino rangatiratanga (the self-determination principle); (b) taonga tuku iho (the cultural aspirations principle); (c) ako Māori (the culturally preferred pedagogy principle); (d) kia piki ake i nga raruraru o te kainga (the socio-economic mediation principle); (e) whānau (the extended family structure principle); and (f) kaupapa (the collective philosophy principle). In this paper, the principles of taonga tuku iho (the cultural aspirations principle) and whānau (the extended family structure principle) were used. Although all the principles are relevant, due to the size and scope of the postgraduate research study, these two principles were selected. Taonga tuku iho (the cultural aspirations principles) aligns closely to identity, and the importance of cultural identity. Whānau (the extended family structure principle) is the basic unit of Māori social structure partly from which stems cultural identity and a guiding focus for the lead author's own journey to cultural identity.

The primary method utilised was semi structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews are a method of interviewing where the conversation is not directed into a set structure, instead it is free flowing and allows room for adaptation (Hanara, 2020). The interview questions were related to Otago Māori Rugby, cultural principles, cultural identity, and wellbeing. Each interview lasted approximately one hour and opened with their understanding of Otago Māori Rugby and the ability to promote cultural principles and enhance wellbeing.

There were five participants. The participants were three Māori men and two Māori women aged between 20-50years. Participant One is a pakeke (adult) Māori female who is involved in Otago Māori as a volunteer and a mother of a rangatahi player. Participant Two is a pakeke Māori male who is part of Otago Māori Rugby as a father of one of the rangatahi. Participant Three is a pakeke Māori male who was a previous coach, Board member for Otago Māori Rugby. Participant Four is a pakeke Māori female, involved within Otago Māori Rugby as a senior professional player. Participant Five is a pakeke Māori male rugby player for a senior team.

Deductive and inductive analysis was used. The data was examined deductively through applying kaupapa Māori theory, namely taonga tuku iho (cultural aspirations principle) and whānau (extended family structure) (Pihama et al., 2002). Inductive analysis involves themes that emerge from the data and themes that are organically produced (Azungah, 2018). The interviews were transcribed verbatim, and these were read and re-read. The key words, concepts, phrases and quotes were grouped according to either deductive or inductively analysis. Some of the main findings of these analyses are presented in the next section. Due to constraints on word limits we have presented a selection of the findings of the study two tables.

Ngā Hua: Results

The main results of this study are presented in the figure and two tables below. We discuss these in further detail in the next section.

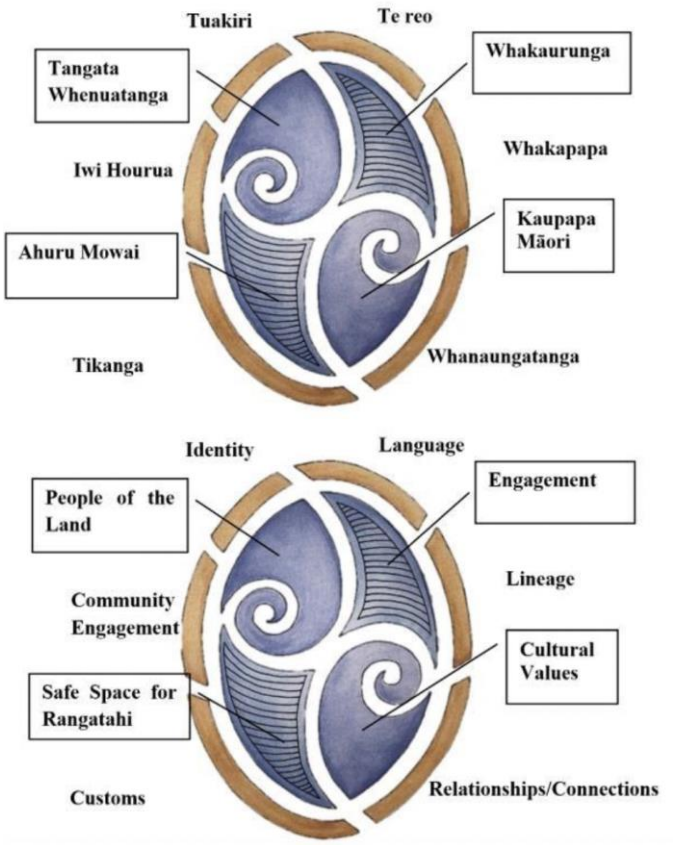

Figure 1

Main Findings of Research Te Papa Tākaro o te Tuakiri (top) and The Field of Identity (bottom).

Figure 1 uses the symbolism and shape of a rugby ball to depict a visual representation of the main results identified in the research. The top image reflects the key themes in the Māori language and the bottom image represents their English translations. The outer edges of the rugby ball reflect the deductive themes associated with the principles of taonga tuku iho (cultural aspirations principle) and whānau (extended family structure). These are: whakapapa, identity, Te Reo Māori, tikanga, whanaungatanga and community involvement.

Moving toward the centre, are four main segments which represent the four key emerging themes revealed through inductive analysis: whakaurunga, tangata whenuatanga, cultural values for mainstream sports and safe avenues for rangatahi. This model, Te Papa Tākaro o Tuakiri—The Field of Identity, provides a symbolic image of the main findings of the study as well as emphasises identity as being vital.

Table 1

Deductive Kaupapa Māori Principles Themes and Subthemes of Taonga Tuku Iho (Cultural Aspirations Principle) and Whānau (Extended Family Structure) with Accompanying Examples from Participant Interview Transcripts.

