

Running head: BRIDGING TROUBLED WATERS

Bridging Troubled Waters: Examining Culture in the Canadian Red Cross' Swimming and Water  
Safety Program

by  
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THESIS

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### **Abstract**

The Canadian Red Cross (CRC) offers its Swimming and Water Safety Program throughout Canada. The program is delivered by over 35 000 active instructors to over one million participants every year. The research in this thesis is part of a collaborative, interdisciplinary project in partnership with the CRC that examined ways to improve programming for cultural and ethnic minority populations. The thesis is written in the stand alone paper format. The first paper evaluates the program's content, through a critical whiteness lens, to identify obstacles to offering effective programming to people of diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds. Based on these findings, I created and piloted a cultural safety training module for program instructors. The second paper then evaluates the effectiveness of this training module to provide recommendations for the CRC to optimize its management of diversity within its organization and aquatics facilities across the country. Collectively, this thesis bridges both understandings of Eurocanadian and whiteness discourses as well as critical whiteness and organizational theories to more holistically understand processes of inclusion, exclusion, accommodation, and the management of diversity in the context of a nation-wide Canadian sport and recreation program.

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### Reflections

I can vividly recall my first obvious encounters with whiteness in aquatics programming. They occurred during the five years I worked as a lifeguard, swimming instructor, and supervisor at the Jewish Community Centre (JCC). Given that I am not Jewish, and that I grew up in a homogenous, rural, northern Ontario community, I learned many things through my experiences at the JCC. Specifically, I became quite aware of how cultures manifested and were enacted in both individual and group interaction, specifically in sport and recreation contexts. My most obvious encounter with whiteness occurred while I was covering a shift for another instructor. What appeared to me to be the routine teaching of a “swimmer 1” lesson with five young swimmers on a Monday night at the JCC proved to be one of the most hilarious and enriching experiences that I experienced as a Water Safety Instructor. While playing the “Pizza Game,” where the instructor yells out pizza toppings and participants jump into the pool if they like the topping on their pizza and then climb out to get ready for the next jump (a fun and productive way of teaching entries and exits), I had saved “pepperoni” for last, as it is the classic pizza topping that I imagined was enjoyed by all kids. I had built up all of the swimmers’ excitement for the final round, but when I shouted “PEPPERONI!,” none of the young swimmers jumped in. When I questioned them why, with a hint of sarcasm - because “everyone loves pepperoni,” a young girl responded, matter-of-factly, “pepperoni is not kosher.” The on-looking parents erupted in laughter; although I was caught feeling insensitive and uncomfortable, I laughed as well. I do not regret this experience, as there are several important things that I learned through this encounter. First, I was abruptly and unexpectedly made aware of my own cultural position and the effect that it has on my interactions with others, specifically those with whom I interact

as an instructor. Secondly, I became aware of the mainstream, standardized approach that I employed as a swimming instructor and I assumed was applicable and ideal for all participants. Finally, my self-reflection also led me to question my understanding of what inclusion and acceptance really mean and how simply paying lip-service to inclusive practices, multicultural environments, and the acceptance and celebration of diversity may not be as adequate and effective as I had imagined.

Fortunately, I have been privileged to further my understanding of these and other topics throughout my studies. I hope that now, with this thesis, I am able to contribute and further the discussion on the importance of acknowledging culture in aquatics programming and how those who participate in all aspects of aquatics programming can become aware of and address the rough waters of inclusive and cross-cultural programming. As self-reflection has been an integral part of the process for me in coming to these realizations, I would like to introduce this thesis with a quote. Fittingly, this quote comes from the man whose signature endorsed the original Multiculturalism Policy of Canada in 1971, and it embodies much of what I hope to impart through this thesis:

“May every dip of your paddle lead you towards a rediscovery of yourself...”

-Pierre Elliot Trudeau

The Canadian Red Cross Society's (CRC) Swimming and Water Safety program has over one million Canadian participants every year (Canadian Red Cross, 2009). Despite such high national participation numbers, recent research has shown that Aboriginal peoples and new Canadians are at heightened risk of drowning (Canadian Red Cross, 2003; Lifesaving Society, 2010) and that new Canadians are "four times more likely to be unable to swim than those born in Canada" (Lifesaving Society, 2010). Research on lifesaving and lifeguarding programs offered by the Lifesaving Society has attributed the ineffectiveness of these programs for Aboriginal peoples to a failure to account for cultural differences in risk perception, risk communication, and traditional cultural practices (Baker & Giles, 2008; Giles, Baker, & Rousell, 2007; Giles, Strachan, Stadig, & Baker, 2010). Furthermore, recent research has examined the role of culture in water education programs targeted for ethnic and cultural minorities and found that standardized aquatics programming may not be meeting the needs of diverse populations (Golob, Giles, & Rich, 2013); however research that attends to issues pertaining to culture within the CRC's program specifically has not yet occurred. The research contained in this thesis makes a contribution towards addressing this lack of literature.

The following thesis, which is informed by a constructionist epistemology, uses a case study approach, focus groups, semi-structured interviews and discourse and thematic analysis. The research described herein occurred in three stages. First, I examined the CRC's Swimming and Water Safety Program in order to identify if/how dominant Eurocanadian and whiteness discourses of appropriate leadership and water safety are produced and perpetuated through the program's content. Next, these findings were utilised to develop a cultural safety training module that aimed to show current and future Water Safety Instructors how particular discourses may

affect participants' experiences in the program. The module was then piloted in training courses for new instructors as well as a recertification course for current, active instructors. The pilot course was then evaluated for its effectiveness and applicability to the CRC's Swimming and Water Safety Program. The assessment of the discourses at work in the CRC's program as well as the examination of ways in which CRC's Water Safety Instructors can be sensitized to cultural differences enabled me to make recommendations for ways to make water safety programming more reflective and inclusive of the needs of diverse populations in Canada. As my research was conducted in partnership with the CRC, my research findings will be used to inform the upcoming revisions to the CRC's Assistant Water Safety Instructor (AWSI), Water Safety Instructor (WSI), and Water Safety Instructor Trainer (WSIT) program and will also be communicated to current water safety instructors through the recertification process. Given that over a million Canadians participate in CRC water safety programming each year, my research's findings have the potential to be far-reaching, especially in terms of impacts on new Canadians' and ethnic minorities' safe enjoyment of aquatic-based activities.

### **Thesis Format**

This thesis is comprised of two, stand-alone manuscripts as well as the material resources developed specifically for the CRC's Swimming and Water Safety Program. First, an introduction to the project, including the literature review, theoretical framework, methodology, methods, and analysis will be provided. Next, the first stand-alone manuscript will assess if and how EuroCanadian and whiteness discourses of leadership and water safety are present and perpetuated in the CRC's Swimming and Water Safety Program. I then provide the cultural safety training module that was developed for instructors of the CRC's program. Finally, the

second stand-alone manuscript will evaluate the effectiveness and applicability of the cultural safety module designed specifically for the program. Collectively, this thesis makes three contributions to the current literature pertaining to sport and recreation in the Canadian context: first, it bridges concepts of Eurocanadian and whiteness studies in a sport and recreation context; second, it addresses a lack of critical sport management research and seeks to translate research conducted through a critical whiteness lens (the first paper) into effective social change; and finally it contributes to the applied research concerned with the strategies for the management of diversity in sport and recreation organizations.

### **Literature Review**

Within Canada, new Canadians appear to be at greater risk of drowning than Canadian born individuals (Lifesaving Society, 2010). There is strong evidence that ethnic minorities are at heightened risk of drowning in other countries, such as the United States (Center for Disease Control & Prevention, 2008), the Netherlands (Schulpen, van Steenberghe & van Driel, 2001), and New Zealand (Moran, 2006). These statistics have led me to question why these populations experience higher rates of drowning and aquatics-based risk and how we can train swimming instructors to better meet ethnic minorities' water safety needs in Canada.

In order to gain a more nuanced understanding of these disparate drowning rates, there are several key areas of literature that must be examined. Firstly, one must understand the current situation in Canada in terms of drowning rates, population demographics, as well as the concept of colonialism and the breadth and depth of the consequences that it has provoked. In this case, the focus will be specifically on how colonial and Eurocanadian discourses can affect participation in recreation and leisure programming. Next, an examination of risk perception and

communication among Aboriginal peoples and other ethnic minority groups will be used to provide insight into how these populations perceive aquatic risk and respond to water safety messages. Third, literature pertaining to the management of diversity and multiculturalism in sport and recreation contexts will be presented in order to consider approaches and promising practices that may be applicable and useful for the CRC. Finally, an overview of the current CRC program will be presented to allow for a better understanding of the way it is structured and implemented. An understanding of the program is crucial in order to examine the discourses that are (re)produced within it and how the program may be adapted to become more inclusive and accommodating of cultural and ethnic diversity.

Before delving into the pertinent literature, I must first define and distinguish the terms culture and ethnicity, as they are key concepts for the research conducted in this thesis. The term culture can broadly be understood as all that is transmitted socially rather than biologically in a society. For example, beliefs, languages, values, traditions, customs, mannerisms, and religions are all aspects of culture as they are socially transmitted. Ethnicity, on the other hand, is a more fluid concept, more specifically linked to identity in that it describes a group of individuals who distinguish themselves (or are distinguished by others) in terms of shared social and/or cultural characteristics such as common language, ancestry, religion etc. (Nagel, 1994). While these definitions are somewhat contested, they provide useful working definitions for the purposes of this thesis.

### **The Situation in Canada**

Recent research (Lifesaving Society, 2010) has provided limited insight into the current drowning statistics among new Canadians. Unfortunately, exact statistics regarding ethnicity are

difficult to obtain as provincial coroners do not currently record a person's ethnicity on their death certificate. Data available from other countries, however, do show disparate rates of drowning among ethnic minorities and mainstream American (Center for Disease Control & Prevention, 2008), Dutch (Schulpen, van Steenbergen, & van Driel, 2001), and New Zealand (Moran, 2006) populations. Given that ethnic minority populations may experience disparate rates of drowning, it is important to also consider recent immigration trends and the consequent demographic makeup of the Canadian population.

In the fourth quarter of 2011, nearly 59 800 international migrants settled in Canada, accounting for slightly less than two thirds of the national population growth in this quarter (Statistics Canada, 2011). These rates are similar to the recent trends observed in the Canadian demographic. The evident rise in rates of ethnic diversity as a result of Canada's multicultural approach to citizenship (Banting & Kymlicka, 2010) clearly highlights a need for nation-wide programs, such as the CRC's Swimming and Water Safety Program, to take appropriate steps to create programs that are culturally safe in order to better serve the needs of the entire Canadian population.

While Canada is ostensibly multicultural, because it was previously a British and French colony, strong Eurocanadian discourses continue to dominate cultural norms (Young, 2001). Westernized norms and discourses are evident in current water safety programs in Canada (Giles et al., 2007). They are visible in the attitudes, beliefs and accepted "truths" surrounding drowning and water safety. To illustrate this ethnocentrism, consider an example of how alternative (i.e. non-Eurocentric) water related beliefs would fit into our current water safety programming. Quan, Crispin, Bennett, and Gomez (2006) reported that some members of Asian

cultures believe that drowning deaths are caused by circumstances outside the control of the individual. For instance, drowning can be attributed to fate; a drowning death can mean that it was a person's "time to go" or "spirits pull you down" under the water (p. 428). This example clearly illustrates an example of beliefs that fall outside of the accepted knowledge and beliefs surrounding water safety in Canada. These beliefs are not currently accepted and included in curriculum for water safety programming due to the Eurocanadian ethnocentrism that would classify these beliefs as Other and illegitimate. Ignoring these discourses and educating water safety lesson participants about the "real" causes of drowning (such as alcohol consumption while boating or swimming in cold water) has the potential to create tension between the participants' beliefs and instructors' actions and behaviours, which may lead to an unwelcoming aquatic environment and a program that is ineffective for participants as it fails to acknowledge their individual needs.

Values accepted as "mainstream, standardized [and] one-size-fits-all" produce a "homogenizing, monocultural" approach to programs and services offered within a society (Ball, 2004, p .457); such is the case with water safety programming in Canada. Postcolonial thought is now commonly used to examine current practices, policies, and programs in order to determine ways in which they can be made to be more appropriate and sensitive to cultures and populations affected by colonialism. As colonial discourses denounce and illegitimize all other knowledge, beliefs and attitudes, Giles et al. (2007) have called for a decolonization of water safety programming for Aboriginal peoples in Canada. These authors, as well as Giles, Castleden, and Baker (2010), have argued that such decolonization can be accomplished through

the acknowledgment of diverse attitudes, beliefs, and traditional knowledge about water safety that may fall outside of the accepted, Eurocanadian norms.

Several authors have specifically noted the intersection of culture and Eurocanadian discourses in recreation and leisure programming in Canada. Giles et al. (2007), Fox (2007), and Paraschak (1997) have all argued that colonialism has influenced the ways in which Aboriginal peoples in Canada participate in physical activity, sport, and recreation. Paraschak (1998) also noted that traditional Aboriginal physical practices were often forbidden or ignored by colonizers as they were perceived to be uncivilized and to be more suitable as a form of entertainment for non-Aboriginal peoples due to their apparently exotic content.

Conversely, physical activity and sport can also be used as a way to challenge colonial relations of power. Forsyth and Wamsley (2006) illustrated the ways in which Aboriginal peoples have used games and physical activity as a tool for self-determination and as resistance to Eurocanadian discourses. Therefore, while physical activity and recreation programming was once a means of colonization, these activities can also be effectively implemented and altered to challenge colonial discourses and act as a vehicle for decolonization. The aforementioned literature (Forsyth & Wamsley, 2006; Giles et al., 2007; Paraschak, 1998) is crucial to the proposed research study as it demonstrates that while water safety programming in the past may have served to produce and reproduce Eurocanadian discourses, in effect marginalizing these Aboriginal populations, it has also been demonstrated that sport and recreation programming can also be adapted to better suit the needs of diverse populations and even used as a means of resistance to these problematic discourses. As this project seeks to adapt the CRC's Swimming and Water Safety Program to better meet the needs of the diverse Canadian population, this

literature pertaining to Canada's diversity, multiculturalism, and the decolonization of water safety programs provided the basis upon which this endeavour was informed. As water safety programming involves significant amounts of risk communication with regards to the risks involved with aquatic activities, next I provide an overview of risk perception and communication literature as well as culture's impact on this domain.

### **Risk Perception and Communication**

Risk communication is a broad topic that encompasses many forms of media and all segments of the population. Risk communication can be designed in a variety of ways to target any group or population (Lundgren & McMakin, 2009). With data from the United States National Risk Survey of Euro-American, Hispanic, Asian, and African-Americans, Satterfield, Mertz, and Slovic (2004) presented evidence that ethnicity has a significant influence on individuals' health and environmental risk perceptions. Thus, it can be deduced that cultural minorities in Canada are also likely to have significantly different perceptions of risk than their Eurocanadian counterparts. It is therefore imperative that risk communication strategies account for these differences in perceptions. As perceptions of aquatic risk will be shaped by beliefs and attitudes surrounding water and drowning (Irwin, Irwin, Ryan, & Drayer, 2009), the communication of these risks must utilize strategies that are sensitive and appropriate for their intended audience in order to effectively convey the message.

Risk communication has been described as a responsible attempt to convey risk factors to a given population (Leiss, 2004; McComas, 2006). McComas (2006) argued that social, cultural, and psychological contexts play significant roles in the perception of risk; therefore, these contexts influence the way in which the risk communication message will be interpreted. Leiss

(2004) noted the importance of the use of appropriate language in risk communication, as well as the significance of individual perceptions and understandings of risks, all which must be considered in the design and delivery of risk communication. The works of Leiss (2004) and McComas (2006) highlighted the importance of contextual considerations in risk communication. These considerations are critical for the proposed research as they highlight the importance of considering the diverse perceptions and understandings that exist concerning risk. Acknowledging these differences is especially important in designing programs for diverse populations such as those found in Canada. Aquatic risk communication will thus benefit from a more culturally inclusive approach, one that allows for a more appropriate delivery and interpretation of the risk communication messages conveyed through the CRC's Swimming and Water Safety Program.

As it has been shown that risk perception varies among populations, cultures, and geographic locations (Giles et al., 2010; Satterfield et al., 2004), it is necessary to account for these differences in water safety programming so that programs can be better tailored to each population's needs. Giles et al. (2010) provided a compelling example from Canada's north that distinguished the unique perceptions of aquatic risk in Inuit populations and how aquatic risk is perceived in their communities. They argued that aquatic risk communication can be improved by accounting for colonialism's effect on risk communication messages delivered through the program and how these messages may not be appropriate for the populations in question. Similarly, Zaloshnja et al. (2003) provided an example of risk communication that took into account Native Alaskan culture in an attempt to reduce drowning in a local river in Alaska where due to local traditions and the importance of burial, the community spent significant amounts of

time dragging the river for bodies of local drowning victims. Jackets with flotation properties were sold at cost and as comfortable outerwear and promoted with a message derived from local Elders: “Wear a float coat so that if you drown, people will not have to drag the river for your body” (p. 632). The campaign was extremely successful in that it reduced drowning rates by 53% over the course of five years. This example illustrates the effectiveness of an approach to risk communication that was developed by accounting for and incorporating local culture, thus making it more effective for the intended population.

Within Canada, research has attributed disparate rates of drowning amongst Aboriginal populations to cultural differences in the way that people perceive and understand risk (Giles et al, 2010) as well as the way that standardized recreational programming fails to account for cultural differences (Giles et al, 2007). These considerations must thus all be accounted for within the proposed research in order to gain a better understanding of the impacts of Eurocanadian and whiteness discourses in the CRC’s Swimming and Water Safety Program and subsequently provide recommendations for the CRC to improve their program’s effectiveness for culturally and ethnically diverse populations. As the program is orchestrated at the national level, monitored at the provincial/territorial level, and implemented locally at various facilities and locations, there are many implications and considerations regarding culture and ethnicity of the diverse Canadian population for the CRC’s program. The concept of a cultural safety has been developed in the field of health care to train practitioners to offer effective meaningful services to diverse populations. I argue that a cultural safety approach may also be an effective way to train instructors of the CRC’s Swimming and Water Safety Program to develop more effective programming for diverse participants.

## **Cultural Safety**

The concept of cultural safety was developed through Maori nursing practices in New Zealand (Wepa, 2003). Cultural safety training was developed to respond to the idea that in order to deliver meaningful health care to “people from different ethnicities and cultures, nurses must provide that care within the cultural values and norms of the patient” (Brascoupé & Waters, 2009, p. 7). While the ideas behind cultural safety were developed for work with Maori populations in New Zealand, much work with cultural safety has been done in the Canadian, postcolonial context as well (see Brascoupé & Waters, 2009; Smye & Browne, 2002; Thomas & Bellefeuille, 2006), where these foundational ideas have been exported and applied in attempt to improve the quality and appropriateness of health care and health policy for Aboriginal populations (Smye & Browne, 2002). My thesis draws on concepts of cultural safety in attempt to improve the quality and appropriateness of the CRC’s Swimming and Water Safety Program just as nursing practices have capitalized on these important findings to improve nurses’ approaches to care in a health setting.

### **The CRC’s Swimming and Water Safety Program**

The CRC has offered swimming and aquatic safety programming in Canada for over 65 years (CRC, 2007). The program provides instruction in the core swimming strokes, aquatic safety and decision making, as well as promoting physical fitness among participants. The program is based on the CRC’s research into how and why people drown in Canada, as well as injury prevention literature (CRC, 2009). The current program is comprised of six segments: the Swim Preschool levels, the Swim Kids levels, the Swim@School Program, the Swim for Adults & Teens Program, the Swim@Camp Program, as well as the Instructor Development Program.

As the Swim Preschool, Swim Kids, and Instructor Development Programs constitute the process through which the majority of water safety and swimming skills are communicated and through which future instructors are developed, I provide a more in depth description of these programs. The Swim Preschool levels, designed for participants aged four months to five years, are focused on providing a positive, supportive environment, and to encourage participants and their caregivers to enjoy themselves and become comfortable in the water (CRC, 2011b). The Swim Preschool program utilizes songs, games, and toys to enhance participants' learning. As participants move through the Swim Kids levels, the focus shifts to learning through repetition and progressions. Participation is promoted by encouraging swimmers to improve and achieve personal bests. In the Swim Kids levels, participants are also taught important aspects of water safety (CRC, 2011a). These programs are where young swimmers build their swimming skills as well as their repertoire of aquatic safety information. The program is also a direct feeder into the Instructor Development Program. Here, the participants begin in the Assistant Water Safety Instructor (AWSI) course, where they learn techniques for communicating their acquired knowledge and skills to younger swimmers. The next step in the established progression is to become a Water Safety Instructor (WSI). This certification familiarizes future instructors with the program content, tools, and techniques for their implementation, as well as expectations and responsibilities of water safety professionals (CRC, 2010b). Water Safety Instructors will be a crucial component of the implementation of the findings of this research as they are responsible for the majority of the direct implementation of the CRC's Swimming and Water Safety Program. The final course of the Instructor Development Program is the Water Safety Instructor Trainer (WSIT) course. WSITs are experienced and qualified WSIs who have taken an

additional course in order to be able to instruct AWSI and WSI training courses. Additionally, candidates in each level of the training program (AWSI, WSI, and WSIT) are required to complete an apprenticeship placement where they gain a certain amount of experience in teaching the respective courses before they are officially granted the certification. For example, after completing the WSIT course, participants would be qualified as a Water Safety Instructor Trainer Apprentice (WSITA) until they complete two co-teaches of AWSI and/or WSI courses supervised by an experienced WSIT, at which point they would also be appointed as a WSIT by the CRC. Once instructors obtain their WSI certification (or more advanced qualifications), they are required to recertify this qualification every two years.

