

Lacrosse for Reconciliation: How Lacrosse Organizations in Canada Have Taken Up the Truth
and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action

Avery Holmes, B.A. (Hons.)

Co- Supervisor: Dr. Audrey R. Giles
Co-Supervisor: Dr. Lyndsay Hayhurst
Committee Member: Dr. Dan Henhawk
Committee Member: Dr. Michael Robidoux

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School of Human Kinetics
Faculty of Health Sciences
University of Ottawa

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Abstract

In 2015, The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) released a list of Calls to Action aimed at redressing the harms of the residential school system through improving and reconciling relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities in Canada. Within these Calls to Action, there are five Calls that directly address sport. Lacrosse, as a sport currently dominated by white men, is an Indigenous physical practice that has been, and continues to be, widely appropriated by settlers. This ongoing legacy of settler colonialism positions lacrosse as a pressing site through which to investigate reconciliatory efforts. Further, the current landscape of lacrosse as a white male dominated sport, coupled with the ongoing cultural appropriation of lacrosse from Indigenous communities, creates an important opportunity to investigate interlocking systems of settler colonization and heteropatriarchy within sport. These areas are considered through the publishable papers of my thesis.

The questions that have guided my Master's of Arts by publishable paper are two-fold: how are national and provincial lacrosse organizations in Canada taking up the TRC's sport-related Calls to Action, and in what ways are these efforts gendered? Chapter 2, the first of my publishable papers, I argue that these Calls to Action need to be extended to lacrosse organizations within Canada. In this chapter, I investigate how representatives from seven lacrosse organizations within Canada conceptualized their organizations as attending (or not) to the Calls to Action. In Chapter 3, in which I present the second of my publishable papers, I focus on the gendered elements of the participants' responses to how lacrosse organizations have taken up the Calls to Action and have addressed Indigenous women's involvement in lacrosse.

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to the people who are not afraid to make a bit of good trouble.

Acknowledgments

There are so many people who have helped me get to this point that this section could not be large enough to encompass everyone and all the thanks that I have to give. It takes a village. Though I've gone through grad school from afar, I've never been alone.

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Chapter One: Introduction

Lacrosse is an Indigenous physical practice that has been widely appropriated by non-Indigenous settlers. It has existed within different Indigenous societies in different forms since time immemorial (Downey, 2016), but through processes of colonization it was appropriated by White settlers and has become the national summer sport of the settler-state now known as Canada (Heritage Canada, n.d.). Presently, lacrosse is predominantly played by white males within Canada; however, women and girls also play lacrosse, but tend to be overlooked throughout dominant narratives surrounding lacrosse. The specific Indigenous cultural relevance of lacrosse coupled with its wide appropriation by settlers creates a unique site through which to investigate the sport as a tool to promote reconciliation between Indigenous peoples and Settler peoples within Canada, the importance of which has been highlighted by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of Canada and its associated 94 Calls to Action aimed at redressing the harms of the residential school system to pursue meaningful reconciliation between Indigenous nations and settler communities.

The TRC stemmed from the Indian Residential School Settlement, which was the result of a class-action lawsuit against the Canadian government. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was formed in 2007 and tabled its final report in 2015 (TRCb, 2015). This case was led by residential school survivors who took the Canadian government to court over the treatment and horrors that they experienced within the residential schools (Government of Canada, 2021). This lawsuit was led by residential school survivors and was created to investigate the impact of the residential school system on Indigenous communities across Canada (TRC, 2015). It is estimated that over 150,000 Indigenous children were sent to residential schools throughout Canada (Government of Canada, n.d.) where children were removed from their communities, stripped of their Indigenous identity and cultural ties in order to “kill the

Indian in the child” (Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1996, p. 346). The residential school system negatively impacted Indigenous communities, as children were taken away from their homes and families, cultural ties were severed, and familial connections were lost (National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation, n.d.) The Indian Residential School Settlement acknowledged that the impacts of the residential school system are ongoing and formed the basis for establishment of the TRC.

The harms of residential schools are not in the past; Indigenous peoples and communities continue to suffer from the burden of intergenerational trauma stemming from residential schools. In May of 2021, the bodies of 215 Indigenous children were found buried on the grounds of the former Kamloops Indian Residential School (Dickson & Watson, 2021). There have been 1800 confirmed or suspected unmarked graves found on the sites of former residential schools across Canada, as reported by CTV News (2022). There are 4115 names of Indigenous children who died at residential school on the National Center for Truth and Reconciliation Memorial Register (NCTR, n.d), which is the first memorial commemoration of Indigenous children who never came home from residential school.

These ongoing harms make it increasingly important to pursue reconciliation between Indigenous peoples and settlers. Within the residential school system, many children were subjected to horrific forms of abuse, Indigenous languages were not allowed to be spoken, and connections within communities and families were lost (RCAP, 1996). The effects of these atrocities and forced assimilation is ongoing, as these traumas are passed from one generation to the next (Bombay et al., 2014; Chief Moon-Riley, 2019). Though commonly overlooked, the Western culturally appropriated version of lacrosse was used as a tool of colonization within residential schools (Downey, 2018). This legacy of lacrosse being used to promote genocide

within the residential school system compounded with the ongoing cultural appropriation of the game renders the sport to be a unique site to investigate the implementations (or lack thereof) of the TRC's sport-related Calls to Action (TRCa, 2015) within Canadian lacrosse organizations.

The 94 Calls to Action address child welfare, education, language and culture, health, justice, the media, and, notably for the purposes of this paper, sport (TRCa, 2015). There are five Calls to Action that directly address sport. Call to Action 87 calls on "all levels of government to take action to ensure long-term Aboriginal athlete development and growth, and continued support for the North American Indigenous Games, including funding to host the games and for provincial and territorial team preparation and travel" (TRCb, 2015, p.10). Call to Action 88 calls upon the federal government to ensure sport policy is inclusive of Indigenous peoples:

We call upon the federal government to amend the Physical Activity and Sport Act to support reconciliation by ensuring that policies to promote physical activity as a fundamental element of health and well-being, reduce barriers to sports participation, increase the pursuit of excellence in sport, and build capacity in the Canadian sport system, are inclusive of Aboriginal peoples. (TRCb, 2015, p.10)

Call to Action 90 is multifaceted and centres around inclusive sport policies, programs, and initiatives:

We call upon the federal government to ensure that national sports policies, programs, and initiatives are inclusive of Aboriginal peoples, including, but not limited to, establishing: i.) In collaboration with provincial and territorial governments, stable funding for, and access to, community sports programs that reflect the diverse cultures and traditional sporting activities of Aboriginal peoples. ii.) An elite athlete development program for Aboriginal athletes. iii.) Programs for coaches, trainers, and sports officials

that are culturally relevant for Aboriginal peoples. iv.) Anti-racism awareness and training programs. (TRCb, 2015, p.10)

The final sport-related Call to Action, Call to Action 91, focuses on event planning and consultation:

We call upon the officials and host countries of international sporting events such as the Olympics, Pan Am, and Commonwealth games to ensure that Indigenous peoples' territorial protocols are respected, and local Indigenous communities are engaged in all aspects of planning and participating in such events. (TRCb, 2015, p.10).

Notably, within the five Calls to Action that directly address sport, there is no specific reference to gender. Sport is a masculine environment, created for and dominated by men, which reinforces and reproduces heteropatriarchy (Kay, 2014; Kidd, 2013). The omission of gender specific language within the sport-related Calls to Action creates the possibility for these Calls to Action to be influenced by the male-dominated sporting environment in ways that continue to disadvantage Indigenous women and girls as well as Two-Spirit, trans, and gender non-conforming peoples. To pursue meaningful reconciliation, it is imperative that gender be a locus of analysis and that attention be paid to the gendered dimensions and implications of settler colonialism.

The questions that have guided my Master's of Arts by publishable paper are two-fold: how are national and provincial lacrosse organizations in Canada taking up the TRC's sport-related Calls to Action, and in what ways are these efforts gendered? Chapter 2, the first of my publishable papers, I argue that these Calls to Action need to be extended to lacrosse organizations within Canada. In this chapter, I investigate how representatives from seven lacrosse organizations within Canada conceptualized their organizations as attending (or not) to

the Calls to Action. In Chapter 3, in which I present the second of my publishable papers, I focus on the gendered elements of the participants' responses to how lacrosse organizations have taken up the Calls to Action and have addressed Indigenous women's involvement in lacrosse.

In this introductory chapter, I situate the context of my study. To do this, I provide a review of relevant literature and discuss the design of my research project by describing the overarching constructionist epistemology. I then discuss how settler colonial studies and Indigenous feminist theory provided the theoretical frameworks for my work. I continue by outlining the methodologies that I used for each of my papers: qualitative descriptive methodology and feminist methodologies informed by Indigenous methodologies. I continue with a description of my chosen method of semi-structured interviews and conclude by discussing how I employed reflexive thematic analysis to analyze the data through this work.

Literature Review

In this section I discuss pertinent literature that informed my research. It proceeds with a discussion of the relationship between sport and gender, gender and colonization, and colonization and lacrosse, and sport for reconciliation.

Sport and Gender

Central to the overarching research question examining the gendered dimensions of lacrosse organization's reconciliation efforts is the understanding that sport is a gendered space. As asserted by Kidd (2013), "the games we play were created by males for males without taking the needs and experiences of females into account in any way" (p. 554). Organized sport is a masculine space that is dominated by men. This pervasive male domination within sport has created an environment that is hostile to women (Kidd, 2013). The patriarchal organization of sport echoes the broader social patriarchal organization of Western society (Kay, 2014). As

stated by Kay (2014), “in society generally, a pervasive gender ideology discriminates against females of all ages, and this is replicated and reinforced in sport” (p. 90).

The patriarchal domination within sport is reflective of broader societal gender relations. Hall (2016) outlined how sport can be considered a hegemonic tool of control that shapes dominant power structures. Hall (2015, 2016) traced women’s sport history in Canada and outlined three major turns that influenced white women’s participation in sport in Canada. The First World War brought more women into work outside of the home to support the war effort. These newfound employment opportunities enabled women to then seek out recreation opportunities, which resulted in the creation of women’s sporting clubs and leagues. The newly established women’s leagues during the First World War enabled women to build skills, confidence, and networks to sustain these organizations after the war. During the Second World War, women’s sporting efforts were used to support the war effort through fundraising tournaments and events and as ways to entertain domestic troops (Hall, 2015, 2016). During this time, women were often in coaching and training roles due to the absence of men; however, this starkly changed after the war when men returned to these sporting spaces and women’s participation shifted to emphasize beauty and the male gaze (Hall, 2016). Hall (2015, 2016) outlined the rise of second wave feminism during the 1960s as the third important turning point in women’s sports history, as sport was adopted into the liberal feminist agenda in which advocacy focused on legal issues surrounding girls’ rights to play sports with boys and to have equal access to resources.

Importantly, these dominant stories of women’s sports history are generally reflective of white women’s experiences. Throughout women’s sport history, the experiences of Indigenous women have been and continue to be overlooked (Hall, 2015). Similarly, throughout iterations of

Indigenous sport history, Indigenous women's experiences are often forgotten (Hall, 2015). Indigenous women have been actively involved within Indigenous sport systems as well as mainstream sport, but they are often not equally supported nor have their accomplishments recognized in ways similar to men (Parashak, 1995). Indeed, Parashak and Forsyth (2010) highlighted the unique ways in which gender has structured the experiences of Indigenous women working within sport. These gendered impacts on the sporting experiences of Indigenous women are informed by the settler colonial imposition of patriarchy.

Gender and Colonization

The patriarchal organization of sport, and the gendered impacts that derive from it, stem from the imposition of the Western gender binary. The imposition of Western conceptions of gender as a male/female binary has obfuscated Indigenous peoples' conceptions of gender and gender diversity. Within various Indigenous communities, conceptions of gender recognize and uphold Indigenous women as powerful, valuable leaders of society, and gender diversity is also recognised, as demonstrated by the resurgence of Two-Spirit peoples (Driskill, 2004; Hunt, 2018). Indigenous conceptions of gender, wherein women are valued and gender is diverse, stand in stark contrast to the Western gender binary. Since these Indigenous conceptions of gender challenged and continues to challenge the Western settler colonial values, gender was and is targeted by the settler colonial project of assimilation. Within residential schools, the settler colonial gender binary was strictly imposed (Forsyth, 2015) through the use of gendered expectations so that Indigenous "children became both 'civilized' and genderconscious" (Giancarlo, 2020, p. 446). Though Indigenous conceptions of gender have been influenced by the settler colonial project, Indigenous conceptions of gender have not been extinguished.

The revitalization of the term Two-Spirit illustrates a challenge to ongoing settler colonialism and patriarchy. Though not a singular, monolithic identity, the term Two-Spirit is specific to Indigenous peoples and refers to a way of understanding one's gender and/or sexual identity outside of the Western paradigm (Driskill, 2004). The term "resists colonial definitions of who we are" (Driskill, 2004, p. 52). Two-Spirit peoples can position their identities beyond the Western gender binary and exist outside of settler colonial ideals of gender. Hunt (2018) identified how the erasure of Two-Spirit peoples is a form of ongoing colonial violence that has real impacts on health outcomes for Indigenous Two-Spirit peoples. Western gender relations and the institutionalization of the gender binary, through residential schools and the Indian Act (1876), have contributed to the loss of Two-Spirit traditions (Hunt, 2018). The resurgence and reclamation of the Two-Spirit identity by Indigenous peoples demonstrates an ongoing resistance to settler colonialism and a movement to decolonize ideologies of gender and sexuality (Driskill, 2010; Laing, 2021). The overarching domination of the sport landscape by White men, coupled with the effects of settler colonialism on gender, highlights the need for a critical examination of how gender is addressed throughout Canadian lacrosse organizations' reconciliatory efforts.

Though this research project centres on the examination of how gender is addressed by lacrosse organizations throughout the ways in which they have or have not enacted the TRCs Calls to Action, it is important to recognize that there have been gendered divisions within traditional Indigenous cultural activities. Hall (2016) discussed that in some communities, Indigenous women were involved in lacrosse as supporters; in other communities, some women did play the game. The different roles for women within lacrosse roles depended on values and practices of specific communities. Similarly, Giles (2004) examined the complexities surrounding Indigenous women and girls' participation in the Dene Games. She argued that

tradition is not static and that there are different conceptions of what constitutes tradition and opinions surrounding Indigenous women and girls' involvement in traditional games will vary within and between communities (Giles, 2004). Just as cultures evolve and change, so do roles within those cultures. This work does not assert that all Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people should play lacrosse, but it makes space for complex discussion and contends that there should be equitable opportunities for Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people to choose to participate in lacrosse if they so desire.

Colonization and Lacrosse

Lacrosse has been influenced by settler colonialism in similar ways to how Indigenous conceptions of gender have been influenced. As a traditional Indigenous physical practice, the process of settler colonialism has transformed lacrosse into the sport that is now widely known. Downey (2018) noted that lacrosse has been a part of many Indigenous cultures across the continent and is considered to be ceremony:

Prior to, and during, European colonization, lacrosse existed from the northeastern shores of the continent in present-day New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Maine among the Mi'kmaq, Peskotomuhkati (Passamaquoddy), and Panawahpskek (Penobscot); in the southeast among the Aniyvwiya (Cherokee), Mvskoke (Muscogee/Creek), Choctaw, and Seminole Nations; down into Mexico following the Kiikaapoi (Kickapoo) displacement and subsequent migration in the 1830s; west to California with the Pomo and Yokuts; up to Washington State and British Columbia among the Coast and Interior Salish nations; and throughout the interior of the continent. (p. 19)

It is imperative to highlight that lacrosse has had different meanings and cultural significance within different nations and that there is no singular understanding of lacrosse across Indigenous

nations (Downey, 2018). Further, different Indigenous nations have their own names for lacrosse: The Ojibway word for lacrosse is Baaga'adowewin, whereas the Kanien'kéha, or Mohawk, word for lacrosse is Téwaá;rathon (Downey, 2018). Though lacrosse has never left Indigenous communities, it has been widely appropriated by White settlers.

According to Kossuth and McMurray (2015), the popularity of the settler version of lacrosse in Canada can be traced to Canadian nationalist W. George Beers in the 19th century. Lacrosse was promoted by Canadian-born nationalists as a nation-building project tied to cultivating a national consciousness and collective identity (Kossuth & McMurray, 2015). In 1860, Beers published a pamphlet consisting of rules and guidelines for lacrosse, which was the first form of Western standardization that served to colonize and civilize lacrosse from previous Indigenous versions of the game (Downey, 2016). Upon the creation of the National Lacrosse Association (NLA) in 1867 as the Canadian sport governing body, lacrosse was seen as a characteristic of a national Canadian identity (Robidoux, 2002). Indigenous lacrosse players during this time were barred from competition with and against non-Indigenous teams (Downey, 2016; Robidoux, 2002). In 1880, the NLA was transformed into the National Amateur Lacrosse Association (NALA) and banned Indigenous athletes completely from play (Downey, 2016). Prior to this, Indigenous teams would receive a portion of the gate fees, which made the adoption of amateurism in sport a way to bar Indigenous teams completely (Downey, 2016).

Though Indigenous teams were barred from competition within the NLA, this did not keep Indigenous teams from playing their game. Independent Indigenous lacrosse teams played each other and played non-Indigenous teams (Downey, 2016). These games served as performances where Indigenous teams could showcase their athletic skill as well as make money from spectators (Downey, 2016). Indigenous players used their own Indigenous teams to assert

their sovereignty over the game of lacrosse, but they were also used by the Canadian nation-state to further colonize Canada. In 1883, the federal Department of Agriculture sponsored a trip to the United Kingdom to use lacrosse to promote immigration. Haudenosaunee players were enlisted to travel to Europe to play lacrosse for audiences to demonstrate that Canada had been settled in hopes of attracting British immigrants (Downey, 2016). These lacrosse exhibitions continued to be played by Indigenous teams against both Indigenous and non-Indigenous teams in Canada during the turn of the century and continued through the 1900s.

The popularity of lacrosse in the 1880s started to wane and by 1914 participation was limited to mainly large communities (Kossuth & McMurray, 2015). A post-war revival of lacrosse through the 1920s and 1930s coincided with a rise of nationalism (Kossuth & McMurray, 2015), and lacrosse was used as a part of the nation-building project by nationalist organizations to bring together young, white, men, specifically in Alberta, to promote nationalist goals (Kossuth & McMurray, 2015).

In many ways, from the 1930s onwards, lacrosse has resembled the sport that we know today. In 1924, the white, middle-class sport played by men that was appropriated from Indigenous forms of the game (Kossuth & McMurray, 2015). The 1930s marked a drastic shift in the landscape of lacrosse in Canada with the creation of box lacrosse, an indoor version of the game that was played in hockey arenas during the summer months. Since Indigenous athletes' participation in lacrosse was restricted since 1880, the advent of box lacrosse, from which Indigenous athletes were not excluded, enabled Indigenous lacrosse players to become visible and prominent within non-Indigenous lacrosse organizations (Downey, 2018). In 1931, the first professional box lacrosse league was established in Ontario with four teams, each of which featuring a significant number of Indigenous athletes (Downey, 2018). Similarly, many amateurs

box lacrosse teams throughout Ontario would recruit Indigenous lacrosse players, which saw Indigenous athletes competing in national championships for the first time since Indigenous participants were barred (Downey, 2018).

The revitalization and popularity of box lacrosse throughout the 1930s led to an increased number of Indigenous athletes participating within the mainstream sport system. Throughout the 1950s, some of the most prominent lacrosse players in Canada were Indigenous athletes, however these athletes had to leave their home communities and play for non-Indigenous teams to play at the highest level (Downey, 2018). The popularity of lacrosse throughout the 1950s led to a community resurgence of lacrosse throughout various Indigenous communities in the 1960s wherein informal, recreational games as well as formal lacrosse games helped to bolster cultural connections, pride, and inter-nation relationships (Downey, 2018). Informal lacrosse games that took place during the 1960s among Haudenosaunee ironworkers who would leave their home communities in pursuit of work served to cultivate community connections and relationship building (Downey, 2018). These informal lacrosse games were the foundation of the development for the Indigenous lacrosse governing body, the North American Lacrosse Association, later called the Can-Am Lacrosse League (Downey, 2018). This league helped to promote lacrosse across Haudenosaunee communities, promoting a collective Haudenosaunee identity and relationship building (Downey, 2018). This organization exemplifies an assertion of a collective Indigenous identity and sovereignty within the game of lacrosse. The appropriation of lacrosse by white settlers was so successful that the sport was declared Canada's national summer sport in 1994 (Kossuth & McMurray, 2015; Robidoux, 2002).