Deductive Kaupapa Māori Principles and subthemes	
Taonga tuku iho (cultural aspirations principle)	Excerpts from Interview Transcripts
Whakapapa	It's the village concept, I think the other strength is the pepeha, that's their first point of connection, be proud where you come from. If you come from royals, then you come from royals don't pretend you come from Stewart Island. I think it's awesome that our kids have an avenue where they can explore the fact, they are Māori and to learn their whakapapa, to be proud of who they are and I kind of see rugby being the bonus for the (Participant Two, 2021).
Identity	Part of our identity is connecting to our tupuna and how we connect to each other. Connecting with Te Whare Tapa Whā and even other health models like the integrative wellbeing model, identity is... a big thing. They're the building blocks of what makes us who we are (Participant Four, 2021).
Te Reo Māori	I already know the reo and the tikanga but obviously that is a very big part and learning about yourself and [that] helps reconnect with your culture. Not many people here speak fluent reo. So, for Otago Māori it's interesting to see that when you go to that space that they understand and can speak the reo. (Participant Five, 2021).
Tikanga	I think for me, it's that learning the tikanga within rugby, coming from primarily Western sports like rugby there wasn't really anything to do with Māori culture (Participant Four, 2021). You know until you get to an older age where they segregate you into like Māori. But I know they're definitely trying to recognise it and to utilise it and in the women's team we try to do our plays based off Māori words. Otago Māori Rugby space I guess you learn more about the cultural values and cultural way of life through tikanga (Participant Four, 2021).
Whānau (extended family structure)	
Whanaungatanga	Otago Māori Rugby have like a whanaungatanga session for three hours where no one touches the ball or anything it's just all about getting to know each other (Participant Five, 2021).
Community involvement	It's also whānau orientated too, you know you can go play club by yourself and you can play south rugby by yourself but only Otago Māori Rugby has allowed them to understand who they are connected to and their family, brothers and sisters, you know mums and dads, aunties and uncles everybody's in that waka together (Participant Two, 2021).

Table 1 presents a collation of the key excerpts from the participants as they pertain to the deductive themes, or the outer aspect of the Te Papa Tākaro o Tuakiri—The Field of Identity model.

Table 2

Inductive Themes with Accompanying Examples from Participant Interview Transcripts.

Inductive Themes	Excerpts from Interview Transcripts
Whakaurunga (engagement)	Yeah, well, the reason why I have participated is to see more of our young rangatahi come through, because it's where it is really. Now young ones need to be nurtured and grow in Otago Māori Rugby. Without them it won't go anywhere (Participant Three, 2021).
	[Daughter] decided that she wanted to play and her wanting to play was about that connection to te ao Māori and that's still her rationale for why she is much more involved in Otago Māori Rugby is because of te ao Māori versus just normal rugby. For her it is the connection with Māori people and people that are going through that same walk, trying to figure out who they are as young Māori people, she loves the tikanga, she loves the kaupapa and just that connection with the other girls (Participant One, 2021).
Tangata whenuatanga	You know how the games growing for females in rugby. That's pretty crucial that list is there for them. Because you know, sports used to be a real heavily male hegemonised space, but now it's coming into like where females can find their identity (Participant Four, 2021).
Cultural values for mainstream sports	I think having Otago Māori Rugby and kind of having that exposure to what they do will inspire other provinces to kind of follow suit make sure that they are doing everything correctly. Otago Māori Rugby will be you know, leading that and showing other regions that this is how you should be doing it (Participant Four, 2021).
Safe avenues for rangatahi	It's smoke free drug free and alcohol free that's the part she loves about our Māori space that we are promoting healthy decisions making healthy bodies and healthy minds. But schools, yeah she loves school rugby, but again school rugby it's clean, nobodies encouraging alcohol, nobodies encouraging drugs, just going for the connections and the atmosphere (Participant One, 2021).

Table 2 highlights key excerpts from the participants as they pertain to the inductive themes or the inner segments of the Te Papa Tākaro o Tuakiri—The Field of Identity model. The next section is whakamārama o ngā hua discussion. In accordance with kaupapa Māori theory and methodology and how the findings were presented in the overall study, additional literature is interwoven with the data from the interview participants.

Whakamārama o Ngā Hua: Discussion

In this section we present the deductive analysis which was the application of taonga tuku iho (cultural aspirations principle) and whānau (the extended family principle). Taonga tuku iho (cultural aspirations principle) had the subthemes of whakapapa, identity, Te Reo Māori and tikanga. Whānau (the extended family principle) had the subthemes of whanaungatanga and community involvement. We also explore the inductive analysis to highlight the emergent themes of whakaurunga, tangata whenuatanga, influences of cultural values for mainstream and safe avenue for rangatahi.

Deductive Analysis: Taonga tuku iho (cultural aspirations principle)

The first kaupapa Māori principle that was applied to the interview data was taonga tuku iho (cultural aspirations principle). This principle asserts that cultural aspirations such as whakapapa, identity, Te Reo Māori and tikanga for example, are critical in understanding kaupapa Māori (Pihama et al., 2002; Smith, 2003). There were four subthemes identified: whakapapa, identity, Te Reo Māori and tikanga.

Whakapapa

Whakapapa is a philosophical construct that explains how all things are derived from ancestors (Roberts, 2013). Te Rito (2007) express the importance of whakapapa to form a sense of identity. Moeke-Pickering (1996) claims Māori find whakapapa crucial for how they self-identify and give meaning to life. Whakapapa arises as a theme because it comprises of several beliefs, values and, whakapapa is vital for the development of cultural identity and wellbeing. Three out of five participants specifically signified the importance of whakapapa and the part it plays in Otago Māori Rugby.

For example, as highlighted in Table 1, Participant Two states "I think the other strength is the pepeha, that's their first point of connection, be proud of where you come from". This quote highlights the importance of pepeha in relation to whakapapa and identity as Māori. Pepeha is a specific Māori cultural idiom and marker of cultural identity. Often pēpeha will include important landmarks or cultural histories relating to whakapapa and ancestral connections. This supports Moeke-Pickering (1996) who states Māori find whakapapa important for self-identification. Participant Two further explains, "I think it's awesome that our kids have an avenue where they can explore the fact, they are Māori and to learn their whakapapa, to be proud of who they are and I kind of see rugby being the bonus for them". It is from this expression the participant was able to identify how Otago Māori Rugby and the community, support rangatahi in understanding their whakapapa. Whakapapa supports the formation of identity.