The aforementioned literature pertaining to Canadian demographics and its implications on sport, recreation, and leisure programming as well as Eurocanadian discourses in Canada and how they have also been explored in terms of recreation and leisure informed my research. As well, by reviewing current theoretical approaches to the management of diversity in sport, recreation, and health care organizations and by ascertaining an understanding of the CRC's program and how it operates, I am able to appreciate the ways in which, if at all, Eurocanadian and whiteness discourses may be produced and perpetuated through this programming. Furthermore, this background allowed for feasible theoretically sound recommendations to be made in order to address these discourses and make the program more sensitive to the needs of the diverse Canadian population. Below, I will outline the research approach that I used to conduct this research and formulate these recommendations.

### **Theoretical Framework**

For my thesis, I utilized two theoretical frameworks: critical whiteness studies and organizational theory pertaining to the management of diversity. A review of these theoretical frameworks and of the theories' application to sport and recreation will be provided to show the ways in which they are relevant to examining the CRC's Swimming and Water Safety Program.

### **Critical Whiteness Studies**

Recently, the focus of racial and ethnicity studies has shifted from racial and ethnic minority-centred inquiry to critically addressing issues surrounding the meaning of "whiteness" (Nayak, 2007). While recent critical inquiry has explicitly discussed the notion of whiteness, authors who have employed critical whiteness theory (e.g., McDonald, 2005; Nayak, 2007) have traced the beginnings of this style of inquiry to much earlier works such as Fanon's (1986) *Black Skin, White Masks* and Cobb's (1936) *Race and Runners*. Therefore, while this field has recently received significant attention, it is by no means a new topic of discussion in the literature.

Nayak (2007) described three distinct approaches in the field of critical whiteness studies: abolishing, deconstructing, and re-thinking whiteness. The paradigm concerned with abolishing whiteness is most evident in historical Marxist labour writings (Nayak, 2007). Scholars who use this approach (e.g., Allen, 1992; Roediger, 1992) view whiteness as an unearned social privilege that could be challenged and abolished. The second paradigm, deconstructing whiteness, is heavily influenced by "feminist social constructions and the politics of representation" (p. 741) and focused largely on labour relations (Nayak, 2007). Through writings such as Frankenberg's (1993, 1994, 1997), scholars who use the paradigm of deconstructing whiteness further explore the roles of gender, place, and whiteness and how the prioritization of white masculinity is

employed and constructed as a means of “civilizing” non-western societies (Ware, 1993). The re-thinking approach to critical whiteness studies is concerned with unconscious racial constructions and the product of whiteness (Nayak, 2007). My proposed research will be informed by the re-thinking whiteness paradigm, as I am seeking to determine if/how that these unconscious racial constructions of whiteness are present and/or perpetuated through Eurocanadian discourses in the aquatics environment and consequently affect participants’ experiences in the Canadian Red Cross’ Swimming and Water Safety Program.

**Re-thinking Whiteness.** A re-thinking whiteness approach “allows us to interpret how race discourses come to be lived out in the imagination and connect this to the formation of identity” (Nayak, 2007, p. 746). Utilizing this approach, Perry (2001) presented a compelling example of high school youths’ unconscious constructions of whiteness as, in fact, “cultureless.” By associating whiteness with no culture, the students implied that whiteness is “normal” or “rational,” which therefore produced individuals with “culture” or “ethnicity” as “different” or “Other.” Perry (2001) raised important points that highlighted the unconscious construction of whiteness as normal and the subordination of things that are cultural. Her discussion of the production of “normal whiteness” and “cultural others” is crucial for understanding how whiteness discourses are present in many aspects of North American society including sport and recreation programming.

**Critical Whiteness Studies in Sport.** In the sport literature, McDonald (2002) has used critical whiteness studies in the Women’s National Basketball Association (WNBA) to examine marketing discourses that idealize maternity, morality, and the image of a “good white girl.” McDonald and Togliola (2010) also examined the dress code policy in the National Basketball

Association and demonstrated that the policy is rationalized for economic and corporate culture related reason. Interestingly, McDonald and Toglia (2010) noted that this policy in fact also serves to reproduce whiteness. By examining the unconscious racial constructions present in these professional sporting domains, these authors (McDonald, 2002; McDonald & Toglia, 2010) noted two important considerations: first they showed that sport is not a neutral arena, immune to underlying whiteness discourses that have been identified (e.g., Perry, 2001) in other aspects of society; and second, that the corporate culture of professional sporting associations does, in fact, affect the management and embracing of diversity in these sports organizations (Doherty & Chelladurai, 1999).

In 2005, a special issue of the *Sociology of Sport Journal* that was edited by McDonald (2005) focused exclusively on the study of whiteness in sport (McDonald, 2005). In this issue, several examples of whiteness discourses and their impacts on sports and their participants were described. In her introduction to this special issue, McDonald (2005) emphasized the need for critical whiteness scholars to be sensitive to the ways in which discourses of whiteness act on diverse global, national, and local levels. She illustrated these implications with a brief exploration of the meaning of “Canadianess” and how the notion that “Canadianess” is equal to “whiteness” may be left unchallenged in some contexts (e.g., small, rural communities), whereas the term may be repeatedly challenged and take on new meaning in others (e.g., more diverse, metropolitan areas) (McDonald, 2005). These cautions highlight the challenges that can be anticipated in evaluating a program that operates across Canada in a multitude of diverse contexts and locations. Given the aforementioned cautions and applications of critical whiteness

studies, careful attention will need to be paid to the variety of ways in which whiteness discourses may be operating on numerous levels.

In another example of critical whiteness studies in sport, Fusco (2005) described how intersections of race and space as well as the built environments of sport, namely locker rooms, serve to produce white(ned) normativity. Importantly, Fusco (2005) linked whiteness discourses not only to the sport domain, but also to recreation and leisure participants who also utilize these spaces (locker rooms), which can, for instance, include swimming and water safety program participants. The aforementioned literature (Fusco, 2005; McDonald, 2002) justifies further investigation into other sport and recreation programming to determine the potential impacts that whiteness discourses may be having on current and potential participants. Furthermore, given the Eurocanadian discourses previously identified in Canadian aquatics context (Giles et al., 2007, 2010), I will also incorporate these discussions in my research. Thus, informed by critical whiteness studies, the current project will examine the CRC's Swimming and Water Safety Program in order to determine the ways in which underlying Eurocanadian and whiteness discourses may be affecting the program's structure, content, and implementation, as well as to determine how the program can be adapted to better respond to Canadians' diverse needs. This thesis also drew from sport and recreation management literature concerning organizational theory and the management of diversity within and an organization.

### **Managing Diversity in Sport and Recreation**

To my knowledge, there is no literature that directly examines the management of diversity specifically in aquatics contexts. However, some recent research in organizational theory of sport management has examined impacts of diversity on sport and recreation

organizations. Organizational theorists are concerned with macro perspectives of organizations, that is, their structures, compositions, contextual factors, and commonly occurring patterns or regularities with organizations or their sub-units (Slack & Parent, 2006). There are several ways in which researchers can conceptualize organizations (e.g., as machines, as cultures, or as political systems). In line with Doherty and Chelladurai (1999), I utilize an approach that views organizations as cultures, as this approach allows for adequate consideration of both the organizational and contextual factors that influence the CRC's Swimming and Water Safety Program.

One of the concepts or practices examined by organizational theorists is the management of diversity and/or multiculturalism in sport and recreation organizations. As noted by Cunningham and Fink (2006), diversifying and embracing diversity in sport organizations “represents one of the most important issues for academics and sport managers today” (p. 455). Importantly, sport and recreation organizations have repeatedly been ostracized for their patriarchal cultures of similarity (Doherty & Chelladurai, 2006; McDonald, 2002) that often privilege systems and constructions of whiteness (McDonald & Toglia, 2010; Smith & Hattery, 2011). Given the significance of this culture of similarity, the management of diversity in sport organizations is by no means an easy or straightforward practice. Within the literature examining the management of diversity in sport and recreation contexts, there are several theories that are worth noting. Desensi (1995) utilized models from education to classify sport organizations along an ethnocentric-ethnorelative continuum based on organizational characteristics (such as mission, organizational culture, and major change strategies) in order to compare different sport organizations and their approach to managing diversity. Fink and Pastore (1999) also devised a

framework of continuums to classify and compare organizations. Their framework classified sport organizations as non-compliant, compliant, reactive, and proactive in their diversity management practices, allowing for a comparison between organizations and a direction in which managers can attempt to progress. Doherty and Chelladurai (1999) proposed that the impacts of cultural diversity on a sport organization are a result of the management of that diversity, which is, in fact, a function of the organizational culture of the organization. Thus, while leadership directs organizational culture, managers can potentially seek to embrace diversity through the direction of organizational culture in order to facilitate a welcoming and inclusive environment that will embrace and celebrate diversity. My research employs Doherty and Chelladurai's (1999) framework for managing diversity in sport organizations as it incorporates the context in which the sport organization operates, which I have already noted is of crucial importance to consider in examining the CRC's Swimming and Water Safety Program.

Given that previous literature has identified the potential for standardized programming to be less effective for racial and ethnic minority populations (Golob et al., 2013) and the documented impacts that culture has on risk perception and communication, it is important to critically examine programs such as the CRC's Swimming and Water Safety Program that are offered on a national scale. Such an examination is needed in order to determine the ways that this program meets (or does not meet) the needs of the diverse Canadian population. As a result, given the pervasiveness of a patriarchal culture of similarity (Doherty & Chelladurai, 1999; McDonald, 2002) in sport organizations and the identified need to embrace diversity in sport organizations (Cunningham & Fink, 2006), in this thesis I attempt to provide theoretically sound recommendations for the CRC to adapt its Swimming and Water Safety Program to become

more inclusive and accommodating of culturally and ethnically diverse populations. One of the approaches that has been employed in the field of health care to facilitate the offering of inclusive and effective services for diverse populations is a cultural safety approach. Through this thesis, I propose that a cultural safety approach may be a useful approach for the CRC specifically, and sport and recreation programs in general, to become more inclusive and accommodating of diverse Canadian participants.

### **Epistemology**

My thesis is informed by a constructionist epistemology. Constructionism asserts that all knowledge is constructed through human interaction (Crotty, 1998). As such, knowledge is developed and transmitted through individual and group interactions. More specifically, my research draw specifically on social constructionism, which posits that social reality is produced through meanings and understandings shared amongst a group or culture (Crotty, 1998). These meanings and understandings are then maintained and reproduced through aspects of social life (Crotty, 1998). Such an approach is appropriate for my proposed research as my research focuses specifically on aspects of culture and how different cultures interact – especially in the contexts of sport and recreation organizations as well aquatics facilities.

### **Methodology**

In order to effectively examine the issues surrounding culture in the CRC's Swimming and Water Safety Program, I utilized an intrinsic case study methodology (Stake, 2005). As described by Crotty (1998), a methodology is a "strategy, plan of action, process or design lying behind the choice and use of particular methods" (p. 3). In this section, I outline why a case study strategy was the most appropriate approach for the research I conducted.

### **Case Study Research**

Case study research is often used to describe a contemporary phenomenon within its actual context (Yin, 1994). Yin (1994) highlighted case study researchers' ability to explain, describe, illustrate, or explore the situations and factors surrounding a phenomenon in order to provide a holistic analysis, a feat that other methodologies may fail to achieve. Swanborn (2010) described this well when he identified case studies as intensive research. The holistic view achieved through intensive research is crucial to examining the CRC's program as there are many cultural and contextual factors that influence cultural interactions within the program. These interactions influence each other in various ways that, if examined individually, would not provide an adequate representation of the issues at hand. Case study research can provide a holistic account by allowing for the use of various methods and analyses to delve deep into the various issues at hand and to examine a situation or phenomenon from various perspectives (Yin, 1994). Yin (1993) cited this type of analysis as critical for program evaluations as they may require the analysis of the complex interactions between the program, the participants, and the context.

Yin (1994) also stressed the importance of choosing a research strategy based on the type of research question being asked. Answers to "how" and "why" questions can often effectively be answered through case study research. As the proposed research questions to be asked are i) if and how Eurocanadian and whiteness discourses are produced and perpetuated through the content of the CRC's Swimming and Water Safety Program and ii) if so, how can the program be modified to become more culturally safe, it is evident that a case study strategy is a suitable choice for the research project at hand.

### **Type of Case Studies**

Several authors have developed frameworks for classifying case study research. For example, Yin (1994) described three types of case studies: exploratory, explanatory, and descriptive. Stake (2005) also presented a system by which case studies are categorized as intrinsic, instrumental, or multiple case studies. Thomas (2011) developed a much more elaborate classification system and emphasized the relationship between the subject, purpose, approach, and process of a case study. While each method of classifying case studies has its own merits, for the purpose of this research project, I used Stake's (2005) work, as this classification system provides adequate depth of explanation to justify the choice of case study methodology for the research conducted herein.

Stake (2005) described an intrinsic case study as research that is undertaken with the sole purpose of developing a better understanding of the case being studied. Those who employ intrinsic studies do not look to generalize their findings to other situations or cases. On the other hand, an instrumental case study is carried out "to provide insight into an issue or to redraw a generalization" (p. 445) of an issue that can then be applied to other similar cases. Finally, when there is less interest in a single specific case, multiple cases can be studied together in order to examine the issues at hand by making comparisons and drawing from the similarities and differences among the given cases to develop a better understanding of a "phenomenon, population or general condition" (p. 445). For the research contained in this thesis, I employed an intrinsic case study methodology, as I was concerned with understanding the nexus of influencing surrounding discourses and cross-cultural interactions in the CRC's Swimming and Water Safety Program.

While both Yin (1993) and Stake (2005) presented their own unique systems for classifying case studies, both authors agreed that the context in which a case takes place is a key consideration. According to Stake (2005), not only the case and its issues, but also the context or background in which the case is situated must also be identified and included in the analysis. Yin (1993) also highlighted the “inclusion of the context as a major part of the study” (p. 3), as well as the distinct challenges that this creates in the research design. The difficulty in including the context in case study research is largely due to the broad array of variables that can arise within this context. According to Yin (1993), depending on the richness of the context, the researcher may find him/herself having more variables than data points. The researcher is then charged with the task of incorporating these variables into his/her analysis in order to provide a holistic account of the case within the given context. This is achieved, as mentioned before, by gathering various forms of evidence, through multiple, overlapping methods (Yin, 1993, 1994).

### **Defining and Situating the Case**

According to Stake (2005), a case can be a wide variety of things, large or small, simple or complex. In order for a case study to be successful, the case itself must be clearly defined as well as the smaller cases or issues within the case. In my proposed research, the case was the CRC’s current Swimming and Water Safety Program. This study can be described as an intrinsic case study (Stake, 2005), because it served to develop a better understanding of the current program, if/how Eurocanadian and whiteness discourses are present therein, and finally how the program can be adapted to be more inclusive and accommodating of cultural and ethnically diverse populations. The results are specific to the CRC’s program and serve to improve the program itself rather than be used as tools to draw generalizations that can be applied elsewhere,

which would constitute an instrumental case study (Stake, 2005). As the only program being considered was the Canadian Red Cross', the case did not constitute a multiple case study as there were no comparisons made.

### **Justifying the Selection**

While the case study methodology has been praised for its ability to provide a holistic representation of a case and the issues at play within it, Yin (1994) also suggested several common criticisms to case study research. Firstly, concern has been expressed “over the lack of rigor of case study research” (Yin, 1994, p. 9); this concern can be addressed through a researcher’s commitment to deliver a quality study that is thorough. A second problem often identified with case study research is an inability to provide “basis for scientific generalization” (Yin, 1994, p. 10). As addressed in the section outlining different types of case studies, the degree to which a case study may be generalized to other situations is largely dependent on the type of case study undertaken; therefore, unlike an instrumental case study, an intrinsic case study (the type that us employed in this thesis) is not meant to be generalized, only to provide an in-depth and holistic account of the case in question. Another criticism of case study research presented by Yin (1994) was the amount of time required to complete a case study and the quality and conciseness of the document produced. Yin (1994) also refuted these claims by stating that claiming a case study is too time-consuming is to confuse it with a specific method of data collection, rather than the methodology or strategy of conducting research. Yin (1994) also stated that criticisms in the writing styles of case studies may have been founded in the way that case studies were written in the past, but due to the new creative ways that these studies are being presented, this is no longer the case.

Despite these criticisms, case study research has also been commended for the in-depth, holistic analysis that it provides (Stake, 2005; Yin, 1994). While not all case studies are able to be generalized to broader issues in society (Yin, 1994), they possess the unique strength of utilizing multiple, overlapping methods to provide an analysis from multiple perspectives and identify various factors that may be interacting within a given case. For the research contained in this thesis, it was necessary to identify and appreciate the diverse characteristics of the instructors, the participants, the program, and the context in which the program operates (postcolonial/multicultural Canada). An in-depth, multifaceted analysis was necessary to produce meaningful results and discussion in both manuscripts. The ultimate product of the research will be to apply the rich analysis achieved through the study of the case, its issues, and context to make the CRC's Swimming and Water Safety Program culturally safe - a feat that cannot be achieved through any other methodology.

### **Methods**

As stated in the aforementioned section, case study research provides a holistic account through the use of multiple methods (Yin, 1994). I employed three distinct methods in order to derive a holistic account of the CRC's Swimming and Water Safety Program: discourse analysis (Phillips & Hardy, 2002), focus groups (Kamberelis & Dimitraidis, 2005), and semi-structured interviews (Fontana and Frey (2005). While the use of multiple methods in case study research has been criticized for the time it takes to conduct multiple forms of data collection, analysis, and interpretation, this temporal limitation can be justified by the quality of the holistic and rich account these methods produce (Stake, 2005). The following section outlines the methods that were used in each of the papers contained in this thesis.

## Paper 1

The purpose of the first paper was to answer the first research question: (how) are Eurocanadian and whiteness discourses of leadership and water safety produced and perpetuated through the content of the CRC's Swimming and Water Safety Program? In order to answer this question, discourse analysis was used to examine the Assistant Water Safety, Water Safety, and Water Safety Instructor Trainer Manuals (Canadian Red Cross, 2010a; 2010c; 2010d).

**Discourse analysis.** While Phillips and Hardy (2002) advocated for the use of discourse analysis as the use of a methodology, they also acknowledged its use as a method. They highlighted the importance in understanding discourse with their statement: "social reality is produced and made real through discourses, and social interactions cannot be fully understood without reference to the discourses that give them meaning" (Phillips & Hardy, 2002, p. 3). Discourse analysts then seek to identify and explain the relationship between these social realities and the discourses from which they emerge. More simply, whereas other qualitative methods seek to identify social realities, discourse analysis seeks to determine how they are produced (Phillips & Hardy, 2002). Although there are several approaches to discourse analysis, the approach that will be utilized in this study was described by Punch (2005) as analysis that is used to "show how institutions, practices and even the individual person can be understood as produced through the workings of a set of discourses" (p. 222). Phillips and Hardy (2002) highlighted discourse analysts' attempt to "explore the relationships between text, discourse, and context" (p. 6). For this paper, the texts from the Assistant Water Safety Instructor, Water Safety Instructor, and Water Safety Instructor Trainer manuals (Canadian Red Cross, 2010a, 2010c, 2010d) were analyzed. These texts constituted the data that were analyzed in order to determine

how the social realities experienced by the CRC instructors and program participants are constructed.

The approach to discourse analysis utilized in the first paper employed the five stage critical discourse analytical framework proposed by Fairclough (2002). This framework was chosen specifically for its focus on conducting critical discourse analysis in a way that is facilitative of producing positive social change. Fairclough's (2002) five stage approach occurred as follows. First, I focused on a problem with a semiotic (discursive) aspect. In this case, the problem was a program that has not been critically examined to identify if it relies on discourses of Eurocanadian norms or white superiority. Second, Fairclough (2002) suggested identifying the obstacles or components that construct and perpetuate discourses within the text. In order to achieve this, I read and re-read the manuals, taking the time to highlight all of the segments of text that could be interpreted as relating to "appropriate" leadership styles and/or water safety practices. As per Fairclough's (2002) framework, I then considered the social order of the problem, that is, the context in which the discursive problem was produced. With this context in mind, I then identified ways to overcome the previously identified obstacles and address the discursive components. Finally, I reflected critically on the analysis and its potential to be translated into change (Fairclough, 2002). These final steps were conducted in collaboration with the CRC in order to ensure that this study had the potential to be used to improve the current program.

### **The Cultural Safety Training Module**

The findings from the first paper were then used to inform the construction of a cultural safety training module for the participants of the CRC Instructor Development Program. The

module drew from the literature examining cultural safety training in health care and other settings (e.g., Brascoupé, & Waters, 2009), findings of the first paper, as well as my personal experiences in designing and implementing aquatic training programs. The overall goal of the module was to make current and future instructors aware of the discourses that are present in the aquatic environment and the actions that they can take to make their programming more inclusive and reflective of the diverse needs of the Canadian population. I attempted to achieve these goals by encouraging self-reflection, promoting discussions of inclusion and exclusion at the instructional and organizational level, and by encouraging participants to apply these discussions to scenarios that they may encounter in aquatics environment. After developing an initial draft of the module, I received feedback from my colleagues at the CRC. Revisions to the module were then made in accordance with their suggestions. The construction of this module did not only serve as a means of knowledge translation, it also served as the pilot training module, which was evaluated for the second paper of this thesis.