Indeed, though mainstream iterations of lacrosse may focus on the white, male athlete, lacrosse has continued to be a space through which Indigenous sovereignty has been showcased.

In response to the aforementioned discrimination against Indigenous lacrosse players, and wider anti-Indigenous racism within sport and broader Canadian society (Hall, 2016; Paraschak, 2019), lacrosse has been used as a way for Haudenosaunee peoples to assert their sovereignty. Most famously, the Iroquois Nationals, the organization that represents the Haudenosaunee Confederacy at international lacrosse competitions, has been an international symbol of Indigenous self-determination, as its members demonstrate their thriving cultural connections and athletic skill on the international stage (Downey, 2016). For international competition, the Iroquois Nationals lacrosse team has travelled using Haudenosaunee passports. In 2010, the Iroquois Nationals refused to compete in the World Lacrosse championships because the host country, England, would not accept these passports (Simpson, 2014). Travelling on Haudenosaunee passports that were issued by the Chiefs of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy demonstrates the team members' assertion of their sovereignty, as they refused to be recognized as anything other Haudenosaunee (Simpson, 2014).

The Iroquois Nationals are not the only Indigenous lacrosse organization that operates within Canada, but the organization has been widely discussed within the literature (Downey, 2012, 2016, 2018; Simpson, 2014). Indeed, the Iroquois Nationals are an important organization not only because they illustrate Haudenosaunee peoples asserting their sovereignty within international lacrosse events, but also because there is an important gender dynamic within the organization that highlights the gendered complexities of women's lacrosse within Indigenous communities. When tracing the history of the Iroquois Nationals organization and recognizing its capacity to raise awareness and garner support for Indigenous sovereignty (Downey, 2016), it is imperative to highlight that it has been the *men's* lacrosse team that is central to the Iroquois Nationals' narrative.

Women have always been involved in lacrosse in different ways: as supporters who bring gifts to players as well as players in some nations (Hall, 2016). Haudenosaunee women started an Iroquois women's lacrosse team in 1984. When they attempted to play at the international level in 1987, they were not supported within some traditionalist communities (Downey, 2012). Arising from Longhouse epistemology and traditionalism within Haudenosaunee nations, lacrosse is a powerful game, and women are powerful members of community (Downey, 2012). Some maintain that this positioning of women within Haudenosaunee society renders them as incompatible with lacrosse, where they are viewed as too powerful and the game is not viewed a part of their respected role within their communities (Downey, 2012). Though Indigenous women's participation in lacrosse has been contested by some, it has not ceased: Haudenosaunee women's lacrosse teams are still fighting to play on the international stage today (Hamilton, 2020). The complex history and present state of lacrosse positions the sport as a rich site to investigate the impacts of the TRC's Calls to Action.

Lacrosse and Reconciliation

The TRC's (2015) inclusion of sport within its Calls to Action demonstrates that sport has been identified as an avenue to pursue reconciliatory efforts. The importance of reconciliation efforts within the sport has been highlighted in previous literature from sport for development and peace scholars, and it has been studied primarily in post-conflict areas as a way to promote peace and diversity (Hoglund & Sundberg, 2008; Levinsen, 2009; Schulenkorf, 2010). Recently, amid the rise of reconciliation efforts within settler-colonial states such as Canada, Australia, and Aotearoa New Zealand, emerging scholarship has investigated sport as a tool to promote reconciliation between Indigenous people and non-Indigenous settlers.

Lacrosse has been used in sport for development initiatives for Indigenous youth wherein sport is used as a tool to help communities “develop.” Arellano and Downey (2019) examined the use of lacrosse in Right to Play’s Promoting Life Skills in Aboriginal Youth (PLAY) program. As an Indigenous sport with deep cultural meanings across various Indigenous communities, lacrosse has been utilized by Right to Play, an international sport for development non-governmental organization, as a vehicle to “help” Indigenous youth connect with their culture while being physically active (Arellano & Downey, 2019). Arellano and Downey found, however, that the PLAY program staff positioned Indigenous knowledges as an additive section to the program and failed to centre Indigenous knowledges through its sport-based pedagogy. Arellano and Downey argued that while lacrosse offers a unique avenue for Indigenous youth to meaningfully engage with their culture(s) and to support Indigenous resurgence, for it to be meaningful, Indigenous knowledges and teachings need to be central to the endeavor.

The TRC’s (2015) Calls to Action offer tangible ways for reconciliation to be meaningfully pursued by both the Canadian government and various non-governmental organizations, such as sport governing bodies. Upon the release of the TRC’s Calls to Action in 2015, Prime Minister Trudeau vowed to “fully implement the Calls to Action” (Prime Minister of Canada, 2015, para. 9). This vow from the Prime Minister provided the impetus for these organizations to follow through on federal promises (Prime Minister of Canada, 2015); as organizations that receive federal funding (Government of Canada, n.d.), they have the responsibility to implement the Calls to Action.

Within Canada, the project of reconciliation challenges colonial structures and works to centre Indigenous epistemologies and ways of being. Reconciliation requires non-Indigenous settlers to challenge oppressive institutions and their own privilege (Regan, 2010). It is important

to note that reconciliation does not undo the harms of settler colonialism (Freeman, 2014; Jung, 2018). Indeed, reconciliation has been critiqued because it does not completely change the system that has worked to oppress and eradicate Indigenous peoples in Canada, but it relies on improving relations between settler and Indigenous peoples (Freeman, 2014; Jung, 2018). Reconciliation focuses on relationships (Freeman, 2014; Jung, 2018; Regan, 2010), whereas more radical conceptions of social transformation, such as decolonization, focuses on changing political structures, Indigenous sovereignty, and repatriation of land to Indigenous peoples (Tuck & Yang, 2012). It is thus clear that reconciliation and decolonization are distinct. Freeman (2014) has argued that reconciliation “is not a sufficient condition for decolonization” (Freeman, 2014, p. 214). Nevertheless, it is still important to understand and explore reconciliation. For example, Freeman (2014) argued that reconciliation and decolonization processes can co-exist and can even complement each other. Decolonization can be a broad and overwhelming task for organizations, but reconciliation can be a more accessible first step towards social change. Lacrosse organizations within Canada have a unique position through which they can take up the TRC’s Calls to Action (2015) in ways that pursue meaningful reconciliation. The nexus of lacrosse, reconciliation, and gender is thus a rich area for sociocultural analysis.

Epistemology

My research is grounded in a constructionist epistemology wherein knowledge is viewed as being “contingent upon human practices, being constructed in and out of interaction between human beings and their world, and it is developed and transmitted with an essentially social context” (Crotty, 1998, p. 42). Through a constructionist epistemology, meaning is interpreted through a person’s engagement with the world. Within the context of my study, I investigated the ways in which lacrosse, gender, and reconciliation are constructed by the national and provincial

sport organizations. A constructionist epistemology is congruent with the overarching theoretical frameworks for each of my papers, settler colonial studies and Indigenous feminist theory. Researchers using a constructionist epistemology view knowledge as contingent upon human practices and meaning is made through interactions (Crotty, 1998), these theoretical frameworks similarly investigate the ways in which our world is shaped by different forms of human interaction. Further, constructionism is also compatible with my use of qualitative descriptive methodology within my first publishable paper as well as the use of feminist methodologies informed by Indigenous methodologies within my second publishable paper. As asserted by Doyle and colleagues (2019), qualitative descriptive methodologies are best aligned with research derived from a constructionist epistemology due to researchers collecting data derived from participants subjective experiences. Further, feminist methodologies informed by Indigenous methodologies account for the ways in which different systems of power inform interactions.

Theoretical Framework

Each of my publishable papers was guided by a different theoretical framework. I used settler colonial studies throughout my first publishable paper, and I used Indigenous feminist theory for the second paper.

Settler Colonial Studies

Settler colonial studies scholars venture to understand the complex ways in which settler colonialism structures society. Settler colonialism is the social organization of society whereby settlers come to a place in an attempt to destroy Indigenous peoples and their society to create a new social order dominated by settler (Wolfe, 2006). Settler colonialism is not an event that merely occurred in the past, but it is an ongoing process that constitutes an organizing principle

of society (Wolfe, 2006). A central tenant to settler colonialism is the desire for unrestricted access to land to sustain a society dominated by settlers (Wolfe, 2006).

Building off this understanding of settler colonialism as structure, settler colonial studies scholars have attempted to theorize the implications of this structure. As described by Veracini (2011), “settler colonies ‘tame’ a variety of wildernesses, end up establishing independent nations, effectively repress, co-opt, and extinguish indigenous alterities, and productively manage ethnic diversity” (p. 3) to erect and control new societies. Understanding settler colonialism as an ongoing structure is imperative to settler colonial studies, as there is a need to evaluate how the structure of settler colonialism impacts every facet of life within the settler colonial state. Edmonds and Carey (2013) positioned settler colonial studies as a field that emerged in response to the growing demand to interrogate settler colonialism and its distinct social and cultural effects. This field emerged to complicate the category of colonialism, specifically within areas where colonizers have never left, such as Canada, the United States, Australia, and New Zealand (Edmonds & Carey, 2013).

The history of the appropriation of lacrosse position the sport as a fruitful site to investigate the impacts of settler colonialism. As an Indigenous physical practice that was widely appropriated by non-Indigenous white settlers, and participation in the sport is now dominated by white males (Downey, 2018), analysis of the reconciliatory efforts through the lens of settler colonial studies are pivotal to understanding the ways in which settler colonialism continues to shape the lacrosse environment within Canada.

Indigenous Feminist Theory

Employing Indigenous feminist theory in my research for my second paper enabled me to focus on the interaction between settler colonialism and heteropatriarchy and provided me with

the theoretical tools necessary to understand interlocking systems of oppression, specifically within an Indigenous context. Indigenous feminist theory arose from tensions within both feminism and Indigenous studies. Within early feminist discourses, the category of a being a woman was conceived from a white, Western point of view in which womanhood was essentialized into one universal category of experience that focused on being female, rather than how gender affects experience (Cannella & Manuelito, 2008). The origin of feminism within white women's experiences caused feminism to be contentious within Indigenous communities (Ross, 2009). According to McGuire-Adams (2020), historically, Indigenous peoples have been theorized as monoliths with little attention to the impacts of settler colonialism on matrilineal nations. Indigenous communities have always theorized themselves through Indigenous worldviews but that is only now beginning to be recognized. Thus, critical Indigenous perspective on both feminism and Indigenous experiences have culminated in current articulations of Indigenous feminist theory.

Overall, Indigenous feminist theory offers useful conceptual tools through which to evaluate the ways that settler colonialism is gendered and uniquely affects Indigenous women, non-binary, and Two Spirit peoples. Indigenous feminist theorists highlight that racism and sexism operate in interlocking ways (Suzack, 2015). As Suzack (2015) stated, "Indigenous feminism represents a critical paradigm that analyses how gender injustice against Indigenous women emerges from colonial policies and patriarchal practices that inscribe gendered power dynamics to the detriment of Indigenous women" (p. 261). This can be further extended to those who do not fit within the colonial gender binary of man and woman. Indigenous feminist theorists are interested in gender decolonization through the collective assertion of Indigenous rights, as well as restoring the collective status of Indigenous women, non-binary, and Two Spirit

peoples within their communities and broader society, which has been eroded through colonial and patriarchal systems (Suzack, 2015). These characteristics enable researchers who employ Indigenous feminist theory to work towards achieving gender and racial justice within Indigenous communities and society at large (Suzack, 2015). Indigenous feminist theorists investigate the intersection of settler colonialism and patriarchy and the ways in which the effects of this intersection are gendered.

To develop a heightened understanding of Indigenous feminist theory, it is imperative to understand how settler colonialism and patriarchy operate together. Settler colonialism is the social organization of society whereby settlers come to a place in an attempt to destroy Indigenous peoples and their society to create a new social order dominated by settlers (Wolfe, 2006). Indigenous communities and peoples are destroyed so that settlers can access land and exploit resources (Wolfe, 2006). Indigenous scholars have demonstrated that settler colonialism, as a process, is inherently gendered (Simpson, 2016). Indigenous women are inextricably tied to land and culture; therefore, for settler colonialism to be successful, it must target Indigenous land through targeting Indigenous women (Simpson, 2016). The same systems of power that enable colonialism simultaneously inscribe gendered power dynamics (Suzack, 2015).

An ongoing effect of settler colonialism is the patriarchal organization of society within which gender is most often conceived within the Western gender binary of man and woman. This colonial gender binary is challenged by Indigenous feminist theorists who do not simply look at women's experiences; they also examine how gender shapes experiences. St. Denis (2007) noted that some Indigenous peoples believe that there is a fundamental difference between conceptions of gender within Western and Indigenous cultures. It is important to remember that Indigenous nations and peoples are not monolithic, and Barker (2020) has reminded us that Indigenous

conceptions of gender cannot be essentialized and romanticized: “nations and territories provide the contexts necessary for understanding the social responsibilities and relationships that inform Indigenous perspectives, political organizing, and intellectual theorizing around the politics of gender, sexuality, and feminism” (pp. 5-6). Through processes of colonization, Western conceptions of binary gender were imposed onto Indigenous communities (Driskill, 2010; Hunt, 2016). The term Two-Spirit, “encompasses a broad range of sexual and gender identities of Aboriginal people across North America” (Hunt, 2016, p. 7) and demonstrates that gender does not operate within a binary within some Indigenous communities. Driskill (2010) asserted that “Indigenous Two-Spirit/LGBTQ people are asserting uniquely Native-centered and tribally specific understandings of gender and sexuality as a way to critique colonialism” (p. 69). This demonstrates that gender is a concept that has been heavily influenced by settler colonialism and that Indigenous conceptions of gender can be broader than the colonial gender binary.

There are numerous benefits to utilizing Indigenous feminist theory. Indigenous feminist theory enables researchers to evaluate how racism and sexism overlap from a specific Indigenous perspective, which enables cultural specificity and a rich examination of the ongoing impacts of settler colonialism (Arvin et al., 2013). This theory provides a theoretical tool for evaluating complicated systems of power and acknowledges that they are connected (Arvin et al., 2013; Suzack, 2015). The lack of a singular theory poses a challenge the Western research paradigm; however, this enables cultural specificity and avoids purporting one singular theory to represent all Indigenous nations.

When engaging with Indigenous feminist theory, it is imperative to avoid a pan-Indigenous lens that depicts all Indigenous peoples as homogenous (McGuire-Adams, 2020). There can be many different conceptions of Indigenous feminist theory that are tied to different

nations and places. The multiplicity inherent within Indigenous feminist theory stands in stark comparison to other rigid colonial ways of knowing. Indigenous feminist theory is tied to location, place, and ways of knowing and thus cultural specificity is important to maintaining relevance (Green, 2007; McGuire-Adams, 2020; Ross, 2009).

Methodology

I used qualitative descriptive methodology to guide my first publishable paper (Chapter 2). In my second publishable paper (Chapter 3), I used feminist methodologies informed by Indigenous methodologies. In this section, I describe each of these methodologies.

Qualitative Descriptive Methodology

Qualitative descriptive methodology is a tool that is used by researchers to “provide a broad insight into particular phenomena and can be used in a variety of ways including as a standalone research design...” (Doyle et al., 2020, p. 444). Researchers employ qualitative descriptive methodology to provide clear descriptions of experiences (Doyle et al., 2020; Sandelowski, 2010). This approach is commonly used in clinical settings with the goal of contributing to practical change (Doyle et al., 2020).

As the field of qualitative research has expanded, qualitative methodologies became increasingly complex (Sandelowski, 2000, 2010). As the complexity of many qualitative paradigms, such as phenomenology, grounded theory, and ethnography, have increased, many researchers have resorted to framing their work under the guise of one of the aforementioned methodologies when their work does not truly fit within that methodology, a practice termed “methodological acrobatics” (Sandelowski, 2000, p. 335). To avoid researchers positioning their work as something it is not, qualitative description was described as a methodology that

researchers “can claim unashamedly without resorting to methodological acrobatics” (Sandelowski, 2000, p. 335).

Proponents of qualitative description value this methodology as a stand-alone design that enables researchers to produce complete projects, not merely as a jumping off point into other forms of inquiry (Doyle et al., 2019; Sandelowski, 2000, 2010). The overarching goal of qualitative descriptive methodology is to “provide a broad insight into particular phenomena” (Doyle et al., 2019, p. 444) by providing clear descriptions of the participant’s experiences (Doyle et al., 2019; Sandelowski, 2010). Qualitative descriptive methodology “has been identified as important and appropriate for research questions focused on discovering the who, what, and where of events or experiences and on gaining insights from informants regarding a poorly understood phenomenon” (Kim et al., 2016, p. 23).

Qualitative descriptive methodology has been identified as a flexible research paradigm, yet done in which researchers follow guiding principles that demarcate qualitative description from other modes of inquiry. Notably, qualitative description has been described as a less theory-driven methodology than others, as it is a flexible methodology that is not attached to a particular theoretical framework, which allows researchers the flexibility to determine for themselves the levels of theoretical intervention needed within their particular study (Kim et al., 2016; Sandelowski, 2000, 2010;). Additionally, researchers using qualitative description employ purposive sampling techniques and data collection typically involves open-ended individual or group interviews (Sandelowski, 2000). Following qualitative descriptive methodology, content and thematic analysis are the most commonly utilized methods of analysis (Doyle et al., 2019). The use of thematic analysis, and in particular my use of reflexive thematic analysis, highlight

the researcher's role in shaping the ways in which participants' experiences are described and depicted (Sanelwoski, 2000).

There are both strengths and weaknesses to qualitative descriptive methodology. A strength of this methodology is that it offers researchers an uncomplicated qualitative research paradigm outside of the more popular qualitative methodologies of phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, and narrative inquiry (Sadelowski, 2000). Rather than having researchers incorrectly label their work as one of the former methodologies, qualitative description offers researchers a stand-alone research design aimed at producing quality descriptions of events or phenomena (Sadelowski, 2000, 2010). Further, this methodology is flexible – there is no prescribed research method or theoretical framework attached to qualitative descriptive methodology (Doyle et al., 2020; Sandelowski, 2010). However, the flexibility of qualitative description has led to some critiques.

Qualitative descriptive methodology has been critiqued for lacking theoretical vigor. Proponents of qualitative description assert that the flexibility of this methodology enables researchers to decide for themselves the level of theoretical underpinnings that guide their work (Doyle et al., 2020; Sandelowski, 2010). Qualitative description has also been used as a label to attach to poorly designed research projects that do not ascribe to the methodological frameworks of other qualitative paradigms. Proponents of qualitative description have rejected this practice and asserted that to employ this methodology correctly, researchers must be forthright and transparent in their selection of qualitative descriptive methodology (Sandelowski, 2010). I selected qualitative description to guide my first publishable paper because I wanted to focus on how participants were describing the work of the organizations that they represent.

Feminist Methodologies

My second publishable paper was guided by the overarching principles of feminist methodologies and informed by principles of Indigenous methodologies. The development of feminist research methodologies is rooted in inadequacies of scientific research that were identified by feminist researchers: positivism within science, androcentric bias, and the exclusion of women's experiences (Cancian, 1991; Naples, 2016; Wigginton & LaFrance, 2019). Between 1960 and 1980, second-wave feminism and women's issues gained traction, which caused patriarchy and male bias within the sciences to be criticized (Hesse-Biber et al., 2004; Naples, 2016). During this time period, men were commonly the scholars who were conducting research, and their positions as white, upper-class males were reflected in their biased findings (Cancian, 1992). Second-wave feminism led to the recognition of feminist methodologies as a research practice wherein gender was considered a locus of evaluation within the research process. The emphasis on gender as the locus of evaluation is the basis for feminist methodologies, and this has been taken up in different ways. Feminist methodologies are difficult to define because there is no singular feminist methodology; however, there are some overarching principles that guide feminist methodologists to challenge male bias in the research process and to critically engage with systems of power. According to Cancian (1992), these overarching principles include focusing gender and inequality, centring lived experiences of participants, being action oriented, critical, and reflexive, and using participatory methods. The focus on gender and inequality is used by feminist methodologists to acknowledge the ongoing patriarchal oppression of women within research and broader society. The focus on experience results in feminist methodologists typically using qualitative research methods to examine the lived experiences of participants. Action-oriented research involves actionable outcomes and policy changes aimed at social justice. The reflexive critical stance of feminist methodologists reflects their understanding

of how research is shaped by the social location of the researcher. Finally, participatory methods are used by feminist methodologies to enable participants to exercise more agency and power during the research process (Cancian, 1992).

