White Privilege in Canadian High School Sport:
Investigating White Coaches' Perspectives on Social Justice Issues

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Abstract

Sport constitutes an important setting in which to study whiteness given ongoing issues related to power, privilege, and oppression. The purpose of the study was to examine white privilege in Canadian high school sport by investigating white coaches' perspectives on social justice issues. A total of 463 high school coaches who self-identified as white completed an online survey. Results showed how coaches who had a greater awareness of white privilege in society had more favourable attitudes toward social justice, higher importance attributed to climate change issues, greater awareness of prejudicial attitudes against the LGBT community, and a higher propensity to engage in antiracist behaviours. Moderating effects for gender identity were also found. Moving forward, white privilege should continue to be studied in coaching to better understand how it is entangled with social justice.

Keywords: critical consciousness, antiracism, climate change, gender

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Power, privilege, oppression, and the advancement of social justice are at the heart of what Freire (1972) termed *conscientização*, which translates to conscientisation or critical consciousness. Social justice is a dynamic multifaceted construct that cannot be reduced to a single definition, yet involves "raising awareness about oppression and diversity, striving for equal opportunities for all people by ensuring access to resources, services, and information, and opening spaces so all groups can participate in decision making at different levels of citizenship" (Newman et al., 2019, p. 167). Importantly, social justice efforts account for equitable living conditions in consideration of race, gender, sexuality, ability/disability, socioeconomic status, the environment, and other social factors (Harkins et al., 2021). Critical consciousness (Freire, 1972) entails how individuals should view their social reality through a critically reflexive lens as they question their historical and contemporary sociopolitical situation.

In developing a critical positive youth development (CPYD) framework, Gonzalez et al. (2020) indicated that to promote social justice and *critical consciousness* (Freire, 1973), youth/adolescents and adults should engage in critical reflection (i.e., recognize social inequities), political efficacy (i.e., recognize their ability to enact social change), and critical action (i.e., enact social change). Camiré et al. (2022) and Newman et al. (2022) utilized the CPYD framework to position social justice and critical consciousness as essential elements to promote within youth sport. In societies and sport systems seeking to promote social justice, foster critical consciousness, and dismantle systems of inequity, white[1] people who benefit from implicit and/or explicit power and privilege (e.g., holders of many powerful positions in society)

[1] Consistent with guidelines from Laws (2020), *white* is not capitalised but *Black* is when referring to race/ethnicity.

should be actively engaged as agents of change. Intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989) – or the notion that entangled social identities create unique embodiments of privilege and oppression – plays an important role in access to and outcomes from sport participation (Lim et al., 2022). The intersectional nature of social inequities points to the interrelatedness of race, gender, sexuality, ability/disability, and the environment. Examining how whiteness and white privilege interact with numerous social issues can help uncover ways in which youth sport can be made safer, more equitable, and more accessible. These topics are particularly important to address, considering the need for more research engaging whiteness and racism in coaching science.

Critical Whiteness

Examples of oppression and systemic inequities are pervasive throughout history. Ongoing instances of police brutality in the United States that resulted in the death of many people (e.g., George Floyd, Eric Garner, Michael Brown, Tamir Rice, Chantel Moore, Philando Castile, Breonna Taylor, among many others) have instigated critical dialogue on systemic inequities permeating everyday life for Black people and people of colour. Additionally, during the COVID-19 pandemic, rates of anti-Asian hate crimes rose in the United States (Levin et al., 2022) and in other nations such as England and Wales (Carr et al., 2022). In Canada, calls for justice resulted in a National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (2019). Such events have helped raise society's critical consciousness, yet additional analyses are warranted to help dismantle systemic inequities. Critical whiteness studies (e.g., Leonardo, 2004) provide a lens for questioning/deconstructing dominant discourses of whiteness, white privilege, and white supremacy that sustain normative sociopolitical and economic structures. White supremacy does not exclusively refer to an extreme position of discrimination and dominance; it also refers to the foundations that allow for racial privilege and racism to permeate all aspects of

society (Bonds & Inwood, 2015). Because of this, dismantling systems of white supremacy must be included in conversations about unpacking white privilege.