## **Paper 2**

In the second paper, I evaluated the effectiveness and applicability of the cultural safety training module created for future and current WSIs as outlined above. The training module was piloted at three aquatics facilities in various neighbourhoods in Ottawa, Ontario a total of four times. It involved a total of 36 participants (13 males and 26 females). All pilot trainings and data collection for the second paper took place between January 1<sup>st</sup> and March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2013. I recruited participants through the CRC's affiliate aquatic facilities and the focus groups took place on site at these facilities to ensure comfort of the participants as well as that the venue was easily accessible. A total of six focus groups took place, each lasting between 20 and 60 minutes.

As the study is fully supported by the CRC, I worked in close collaboration with them throughout the project. Furthermore, through the CRC I obtained support from the City of Ottawa, which gave me access to pilot the cultural safety training and conduct data collection in its facilities. The training was piloted once in an AWSI course, twice in two separate WSI courses, and finally once with experienced instructors in a WSI recertification course. This selection was intended to reflect a breadth of representation of participants in the program, from instructors who are new to the program to instructors who are experienced and knowledgeable in the field of swimming and water safety instruction. Evaluating the program with a breadth of participants helped to evaluate the module's effectiveness as a training for new instructors as well as a recertification module for current instructors. All pilot sessions of the cultural safety training module were conducted outside of the regular course meeting times and course participants volunteered to participate on their own accord after being fully informed of all the details of the study. I recruited the participants by visiting a course meeting prior to the date of the training to introduce myself and explain the study and what participation would entail.

Participants who volunteered to participate in the study first met with the WSIT or WSITA who was delivering the rest of the regular course material. This WSIT/WSITA also delivered the cultural safety training module in order to replicate the realistic process of implementing this sort of training. I observed the delivery of the cultural safety training module without interfering or interacting with the participants or WSIT/WSITA in order to be aware of the discussions that took place during the training. Data were then gathered through focus groups.

**Focus groups.** Data for the second paper were collected through focus group interviews (Kamberelis & Dimitriadis, 2005). A total of six focus groups, each with five or six participants (n=32) took place. One focus group took place with participants of an AWSI course, three with participants of the WSI courses and finally, two with participants of the WSI recertification course. Course participants met with me on a pre-established date at the facility where the respective courses were being offered.

As described by Kamberelis and Dimitriadis (2005), focus groups are, in a broad sense, “collective conversations or group interviews” (p. 887). Focus groups can be used to collect “especially powerful interpretive insights” as they “take the interpretive process beyond the bounds of individual memory and expression...[and]...capitalize on the richness and complexity of group dynamics” (Kamberelis & Dimitriadis, 2005, p. 903). The data collected through the six focus groups with participants of this study provided rich insight into the way that these participants interpreted and communicated the content of the program, how the participants positioned themselves in terms of cross-cultural interactions, inclusion and accommodation practices with an aquatics environment. Furthermore, the focus group discussions allowed me to gain insight into how participants perceived and valued cultural safety training in their role as front line aquatics staff.

**Semi-Structured Interviews.** The WSITs and WSITA who delivered the cultural safety training module also participated in semi-structured interviews separate from the course participants. These participants also had a range of experience: one was currently a WSITA (not yet certified to offer courses independently, one had less than one year of IT experience, one had over two years of IT experience, and finally, one of whom had accumulated 22 years of

experience with the program and was working in a senior position with the CRC. The semi-structured interviews with WSITs/WSITA took place either at the pool where the course was being offered or alternatively at their place of work.

As noted by Fontana and Frey (2005), interviewing is one of the most common and powerful ways to gain insights from participants. The semi-structured interviews conducted for this study utilized an interview guide comprised of 20 open-ended questions. I conducted the semi-structured interviews with WSITs/WSITA in private, using the interview guide to direct the conversation, but also allowing and encouraging participants to elaborate on and clarify their answers as required.

During the focus groups and semi-structured interviews, research participants were asked questions pertaining to a number of aspects of the cultural safety training module: their experiences participating in or delivering the training module; the principles of cultural safety; the applicability, utility, and feasibility of cultural safety training in the CRC's Swimming and Water Safety Program; expectations and roles of instructors/instructor trainers in facilitating inclusion and accommodation; and their thoughts and reflections regarding the implications of culture, and aquatic environments as diverse and multicultural spaces. I transcribed focus group and semi-structured interview recordings verbatim and returned the transcripts to the participants for verification, at which time they had the opportunity to request the omission or modification of their statements. The data from these transcripts were then analyzed using thematic analysis.

### **Thematic Analysis**

For the second paper, data from the focus groups and semi-structured interviews underwent thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is used to uncover and report recurring patterns

in data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). I utilized the six step approach to thematic analysis described by Braun and Clarke (2006) to analyze the data for the second paper. First, I familiarized with the data by reading and re-reading it and taking note of initial ideas. Second, I generated and attached initial codes to the text in order to systematically identify and organize all the data. Third, I collated the codes the codes into potential themes. Next, I reviewed the potential themes and ensured that codes fit in both their original context as well as the generated theme. Fifth, I gave the themes clear and concise names and definitions that reflected the message that the analysis was attempting to deliver. Finally, in the sixth step, I selected the most appropriate, compelling extracts of the data that related to the research questions and best illustrated the identified themes in relation to literature reviewed. This sixth and final step was also my final opportunity to analyze and review the data and ensure that my selections were in fact appropriate and accurately representative extracts of the collected data (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

### **The Papers**

By employing the approach described above, I was able to craft a cultural safety training module for the CRC and the two papers that comprise this thesis: “Examining whiteness and Eurocanadian discourses in the Canadian Red Cross Swimming and Water Safety Program” and “Bridging the waters of sport management and critical whiteness theories to examine cultural safety training for instructors of the Canadian Red Cross’ Swimming and Water Safety Program.” As a result, it is my hope that my findings will make contributions to both the academy as well as to the CRC’s efforts to offer inclusive and accommodating programming that responds to the needs of diverse Canadian populations.

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Examining Whiteness and Eurocanadian Discourses in the Canadian Red Cross'

Swimming and Water Safety Program

### **Abstract**

Each year over 1 million Canadians participate in the Canadian Red Cross' Swimming and Water Safety Program (Canadian Red Cross, 2009). Despite the increasing importance of cultural diversity in Canadian society, the Canadian Red Cross has yet to incorporate diversity training for this program's Water Safety Instructors. Through the use of critical whiteness theory and critical discourse analysis, in this paper I examine the program's content in order to assess the ways in which, if at all, it reflects mainstream, Eurocanadian and whiteness discourses. My analysis revealed two dominant discourses: i) all participants should perceive risk and demonstrate leadership like Whites/Eurocanadians; ii) behaviours that reflect white/Eurocanadian beliefs are normal and/or superior to other alternative ways of behaving. As a result of these findings, I suggest that future research should evaluate the possibility of implementing cultural safety (Brascoupé & Waters, 2009) training to equip instructors with a suitable understanding of cultural implications aquatics programming, which may improve the program's effectiveness for diverse Canadian population.

Annually, over 1 million Canadians participate in the Canadian Red Cross' (CRC) Swimming and Water Safety Program, which works to educate participants about swimming skills and water safety education (CRC, 2009). Despite this impressive level of national participation, recent research has highlighted that “new Canadians” are “over four times more likely to be unable to swim than those born in Canada” (Lifesaving Society, 2010). Although it is impossible to determine drowning-related mortality rates by ethnicity or immigration status within Canada (as coroners in Canada do not record statistics pertaining to ethnicity, immigration status, or nationality), recent attention has been focused on the role that culture may play in drowning-related deaths, particularly in the Canadian context (Golob, Giles, & Rich, 2013). Such interest has led the CRC to support the research described herein, in which I employ critical whiteness theory and conduct a discourse analysis of the CRC's Swimming and Water Safety Program's content to understand if and how it reflects and/or reaffirms discourses of Eurocanadianess and/or whiteness. By bridging discussions of Eurocanadianess and whiteness, I argue that participants in the CRC's Swimming and Water Safety Program will be better able to understand and then challenge the impacts of Eurocanadian and whiteness discourses on culturally and ethnically diverse populations.

### **Review of the Literature**

In order to situate the research, I begin with an overview of relevant literature. First, I highlight trends in the current demographics of the Canadian population to explain the importance of this type of research in making national programs (such as the CRC's Swimming and Water Safety Program) relevant for Canadians' diverse needs. Next, I explore cultural dimensions of risk perception and communication, which I follow with a review of the current

literature that examines cultural implications for aquatics programming and the complexities of cross-cultural programming, specifically in the Canadian context. Finally, I provide a brief overview of the CRC's Swimming and Water Safety Program to familiarize readers with the program's history, structure, and implementation.

### **Demographics in Canada**

The Canadian population is largely made-up of and distinguished by a variety of cultures and ethnicities. Culture and ethnicity, while very closely linked, are important to differentiate. Culture can be understood as the socially transmitted practices (customs, traditions, symbols, behaviours, etc.) within a society. On the other hand, ethnicity is more specifically described as characteristics (e.g., ancestry, language, religion, etc.) that distinguish certain groups within a society (Scott & Marshall, 2009). In Canada, longstanding ethnic groups such as Aboriginal peoples (i.e., First Nations, Inuit, and Métis), French Canadian, Québécois, and Anglo-Saxon populations have deep roots and historical ties to Canada. More recently, due to trends in immigration, many more ethnic and cultural minority groups have been gaining prevalence; these groups are becoming major and defining elements of Canadian society (Banting & Kymlicka, 2010). In fact, recent immigration statistics show that in the final quarter of 2011, 57% of the increase in the Canadian population (59 800 people) was accounted for by international migration (Statistics Canada, 2012). Furthermore, the multicultural aspects of Canadian society are supported through a federal policy, the Multiculturalism Policy, formalized in 1971 (Banting & Kymlicka, 2010), which is designed to “preserv[e] and enhance... multiculturalism in Canada” (Government of Canada, 2003, p. 4). These recent immigration trends and government policy demonstrate the importance of immigration and multiculturalism

to the Canadian public, and thus the need for continued consideration of factors related to culture and ethnicity for programs that operate at the national level. I argue that one such area of consideration should be risk perception and communication.

### **Cross-Cultural Risk Perception and Communication**

Ethnicity and discrimination have been shown to have significant impacts on individuals' perceptions of risk (Satterfield, Mertz, & Slovic, 2004). Flynn, Slovic, and Mertz (1994) reported that risk perception, that is, feeling threatened by hazards such as technologies, lifestyle choices, or environmental conditions, is linked to both gender and ethnicity, with white males consistently perceiving less risk than their white female and non-white male and female counterparts. These findings also linked ethnic and gender differences in risk perception to sociopolitical factors (e.g., power, alienation, and trust). This phenomenon, termed the "white male" effect, inspired further research that has explored these sociopolitical factors (e.g., power, alienation, and trust) in greater depth while highlighting other factors such as worldviews, feelings of trust (towards experts, governments, etc.), and sensitivity to stigmatization of dangerous places (Finucane, Slovic, Mertz, Flynn, & Satterfield, 2000), all of which impact risk perception. Finucane et al. (2000) argued that the variations among populations' perceptions of risk were more complicated than simply stating that white males perceive less risk. In fact, Finucane et al. (2000) found that each population has unique differences in the degree to which its members perceive different risks. As a result, these authors called for more research into individual characteristics and sociopolitical factors that affect the ways that different populations uniquely perceive risks. In terms of aquatics, research has attributed notable differences in aquatic risk perception to diverse beliefs and attitudes surrounding water and drowning that differ among various populations and

cultures (Giles, Castleden, & Baker, 2010; Irwin, Irwin, Ryan, & Drayer, 2009). In a culturally and ethnically diverse country such as Canada, there is thus the potential for Canadian citizens to hold many different perceptions of aquatic risk. Given the aforementioned implications of ethnicity on risk perception, there are clearly repercussions that must be considered when developing risk communication strategies.

Risk communication has been described as a responsible attempt to convey risk factors to a given population (Leiss, 2004; McComas, 2006). McComas (2006) argued that social, cultural, and psychological contexts play significant roles in the perception of risk; therefore, these contexts influence the ways in which risk communication messages are interpreted. The consideration of contextual factors should therefore be important for programs such as the CRC's Swimming and Water Safety Program, which seek to communicate risk messages to diverse populations.

### **Aquatic Programming in the Canadian Context**

In relation to aquatic risk perception and communication, Giles, Baker, and Rousell (2007) examined beliefs, attitudes, and knowledge pertaining to water safety in several Inuit communities in Canada's north, where drowning rates are up to ten times higher than the national average. Giles et al. (2010) argued that aquatic risk communication is most effectively transmitted by fostering respect for traditional Inuit water safety knowledge as well through place-based risk experience and communication that is appropriate for the northern context. Importantly Giles et al. (2010) noted that most certification based programs fail to account for contextual differences, assume a southern Canadian norm, and are therefore less effective in northern communities. Similarly, Giles et al. (2007) identified the ways that standardized

southern Canadian-based aquatics programs currently fail to meet the cultural needs of Aboriginal populations, which they argued contributes to higher rates of drowning in these populations. Given these findings, Giles et al. (2007) called for a decolonization of water safety programming for Aboriginal populations in the Canadian North. Furthermore, Giles et al. (2007) argued that culturally-relevant water safety programs in the North could lead to improved outcomes in individual and community health, such as physical activity and health promotion, drowning prevention, as well as leadership development, all of which are goals of northern aquatics programs. As leadership development is an important aspect of swimming and water safety instruction (CRC, 2009), this aspect of the program is also important to consider.

Rousell and Giles (2011) discussed lifeguards' aquatic leadership styles and the power relations at play in northern swimming facilities and how they have also been found to create and perpetuate institutionalized racism, which consequently affects Aboriginal participants' experiences in these facilities. Drawing on Drath and Palus's (1994) work, Rousell and Giles (2011) noted, "Western definitions of leadership state that a leader is supposed to provide instructive motivation or domination over other individuals in order to obtain a specific objective or level of productivity" (p. 55), but that these leadership styles are not always in line with accepted leadership styles in other cultures and contexts. While there are a variety of styles and approaches to leadership within Western paradigms, Rousell and Giles (2011) demonstrated the prevalence of this autocratic approach to leadership within aquatics environments. As noted by Ball (2004), Eurocanadian values accepted as "mainstream, standardized [and] one-size-fits-all" produce a "homogenizing, monocultural" approach to programs and services offered within a society (p. 457). As such, Giles et al. (2007, 2010, 2011) argued that acknowledging diverse

attitudes, beliefs, and traditional knowledge about water safety, regardless of Eurocanadian norms and accepted leadership styles, can lead to improving and effectively decolonizing aquatic programs.

Outside of Aboriginal communities, the impacts of race and ethnicity on leadership have also been discussed extensively. For example, in their review of leadership studies from education, communication, and black studies, Ospina and Foldy (2009) examined the differences in leadership perceptions and actions, and the variance of these factors across contexts, races, and ethnicities. The framework presented by Ospina and Foldy (2009) can be used to understand how dominant Eurocanadian leadership styles would be less effective in not only northern, swimming facilities, but any facility providing services to culturally and ethnically diverse populations, such as the case in many aquatic facilities across Canada.

While a considerable body of literature has examined the impact of Eurocanadian discourses about and practices of water safety in Aboriginal communities (Baker & Giles, 2008; Giles et al., 2007; 2010; Giles, Strachan, Stadig, & Baker, 2010; Rich & Giles, in press; Rousell & Giles, 2011; 2012), little research has addressed these discourses and their impacts on other marginalized groups in Canada within an aquatics setting. Golob et al. (2013) suggested that accounting for diverse cultural characteristics (attitudes, beliefs, experiences, etc.) and the impact that they may have on the interpretation of water safety messages is necessary for water safety programming to be effective for participants of diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds. Along with recent findings that have suggested that new Canadians are at a higher risk of drowning than those born in Canada (Lifesaving Society, 2010), Golob et al.'s (2013) findings suggest a need

for scrutiny of current swimming and water safety programming in order to better understand the implications of Eurocanadian discourses on programs' participants.

### **The CRC's Water Safety Program**

As of 2013, the CRC has offered swimming and aquatic safety programming in Canada for over 65 years (CRC, 2007). The program is based on the CRC's research pertaining to how and why people become injured and or drown in aquatic settings in Canada. Each year, the program is delivered to over one million Canadians across the country (CRC, 2009). The current program is comprised of five main components: the Swim Preschool levels, the Swim Kids levels; the Swim@School program, the Swim for Adults & Teens program, as well as the Instructor Development program. There is also a less common Swim@Camp program that is run through some organizations less regularly on a seasonal basis. The Preschool and Swim Kids levels are designed to provide school-aged participants with swimming and fitness skills as well as water safety knowledge (CRC, 2009). The Swim@School program is designed to provide an introduction to swimming and water safety for participants in a short timeframe that can be implemented through schools. The Swim for Adults and Teens program is designed to provide older participants with a chance to learn swimming and water safety skills in a learning environment more tailored to their needs (strokes, fitness, sports, etc.). The Instructor Development Program is divided into three separate qualifications that can be obtained through course participation and practical experience. First, individuals 15 years of age and over can begin to develop their leadership and teaching skills as an Assistant Water Safety Instructor (AWSI), which qualifies them to assist in the delivery of all components of the program other than the Instructor Development Program. Next, individuals hone their skills through an

additional course to become a Water Safety Instructor (WSI), which allows them to instruct lessons independently (CRC, 2009). Water Safety Instructors are responsible for the vast majority of the delivery of the CRC's programming. Water Safety Instructor Trainers (WSITs) are responsible for delivering the Assistant Water Safety Instructor and Water Safety Instructor courses. The WSITs are thus the individuals who prepare participants of the Instructor Development Program to deliver the CRC's Swimming and Water Safety Program.

While programming in each province is monitored by the CRC's provincial branches, the program content and structure are consistent across the country. As such, the CRC's Swimming and Water Safety Program is intended to be applicable and effective for the entire, diverse Canadian population. There are several reasons that the CRC's Swimming and Water Safety Program holds promise as a site for the exploration of the effects that Eurocanadian and whiteness discourses may have on Canadian aquatics program participants. Firstly, the effects of colonialism on water safety programming in the Canadian context has already been demonstrated (Giles et al., 2007, 2010), and the need to account for culture in swimming and water safety programming identified (Golob et al., 2013). Furthermore, the fact that the CRC's program was established even before the formalization of the Government of Canada's multiculturalism policy (Government of Canada, 2003), and recent increase in the importance of immigration and new immigrants to Canadian society (Banting & Kymlicka, 2010) demonstrates the potential of residual effects of colonialism on current programming and the importance of exploring it in a contemporary context. Finally, the identified implications of culture and ethnicity for risk perception (Finucane et al., 2000; Giles et al., 2010) and the effects that the leadership styles exhibited in the pool context can have on participants (Rousell & Giles, 2011) allow for a

nuanced discussion of these discourses and how they may be influencing swimming and water safety programming in the Canadian context. Below, as a first step to exploring the applicability of cultural safety in swimming and water safety programming, I employ a critical whiteness approach to identify and examine discourses that operate within the CRC's Swimming and Water Safety program.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Critical whiteness studies allows for the questioning and deconstruction of contemporary discourses of whiteness that often go unnoticed and unidentified in various aspects of modern society. By employing a critical whiteness approach while drawing from literature pertaining to Eurocanadian discourses, I hope to explore the impacts of these discourses more broadly for ethnically and culturally diverse populations. Here, I provide an overview of critical whiteness studies, its application to studies of sport and recreation, and finally how such an approach is relevant for and applicable to the CRC's Swimming and Water Safety Program.

Recently, racial and ethnicity studies have shifted from racial and ethnic minority-centred inquiry to critically addressing issues surrounding the meaning of "whiteness" (Nayak, 2007). Nayak (2007) identified three distinct approaches to critical whiteness studies: abolishing, deconstructing, and re-thinking whiteness. Due to the limited scope of this paper, I will focus on re-thinking whiteness. The re-thinking approach to critical whiteness studies is concerned with unconscious racial constructions and the production of whiteness. Such an approach "allows us to interpret how race discourses come to be lived out in the imagination and connect this to the formation of identity" (Nayak, 2007, p. 746). Perry (2001) used this approach to examine students' perceptions of culture in two high schools in California: one with a predominantly

white student body, and the other predominantly multiracial. Perry (2001) presented a compelling example of the way that both white and non-white groups of youth described whiteness as, in fact, “cultureless.” The idea of associating whiteness with no culture implied for these students that whiteness was “normal” or “rational,” which produced those individuals who apparently have “culture” or “ethnicity” as “other” or “irrational.” Perry’s (2001) findings demonstrated that students in these schools were constructing white culture as the norm or standard to which other cultures were compared, which thus idealized whiteness and constructed it as superior.

The construction and justification of white superiority has been examined in depth in white populations. Feagin, Vera, and Batur (2000) noted how many Whites justify their privilege, conceal what they acknowledge as racist behaviour, and then purport to be “more insightful about or active in racial change” (p. 196). Perry (2001) and Feagin et al. (2000) both raised important points that highlighted the unconscious construction of whiteness as normal. Another helpful concept in the conceptualization of whiteness is the “Invisible Knapsack” (McIntosh, 2003). In her discussion of whiteness and male privilege, McIntosh described white privilege as “an invisible package of unearned privilege...about which [one is]... “meant” to remain oblivious” (p. 148). McIntosh’s (2003) work highlights the importance of interrogating the neutrality of whiteness in order to understand and destabilize the systems of privilege that it creates. These authors’ works (Feagin et al., 2000; McIntosh, 2003; Perry, 2001) are crucial for understanding how discourses of white racial superiority are present in many aspects of North American society including sport and recreation programming.