The lack of a singular, uniform set of principles for feminist methodologies provides opportunities for criticism. The roots of feminist methodologies within second-wave feminism have been critiqued for reflecting the values of white, middle-class women as well as depicting a singular, monolithic conception of womanhood (Hammersly, 1992). Further, Indigenous scholars have criticized feminism for not being attuned to Indigenous issues, as Indigenous women's issues are often omitted from feminist scholarship (Huhndorf & Suzack, 2010). Despite these critiques, feminist methodologies have been praised for being aimed at social change (Cancian, 1991; Hammersly, 1992; Naples, 2016), and they are constantly being re-worked to address the needs of groups that experience marginalization. A wide range of researchers across different fields have adopted feminist methodologies (Cancian, 1991; Landman, 2006), and many different methods align with them (Hammersly, 1992; Wigginton & Lafrance, 2019). The versatility as well as the attention to gender and systems of oppression of feminist methodologies make it a suitable choice for my research.

Feminist methodologies guided this paper as well as my data collection. Focusing on the lived experiences of participants through participatory methods was important so that I could build relationships with participants to foster an environment conducive to open and honest conversation, while also valuing the experiences and knowledge of participants. My research question was grounded in investigating how lacrosse organizations are or are not taking up the TRC's Calls to Action, as it is important to determine actions are happening on the ground within these organizations rather than simply looking at what their policies state or what is

advertised by these organizations. The research process caused me to reflect on my own personal experiences within the lacrosse world and how they may influence my interactions with participants. This was a non-linear process; at every stage I was reflexive. During interviews, I openly reflected on my positionality and experiences with participants to situate myself and to work through questions with participants in meaningful ways. I reflected on my interviews after they were concluded to see what went well and upon what I could have improved.

These reflections took the form of conversations with my thesis advisors and journaling exercises. Throughout this process, when I had strong emotions or was feeling frustrated, drained, or discouraged, I shared these feelings with my thesis advisors, who then told me to write down my feelings to help myself sort through the emotions. This research project intersected with my personal involvement in lacrosse. The convergence of my personal life with my academic life did create some challenges. These journaling exercises enabled me to distill my emotions and helped me to separate out the ways in which my personal involvement in lacrosse was influencing my feelings towards completing this research project. I have a love/hate relationship with lacrosse. Through these journaling exercises, I was able to take stock of my negative emotions. This awareness enabled me to work with and beyond my multiplicitous emotions in ways that enabled me to meaningful engage with my data.

Indigenous Methodologies

It was important that feminist methodologies guided my second publishable paper as my research question was focused on gender. At the same time, as a non-Indigenous person doing research involving reconciliation, it was imperative that my work was informed by Indigenous methodologies. It is important to note I do not claim that I have the ability to fully use Indigenous methodologies. As asserted by Kovach (2021), Indigenous methodologies are derived

from an Indigenous epistemology and are therefore incongruent with Western ways of knowing. As a non-Indigenous person, it would be inappropriate for me to adopt an Indigenous epistemology to utilize Indigenous methodologies as my own. However, by informing my use of feminist methodologies with some principles of Indigenous methodologies, I attended to the gendered nature of my research question while simultaneously conducting my research in what I hope was a culturally safe manner that avoided reproducing harmful settler colonial research practices.

In contrast to how feminist methodologies arose from critiques of the research process, Indigenous methodologies did not originate within academic settings (Simonds & Christopher, 2013). Indigenous communities have always done their own research through gathering information and culturally specific meaning making processes, which inform community knowledges (Castellano, 2004). For too long, academic researchers have engaged in harmful and extractive research in Indigenous communities. When the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples was conducted, starting in 1992, participants were hesitant to participate, and they cited criticism of past research on Indigenous communities (Castellano, 2004). Concerns from Indigenous communities were that Indigenous peoples had been “researched to death” (Castellano, 2004, p. 98). Importantly, Indigenous research methodologies present an opportunity for Indigenous peoples “researching ourselves [Indigenous communities] back to life” (Castellano, 2004, p. 98). The use of Indigenous methodologies challenges colonial research frameworks.

Similar to feminist methodologies, identifying one definition of Indigenous methodologies is a difficult task. There can be no specific definition of Indigenous methodologies as they are determined by specific Indigenous communities and by place

(Steinhauer, 2002). Indigenous methodologies involve relational accountability wherein knowledge is constructed within relationships, and these relationships instill a relational obligation wherein the researcher must be accountable to all of their relations (Wilson, 2001). Ray et al. (2020) asserted that Indigenous research methodologists “understand knowledge within the context of Indigenous worldviews” (p. 3). Stemming from Indigenous worldviews, Indigenous methodologies are tied to specific communities and are derived from sacred connections to land (Ray et al., 2020). Such research challenges Western research protocols that stem from colonization to make room for alternate ways of knowing (Simonds & Christopher, 2013). Indigenous methodologies have become a popular tool to challenge the harmful legacies of colonialism that permeate dominant research discourses.

Though there are no prescribed steps to using Indigenous methodologies, the “five R’s” can be used to guide Indigenous research methodologies. The five R’s were first conceptualized as four R’s and the fifth was added later. The four R’s of respect, relevance, reciprocity, and responsibility (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 2001) were conceptualized to be a tool within education, but the principles can be used to guide research. The fifth R, relationships (Restoule, 2008; Tessaro et al., 2016), was added to help bring the previous four R’s into fruition. Respect involves recognizing and respecting Indigenous peoples, culture, cultural knowledge, core values (Tessaro et al., 2016), and “respect of First Nations cultural integrity” (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 2001, p. 7). The second R, relevance, asserts that research must be relevant to Indigenous communities as well as Indigenous perspectives and experiences (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 2001). The third R is reciprocity (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 2001). There is a history of research being colonial and extractive (Tessaro et al., 2016); by fostering reciprocity, the research can be mutually beneficial to the researcher, participants, and stakeholders (Tessaro et al., 2016).

Responsibility is the fourth R, which illustrates that the researcher has a responsibility to conduct research in culturally safe and respectful ways (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 2001; Tessaro et al., 2016). The final R is relationships: “the other four R’s ... can only be truly realized through conscious tending and effort to relationships” (Tessaro et al., 2016, p. 139).

Throughout the development of this research project, I was guided by an Indigenous advisory committee. This committee helped guide the development of my research and to ensure that my work was done following the five Rs. Two of the members are from Six Nations of the Grand River and the third is from Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory. Respectively, they are each involved in lacrosse within their communities in different capacities. These five R’s were used to guide my research as well as the dynamics with my Indigenous advisory committee. The first R, respect, was a pillar of the interactions that I had with the members of my Indigenous advisory committee. I respected each of my advisors, listened to and valued their input into my project, and I respect the time they have taken to share their knowledge with me. This respect was also extended to my methods. I demonstrated respect to every participant in my study. The Indigenous advisory committee members helped to ensure that the work that I am doing is relevant to their concerns and to the different communities that they represent. Reciprocity is important part of this project, as I hope that this project will be beneficial to both my advisory committee and to my participants. It is my hope that my proposed research will be of benefit to the members of my advisory committee as they are all stakeholders within the lacrosse community, and this work is being done to better understand how lacrosse is being used for reconciliation within Canada and the ways in which these efforts are gendered. Similarly, I hope to help the various lacrosse organizations in question to create better policies and programming

to be able to implement all of the TRC's sport-related Calls to Action, promote reconciliation, and to promote deeper considerations of gender within the sport.

The next R is responsibility. My Indigenous advisory committee helped to ensure that my work was responsible and that I conducted myself in a responsible manner by advising me on culturally appropriate questions to ask. Relationships, the final R, was essential to enabling the other R's to come to fruition. It is imperative that I implement the five R's within my research so that my work can be informed by Indigenous methodologies.

My Indigenous advisory committee was comprised of three Indigenous peoples who informed the development of this project. These individuals are all actively involved within lacrosse in various capacities throughout Ontario. I recruited prospective committee members through my own personal network and contacted them by email. We had a preliminary meeting to discuss my project in which I answered any questions that committee members had. I then shared a draft of my research proposal and a draft of my interview guide with my committee. The committee reviewed both the proposal and the interview guide, and we had another meeting to discuss and feedback from the committee. Committee members urged me to highlight the effect of the residential school system within my work, because the TRC's Calls to Action (2015b) derived from the harms caused by the residential school system. The committee also urged me to interview two representatives from each perspective organization to ensure that multiple perspectives were represented. Further, the committee also suggested that I ask alternative questions to a representative from the First Nations Lacrosse Association (FNLA), as reconciliation is not the responsibility of Indigenous peoples. They also suggested that I ask the FNLA about their experiences and perspectives about racism and sexism and what they would like to see happen within the lacrosse landscape. The Indigenous Advisory Committee approved

my research proposal as well as the interview guide before I formally submitted them to my university. I compensated the Indigenous Advisory Committee members for their time and expert knowledge.

Table 1

Participants

Participant	Gender	Self-Identification
Organization 1	Male	Non-Indigenous
Organization 2	Male	Non-Indigenous
Organization 3	Male	Non-Indigenous
Organization 4	Male	Non-Indigenous
Organization 5	Male	Non-Indigenous
Organization 6	Male	Non-Indigenous
Organization 7	Male	Indigenous

The use of Indigenous methodologies creates unique opportunities for meaningful engagement. Indigenous methodologies involve “relationship-based research” (Kilian et al., 2019, p. 504), and non-Indigenous researchers may not have relationships to communities or to land. However, a way for non-Indigenous researchers to ensure that their research is informed Indigenous methodologies is to locate themselves within their work while following the five R’s. An inherent strength is that Indigenous methodologies are specific to communities and tied to land (Ray et al., 2020), meaning that these methodologies will differ depending on where and with what communities the researcher is engaged with, which enables the researcher to avoid a pan-Indigenous approach.

The gendered and racialized nature of my research implores me to use feminist methodologies informed by Indigenous methodologies. As a non-Indigenous researcher, having Indigenous methodologies inform my use of feminist methodologies provides me with the tools to critically examine settler colonialism while avoiding reproducing legacies of colonialism through adopting Indigenous methodologies as my own. I will use Indigenous methodologies to centre Indigenous worldviews and challenge settler colonialism, which will enable an exploration of gender. Further, feminist methodologies will enable me to critically examine gender and the power structures that uphold patriarchy within sport. Utilizing feminist methodologies informed by Indigenous methodologies enriched the methodological framework needed to conduct a rigorous study that is attune to different systems of oppression.

Methods

Prior to commencing my data collection, I received approval from the University of Ottawa's Research Ethics Board (file number H-10-21-7458). Importantly, the method that I used, semi-structured interviews, was approved by the members of my Indigenous advisory committee. Prior to discussing my use of semi-structured interviews, I will outline my sampling and inclusion criteria.

Sampling and Inclusion Criteria

Purposive sampling occurs when a researcher selects a participant because the participant possesses characteristics that are desirable for the research topic (DeCarlo, 2018). For my interviews, I purposively sampled stakeholders from different lacrosse organizations. Using publicly available information, I contacted each member association via email. I indicated that I was looking to recruit representatives from either Lacrosse Canada or a member association of Lacrosse Canada, who were be comfortable conversing in English, and had access to a computer

and internet connection.. Representatives from six of the nine PSOs and the NSO agreed to participate, for a total of seven participants. Representatives from the First National Lacrosse Association noted interest in this project, but were not able to identify a participant. Within Canada, the national governing body is Lacrosse Canada. There are 11 member associations of Lacrosse Canada: The Alberta Lacrosse Association, the British Columbia Lacrosse Association, the Fédération de crosse du Québec, the First Nations Lacrosse Association, Lacrosse New Brunswick, Lacrosse Nova Scotia, Lacrosse PEI, the Manitoba Lacrosse Association, Newfoundland Lacrosse, the Ontario Lacrosse Association, and the Saskatchewan Lacrosse Association. Of the member associations, nine are recognized by their respective provincial governments as being the provincial sport organizations (PSOs): The Alberta Lacrosse Association, the British Columbia Lacrosse Association, the Fédération de crosse du Québec, Lacrosse New Brunswick, Lacrosse Nova Scotia, Lacrosse PEI, the Manitoba Lacrosse Association, the Ontario Lacrosse Association, and the Saskatchewan Lacrosse Association are I interviewed seven representatives from the NSO and PSOs.

My Indigenous advisory committee advised that I should interview two individuals representing each association to ensure that multiple perspectives were being represented, however I was only able to recruit one participant from the organizations that did participate. Participants in my study were stakeholders in the aforementioned lacrosse organizations such as members of the Board of Directors, individuals who represent the particular association on a specific committee, or association staff members. Interviews ranged from approximately 40 minutes to 120 minutes. Initially, I proposed that the participants' organizations would not be anonymized; however, to ensure that my work aligned with the 5 R's, I anonymized the data to the best of my ability.

Semi-Structured Interviews

To collect data, I used online semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews have enough structure that they helped me to attend to my specific research question, yet they can be used by participants to steer conversations in the directions that they see fit to offer new insights and meanings (Fontana & Frey, 2005; Galletta, 2013). My advisory committee assisted me in creating the interview guide so that I addressed appropriate topics and asked respectful and relevant questions. After the interviews were conducted, I provided each interviewee with a transcript of the interview. I then asked them to return the transcript to me with any revisions or clarifications that they wanted to make within two weeks. Only one participant opted to make changes to their transcript.

I selected this research method for various reasons. Using semi-structured interviews enabled the flexibility for participants to go into depth about their experiences, which can illuminate important insights that the researcher may not expect (Galletta, 2013). However, participants did have the ability to avoid questions and shift the direction of the conversation away from the question (Galletta, 2013). In the virtual environment, there are several additional considerations. Online interviews can influence a researcher's ability to build rapport with interview participants (Mann & Stewart, 2011). Building rapport with participants online is possible, but researchers must be transparent and authentic (Mann & Stewart, 2011). To attend to these issues, at the beginning of each interview, I spent time getting to know each participant and finding shared experiences to build a relationship with the participants. Additionally, online interviews cut down on the need for expensive travel, which would have prevented me from completing as many interviews and would have resulted in environmental degradation from unnecessary travel. The synchronous platform thus enabled me to build rapport, foster respectful

relationships, and collect meaningful data from online interactions while keeping physical distance to respect public health guidelines as well as promote planetary health.

Analysis

For both of my publishable papers, I analysed my data using reflexive thematic analysis. Reflexive thematic analysis is a mode of analysis utilized by qualitative researchers to identify and develop themes across data sets (Braun & Clarke, 2006; 2019). Reflexive thematic analysis evolved from Braun and Clarke's (2006) articulation of thematic analysis as a "method for identifying analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data" (p. 79). As thematic analysis has been increasingly taken up within qualitative research, and taken up incorrectly, Braun and Clarke subsequently demarcated their articulation of thematic analysis as a *reflexive* thematic analysis to highlight the researcher's active role in shaping themes (Braun et al., 2019; Braun & Clarke, 2019a, Braun & Clarke, 2019a). Building on Braun and Clarke's (2006) six steps for thematic analysis, reflexive thematic analysis "[emphasize] the importance of the researcher's subjectivity as analytic resource, and their reflexive engagement with theory, data and interpretation" (Braun & Clarke, 2021, p. 330).

There is no singular methodology or method ideally suited for reflexive thematic analysis. Braun and Clarke (2019) highlighted that this method of analysis is not attached to a theoretical framework, so it can be used with various theoretical frameworks. A theme, as defined by Braun and Clarke, (2006), "captures something important about the data in relation to the research question, and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within data set" (p. 82). Though Braun and Clarke (2006) recognized that, ideally, themes are prevalent across the entirety of the data, they recognized that if there is recurrent evidence that supports one theme, that does not make that theme the most important. As asserted by Braun and Clarke

(2006), “there is no hard-and-fast answer to the question of what proportion of your data set needs to display evidence of the theme for it to be considered a theme” (p. 82). Braun and Clarke (2006) argued that themes can be prevalent across data items, or they “might appear in relatively little of the data set” (p. 83). The importance of a theme is determined by what insights that theme captures in relation to the research question (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

To analyze the data, I followed the six steps outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006). Step one, familiarizing yourself with the data, was done through transcribing the interview recordings verbatim, reading the transcriptions, and rereading the transcripts while noting my initial thoughts and observations (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Step two requires “generating initial codes” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 87). After generating initial codes, step three entails “searching for themes” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 87) from the initial codes. Step four requires reviewing the initial potential themes to ensure that the “themes work in relation to the coded extracts .. and the entire data set” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 87). Step five requires the researcher to define and name themes prior to step six, which is generating the final report (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

In using reflexive thematic analysis, I developed themes at the latent level, meaning that I developed themes by analyzing “the underlying ideas, assumptions, and conceptualizations and ideologies that are theorized as shaping or informing the semantic content of the data” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 84). My analysis followed a theoretical, or deductive, approach that was researcher driven and informed by the theoretical frameworks used for each paper to develop latent themes that highlight the assumptions and ideologies that underscore the results (Braun & Clarke, 2006). While following Braun and Clarke’s six steps, consistent with a reflexive thematic analysis approach, my process involved recursive coding and deep reflection on, and engagement with, data (Braun & Clarke, 2019) through my nonlinear coding process, whereby I repeatedly

returned to previous steps of analysis throughout the development of the themes. I moved back and forth between different steps to help refine my themes and to help myself make sense of the data. The principle of centring research subjectivity is illustrated through how I actively created the codes and themes, as these did not passively and objectively arise from the data.

The use of constructionism, settler colonial studies, Indigenous feminist theory, qualitative descriptive methodology, feminist methodologies informed by Indigenous methodologies, semi-structured interviews, and RTA informed the development of my thesis. The following chapter features the first of my publishable papers, where I investigate how representatives from seven lacrosse organizations within Canada conceptualized their organizations as attending (or not) to the Calls to Action. In Chapter 3, the second of my publishable papers, I focus on the gendered elements of the participants' responses to how lacrosse organizations have taken up the Calls to Action and the ways in which Indigenous women's participation in lacrosse are discussed. The final chapter of this thesis serves as my concluding chapter, which rounds out the arguments made throughout my work.

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Chapter Two: "We Don't Have a Strategic Plan in Place for Any of This": How Lacrosse Organizations Within Canada Have Taken Up the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action

Abstract

Lacrosse is a traditional Indigenous physical practice that has been widely appropriated by settlers. The ongoing cultural appropriation of lacrosse coupled with its Indigenous cultural meanings renders it a unique site to investigate reconciliation efforts derived from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC) Calls to Action. I used settler colonial theory, qualitative descriptive methodology, and reflexive thematic analysis to examine how seven lacrosse organizations within Canada have (or have not) taken up the TRC's five sport-related Calls to Action. Through the use of reflexive thematic analysis to analyze participants' description of the ways in which their organizations have or have not attended to the TRC's sport-related Calls to Action, I constructed two main themes with the participants' descriptions of their organizations: deflecting responsibility in responding to the Calls, and the desire to centre Indigenous peoples' perspectives. I argue that due to the ongoing cultural appropriation of lacrosse by settlers, there is a responsibility for lacrosse organizations to implement the Calls to Action as well as a responsibility to lead reconciliatory efforts.

Keywords: lacrosse, reconciliation, Truth and Reconciliation, Calls to Action, Canada

Lacrosse has existed across different Indigenous nations and in varying forms throughout North America since time immemorial (Downey, 2018); however, the Western version of lacrosse that dominates the sport today looks vastly different from the Indigenous game from which the Western version originated (Delsahut, 2015). As an Indigenous physical and cultural practice, lacrosse was appropriated by white settlers and became a symbol of the area now known as Canada - so much so that the game is Canada's national summer sport (Delsahut, 2015; Downey, 2015, 2018; Kossuth & McMurray, 2015; Robidoux, 2002). The appropriation of lacrosse by settlers has not been without resistance. Indeed, lacrosse has been used within Haudenosaunee communities to demonstrate self-determination and sovereignty by continuing to play lacrosse games on-reserve when it was made illegal through settler colonial legislation (Downey, 2015) and by travelling to international competitions travel using their Haudenosaunee passports (Simpson, 2014). Given its history of settler appropriation, as well as resistance from Indigenous communities, lacrosse is an important site to investigate reconciliation initiatives between Indigenous peoples and settlers.