Identity

Cultural identity is essential for Māori health and wellbeing (Moeke-Pickering, 1996). Te Huia (2015) expresses how identity develops the ability to self-identify as Māori and becomes important towards individual development. Two out of five participants specifically refer to identity. For example, Participant Four stated that "Te Whare Tapa Whā[2] and even other health models like the integrative wellbeing model" are created by and for Māori. This framework has been constructed by academic research in relation to identity and wellbeing (Durie, 1982). Only recently has Participant Four reconnected with her culture and understands from a holistic lens the importance of identity as she uses her own personal experience to explain "they're [Māori health models] the building blocks of what makes us who we are".

Te Reo

Te Reo Māori is the Māori language. Barr & Seals (2018) state that Te Reo Māori is important to Māori as it represents a symbol of identity and status within New Zealand society. Furthermore, Leoni & Pōtiki (2019) clarify that the Māori language becomes an identity marker for all New Zealanders, whether consciously or not. As a cultural identity marker for all New Zealanders, they argue that there is much work to be undertaken in order to ensure that Te Reo Māori flourishes both within the home and educational settings, including academic settings. Three out of five participants acknowledged Te Reo Māori as an important aspect for Māori. Participant Five believes because he is familiar with Te Reo Māori that he was interested to observe how the coaches and board members of Otago Māori Rugby teach and apply this cultural value. When Participant Five states "not many people here speak fluent reo. So, for Otago Māori it's interesting to see that when you go to that space that they understand and can speak the reo", he demonstrates that he understands the significance of Te Reo Māori and sees that it is used effectively within an Otago Māori Rugby setting.

Although Te Reo Māori was mentioned and further discussed in the interviews, it was suggested that all participants through education, mainstream sports and general lifestyle activities struggled to describe their experience of Māori culture outside of Otago Māori Rugby. Given the New Zealand government has a statutory obligation to protect and develop Te Reo Māori under the Māori Language Act 1987, it has been made clear by observations and an inductive analysis that there are limited spaces where Te Reo Māori exists for Māori players. This also suggested that regardless of how direct the questions were in relation to their exposure of Te Reo Māori, the participants are limited to Te Reo Māori and tikanga outside of Otago Māori Rugby.

Tikanga

Tikanga is a framework or body of rules and values used to govern or shape people's behaviour, or a code of expected behaviour, and is analogous to all Māori values and culture. Harmsworth (2005) states tikanga often refers to the correct way of doing things, including custom, protocols, process, rules, etiquette, formality, codes, condition, ethic, morals, and method. Tikanga is mentioned by three out of five participants as a crucial component within Otago Māori rugby. Participant Four reflects on how Otago Māori rugby makes the conscious effort of implementing tikanga and cultural values.

The quote from Participant Four shows the disparity between the two environments of rugby and Māori rugby when it comes to cultural influence, cultural values, and beliefs. Participant Four first explains that "Western sports like rugby there wasn't really anything to do with Māori culture," whereas within a Māori rugby environment "learning the tikanga within rugby" became a part of the team experience. Participant Four then explains further stating that within the "Otago Māori Rugby space I guess you learn more about the cultural values and cultural way of life through tikanga." These specific sentences resonate with the idea of tikanga as an aspect to consider within Otago Māori Rugby. Because of its limited incorporation within Westernised teams, it's difficult to fully understand or grasp the importance tikanga has for Māori within rugby and Māori culture. Tikanga is a diverse concept which refers to beliefs associated with practices and procedures that are monitored when dealing with groups or individuals

(Mead, 2016). Therefore, considering Participant Four's perspective and the current literature which indicates the role tikanga has in understanding cultural values within collective spaces or team sports, the implementation of tikanga is vital.

Deductive Analysis: Whānau

The second kaupapa Māori principle that was applied to the interview data was whānau (extended family structure). The whānau principle refers to the extended family. Whānau is the basic unit of Māori social structure and is descended from a common ancestor, within which certain roles and responsibilities are maintained (Durie, 2001). Kaupapa whānau is where people are joined together through a shared purpose or aspiration, such as Otago Māori Rugby, where people may not necessarily be related through a common ancestor, however they share a common purpose. There were two subthemes drawn from the data: whanaungatanga and community involvement.

Whanaungatanga

Whanaungatanga specifically refers to solidifying relationships and strengthening connections. O'Carroll (2013) states whanaungatanga is a Māori practice and the building of relationships through physical spaces. Harmsworth (2005) defined whanaungatanga as bonds of kinship that exist within and between whānau, hapū, and iwi. Whanaungatanga can encourage a safe environment where Māori can express and explore their cultural identity. Three out of five participants specifically discussed whanaungatanga in their interviews.

From Participant Five's quote we see an example of how Otago Māori Rugby prioritises whanaungatanga within team environments before progressing towards training sessions that aim to improve the physical skills of their players. Participant Five realises during the introduction phase into Otago Māori Rugby, he understands why whanaungatanga is crucial for existing members. Many participants acknowledged that whanaungatanga is essential towards team culture especially Māori.

Community Involvement

Community involvement refers to the local populations of a particular area, as Eriksson & Lindström (2008) articulates how community engagement can demonstrate support, empowerment, enhanced wellbeing, safe physical, and emotional environments. Participant Two recognises how "their family, brothers and sisters, you know mums and dads, aunties and uncles everybody's in that waka together". This quote describes how Otago Māori Rugby involves the surrounding community. Being an inclusive and diverse organisation, it was important for Otago Māori Rugby to incorporate community assistance. Otago Māori Rugby tries to include whānau members and players across the entire community to enhance wellbeing through development of cultural identity. Participant Two's understanding aligns with Pitama et al. (2002) who describe how utilising the environment in relation to communities and whānau will equip youth with the knowledge to strengthen their cultural identity.