While critical whiteness approaches have only recently been applied to sport studies, there are several examples of interrogations of racism in sport from which this method of questioning emerged. Notably, Loy and Elvogue (1970) examined positioning and player roles in sport and found that racial segregation was apparent in American professional football and baseball teams. From this study, Loy and Elvogue (1970) noted that discrimination was related to the centrality of the player position, that is, while Whites were more likely to assume the central decision making roles (e.g., pitcher or quarterback), Blacks were more likely to play non-central positions (e.g., outfielder or cornerback). This early study of race relations in sport was crucial in directing sport sociologists to question issues surrounding racism and segregation through sport at a time when sport was being largely commended for purely positive social outcomes, especially for Blacks (Loy & Elvogue, 1970). While these early studies focused primarily on black, male athletes, as this field of study grew there were calls for “sophisticated analysis of racial relations in sport” (Birrell, 1989, p. 213) through a cultural studies approach, which blends theories and includes considerations of all races, genders, and classes (Birrell, 1989). As the study of race, ethnicity, and sport grew, this was an important shift in focus that allowed scholars to broaden their focus and better understand the complex issues at work.

Within the realm of sport, Long and Hylton (2002) have shown that normalized whiteness is prolific in sport, as racial and ethnic stereotypes are often present and openly discussed, except in the case of whiteness. Furthermore, Long and Hylton (2002) noted the domination of the administration of sports by Whites and the ways in which it resulted in the perpetuation of white normalcy. McDonald (2002) also applied critical whiteness studies, specifically to the Women’s National Basketball Association (WNBA), to examine marketing

discourses that idealize maternity, morality, and the image of a “good white girl” in comparison to the alternative “fatal women” who are black, aggressive, and lesbian. In her more recent work, McDonald and Toglia (2010) examined the implementation of the National Basketball Association’s dress code policy and demonstrated that although the policy is rationalized in other ways (economic, corporate culture), it in fact also serves to reproduce whiteness. These authors also noted that while the dress code was implemented to protect the political and economic interests of the white middle class, the league has not cut ties with the hip-hop culture associated with the sport and is only in fact attempting to control it. Authors like Long and Hylton (2002), McDonald (2002), and McDonald and Toglia (2010) have shown that sport is not a neutral ground immune to underlying discourses of white racial superiority that have been identified (e.g., Perry, 2001) in other aspects of society. The aforementioned examples represent inquiries that have troubled the unconscious racial construction and production of whiteness and have thus employed a re-thinking whiteness approach to contemporary sport.

To my knowledge, there is very little scholarly literature and consequently a dearth of knowledge regarding whiteness in recreation and leisure programming. Consequently, there is a need for further investigation into programs that encompass sport and recreation/leisure (such as swimming and water safety programs) in order to develop a better understanding of how discourses of whiteness and white superiority may be operating in these programs. Critical whiteness studies provides scholars with a strong theoretical lens through which we can understand if/how discourses of whiteness are present and acted upon within the CRC’s Swimming and Water Safety program’s content, as well as how the program can be adapted to better respond to Canadians’ diverse water safety needs.

### Methods

I used critical discourse analysis to examine three texts produced by and for the current CRC's Swimming and Water Safety Program: the *Assistant Water Safety Instructor Manual* (CRC, 2010a), *Water Safety Instructor Manual* (CRC, 2010c), and *Water Safety Instructor Trainer Manual* (CRC, 2010d). These manuals are resources for participants in the Instructor Development Program and are produced as a means of maintaining consistency and quality among Water Safety Instructors across Canada (CRC, 2010d). They outline the expected training for future aquatic leaders as well as the expectations and strategies for the delivery of the Swimming and Water Safety Program (CRC, 2010d).

As described by Phillips and Hardy (2002), a discourse is an interrelated set of texts, which can be written, spoken, visually obtained, etc., and the resulting social practices from their production, dissemination, and reception that create a social reality. Superficially, the CRC's water safety manuals contain the program content, structure, and strategies for the program's effective delivery; nevertheless, these manuals' content can also be scrutinized as a set of texts to determine if, and to what extent, discourses of whiteness are present and perpetuated through the current program.

Discourse analysts are concerned with linking texts to their corresponding discourses and identifying and explaining the relationship between social realities and the discourses from which they emerge. More simply, whereas other qualitative methods are used to identify social realities, discourse analysts seek to determine how they are produced (Phillips & Hardy, 2002). The approach to discourse analysis utilized in this paper follows the five stage critical discourse analytical framework proposed by Fairclough (2002). First, one needs to focus on a problem with

a semiotic (discursive) aspect; that is, a problem that can be examined and attributed to a discourse. In this case, the problem is a program that has not been critically examined to identify if it relies on discourses of white superiority. Second, Fairclough (2002) suggested identifying the obstacles or components that construct and perpetuate discourses. In order to attend to the specific discursive aspects of the texts, I read and re-read the manuals and highlighted all of the sections of text that potentially conveyed messages pertaining to “appropriate” leadership and water safety. In the final steps of this approach to discourse analysis, the analyst must consider the social order of the problem; identify ways to overcome the obstacles; and finally reflect critically on the analysis (Fairclough, 2002). I conducted these steps in collaboration with the CRC to ensure that this study had the potential to be used to improve the current program.

Importantly, I selected Fairclough’s (2002) approach to discourse analysis because of his inclusion of step four: identifying ways to overcome the obstacles. As social theorists, and especially discourse analysts, are often criticized for finding problems rather than solutions (see Breeze, 2011), the step of identifying ways to overcome obstacles that may be identified through research is crucial for the analysis of the CRC’s Swimming and Water Safety Program. As this step entails going beyond finding problems and, instead, makes a useful contribution towards improving programming, it makes Fairclough’s (2002) approach ideally suited to the goals of this research. In short, this approach allows for the production of realistic suggestions that can be applied to the current program in order to potentially make it more effective for diverse Canadian populations.

## **Results**

Critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 2002) of the CRCs' water safety manuals (CRC, 2010a; 2010c; 2010d) revealed that the texts construct and perpetuate two discourses related to aquatic leadership and water safety: in order to be active and safe participants in water-based activities and to be good aquatic leaders, all participants should perceive risk and demonstrate leadership like Whites/Eurocanadians; second, the "white/Eurocanadian way" is normal and/or superior and thus alternative attitudes or approaches to water safety and leadership are different, inferior, and should actively be identified and corrected. These two discourses are constructed through various discursive components including the production of difference and the need for inclusion, the suggestion that differences need to be corrected, and through an implied idealized leadership style (i.e., autocratic, in control, powerful, etc.). Below, I outline these discursive components and how they are produced in the texts through the use of examples from the manuals. I present the following results as organized by discursive components in order to provide a better opportunity to discuss the specific ways in which we can attempt to challenge these discourses in hopes of improving the CRC's Swimming and Water Safety Program.

### **All Participants Should Perceive Risk and Demonstrate Leadership like Whites**

Throughout the manuals, the discourse that all participants should perceive risk and demonstrate leadership like Whites/Eurocanadians in order to be active and safe participants in water-based activities and to be good aquatic leaders is evident. This discourse is continually reinforced through the production of difference the importance of inclusion throughout the texts.

**Difference and Inclusion.** Initially, readers are introduced to the idea of "difference" through the idea of the importance of Water Safety Instructors being inclusive and responding to participants' diverse needs and facilitating inclusion, which is described as "providing the

opportunity for all Canadians to participate” including “persons of different gender, religions, race” or those “with cultural needs” (CRC, 2010a, p. 1.2). Further passages counsel instructors that “inclusion exists when you embrace diversity and your swimmers feel welcome, accepted and valued” (CRC, 2010c, p. 3.5). The production of difference is facilitated through the notion of embracing diversity. This trend is evident throughout all of the program manuals, as seen in the WSIT manual (CRC, 2010d) where Instructor Trainers are simply directed to “introduce [AWSI] candidates to the principle of inclusion as it applies to the Red Cross Swim programs” (p. 3.2). Importantly, the manuals fail to identify and address the norm against which these “differences” are produced. That is, candidates in the Instructor Development Program are not required to reflect on their own position (social class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, religion, culture, etc.) and how this may affect the way that they construct and perceive “difference” amongst participants in water safety programs.

### **The White/Eurocanadian Way is Normal and/or Superior**

The second discourse that was evident in the texts was that the “white/Eurocanadian way” (i.e., the mainstream and accepted way) is in fact normal and/or superior; as a result, alternative attitudes and approaches to water safety and leadership are different and/or inferior and should therefore actively be identified and corrected. While much of the texts discursively produce difference, there is also significant support for the idea that this difference can and should be “corrected.”

**Differences should be corrected.** Within the discussion of inclusion in the AWSI manual, it is noted that “inclusion is linked to learner readiness” (CRC, 2010a, p. 4.4). Furthermore, the importance of participants feeling “included” is noted as a prerequisite in order

for them to have a positive experience and therefore be more likely to learn (CRC, 2010a, p. 4.4). Once the importance of facilitating an inclusive environment has been established, provocative messages suggest that instructors should facilitate the change and replacement of participants' alternative (i.e., non-white/Eurocanadian) attitudes and approaches to activities in the program. In one instance, a text suggests that Assistant Water Safety Instructors should impart their water-safe attitudes to participants: "Attitudes are '*caught*' rather than '*taught*.' Our fears, knowledge, hopes, beliefs, and concerns all help to form our attitudes" (CRC, 2010a, p. 4.2). These instructors are also counseled to "Watch for a change in his or her [the participant's] behavior in, on, and around the water. That's the key!" (CRC, 2010a, p. 2.8). Additionally, Water Safety Instructors are tasked with "develop[ing] positive water-safe attitudes in children and caregivers" (CRC, 2010c, p. 4.1). Not only do these passages reinforce the production of difference, they also suggest that these differences should be identified and replaced with the appropriate, apparently normal and superior beliefs and attitudes taught by the CRC instructors. These suggestions are reinforced by teaching tips that suggest using feedback to "tell them [the participants] what they are doing correctly and why, tell them what they are doing wrong and how to fix it, recognize the different ways they have improved, [and] motivate their efforts in the future" (CRC, 2010a, p. 6.4). In a particularly important example, the production of difference and suggestion for change is quite obvious:

You are the key to the success of our programs, to the success of your swimmers, and to the creation of an environment in which all Canadians have healthy, positive attitudes toward swimming and water safety. You are our '*aquatic link*.' Your commitment begins now. (CRC, 2010c, p. 1.1).

This statement is especially powerful as it not only discursively produces difference by distinguishing “healthy, positive attitudes” from presumably “unhealthy, negative ones,” but also suggests that the onus is nearly exclusively on the instructor to uphold certain standards and impart the “healthy, positive attitudes” on participants. Importantly, it may lead to the problematization of difference as it can frame alternative attitudes and approaches as “unhealthy and negative.” This text therefore suggests that instructors use their expertise and knowledge to identify these differences and attempt to fix this problem: “How do you develop a behaviour? You change swimmers’ attitudes by providing a personal experience” (CRC, 2010a, p. 2.6).

**An Idealized Approach to Leadership.** Discourses of white/Eurocanadian leadership practices’ superiority are evident throughout the manuals and are consequently constructed as the norm against which “difference” is produced. Assistant Water Safety Instructors are clearly identified as the holders or providers of water safety knowledge: “We have the knowledge to give” (CRC, 2010a, p. 2.2). This leadership responsibility is then amplified as a Water Safety Instructor: “You are the key to the success of our programs” (CRC, 2010c, p. 1.1). The specific “normal” approach to teaching and development of the participants’ skills and knowledge is also discussed in the manuals. While Water Safety Instructors are cautioned “not to slip into a traditional ‘teaching’ role in which you dominate and impose your ideas on the children” (CRC, 2010c, p. 4.10), the program’s focus on an analytical, progression-based approach to learning, and rigid curriculum expectations for each level is facilitative of that very type of environment and participant-instructor power dynamic. Throughout the manuals, importance is often placed on “developing swimmer progressions” and “detailed performance criteria” (CRC, 2010a, p. 8.1), as well as “proven” and “solid progressions” (CRC 2010c, p. 5.1). The construction of the

instructor as the holder of knowledge and the rigid program structure with little room for variance collectively work to construct the “norm” to which instructors compare “differences” as they attempt to facilitate inclusion and embrace diversity. Throughout the manuals it is clearly emphasized that instructors must embrace responsibility for motivating and educating participants in order to provide a productive and successful program and to be a successful “aquatic link” between the CRC and Swimming and Water Safety Program participants.

In summary, there are many examples throughout these texts (CRC, 2010a; 2010c; 2010d) that convey the discourses that all participants should perceive risk and demonstrate leadership like Whites and that the white/Eurocanadian way is normal and/or superior. Notably, discursive components included the concepts of “difference,” “inclusion,” and “diversity,” the provocative suggestion of the need for a change of students’ attitudes and beliefs, and the idealized individualistic approach to leadership.

### **Discussion**

Upon analysis of CRC’s (2010a; 2010c’ 2010d) manuals, there are several potentially problematic discourses that emerged. The CRC’s (2010a, 2010c, 2010d) water safety manuals produce an understanding of difference and a need for inclusion that implies that all participants should perceive risk and demonstrate leadership like Whites/Eurocanadians, that is, in the mainstream and accepted manner that is often demonstrated in aquatics contexts. Furthermore, through the construction of a supposedly correct, white/Eurocanadian approach to water safety and leadership, and the message that alternative attitudes and beliefs should be identified and corrected, the texts convey the discourse that the white/Eurocanadian way is in fact normal and/or superior. I will now turn to the three aforementioned discursive components that serve as

obstacles, to use the term applied by Faircough (2002), to effective programming for participants of all cultural and ethnic backgrounds. Each of these obstacles will be discussed through a critical whiteness lens and compared to the literature and, finally, suggestions of ways to address these obstacles and challenge the aforementioned discourses will be offered to inform an approach to water safety programming that may be more sensitive and effective for diverse Canadian populations.

### **Difference and Inclusion**

As seen above, the inclusion of people from “different” genders, religions, races, and cultures is encouraged throughout the CRC manuals; however, ambiguity surrounding the term inclusion and a lack of strategies for including all individuals is also evident. Furthermore, this reference to difference implies that there is in fact a “normal” with which difference is compared. In short, what the manuals are not explicitly stating may be equally as important as what they are stating. The identification of difference without explicitly addressing how participants may be excluded based on this difference can be interpreted as a “color-blind” approach (Glover, 2007) in that it assumes that one approach to leadership and water safety is relevant for all participants. In the manuals, the CRC suggested inclusion strategies (in order to maximize inclusive participation for those of all genders, religions, races, and cultures) that included holding open registration and making programs accessible; these strategies are targeted at an organizational level, geared primarily towards facility operators, and focus on barriers to participation such as limited or member-based registration and gender or religious-based requirements for participation (e.g., gender segregated swims) (CRC, 2010a, p. 1.3). By acknowledging facility operators’ need to accommodate differences, the manuals perpetuate the idea that individuals

with specific gender, religious, racial, or cultural needs that differ from the supposed norm (i.e., white; Christian or Atheist) are “different.” The manuals overlook the ways in which the current program, at an instructional level, does in fact focus on one particular group’s needs (i.e., white; Christian or Atheist).

Exclusion or inclusion is not solely a product of interaction between swimming instructors and their students; a vast array of social factors and constructions relating to gender, religion, race, and culture must also be considered in order to create a truly inclusive program and aquatic environment (Golob et al., 2013). As it has been noted that sports administration is dominated by whiteness (Long & Hylton, 2002; McDonald, 2002; McDonald & Toglia, 2010), it is not surprising that we see the perfunctory use of the notion of inclusion at the organizational level within a sport and recreation program. While the organization has attempted to address the issue of inclusion, its “culturelessness” (Perry, 2001) and “color-blind” approach (Glover, 2007) may in fact need to be re-thought in order to provide more effective programming for diverse Canadian populations, as it may be perpetuating notions of white/Eurocanadian superiority. In order to address this “culturelessness” (Perry, 2001) and “color-blind” approach (Glover, 2007), instructors will need to critically reflect on their own positions (gender, culture, religion, past experiences, etc.) and the implications of the power relations at play within the program and then alter their behaviours accordingly. For example, a white, middle class, female swimming instructor who was raised spending her summers at a family cottage on a lake may have difficulty understanding the experiences and perceptions of a participant who is a newcomer to Canada and has spent little or no time in an aquatic environment. Reflecting upon characteristics of her own culture, social position, and how and why she in fact became so involved in aquatics

may help this instructor to understand the implications that a cultureless and/or color-blind approach may have on participants who do not share the instructor's attitudes, beliefs, and experiences. This self-awareness and reflection will be of critical importance in order for instructors to understand the "norm" to which they may actively or unconsciously be comparing apparent "differences." Furthermore, this reflection may serve to highlight the ways that common practices by organizations and instructors may in fact be excluding some participants despite the push for inclusion.

### **Differences Should be Corrected**

The discourse of an idealized approach to water safety leadership that is communicated through the manuals encourages instructors to actively influence participants' attitudes and beliefs in order to facilitate desired behaviours in, on, and around the water. As different (i.e., non-white/Eurocanadian) attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours regarding water safety have been identified as having an impact on the effectiveness of water safety programming for participants (Golob, et al., 2013), they should be important considerations for the CRC's Swimming and Water Safety Program. Considering that social and cultural contexts can influence the interpretation of a risk communication message (McComas, 2006), and that an individual's attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours are rooted in social and cultural constructions, an instructor's attempt to impart or change these characteristics may result in tensions or incongruencies between the sender and receiver of the message. Indeed, the idea of an instructor facilitating a participant "catching" or "developing" an attitude (CRC, 2010a, p. 4.2) may in fact be an exercise of institutional racism and discrimination. For instance, Giles et al. (2007) provided an example where an instructor who was attempting to teach boating safety in a northern

community in Canada faced quite a surprise when her students informed her that one should “say a prayer to the water” and that “a gun should be brought on a boat trip” (p. 35). Had this instructor actively sought to change these students’ attitudes and beliefs about boating safety based on program expectations, I argue that it would be quite probable that racism and discrimination could manifest through the program’s content and the instructor’s approach to the content’s delivery. Moreover, the manual’s suggestion of giving personal experiences in order to change swimmers’ attitudes and to consequently develop new, more appropriate behaviours (CRC, 2010a, p. 2.6) bears a frightening resemblance to colonial practices of repression (Pettipas, 1994), through which attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours that did not replicate Eurocanadian attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours were actively identified and replaced with mainstream, Eurocanadian alternatives.

Consider, for example, the attitudes, beliefs, and traditional knowledge surrounding water and water safety in Aboriginal communities described by Giles et al. (2007, 2010). Certain Inuit populations hold traditional knowledge regarding resuscitation practices (Giles et al., 2007) and utilize storytelling as a means to share water safety knowledge (Giles et al., 2010). These examples demonstrate the diversity of water-based attitudes, beliefs, and knowledge present in just one segment of the Canadian population. In following the guidance of the manuals, instructors encountering alternative approaches to water safety may be led to discount these attitudes, beliefs, and knowledge as irrational or incorrect. Subsequently, instructors may reinforce their personal attitudes, beliefs, and knowledge and attempt to impart them upon participants in order to “develop positive water-safe attitudes” (CRC, 2010c, p. 4.1).

While it is apparent that this assimilatory approach to water safety education is by no means maliciously intended, such an approach further reinforces the dominant white/Eurocanadian instructional method that favours a single approach and belief system with little room for variance. The noticeable neglect of alternative attitudes, beliefs, and knowledge and the suggestion to impart mainstream Eurocentric ways upon participants who do not currently comply with these expectations is consistent with critical whiteness scholars' assertion that whiteness is constructed as rational and normal (Perry, 2001). These constructions of rationality/normality have led to an accepted approach to water safety education that serves to reproduce whiteness, similar to the dress code policy in the NBA described by McDonald and Toglia (2010). By examining and re-thinking water safety programming, it is evident that instructors will be required to accept and acknowledge diverse attitudes, beliefs, and knowledge regarding water safety for the CRCs' Swimming and Water Safety Program to become more effective and meaningful for diverse Canadian populations.

### **An Idealized Approach to Leadership**

The discourse pertaining to the expected approach to water safety leadership and learning described throughout the manuals is consistent with the classic imagined white/Eurocanadian leader who demonstrates individual competence, an authoritarian leadership style, and powerful, motivating traits (Rousell & Giles, 2011). Considering Rousell and Giles' (2011) description of the importance of leadership and how water safety and swimming instructors exercise power with participants in the aquatic environment, it is not surprising that power relations are prevalent topics that are robustly described throughout the manuals (CRC, 2010a; 2010c; 2010d). The explicit analytic and progression-based approach to teaching also conveys the apparent

benefits of an extremely structured and authoritarian approach to water safety, which in turn also serves to repress alternative forms of knowledge from gaining legitimacy, similar to the situation described by Baker and Giles (2008). Although designed with good intentions - to instill a knowledge and appreciation of water safety practices, such an approach is deeply rooted in Eurocanadian discourses that leave little room for negotiation and incorporation of non-dominant approaches to leadership and water safety.

The value of incorporating various leadership and water safety approaches into swimming and water safety instruction can be illustrated by the example of a community-based float coat campaign that featured a water safety message created by local Elders in a rural Indigenous community in Alaska, which resulted in a significant reduction in drowning deaths (Zaloshnja et al., 2003). In contrast, through the discourses present in the CRC's manuals, instructors are left with the impression that they alone are the holders of the water safety knowledge and it is their responsibility to share and deliver this knowledge to the participants in the programs they instruct. In order for instructors to realize that they cannot in fact be experts in all situations and conditions, they should be exposed to a variety of water safety knowledge transmission methods such as storytelling or involvement of community members (e.g., law enforcement officers, fisherpeople, hunters, snowmobilers, or anyone who participates in water-related activities) in order to appreciate the diversity and potential impacts of incorporating alternative approaches into swimming and water safety education.