Whiteness and Eurocentric worldviews are positioned as master narratives, guiding normative social processes, laws, privileges, and life experiences that favour white people over others (Helms, 2017). This positioning of whiteness invokes the *other*, an assigned collective identity for those who do not benefit from and/or conform to dominant white culture (Hage, 2000). Since discussions of race are typically not key components of white children's socialisation, white people often fail to grasp how the social construction of race operates throughout society (Hazelbaker et al., 2022). When discussions about whiteness and race do occur, they are often discomforting or avoided all together - referred to as *white fragility* (DiAngelo, 2015). Even after the tumultuous events surrounding the murder of George Floyd, Sullivan et al. (2021) showed how white parents were less likely to discuss being white and more likely to use colourblind messaging with their children than before the murder.

As a field of study, critical whiteness is underpinned by three tenets: (a) whiteness is dynamic, (b) whiteness is entangled with many unrecognised privileges, and (c) whiteness can be deconstructed and reimagined (Nayak, 2007). Centred on the deconstruction of whiteness, Perry (2001) examined American high school students' perceptions of culture at one predominantly white and one predominantly multiracial school. Findings situated whiteness as *cultureless*, a belief that can unintentionally position white racial superiority as postcultural and thus inherently more advanced. Hazelbaker et al. (2022) discussed how white people, due to their little exposure to racism, have the luxury to situate themselves as just human, privileged to "both benefit from and ignore race and racism" (p. 2). Although the deconstruction of white privilege is key in

studying whiteness, Leonardo (2004) cautioned that critical whiteness studies must also analyse the factors involved in white supremacy woven into most social institutions, including sport.

Situating Social Justice Issues as Entangled

Social justice is intersectional and scholars have explored the complex relationships between race, gender, sexuality, socioeconomic status, and stereotypes toward individuals with disabilities (Banks, 2015; Banks & Hughes, 2013). Further, scholars have discussed how whiteness, disability, and notions of smartness are entrenched in colonial, Eurocentric values, and how these values have been used oppressively throughout history (Leonardo & Broderick, 2011). More research regarding the interrelatedness of disability and various elements of social justice is needed to better grasp how they shape lived experiences and outcomes. The dynamic relationships between human-centred social justice issues (i.e., racism, sexism, ableism) and environmental justice issues are also complex and must be studied together. For example, Hayhurst et al. (2021) examined a sport-for-development program for Nicaraguan women, showing how prolonged bouts of rain and damaged roads made attending the sport program often impossible, in turn exposing the women to more domestic labour/violence at home. Mikulewicz et al. (2023) argued how intersectionality can positively influence the transformative potential of climate scholarship, contributing to an emerging area called *critical climate justice*. More research is needed to address whiteness and various entangled social justice issues in sport, as silence related to these topics has long been normalised.

Whiteness and Social Justice in Sport

In society as in sport, the dynamic between being white and being man is critical to consider, as this intersection reinforces inequitable power structures feeding systems of oppression. The intersection of white men's privilege has been situated as "an invisible

knapsack" full of unearned societal advantages (McIntosh, 1988, p. 2). McIntosh (1988) explained how these privileges benefit white men while oppressing people of colour, people of other genders, and other minoritised identities. In other words, white men benefit from their skin colour and gender identity regardless of whether they acknowledge and unpack their privileges.

McIntosh (1997) created 46 indicators of white privileges that she, as a white person, had but that her Black colleagues did not. In sport, Long and Hylton (2002) built upon MacIntosh's work to create sport-specific white privilege indicators (e.g., "I do not have to worry about racist behaviour putting me off my game"; p. 96). Aligning with such indicators and notions of *white silence* (DiAngelo, 2012), Martin et al. (2022) showed how social justice engagement among white collegiate student-athletes was lower than that of Black or multi-racial student-athletes. Fletcher and Hylton (2016) suggested that sport is a focal yet problematic institution in which to study race/ethnicity (e.g., whiteness) given that sport often espouses values of colourblindness (i.e., I do not see race), meritocracy (i.e., the best athletes achieve the most success), and egalitarianism (i.e., sport provides a level playing field). McDonald (2016) stated that popular campaigns addressing racism in sport bolster racism as an individual behaviour, withholding discussions of systemic racism that have allowed white privilege to proliferate. Lim et al. (2022) illustrated that "middle-class, white heteronormative masculinity appears to dominate sport spaces, while 'othering' individuals who are racialized and non-heterosexual" (p. 7).