Inductive Analysis

There were four inductive themes that emerged from this research as shown in Table 2. These were whakaurunga (engagement), tangata whenuatanga, influences of cultural values for mainstream and safe avenue for rangatahi.

Whakaurunga (engagement)

Whakaurunga is related to the reasons that Māori partake and engage within Otago Māori Rugby. Pitama et al. (2002) suggest that engagement in a wider community is important for identity development. Four out of five participants recognise whakaurunga as an important theme that is embedded within Otago Māori Rugby. As indicated, Participant Three identified the importance of educating rangatahi about cultural values. Based on his statement "the reason why I have participated is to see more of our young rangatahi come through, because it's where it is really." Participant Three acknowledges if safe physical and emotional environments are created then more children and youth will feel welcomed within Otago Māori Rugby. Pitama et al. (2002) also believe that by utilising the environment concerning communities and whānau, it will equip youth with the knowledge to strengthen their cultural identity. This particularly resonated with Participant Three as he states "now young ones need to be nurtured and grow in Otago Māori Rugby, without them it won't go anywhere" which is his personal reasoning for participating in this space.

Participant One explains the significance of having culturally safe environments which reflects her daughter's involvement within Otago Māori Rugby. Participant One's quote indicates the significance of an Otago Māori Rugby space for her child and further expresses how "for her it is the connection with Māori people and people that are going through that same walk, trying to figure out who they are as young Māori, she loves the tikanga, she loves the kaupapa" which again, signifies the multiple components that are associated within the Otago Māori Rugby space.

Tangata Whenuatanga

Tangata whenua are the Indigenous people or people born of the land. Māori are the Indigenous people within this research context. Tangata whenuatanga represents the "place based, socio-cultural awareness and knowledge" (Ministry of Education, 2011, p. 3) of the whenua we come from. The Ministry of Education (2011) explains that tangata whenuatanga is about "affirming Māori learners as Māori. Providing contexts for learning where the language, identity and culture (cultural locatedness) of Māori learners and their whānau is affirmed" (p. 4).

Participant Four acknowledges the benefits of becoming an Otago Māori Rugby member, she identifies the cultural aspirations that are upheld in this organisation that aren't replicated in professional and recreational female rugby teams. Participant Four mentions "You know how the games growing for females in rugby," she appreciates the space within Otago Māori Rugby where she can develop both her gender and cultural identities. Again, this links back to the previous discussion of the importance of supporting both sporting and cultural aspirations of players and management.

Another example of this theme is evident with Participant Four who is constantly challenged with her identity. She describes how Otago Māori Rugby utilises rugby and te ao Māori (Māori worldview) to construct cultural identity for both male and female rugby players. Participant Four states "because you know, sports used to be a real heavily male hegemonised space, but now it's coming into like where females can find their identity" reflects how Otago Māori Rugby is gender diverse and targets tangata whenuatanga as a whole, which includes both female and male athletes.

Influence of cultural values for mainstream

Māori culture derives from traditional knowledge and values which then determines how an individual chooses to operate within society. Together cultural values are intended for Māori to affirm their place in Aotearoa as tangata whenua. The Ministry of Education (2011) expresses how obtaining cultural values is vital for Māori learners to uphold the integrity, sincerity, and respect towards Māori beliefs. In addition to this, Hapeta et al. (2015) explains that the number of Māori athletes involved in rugby has increased. Exposure of cultural values needs to be embedded within mainstream sports to enhance cultural identity for Māori players. Three out of five Participants acknowledge the influence cultural values have within sports that develops cultural identity. Participant Five understands the intentions of Otago Māori and can envision a future application where cultural values within sports becomes normalised. This quote by Participant Four identifies a lack of Māori cultural application outside of Otago Māori Rugby but agreed that this can be rectified by implementing cultural values through education and mainstream sport settings.

Safe Avenue for Rangatahi

Creating environments where rangatahi can engage in traditional knowledge safely is significant for growth in cultural engagement and therefore cultural identity. Pitama, et al. (2002) indicate the importance of child protection which refers to the child's upbringing and their exposure that evolves around whānau, hapū, and iwi. Furthermore, Eriksson & Lindström (2008) also express how community engagement can demonstrate support, empowerment, enhanced wellbeing, safe physical, and emotional environments. Otago Māori Rugby is an avenue where rangatahi can engage in traditional knowledge and physical activity.

Participant One has a strong sense that both schools and Otago Māori Rugby offer safe environments "It's smoke free drug free and alcohol free that's the part she loves about our Māori space" she also indicates "nobody's encouraging alcohol, nobody's encouraging drugs in school either". These comments describe a parent's need for culturally and physically safe spaces for their children. She extends her thoughts by positively acknowledging how "we [Otago Māori Rugby] are promoting healthy decisions making healthy bodies and healthy minds". These are factors that are important for whānau to know when their children are in the care of others.

Kōrero Whakamutunga: Conclusion

This paper described how Otago Māori Rugby incorporated Māori values to enhance Māori identity and wellbeing within their organisation. The various themes that emerged from the participant interviews, demonstrated what is most important to Otago Māori Rugby. Taonga tuku iho encompassed core Māori concepts of whakapapa, the importance of language, Māori tikanga and identity. These four themes reflect the meaning of taonga tuku iho, because these values are the treasures passed down to us by our ancestors. In this sense, Otago Māori Rugby are continuing

Tthis transmission of knowledge, by passing down these taonga to our future Māori athletes, so that their identity and wellbeing flourishes alongside their sporting abilities.

In addition, Otago Māori Rugby espoused the notion of whānau and importance of people and relationships. This was evident through the whanaungatanga that took precedence in the organisation and the clear intention for community involvement by providing an inclusive and welcoming space for community input. When family members and the wider community can feel part of the organisation, it then becomes one large family, all concerned with looking after the wellbeing and health of their athletes/whānau members. The remaining themes of whakaurunga, tangata whenuatanga, cultural values in mainstream, and safe avenue, ultimately showcased how important Māori cultural values are for Indigenous player's identity and wellbeing in the sport.