The strong discourses pertaining to water safety leadership and the expected approach to teaching are not only constructed through the actions of instructors, but also through the program's structure and content. Drawing from the work of McDonald (2002), which analyzed

discursive reproductions in the WNBA that idealized the “good, white, girl,” discourses within the CRC’s Swimming and Water Safety Program idealize the subordination of participants, a progression-based learning style, and an authoritarian approach to water safety leadership. These characteristics are all indicative of the dominant Eurocanadian approaches to leadership and water safety that Rousell and Giles (2011) described as negatively influencing Aboriginal peoples’ experiences in aquatics facilities in Canada’s North. These Eurocanadian leadership characteristics are indicative of the production and proliferation of discourses of white superiority in the context of water safety programming. In order for instructors of the CRC’s Swimming and Water Safety Program to adopt a more effective approach, it will be important to reflect upon and challenge dominant discourses pertaining to water safety and leadership in the aquatic environment.

### **Social Context, Critical Reflections, and Ways to Overcome the Obstacles**

In order to better understand how the discourses at work in the CRC’s Swimming and Water Safety Program can be challenged, I must also reflect on other aspects of the program to ensure that suggestions for improvement are feasible and realistic. First and foremost, it is crucial to acknowledge the broader Canadian context. As mentioned above, ethnic and cultural minority populations are continuously growing in both numbers and importance in Canadian society (Banting & Kymlicka, 2010). Furthermore, the sheer geographical space and diversity of the Canadian cultural landscape present significant challenges in the design and implementation of any program that attempts to meet the diverse needs of Canadian populations. Finally, it is also important to acknowledge that the CRC’s Swimming and Water Safety Program is implemented largely by a teenage population that receives only 30-75 hours of training time that provides an

overview of all aspects of the program (structure, teaching, evaluation, content, etc.). In such a young population (many of whose members have other priorities such as school, social life, athletics, etc.) with limited training and resources, it is important for the program to operate in a way that will allow it to run efficiently, effectively, and with a structured approach (i.e., while it would be ideal to offer instructors extensive training to deal with all demographics as well as programming resources to meet all of their needs, it is economically and logistically unrealistic to implement these sorts of changes for instructors across the country).

Despite these complexities, the social context within which the CRC's Swimming and Water Safety Program operates does not necessitate the reliance on discourses that produce whiteness as both normal and desirable. It would thus be beneficial for the CRC to implement instructor training that addresses these discourses and obstacles (to effective programming for diverse Canadian populations) that are evident throughout the program and the potential they have to affect participants. I argue that cultural safety training would be an effective and appropriate way to train participants of the CRC's Instructor Development Program to provide swimming and water safety education to diverse Canadian populations. Cultural safety is a concept developed and widely implemented in health care settings to aide practitioners in providing effective and meaningful services to Aboriginal peoples (Brascoupé & Waters, 2009). In short, a culturally safe approach does not simply involve being knowledgeable about other cultures; instead, it is "a journey of self-awareness" (Brascoupé & Waters, 2009, p. 11) where providers must acknowledge and reflect upon the "power inherent in their professional position" (p. 11). Given the nature of cultural safety training, I suggest that it is an appropriate

approach that may be useful in addressing the problematic discourses that produced and proliferated in the CRC's Swimming and Water Safety Program.

### **Conclusion**

In summary, through a critical discourse analysis of the CRC's *Assistant Water Safety Instructor*, *Water Safety Instructor*, and *Water Safety Instructor Trainer manuals* (CRC, 2010a; 2010c; 2010d), I have demonstrated the ways that the discourses shape the ideas that all participants should perceive risk and demonstrate leadership like Whites/Eurocanadians and that the white/Eurocanadian way is normal and/or superior. Furthermore, I have identified various obstacles for effective programming for Canadians of all cultural and ethnic backgrounds, including: the production of difference and need for inclusion; the suggestion that differences should be corrected; and the idealized white/Eurocanadian approach to leadership and water safety. Finally, I propose that an effective way to address these obstacles and effectively to challenge these discourses, would be for instructors of the program to participate in a cultural safety training program, which would address these discursive components in order to provide instructors with the tools to effectively deliver programming to Canadians of all cultural and ethnic backgrounds. This research lays an important foundation for attempts to improve the current program's sensitivity to Canadians' diverse needs. Future research should be conducted to pilot and evaluate the effectiveness and appropriateness of cultural safety training component for the CRC's Swimming and Water Safety Program and determine whether this avenue holds promise for challenging discourses in large scale sport and recreation programs.

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Bridging Theory and Practice: The Training Module

I developed the following module based on the principles of cultural safety. I presented it to four CRC Water Safety Instructor Trainers (WSITs), who then read the content and developed a 20 to 30 minute long training using the information and activities provided. The training module was then delivered to 36 participants in various courses of the CRC's Instructor Development Program (AWSI, WSI, and WSI recertification courses). In collaboration with the Canadian Red Cross Society (CRC), I designed the module to reflect the following format: first, participants attempt to develop an understanding of culture and reflect on the explicit and tacit (i.e., conscious and unconscious) aspects of their own culture: then, participants discuss how exclusion could occur (based on their previous discussions of culture) at both the micro/instructional and macro/organizational levels in an aquatics environment; finally, participants are given scenarios involving a cultural interaction in an aquatics environment, which they discuss and for which and attempt to find solutions (i.e., to find ways in which they could provide a culturally safe environment). The module also included several optional activities that WSITs could use as teaching tools to support the discussions with candidates. In order to reflect the realistic process of implementing this training in the CRC's program, I designed the module to be a stand-alone resource that provides WSITs enough information to effectively conduct training for current or future WSIs.

## Training Module: Red Cross Cultural Safety

### Introduction:

As the Canadian population is becoming increasingly diverse, we, as AWSIs/WSIs/WSITs, need to be able and prepared to offer programming to diverse populations. As the Canadian Red Cross Swimming and Water Safety Program is run across the country for participants from a variety of cultural and ethnic backgrounds, instructors need to be able to effectively instruct all candidates in our programs.

### Goals of the Training Module:

- Develop an understanding of cultural safety and the meaning of culturally safe programming.
- Candidates are able to explain explicit and tacit aspects of culture.
- Candidates are able to critically reflect on their own culture and understand the ways that diverse attitudes, beliefs, experiences, and cultural backgrounds can impact participation in swimming and water safety programming.
- Develop an understanding of the various ways that exclusion can happen at an organizational and instructional level in swimming and water safety programming.

### Cultural Safety: The How and Why?

- How can our Training Partners offer effective programming for participants of all cultures and ethnicities?
  - o When programs are run by individuals who acknowledge and understand participants' social and cultural backgrounds, they are better able to offer meaningful services to these participants. This type of programming is known as "culturally safe" programming. Culturally safe approaches are being used in a variety of fields (such as healthcare) in order to provide more meaningful and effective services to diverse populations. In order for individuals to employ a culturally safe approach, they are required to do several things:
    - Think critically about their own social and cultural characteristics
    - Acknowledge and accept diversity
    - Understand the power relationship that is involved in providing any type of service.

**IMPORTANTLY**, a culturally safe approach can only be affirmed by the participants feeling welcomed and respected.

- Why should the Red Cross Swimming and Water Safety Program adopt a culturally safe approach?
  - o As instructors of the Canadian Red Cross Swimming and Water Safety Program, we need to be mindful of the Red Cross' seven fundamental principles. The principle of impartiality states that "it makes no difference as to nationality, race, religious beliefs, class, or political opinions." Programs offered for populations

by the Red Cross should be “guided solely by their [these populations’] needs.” In light of the fundamental principal of impartiality, it is our responsibility as Red Cross Swimming and Water Safety Instructors to try to meet the needs of all individuals who participate in all of our programs.

- How can principles of cultural safety be taught to current and future aquatic leaders?
  - As mentioned above, cultural safety is an approach whereby individuals and groups that offer services think critically about themselves, acknowledge participants’ cultural and social backgrounds, and understand the power dynamics involved in offering services. The following activities have been designed to help current instructors and participants in the instructor development program reflect on their own cultural and social position in order to better understand the diverse positions of others. This reflection will help candidates to be prepared to offer culturally safe programming to all Canadians, regardless of their cultural or ethnic background.
  - In general, this training module should help instructors develop an understanding of cultural safety and how they can apply a culturally safe approach to delivering the Red Cross Swimming and Water Safety Program. These goals will be achieved by first encouraging instructors to identify and explain the concept of culture and the breadth and depth of its implications. Next, participants will be asked to reflect on their own social and cultural position and all of their personal characteristics and assumptions that affect the way they think and behave. The module will then specifically address exclusion and the variety of ways that exclusion can be manifested within a program and among participants. Finally, we will discuss examples of attitudes, beliefs, and knowledge from a variety of cultures and ethnicities about swimming and water safety in order to facilitate reflection upon the various ways in which aspects of culture/ethnicity can be presented in an aquatic environment. It is important to also acknowledge that this is not simply a training module that one learns and refers to; it is an approach that must be practiced and employed in all aspects of the program.

**Activity #1 - Identifying aspects of culture**

- The *Oxford Dictionary of Sociology* defines culture as, “all that in human society which is socially rather than biologically transmitted...a general term for the symbolic and learned aspects of human society.” As a group, participants should brainstorm all of the factors that contribute to culture. The purpose of this activity is to make participants think about the more tacit (unconscious) aspects of culture. Initial items should begin with explicit aspects (language, beliefs, attitudes, ethnicities, foods, sports, etc.).
- Activity:
  - Brainstorm and list on a flip chart as many cultural differences as possible (language, beliefs, attitudes, ethnicities, foods, sports, recreational pursuits, etc.)
  - Debrief findings, and does anyone have anything to add?
- Once these have been somewhat exhausted, participants should be encouraged to think about deeper aspects of culture, specifically aspects relating to swimming and water safety (i.e. acceptance/tolerance, leadership styles, morals, values, social norms, etc.)
- \*\*\*See appendix for suggested questions to stimulate discussions and potential answers\*\*\*
  - Think about the listed differences above, now how would these affect participants in swimming lessons (participant level) or an AWSI/WSI course. How do the shared beliefs and assumptions regarding water safety affect the way we deliver lessons? (see appendix for some sample questions)

Subsequently, all participants can be asked to list the three aspects of *their own* cultures that influence the activities in which they participate and the attitudes they have regarding swimming and water safety. For example, were they a competitive swimmer, do they have a backyard pool, a cottage on a lake, etc.? From here, ask participants how they think that their list would compare with that of someone from another country or geographical region (e.g., China, Egypt, Australia, Brazil, Iceland, a desert, the tundra, a rainforest). Do they think these lists would be similar or different? The point of this exercise is to have participants reflect on their own culture and experiences that influence their attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours in and around the water.

- In partners, participants can then be asked to choose one or two of aspects from their own cultures and discuss ways that these tacit aspects of their culture can influence the ways that they interact with others and specifically in an instructional setting (i.e., how will these aspects affect the way that they deliver their lessons?). Here are some interesting points you might want to discuss (borrowed from Myers & Spencer, 2004):

- Proxemics/personal space—when interacting with individuals we negotiate physical distance between each other that feels right. How far is comfortable for you when speaking to a group? How does this change when speaking to an individual? Understandings of what is appropriate personal space allowances may vary among individuals; as instructors we often operate in very intimate personal spaces (including body contact, physical manipulation, etc.), this may make individuals uncomfortable.
- Gestures – When communicating we often utilize gestures to send messages to our audience. While we often take for granted that everyone will interpret our gestures in the same way, it is important to recognize the potential of misinterpretation. For example, the “thumbs up” in North America symbolizes “good job;” however, in Nigeria it is a rude gesture used to express disapproval, and in Asia is often used in counting to represent the number four.
- Facial expression – individuals from western, individualistic cultures often display their emotions intensely and for a prolonged period of time (e.g. when I am having a bad day, I look like I am pouting all the time), individuals from collective cultures on the other hand may visibly express their emotions more subtly or not at all. We therefore should not rely too much on what we see; even though swimmers may look unimpressed, they may be having a great time. Furthermore, we should not let our own attitudes be overly affected by our interpretations of the expressions of those around us.
- Eye contact – different cultures have different practices regarding what is acceptable in terms of eye contact. While in North America, intermittent eye contact is expected to show that you are engaged and paying attention, other cultures have very different practices. For example, in some cultures, extended and intense eye contact among same sex individuals is a sign of trust and respect, whereas among individuals of the opposite sex it is considered inappropriate.

**Activity #2 - Addressing exclusion**

In Canada, we pride ourselves on our tolerance and acceptance of all cultures and ethnicities, sometimes without explicitly addressing or reflecting on how our actions may still in some ways be exclusionary in nature. For the second activity, in small groups, participants should reflect on the previous activity to discuss the ways in which aquatics facilities and lessons are run may in fact be exclusionary to some people. Each group should try to identify one or two potential problems and solutions for facility operators (at an organizational level) as well as instructors (at an instructional level).

- **Examples for organizations** - no gender segregated swims or lesson times; or only private (more expensive) lessons during gender segregated swims, gender segregated times only for women, clothing/bathing suit requirements (e.g., swim caps), lesson times during fasting periods, open beaches with no privacy.
- **Examples for instructors** - mixed sex classes with participants who are uncomfortable or others who make inappropriate comments, using “food” examples in games/activities, unfamiliar with cultural/local practices/traditions, participants who have never swum in a pool/lake.

This activity can also be started with discussion of visual representation of lifeguards and swimming instructors. While images produced by the Red Cross are carefully selected, other representations of lifeguards, swimming instructors, and participants in aquatics programming often portray all participants as young and fit individuals. Given this image, it is easy to see how potential participants may consider these young, fit individuals as either too young to be charged with the responsibility of “saving lives” or even a bad influence on their children as they may consider the exposure of body parts to be inappropriate.

Alternatively, groups can be provided with one of the above examples and then be asked to discuss implications for instructors and administrators facing these situations and then present their discussion to the other participants.

**IMPORTANT:** What needs to be avoided here is the idea that it is the participants’ responsibility to make accommodations rather than the organizations’/instructors’ responsibility to offer appropriate programming. If the discussion turns in this direction, refer to the fundamental principle of impartiality and its implications for Red Cross programming (as discussed above).

**Activity #3 – Problem Solving**

For this activity, break the participants into small groups and give them a scenario in which they will need to draw upon the concept of cultural safety in order to determine appropriate action. Below are several scenarios that may be used, others may also be incorporated. The suggested actions are also flexible. Any response where the instructor is respectful of cultural differences and does his/her best to accommodate to the needs of the swimmers is acceptable. What is not acceptable is any response where the answer infers that it is the swimmer's responsibility to change his/her behaviour.

**Scenario 1** – A young girl in your swim class comes each week wearing sweat pants and a sweater. She obviously struggles in the water due to the weight of her clothing but you know that she dresses this way to accommodate her beliefs about modesty. Her participation makes you concerned for her safety in the pool. How do you address this?

Suggested Action – Continue to be mindful and attentive to her behavior and swimming. If possible, discuss clothing options with her parents/caregivers. There are modesty mindful bathing suits available (e.g., the burkini) about which they may be unaware. Otherwise you can suggest that the swimmer wears slimmer, less bulkier clothing (e.g., long sleeved t-shirt rather than a hoody) made of materials that will retain less water (e.g., polyester rather than cotton) and be less cumbersome in the water.

**Scenario 2** – You are reviewing boating safety with a group of young swimmers. After asking your swimmers, “What do we need to do to prepare for a boating trip?” one of your swimmers says, “say a prayer to the water so that we will make it home safely.” You are caught off guard and the other swimmers look confused. How do you respond?

Suggested Action – This response is a valid and legitimate answer. You should confirm the participant's answer and continue with the activity not by dismissing the response, but by seriously accepting it. If other swimmers question the response, you can ask the swimmer to elaborate. If s/he is unable to explain, you can reassure the child and ask if s/he can bring a response the following week.

**Scenario 3** – While playing the “Pizza Game” where you shout out toppings and swimmers jump into the pool and climb out to get ready for the next jump, you have saved “Pepperoni” for last as it is the classic pizza topping enjoyed by all kids. You get the swimmers all excited and shout “PEPPERONI!” All the swimmers but one jumps in. When you question him why, with a hint of sarcasm - because “everyone loves pepperoni,” he responds that it is not kosher. You are caught feeling insensitive and uncomfortable. How do you respond?

Suggested Action –Firstly, apologize! If it was your mistake, there is nothing wrong with admitting it. You can choose to do one more round of the game and pick something more obvious like “cheese” or “sauce,” as long as you acknowledge the swimmer’s situation and make him/her feel welcome by accepting that your comment was inappropriate. Next time, be mindful of these possibilities and opt for types of ice cream rather than pizza toppings.

**Scenario 4** – There is a swimmer in your class who deliberately avoids eye contact. She participates in all activities, but needs a little extra help with her strokes. You are concerned that she is not watching when you demonstrate and this is why she not improving as well as the others. How can you address this situation?

Suggested Action –Avoiding eye contact may in fact be a sign of respect and a practice that is part of the swimmer’s culture. Therefore, you should not try to force the participant to watch you more closely. Alternatively, you could ask other swimmers to demonstrate the skills that you are practicing.

**Scenario 5** – A girl in your class tells you that she cannot participate in the endurance swim for religious reasons. You are not familiar with this religious teaching. How do you respond?

Suggested Action –You should not argue, try to force the swimmer to participate, or punish her. Try to find an alternative activity in which she can participate (e.g., treading water while the others complete the swim). For this specific example, speaking with the parents/caregivers after class in order to confirm that you understand this religious teaching and that you understand the limits of the child’s participation is of great importance.

**Scenario 6** – A swimmer in your class is continuously in what you consider your “personal space.” He is regularly so close that it makes you uncomfortable. He consistently hangs off of you and gets extremely close to you when speaking. He is a good swimmer and participant but you are concerned that his proximity is inappropriate, yet he seems to consider this behaviour to be acceptable.

Suggested Action –Nicely explain to him that you don’t feel comfortable being so close, that each person has a different comfort zone, and that it’s important to be respectful of that. If the problem persists, explain the situation to the parents/caregivers and ask for their help to communicate your feelings to the swimmer.

\*\*\*This example is important as it also brings up the importance of the instructor’s right to be respected as well.

### Conclusion

In summary, the best advice you can offer for instructors regarding participants' social and cultural practices is to approach each individual swimmer and lesson with an **open mind**, a **willingness to learn**, and **humility**. Furthermore, you should never be afraid to discuss issues or situations that arise in order to be sure that you are dealing with them appropriately. Use all the resources that you have available, including your fellow instructors, your supervisors, parents/caregivers/family, and community members. By engaging in discussions with the people for whom you are providing the service, you can improve your abilities as an instructor.



## **Appendices**

Appendix A: Suggested questions and responses for Activity 1

Appendix B: Optional Activity #1

Appendix C: Optional Activity #2

Appendix D: Definitions

Appendix E: References/Other Readings

**Appendix A: Activity 1 Suggested Responses**

- Examples of explicit aspects of culture- language, beliefs, attitudes, ethnicities, foods, sports, clothing, jewelry, greetings, popular culture trends, etc.
- Tacit Questions:
  - What are some of the (less obvious) things that you learn from your parents? (manners, tolerance, leadership, right vs. wrong)
  - What are some things that you and your siblings, parents, closest friends, etc “just get” without having to discuss? (How you are feeling/expression, the importance of family/friends/beliefs/etc.)
  - What are some differences between your social behaviour and that of people your parents’ age? Grandparents? (tolerance, acceptance, clothing, moral values, social expectations, social interactions, approaches to diversity, etc.)
- Examples of tacit aspects of culture – what is accepted/tolerated, appropriate leadership styles, morals, values, social norms, shared understandings, perceptions of time, family values, expression, approaches to problem solving, acceptable personal space, use of gestures,
- Specifically related water safety and swimming:
  - How is water safety taught? An individual responsibility.
  - What do instructors and participants value about swimming and water based activities?
  - How do instructors explain water related injuries and drowning?

**Appendix B: Optional Activity #1- can be done as an opener or closer**

This activity is designed in order to open instructors' eyes to forms of water safety education that are employed and successful in non-Eurocanadian cultures. This activity will consist of presenting participants with an example of a water safety strategy that is/has been employed and then asking them to reflect upon it as well as their own approach and ways of knowing about water safety. As Canada is a country with many lakes, rivers, etc., Aboriginal cultures have diverse and varying attitudes, beliefs, and knowledge surrounding water safety. The following examples illustrate some diverse and interesting situations and their implications for water safety.

**Example one: Qallupaluit** - the Inuit sea monster who swallows up little children who wander out onto the ice. (see video or book *A Promise is a Promise* by Robert Munsch and Michael Kugusak). In Inuit culture, storytelling is effectively used as a method for teaching water safety. While the Red Cross uses a systematic, analytical approach to teaching through progressions, there are places right here in Canada where this approach is not as effective as it does not serve these populations' needs. Rather than the typical approach of keeping children "within arm's reach," this example illustrates how using an oral tradition (storytelling) can be effective in keeping children safe by teaching them not to wander out on the ice. From this approach we can learn how the needs of different populations produce diverse ways of transmitting water safety messages that are more effective than the current system.