Whiteness and Social Justice in Coaching

In Canada and in the United States, sport coaching positions are most often held by white men who often adopt discursive practices (e.g., essentialism, self-victimisation) and exhibit microaggressions benefiting white youth while disadvantaging youth of colour (Gearity & Metzger, 2017; Spaaij et al., 2020). White coaches have also been shown to disregard

racial/cultural issues (Newman et al., 2020) and adopt functionalist (Kochanek & Erickson, 2019) and normative (DeJaeghere & Murphy-Graham, 2022) approaches to coaching that help maintain the socially unjust status quo. Gearity et al. (2019) stated that "by refusing to see how race affects identity and cultural practices, including coaching and education, we normalise whiteness at the expense of diversity, difference, and multiculturalism" (p. 251).

While white coaches experience many privileges, crucially, non-white coaches experience many forms of oppression. McDonald (2016) showed how whiteness contributed to a culture of *othering* in Australian high school rugby, where essentialist and reductionist practices related to race and gender sustained marginalizing/oppressive sporting environments for athletes and coaches of colour. In Canada, Indigenous coaches continue to face a plethora of barriers (e.g., westernized/colonial education system) impacting sport participation due to persistent systemic racism (Gurgis et al., 2022). In the United States, sports such as baseball have been shown to disadvantage coaches of colour while privileging white coaches through power imbalances and racialized practices that shape the sport's culture (Glover, 2007). Despite these known issues, notions of colourblindness, meritocracy, and egalitarianism continue to propagate inequities that remain overlooked by those in privileged positions in sport (Ranking-Wright et al., 2016).

To address Kochanek and Erickson's (2020) call to reimagine sport coaching as a more critical praxis, research is needed that addresses white privilege and better situates coach perspectives on social justice in sport (Gearity et al., 2019). Per Butryn (2016), more research must explore racial/ethnic identity and its influence on systems of power, privilege, and oppression. Ideally, coaches who teach youth athletes about social justice at an early age can contribute to changes in sporting culture as athletes move through the sport system. Given the important role coaches play in athlete development (Camiré, 2022), it is crucial to explore the

implications of white privilege, whiteness, and social justice in sport coaching. Such explorations can help advance coach education and professional development (Newman et al., 2022). Also, research examining social justice and coaching can promote safer more inclusive environments by raising the critical consciousness of athletes and coaches alike (Lusted et al., 2021).

The Present Study

Based on research needs described above, the purpose of the study was to examine white privilege in Canadian high school sport by investigating white coaches' perspectives on social justice issues. Coaches' perspectives were investigated in relation to social justice, antiracism, LGBT, disability, and climate change. The study was conducted using a post-positivistic lens, whereby an objective reality exists, but it can only be known imperfectly (Fox, 2008). From this critical realist ontology, coaches' white privilege and attitudes toward social justice issues are likely true, while at once acknowledging the fallibility of observed reality.

Positionality

The researchers recognise the influence of each individual team member in the research process. The first author identifies as a white Canadian-born man. In addition to his role as a doctoral student, he also has years of experience as a coach and as an athlete. As someone in a privileged social position, he acknowledges how his positionality affects his engagement with social justice research in sport. The second author identifies as a white woman, university professor, and former athlete. As such, she recognises that her personal experiences as a woman and as an athlete may influence her interpretation of findings. The third author identifies as a Christian Canadian-born Chinese man. He recognises how his faith-based values, experiences as a former coach and athlete, and perspectives as a graduate student position his contributions to social justice. The fourth author identifies as a neurodiverse, foreign-born, person of colour. In

addition to their role as a professor of social work, they serve as a high school sport coach and sport social worker. Thus, as scholar, practitioner, and social justice activist, they remain cognisant of their positionality related to systems of power, privilege, and oppression. The fifth author identifies as a first generation, cis gender, Black Canadian woman with West Indian roots. Her experience as a daughter of immigrants and current roles as a professor, researcher, and coach of 29 years provides a unique perspective in relation to this study. She is fully aware of her own unique privileges as a professor, but acknowledges continued challenges for Black women in sport and in academia. The sixth author acknowledges her identities (e.g., white, able-bodied, woman, Canadian, educated, cisgender, mother, researcher) and the importance of ongoing reflection on her positionality throughout the research process, even in quantitative studies. The last author identifies as a white man and university professor. He acknowledges how his positionality comes with historical entitlements and how he must remain aware of his angle of vision and how it influences his sense-making efforts on white privilege and social justice.