The impetus for this research is the Calls for Action that emerged from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of Canada, which examined the ongoing harms that resulted from the Indian residential school system. Residential schools operated from 1831 to 1996. During this time, Indigenous children and youth were taken from their families and forced to attend these schools where they were stripped of their Indigenous culture and familial ties in attempts to forcibly assimilate them into Western culture (National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation [NCTR], n.d.), an act of cultural genocide (TRC, 2015a). Within these schools, thousands of students suffered from emotional, physical, and sexual abuse (NCTR, n.d.).

The harms and traumas of the residential school system are ongoing, as evidenced through intergenerational trauma and the current identification process of bodies of Indigenous children that are being found on the sites of former residential schools (Dickson & Watson, 2021). Residential school survivors took the Canadian government to court over the horrors that they experienced (Government of Canada, 2021b), resulting in the largest class-action lawsuit settlement in Canadian history in May 2006, which is now referred to as the Indian Residential School Settlement Agreement (IRSSA) (Government of Canada, 2021a). The IRSSA was implemented in September 2007 and included the establishment of the TRC (Government of Canada, 2021a). The TRC was formed in 2007, began its work in 2008, and tabled its *Final Report* in 2015 (TRCb, 2015).

The TRC's *Final Report* featured 94 Calls to Action for the purpose of redressing “the legacy of residential schools and [advancing] the process of Canadian reconciliation” (TRCa, 2015, p. 1). Importantly, there are five sport-related Calls to Action. Call to Action 87 states, “We call upon all levels of government, in collaboration with Aboriginal peoples, sports halls of fame, and other relevant organizations, to provide public education that tells the national story of Aboriginal athletes in history” (TRCb, 2015, p. 10). Call to Action 88 states:

We call upon all levels of government to take action to ensure long-term Aboriginal athlete development and growth, and continued support for the North American Indigenous Games, including funding to host the games and for provincial and territorial team preparation and travel. (TRCb, 2015, p. 10)

Call to Action 89 states:

We call upon the federal government to amend the Physical Activity and Sport Act to support reconciliation by ensuring that policies to promote physical activity as a

fundamental element of health and well-being, reduce barriers to sports participation, increase the pursuit of excellence in sport, and build capacity in the Canadian sport system, are inclusive of Aboriginal peoples. (TRCb, 2015, p. 10)

Call to Action 90 states:

We call upon the federal government to ensure that national sports policies, programs, and initiatives are inclusive of Aboriginal peoples, including, but not limited to, establishing: i. In collaboration with provincial and territorial governments, stable funding for, and access to, community sports programs that reflect the diverse cultures and traditional sporting activities of Aboriginal peoples. ii. An elite athlete development program for Aboriginal athletes. iii. Programs for coaches, trainers, and sports officials that are culturally relevant for Aboriginal peoples. iv. Anti-racism awareness and training programs. (TRCb, 2015, p. 10)

Call to Action 91 states:

We call upon the officials and host countries of international sporting events such as the Olympics, Pan Am, and Commonwealth games to ensure that Indigenous peoples' territorial protocols are respected, and local Indigenous communities are engaged in all aspects of planning and participating in such events. (TRCb, 2015, p. 10)

In this paper, I investigate how representatives from seven lacrosse organizations within Canada conceptualize their organizations as attending to (or not) these Calls to Action. This paper begins with a brief review of pertinent literature. Next, I discuss my theoretical framework of settler colonial studies, qualitative descriptive methodology, semi-structured interviews, and reflexive thematic analysis. I then present my results, discussion, and conclusion.

Literature Review

Commonly referred to from the Haudenosaunee perspective as the Creator's Game, lacrosse is a traditional Indigenous physical practice that is "understood as a gift from the Creator" (Downey, 2018, p. 19). The specific Indigenous cultural significance of lacrosse is not isolated to Haudenosaunee peoples. Prior to colonization, there were many different articulations of lacrosse, but through colonization processes the sport was culturally appropriated and, in some cases, was lost. During the 1630s, French Jesuit missionaries arrived in the St Lawrence Valley and witnessed Indigenous peoples engaging in the activity (Delsahut, 2015). Though the missionaries initially condemned the sport for its apparently violent nature, early settlers were drawn to the sport, and by 1740 lacrosse was being played among French settlers (Delsahut, 2015). By 1840, Indigenous players participated in organized games of lacrosse alongside settlers (Delsahut, 2015; Downey, 2012). During the nineteenth century, through its growing popularity among settler communities, lacrosse became a symbol of a shared identity and collective national pride among settlers (Delsahut, 2015; Downey, 2012, 2018; Kossuth & McMurray, 2015; Robidoux). In 1860, William George Beers, a settler from Montreal, published the first set of rules governing the formalized, colonized version of lacrosse, which served as the first formal, Western, standardized articulation of the game; this set of rules became the basis for the dominant Western version of the game, as appropriated from the nearby Haudenosaunee communities (Delsahut, 2015, Downey, 2018). Not only did the Western standardization of the rules of the sport work to colonize the sport, but so too did the use of official governing bodies and residential schools.

The advent of official governing bodies for lacrosse resulted in restricting and even prohibiting Indigenous peoples' participation in it. The National Lacrosse Association (NLA)

was formed in 1867 to act as the official governing body of the sport. During this time, Indigenous participants were not allowed to play on white teams, unless they had league approval (Downey, 2016). By 1880, the national governing body revised its rules in an attempt to completely bar Indigenous participants (Downey, 2018, 2012). Through these mechanisms of colonization, Indigenous peoples' influence on lacrosse was greatly restricted (Downey, 2012).

Though Indigenous lacrosse players were barred from competition in 1880, new iterations of the sport enabled Indigenous athletes to resist their exclusion. Box lacrosse, the indoor version of the game, was developed in the early 1930s and contrasted with the previously played outdoor game of field lacrosse (Downey, 2018). Downey (2018) described this "early era of box lacrosse, from 1931 to about 1960, as a period during which Indigenous athletes used lacrosse to assert their sovereignty.

This early era of box lacrosse featured the development of new leagues and opportunities for Indigenous lacrosse players. The International Professional Lacrosse league (IPLL) started in 1931 and served as the first professional box lacrosse league. Though none of these first professional teams were from Indigenous communities, the teams featured numerous Indigenous athletes. Though the IPLL league did not operate for long, it gave Indigenous athletes the opportunity to travel and play lacrosse for non-Indigenous teams prior to the creation of the league's first Indigenous team in 1932 (Downey, 2018). Within Canada, Indigenous athletes' participation in box lacrosse increased through the 1930s and prominent non-Indigenous teams would recruit Indigenous athletes for their talent and abilities to compete in national championships (Downey, 2018). Through the 1940 to 1960s, Indigenous lacrosse players' popularity grew. A sense of pride that was developed through recognition of Indigenous lacrosse players' increased participation and positioned it as a catalyst for a resurgence of Indigenous

cultural solidarity and identity (Downey, 2018), which led to the development of the Iroquois Nationals lacrosse team – the organization that represents the Haudenosaunee Confederacy within international lacrosse competition. The organization was founded in 1983 to declare Haudenosaunee sovereignty through sport on the principle that they were to be recognized as a distinct, sovereign nation (Downey, 2018), that travelled on Haudenosaunee passports (Simpson, 2014).

Despite the abundance of research on the history of lacrosse and its links to Indigenous politics, there is a dearth of scholarship that has situated these discussions within considerations of reconciliation. Further, there has yet to be a study evaluating how lacrosse organizations have taken up the TRC's Calls to Action (2015b).

Sport and Reconciliation

On December 15, 2015, after the *Final Report* of the TRC was released, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau vowed to fully implement all the Calls to Action (Prime Minister of Canada, 2015). This is particularly relevant to National Sport Organizations (NSOs), which serve as the national bodies for sports and that receive federal funding through Sport Canada, as it serves as an impetus for these organizations, and their regional bodies (e.g., Provincial and Territorial Sport Organizations [PTSOs]) to also fully implement the TRC's Calls to Action. The NSO for lacrosse, Lacrosse Canada, is the national governing body that is recognized by Sport Canada and features 11 member associations. These member associations (MAs) serve as the regional administrative and governing bodies and report back to Lacrosse Canada. Of these 11 MAs, 9 are recognized as Provincial Sport Organizations (PSOs) by their respective provincial governments. Within lacrosse, there are no territorial sport organizations (TSOs), so I use the term PSOs instead of PTSOs. Within each PSO, there are individual local level clubs or associations that

forms the membership of the PSO. NSO, PSOs, and local clubs and associations thus form the public sport system that governs lacrosse in Canada

Within these Calls to Action, various organizations are specifically named. Call to Action 87 specifically addresses “all levels of government, in collaboration with Aboriginal peoples, sports halls of fame, and other relevant organizations” (TRCb, 2015, p. 10). As sport governing bodies, NSOs and PSOs can be considered as included within the reference to “all levels of government” and “other relevant organizations,” I argue that NSOs and PSOs are included within this directive. Calls to Action 89 and 90 name the federal government and a specific piece of legislation directly. Importantly, sport organizations, such as NSOs and PSOs, are directly responsible for the policies they create; therefore, they are also responsible for creating policies that support reconciliation. Call to Action 90 also calls for the establishment of some very specific programs and policies, such as elite athlete development programs and anti-racism awareness and training, which fall within the purview of NSOs and PSOs. Call to Action 91 addresses the hosting of international sporting events. Though international events are named, I argue that all sporting events hosted by NSOs and PSOs should be planned in alignment with this Call to Action so that “Indigenous peoples’ territorial protocols are respected, and local Indigenous communities are engaged in all aspects of planning and participating” (TRCb, 2015, p. 10) through all levels of sport within this country. As such, I argue that the Calls to Action concerning reconciliation fall within the purview of Lacrosse Canada and its member organizations.

Reconciliation is described within the TRC *Final Report* 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. (TRCb, 2015, p. 6)

The state-sponsored ideal of reconciliation has been widely critiqued by both Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars. Daigle (2019), for instance, critiqued this form of reconciliation for creating an “ask-the-Indian dynamic” (p. 705), wherein white settlers default to asking “Indigenous peoples what they could do to ‘achieve’ reconciliation and be a reconciled settler” (p. 705). Within this dynamic, the burden of “emotional and time-consuming work of mitigating white guilt and creating a forgiving space to move forward” (Daigle, 2019, p. 705) has been thrust onto Indigenous peoples. These ideals of a reconciled settler and moving forwards have been critiqued as ways for settlers to remove themselves from blame and responsibility. Tuck and Yang (2012) discussed reconciliation as motivating “settler moves to innocence” to preserve the status quo, or sense of “settler normalcy” (p. 35). Borrows and Tully (2018) highlighted that the use of the term reconciliation has become widely popular within academia, government, and public discourse and the term is used in broad, varying ways that have caused it to become contested. Reconciliation has been critiqued as a tool of control aimed at reconciling Indigenous peoples with dominant settler society (Borrows & Tully, 2018; Tuck & Yang, 2012).

Conceptions of reconciliation within the sport field have been problematized by Forde and colleagues (2022) for positioning reconciliation as an achievable end goal for peace initiatives rather than as an ongoing structural process. They argued that sport initiatives that focus on reconciliation must aim to be “respectful, responsible, relevant, reciprocal, and relationship-oriented sporting initiatives that attend to past injustices as well as the ongoing impacts of settler colonialism” (p. 9). This articulation of reconciliation through sport moves beyond discourses of development and apologies and urges critical engagement with

understandings of both sport and reconciliation to challenge the existing settler colonial structure of sport (Forde et al., 2022). Within this context, Forde and colleagues (2022) argued that sport can be a site for Indigenous peoples to exercise self-determination and sovereignty and as resistance to settler colonialism. Building on Forde and colleague's (2022) articulation of sport for reconciliation, the ongoing legacy of settler colonialism within lacrosse organizations positions lacrosse as a rich site to investigate the possibilities of reconciliatory efforts within sport. My investigation of how representatives from various lacrosse organizations conceptualized their programs and policies as attending to (or not) the TRC's Calls to Action (2015b) was informed by settler colonial studies.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework that guided my work was settler colonialism studies. Wolfe's (2006) work is foundational to understanding the characteristics of settler colonialism. According to Wolfe, settler colonialism has two distinct aspects: It works to destroy Indigenous peoples, nations, and cultures to gain access to resources and land; and it exploits the resources and land to build and sustain a society dominated by settlers. Within the settler colonial process, genocide is enacted both overtly and insidiously in an attempt to eliminate Indigenous peoples and their cultures. This elimination sustains the society erected by settlers. Within this process, "elimination is an organizing principle of settler colonial society rather than a one-off occurrence" (Wolfe, 2006, p. 388). Thus, settler colonialism is a structure, not an event, that "destroys to replace" (Wolfe, 2006, p. 388).

Settler colonialism, as an organizing principle of society, structures the ways that lacrosse has been appropriated by settlers, how lacrosse organizations are structured, and the ways in which various lacrosse organizations interact with Indigenous peoples. Settler colonial studies

helps to illuminate the systems of power that underpin lacrosse organizations in Canada. The understanding that settler colonialism, and the ongoing dispossession of Indigenous peoples, is the organizing principle guiding these institutions highlights not only the responsibility for these organizations to take up the Calls to Action but also the importance of conducting this work in respectful manner. Below, I describe my research framework

Methodology

For my research, I engaged with qualitative descriptive methodology. As outlined by Sandelowski (2000), qualitative descriptive methodology entails descriptive summaries of events or phenomena. Though arguments have been made that all qualitative work is descriptive, qualitative descriptive methodology is a standalone methodology that can be used to create complete research projects and is not merely a jumping off point for other forms of inquiry (Sandelowski, 2000). Qualitative descriptive methodology can be used by researchers who “aim to stay close to and describe participants’ experiences” (Doyle et al., 2020, p. 444). Commonly used in healthcare research settings, a qualitative descriptive methodology can be used by researchers to describe practical issues or phenomena in pursuit of contributing to change in practice settings (Doyle et al., 2020). Within a qualitative descriptive methodology, data are generated from participants’ subjective experiences and are presented in ways that describes those subjective perspectives (Doyle et al., 2020).

Qualitative descriptive methodologists employ a standalone framework to help describe phenomena, yet following a qualitative descriptive methodology is not merely descriptive work (Sandelowski, 2010). Within this framework, qualitative descriptions can be discussed and interpreted through the various theoretical lenses, using different modes of analysis (Sandelowski, 2010). Doyle and colleagues (2020) asserted that the subjective nature of

qualitative descriptions are most appropriately aligned with the use of critical theories. Most commonly, data generated through the use of a qualitative descriptive methodology are analysed using either content analysis or thematic analysis (Doyle et al., 2020; Kim et al., 2016).

This methodology provides researchers with flexibility, as it can be used with numerous theoretical frameworks, methods, and modes of analysis. Though qualitative descriptive methodology has been critiqued for lacking rigour and for being theoretically thin, Doyle and colleagues (2020) asserted that since it is not tied to one specific theoretical framework, it affords researchers flexibility to determine how and to what extent their work will be informed by relevant theory. Sandelowski (2010) has also critiqued researchers for using qualitative descriptive methodology as a catch-all methodology for poorly designed studies and argued that this methodology is not to be adopted as a fix for studies lacking a methodological base. As a way to preserve the integrity of qualitative descriptive analysis, Doyle and colleagues (2020) called for researchers to justify their choice of methodology to prevent the selection from being “an expedient rather than a measured choice” (p. 450).

Following qualitative descriptive methodology, my goal was to describe what lacrosse organizations in Canada are doing with regard to the TRC’s Calls to Action. This methodology works well alongside my chosen theoretical framework of settler colonial studies because I am able to simultaneously account for participants’ descriptions of how lacrosse organizations conceptualize their programs and policies alongside the TRC’s Calls to Action while understanding that settler colonialism structures these accounts and institutions.

Methods

I selected semi-structured interviews as my form of data collection because of their flexibility in addressing specific research questions and also enabling participants to steer the

interview in ways that they deemed valuable (Galletta, 2015). I formed an Indigenous advisory committee to help to guide my research and provided them with a draft of the interview guide. The Indigenous advisory committee implored me to emphasize that the harms of residential schools are not in the past; Indigenous peoples and communities continue to suffer from the burden of intergenerational trauma stemming from residential schools. They urged me to highlight that these ongoing harms, coupled with ongoing settler colonialism, form the impetus for my work. We then met online to refine the questions. Initially, I proposed to interview one individual from each lacrosse organization. The committee members instead encouraged me to interview two participants in an attempt to capture multiple perspectives. Once the committee members approved the interview guide, I sought and received approval from the University of Ottawa's Research Ethics Board. Sample interview questions included, "What does the long-term athlete development program look like for Indigenous athlete development?;" "Does your association support the North American Indigenous Games?"

I recruited research participants from lacrosse governing bodies in Canada. The inclusion criteria that guided the selection of participants were as follows: participants must be representatives from either Lacrosse Canada or a member association of Lacrosse Canada; must be comfortable conversing in English; and participants must have access to a computer and internet connection.

Using publicly available information, I contacted every member association, and representatives from six of the nine PSOs and the NSO agreed to participate, for a total of seven participants. All of the participants were men; one participant spoke English as a second language, and one participant identified as Indigenous. Interviews were 40 minutes to 2 hours in length. The participants held a variety of roles within their organizations, ranging from

volunteers on executive boards to association staff. The members of my Indigenous advisory board implored me to conduct my research in what they termed a “good way.” Doing my work in a good way referred to me attempting not to harm participants. As a result, to protect the participants and to respect their willingness to openly and honestly share their perspectives, I anonymized participants’ responses to the best of my ability. To enable cost effectiveness and to promote planetary health, I eliminated the need for travel by holding all seven interviews over Zoom, an internet-mediated video platform. I audio recorded them and transcribed them verbatim. Each participant received a copy of their transcript and had the opportunity to make clarifications or corrections to the transcript prior to data analysis. One participant chose to add clarifications to their transcript; no other participant made changes.

Analysis

I used NVivo, a qualitative data management system, to assist in the organization of the transcripts for analysis with Braun and Clarke’s (2006) six-step thematic analysis, which was informed by their reflexive thematic analysis approach (Braun & Clarke, 2019). First articulated as thematic analysis, Braun and Clarke (2019) then distinguished their method of analysis as reflexive thematic analysis to highlight the role of researcher subjectivity within the analysis process (2019). Following Braun and Clarke’s (2006) six steps, I familiarized myself with the data. I then generated initial codes, such as “failure of executive boards,” “individual association responsibility”, and “community partnerships,” based on the TRC’s Calls to Action/ I then developed themes from the codes, and I reviewed potential themes. Next, I finalized themes through redefining and naming them. Finally, I produced the report, which is found in the results section. These steps enabled me to generate themes across the data to identify what was

commonly discussed across the participants' conceptions of how their organizations' programs and policies respond to (or not) the TRC's Calls to Action (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

The reflexive aspect of the data analysis process was invoked through my non-linear coding process. Braun and Clarke (2019) asserted that reflexive thematic analysis centres “researcher subjectivity, organic and recursive coding processes, and... deep reflection on, and engagement with, data” (p. 493). I frequently returned to earlier steps of analysis – that is, I reread transcripts, revisited codes, and reconsidered themes to help make sense of the data in different ways. The analysis process and the ways in which I approached the data were influenced by my positionality as a white settler, cisgender woman who has had life-long participation within lacrosse in various capacities throughout Ontario, and my deep dissatisfaction with the ways in which injustices within sport and incidents of racism and sexism have been and continue to be handled within these institutions. My own positionality as a person who experiences many privileges within sporting spaces but who also experiences and calls attention to the ways in which lacrosse organizations systemically disenfranchise women and girls creates the context from which I approached this work. Throughout this research project, I engaged in reflexive journaling to help keep note of my emotions throughout and to develop an awareness of the ways in which my personal involvement within lacrosse converged with this work.

When I approached data analysis, a key part of reflexivity was taking note of some assumptions that I held so that I that I could be actively aware of how these assumptions could impact my work (Braun & Clarke, 2019). My main assumptions were that 1) Lacrosse organizations have not meaningfully implemented, or even committed to implementing, the TRC's sport-related Calls to Action; 2) that there is little awareness in lacrosse organizations of

the TRC's Calls to Action; 3) this work is not an issue to which organizations will value dedicating time and resources ; and 4) settler lacrosse organizations systemically discriminate against Indigenous peoples. These assumptions have negative connotations surrounding settler lacrosse organizations in Canada, so it was important for me to be aware of these throughout my data analysis. Throughout my recursive and non-linear coding process, I frequently revisited my codes and themes to reflect on the ways my assumptions may have influenced my analysis .

Results

In this section, I outline how representatives from seven lacrosse organizations within Canada conceptualized their organizations as attending to the TRC's Calls to Action. .