**Example two: Rural Aboriginal communities** - where many daily activities take place in, on, and around the water. Many traditional beliefs relate to water. For example, in certain lakes, men and women should not swim together, mixing genders while hunting/fishing will bring bad luck, and common boating equipment includes gear and materials required to spend a night on the land, etc. These differences in water safety knowledge are just as legitimate as the ones that are included in the current program literature. It is important to acknowledge the way that the context and culture of a population will produce different attitudes, beliefs, and knowledge pertaining to aquatic safety and these are important to recognize and work with, not discount as illegitimate.

**Example three:** In some Asian cultures, in order to remain safe around the water, the avoidance approach (i.e. avoiding all contact and activities in the water) is widely applied. Rather than learning to swim and participate in water activities, it is accepted practice to avoid the water at all costs. Furthermore, drowning and water related injuries are sometimes attributed to fate (out of your control) rather than being unprepared (which you can control).

These examples should be used to encourage participants to reflect critically on their own water safety practices and highlight the fact that the approach utilized by the Red Cross isn't the only approach. By acknowledging these different approaches, one can develop a better understanding of diversity in relation to water safety practices and beliefs.

**Appendix C: Optional Activity #2 – Application/Sharing****Activity:**

Current instructors can be asked to share their own personal experiences where they have encountered a cultural interaction or misunderstanding in one of their swimming lessons. They may also be asked to discuss biases or personal experiences with racism in the work environment and how this affects the way that they do their job.

Participants of the instructor development program can be asked to look out for aspects and instances of cultural diversity and the implications that it may have in the aquatics environment during their apprenticeship hours. In a course session following the practice teaching, the group can discuss different participants in their lessons and what they may have noticed after discussing the importance of culture in shaping our attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours in and around the water.

### **Appendix D: Definitions**

Culture – Culture is everything in human society which is socially rather than biologically transmitted. Culture is thus a general term for all the symbolic and learned aspects of human society.

Cultural Safety –happens when instructors understand that not all individuals act in the same way, or hold the same beliefs. In order to run culturally safe programming, instructors need to acknowledge and manage the personal and professional assumptions that they bring to every aquatic relationship. Furthermore, instructors need to reflect critically on their own cultural position and understand the power dynamic involved in offering a service to someone who doesn't share the same cultural characteristics. Finally, cultural safety can only be affirmed by the participant feeling welcomed and respected in their interaction.

**Appendix E: References and Other Readings**

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### Reflections

After finishing my course work, proposing my intended research project, and carrying out the critical discourse analysis described above, I experienced a noticeable shift in thinking. Not surprisingly, my way of thinking about the sport and recreation programs that I had come to know and embrace as well as my understanding of my role as a participant, instructor, and now critic of these programs, drastically changed. Through critiquing the CRC's Swimming and Water Safety Program, I was able to further reflect on my personal experiences of delivering a variety of programming in a diverse contexts. What this further reflection provoked was an appreciation for examining the contexts in which programs are delivered.

I have been extremely fortunate and privileged to have had the opportunity work and volunteer in a wide array of sport and recreation contexts. As a young adult, I was a very active member of my rural hometown's sport and recreation community. In the municipality of Powassan, I was fortunate to connect with hundreds of rural community members in the capacity of a lifeguard, water safety instructor, community coach, referee, sports event/tournament organizer, and student athletic council president at Almaguin Highlands Secondary School. Following high school, a desire to diversify my experiences and skill set led me to accept a position as a summer program facilitator at Hockey Opportunity Camp, a well-respected sports camp north of Muskoka. After a summer as a facilitator, I was fortunate to spend the three following summers in between my years as an undergraduate student in an administrative role where I supervised and coordinated staff who offered a variety of sport and outdoor education programming for youths aged six to sixteen, most of whom travelled in from the city, making them noticeably distinguishable from the rural participants to whom I was accustomed. During

my undergraduate degree, I also worked at the Jewish Community Centre (JCC) in Ottawa, where I was exposed to an even more diverse group of participants and a working environment with distinct cultural presence. At the JCC, I was fortunate to offer programming to extremely diverse populations in terms of ethnicity, culture, and ability. Notably, I developed a close bond with students of the Woodroffe High School General Learning Program for students with developmental disabilities. Working with “my Woodroffe kids” and staff allowed me to develop a stronger appreciation for the ways that interactions of culture, ability, and the context (of the pool, classroom, learning environment, school, etc.) can affect programs and their effectiveness. Following my undergraduate degree, I served a brief stint working for “the Man” at a major fitness facility. There is not much to say about this experience except that it helped me realize that this type of corporate context was not one in which I wished to pursue a career. Finally, during my graduate work, I became involved with the Community Cup, a local organization whose staff works to integrate and facilitate community connections for newcomers to Ottawa and Canada through sport, professional development, and volunteerism. Working with the Community Cup sensitized me to the importance of an organization’s overall mandate in the success of its program. The leadership of the Community Cup truly “walks the talk” in that they embody ideas of inclusion, accommodation, and awareness of cultural diversity, which is crucial to the success of their program.

Through my studies and reflections on my interactions and involvement with all of these programs and participants, a few things became clear to me. First, I developed an acute awareness of some of the diverse needs of the various populations with which I had worked so closely. Second, given this diversity, I came to realize the potential problematic nature of

standardized programming that assumes that one approach will be effective for all populations. Third, however, I also observed that despite the shortcomings of standardized programming, given the chance to flourish in the appropriate context, nearly all programming can be adapted to respond to the needs and characteristics of any diverse population. This led me to my final realization of the utmost importance of the context in which programming is implemented and delivered. That is, the appropriate context, supportive environment, and a certain level of awareness and reflection can be conducive to adapting sport and recreation programming that, although may be designed and communicated in one way, can be changed to be responsive to diverse populations.

The following paper addresses the use of the organizational context as a way for the CRC to improve the implementation of their Swimming and Water Safety Program for diverse populations. I sincerely hope that through drawing from the existing literature and theories, the data collected, and reflections from my own experience, that a productive conversation can be facilitated in order to effectively improve this program. To introduce this paper I have chosen another quote that not only speaks to one of the goals of the cultural safety training module (self-reflection), but also reflects the importance of considering multiple perspectives (e.g., participants, instructors, administrators, etc. of a program) in order to make productive recommendations that may be incorporated in order to produce positive social change:

Look at all situations from all angles and you will become more open.

-Dalai Lama

Bridging the Waters of Sport Management and Critical Whiteness Theories to Examine Cultural Safety Training for Instructors of the Canadian Red Cross' Swimming and Water Safety Program

### **Abstract**

In Canada, there are over 35 000 instructors of the Canadian Red Cross Society's (CRC) Swimming and Water Safety Program. Given the importance of multiculturalism and diversity to Canadian society, the CRC is actively searching for ways to train instructors to be more skilled at offering programming to all populations. In this paper, I examine the piloting of a cultural safety (Brascoupe & Waters, 2009) training module in the CRC's Instructor Development Program. Using data from focus groups and semi-structured interviews with program participants and facilitators, thematic analysis revealed two main themes: that inclusion is important and valued by instructors; and that accommodation for cultural and ethnic diversity is difficult in aquatics settings. By engaging in literature on the management of diversity as well whiteness in sport and recreation contexts, I believe this paper makes two main contributions to the literature. First, I bridge the existing bodies of literature on critical whiteness theory and sport management literature addressing inclusive programming and examine this link, and the effectiveness of this approach, in an applied sport and recreation context. Second, I explore the novel application of cultural safety training for instructors of a sport and recreation program. Finally I offer recommendations to facilitate a sport and recreation organizational culture that is facilitative and supportive of inclusive (i.e., welcoming) and accommodating (i.e., flexible and adaptable) aquatic programming.

The Canadian Red Cross Society (CRC) began offering swimming and water safety programming in Canada in 1946. Since then, the program has experienced significant growth and development, which have culminated in the current CRC Swimming and Water Safety Program (CRC, 2007). Currently, the CRC trains and certifies over 20 000 Water Safety Instructors in Canada annually, who in turn deliver swimming and water safety programming to over one million Canadians each year (CRC, 2009). As a registered charity, the CRC operates as an auxiliary to governments in the humanitarian field. It offers a variety of programs (such as the swimming and water safety program) consistently, as well as support and humanitarian aid in times of need (CRC, 2010a). The CRC is part of the International Red Cross Red Crescent Movement and all of its actions and activities are therefore governed by the Movement's seven fundamental principles: humanity, impartiality, neutrality, independence, voluntary service, unity, and universality. Specifically, the fundamental principle of impartiality means that the organization "makes no discrimination as to nationality, race, religious beliefs, class or political opinions" (CRC, 2010c, para. 3). In light of recent claims of new Canadians' heightened risk of drowning (Lifesaving Society, 2010) and the potential ineffectiveness of water safety programming for racial and ethnic minority populations (Golob, Giles, & Rich, 2013), the CRC has raised concerns about the effectiveness of its programming. Consequently, in order to have its programming better reflect the fundamental principle of impartiality, the CRC has elected to support research to identify practical approaches to making its programming more effective for Canadians of all ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Thus, in this paper, I use a case study methodology to examine the development and piloting of a cultural safety training module for those participating in the CRC's Instructor Development Program. More specifically, I use

thematic analysis to analyze transcripts from six focus group and four semi-structured interviews conducted with training participants and the facilitators who ran the training module.

By bridging the literature concerned with troubling whiteness in sport management and the management of diversity and multiculturalism in sport and recreation contexts, my research will hopefully enable a discussion of the effectiveness of the training module in making instructors more culturally aware and prepared to offer culturally safe programming, and consequently, how organizations can improve current practices to facilitate the inclusion and accommodation of participants from diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds. Based on my analysis, I recommend that the CRC should develop cultural safety training for not only those who deliver swimming lessons, but also management and front line staff at aquatics facilities in order to provide programming that is culturally safe and consequently more welcoming and inclusive of and accommodating for diverse populations. In order to appreciate the demographic trends and cultural and ethnic diversity of the Canadian population – that is, changes in the make-up of the potential participants of the CRC Swimming and Water Safety Programming, I will now review the current trends in immigration and the resulting changes to the Canadian population.

### **Diversity and Multiculturalism in the Canadian Context**

The demographics of the Canadian population are changing and, consequently, diversity and multiculturalism are now prominent and defining features of the Canadian demographic landscape (Banting & Kymlicka, 2010). As noted by Golob et al. (2013), recent immigration trends demonstrate a consistent flow of immigrants from non-western cultures and societies to westernized regions such as Europe, Canada, the U.S., and Australia. Statistics Canada (2010)

noted that the proportion of foreign-born persons in Canada is approaching record levels and that by 2031 this proportion could reach levels not seen since the early 1900s when large numbers of immigrants were received in efforts to settle western Canada. Furthermore, sources of recent immigration flow have drastically changed. Until 2001, the majority of the Canadian foreign-born population had immigrated to Canada from Europe. Recently, however, immigration to Canada from Asia has experienced tremendous growth, whereas the proportion of Asian-born persons accounted for only 14% of foreign-born Canadians in 1981, this proportion increased to 40.9% in 2006, for the first time surpassing the proportion of foreign-born Canadians from Europe (Statistics Canada, 2010). As a result of these changing demographic trends, a defining feature of the Canadian population is its diversity of cultural and ethnic backgrounds. Consequently, policy and programming developed and offered at the national level must be changed accordingly to respond the needs of a changing population.

Trends of demographic change are endorsed by and reflective of the Canadian Multiculturalism Act (Government of Canada, 2011). First introduced as the Multiculturalism Policy by the federal government in 1971 and later reaffirmed and instituted as the Multiculturalism Act in 1988, the Canadian Multiculturalism Act has evolved with the changing demographics in Canada, but maintained its core ideas of “recognition and accommodation of cultural diversity; removing barriers to full participation; promoting interchange between groups; and promoting the acquisition of official languages” (Banting & Kymlicka, 2010, p. 50). While national policies such as the Multiculturalism Act and their underlying ideals are ultimately enforced and promoted by the federal government, Sandercock (2004) noted that they are primarily implemented and experienced at the local level. Such a division creates both challenges

and opportunities for local governments and organizations that are not responsible for or necessarily involved in the settlement process, but nevertheless offer services to the changing Canadian population. At the local level, in order to facilitate integration and participation, there is a need for “expanding the cultural repertoires of planners and other civil servants by designing more inclusive and culturally appropriate participatory processes” (Sandercock, 2004, p. 154). Sandercock (2004) also suggested that these outcomes (integration and participation) could effectively be achieved through a number of means, including providing racism and diversity training to municipal workers and service providers. In order to understand some of these challenges and opportunities faced by organizations, such as the CRC, which offer national-level programming at the local level, and the implementation of racism and diversity training, I will now turn to literature pertaining to aquatics programming in the Canadian context.

### **Canadian Aquatics Environments**

While there is a significant body of literature concerning the tensions and difficulties of using standardized aquatics programs (i.e., the same program in very different contexts) in Aboriginal communities in Canada’s North (Baker & Giles, 2008; Giles, Baker, & Rousell, 2007; Giles, Castleden, & Baker, 2010; Giles, Strachan, Stadig, & Baker, 2010; Rich & Giles, in press; Rousell & Giles, 2011b), scholars have only begun to discuss the (in)effectiveness of these programs for other ethnic and racial minority populations (Golob et al., 2013). Giles and colleagues have illustrated the ways in which risk perception and communication, approaches to leadership, and understandings of water safety that are embedded in Eurocentric aquatics programs do not respond to the unique and diverse needs of northern Aboriginal populations. Importantly, Rousell and Giles (2011a, 2011b) discussed the implications that Eurocentric

approaches to leadership utilized by program facilitators (i.e., lifeguards and day camp workers) can have on Aboriginal participants' experiences in sport and recreation programming. These studies found that lifeguards and recreation practitioners from southern Canada who were employed at northern pools utilized leadership styles that in turn led to tensions with, and even institutionalized racism towards, local Aboriginal participants. Rousell and Giles' (2011a, 2011b) work demonstrated the extent to which the organizational culture of a sport and recreation facility can impact the experiences of participants who do not necessarily share the values of that culture. The work of Rousell and Giles also attests to the stratification of a patriarchal culture of similarity based on Eurocentric, masculine ideals (see Doherty & Chelladurai, 1999), which is evident in some Canadian aquatics and recreation programs and facilities (Rousell & Giles, 2011a, 2011b). Furthermore, as the organizational culture in northern aquatics facilities appeared to be directly reflective of the approaches to leadership employed by aquatics staff (Rousell & Giles, 2011a, 2011b), it is evident that there may be many barriers to establishing the importance of incorporating diversity that may be entrenched into current aquatics program management.

In order to address issues surrounding Eurocentrism in Canadian aquatics and recreational programming, Golob et al. (2013) suggested an approach that requires fundamental changes to the design and delivery of these programs. In drawing from aquatics literature, Golob et al. (2013) investigated the notion that disparate drowning rates of ethnic and racial minority populations may be linked to standardized programming that fails to account for participants' diverse beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours pertaining to water safety. Golob et al. (2013) identified promising practices for improving the effectiveness of water safety programming for ethnic and racially diverse populations. These practices included programmers ascertaining and responding

to an understanding of diverse cultural practices and beliefs, including members of target groups in program development, offering programs specifically for newcomers, and recruiting and retaining lifeguards, instructors, and administrators that better reflect the ethnic and cultural dimensions of the population at large (Golob et al., 2013). While these promising practices are grounded in the literature, it is also important to examine their applicability to swimming and water safety programming in the Canadian context.

### **The Management of the CRC's Swimming and Water Safety Program**

The CRC's Swimming and Water Safety program trains instructors across Canada through its Instructor Development Program. Indeed, each year over 20,000 Water Safety Instructors (WSIs) are trained and certified through the CRC (CRC, 2009). While these instructors are trained and certified through the CRC's Instructor Development Program, they are then hired to work at municipal or private organizations (pools, recreation facilities, beaches, summer camps, etc.) where they deliver the CRC's Swimming and Water Safety Program. Thus, while the CRC trains and certifies instructors, as well as develops and disseminates its program, it is not, in fact, responsible for the hiring of instructors or the supervision and monitoring of the program's implementation. Consequently, while promising practices, such as those proposed by Golob et al. (2013), may be successful means for improving the effectiveness of aquatics programming for participants from culturally and ethnically diverse backgrounds, many of these propositions (e.g., responding to specific cultural practices and beliefs, retaining diverse lifeguards, instructors, and administrators) are largely outside of the control of a national level program. Although the CRC's Swimming and Water Safety Program operates across all provinces and territories, it does not provide specific programming for unique cultural and ethnic

groups. Furthermore, as the CRC is not responsible for the actual hiring process in aquatics facilities, it is unable to control efforts to hire and retain diverse aquatics staff. Considering these factors, I argue that there is a disconnect between the promising practices identified in the literature and the reality of what is applicable to the management of the CRC's Swimming and Water Safety Program at the national level. In this paper, I respond to this disconnect by evaluating a strategy that may be implemented by aquatics programmers in Canada, that is, a cultural safety training program for instructors of the CRC's Swimming and Water Safety Program. In order to situate aquatics programming in a broader theoretical context, I will now examine the literature concerning the management of diversity in sport and recreation.

### **Managing Diversity in Sport and Recreation**

Though local Canadian sport and recreation managers often face challenges to acting on policies such as the Multiculturalism Act to provide inclusive programs and services (Poirier, 2004), this area has been somewhat overlooked by sport and recreation researchers. While research concerning the use of sport and recreation to serve other social agendas, such as the promotion of citizenship and national identity (Gruneau & Whitson, 1993; Harvey, 2001), fostering the integration of marginalized populations (Frisby & Millar, 2002; Pedlar, Yuen, & Fortune, 2008), as well as individual and community development (Danish, Forneris, Hodge, & Heke, 2011; Gould & Carson, 2007), have received significant attention, literature pertaining to the management implications of diversity in Canadian sport and recreation programs is scarce (Thibeault, Frisby, & Taylor, 2009, as cited in Frisby, 2011). Due to the similarities between sport and recreation organizations – and the lack of literature pertaining to recreation management and diversity, I provide an overview of scholarship related to both contexts.

### **Managing Diversity in Sport and Recreation**

Cunningham and Fink (2006) highlighted the need for sport organizations to diversify and embrace cultural diversity. They argued that addressing the management of diversity “represents one of the most important issues for academics and sport managers today” (p. 455). Given the apparent importance of sport managers embracing cultural and ethnic diversity, scholars have developed frameworks for the management of diversity in sport organizations. In this study, I utilized the diversity management framework proposed by Doherty and Chelladurai (1999). These authors incorporated the importance of the context in which a sport organization operates and proposed that the management of diversity is indirectly a function of the organization’s culture. These authors therefore posited that the management of diversity can be influenced by a sport organization’s leadership who has the ability to influence organizational culture to embrace and celebrate diversity.

The theoretical framework proposed by Doherty and Chelladurai (1999) is particularly relevant for the research at hand for two reasons: First, Doherty and Chelladurai’s work acknowledges the importance of the context of the sport organization and recognizes the potential difficulties inherent in making changes to diversity management practices as they are embedded in organizational culture; second, it offers a clear way of understanding how to improve management practices to include and celebrate diversity. Thus, Doherty and Chelladurai’s (1999) framework is an appropriate model for an examination of the management of diversity in the CRC’s Swimming and Water Safety Program.

Doherty and Chelladurai (1999) discussed the relationship between a sport organization’s members’ cultural diversity and the value of cultural diversity to that organization’s culture. They

proposed “that the impact of cultural diversity in the organization is largely a function of managing that diversity” and that “managing cultural diversity is a function of the culture of the organization” (Doherty & Chelladurai, 1999, p. 286). While an exact definition of organizational culture is difficult to identify, in general, it can be understood as the “values, beliefs, basic assumptions, shared understandings, and taken-for-granted meanings” through which understanding of an organization or group within the organization are constructed (Slack & Parent, 2006, p. 275). Doherty and Chelladurai (1999) acknowledged that sport organizations typically adopt a patriarchal culture of similarity (i.e., one that reflects and seeks to reproduce masculine ideals) and that encouraging and embracing diversity entails tolerating challenges of inefficiency. Nevertheless, they argued that it is possible to embrace cultural diversity in sport organizations. Doherty and Chelladurai (1999) further proposed that leadership within the organization is required to ensure that organizational culture is reflective of the organization’s desired outcomes, such as embracing and celebrating the cultural diversity of the organization’s members (Doherty & Chelladurai, 1999). In another paper, Smith and Hattery (2011) applied race relation theories to sport management to explain some of the specific barriers faced by staff at sport organizations to embracing cultural diversity and multiculturalism. From their analysis, Smith and Hattery (2011) made suggestions for promoting diversity in the management of sport organizations, including providing training in decoding the language of symbolic racism and having managers provide specific ways for organizations to create inclusive workplace cultures. While both of these examples (Doherty & Chelladurai, 1999; Smith & Hattery, 2011) raised important points, the authors did not specifically discuss the process of implementing their suggested changes.

In the recreation literature, Scott (2000) identified some of the ways in which leisure service agencies operate that prevent these agencies from “effectively meeting the leisure and recreation needs of disenfranchised groups” (p. 133). Scott (2000) found that these shortcomings stemmed from an entrepreneurial approach (valuing revenue production, privatization, and efficiency), the promotion of customer loyalty (as opposed to constantly recruiting new participants), a lack of commonality between recreation employees and disenfranchised groups, and practitioners’ belief that “people are able to act freely on the basis of their leisure preferences” (Scott, 2000, p. 136). All three of the aforementioned studies (Doherty & Chelladurai, 1999; Scott, 2000; Smith & Hattery, 2011) directly or indirectly highlighted the importance of organizational culture and its impact on the management of diversity in sport and recreation management contexts. In order to appreciate this apparent importance, it is also necessary to examine current practices that are being applied to manage diversity in Canadian sport and recreation settings.