Method

Context

In Canadian high school sport, coaches are predominantly white (Camiré et al., 2016). Furthermore, the whiteness of coaching in Canada has yet to be examined empirically. Given the oppression and inequalities known to permeate across educational sectors (e.g., Gonzalez et al., 2020), it was considered warranted to examine more closely white privilege, and how it intersects with other social justice issues, in Canadian high school sport coaching.

Recruitment

Upon university ethical approval, Canadian high school coaches actively coaching during the 2021-2022 school year were recruited with the assistance of the main project partner, School

Sport Canada, the national governing body for school sport. Using coach email lists provided by provincial athletic associations (i.e., members of School Sport Canada) and information posters distributed on social media and in newsletters, high school coaches from across Canada were asked to complete an online survey. Recruitment occurred in October-November 2021, with 916 coaches from eight provinces accessing the survey link in English (n = 901) and French (n = 15).

Participants

Given the study focus (i.e., white privilege in sport), of the 916 coaches who accessed the survey, only those who self-identified as white were retained (68.45%; n = 627)[2]. Further, we removed participants with incomplete surveys (i.e., 75% missing data on one or more of the measures used; n = 164) from this subgroup, as well as coaches who did not report their gender (n = 3) or reported a gender other than man or woman (n = 1)[3]. The final sample was comprised of 463 high school coaches (i.e., white North American 89.42%; n = 414; white European 10.58%; n = 49). Nearly two-thirds of participants self-identified as a man (65.44%; n = 303). Coaches were on average 41.1 years of age (SD = 11.2 years) and had been coaching for an average of 12.4 years (SD = 10.0 years). Most participants resided in Alberta (44.49%; n = 206), Manitoba (20.52%; n = 95), or New Brunswick (12.96%; n = 60). Most coaches (78.62%; n = 364) held a bachelor's degree and 57.45% (n = 266) identified teaching as their occupation. Participants coached one (57.02%; n = 264), two (28.51%; n = 132), or three or more (14.47%; n = 67) high school sports during the 2021-2022 school year. A total of 28 different sports were reported, with volleyball (46.44%, n = 215), basketball (21.60%; n = 100), and football (15.55%; n = 72) the most frequent sports coached. Regarding coaching certifications, 56.59% (n = 262) of

[2] Data were collected for the larger project with white coaches and coaches of colour. For the present study, only data from white coaches were retained; however, data from coaches of colour are used in another study.
[3] We removed this participant due to insufficient sample size for the analyses and have outlined this as a social justice concern and limitation of the present study in the discussion.

participants indicated being certified through Canada's National Coaching Certification Program and 7.78% (n = 36) indicated holding another form of coaching certification (e.g., provincial or local certification/course). Forty-three participants (9.29%) stated being in the process of completing their certification, while 27.65% (n = 128) reported not holding any certification.

Instruments

The study was cross-sectional and employed a self-reported online survey. Subscales from existing validated scales were amalgamated to form the survey and all had acceptable scores for reliability (George & Mallery, 2018). Each subscale is described below. The subscales forming the survey focused specifically on attitudes toward different aspects of social justice. The use of specific subscales selected from existing validated scales was preferred, instead of getting participants to fill out entire scales, to avoid excessively long survey completion times.

The White Privilege Awareness subscale (further referred to as the white privilege subscale) in the White Privilege Attitudes Scale (Pinterits et al., 2009) was used to measure awareness of white privilege (e.g., "Our social structure system promotes white privilege"). This 4-item subscale uses a 6-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree* to 6 = *strongly agree*), with higher scores indicating higher levels of awareness of the existence of white privilege in society. Initial validation showed good internal consistency reliability (α = .84) and support for convergent validity with the Colorblind Racial Attitudes Scale (r = -.81, p < .01), the Modern Racism Scale (r = -.52, p < .01), and the Social Dominance Orientation scale (r = -.39, p < .01). In our sample, the internal consistency reliability for the white privilege subscale was deemed good (α = .82).