Returning to the Māui pūrākau provided at the beginning of this paper, there are many Māori who, like Māui, struggled with their cultural identity and sense of belonging in their younger ages. As the first author noted, rugby provided him with a point of connection after his initial struggles to learn about taha Māori, and from there his identity and wellbeing blossomed. Otago Māori Rugby are an Indigenous sport organisation with a focus on nurturing wellbeing and strengthening identity of their players alongside the skills of the game, reflecting a sport-plus approach (Hapeta, Stewart-Withers & Palmer, 2019). Indigenous organisations, like Otago Māori Rugby, have a lot to offer in the sport-for-development space, where cultural values, identity, and wellbeing are at the forefront of everything they do.

Notes

1 A Māori demigod who is well known throughout Polynesia. From a Māori perspective, he undertook many feats such as slowing the sun, fishing up the North Island, attempting to trick the Goddess of Death Hinenuitepō for example. Māui is often described as our trickster hero, akin to many Indigenous cultures' trickster hero and heroines.

2 This refers to Tā (Sir) Mason Durie's model of Māori health where positive health is symbolically referred to as a Māori meeting house. For a person and their whānau (family) to be well, each wall or side of the house must be maintained. The four sides of the house are: te taha wairua (spiritual health); te taha hinengaro (mental health); te taha whānau (family health) and; te taha tinana (physical health).

Conflict of Interest

Authors are colleagues with Dr Jeremy Hapeta and Dr Audrey Giles.

Funding

Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga, Te Koronga.

Acknowledgements

We would like to acknowledge the five participants of this study for sharing their knowledge and experience. A special thank you also to Otago Māori Rugby for their support throughout this research. Associate Professor Anne-Marie Jackson is current Chair of Otago Māori Rugby and the Board fully support this research and paper and we thank Jack Nelson for his tautoko (support) for Otago Māori Rugby. Ngā mihi nui ki a koutou.

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Editorial

Ka muri, ka mua[1]: Indigenous voices matter

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Kia whakatōmuri te haere whakamua – "I walk backwards into the future with my eyes fixed on my past" is a whakataukī (proverb) that illuminates Māori (Indigenous people of Aotearoa New Zealand) conceptualisation of time, "where the past, the present and the future are viewed as intertwined, and life as a continuous cosmic process. Within this continuous cosmic movement, time has no restrictions – it is both past and present" (Rameka, 2017, p. 387). Thus, as we write this closing piece for the Special Issue: Indigenous Voices Matter to Sport for Development (SFD), it makes sense to return full circle to reflect on where the seeds were first planted for this work. In doing so, we are better able to consider the challenges faced, take note of the opportunities that have presented themselves, and be better guided for the future by those who have come before us.

Facing the Challenges

The seeds for this special issue were planted in 2019 when we (Jeremy and Rochelle - Indigenous scholars and two of the Guest Editors of this special issue) were looking to submit an article to a sport management journal and found ourselves unable to choose from a drop-down menu a fundamental keyword (Indigenous) we had planned to use to reflect the intent of our article. A quick search of various other sport management and sport sociology journals, many with a history of scholarship that focused on the subject matter sport for social change (and its various forms, such as SFD and sport for development and peace), reiterated that for the most part "Indigenous" was not a selectable option as a keyword. In further searches of related journals we soon discovered that despite 20 years of dedicated SFD theorizing, research, and practice, with the exception of a few scholars (e.g., Arellano & Downey, 2018; Banda & Holmes, 2017; Mwaanga & Mwansa, 2014), Indigenous worldviews remain largely silenced and positioned at the margins. There was (and is) a real underrepresentation of Indigenous-informed SFD scholarship – both theoretically and empirically. To us, this was deeply concerning, especially because in both the Global North and South, Indigenous peoples are frequently the target of SFD initiatives, while at the same time often excluded in decision making around project and program design, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation (Stewart-Withers et al., 2022).

Given the dearth of representation, what then stood out was the small number of SFD case study pieces written by Indigenous scholars and non-Indigenous scholars who before us (e.g., Adair & Stronach, 2014; Gardam et al., 2018; Giles et al., 2018; Hayhurst et al., 2016; Rossi & Rynne, 2014; Rynne, 2016; Stronach et al., 2019), and with us (the two other Guest Editors of this special issue, Audrey and Haydn), have also written about this gap and their concerns. Those before us, Indigenous and non-Indigenous), and more recently (e.g., Arellano & Downey, 2019; Essa et al., 2022; Henhawk & Norman, 2019), also called for the SFD sector to make space for voices located at the margins. The discipline needs to expand the narrow range of knowledges and perspectives that are privileged and thus dominate within SFD theory, research, and practice (Nicholls et al., 2011).

Many of the issues rampant within the SFD sector are compounded for Indigenous populations. For example, SFD agendas by nature can be inherently deficit-based because they focus on a particular problem, such as low literacy or youth crime (Latino et al., 2022). Indigenous people bear the brunt of this lens when they are targeted by deficit-focused SFD initiatives (Gartner-Manzon & Giles, 2018; Hayhurst & Giles, 2013; Stewart-Withers et al., 2022). Therefore, there is a need to build on a tradition of Indigenous arguments that challenge deficit views (Hapeta et al., 2019).