### **Applied Management of Diversity**

In an applied context, Frisby (2011) examined a multiculturalism, sport, and physical activity workshop designed to develop physical activity inclusion practices for newcomers in Vancouver, British Columbia. From this study, Frisby (2011) proposed promising practices for including newcomers in physical activity programming. Among others, these practices included promoting dialogue between managers and citizens in the process of policy and program development, considering a broader socio-ecological framework (i.e., considering the broader socio-cultural environment of participants rather than focusing only on individual factors), and

increasing partnerships between community organizations to subsequently increase cross-cultural connections between citizens and organizations.

Importantly, Frisby's (2011) promising practices have similarities to the suggestions outlined above (Doherty & Chelladurai, 1999; Golob et al., 2013; Scott, 2000; Smith & Hattery, 2011), including the creation of an inclusive environment, promoting the engagement of stakeholders and participants in the process of designing and implementing programs, and the fostering of partnerships between program managers and participants. Thus, while there is little literature that examines the effectiveness of the management of diversity in an applied sport and recreation context, the limited literature that is available shows promise that researchers' propositions (Doherty & Chelladurai, 1999; Golob et al., 2013; Scott, 2000; Smith & Hattery, 2011) are indeed exploring appropriate and effective avenues (e.g., addressing organizational culture and promoting stakeholder engagement) that may be applicable to current practice. Nevertheless, while Frisby's (2011) work provided crucial insights to the management practices concerning diversity in an applied Canadian sport and recreation context, her focus was on a program that operated locally and therefore did not face the same challenges as one that operates in multiple communities or, as in the case of the CRC's Swimming and Water Safety Program, in communities across the country. There is therefore a need for an examination of the management of diversity in larger scale programming in order to appreciate the unique challenges faced by organizations that offer programming to diverse populations in multiple, diverse contexts. In order to understand the complexities of managing diversity in a sport and recreation context, it is also necessary to examine dominant understandings of culture and ethnicity by sport and recreation managers. As the pervasiveness of whiteness and masculine ideals are common

criticisms of sport management paradigms (Doherty & Chelladurai, 1999; McDonald, 2002; Smith & Hattery, 2011), an examination of whiteness in the sport management context is warranted as it served as the critical lens through which this study was conducted.

### **Critical Whiteness Studies in Sport Management**

Several authors (Darnell, 2007; McDonald, 2002; McDonald & Toglia, 2010; Smith & Hattery, 2011) have addressed whiteness in a variety of sport contexts. Specifically, the management of sport organizations has been repeatedly critiqued for the pervasiveness of white, male constituents and their concurrent practices that reflect and protect the needs and interests of this demographic (Doherty & Chelladurai, 1999; McDonald, 2002; Smith & Hattery, 2011). Whiteness can be understood as a system of privilege that is often considered to be mainstream and/or normal, which serves to construct those who apparently “have” culture or ethnicity as “Others.” This system reproduces its inherent and often unconscious “norms” and is therefore overlooked from within, which allows its constituents to freely observe themselves as individuals rather than members of a culture (Mahoney, 1997). In sport management contexts, systems of whiteness have been examined by several authors. Smith and Hattery (2011) noted the prevalence of symbolic racism in sport management as a “stratified and ingrained system that has material benefits for Whites” (Smith & Hattery, 2011, p. 112). That is, while overt forms of racism (e.g., racial segregation or exclusion, public use of racist language, etc.) are no longer acceptable, unconscious and concealed means of privileging Whites and marginalizing Others are still prevalent. Furthermore, as these symbolic forms of racism are concealed, they tend to be ignored, which leads to issues such as the underrepresentation of cultural and ethnic diversity in sport management positions, which is consequently attributed to other factors, such as a lack of

interests or personal choice (Smith & Hattery, 2011). This misattribution, known as a “color-blind” approach (Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Glover, 2007), is created by a belief that racism no longer exists and that people of all cultures and ethnicities should be treated the same without consideration of unique cultural attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours. Another way that symbolic racism is manifested is through the language used to discuss race and culture.

Smith and Hattery (2011) argued that race neutral language allows Whites to perpetuate the dominance of whiteness in sport management without engaging in overtly unacceptable racist behaviour. For example, a black coach who is not hired because s/he simply does not “fit in” may be a victim of racism that is concealed with race neutral language (Smith & Hattery, 2011, p.113). The use of race neutral language can also be found in the CRC Swimming and Water Safety Program, where program manuals note a need for instructors to facilitate the inclusion of participants with “cultural needs.” By examining the content of the CRC’s program manuals through a critical whiteness lens, I can demonstrate how whiteness is constructed as normal and culture (i.e., non-whiteness) is consequently produced as abnormal or Other in current Canadian aquatics programming.

As noted by Frisby (2005), there is a significant lack of critical sport management research. Furthermore, Frisby (2005) also noted that when critical sport management research is undertaken, it should be done with the specific intention of being communicated beyond academia to produce social change. The following study responds to this call by applying a critical whiteness approach to issues surrounding the management of diversity in a current Canadian swimming and water safety program. Furthermore, the study also examines the effectiveness of an attempt to link critical research with effective social change.

In order to address these concerns related to the management of diversity in the CRC's Swimming and Water Safety Program, I will now explore the use of cultural safety training for program instructors as a means of improving the quality of programming for the diverse Canadian population.

### **Cultural Safety Training in the CRC**

The concept of cultural safety was developed in New Zealand as a means of helping nurses to offer more meaningful, effective health care to Maori peoples (Wepa, 2003). It has since also been applied in the Canadian context as a way of offering more meaningful health care service to Aboriginal populations (Brascoupé & Waters, 2009; Smye & Browne, 2002). In order to understand this approach, I provide a brief outline of the tenets of cultural safety as well as a description of the module informed by these tenets that I created and piloted in this study.

#### **Cultural Safety**

Brascoupé and Waters (2009) described cultural safety as a departure from cultural competence, which was an earlier focus of cultural training in health care, in that cultural safety acknowledges the power relations involved in a provider-recipient relationship. Furthermore, a culturally safe approach requires the recipient to determine whether s/he has in fact received a service that was offered in a respectful and culturally sound manner, therefore making it culturally safe. In short, a culturally safe approach does not simply involve being knowledgeable about other cultures; instead, it is “a journey of self-awareness” (Brascoupé & Waters, 2009, p. 11) where providers must acknowledge and reflect upon the “power inherent in their professional position” (p. 11) and the onus is on recipients to determine whether or not the approach is effective. In a water safety and swimming instruction context, for example, for programming to

be delivered in culturally safe manner, the individuals in charge of implementing these programs would be required to reflect upon their own accepted norms, values, and water-specific practices and beliefs in order to understand how culture may factor into their interactions with course participants. Furthermore, for the program to be deemed culturally safe, program participants would need to affirm that the program was delivered in a respectful and culturally appropriate way. While to my knowledge no research has examined the effectiveness of cultural safety (i.e., in terms on outcomes), the applicability of a cultural safety approach has been explored in other fields such as occupational therapy (Jull & Giles, 2012) and sport and recreation (Giles & Darroch, 2012). In continuing with these inquiries, I propose to examine the effectiveness of training CRC Water Safety Instructors in cultural safety in order to improve the program for all participants. Importantly, the training and evaluation I conducted in this study did not seek to evaluate participant outcomes; rather, it attempted to facilitate self-reflection and an understanding of cultural diversity and power relations in program instructors as an important first step in providing culturally safe programming.

### **The CRC Cultural Safety Training Module**

The training module I created with support from the CRC that was delivered to participants in this study was comprised of three components, all of which were informed by cultural safety (Brascoupé & Waters, 2009; Smye & Brown, 2002; Wepa, 2003): promoting self-reflection, understanding exclusion, and application to possible scenarios. I designed the training module to sensitize Water Safety Instructors to participants' needs pertaining to gender, religion, race, and culture and the inherent power relations at play in the provision of services in cross-cultural contexts. Importantly, I took a “train the trainer” approach so that the training was

delivered by Water Safety Instructor Trainers – rather than the researchers – as this is the approach that is utilized by the CRC’s Instructor Development Program and is thus realistic for the implementation of this sort of programming. The first component of the training involved self-reflection. For this component, training participants were encouraged to reflect upon their own culture and some of the tacit (unconscious) aspects of their culture that influence their attitudes, beliefs, and knowledge both in general and in relation to swimming and water safety. This was accomplished by compiling a list of all the aspects of culture (with the help of some probing questions) that participants could gather. The second component of the training built on the previous discussions of the tacit aspects of culture in order to expose some of the ways that participants of aquatics programs can be excluded from full participation. For this component, participants brainstormed the ways in which exclusion could manifest at both the macro/organizational and micro/instructional level in an aquatics environment. In the third and final component of the module, participants were asked to apply their thinking by describing an appropriate way of responding to hypothetical scenarios where an instructor finds him/herself in a difficult situation involving a cross-cultural interaction in an instructional context (e.g., having a participant who wears baggy clothing in the pool to accommodate modesty beliefs, which consequently hinders their progress through the program). In providing potential ways in which to deal with these scenarios, the emphasis was placed on the importance of initiating dialogue, finding a means of accommodation, and employing a sensitive and respectful approach, in line with the cultural safety literature (Brascoupe & Waters, 2009; Smye & Browne, 2002; Wepa, 2003). I then evaluated the outcomes of this module through the employment of a case study methodology.

### **Methodology**

I utilized an intrinsic case study methodology (Stake, 2005) to examine the effectiveness of a cultural safety training module for instructors of the CRC Swimming and Water Safety Program. An intrinsic case study is used when the goal of the research is to obtain a nuanced understanding of the case in question, rather than to make generalizations (Stake, 2005). Furthermore, as noted by Yin (1993; 1994), a case study methodology is ideally suited for program evaluations as they allow the researcher to examine the program from many perspectives and complete a holistic analysis of the interactions of the program, the participants, and the context in which the program operates. As I was concerned with obtaining such an understanding of the effectiveness of a cultural safety training module delivered in a national program, there are a multitude of influences and interactions between participants, the program, and the various contexts in which they interact that must be accounted for. For example, consider that the program is delivered by instructors trained and certified by the CRC, who in turn are hired by municipal or private organizations to deliver the CRC's Swimming and Water Safety Program to over one million Canadians, in different communities in the greater context of a large, ostensibly multicultural country. In order to examine these complex and diverse interactions, case study researchers characteristically employ multiple methods (Yin, 1993; 1994). I will now outline the methods utilized to analyze the effectiveness of the cultural safety training module for participants in the CRC's Instructor Development Program.

### **Sampling and Methods**

In order to effectively examine the interactions and contextual factors associated with the implementation of the cultural safety training module, I employed a variety of data collection

methods. The participants were instructors of the CRC's Swimming and Water Safety Program who had various levels of experience and qualifications. The CRC Instructor Development Program (CRC, 2010b) consists of three levels of certification: Assistant Water Safety Instructors (AWSIs), who can assist in the delivery of the program; Water Safety Instructors (WSIs), who can deliver the program independently; and Water Safety Instructor Trainers (WSITs), who are experienced and qualified WSIs who are able to instruct AWSI and WSI training courses. Additionally, candidates in each level of the training program are required to complete an apprenticeship placement where they gain a certain amount of experience in teaching the respective courses before they are officially granted the certification. For example, after completing the WSIT course, participants would be qualified as a Water Safety Instructor Trainer Apprentice (WSITA) until they complete two co-teaches of AWSI and/or WSI courses supervised by an experienced WSIT, at which point they would also be appointed as a WSIT by the CRC. Once instructors obtain their WSI certification (or more advanced qualifications), they are required to recertify this qualification every two years.

I piloted the cultural safety training module in Ottawa, Ontario, at various municipal facilities in different neighbourhoods. The module was piloted in a total of four courses: once in an AWSI training course, twice in separate WSI training courses, and finally once in a WSI recertification course. Participants (n=36, 13 males and 26 females) included four AWSI candidates (referred to as AWSIs), 18 WSI candidates (referred to as WSIs), nine experienced (i.e. recertifying) WSIs who participated in the training module as part of a recertification course (WSIRs), as well as two WSIT apprentices (WSITAs) - one of whom participated in the cultural safety training and one who delivered the module to participants, and three experienced WSITs

who all delivered the training module (one with less than one year of IT experience, one with over two years of IT experience, and finally, one of whom had accumulated 22 years of experience with the program and was working in a senior position with the CRC). While I selected the courses opportunistically to coincide with the constraints of the funding I had obtained (i.e., courses running between January 1<sup>st</sup> and March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2013), my efforts to recruit participants from all levels of the CRC's Instructor Development Program were successful. This sample therefore reflects the range of individuals who would realistically be involved in training modules such as the one in question (i.e., those who would receive the training, those who would deliver the training, and even those who would support the WSIT's who deliver the training). Furthermore, participants in the various courses self-identified with a range of ethnic and cultural identities, including Canadian, French Canadian, Polish, Asian, Chinese, Lebanese, Jewish, Caucasian, and White. Following the pilot sessions, I collected data through focus groups and semi-structured interviews; the results were then subjected to thematic analysis.

In each of the pilot courses, I visited the course prior to the delivery of the module to introduce myself to and familiarize myself with the participants and to explain the study. During the pilot sessions, a WSIT or WSITA who was delivering the overall training program (e.g., AWSI, WSI, or WSI recertification course) also delivered the cultural safety training module, which allowed for a realistic simulation of the process of implementing this type of training. I also overtly observed the delivery of the module and the participants' interactions therein in order to be aware of their discussions and to draw from them when conducting the interviews. Following the delivery of the module, I conducted focus group interviews with the course

participants and semi-structured interviews with the WSITs/WSITA who delivered the training module.

### **Focus Group Interviews**

The trainees (i.e., AWSI candidates, WSI candidates, and WSI recertification candidates) participated in focus group interviews that followed the cultural safety training module.

Interviews occurred between one hour and up to two weeks following the delivery of the training module). Focus group interviews provide the opportunity to obtain exceptionally insightful data from group discussions, as they allow participants to interact and discuss topics beyond what the participants would have explored individually (Kamberelis & Dimitriadis, 2005). I conducted a total of six focus groups that each had five or six participants (n=32). The focus groups ranged in length from 20 to 60 minutes.

### **Semi-Structured Interviews**

Following the delivery of the cultural safety training module, I conducted semi-structured interviews (Fontana & Frey, 2005) with the WSITs (n=3) and WSITA (n=1) who delivered the training module. These interviews lasted between 40 and 70 minutes and were conducted in private.

During the focus groups and semi-structured interviews, I asked participants questions pertaining to a number of aspects of the cultural safety training module: their experiences participating in or delivering the training module; the principles of cultural safety; the applicability, utility, and feasibility of cultural safety training in the CRC's Swimming and Water Safety Program; expectations and roles of instructors/instructor trainers in facilitating inclusion and accommodation; and their thoughts and reflections regarding the implications of culture, and

aquatics environments as diverse and multicultural spaces. I then transcribed the focus groups and semi-structured interviews verbatim and returned them to participants for verification, at which time the participants were able to make modifications to or request the omission of their statements. The finalized transcripts then underwent thematic analysis.

### **Analysis**

To analyze the collected data, the focus group and semi-structured interview transcripts were subjected to thematic analysis that followed Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step approach. First, I read and re-read the data. Then, I identified codes (e.g. statements about self-reflection, the need for inclusive programming, the importance instructor training to offer programming to diverse populations, etc.) to systematically identify and organize the relevant topics, which were then verified by my supervisor to ensure accuracy. Next, I organized the codes into potential themes, which included perceptions of inclusion, and the roles of instructors and organizations in facilitating accommodation. In the fourth step, I verified that the coded data matched the theme as well as its original context. Next, I assigned clear, concise, and appropriate titles to the themes (e.g. inclusion is important) which was again verified by my supervisor. Finally, I selected the most compelling and appropriate examples that accurately represent the data collected and effectively link the data to the current literature to provide a platform for a productive discussion of the results (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

### **Results**

Thematic analysis of the transcripts revealed two main themes: inclusion is valued and important for aquatics programming, but conversely that adapting programming to accommodate

cultural and ethnic diversity is perceived by instructors as difficult and, in most cases, as not being supported by organizational norms and employers' expectations.

### **Inclusion is Important**

Participants unequivocally valued inclusion and believed that swimming and water safety programming should be offered and accessible to all populations. According to Sarah (WSITA), "We don't want anyone's learning or experience to be hindered, I guess; you want everyone to have an equal chance at succeeding in the lessons" (personal communication, February 25, 2013). Participants often linked the requirement of inclusive practices to underlying Canadian values and even federal policy, which should be enacted at the municipal level: "[in Canada] we don't just want people who are able to accept the other people, but more like encourage the different backgrounds" (Nat, WSI, personal communication), "Yeah we're [employed by] the [municipal] government. We have to accommodate for everyone who pays taxes so [inclusion is] very important" (Bryan, WSIR, personal communication, February 22, 2013). Participants also noted that they valued inclusive practices because of an aversion to excluding or offending someone: "the one thing we don't really want is exclusion" (Bryan, WSIR, personal communication). Amanda (AWSI) noted, "I think it's better to be aware [of useful inclusion practices] than to find out through trial and error and then we offend someone" (personal communication, February 25, 2013).

Many participants justified the importance of specific training on inclusive practices for cultural and ethnic diversity by noting that the implications of culture for aquatics programming was something they "hadn't really thought about [prior to this pilot]" (Bruce, WSI, personal communication, January 3, 2013). Furthermore, the participants noted that the perfunctory use of

the term inclusion in current programming allows for various interpretations of the term that do not always incorporate cultural and ethnic diversity: “we stress a lot with Red Cross and other agencies ‘inclusion.’ But inclusion, it more gets changed to like adapted aquatics for kids with disabilities...I’d say 90% of time, the second you teach inclusion, people just think disabilities (Corey, WSIT, personal communication, February 27, 2013).

Instructors clearly appreciated and valued training that specifically addressed cultural and ethnic diversity in aquatics programming: “it should be mandatory to know this type of stuff ‘cause it’s actually really important once you start teaching” (Chuck, AWSI, personal communication, February 25, 2013). While the importance of inclusion was unanimously voiced by participants, they were more hesitant to accept practices of adapting programming to accommodate cultural and ethnic diversity, as the implications of these practices were viewed as being more complex.

### **Accommodation is Difficult**

Participants had distinct perceptions of the differences between including (e.g., welcoming diverse participants into programming) and accommodating cultural and ethnic diversity (e.g., adapting current practices to meet the diverse needs of all participants) in aquatics programming. Notably, the participants discussed the difficulties associated with adapting a program that is based on achieving pre-determined standards to progress through:

They [diverse participants] came to, like, our swimming lesson, like the city’s swimming lesson, so they were willing to adapt to the way we do things. They signed up for this course, not another course for a reason and I don’t think changing it would really follow the goal of [taking] this course. (Selena, WSI, personal communication, January 3, 2013)

A resistance to adapt program standards to accommodate cultural and ethnic diversity was also justified by instructors through their apparent will to promote fairness for all swimmers and to avoid confrontation with parents. According to Amanda (AWSI), instructors should be “[accommodating] enough so that they [program participants] understand [course content] but not too much so that the other kids in the class are affected by if you are, like, paying too much attention to the one kid in class” (personal communication, February 25, 2013). Debrah (WSIR) noted that accommodation can create “grey areas that makes it harder for us [instructors] ‘cause if other parents find out that, oh, they didn’t do all those skills but they still passed the lesson, then we have to start explaining that” (personal communication, February 22, 2013). When asked to provide acceptable solutions to the provided scenarios, even the most experienced instructor noted the difficulty of adapting programming to accommodate cultural and ethnic diversity in a program based on rigid performance criteria: “the program, and the expectations, and the evaluation criteria are not balanced against [being able to accommodate for] cultur[e]” (Lester, WSIT, personal communication, February 11, 2013). Hesitancy to accommodate programming not only stemmed from difficulties related to program standards, but also to pressure from individuals at the facilities where instructors were employed.

While instructors in the preliminary training courses (AWSI and WSI courses) had very optimistic outlooks regarding the possibility of adapting programming to accommodate cultural and ethnic diversity, experienced instructors (WSIRs and WSITs) noted additional difficulties in such accommodation due to pressures from their employers to adhere to organizational expectations. For example, when given the scenario of a swimmer who was unable to participate in a fitness activity due to a cultural practice, recertifying instructors were more likely to

reinforce the swimmer's need to participate in the activity in order to pass the level, whereas less experienced instructors were more optimistic about adapting the program in order to accommodate the cultural practice. Lester, the most experienced participant who worked with the CRC, noted that in municipal programming

The business has taken over and the community stuff is not there...[P]eople sit in there [municipal facilities] and they're trying to figure out how many more people can I get into the pool and how can I get that budget. (Lester, WSIT, personal communication, February 11, 2013).

Participants also felt that creating a culturally safe swimming environment by only training instructors (at the micro/instructional level) was an inefficient way of improving current programming. They noted that "it would be a lot faster if you went from the top down" (Sarah, WSITA, personal communication, February 25, 2013), that is, by implementing changes through facility managers (at the macro/organizational level). The importance of this hierarchy was reaffirmed as instructors "are just told what to do on the bottom... it [the facility's expectations] comes down on you and then you just do it" (Sven, WSIR, personal communication, February 22, 2013). Overall, experienced instructors identified that accommodation needs to be encouraged and supported at all levels of the organization in order for it to be feasible for instructors and consequently become an accepted practice.

These results will now be discussed in relation to the literature pertaining to the management of diversity and whiteness in sport and recreation management, in order to recommend a feasible and realistic approach for the CRC to offer more effective programming for the diverse Canadian populations.