Call to Action 87

Participants discussed their organizations' responses to Call to Action 87 in terms of the role of hall of fames, recognition of Indigenous athletes, and educating their membership about the Indigenous roots of lacrosse. When asked how their PSO recognizes and shares the stories of Indigenous athletes, the representative from Organization 2 noted, "I know that a lot of our clubs do a very good job of...highlighting all of the athletes...from their communities." The representative from Organization 3 stated, "We don't recognize it [accomplishments of Indigenous athletes] at the moment." The representative from Organization 4 stated, "If you look at those old Canada Games teams... there were some Indigenous players on those Canada Games teams. And I don't know how to track down the information."

Two of the seven participants shared that their organizations have independent lacrosse hall of fames. When asked if their organization does an adequate job of recognizing Indigenous athletes, the representative from Organization 7 stated, "Unfortunately, no, they do not." The representative from Organization 2 highlighted the recent inductions into their hall of fame: "I

know that there's been a number of Indigenous athletes, mostly male, that, that have been inducted in into the [hall of fame], either as builders, or players or veterans.” Further, the representative from Organization 5 discussed how their association does not have its own hall of fame, “We have a Sport [Province 5] Hall of Fame. But not just for lacrosse, no.” The representative for Organization 5 discussed the lack of recognition for Indigenous lacrosse players within the provincial sport hall of fame: “It'd be great to acknowledge Indigenous players, but it [lacrosse] just wasn't played by Indigenous people till, like, within 20 years.”

Contentions arose between the ways in which participants acknowledged the ease and ability, or lack thereof, to share the stories of Indigenous athletes within lacrosse history. When articulating how/if stories of Indigenous athletes throughout history have been shared, the representative from Organization 2 noted how various local arenas, specifically arenas located on reserves and near Indigenous communities, showcase the history of lacrosse and the accomplishments of local athletes through pictures and memorabilia displays: “There's a bunch of other places...throughout the province where, you know, I've walked in the hallways, or, you know, I visited an arena and, you know, I'm just, I'm blown away.” When asked how their organization has recognized Indigenous athletes through history, the Organization 1 representative stated, “This is where it's very easy in lacrosse, right, is, you know, most of the best players of all time, you know, had Indigenous heritage.”

When discussing public education that shares the story of Indigenous athletes and the Indigenous history of lacrosse, the representative from Organization 3 spoke about educating its membership about the Indigenous history of lacrosse and stated, “Oh god, it's hard ... And I'm not afraid to say I'm probably one of the only voices who tries to educate ... It's really hard. Especially with my executive board.” They continued, “we don't have a hall the fame, we don't

have any way of recognition.” When asked if they educate their membership about the Indigenous history of lacrosse, the representative from Organization 4 stated, “no... other than a couple of token like social media texts on like Indigenous Peoples Day...we don't have a strategic plan in place for any of this.” The representative from Organization 7 discussed the complexities surrounding recognizing Indigenous athletes within their organization:

...there's a ton of Indigenous players throughout the world that play, and they don't get the true overall recognition that they really should be getting... it's more or less a political aspect...[Organization 7] is there to highlight and showcase the athletes from [region]. As, I'll just, I'll say this, as Indigenous people in North America here, 100%, like I can't say 100%, 80% of them, don't identify themselves as either Canadian or US [American]. They'll say that: “We are not either. We are, you know, we're Indigenous.”

Call to Action 88

Call to Action 88 focuses on the importance of long-term athlete development and the North American Indigenous Games (NAIG). All of the participants stated that their organizations follow the Long-Term Athlete Development (LTAD) program as prescribed by the NSO. When asked if LTAD programs differed for Indigenous athletes, the representative from Organization 2 stated, “under our current framework, we don't differentiate or ... identify any subset of the population as being more or less important than any other.” The representative from organization 4 discussed the LTAD program as a possible site to implement programming specifically targeting Indigenous athletes: “I think it [a LTAD modeled specifically for Indigenous athletes] would definitely be different...the complementary pieces, I think, is where it would differentiate and...I wouldn't be the one to tell you what those missing pieces are.”

When discussing support for, and involvement in, the NAIG the representative from Organization 7 stated, “The only real tie that they [organization 7] have to it [NAIG] is that a lot of the [clubs] are affiliated with it.” The representative from Organization 4 discussed the importance of relationships with local Indigenous communities to be able to support the NAIG lacrosse teams:

That would be a great victory if we were able to field the team [for NAIG]. But, I mean, as far as I know, it comes from within [Indigenous communities], right? ... Until initiative comes on the other side in terms of wanting lacrosse, I don't see what we can really do other than try to create an inclusive environment within our regular programs.

Similarly, when asked if his organization supports NAIG, the representative from Organization 2 reflected on the importance of community partnerships: “informally, yes ... we've made some inroads in the past year ... to say ... how can we be better involved? How can we make sure that your events ... don't ... interfere with ours?” The representative from Organization 6 noted that their organization hosts an event that serves as a fundraising activity for the local NAIG lacrosse team:

All the profits ...went to the [NAIG] provincial program here. So, we buddied up with the Aboriginal Sport Circle here right from the get go. We said, “okay, you help us try to find ways to utilize the Mi'kmaq culture for lacrosse because we don't know. And then in exchange for that, we will try to help your community with developing lacrosse... [and] also financial resources for your other programming you're doing.” And so that was an event we did every year. We used to make, I don't know two or \$3,000 an event and that would go towards NAIG trips.

Call to Action 89

Call to Action 89 specifically calls upon the federal government to amend the Physical Activity and Sport Act. Though lacrosse organizations are unable to independently amend the Physical Activity and Sport Act, they are able to ensure that they have “policies to promote physical activity... reduce barriers to sports participation, increase the pursuit of excellence in sport, and build capacity in the Canadian sport system, [and that] are inclusive of Aboriginal peoples” (TRCb, 2015, p. 10). Many of the representatives discussed their organizations’ outreach initiatives, such as try-lacrosse clinics and school-based programs, as barrier-reducing activities aimed at increasing participation in lacrosse, which they discussed in alignment with Call to Action 89. The representative from Organization 1 stated, “[Organization 1] for a number of years, has run school programs in which they ensure they're getting to communities that are, have a large target or Indigenous population, trying to expose them to lacrosse and get involved.”

The representative continued:

We will go into schools, we will actually ask the school to identify in an anonymous manner, you know, gender and race if they can. So, we ensure that we're tracking how many Indigenous students were exposing to the game... That being said, there are some gaps still, right? There are areas in the province that don't have associations, and some of the sister associations inside communities wouldn't have the capacity to support it. So, it's always about the champions within.

When discussing the northern and remote lacrosse outreach programs that Organization 2 has offered in the past, the representative asserted that, “for a program to be successful ... it needs a local champion, the [organization] can't come into anyone's communities and plant lacrosse programs, because the [organization is] responsible for administering lacrosse programs that exist, right?” This reliance on local champions was also mentioned by the representative for

Organization 1, who invoked a similar discussion when discussing outreach programs: “lacrosse can't be successful in a place ... where there isn't a local champion, or there isn't somebody who says, ‘I'm willing to take this up and make this, you know, a program that's successful.’”

The Organization 4 representative highlighted aspirations for Indigenous-led programming aimed at increasing Indigenous athlete participation and reducing barriers to lacrosse. They discussed the desire for inclusive lacrosse programs that align with Call to Action 89 to be led by local Indigenous communities:

You hear things like oh [specific Indigenous community]...is interested and stuff, and...we haven't been able to get those conversations started and that's kind of where it stands ... When are we going to start doing the work? Because regardless of how it looks, [organization 4] is interested and wants to help but until it comes from within [we can't do anything].

The importance of programs being led by Indigenous communities was echoed by the Organization 5 representative. When discussing reducing barriers to participation for Indigenous lacrosse players, they explained how they follow the lead of an Indigenous-led players' association that advocates for the needs and desires of Indigenous lacrosse players in the area. They noted that their organization, “[Follows] their [Indigenous-led organization] lead, whatever they see fit, whatever environmental or atmosphere requests they have” to ensure programs and policies are inclusive of Indigenous participants. The Organization 1 representative highlighted the valuable community partnerships their organization has made with local Indigenous communities to help guide programming and initiatives:

We had a meeting in the fall about the Truth and Reconciliation ... we were trying to figure out which Indigenous leaders to bring on to our next meeting to give us some

insight. There was just so many we had to actually pare it down ... it wasn't like, "Who can we find?" It was like 17 names.

The Organization 5 representative discussed a local Indigenous-led organization leading its inclusive programming and barrier-reducing activities: "Their main goal is to get into communities and help grow the game of lacrosse ... their initiative is to ... re-immense the game into their culture and target all the little small communities." When asked about reducing barriers to increase participation for Indigenous peoples, the Organization 7 representative shared that "Organization 7 is] really trying to push that now, trying to get as many Indigenous people involved within lacrosse."

Call to Action 90

As a multifaceted Call to Action, the ways in which representatives from lacrosse organizations discussed their programming in relation to Call to Action 90 varied. Call to Action 90 advocates for inclusive programming, policies, and initiatives for Indigenous peoples and then continues to specify access to diverse traditional and cultural sport programs, elite athlete development programs for Indigenous athletes, programs for coaches, trainers, and officials that are culturally relevant to Indigenous peoples, as well as antiracism training programs (TRCb, 2015). Participants' responses ranged from specifically attending to the Call as well as conceptualizing the Call, specifically policies, programs, and initiatives that are inclusive of Indigenous peoples as aligning with their pre-existing program and initiatives. When asked if their organization has any elite athlete development programs specifically for Indigenous athletes, the Organization 2 representative invoked individual associations' responsibility provide elite athlete development opportunities for Indigenous athletes rather than the PSO itself: "there's a ton that we're familiar with, but not operated or administered by us."

Participants discussed elite athlete development programs for Indigenous athletes in terms of a reliance on Indigenous leaders. The Organization 5 representative emphasized the role of the Indigenous-led organization that they work with: “So the [Indigenous-led organization] is...someone we are really relying on to help us break down that wall and really make it their game to take back.” Discussions of organizations’ elite athlete development programs for Indigenous athletes also centred around the importance of input from Indigenous communities. This was demonstrated when the Organization 1 representative stated, “The [Organization 1] has always developed a good rapport with some of the leading Chiefs ... and relied on them for not only expertise on political decisions, but also just for some direction on Indigenous [lacrosse] development.”

Elite Indigenous athlete development was also discussed through access to high profile sporting events. This was seen through the Organization 1 representative’s assertion that their Summer Games programs offer elite development opportunities for Indigenous players:

[At] Summer Games we had an Indigenous team. I think some of that [elite] development [of Indigenous lacrosse players] will become more and more profound if we can ensure that... the local [Indigenous] communities that we're going to [deliver “try lacrosse programs”] understand the connection to the Indigenous history of the game.

Participants noted a failure of lacrosse organizations to offer programs for coaches, trainers, and officials that are culturally relevant for Indigenous peoples. When asked about any training programs that are offered by their organization that are culturally relevant to Indigenous peoples, the Organization 3 representative shared “no, we don't have that ... but [we] now have an Indigenous voice on our executive board. So, hoping in the next years, like those kinds of

initiatives will be possible.” Across all participant responses questions about Call to Action 90 iv., it was evident that there was an absence of anti-racism awareness and training programs.

Call to Action 91

Call to Action 91 addresses international event planning and urges community consultation in planning events to ensure that Indigenous protocols can be followed and respected. Though the NSO and PSOs are commonly not involved in planning of international sporting events, there are many national, regional, and local events that these organizations plan at which this TRC’s Call to Action could be meaningfully implemented. Within the landscape of lacrosse in Canada, various PSOs host numerous tournaments and provincial championship events. Similarly, the NSO is responsible for various national championship events. Substantively, this Call to Action urges cultural respect, meaningful consultation, and community engagement. It is imperative that Indigenous nations are truly treated as independent nations through nation-to-nation relationships that must be recognized and respected locally; therefore, it is not only the duty of the federal government to recognize Indigenous sovereignty, local settler communities, including those involved in lacrosse, must also recognize the sovereignty of Indigenous nations.

When asked about engaging local Indigenous communities in event planning, the Organization 1 and 7 representatives both disclosed that it is the individual association’s responsibility to consult with local Indigenous communities. Organization 5’s representative noted the reliance on Indigenous leaders with respect to engaging Indigenous communities in planning events: “We have an Indigenous liaison... we value their voice just as much as anyone else. And any input they have [that] they feel [is] culturally relevant or necessary... then we definitely do our best to implement that.” Similarly, the Organization 6 representative stated, “We buddied up with the Aboriginal Sports Circle [ASC] here, right from the get-go” and

highlighted the importance of these partnerships: “We always go to them [ASC] first, just in case something is on the go that we wouldn't be aware of that we want to be sensitive about...we usually let them lead.”

When asked which Indigenous communities their organization consults with, the representative from Organization 2 shared insights into the extent of their relationships with local Indigenous communities, “Officially, none. But unofficially, these are our clubs, these are our people, right?” They continued, “we know who the key leaders of all of our communities are, right, throughout the province.” The relationships between lacrosse organizations and various Indigenous communities ranged from no connections to informal connections to formalized forms of consultation, wherein Indigenous peoples were invited to executive board meetings to consult and positions were created for Indigenous liaisons on executive boards.

Discussion

The participants’ description of the ways in which their organizations have or have not attended to the TRC’s sport-related Calls to Action demonstrated two main issues: deflecting responsibility in responding to the Calls, and the desire to centre Indigenous peoples’ perspectives. Below, I discuss these issues and the ways in which they demonstrate that the settler colonial legacy of lacrosse organizations implicates a responsibility for lacrosse organizations to implement the Calls to Action as well as a responsibility to lead reconciliatory efforts.

Reconciliation and Responsibility

The ways in which each of the five sport-related Calls to Action has been enacted (or not) by these organizations demonstrates tensions regarding where responsibility lies for implementing these Calls. There was a consistent trend of larger organizations passing off

responsibility for implementation to smaller organizations, whether it be from the NSO to PSOs or from PSOs to individual local lacrosse associations. Further, interviewees also demonstrated a reliance on the efforts and labour of individuals, which enables organizations to avoid institutional responsibility in favour of a manufactured sense of individualized responsibility. Part of the failure of these organizations to take responsibility for the implementation of the Calls to Action may be due to the lack of a specific mandate for these organizations to do so.

When the Calls to Action were released, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau vowed to “fully implement these Calls to Action” (Prime Minister of Canada, 2015, para. 9), which formed the impetus for federally funded organizations, like NSOs, to take up the Calls to Action. However, many lacrosse organizations do not receive federal funding, which provides an opportunity for these organizations to deflect responsibility. I argue that because of the appropriation of lacrosse from Indigenous nations by settlers and the fact that these lacrosse organizations have and continue to benefit greatly from this ongoing cultural appropriation and settler colonialism (Downey, 2016), there is a responsibility for Lacrosse Canada and each PSO to implement the Calls to Action in meaningful – instead of tokenistic – ways.

Though lacrosse has never left Indigenous communities, it has been and continues to be widely appropriated by White settlers. Processes of settler colonialism have eroded Indigenous cultural connections to lacrosse, as demonstrated through participants’ descriptions of lacrosse as absent from Indigenous communities, which creates an ahistorical conception of the sport wherein the appropriated, Western version of lacrosse is positioned as the naturalized and dominant version of it, but not without resistance. This ahistorical conception of lacrosse, exacerbated by non-Indigenous organizations essentially controlling and governing lacrosse within Canada, contributes to an underlying sense of ownership over lacrosse by these

organizations, as communicated through the participants' responses. When evaluating this ongoing form of cultural appropriation through the lens of settler colonialism, we can see that this is a harmful process from which these lacrosse organizations have benefitted greatly - so much so that they stated that they are venturing to bring lacrosse *back* to Indigenous peoples.

This repackaging of lacrosse and giving it *back* to Indigenous communities by lacrosse governing bodies works as a form of erasure while simultaneously trying to bring Indigenous peoples into the fold of their respective settler organizations for the benefit of these organizations. Indeed, the appropriation of lacrosse by early settlers and current settler lacrosse organizations that stake ownership over this Indigenous practice echoes the ways in which lands were stolen and Settlers attempted to erase Indigenous peoples. This legacy of appropriation, and the ongoing harms done by this, requires all lacrosse organizations to take up the TRC's Calls to Action.

Further, the tensions surrounding the responsibility to implement the Calls to Action are reflected by constraints that these organizations face that may enable them to evade responsibility. Participants described a lack of expertise surrounding these topics as well as a lack of boards of directors valuing these initiatives. There is a need for Sport Canada to give NSOs and PSOs resources so that people with relevant and appropriate experience and expertise can be hired to do the work of meaningfully implementing the Calls to Action.

Centring Indigenous Perspectives and Making Space for Indigenous Leaders

In the wake of the TRC, many settler reactions have featured "commentaries of 'wanting to help'" (Kolezar-Green, 2019, p. 68). This sentiment has been echoed by the lacrosse organizations whose representatives I interviewed through their desire to work with Indigenous community partners. The colonial legacy of lacrosse organizations has removed Indigenous

peoples from formalized Western lacrosse organizations at every level. The desire to help to include Indigenous peoples' perspectives within lacrosse organizations as well as the desire to have Indigenous peoples lead programs and initiatives, as described by the participants, could illustrate a desire to change attitudes within settler institutions and that these lacrosse organizations value the self-determination of Indigenous communities. However, there is a need to situate these descriptions within the broader colonial project.

Indigenous peoples are not responsible for pacifying the feelings of colonizers and they do not owe settlers the labour of guiding reconciliation efforts (Daigle, 2019). Exploiting the labour of Indigenous peoples does not align with the core principle of reconciliation- mutually beneficial relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people (TRCa, 2015). If Indigenous peoples do become involved with lacrosse organizations and choose to assist in helping these organizations implement the Calls to Action, then they need to be compensated for their time and paid for their expertise. Further, such efforts have been critiqued for preserving the status quo within colonial institutions and not being tied to meaningful transformation and justice (Coulthard, 2014; Forde et al., 2021; Tuck & Yang, 2012). Inviting Indigenous peoples to an executive meeting but not changing the colonial structure of these organizations works to preserve "settler normalcy" (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 35). Similarly, citing the lack of Indigenous peoples to deliver Indigenous-led programming and advise executive boards can be seen as a way to evade action can be described as "settler moves to innocence" (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 3) that represents an "easier path to reconciliation" (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 3).

No amount of anti-racist training can make colonial institutions – especially, in the case of lacrosse, where the sport has been appropriated from Indigenous communities and Indigenous peoples' participation has been restricted by these organizations - not racist. Deeper effort and

critical reflection on the part of lacrosse organizations in Canada is needed. These organizations must confront their colonial history to create environments where Indigenous people can flourish. Importantly, such an environment would be dependent on relationality. Alongside the TRC (2015b) highlighting the value of relationships, the iteration of reconciliation and resurgence as proposed by Borrows and Tully (2018) positions relationships as the basis for transformation and resurgence. Successful implementation of the TRC's Calls to Action (2015b) is predicated on settlers cultivating respectful, reciprocal relationships with Indigenous peoples. Building from Forde and colleagues' (2022) conception of sport for reconciliation that centres Indigenous self-determination and "respectful, responsible, relevant, reciprocal, and relationship-oriented sporting initiatives that attend to past injustices as well as the ongoing impacts of settler colonialism" (p. 9), there are possibilities for the TRC's Calls to Action to be used by lacrosse organizations as a starting point to interrogate the ways in which sporting institutions uphold settler colonialism. This could look like lacrosse organizations recognizing their colonial histories and reshaping their structures to promote the inclusion of Indigenous peoples and respect the self-determination of Indigenous nations, zero tolerance for racism policies, and the promotion of antiracism in ways that positively affect the overall sport culture.

All research has its limitations, and this study is no different in that regard. A limitation to this study is that not all of the governing bodies for lacrosse in Canada participated in my research; as such, this work is not reflective of all lacrosse organizations within Canada. Additionally, this study relied on qualitative data collected from one person within each participating organization. My Indigenous advisory committee advised me to interview multiple representatives from each organization so that multiple perspectives were represented; however, I was unable to recruit more participants, despite my best efforts. It is possible that the

descriptions from each participant do not reflect the views of the organizations' views as a whole.