Relatedly, SFD initiatives have had a tendency to overlook community members as knowledge sources when looking to the "world of evidence" in decision making (Gartner-Manzon & Giles, 2018; Hayhurst_& Giles, 2013; Stewart-Withers et al. 2022). Community members' knowledge and evidence has also been excluded when determining success, with monitoring and evaluation indicators drawing mainly on external, top-down measures (Nicholls et al., 2011; Stewart-Withers et al., 2022). This is highly problematic because, as we have found, outcomes are better when the design of SFD initiatives with Indigenous communities reflect Indigenous values (Stewart-Withers et al., 2022). Furthermore, SFD initiatives that focus on Indigenous populations, yet do not come from an Indigenous standpoint, can hinder Indigenous development. This is particularly the case when project or program goals, and ensuing impact and outcome measures, lack alignment with Indigenous aspirations and measures of success (Stewart-Withers et al., 2022). For example, notions of success for Indigenous peoples might relate to ancestral language inclusion and ensuing efficacy, or how well SFD initiatives can work alongside and complement Indigenous festivals and ceremonies, whereas funders of SFD may view success in terms of completion rates, gender inclusion statistics, or how many young people have paid employment upon being involved in a SFD livelihoods initiative.

The *Journal of Sport for Development* (JSFD) and the editorial team not only welcomed the idea to have a special issue focusing on Indigenous voices in SFD, but they have been incredibly patient and supportive in shifting this from merely an idea into the manifestation of something tangible. This has become even more evident as the genesis of the idea was located at the start of 2020, when a scoping exercise was undertaken by Rochelle and Jeremy - and three years later the work has only finally come to fruition.

Across the globe, the COVID-19 pandemic left its mark on the academy and scholarship productivity. For example, there were many expressed aspirations to contribute to the special issue project when we sent out the call for "Expressions of Interest" to the SFD community. Many researchers, however, were unable to return to their fieldwork sites to progress their work. They were also unable to follow Indigenous protocols of feedback loops and checking-in, meaning the work was not yet ready to be shared widely. COVID-19 restrictions severely hampered connection and collaboration efforts, especially with Indigenous communities.

Building relationships with Indigenous communities can be a slow burn for non-Indigenous researchers, and Indigenous scholars also have ongoing obligations, responsibilities, and expectations of them in light of their people (Giles et al., in press). The pandemic also placed huge demands on the time of Indigenous peoples/scholars, whose communities felt the impacts more severely, and more often than not, comparative to general populations, were made more vulnerable to the health and economic impacts due to health and social statuses (McLeod et al., 2020).

The practice of actually pulling together this special issue came up against the very issues just discussed, because many Indigenous scholars found themselves stretched even further due to greater community commitments. In the final stages of writing this piece and the foreword, Cyclone Gabrielle landed upon Aotearoa displacing thousands for periods of time, which again saw the time and efforts of Indigenous community members drawn upon.

Outside of the pandemic and natural disasters, irrespective of discipline or subject matter, there are many challenges that Indigenous scholars face that may be unique in comparison to non-Indigenous scholars, and even more so if you happen to be an Indigenous scholar from the Global South. These are capacity and capability issues, including but not restricted to, English as a second language, opportunities to publish, less funding for research, the availability of local mentors (who are typically oversubscribed), restricted access to databases and partners to work with, and funds to pay for open access publications are common for issues Indigenous scholars. Indeed, on the latter point, the accessibility of this collection in JSFD (an open-access journal) is important to us as a starting point to address at least one of these issues.

We are cognizant, due to many of the reasons described above, that certain voices are missing from this special issue. Indeed, we are acutely aware that this special issue is overrepresented by Global North SFD scholars, some of whom are Indigenous. Regardless, we see this project as a contribution to be the broader agenda that aspires to realize an Indigenization of SFD. The term Indigenization is important - as opposed to just decolonizing SFD, because

decolonizing debates have had a tendency to center the colonizers. Moreover, as discussed by Hoskins and Jones (2022), "Indigenisation refers not to the inclusion of indigenous people, values and knowledge within a largely unchanged or superficially changed institutional structure, but to the normalisation of indigenous ways of being and knowing" (p. 307). Indigenization offers more hopeful possibilities.

In working towards a more hopeful future, a number of key questions need to be posited and fleshed out:

- How do we research and practice in such a way that both sport and development continue to be decolonized and, when appropriate, Indigenized?
- What does an Indigenous-centered SFD research agenda - one in which the creation of a broader range of issues, themes, theoretical directions, and methodologies should be in the forefront – look like?
- How do we continue to create the space for Indigenous voices – other ontologies, epistemologies, methodologies - and how do we ensure varying expressions of how we understand humanity have a chance to be seen and heard?
- How do we support Indigenous scholars and Indigenous scholarship, seeing also the value in other forms of dissemination beyond high-ranked journals?
- How do busy practitioners working tirelessly in Indigenous communities get to have a say?
- How do we ensure that the work we do does not reinforce or perpetuate past wrongs?

These are complex questions that require deep reflection. We see this special issue as just the start point of the conversation, building on earlier and more recent ideas from ourselves and others writing about SFD.

Hopeful Reflections

In looking to tie up this end piece, each of the four guest editors offer a short reflection as to what we personally hope for and what inspires us from what we have seen via this experience and in terms of articles which make up this special issue; here we consider also where the scholarship – theory, practice, and research relevant to SFD is at or could be heading.

Associate Professor Rochelle Stewart-Withers
Indigenous Scholar (Ngāti Rāhiri Hapū o Te Ātiawa)

Since seeding this idea back in 2019, I feel hopeful about the progress that is being made, albeit slowly, in the SFD arena, and in sport sociology and sport management journals, with an increased number of publications evident related to Indigenous peoples. While non-Indigenous or settler researchers continue to dominate research with Indigenous people, we, Indigenous peoples, are starting to see a level of reflexivity from non-Indigenous people about who is doing the research, alongside how this research is being done (e.g., see points made by Essa et al., 2022). In unpacking this point, it is partially true that non-Indigenous researchers continue to be the ones driving research with Indigenous people, but it may also be that Indigenous researchers' contributions to SFD scholarship too often have been rendered invisible. This invisibility comes about due to publishing in languages other than English, because discoveries remain hidden in post-graduate research theses, never seeing the light of day, least of all in top-tier, A-ranked journals. Or Indigenous names, especially practitioners, end up in the acknowledgments as opposed to being listed as authors, even though the project has been highly dependent on the intellectual (cultural) insights garnered. We need to move beyond this idea whereby one's contribution is measured by the words individually added to the page. A challenge we put to those working in the SFD arena – especially scholars – is to think beyond who seems to be doing the research or producing the knowledge (i.e., the end product). With an open mind and heart and a level of creativity, this will be less opaque.