### **Discussion**

The cultural safety training module was piloted in the CRC's Instructor Development Program as an attempt to prepare instructors to deliver programming that is more inclusive and effective for the diverse Canadian population. Through analyzing focus group and semi-structured interview transcripts, it became apparent that both new and experienced instructors valued and expressed a desire to deliver inclusive aquatics programming. Consequently, they perceived the cultural safety training module as useful and in some cases necessary training. Participants were, however, more hesitant in their attitudes towards accommodating cultural and ethnic diversity in current aquatics programming as program standards and the expectations of their employers are based on a standardized model or normalized approach that assumes that all participants have the same needs and, consequently, the program does not facilitate or support accommodation.

### **Inclusion in Important**

As participants unanimously agreed that offering and delivering inclusive programming to diverse populations was important and that training on how to provide inclusive programming was warranted and necessary, it is clear that the CRC is effectively communicating and establishing an appreciation of its seven fundamental principles (CRC, 2010c). Education on the fundamental principles is included in all CRC programming as they are the "principles that bond together the national Red Cross Red Crescent societies" (CRC, 2010, para. 1). Essentially the seven fundamental principles are the themes through which the International Red Cross Red Crescent Movement conveys its organizational culture. Doherty and Chelladurai (1999) noted that the impacts of diversity on a sport organization are related to the management of diversity,

which in turn is a function of the organizational culture of the sport organization. Using their work, we can see how the appreciation for inclusive practices among instructors is directly reflective of the organizational culture of the CRC and International Red Cross Red Crescent Movement. As the CRC is in fact a humanitarian organization that offers swimming and water safety programming, it promotes an organizational culture that is quite different from the patriarchal culture of similarity that is a barrier to embracing diversity in many sport organizations (Doherty & Chelladurai, 1999). Furthermore, as a humanitarian organization, the CRC avoids the barriers of embracing diversity faced by leisure service agencies associated with an entrepreneurial approach and a reliance on customer loyalty (Scott, 2000). While the CRC's humanitarian organization status clearly facilitates the opportunity to convey an organizational culture that embraces and celebrates diversity, the level at which the CRC controls the implementation of its programming (i.e., training and certifying instructors rather than hiring instructors and monitoring the implementation of the program) creates complexities in the enactment of this organizational culture and associated inclusion and accommodation practices.

As the CRC does not participate in the hiring of instructors for aquatics facilities, it is unable to promote other inclusive practices that have been identified in the literature as desirable and facilitative of the embracing of diversity within sport and recreation organizations. The distance at which the CRC operates from front line aquatics staff makes the promising practice of engaging of stakeholders (e.g., community partners, target groups) (Frisby, 2011; Golob et al., 2013; Scott, 2000) difficult and in most cases unfeasible. Furthermore, given the level at which the CRC operates, suggestions such as hiring and retaining diverse individuals as instructors and administrators (Golob et al., 2013) are extremely unattainable. Thus, while the CRC's

humanitarian focus allows for the articulation of an organizational culture that values and celebrates diversity, given the distance at which the program operates from its instructors, there are barriers faced by front line aquatics staff to fully enacting this organizational culture. The complexities of these barriers can be better explored and understood by discussing participants' hesitancy to accommodate cultural and ethnic diversity by adapting aquatics programming, despite their vocalized appreciation for and desire deliver inclusive programming.

### **Accommodation is Difficult**

As discussions with participants moved from the need for inclusive programming to ways that instructors can accommodate for diversity by adapting programming, participants became noticeably more hesitant and unsettled. Notably, participants in lower level training courses (AWSI and WSI courses) were more optimistic about their ability to accommodate diversity in CRC programming, whereas experienced instructors (i.e., recertifying participants) expressed their perceived difficulties in the process of accommodation. There are two possible explanations that can be inferred from the literature. Firstly, in drawing from the literature that has examined whiteness in sport management, specifically the work of Smith and Hattery (2011), perhaps the expressed approval and endorsement of inclusive practices (as discussed above) is merely the use of race neutral language (Smith & Hattery, 2011), whereby instructors are protecting and perpetuating the system of privileging whiteness. That is, while they endorse inclusive practices they are not prepared or willing to make accommodations, so they may be engaging in symbolic racism by concealing their unconscious system of privilege without engaging in overt racism, and thus adopting a color-blind approach (Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Glover, 2007). However, this interpretation of the results does not account for the difference in opinions expressed by

participants in the lower level training courses and experienced CRC instructors. Thus, I argue that this difference of opinion could be better understood by considering the implications of organizational culture in the facilitation of embracing diversity in sport and recreation organizations.

As organizational culture informs the management of diversity in sport organizations (Doherty & Chelladurai, 1999) and also plays a role in facilitating the inclusion and embracing of diversity in sport and recreation organizations (Frisby, 2011; Scott, 2000), the influence of multiple organizations (each with its own organizational culture) on instructors must also be considered. Instructors are trained and certified by the CRC, but hired and supervised by public and private organizations. As participants endorsed inclusive programming but then expressed hesitation towards adapting the rigid program standards and evaluation criteria, this may be due to the requirement of instructors to navigate multiple organizational cultures simultaneously, which each influence instructors' attitudes and behaviours in aquatics environments. Consider, for example, experienced participants' suggestions for a need to enforce accommodation from the top (macro/organizational) level, as they believed it would be more effective than training instructors at the bottom (micro/instructional) level. Their appreciation for the hierarchy of management in their respective aquatics facilities suggests that the organizational culture of their facilities may not be supportive of accommodation that involves program adaptations. By considering that public and private aquatics facilities may be more likely to embody the characteristic patriarchal culture of similarity (Doherty & Chelladurai, 1999) that privileges and perpetuates whiteness (McDonald, 2002; Smith & Hattery, 2011), we can begin to understand the multiple influences that affect instructors' attitudes and behaviours. Furthermore, while the CRC

is responsible for training instructors and facilities are responsible for monitoring the program delivery, it is understandable that instructors value inclusion and embracing diversity conceptually (as it aligns with the organizational culture of the training organization), but then are hesitant to actually accommodate diversity in programming (which would align with the supposed culture of similarity).

While it must be acknowledged that rigid evaluation criteria and standards-based progression through levels is by no means a model that is simple to adapt, the organizational culture of the CRC is clearly articulated and unquestionably supportive of accommodating diversity by whatever means necessary. Hence, I argue that a misalignment of organizational cultures between the CRC and local aquatics facilities may be affecting instructors' abilities to offer inclusive and accommodating aquatics programming, therefore making it less culturally safe and effective for diverse populations.

### **Recommendations, Limitations, and Future Directions**

Following the evaluation of the pilot of a cultural safety training module for participants of the CRC Instructor Development Program, I believe that attempts to offer culturally safe programming must first address the organizational culture of the facilities in which CRC programming is delivered. Thus, in line with recent literature (Doherty & Chelladurai, 1999; Frisby, 2011; Golob et al., 2013; Scott, 2000), an important first step to offering culturally safe programming is first establishing coherent organizational cultures that are supportive and facilitative of the necessary inclusion and accommodation practices. In light of the apparent implications of organizational cultures' impacts on instructors' abilities to offer culturally safe programming, I recommend that the CRC offer cultural safety training not only at the lower/

micro/instructional level, but also at the upper/macro/organizational level. Multi-level cultural safety training would allow aquatics managers and decision makers to reflect on their standard practices and appreciate the complexities of offering inclusive and accommodating programs. Crucial to this training will be discussions pertaining to accommodation practices. In line with cultural safety, it must be stressed that accommodation does not infer making changes to programming proactively based on assumptions of the needs of culturally and ethnically diverse groups, but rather being open to engaging in dialogue with local participants in order to ascertain what these needs may be.

While this study offers important insights into the feasibility and effectiveness of cultural safety training in the CRC's Instructor Development Program, the limitations of the study must also be acknowledged. Importantly, the module was only piloted at municipal facilities in the City of Ottawa. Further piloting at additional public and private facilities in a variety of Canadian cities would help to further explore and understand the nuances of navigating multiple organizational cultures in aquatics contexts. Furthermore, future inquiries should seek to establish effective means of interrogating and addressing apparently problematic organizational cultures that permeate sport and recreation organizations, that is, establish effective methods for leadership to facilitate a change in organizational culture to include and embrace diversity. Moving forward, in order for local, provincial/territorial, and national level sport and recreation programs to successfully embrace diversity and offer inclusive and accommodating programs, the pervasive constructions of whiteness that are often characteristic of these organizations will need to be addressed. Based on my research, I suggest that cultural safety training may be an

effective avenue for translating critical research into positive social change in sport and recreation contexts.

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## Conclusions and Final Reflections

The CRC's Swimming and Water Safety Program is a national sport and recreation program delivered by over 35 000 instructors to over one million Canadians every year across all provinces and territories. Governed by their seven fundamental principles, the CRC communicates an organizational culture that is conducive of including, accommodating, and celebrating cultural and ethnic diversity. I feel extremely privileged to have had the opportunity to work in collaboration with the CRC on this project and to contribute to their ongoing efforts to improve the current program. This thesis was conducted in three phases with the overall goal of providing practical recommendations to make the CRC's programming more inclusive and accommodating of cultural and ethnic diversity.

In the first phase of this project, I conducted a critical analysis of the program to identify any content that may not be ideally suited to facilitate inclusion and accommodation. By using critical whiteness theory (Nayak, 2007; Perry, 2001) and critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 2002), I identified two discourses that perpetuated the CRC's current program: All participants should perceive risk and demonstrate leadership like Whites/Eurocanadians; and behaviours that reflect white/Eurocanadian beliefs are normal and/or superior to other alternative ways of behaving. From these findings, I investigated the potential applicability of implementing a cultural safety training module for instructors which could address discursive constructions and better prepare instructors to understand cultural and ethnic diversity should they encounter it while delivering the current program.

The second phase of the project was the creation of a cultural safety training module. In this phase, the findings of the first paper were translated into a cultural safety training module for participants of the CRC's Instructor Development Program. The module was comprised of three

sections. In the first section - self-reflection, I designed a brainstorming activity to sensitize participants to the depth and breadth of culture and some of the factors that contribute to their own culture (attitudes, beliefs, behaviours, understandings, etc.). In the second section, the training module addressed inclusion and exclusion and how diverse cultural and ethnic characteristics can impact attitudes and behaviours, specifically in aquatics environments. Finally, in the third section of the training module, I designed an application activity where participants were provided with scenarios involving a cross-cultural interaction in an aquatics environment which they discussed in order to suggest ways that they could apply a cultural safety approach to create a inclusive and accommodating (i.e., culturally safe) environment in the given situation.

In the third phase of the project, I piloted the training module in order to investigate the potential effectiveness of this sort of training (i.e., a cultural safety training module) for current and future CRC Water Safety Instructors. Through focus groups, semi-structured interviews, and thematic analysis, I examined the effectiveness of the training in preparing instructors to provide inclusive and accommodating programming, as well as the training's applicability to the CRC's program. By examining the results in the context of theories of the management of diversity in sport and recreation organizations, specifically the framework proposed by Doherty and Chelladurai (1999), I recommended that the CRC not only train its instructors but also facility managers and administrators in cultural safety in order to create an organizational culture that is conducive of offering culturally safe programming.

In this thesis, I have attempted to bridge several areas of scholarship in order to better understand the implications of culture for current aquatics programming in the Canadian context.

In the next few paragraphs, I will briefly situate and summarize my work's theoretical implications, provide practical recommendations for the CRC, as well as identify future directions for research.

### **Theoretical Implications**

Through the research presented in this thesis, I drew upon multiple theories and concepts from different fields of study in an attempt to enrich our current understanding of each of them individually as well as in relation to each other. Furthermore, I attempted to translate several theoretical approaches into positive social change (Frisby, 2005) in order to further understand how we can benefit from applying theoretical concepts in real world contexts. By examining Eurocanadianess, whiteness, cultural safety, and the management of diversity in sport and recreation, I believe I have begun to unpack the invisible knapsack of privilege (McIntosh, 2003) and thus made several contributions to the bodies of social theory pertaining to sport and recreation.

First, I examined existing literature pertaining to Eurocanadian discourses in aquatics programming (Baker & Giles, 2008; Giles, Baker, & Rousell, 2007; Giles, Castleden, & Baker, 2010; Giles, Strachan, Stadig, & Baker, 2010) with a critical whiteness theoretical approach (Nayak, 2007; Perry, 2001). As whiteness can be understood as a system of privilege that is often considered to be mainstream and/or normal, which serves to create and reproduce its inherent norms (Mahoney, 1997), this approach effectively allowed me to examine discourses in the current CRC program. The normalized construction of whiteness described by critical whiteness scholars (Nayak, 2007; Perry, 2001) shares many similarities with the standardized, homogenous, one-size-fits-all approach discussed in the Canadian aquatics context (Giles et al.,

2007). I argue that this approach allowed me to examine the broader implications of these Eurocanadian/whiteness discourses in aquatics programming for ethnically and culturally diverse populations across Canada. The linking of Eurocanadian and whiteness and the broader examination of discursive constructions in aquatics programming is important as aquatics environments, and Canadian society in general, are becoming increasingly diverse and multicultural. Therefore, developing an understanding of how culture can impact the delivery of programming is crucial for sport and recreation programmers who may be attempting to offer effective programming for ethnically and culturally diverse populations.

Secondly, I also examined the use of a cultural safety approach (Brascoupé & Waters, 2009) in a sport and recreation context. Culturally safe approaches have been used in health care and health-related fields to address Eurocentric discourses in an attempt to improve service for Aboriginal populations in Canada and for Indigenous peoples around the world (Brascoupé & Waters, 2009; Jull & Giles, 2012; Polaschek, 1998; Wepa, 2003). Through self-reflection, engaging in discussions of inclusion and accommodation, and applying these discussions to aquatics scenarios, the cultural safety training module addressed Eurocanadian and whiteness discourses in an applied sport and recreation context. As culturally safe approaches are difficult to evaluate in terms of effectiveness (Brascoupé & Waters, 2009), I did not intend to assess the training module's ability to facilitate the creation of a culturally safe environment. Rather, I simply set out to evaluate the applicability and feasibility of cultural safety training for practitioners working in a sport and recreation context as a means of offering services that are more inclusive and accommodating of cultural and ethnic diversity.

Finally, the research in this thesis bridged critical social research and applied sport and recreation management literature. As noted by Frisby (2005), there is a need to engage in critical sport management research that can be translated directly into positive social change. I addressed this need by evaluating the pilot of a training module developed as an attempt to translate research conducted through a critical whiteness lens into positive social outcomes. By drawing on Doherty and Chelladurai's (1999) framework for the management of cultural diversity in sport organizations, I discussed the importance of organizational culture for the management of diversity in sport and recreational contexts and offered theoretically sound, practical recommendations for the CRC's Swimming and Water Safety Program to more effectively address inclusion and accommodation in their programming.

By engaging with multiple theoretical perspectives in this thesis, I was able to offer a productive examination of the implications of culture and ethnicity for participants, instructors, and administrators of the CRC's Swimming and Water Safety Program. By linking these theories, I have also attempted to further our understanding of the social constructs of whiteness and Eurocanadianess by beginning to unpack their similarities and the ways that these two areas of study may benefit from each other. Furthermore, this approach allowed me to bridge multiple theoretical concepts in an attempt to demonstrate how they can contribute to our efforts to translate critical research into effective social change. By employing a cultural safety approach, I have attempted to communicate concepts from critical whiteness theory (e.g., culturelessness, a colour-blind approach) to program instructors to help them develop an awareness and understanding of culture and how it can impact participation in aquatics programs. By piloting this approach and understanding them using sport and recreation management literature

pertaining to the management of diversity, I have also attempted to contribute to the relatively unexplored field of critical sport and recreation management research. In doing this, I have begun to explore the possibility of offering cultural safety training to individuals and organizations on a large (national) scale. In summary, by bridging these concepts and theories and offering this novel description of cultural interactions in the CRC's Swimming and Water Safety Program, I was also able to make practical recommendations to the CRC in order to inform its future efforts to provide programming that is more inclusive and accommodating of cultural and ethnic diversity.

### **Practical Recommendations**

Based on the research conducted in this thesis, I offer two main recommendations. First, the CRC should use a cultural safety approach to train Instructor Development Program participants to deliver the Swimming and Water Safety Program in an inclusive and accommodating manner. Second, the CRC should also develop resources based on the principles of cultural safety for facility managers and administrators. As I have shown, the creation of an inclusive and accommodating aquatics environment is not solely the product of micro/instructional level interactions between participants and program instructors, but rather an approach that requires a supportive organizational culture that is embraced at all levels (instructors, supervisors, administrators, etc.). Below, I will elaborate on these recommendations for the CRC.

#### **Using Cultural Safety Approach**

After developing the cultural safety training module, piloting it in the CRC's Instructor Development Program, and evaluating participants' and facilitators' experiences in the training, I

argue that this type of training should be further developed and implemented in the CRC's Swimming and Water Safety Program. Parallel to the intended outcomes of the module's development, participants of the module expressed that the activities facilitated self-reflection, increased awareness of cultural implications for aquatics programming, as well as a deeper understanding of the complexities surrounding the inclusion and accommodation of culturally and ethnically diverse participants. As the piloted module's format appeared to be adequate to communicate the intended content and outcomes to training facilitators (i.e., WSITs) with little or no previous training in cultural safety, this format should also be maintained. While I suggest that this training be implemented for all instructors across Canada, given the findings of this thesis, I also argue that in order for this training to be effective and produce widespread improvements in the program, the organizational culture of aquatics facilities must also be addressed. I propose that this may be best accomplished by developing further resources and training for facility managers and administrators.

### **Developing Resources for Facility Managers and Administrators**

As discussed in the second paper in this thesis, inclusive and accommodating programming is not solely the result of interactions at the micro/instructional level. As expressed by participants in this study, in order for truly inclusive programming to be achieved, accommodations need to be enabled and supported by the organization that employs instructors and facilitates the implementation and delivery of the CRC Swimming and Water Safety Program. I propose that this be addressed by offering similar training to that which was piloted in this study for sport and recreation managers and administrators at sport and recreation facilities that offer the CRC's Swimming and Water Safety program. As proposed by Doherty and

Chelladurai (1999), the impacts of diversity on a sport organization are largely a function of the management of that diversity, which is in turn a function of the organizational culture, which is influenced by the leadership of the sport organization. Thus, in order for instructors of the CRC's Swimming and Water Safety Program to offer more inclusive and accommodating programming, they must work within an organizational culture that is understanding and supportive of the necessary practices required to offer this type of programming. As an organization's culture can be influenced by the leadership of that organization (Doherty & Chelladurai, 1999), the CRC should target leaders (i.e., managers and administrators) at aquatics facilities in order to facilitate the development of organizational cultures that are facilitative of a culturally safe environment.

### **Future Directions**

While this thesis contains research that is an important first step in developing inclusive and accommodating aquatics programming in Canada, the work is far from over. Research related to the management of diversity, inclusion, and accommodation in Canadian sport and recreation contexts is still in need of further development. Future research endeavours would be beneficial to further nuance our understanding of not only how culture can impact sport and recreation organizations, but also how managers and decision makers can better address these impacts in order to offer more inclusive, accommodating, and effective programming for diverse Canadian populations. As this project incorporated only a few theoretical perspectives to understand the cultural interactions within the CRC's program, a more holistic understanding of the program may be pursued by utilizing other theoretical frameworks to further nuance this understanding. For example, examinations of praxis (Wilson, 2012), liberal theory (Johnston, 1994), or rationalization (e.g. McDonaldization) (Ritzer, 2004) could yield interesting

discussions about the translation of critical whiteness research into social change in an aquatics program run at a national level. Specifically, more work needs to address the invisible knapsack of whiteness (McIntosh, 2003) and the problematic acceptance of a cultural neutrality that is still inherent in many sport and recreation contexts. By continuing to examine these discourses and the potential ways to address them in sport and recreation contexts, I believe that it will be possible to improve sport and recreation programming for diverse Canadian populations.

Furthermore, expanding the scope of this project could also provide more insights into effective recommendations for the CRC. As this research was only conducted in municipal aquatic facilities in the City of Ottawa, future inquiries should examine culture in a wider variety of sport and recreation contexts. For example, the comparison of public and privately run facilities in multiple Canadian cities would provide further insights into the impacts of organizational culture and perceptions of inclusion and accommodation. Further, examining culture in a variety of sport and recreational contexts, specifically programs run through purely sport or recreational organizations could develop a better understanding of the complexities of implementing cultural safety training within an organizational culture that may more resistant than the CRC, which – notably, is a humanitarian organization. Finally, more case studies into (apparently) successful programs that have responded to diverse population demographics (similar to the work of Frisby (2011) in Vancouver) would offer important glimpses of other potentially promising practices for the management of diversity in sport and recreation programming.

In conclusion, research pertaining to the management of diversity in Canadian sport and recreation represents an exciting and somewhat under-explored field of research that holds

promise to facilitate tangible outcomes that have the potential to affect many Canadians. In writing this thesis, I have begun to unpack the possibility of using critical research to inform the training of instructors of the CRC Swimming and Water Safety Program to deliver the program in a more culturally safe manner. As I set out with the objective of determining if/how discourses may be affecting instructors and participants of the CRC's program and how the program could be adapted to become more inclusive and accommodating of cultural and ethnic diversity, I believe that I have met these objectives in this thesis. Furthermore, the contributions from this thesis not only furthers our understanding of critical whiteness and the management of diversity in a sport and recreation context, they also contribute to the CRC's on-going efforts to offer inclusive and accommodating programming that meets the needs of all potential participants in Canada.

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