Conclusion

The participants' conceptualizations of their organizations' responses to the Calls to Action provided important insights into the culture and values of lacrosse organizations in Canada. It is imperative for lacrosse organizations to avoid deflecting the responsibility for meaningfully implementing the sport-related Calls to Action, as they are benefitting from the ongoing colonization of lacrosse. Though it is important to centre Indigenous perspectives and make space for Indigenous leaders within lacrosse, this cannot be used to diminish settlers' and non-Indigenous organizations' responsibility for addressing the Calls to Action.

It is my hope lacrosse organizations, their staff, and those involved within these organizations will critically reflect on their practices to identify gaps where the TRC's sport-related Calls to Action could be meaningfully implemented. Future steps for research could include full program and policy reviews for each lacrosse organization within Canada to identify areas in which these TRC's Calls to Action could be implemented. Additionally, advocacy from people in positions of power within these organizations for the TRC's Calls to Action to be mandated by sport governing bodies could create the impetus and guide the allocation of resources within these organizations so that the TRC's Calls to Action can be implemented.

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**Chapter Three: “I Keep Forgetting Them”: Lacrosse, Indigenous Women and Girls, and
Reconciliation in Canada**

Abstract

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) released its list of Calls to Action (CTA) in 2015, and five Calls were directly related to reconciliation and sport. Within these five sport-related CTA, there was no specific reference to gender. Lacrosse, as an Indigenous cultural practice that has been culturally appropriated by white settlers, is a complex site to investigate how the TRC's CTA are (or are not) being implemented and the ways in which these efforts are gendered. In this paper, I discuss how staff of Canadian lacrosse organizations address (or do not) the CTA and Indigenous women's and girls' participation in lacrosse. Through the use of Indigenous feminist theory, feminist methodologies as informed by the tenets of Indigenous methodologies, semi-structured interviews, and reflexive thematic analysis, my findings demonstrate that Indigenous women and girls are commonly overlooked, and gender is typically an afterthought within the implementation of sport-related CTA by lacrosse organizing bodies in Canada – if they are implemented at all. As a result, I argue that there is a need to make gender a central organizing principle when lacrosse organizations within Canada implement the TRC's CTA.

Keywords: Lacrosse, reconciliation, Indigenous women and girls, Indigenous feminist theory, gender

From 2008 to 2015, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of Canada travelled across Canada, and its Commissioners listened to over 6000 witnesses as they charted the history and impacts of the Indian Residential School system on Indigenous peoples and their communities (Government of Canada, 2021). In 2015, the Commission tabled its final six volume report (TRCa, 2015). Derived from the information collected throughout the Commission, the TRC issued 94 Calls to Action (CTA) (TRCb, 2015), a list of actionable steps “to redress the legacy of residential schools and advance the process of Canadian reconciliation” (p. 1).

This paper focuses on the five CTA, 87 through 91, which directly address sport. CTA 87 calls on “all levels of government, in collaboration with Aboriginal peoples, sports halls of fame, and other relevant organizations, to provide public education that tells the national story of Aboriginal athletes in history” (TRCb, 2015, p. 10). CTA 88 calls on governments to “ensure long-term Aboriginal athlete development and growth, and continued support for the North American Indigenous Games (NAIG), including funding to host the games and for provincial and territorial team preparation and travel” (TRCb, 2015, p.10). CTA 89 specifically calls on the federal government to revise a specific piece of legislation:

We call upon the federal government to amend the Physical Activity and Sport Act to support reconciliation by ensuring that policies to promote physical activity as a fundamental element of health and well-being, reduce barriers to sports participation, increase the pursuit of excellence in sport, and build capacity in the Canadian sport system, are inclusive of Aboriginal people. (TRCb, 2015, p. 10)

CTA 90 states:

We call upon the federal government to ensure that national sports policies, programs, and initiatives are inclusive of Aboriginal peoples, including, but not limited to, establishing: i. In collaboration with provincial and territorial governments, stable funding for, and access to, community sports programs that reflect the diverse cultures and traditional sporting activities of Aboriginal peoples. ii. An elite athlete development program for Aboriginal athletes. iii. Programs for coaches, trainers, and sports officials that are culturally relevant for Aboriginal peoples. iv. Anti-racism awareness and training programs. (TRC, 2015, p. 10)

The final sport-related CTA, Call 91, is concerned with event planning and consultation:

We call upon the officials and host countries of international sporting events such as the Olympics, Pan Am, and Commonwealth games to ensure that Indigenous peoples' territorial protocols are respected, and local Indigenous communities are engaged in all aspects of planning and participating in such events. (TRCb, 2015, p. 10)

Importantly, there is no specific mention of gender within these sport-related CTA. Sport has been, and continue to be, dominated by men. The omission of gender-specific language within the sport-related CTA is similarly reflected within other TRC reports, which contributes to the maintenance of heteropatriarchy (James, 2022) and colonial hierarchies of gender that may enable these Calls to be implemented in a way that continues to perpetuate the inequities that are produced in male-dominated sporting environments. Lacrosse, as an Indigenous physical practice that has been heavily colonized and dominated by white men, is an important site to examine the intersections of sport, the TRC's CTA, and gender.

In this paper, I discuss how staff of Canadian lacrosse organizations, specifically Lacrosse Canada – the National Sport Organization (NSO) for lacrosse in Canada, as well as

seven Provincial Sport Organizations (PSOs – notably, there are not Territorial Sport Organizations for lacrosse), which serve as regional governing bodies, address (or do not) the CTA and Indigenous women’s and girls’¹ participation in lacrosse. I begin by contextualizing my research within the existing body of literature and then introduce my approach to my research, which involved the use of Indigenous feminist theory, feminist methodologies as informed by the tenets of Indigenous methodologies, semi-structured interviews, and reflexive thematic analysis. My findings demonstrate that Indigenous women are commonly overlooked, and gender is typically an afterthought within the implementation of sport-related CTA by lacrosse organizing bodies in Canada – if they are implemented at all. As a result, I argue that there is a need to make gender a central organizing principle when lacrosse organizations within Canada implement the TRC’s CTA.

Literature Review

Throughout this section, I will discuss pertinent literature concerning the gendered nature of sport, the gendered nature of sport and settler colonialism, and Indigenous women’s and girls’ involvement in lacrosse.

Gender and Sport

Kidd (2013) highlighted that sporting institutions were created by men and for men, which inherently disenfranchises women. Indeed, despite the current inclusion of girls and women in most categories of sport, the dominant patriarchal gender ideologies of broader Western society and unequal power relationships between genders are reflected and even further entrenched through sport (Kay, 2014; Messner, 2011). The impact of the entrenchment of sport

¹ The literature that was reviewed, as well as the participants in this study, did not explicitly include trans women and girls and non-binary people, so this term is employed as meaning cisgender, except where explicitly stated otherwise.

as a masculine space can be seen as operating through gender stereotypes in sport. Clément-Guillotin and colleagues (2012) suggested that gender stereotypes create associations between rougher sports and masculinity and more artistic sports and femininity. Further, they found that participants in their study, “implicitly associated sport with masculinity” (p. 7). As such, it is not surprising that in Canada, women have had to “fight to gain and maintain control over their own [sport] experience, and to have their alternative practices and activities recognized as legitimate by the dominant culture” (Hall, 2016, p. XV). While sport and sport history have been dominated by men, it is important to note that the more limited body of sport history about women has reflected the experiences of white women. Hall (2016) asserted that the histories and experiences of Indigenous women’s sporting experiences in Canada cannot simply be added onto dominant white women’s sporting history because their experiences have differed greatly. Indigenous women occupy a unique place within sport history, and their stories and accomplishments have been commonly omitted (Hall, 2013).

Critical to understanding Indigenous women’s experiences in sport in Canada is an understanding of how colonization has affected both traditional Indigenous games and Indigenous women’s position within society. Prior to contact with early settlers, there were many traditional Indigenous physical practices that Indigenous women participated in such as shinny, double ball, and - in some communities - lacrosse, which was played away from the view of men (Hall, 2013). Settler colonialism greatly affected traditional Indigenous physical practices as they were restricted or banned through processes of colonialism, and Indigenous women’s participation in particular was discouraged by the imposition of Western heteropatriarchy through settler colonialism (Hall, 2013).

Settler Colonialism and Gender

Heteropatriarchy refers to “the social systems in which heterosexuality and patriarchy are perceived as normal and natural, and in which other configurations are perceived as abnormal, aberrant, and abhorrent” (Arvin et al., 2013, p. 13). Heteropatriarchy and settler colonialism are deeply intertwined (Arvin et al., 2013). Settler colonialism is the social organization of society aimed at destroying Indigenous peoples and cultures and replacing it with a society dominated by settlers (Wolfe, 2006). As famously asserted by Wolfe (2006), settler colonialism is a structure, not an event. Settler colonialism operates in two distinct ways: it destroys Indigenous peoples and cultures in pursuit of unobstructed access to land, and it builds a new society dominated by settlers on the expropriated land (Wolfe, 2006). Central to settler colonialism is the logic of elimination, which can be seen through restrictive racial classification that denies recognizing Indigenous peoples’ claim to both their Indigeneity and their land (Wolfe, 2006), through the Indian Act (1876) and rules governing state-recognized citizenship claims, as well as policies created to structure the lives of Indigenous peoples within Canada.

The residential school system was a site where race and gender were mutually reinforced. The first residential school opened in Canada in 1831 and the last one closed in 1997 (National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation [NCTR], n.d.). During this time, Indigenous children were taken from their families and communities and were forced to attend state-funded, church-run institutions (NCTR, n.d.) in an effort to assimilate Indigenous youth into Western culture by stripping them of their languages, cultures, and connections to family and land (NCTR, n.d.), a practice that has been recognized as cultural genocide (TRC, 2015a). The residential school system also imposed Western conceptions of gender by dividing “sisters and brothers from one another, imposing racialized gender norms onto the young bodies of Native children while denying their traditional gender roles, which differed cross-culturally” (Hunt, 2018, p. 24). These

dichotomous categorizations of gender contrasted with some Indigenous conceptions of gender, as many Indigenous languages do not have dichotomous gender categorizations (Nahwilet Meissner & Whyte, 2018).

The colonial endeavour of rigid gender categorization is tied to the settler colonial project of elimination. The Indian Act (1876, 1985) is a piece of Canadian legislation that governs the State's relationship with First Nations peoples and systemically imposed patriarchy onto First Nations (Barker, 2008). It afforded First Nations men rights and privileges that it did not afford to First Nations women and enshrined and perpetuated a system that systemically targeted and devalued First Nations women and severed their connection to the land (Barker, 2008; Hunt, 2018). Indigenous women are inherently connected to land and to the continuation of culture; therefore, settler colonialism specifically targets Indigenous women (Simpson, 2016). This specifically gendered nature of settler colonialism forms the basis from which I investigate the gendered nature of reconciliation efforts.

Despite knowledge of the ways in which Indigenous women are uniquely targeted by heteropatriarchy and settler colonialism, the five sport-related TRC CTA (2015b) were written in gender-neutral language. In fact, James (2022) found that the TRC as a whole adopted a gender-neutral approach to its investigation, which not only reproduced settler colonial heteropatriarchy but also “has specific consequences in policy and in the daily lives of Indigenous women and girls... [and negatively] impacts the potential for healing for Indigenous women and girls and the potential for transformative reconciliation” (p. 143). Similarly, Sarkin and Ackermann (2019) investigated various international Truth Commissions and found that “commissions with gender as a mandate are usually more successful at bringing about gains for women” (p. 507). Since the TRC's (2015b) sport-related CTA make no specific reference to gender, this serves as an

impetus to critically examine the ways in which gender is or is not taken up in sport-related reconciliatory efforts.

Gender, Settler Colonialism, and Sport

When evaluating the intersection of gender and sport, it is important to reflect upon how both have been influenced by settler colonialism. As noted above, within residential schools, gendered expectations were imposed to entrench Euro-Canadian ideals surrounding gender (Forsyth, 2013). One of the ways that gendered expectations of residential school attendees were imposed was through sport, where boy attendees were encouraged to participate in competitive Euro-Canadian sport, while girls were encouraged to participate in less structured recreational activities (Forsyth, 2013). These practices echoed the overarching goals of settler colonialism - to exert power over Indigenous peoples and their culture in effort to destroy Indigenous culture and assimilate Indigenous peoples into dominant Western culture (Te Hiwi & Forsyth, 2017).

Lacrosse is a rich site to examine the convergence of multiple systems of power. A traditional Indigenous practice that carries specific cultural meanings across different Indigenous nations, it has existed within different Indigenous communities, and in different forms, since time immemorial (Downey, 2012, 2018). However, the form of lacrosse that is popular today looks very different than traditional Indigenous versions of the game. Following seventeenth century Jesuit missionaries who saw Haudenosaunee lacrosse players playing the traditional Haudenosaunee version of lacrosse in the St. Lawrence Valley, the traditional Indigenous version of lacrosse was appropriated by white settlers (Delsahut, 2015). Through processes of cultural appropriation such as white settlers taking up the game, standardizing the rules, implementing official governing bodies, and restricting the participation of Indigenous players, the traditional

Indigenous physical practice was transformed into the sport as we have come to know it today (Delsahut, 2015; Downey, 2018, 2012).

The intersection between settler colonialism and lacrosse is evident through the use of lacrosse in residential schools. Due to the vast appropriation of lacrosse by white settlers, the culturally appropriated version of lacrosse had so become popular among white settlers that the culturally appropriated version of lacrosse was used within residential schools to help “civilize” the Indigenous boys (Downey, 2018). The nexus of lacrosse, gender, and settler colonialism is thus a rich site to explore through the lens of reconciliation. Critical to this exploration is the position of Indigenous women and girls and their involvement within lacrosse.

Indigenous Women’s and Girls’ Involvement in Lacrosse

Indigenous women’s and girls’ participation in lacrosse carries specific cultural significance. Indigenous women have been participating in lacrosse for centuries as committed organizers and supporters (Downey, 2012; Hall, 2013). Within some nations, Indigenous women played lacrosse amongst themselves away from the view of men and, in others, they played among men but without using sticks (Hall, 2013). Indigenous women’s participation in lacrosse as players has not always been supported, as evidenced by the tensions at the intersection of the Haudenosaunee women’s lacrosse team and traditional Longhouse beliefs (Downey, 2012). In the wake of the success of the men’s Iroquois Nationals lacrosse team during the early 1980s, the team that represents the Haudenosaunee Confederacy at international competitions, a group of Haudenosaunee women’s lacrosse players attempted to start their own internationally recognized program, but their efforts were contested by those who supported the traditionalist Longhouse belief that lacrosse is a ceremony (Downey, 2012).

As a Haudenosaunee ceremony, for some, lacrosse is a medicine with healing powers; it is considered to be a practice for men and does not fall within the scope of Haudenosaunee women's roles (Downey, 2012). In 1987, Clan Mothers from Onondaga and the Seneca Nation at Tonawanda protested a Haudenosaunee women's exhibition game, citing their traditionalist beliefs (Downey, 2012). The main belief that was cited was that Indigenous women's power, specifically during moon time (i.e., during menstruation), and the sacred medicine of a lacrosse stick were not compatible (Downey, 2012). Notwithstanding some disapproval from those who ascribe to the aforementioned beliefs, Haudenosaunee women's lacrosse teams have persisted, and Indigenous women and girls have continued to play lacrosse.

Though their participation has been and remains contested by some, Indigenous women have continued to play lacrosse and represent their cultures. Indeed, the Haudenosaunee Nationals women's lacrosse team competed at the 2022 World Games in Alabama (Hamilton, 2020). By representing their nation and culture on the world stage, the Haudenosaunee Nationals women's lacrosse team asserted their sovereignty, agency, and pride in their identity. Relatedly, and drawing from discussions with Indigenous women lacrosse players in Akwesasne, Bassett (2018) argued that within the "context of settler colonialism that systematically dispossesses Indigenous women's bodies, lacrosse emerges as a healing ceremony for Haudenosaunee women, connecting them to their land and culture" (p. 29).

Though Indigenous women's participation in lacrosse has never ceased, their stories and accomplishments have been widely overlooked. The gendered nature of lacrosse and the important cultural nuances surround Indigenous women's and girls' participation in lacrosse, coupled with the non-gendered language within the TRC's CTA, create an important nexus to

study the impacts of how the TRC's sport-related CTA (TRCb, 2015) operate in a gendered way within a sport that is derived from Indigenous cultural practices.

Theoretical Framework

My work is guided by Indigenous feminist theory, which highlights the gendered nature of settler colonialism and can be used to investigate how settler colonialism and heteropatriarchy overlap in ways that uniquely effect Indigenous women. Indigenous feminist theorists have highlighted that Indigenous women's connection to the land causes Indigenous women to be specifically targeted by settler colonialism and creates uniquely gendered-dimensions to settler colonialism (McGuire-Adams, 2020). Suzack (2015) identified Indigenous feminist theorizing as analyzing "how gender injustice against Indigenous women emerges from colonial policies and patriarchal practices that inscribe gendered power dynamics to the detriment of Indigenous women" (p. 261). This can be further extended to those who do not fit within the colonial gender binary of man and woman. Indigenous feminist theory arose from these contentions, and those who employ it argue that it demonstrates that settler colonialism and heteropatriarchy can be evaluated as operating simultaneously.

There is no singular articulation of Indigenous feminist theory, as there are various Indigenous nations that conceptualize gender in different ways (McGuire-Adams, 2020). I have chosen to follow Arvin and colleagues' (2013) approach²: 1) "problematize and theorize the intersections of settler colonialism, heteropatriarchy, and heteropaternalism" (p. 14); 2) "refuse the erasure of Indigenous women" (p. 17); 3) "actively seek alliances in which differences are respected and issues of land and tribal belonging are not erased ... [and] relationships to settler

² Arvin and colleagues (2013) called their theory Native Feminist Theory. I have used the term Indigenous as it is now a more acceptable term than "Native."

colonialism are acknowledged as issues that are critical to social justice” (p. 19); 4) “recognize Indigenous ways of knowing” (p. 21); and 5) “Question academic participation in Indigenous dispossession” (p. 25). This approach provided me with the theoretical tools necessary to understand interlocking systems of oppression.

As a white settler, I am unable to claim Indigenous feminist theory as my own. Indigenous feminist theories were developed by individuals who did not see their experiences reflected within mainstream feminist theory as well as dominant discourses within Indigenous studies. These are not struggles that I know firsthand - I have learned about them from Indigenous women and from the Indigenous feminist theorists who have developed this theory. Though I do not purport to claim this theory as my own, my work is nevertheless informed by how Indigenous feminist theorists have conceptualized gender in relationship to settler colonialism. As a settler researcher, it is important that I be aware of the origins of Indigenous feminist theory to avoid reproducing colonialism within research and to eschew appropriation of this theory. By acknowledging the specific Indigenous context of Indigenous feminist theory and positioning this examination of gender within the context of Indigenous feminist theory, it is my hope that this work is not folded into the mainstream feminist discourses that have worked to disenfranchise the experiences of Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse peoples.

Methodology

My research was guided by the overarching principles of feminist methodologies and informed by the tenets of Indigenous methodologies. Feminist methodologies refer to critical approaches to research that centre gendered experiences (Wigginton & Lafrance, 2019). There is no singular feminist methodology, as feminist methodologies are comprised of a variety of

equity-seeking principles that ground the process of doing feminist research (Chakravarty et al., 2014).

According to Cancian (1992), the overarching principles of feminist methodologies include focusing on gender and inequality, centring participants' lived experiences, being action oriented, critical, and reflexive, and the use of participatory methods. The focus on gender and inequality is used by feminist methodologists to acknowledge the ongoing patriarchal oppression of women within research and broader society. The focus on experience results in feminist methodologists typically using qualitative research methods to examine the lived experiences of participants. Action-oriented research involves actionable outcomes and the encouragement of policy changes aimed at social justice. The reflexive critical stance of feminist methodologists reflects their understanding of how research is shaped by the social location of the researcher. Finally, participatory methods, wherein participants actively engage in the data collection process through methods such as semi-structured interviews, are often used by feminist methodologists to enable participants to exercise more agency and power during the research process (Cancian, 1992).

Feminist methodologies guided the structure of my research. My research question centred investigating and emphasizing discussions of gender and Indigeneity. Further, investigating how lacrosse organizations address gender within the ways that they discuss their programs and policies alongside the TRC's CTA is important in determining what actions are happening within these organizations rather than simply looking at what their policies state or what they advertise. By following the principles of feminist methodologies by utilizing participatory methods, such as semi-structured interviews, was important so that I could centre

the experiences and knowledge of participants while fostering an environment conducive to open and honest.