What also inspires me is there seems to be a genuine and authentic appetite for inclusion of differing ontologies, epistemologies, methodologies, and ways of dissemination, along with an understanding that space must be made to enable this. What remains troubling, however, is that Indigenous knowledge and experiences are often only considered legitimate "as far as they are granted validity by European researchers" (Moore, 2007, as cited in Norman & Hart, 2017, p.439; see also Kincheloe & Steinberg, 2008). Which reads that Indigenous methods, Indigenous ways of producing scholarships, and disseminating knowledge are only considered legitimate as far as they are granted validity or can be explained or understood by non-Indigenous researchers. This why we need to think beyond inclusion and why Indigenization is such an important concept. It is fundamental that SFD scholarship isn't just focused on the subject matter. What is deeply important is *who* is doing this work and *how* this work is being done.

Below, Audrey makes mention of the team projects she is involved in which we have settler and Indigenous scholars working together; if we are to take seriously the idea of working *with* as opposed to for Indigenous communities and indeed with each other, we will need to become comfortable with the uncomfortable, on both sides. To make this point, I draw heavily on statements made by Norman and Hart (2017): We will need to be "accepting [of] the discomfort that comes with working across

worldviews… By no means is this an easy task, but it is a responsibility that should not fall to Indigenous scholars alone" (p. 441). I would argue that for too long, Indigenous scholars have been the ones making the allowances in terms of other worldviews. This said, I agree full heartedly that Indigenous and non-Indigenous people will need to work together and, for this to be successful, Indigenous people will need to "suspend their distrust" and non-Indigenous people will need to "suspend their disbelief" (Kovach[2] cited in Norman & Hart, 2017, p. 442). This suspension of distrust will require work beforehand from non-Indigenous scholars to rebuild this trust, and in part this will require of non-Indigenous scholars to actively consider and practice allyship, or in the words of Whitinui (2021) to behave like an accomplice. Finlay (2020) asked the question to non-Indigenous people working with Indigenous people: "which category are you? Tokenistic? An ally? Or an accomplice?" (p. 1). I therefore ask too: Which category are you?

Professor Audrey Giles, University of Ottawa, Settler Scholar

The idea of writing about sport for reconciliation percolated within me over a number of years and emerged out of my dissatisfaction with work that I had done as a younger person. During my undergraduate degree (1997-2001), I spent numerous summers working for programs in Indigenous communities. Many of these programs used sport and recreation to intervene in the lives of Indigenous youth in some way. I felt that they were at best a form of distraction and at worse a form of unbridled racism. Early in my career as a professor, I became aware of calls to transfer the use of SFD from the Global South to the Canadian context. I was confused. Based on my knowledge, I was sure that SFD had been used as a Eurocentric weapon of assimilation against Indigenous peoples, for example, in Indian residential schools (Forsyth & Paraschak, 2013), and that it had also been used as a tool of by Indigenous peoples to express self-determination and culture, for example, in Dene games and Inuit games (Paraschak & Heine, 2020). How was this possibly a new idea? I felt very strongly that scholars, non-governmental organizations, and governments were ignoring the history of the use of sport on and in Indigenous communities.

With some talented trainees, I began writing about the existing use of SFD in the Canadian context, and some very real concerns that we had with the ways in which many non-Indigenous led programs reinscribed dominant relations of power, were deficit-based, and relied on Euro-Canadian understandings of leadership development. We were surprised to find that many SFD programs for Indigenous youth were funded by the extractives industry (mining, oil, and gas). Drs. Lyndsay Hayhurst, Steven Rynne and I, again with some talented trainees, began examining SFD as a site of "redwashing" in Canada and Australia by the extractives industry by which they "portray themselves as good corporate citizens and as members of the communities in which they operate, while obfuscating the harmful impacts of extractive practices and histories of colonialism" (Millington et al., 2019, p. 2122).

I became quite disillusioned with the concept of SFD, coming to see it mostly as a form of white supremacy with little interest in organizations using it as a tool for Indigenous peoples' resurgence and self-determination. I began to wonder how we could perhaps get outside of this approach. Around the same time, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in Canada released its finding on its investigation into the legacy of Indian residential schools. Its Commissioners released 94 Calls to Action (2015) necessary to further reconciliation in Canada. Five of these Calls to Action related to sport. It was then that we began to see many sporting events and initiatives in the Canadian context – from NHL puck drops to professional sports teams wearing orange shirts on the National Day of Truth and Reconciliation – labelled as "reconciliation." Wanting to better understand this phenomenon and also the ways in which similar movements were occurring in Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand led me to connect me to Associate Professor Stewart-Withers and Dr. Hapeta, with whom I helped to edit this special issue. Together, our research team of Indigenous and settler scholars from three countries has started examining not only sport for reconciliation but also the ways in which Sport For Reconciliation (SFR) research itself could be a form of reconciliation. This issue makes a strong contribution to research in SFD that has made me less pessimistic about its uses with Indigenous communities but still eager to investigate new approaches such as SFR.