While my research was grounded in feminist methodologies, it was also informed by principles of Indigenous methodologies. As a non-Indigenous person, I do not wish to claim ownership of Indigenous methodologies, as doing so could be seen as cultural appropriation. Further, some scholars argue that Indigenous methodologies are inconsistent with Western epistemologies (Kovach, 2021). However, by informing my use of feminist methodologies with principles of Indigenous methodologies, I was able to attend the gendered nature of my research question while simultaneously conducting my research in respectful manner.

Drawing from Indigenous methodological practices, my research project was guided by the 5 R's of Indigenous methodologies: Respect, relevance, reciprocity, responsibility, and relationships (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 2001; Tessaro et al., 2016). To ensure that I adequately engaged with the 5 R's throughout this research process, as well as the principles of feminist methodologies, I formed an Indigenous advisory committee that helped to guide the development of this project. I recruited the committee through my own personal network, and it consisted of three Indigenous individuals who met the following inclusion criteria: involved in lacrosse, interested in examining gender and race, and willing to assist me with my research. Two members were Indigenous women, and the third member was an Indigenous man. Each member is involved in lacrosse within their communities in different capacities, ranging from player to coach and administrator. Importantly, I compensated all members for their time.

I met with this advisory committee twice over Zoom to develop this project. First, we met to discuss my ideas for this project, and I was able to answer any questions that the committee members had. I then circulated a draft of my research proposal and a draft of the interview guide

for the committee to review. We then met again over Zoom where we discussed the proposal and interview guide and committee members offered input and suggestions to the documents to refine questions. The committee members instead recommended that I interview two participants from each organization to capture multiple perspectives and also urged me to highlight the ongoing harms stemming from the residential school system and ongoing settler colonialism, as these ongoing harms form the impetus for my work. Following the input of the advisory committee members, I then submitted my proposal and interview guide to the University of Ottawa Research Ethics Board (REB).

Following the 5 R's, I made sure to demonstrate *respect* for my advisory committee members by listening to and valuing their input into my project as well as respecting the time they took to share their knowledge. The advisory committee members helped me to develop this project in a culturally respectful manner. Additionally, the Indigenous advisory committee helped to ensure that my work was culturally *relevant* and reflected their concerns and those of the communities to which they belong. It was important that this project was *reciprocal* so that the participants could gain something productive from this research, such as critical insights into their own organizations and direction and support to help enable lacrosse organizations to meaningfully engage with principles of reconciliation. The fourth R, responsibility, emphasizes that I have a responsibility to do this work in a what the Indigenous advisory committee members described as a "good way." To conduct my research in a good way, it was important for me to do no harm, which is why I chose to anonymize the participants and organizations as best as I could. I was able to address the fifth R, *relationships*, with the advisory committee members as well the research participants.

Methods

Importantly, there is no singular method prescribed by feminist methodologies (Wigginton & Lafrance, 2019) nor Indigenous methodologies (Steinhauer, 2002). Semi-structured interviews provided enough structure to help me attend to my specific research question, yet they also enabled me to build rapport with participants and allowed them to tell their own stories and steer conversations in the directions that they saw fit to offer new insights and meanings (Galletta, 2013).

After receiving approval from the University of Ottawa's REB, I used purposive sampling to recruit participants who were representatives of either Lacrosse Canada or a Provincial or Indigenous member association of Lacrosse Canada, were comfortable speaking in English, and had access to a computer and internet connection, as due to COVID-19, interviews were conducted over Zoom. Using the contact information listed on each organization's website, I first reached out to Executive Directors to see if they could identify anyone within their organizations who may have expertise on the research topic and interest in participating in my study. If the organization did not have an Executive Director, or if the Executive Director did not respond, I used the contact information listed in the websites to identify persons whose position could possibly overlap with the research topic and invited them to participate.

I conducted seven semi-structured interviews, with each participant representing a different organization. The participants held roles that ranged from staff members to members of a Board of Directors. All of the participants self-identified as men and one participant self-identified as Indigenous. On average, the interviews lasted 72 minutes. Interview questions addressed the sport-related CTA, such as the following: What does the long-term athlete development program look like for Indigenous girls and women? What, if any, anti-racist awareness and training programs does your association offer? Within these training programs,

how is gender addressed? I transcribed the interviews verbatim and returned the transcripts to the participants. The participants then had two weeks to make any changes or corrections to their interview transcript and return it to me for inclusion in my analysis. Only one participant chose to make revisions to their transcript.

Analysis

To analyse the data, I used reflexive thematic analysis (RTA) (Braun & Clarke, 2019), an updated version of Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis, which is used to identify and analyse themes across data sets. I took a semantic approach to Braun and Clarke's (2006) six step process wherein I focused on one particular area of interest within the data to develop latent themes that highlighted the assumptions and ideologies that underscored the results (Braun & Clarke, 2006). I also integrated the principles of reflexivity that distinguish Braun and Clarke's (2019) RTA from their initial iterations of thematic. The six steps include 1) "Familiarizing yourself with the data" (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 60), 2) "generating initial codes" (p. 61), 3) "searching for themes" (p. 63), 4) "reviewing potential themes" (p. 65), 5) "defining and naming themes" (p. 66), 6) "producing the report" (p. 69). I familiarized myself with the data through transcribing the interviews and reading through the transcripts while noting my initial observations. Coding the data involved generating distinct labels for chunks of text that conveyed meaning to help me make sense of the data (Braun & Clarke, 2019). Some codes that I developed were "Lack of Indigenous women in lacrosse," "different cultural meanings of lacrosse," and "women in lacrosse." I then organized the codes to develop initial themes. After I had organized my codes into themes, I reviewed the potential themes. Step five implored me to refine, define, and name themes, which was done through connecting themes back to my research question. The final step, writing up the findings, can be found in the results section.

As noted above, throughout this process, I followed the principles of reflexivity as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2019): Centring researcher subjectivity, organic and recursive coding processes, and deep reflection on, and engagement with, data. Centring researcher subjectivity required me to reflect on my own personal experiences within lacrosse, which during my life-long involvement have included being an elite player, coach, and referee, and how they influenced my interactions with participants and the data. This reflection enabled me to recognize some assumptions that I held prior to data collection. My main assumptions were threefold: 1) lacrosse organizations are doing very little, if anything, with regard to implementing the TRC's CTA; 2) if lacrosse organizations have done anything in pursuit of reconciliation, these efforts will have been tokenistic; and 3) these efforts will have been aimed at and prioritized Indigenous boys and men. During interviews, I openly reflected on my experiences with participants to situate myself and to work through questions with participants in meaningful ways. While I was analysing the data, I noticed that my Eurocentric approach to gender was apparent; for example, I found that I omitted discussions of gender outside of binary terms. I attempted to address through complicating and challenging the Western gender binary throughout my writing. I achieved organic and recursive coding and deep reflection on, and engagement with, data through my nonlinear coding process, whereby I repeatedly moved back and forth between different steps to help me to refine my themes and to help me make sense of the data (Braun & Clarke, 2019). This organic and recursive coding process enabled me to generate two themes from the data.

Results

Through the use of RTA (Braun & Clarke, 2019), I generated two themes that illustrate how lacrosse organizations within Canada address gender within the ways that they attend to the

TRC's CTA: 1) gender is categorical; 2) and there are specific Indigenous cultural meanings concerning Indigenous women and girls' participation in lacrosse. Using Indigenous feminist theory (Arvin et al., 2013), I argue that these themes illustrate the ways in which settler colonialism and heteropatriarchy continue to influence Canadian lacrosse organizations and jeopardize meaningfully addressing the TRC's CTA (2015b).

Gender is Categorical

When asked about halls of fame and recognition of Indigenous athletes (CTA 87), and the NAIG and long-term athlete development for Indigenous athletes (CTA 88), the participants discussed gender in binary, categorical ways that positioned gender as attached to whiteness. For example, when asked how their organization has recognized Indigenous athletes and how the organization has educated its membership on the stories of Indigenous lacrosse players, the representative from Organization 5 stated, "To be honest, I don't think we've recognized many of our athletes...I think that's something that is lacking, not just in the Indigenous, the female [too]." Importantly, this statement positioned Indigenous and female to be separate, distinct categories. When discussing the development of NAIG teams, the Organization 5 representative said that their "only setback was we weren't able to get a female group going, we tried, we just couldn't get the numbers or the interest going..." When asked if LTAD programs look the same for all athletes, including Indigenous athletes and more specifically Indigenous girls, the Organization 2 representative stated, "right now, no, we don't differentiate between any visible or invisible minority. Whether or not that's, you know, gendered, or race or class or anything."

Throughout conversations surrounding programs and policies aimed at reducing barriers to participation and building capacity in the sport system that are inclusive of Indigenous peoples (CTA 89), I asked the participants about programs for Indigenous women and girls in lacrosse.

The Organization 2 representative stated, “I’m really glad that you speak about girls because I keep forgetting them.” Similarly, the representative from Organization 1 discussed high performance opportunities for Indigenous boys in contrast to community development initiatives for Indigenous girls:

[The Summer Games]. That’s a huge deal for us. To have an Indigenous only team is a huge carrot for Indigenous players to be involved in the sport... As far as female development, you know, some of the programs ...[are] about getting into the schools, and school programming.

The Organization 1 representative continued to discuss his organization’s school programs, programs that he conceptualized as a barrier-reducing activities, as ways to increase Indigenous girls’ participation in lacrosse: “let’s get into the schools ... maybe grab some Indigenous athletes that haven’t been exposed to the game or female Indigenous athletes or female athletes, that’s where you’re going to do it.” When asked about policies and programs aimed at reducing barriers to participation in lacrosse for Indigenous women and girls, the representative from Organization 5 stated, “Indigenous females’ [participation] is pretty low ... But females in general, we do a fantastic job of supporting females.” This participant defined the category of female as inherently non-Indigenous. The categories of female and Indigenous being mutually exclusive was reified by the representative from Organization 4: “[When] I first got there, there wasn’t much happening in the way of female lacrosse and certainly Indigenous lacrosse.”

I asked the participants if there was any funding for programs that reflect the diverse cultures and traditional sporting activities of Indigenous peoples (CTA 90) and how Indigenous women and girls were reflected within these. In response, the Organization 2 representative responded, “So not specifically, although there has been ... increased funding for women and

girls in sport in general.” The Organization 4 representative discussed the need for targeted inclusive programming, as outlined in CTA 90, and within this discussion he referred to Indigenous athletes and girl athletes as being separate categories: “there wasn't much happening in the way of female lacrosse and certainly Indigenous lacrosse.”

Throughout my line of questioning, I prompted participants to discuss the ways their organizations have taken up the latter half of CTA 91, “[ensuring] that Indigenous peoples’ territorial protocols are respected, and local Indigenous communities are engaged in all aspects of planning and participating in such events” and how/if Indigenous women were included in these discussions. I extended the concept of events to include sporting events that could be hosted by lacrosse organizations, such as tournaments and competitions, because lacrosse organizations within Canada, especially smaller PSOs, may not be involved in the planning of international mega-sport events. The representative from Organization 6 highlighted a desire to have Indigenous women lead the planning of events for Indigenous women and girls, but he noted that he faced the barrier of a lack of Indigenous women and girls participating within his PSO: “I think it's from just raw numbers, it will be hard to say ‘we're having a female led, female only Indigenous lacrosse event this weekend.’”

There are Specific Indigenous Cultural Meanings Surrounding Indigenous Women and Girls' Participation in Lacrosse

When specifically asked about how his organization has recognized Indigenous women athletes throughout history, the representative from Organization 2 noted a lack of recognition. He continued by explaining that there are complex reasons behind the lack of recognition, including the fact that his organization only informally recognizes Indigenous women, which are rooted in specific cultural beliefs:

I know that historically, there has been, you know, some concern in the Indigenous community over female participation ... And as an example of that, the [specific Indigenous women's lacrosse team] was ... I don't want to say not invited or not allowed because it's not really accurate, but [the team] was certainly encouraged to play their games [off reserve] as opposed to [on reserve]. And, you know, recently, those athletes have come back on to the rez in order to be able to play, which is a great thing for everyone. Those are cultural issues that typically the [Organization 2] doesn't, you know, involve itself in because those are community perspectives, and it's not up to us to decide where a team plays or where they don't. But we are, you know, pretty proud to see that the [specific Indigenous women's lacrosse team] are playing in [specific Indigenous community].

The representative from Organization 2 further discussed the specific Indigenous cultural meaning surrounding Indigenous women's and girl's participation in lacrosse and their organization's perspective on creating inclusive programs and policy, and thus attending to CTA 90:

[I am] not Indigenous, not, you know, even fully understanding the cultural implications of the background behind why there might be some question over Indigenous female participation. So yeah, [Organization 2 doesn't] touch that at all and [it] allows the community to advise [Organization 2] as to what their plans are [for programs that are inclusive of Indigenous women and girls].

When discussing building capacity for Indigenous women and girls within lacrosse organizations, the Organization 7 representative, notably the only Indigenous participant, shared

some of his own insights and beliefs surrounding Indigenous women and girl's participation in lacrosse:

Even though we have quite a few Indigenous women that do play, there are a lot [of Indigenous people] out there that are really upset and mad about that. Traditionally, the game of lacrosse...it was just strictly men ... Today, the game has really gotten away from the medicine part ... Had it still been played the traditional way, yes, I would be all for it just being strictly men. But the traditional heart and the traditional way the game was played, it was played amongst the clan...[with] all wooden sticks... in huge fields ... Like, today, the aspect of the plastic, the box, the field rules, and all that other stuff ... All that, you know, it was just an evolution of the game to a sport. It was just an evolution of a medicine to a sport, which was going to happen because you know what? We shared it with the world.

This participant continued by sharing personal insights about his daughter:

My daughter plays, she still plays, you know. I taught her to play a young age. She just fell in love with the game and been a part of it ever since. And I don't regret that, I don't. I mean, I have had a lot of people that have looked at me funny for it and got mad at me for it. But hey, you know what? She's playing, she's having fun. I mean, just because she's a woman and it's our game doesn't change the aspect, doesn't change anything.

This theme captured important insights related to the complex ways that gender is discussed alongside the specific Indigenous cultural meanings surrounding Indigenous women's and girls' participation in lacrosse.

Discussion

My research demonstrates that gender is an afterthought within lacrosse organizations' discussions of implementing the TRC's CTAs, and that Indigenous women and girls are systemically disadvantaged within the context of the overlapping systems of settler colonialism and patriarchy. These findings confirm that there is a need to make gender a central organizing principle when lacrosse organizations within Canada are attempting to implement the TRC's CTA.

Gender is Categorical

The theme "gender is categorical" was evidenced by the way participants in this study discussed Indigenous women and girls as separate from the categories of both "women and girls" and "Indigenous." Such statements reflect the dominant whiteness within the notions surrounding the category of "women and girls." It also works to separate Indigenous women from the category of "Indigenous," which demonstrates how patriarchy operates to exclude Indigenous women and positions men as the default conception of an Indigenous person. This discursive exclusion is illustrative of the ways in which Indigenous women and girls are overlooked by lacrosse organizations. The discussion of gender as categorical can be seen as deriving from the patriarchal sporting environment that normalizes heteropatriarchy and produces men as natural athletes and women as novel athletes. Not only were Indigenous women and girls overlooked by participants, but gender and its connection to settler colonialism were omitted from these discussions. Separating Indigenous women from the category of "Indigenous" echoes the heteropatriarchy embedded within the Indian Act (1876), which systemically disenfranchised Indigenous women from their culture (Barker, 2008; Hunt, 2018). This process can be considered Othering.

Othering within this context needs to be understood within the settler colonial project (Kagedan, 2020) wherein a dominant group, settlers, marginalizes a subordinate group, Indigenous women. Settler colonialism and heteropatriarchy are inextricably tied together within this process, as evidenced by the gendered nature of the Othering. Othering serves to erase the existence of Indigenous women and girls within considerations of Indigenous lacrosse players. If lacrosse bodies fail to include Indigenous women and girls as lacrosse players, the TRC's CTA, if implemented, will be aimed at Indigenous men and boys. A tenant of Indigenous feminist theory is refuting the erasure of Indigenous women (Arvin et al., 2013). Though the representative from Organization 3 forgot about women, it is clear from the ongoing achievements of Indigenous women lacrosse players (Bassett, 2018; Hamilton, 2020) that Indigenous women exist within these sporting spaces and are deserving of reconciliatory efforts. For reconciliation efforts to be equitable, they must not erase the existence of Indigenous women and girls within sporting spaces.

Similarly, the representative from Organization 1 discussed the importance of their provincial Summer Games in recruiting more Indigenous male lacrosse athletes, which contrasted with very different efforts for recruiting girls, which instead focused on community-level lacrosse. The statement illustrated different gendered expectations for men and boys, who are considered to be high-performance athletes, and women and girls, who are not even conceptualized within high-performance spaces. Such statements erase Indigenous women and girls from the high-performance sphere. Importantly, Indigenous women are no less capable than their white and male counterparts. These gendered and racialized expectations are derived from the settler colonial imposition of heteropatriarchy, which can be seen through the similarly gendered expectations of sport participation within residential schools (Forsyth, 2013). The

categorical articulation of gender is predicated on the Western gender binary that positions male and female as dichotomous absolutes. When evaluating gender within sporting spaces that are influenced by settler colonial ideals, it is imperative that we move beyond stagnant, binary articulations of gender.

Indigenous Culture and Women's and Girls' Participation in Lacrosse

The theme of “there are specific Indigenous cultural meanings surrounding Indigenous women and girls' participation in lacrosse” illustrated the ways in which participants discussed contentions within Indigenous communities of Indigenous women's and girls' choice to play lacrosse. The Organization 2 representative alluded to cultural complexities and asserted that as a non-Indigenous organization, it is not his responsibility to make policy decisions surrounding Indigenous women and girls' participation in lacrosse. This assertion is important as it highlights a tenant of Indigenous feminist theory, the recognition of Indigenous ways of knowing (Arvin et al., 2013). However, it is important that the recognition of Indigenous beliefs surrounding Indigenous women's and girls' participation in lacrosse does not result in the erasure of Indigenous women and girls from the landscape of lacrosse, which is that something Indigenous feminist theorists work against (Arvin et al., 2013). Further, there is danger in non-Indigenous peoples using their social location as settlers as rationale for not doing anything to promote equitable reconciliatory practices.

Settler colonialism works to erase the complexities and subtle, nuanced cultural differences within lacrosse. This was evidenced by the participant from Organization 2 recognizing that there is in fact a specific cultural relevance to Indigenous women's lacrosse, but not wanting to do the work to unpack and understand how these complexities operate. Even though Indigenous women and girls were widely forgotten by representatives of lacrosse

organizations, lacrosse has been a way for Indigenous women to resist and combat the systemic harms that settler colonialism has brought to their communities (Bassett, 2018). This, alongside the tensions surrounding the participant from Organization 7 encouraging his daughter to play lacrosse, as well as his articulation of evolving changing values, demonstrates that when discussing Indigenous women's and girls' participation in lacrosse, there is no singular answer and that notions of tradition may change and mean different things to different people at different times and in different places.

The question thus arises of how the sport-related CTA can be taken up in ways that recognize the influence of settler colonialism, heteropatriarchy, and heteronormalization of gender in lacrosse and renounce the erasure of Indigenous women and gender diverse peoples, while simultaneously respecting the Indigenous women and girls who are actively participating in lacrosse? The answer is not clear cut. Within sport for reconciliation initiatives, of which the TRC's CTA can be seen as being a part, there needs to be critical reflection upon the ways settler colonialism structures sport (Forde et al., 2022). Therefore, a meaningful, justice-oriented approach to sport for reconciliation must challenge settler colonialism and advocate for Indigenous sovereignty, resistance, and self-determination (Forde et al., 2022). A direct challenge to settler colonialism would be accepting variance between and within Indigenous cultures and belief systems, as well as recognizing that Indigenous cultures are not monolithic or static, and multiple things can be true at once.

The complexity of these discussions and the lack of an easy answer can provide lacrosse organizations with a basis to delay or avoid meaningful implementation of the CTA. Brooks-Cleator and Giles (2020) noted that decision-makers at non-Indigenous organizations often determine how and if they are responsible for implementing the CTA. If these organizations

determine they are not responsible for the implementation of the TRC's sport-related CTA, it could create an overreliance and strain on Indigenous organizations, as culturally specific programs can then be limited to Indigenous organizations, which are often poorly resourced (Brooks-Cleator & Giles, 2020). This is problematic because settler lacrosse organizations, which benefit greatly from the ongoing cultural appropriation of lacrosse, would then be directly contributing to the lack of programming for Indigenous lacrosse players as well as the strain on Indigenous organizations. This speaks for the need to build meaningful relationships with Indigenous communities, to pay them for their expertise, and to present potential players with options. Further, there is a need to evaluate the hiring practices of these organizations. Throughout the hiring process, there is a need to identify Indigenous women and members from Indigenous 2SLGBTQIA communities in order to increase diverse perspectives and actively work against heteropatriarchy within these organizations.

The historical lack of equitable policies and programs aimed at Indigenous women and girls in the lacrosse organizations that the participants represent illustrated the erasure and devaluation of Indigenous women and girls within lacrosse, which could be considered part of a gendered logic of elimination within lacrosse. Further, the lack of discussion of gender beyond the Western gender binary contributes to the erasure of Indigenous trans people, gender diverse peoples, and Two-Spirit people. If lacrosse is to be a site to implement the TRC's CTA, there is a need to centre Indigenous conceptions of gender within these efforts.

Conclusion

This paper is one of the first to look at the TRC's CTA (2015b) related to sport through a gendered lens. The themes that I constructed show that gender is an afterthought within these discussions and that there is a need to make gender a central organizing principle when lacrosse

organizations within Canada are attempting to implement the TRC's CTA. Further, these themes illustrate the complexities tensions surrounding discussions of Indigenous women's and girls' participation in lacrosse. Gender is central to the settler colonial project; continuing sport for reconciliation efforts without specific attention to the gendered implications of settler colonialism on sport reproduces the settler colonial logic of elimination that is explicitly gendered.

There is a need to understand that sport, more specifically lacrosse, is not neutral and value free (Forsyth, 2022). The legacy of settler colonial control of lacrosse and exclusion of Indigenous peoples ought to be the impetus for lacrosse organizations to be forthright about their entanglement with settler colonialism and patriarchy and how they continue to structure these organizations. Once recognized, the next step should be these organizations cultivating relationality and relationships with Indigenous peoples and organizations so that Indigenous sovereignty and ways of knowing are respected and valued. Though these suggestions are merely stepping stones to addressing systemic issues, they are nevertheless preliminary ways forward in pursuit of reconciliation.

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Chapter Four: Conclusion

As I am writing this, I am reflecting on a conversation I had this summer about the Canada Summer Games. The first week of Canada Summer Games featured girls' box lacrosse. The officiating staff for this tournament was comprised of a number of women: one out of the two Referees in Charge was a woman. Further, four out of 10 of the on-floor referees were women. In an environment that is dominated by men, this was celebrated as an achievement in gender equity. However, the following week during the boys' box lacrosse tournament, the referee crew was back to the typical all-male crew. Noticing this, I mentioned my dissatisfaction with the all-male crew to a colleague of mine. This colleague noted that it is frustrating, but there is no solution, as adding a woman to the all-male crew would have taken away a woman from previous week's crew, which would not have been ideal. My colleague's focus on the impossibility of an individual solution highlighted the ways in which inequities are dealt with throughout lacrosse. That is, the focus is on the individuals and what is readily rectifiable – the systemic conditions that enable inequities are ignored. This conversation then drove me to reflect on the ways in which the responses to racist and sexist incidents within lacrosse ignore the systemic conditions that enable these inequalities.

In June, there was a racist incident at a tournament at which I was refereeing: one player made a racial slur to an Indigenous opponent. Since the referees did not hear this incident, it was decided that there was nothing that could be done to penalize the player or rectify this situation. This is another example of focusing on what is readily and easily rectifiable and ignoring the systemic conditions that enabled the racist incident, which will, in turn, continue to enable further racist incidents within lacrosse. Constantly learning about racist and sexist incidents, pointing out inequalities, and consistently being ignored and even attacked for doing so are the conditions from which I have approached my research.

The overarching research question that guided my Master's of Arts research was, "How are lacrosse organizations within Canada taking up the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC) Calls to Action (2015b) and in what ways are these efforts gendered?" My efforts in addressing this research question culminated in two publishable papers. In the first of the publishable papers (Chapter 2), I investigated how representatives from seven lacrosse organizations within Canada, including the national sport governing body and six provincial sport organizations (PSO), conceptualized their organizations as attending to (or not) these Calls to Action. The second publishable paper (Chapter 3) centred gender and complicated the gender-neutral language of the TRC's sport-related Calls to Action. Within this paper, I evaluated the gendered elements of the participants' responses to how lacrosse organizations have taken up the Calls to Action and have addressed Indigenous women's involved in lacrosse.

In this concluding chapter, I briefly summarize each of my publishable papers as well as how these papers inform each other. I then discuss policy, methodological, and theoretical implications of my research followed by limitations, opportunities for future research, and my closing remarks.

Paper 1

In Chapter 2, I used qualitative descriptive methodology to explain what is happening within lacrosse organizations throughout Canada with regard to the implementation of the TRC's sport-related Calls to Actions. Following the overarching theoretical framework of settler colonial studies, I used reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2019) to analyze semi-structured interview data and developed two themes that illustrated the participants' descriptions of the ways in which their organizations have or have not attended to the TRC's sport-related Calls to Action: determining whose responsibility it is to respond to the Calls; and

the desire to centre Indigenous perspectives. The first theme illustrated the trend of larger organizations passing off responsibility for implementation to smaller organizations.

Interviewees also demonstrated a reliance on the efforts and labour of individuals, which enables organizations to avoid institutional responsibility. From this, I argued that because of the appropriation of lacrosse from Indigenous nations by settlers, and the fact that these lacrosse organizations have and continue to benefit greatly from this ongoing cultural appropriation and settler colonialism (Downey, 2016), there is a responsibility for Lacrosse Canada and each PSO to implement the Calls to Action in meaningful ways. The second theme illustrated participants' desire to have these initiatives led by Indigenous peoples. I argued that a reliance on the labour of Indigenous peoples could enable lacrosse organizations to delay implementing the Calls to Action. Further, I argued that reconciliation is not the responsibility of Indigenous peoples and exploiting the labour of Indigenous peoples within settler institutions does not align with the principles of reconciliation.

Paper 2

In Chapter 3, I built on my argument in Chapter 2 that lacrosse organizations have an obligation to implement the TRC's Calls to Action, and I turned my attention to gender. I utilized Indigenous feminist theory, feminist methodologies informed by Indigenous methodologies, and reflexive thematic analysis to discuss the participants' responses to how lacrosse organizations have taken up the Calls to Action and have addressed Indigenous women's involved in lacrosse. This discussion centred around two themes that illustrate how lacrosse organizations within Canada address gender within the ways that they attend to the TRC's Calls to Action: Gender is categorical; and there are specific Indigenous cultural meanings concerning Indigenous women and girls' participation in lacrosse. Drawing on Indigenous feminist theory, I asserted that these

themes illustrate the ways in which settler colonialism and heteropatriarchy continue to influence Canadian lacrosse organizations and how this may jeopardize lacrosse organizations meaningfully addressing the TRC's Calls to Action. The findings from this paper highlight that Indigenous women are commonly overlooked, and that gender is typically an afterthought within the implementation of sport-related Calls to Action by lacrosse organizing bodies in Canada. As a result, I argued that there is a need to make gender a central organizing principle when lacrosse organizations within Canada implement the TRC's Calls to Action. Taken together, these two papers make a case for increased support for reconciliatory efforts that are gendered within lacrosse organizations in Canada.

Research Implications

Policy Implications

Both of my papers highlighted the need for stronger policy, within government and within lacrosse organizations themselves, to ensure the equitable implementation of the TRC's Calls to Action (2015). At the government level, in paper 1 I demonstrated that part of the failure of lacrosse organizations to take responsibility for the implementation of the Calls to Action may be due to the lack of a specific mandate for these organizations to do so. If the Canadian government wants to meaningfully implement the Calls to Action, action should be mandated. If sport funders, whether that be Sport Canada or the provincial governments, were to mandate lacrosse organizations to implement each of the sport-related Calls to Action, this would create an impetus for these organizations to do so. If the implementation of the TRC's Calls to Action (2015) is to be mandated, they must not merely be aimed at Indigenous men and boys.

Within lacrosse organizations themselves, policies and procedures can be amended to reflect the value of Indigenous peoples providing their expertise towards reconciliatory efforts.

As argued in Chapter 3, if Indigenous peoples do become involved with lacrosse organizations and choose to assist and contribute to helping these organizations implement the Calls to Action, then they need to be compensated for their time and paid for their expertise, which needs to be expressly stated in policy and followed in practice.

Taken together, these two papers contribute to the overarching argument that there is a need to move beyond the individual level and focus on systemic inequalities and how they are institutionally perpetuated. Sport in and of itself, and more specifically lacrosse, cannot overcome injustice and reconcile the legacy of settler colonialism on its own. There is a need to create a culture of care grounded in the principles of reconciliation to see change. People and culture, not sport itself, have the power to challenge inequities, so we must build a culture within lacrosse in which people are willing to do this work.

Reconciliation efforts within lacrosse organizations, as a part of the broader sport for reconciliation movement, must reflect critical engagement with the tensions surrounding the sport for reconciliation field. Producing sport as vehicle that can be used to overcome inequalities and reconcile injustices may be problematic. As suggested by Forsyth (2022), “could they [sport for peace initiatives], by focusing on changing the individual rather than changing the system that created the problems they face, in fact serve simply to reinforce an unjust and marginalising status quo” (para. 3)? Lacrosse cannot simply be *brought* to Indigenous communities and have organizations believe that they fulfilled their duties. The real value of reconciliation efforts is in relationality and “respectful, responsible, relevant, reciprocal, and relationship-oriented sporting initiatives that attend to past injustices as well as the ongoing impacts of settler colonialism” (Forde et al., 2022, p. 9)

Drawing from the work of Szto and colleagues (2020) and their policy paper on anti-racism in Canadian hockey, we cannot continue to treat incidents of racism, as well as sexism, as isolated incidents. A special eye to the ways in which racist incidents may also be compounded by sexism and how sexist incidents may be compounded by racism is needed. Racist and sexist incidents do not happen in a vacuum, as racism and sexism, more specifically settler colonialism and heteropatriarchy, structure the fabric of the lacrosse landscape in Canada. At every instance, racism and sexism need to be evaluated as systemic issues (Szto et al., 2020). Sport is not value free (Forsyth, 2022). Therefore, lacrosse organizations cannot be run like apolitical, value-free institutions as they profit off the back of settler colonialism and sexism. Lacrosse organizations need to recognize that in their capacity as sport administrative bodies, principles of equity and reconciliation need to be central. Can winning really be that important if so many people are systemically disenfranchised before they even step on the field or floor, if they are even able to get that far? In every aspect of these organizations, there needs to be a dedication to principles of equity.

Sport Canada as well as provincial governments funding these NSO and PSOs for lacrosse need to increase funding for reconciliation efforts and mandate that these efforts are implemented to prevent funds earmarked for reconciliation efforts to be siphoned into other efforts. Policies and bylaws need to be rewritten in ways that promote not only inclusion and equity but also Indigenous knowledge surrounding lacrosse. Training and certification programs for everyone involved in lacrosse from the board of directors to athletes, coaches, trainers, officials, and parents need to be implemented to address settler colonialism, racism, and sexism in sport. Within this training, there needs to be central attention to the unique position of Indigenous women and girls. Punishment of racist and sexist incidents needs to be taken more

seriously. Incidents need to be reported, appropriately penalized through a zero tolerance policy, and tracked so that the rate of incidents and perpetrators can be monitored by the organizations. Further, a critical settler colonial and trauma-informed lens needs to be used within the reporting process so that individuals feel safe and supported so that they feel comfortable to report, they are believed, and they are taken seriously. Lacrosse organizations should have oversight committees comprised of properly trained individuals with relevant lived experiences to oversee different bodies within these organizations, such as discipline committees, planning committees, and board of governors and directors. There is a need to hire diverse people with relevant experiences and create new positions dedicated to reconciliation in lacrosse. The allocation of funds within operating budgets directed at supporting reconciliation initiatives, as well as helping to fund Indigenous organizations on their own terms, is needed. Further, organizations could remove teams from tournaments that do not respect Indigenous sovereignty, such as the Canada Games, as they do not recognize Indigenous nations teams or organizations within Canada.

Limitations

As with all research, there are some limitations to my work. One limitation was the number of participants. For this project, I was only able to recruit seven participants. This number of participants does not represent all of the lacrosse governing bodies. Further, my Indigenous advisory committee urged me to interview two participants from each organization. However, due to recruitment challenges, I was only able to interview one participant from each organization that I was able to interview. It is also possible that the views and perspectives shared by individual participants is not representative of the organizations that they represent as a whole.

Another limitation of my research could potentially be the person conducting the research. As a white cisgender woman with a complex relationship with lacrosse, I cannot be a single voice of authority on the issues I have addressed. There are perhaps people with more relevant expertise and lived experiences who may be better situated to make recommendations as to what needs to be done within lacrosse organizations to pursue meaningful reconciliation. I do not purport to have all of the answers, but I will continue to encourage these organizations to have tough conversations and engage in critical reflection on the ways in which they uphold systems of settler colonialism and heteropatriarchy.

Opportunities for Future Research

Moving forward, it will be important to pay attention to the work that lacrosse organizations choose to do, or choose not to do, with regard to implementing the TRC's Calls to Action. Future research could involve full program and policy reviews for each organization in question, as my work was limited to interviewing singular representatives. Similarly, the work done here could also be extended to other sporting organizations within Canada to investigate how other NSOs and PSOs for various sports are (or are not) implementing the TRC's Calls to Action. This could allow for nuanced comparisons to be made across different sports.

Closing Remarks

Throughout my time as a lacrosse player, coach, and referee in Ontario, I have come to learn that racism and sexism are pervasive within the landscape of this sport. Women and girls are systemically devalued and disenfranchised while racist incidents are swept under the rug. Throughout my time engaged within sporting institutions, I have spoken out and have had my words trampled or ignored by those in decision making roles as well as my character attacked. I have been involved in lacrosse for 13 years, over half of my life, and the ways that I have been

treated while speaking up and speaking out against inequities was enough for me to give up almost entirely.

Engaging in critical reflection throughout this project was important for me to be aware of how my life experiences may impact my work. Prior to beginning data collection for this study, I took note of overarching assumptions that I had about lacrosse organizations within Canada and their reconciliation efforts. The assumptions that I outlined throughout this thesis were: 1) Lacrosse organizations have not meaningfully implemented, or even committed to implementing, the TRC's sport-related Calls to Action; 2) that there is little awareness in lacrosse organizations of the TRC's Calls to Action; 3) this work is not an issue to which organizations will value dedicating time and resources ; 4) settler lacrosse organizations systemically discriminate against Indigenous peoples; 5) if lacrosse organizations have done anything in pursuit of reconciliation, these efforts will have been tokenistic; and 6) these efforts will have been aimed at and prioritized Indigenous boys and men.

My first assumption appears to have been accurate. Throughout my interviews, it was very clear that the participating lacrosse organizations had not yet done anything to implement the TRC's Calls to Actions, but were discussing how their existing programs may align with the Calls. One participant noted that they have had a meeting about implementing these Calls to Action, but nothing had yet come to fruition. I was surprised that most participants, especially participants who were paid staff, were, in fact, aware of the TRC's sport-related Calls to Action. Further, every participant was aware of the TRC. Throughout discussion with participants, it seemed as though my third assumption, this work is not an issue to which organizations will value dedicating time and resources, was correct. There is an awareness, yet a lack of effort. Though there was little data of which to judge my fifth assumption, if lacrosse organizations

have done anything in pursuit of reconciliation, these efforts will have been tokenistic, against, it was clear that these lacrosse organizations did engage in tokenistic efforts and recognition of Indigenous peoples and the Indigenous history of lacrosse. It was also clear through my discussions with participants that all efforts within lacrosse, including targeted programming for Indigenous peoples, is aimed at boys and men.

When I embarked on this research journey, I made note of some of the assumptions that I held about lacrosse organizations, which derived from my own personal experiences. Though my assumptions were pessimistic about the current state of affairs within lacrosse organizations, this project gave me the opportunity to connect with well-intentioned individuals from across the country who are trying to make lacrosse a welcoming environment. At various points in time, this project made me angry and I wanted to give up on the sport that I had once loved so much. Throughout doing this work, it has become clear that change is hard fought. However, upon reflecting on my experiences, there are a number of individuals, though they may be small in numbers, who are willing to listen, reflect, and learn to help build a better way forward. It is my hope that my thesis research can help to build a better way forward for lacrosse organizations to meaningfully pursue reconciliation efforts.

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Appendix A: Ethics Certificate

11/12/2021

Université d'Ottawa

Bureau d'éthique et d'intégrité de la recherche

University of Ottawa

Office of Research Ethics and Integrity

CERTIFICAT D'APPROBATION ÉTHIQUE | CERTIFICATE OF ETHICS APPROVAL

Numéro du dossier / Ethics File Number	H-10-21-7458
Titre du projet / Project Title	Lacrosse for Reconciliation: Where is Gender?
Type de projet / Project Type	Thèse de maîtrise / Master's thesis
Statut du projet / Project Status	Approuvé / Approved
Date d'approbation (jj/mm/aaaa) / Approval Date (dd/mm/yyyy)	11/12/2021
Date d'expiration (jj/mm/aaaa) / Expiry Date (dd/mm/yyyy)	10/12/2022

Équipe de recherche / Research Team

Chercheur / Researcher	Affiliation	Role
Avery HOLMES	École des sciences de l'activité physique / School of Human Kinetics	Chercheur Principal / Principal Investigator
Audrey GILES	École des sciences de l'activité physique / School of Human Kinetics	Superviseur / Supervisor
Lyndsay HAYHURST		Co-superviseur / Co-supervisor

Conditions spéciales ou commentaires / Special conditions or comments

550, rue Cumberland, pièce 154 550 Cumberland Street, Room 154
Ottawa (Ontario) K1N 6N5 Canada Ottawa, Ontario K1N 6N5 Canada

613-562-5387 • 613-562-5338 • ethique@uOttawa.ca / ethics@uOttawa.ca
www.recherche.uottawa.ca/deontologie | www.recherche.uottawa.ca/ethics

Appendix B: Semi-Structured Interview Guide

1. Can you tell me about your organization and your role?
2. Can you tell me about any programs or initiatives within your organization that specifically involve Indigenous peoples?

3. Has your association recognized the accomplishments of Indigenous athletes?
4. Has your association recognized the accomplishments of Indigenous women athletes?
5. Can you discuss if/how your organization educates its membership about the Indigenous roots of lacrosse?
6. Does your association have a Hall of Fame?
 - a. If so, how have Indigenous athletes been represented within your Hall of Fame?
7. What does the long-term athlete development program look like within your association?
8. What does the long-term athlete development program look like for Indigenous athlete development?
9. What does the long-term athlete development program look like for Indigenous girls and women?
10. Does your association support the North American Indigenous Games? If so, which teams? Are girls and boys team supported equally?

11. What -if anything, has your association done to reduce barriers to participation in lacrosse?
12. How – if at all, has your association worked to reduce barriers and increased the prolonged participation of Indigenous athletes?
13. How has your association worked to reduce barriers for Indigenous girls and women specifically within lacrosse?
14. How - if at all, has your association made itself inclusive to Indigenous athletes?

15. Could you discuss any specific policies in place within your organization that address or impact Indigenous athletes? Are there any policies that impact Indigenous women and girls?
16. Is there any funding for programs that reflect the diverse cultures and traditional sporting activities of Indigenous peoples within your organization? If so, how are Indigenous women and girls reflected in the programming?
17. Is there an elite athlete development program for Indigenous athletes within your association? If so, what does it look like?
18. Is there elite athlete development for Indigenous girls and women within your association? If so, what does it look like?

19. What – if any, culturally specific training programs does your association have that are culturally relevant for Indigenous peoples?
20. If so, how does this training address gender?
21. What if any anti-racist awareness and training programs does your association run? Within these training programs, how is gender addressed?

22. When planning events, how – if at all, are Indigenous communities engaged in the planning and participation of such events? How, if at all, are Indigenous women and girls included in this?
23. What – if any, Indigenous communities does your organization have a relationship with that help you guide your programming?
24. Is there any response you would like to clarify or return to?
25. Do you have anything else to add?

Thank the participant

Appendix C: Contributions

This research was designed and developed by Avery Holmes. She played a key role in the theorization, analysis, and writing of the thesis. Dr. Audrey Giles and Dr. Lyndsay Hayhurst supported all aspects of the development, theorization, and analysis, and aided with feedback into writing and revising the final product. The papers will be published with Holmes as first author, Giles as second, and Hayhurst as third.