Associate Professor Haydn Morgan, University of Bath, non-Indigenous scholar

My personal introduction to (and interest in) Indigenous cultures came in the early 1990s, when, barely out of my teens, I travelled to Aotearoa New Zealand to play a season of cricket for a club team on Te Ika-a-Māui/the North Island (ironically the sport of cricket is perhaps the one most associated with British colonialism). While not an academic then, I soon became exposed to, and aware of, the political tensions (and indeed injustices) of colonialism between the Indigenous Māori and Settler communities. My memories of that time are ones in which the news coverage often reported compensation claims and disputes about land and seabed ownership under the Waitangi Tribunal. However, I also

recall it as a time when Māori language, culture, and education were showing signs of a "re-awakening," both through the introduction of formal legislation (e.g., the Māori Language Act of 1987 and the Education Amendment Act of 1990 which was modified to recognize wānanga as educational institutions), but also through more visible championing of Indigenous ideals in wider society.

In the ensuing three decades, during which time I have been able to reflect on Indigenous issues on subsequent visits to Aotearoa New Zealand (but mainly from afar in the UK), it has been heartening to see some undoubted progress being made. Indeed, when it comes to sustainable development, we need only look at the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (United Nations General Assembly, 2015) for a recognition of Indigenous Peoples' rights and equality of access within the Goals (education being a major focus). However, despite this progress, policy and practice is still typically dominated by Western or Global North thinking, which often merely seeks to defend Indigenous values and rights rather than promote and advocate these as the foundation for alternative ways to address global challenges. This is still highly evident in the SFD space, and the last decade has seen various critiques of top-down projects delivered in accordance with Westernized ideals (see for example, Darnell, 2012; Guilianotti et al., 2018).

However, sport has often been used a site to challenge societal norms, and perhaps it is incumbent on us, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, to think about how we can better promote Indigenous principles and values to meet and influence global development agendas through sport. For example, many SFD projects concern themselves with the individual development of participants, with the 5 C's of Positive Youth Development (competence, confidence, connection, character, and caring/compassion) often utilized as a guiding framework (Lerner et al., 2005; Côté et al., 2014). However, a recent study by Hapeta et al. (2022), which examined the impact of a sport-based program that was implemented in a Youth Justice residence in Aotearoa/New Zealand, offered a critique of the 5Cs, suggesting that "connection" as a starting point, rather than "competence", would offer a more appropriate foundation for PYD when viewed through a Kaupapa Māori lens. As the study demonstrated, a Kaupapa Māori approach cultivated clear benefits for (mainly Indigenous) program participants, however, it also presented one example of where Indigenous approaches could have broader impact for incarcerated populations across the globe who, largely, have been failed by Westernized systems of education and social care.

Of course, this is nothing new, and some influential scholars (many of whom have contributed to this issue) have long challenged Western orthodoxy. While this special issue once again brings Indigenous issues to the fore, it should also be used as a foundation to initiate clear direction on how, in the field of SFD, we might germinate theoretical directions and methodologies that not only give voice to these peoples, but also herald the worth that Indigenous values and principles may offer globally.

Dr. Jeremy Hapeta, Ngāti Raukawa te au ki te tonga, Indigenous Scholar

In the early/mid-1990s fellow Guest Editor, Dr. Haydn Morgan, and I were teammates. We played cricket together for the Manawatū-Foxton Cricket Club in the township of Te Awahou (Foxton) on the northern banks of the Manawatū River. For Haydn, it was a new chapter in his cricketing career; for me, it served as a legitimate excuse that I had used to disengage with the other "distractions" with which youth in our small, rural town decided to engage. As Haydn mentioned, neither of us were "scholars" then, but we did have a pragmatic sense of what was and was not socially just. Much of what was occurring around us, for example, was not too dissimilar to other parts of the world – a major employer in the township closed and the ensuing unemployment in our community took a huge toll on people's livelihoods. For Haydn, it is perhaps fair to say that cricket had provided him with a livelihood, financially; while for me it provided an escape, albeit briefly, from the daily realities of being brought up by a solo-Mother who received a state-funded benefit to raise me and my younger sister. The same sport (cricket) that was also serving two totally different (cricket-plus or plus-cricket?) but intentional outcomes, nonetheless.

As I reflect upon the genesis of this special issue, I can recall the delivery of our initial "pitch" to have our ideas elevated to the front-of-mind of journal editors in order to have this work make it across the line. Ironic, don't you think? We set off "cap-in-hand" to non-Indigenous journal editors and presented our case for "inclusion" into "their" highly-ranked journal, which was eventually (and perhaps not surprisingly) declined because their editorial board feared that, somehow, Indigenous SFD scholarship would not meet their reputable standards of research excellence. We were encouraged to preach to the choir, to try journals that had an "Indigenous-focus." Fortunately, for us, this journal answered the call, providing us with hope and the chance to meaningfully contribute to the scholarship space.

Returning back to my roots, in the words of one of Aotearoa NZ's most internationally recognizable reggae bands, Fat Freddy's Drop, "*Hope for a generation,* [is] *just*

beyond my reach, [but] *not beyond my sight.*" My hope for future generations and for the direction of Indigenous-centered research in the SFD arena is to never lose sight of hope, even if/when it feels like all is lost. Indeed, I hope this special issue gives hope to those who have been told they do not belong in the academy as their research is not "scholarly" enough. It is my desire to demonstrate that there is a place, pathway, or platform where the work of Indigenous scholars is realized *by, with,* and/or *for* Indigenous communities in ways that genuinely honor their traditions and can be disseminated in authentic ways that uplift their dignity (while simultaneously meeting scholarly conventions set by the 'academy'). No longer *just beyond our reach*, but well within our sights in the academy too. In closing this special issue, I wish to also close the so-called 'gap' that exists '*just beyond my reach'* to ensure that our stories become more visible, to amplify our Indigenous voices, therefore, making our stories more accessible and included.

NOTES

[1] Ka muri, ka mua (translates to a shortened version of 'walking backwards into the future')

[2] Kovach (2009) is also paraphrasing the work of Professor Marlene Brant Castellano, who is a Mohawk of the Bay of Quinte Band, Ontario, Canada and Professor Emeritus of Trent University and is considered a trailblazer in Indigenous scholarship.

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Volume 11, Issue 1, 2023

JSFD
Journal of Sport for Development