The Attitudes Towards Social Justice Subscale (further referred to as the social justice subscale) of the Social Justice Scale (Torres-Harding et al., 2011) was used to assess attitudes toward social justice. The 11-item subscale uses a 7-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 =

strongly agree) to measure beliefs in the importance of social justice (e.g., "I believe that it is important to act for social justice"). Higher scores indicated more favourable attitudes toward social justice. Initial validation showed strong internal consistency reliability ($\alpha = .95$) and construct validity (Cronbach, 1951). The subscale has been positively correlated with motivation for public service ($r = .29$, $p < .01$) and negatively correlated with neosexism ($r = -.44$, $p < .01$), symbolic racism ($r = -.28$, $p < .01$), and belief in a just world ($r = -.28$, $p < .01$), supporting properties of convergent and discriminant validity (Torres-Harding et al., 2011). The social justice subscale showed excellent internal consistency reliability in our survey ($\alpha = .95$).

The Individual Advocacy Subscale (further referred to as the antiracism subscale) of the Anti-Racism Behavioural Inventory (Pieterse et al., 2016) was used to measure perceived propensity to undertake antiracist behaviours. The 9-item subscale uses a 5-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*) to assess how participants believe they act when confronted with racism (e.g., "When I hear people telling racist jokes and using negative racial stereotypes, I usually confront them"). Higher scores indicated higher propensity to engage in antiracist behaviours. Initial validation showed acceptable test-retest reliability ($r = .91$, $p < .01$) and construct validity. For convergent validity, participants who reported less non-discriminatory attitudes were more prone to report higher awareness of antiracism ($r = .78$, $p < .01$). The antiracism subscale showed good internal consistency reliability in our survey ($\alpha = .83$).

The Attitudinal Awareness Subscale (further referred to as the LGBT subscale) of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Development of Clinical Skills Scale (Bidell, 2017) was used to measure attitudes toward the LGBT community. The 7-item subscale uses a 7-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree*; 7 = *strongly agree*). All items are reverse scored, with lower scores denoting a greater awareness of prejudicial attitudes against the LGBT community (e.g., "I think

being transgender is a mental disorder"). Initial validation showed good internal consistency (α = .80). Further, strong associations with measures of genderism and transphobia (r = .84, p < .001), as well as non-significant associations (r = -.08, p > *.05*) with social desirability, suggest initial presentations of the subscale's convergent and discriminant validity, respectively (Bidell, 2017). The LGBT subscale showed excellent internal consistency reliability in our sample (α = .90).

The Affect Subscale (further referred to as the disability subscale) of the Multidimensional Attitudes Scale toward Persons with Disabilities (Findler et al., 2007) was used to measure the affective dimension of attitudes toward persons with disabilities. Participants were presented a vignette involving themselves and a person in a wheelchair at a coffee shop. Participants rated 16 items, indicating the likelihood they would experience a given emotion (e.g., tension, fear, relaxation, calmness) on a 5-point scale (1 = *not at all* to 5 = *very much*). Higher scores indicated a higher likelihood of the emotion arising. Initial validation showed a reliable instrument with sound psychometric properties, including excellent internal consistency reliability (α = .90) and evidence of construct validity. Moreover, initial evidence of concurrent validity was established with gender, with men reporting higher levels of negative behavioural intentions than women (Findler et al., 2007). The disability subscale showed good internal consistency reliability in our sample (α = .84).

The Attitudes Towards the Urgency of Climate Change Subscale (further referred to as the climate change subscale) of the Attitudes towards Climate Change and Science Instrument (Dijkstra & Goedhart, 2012) was used to measure attitudes on climate change. The 6-item subscale uses a 5-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*) to measure beliefs on climate change urgency (e.g., "Climate change should be given top priority"). Higher scores indicate a higher importance attributed to climate change. Initial validation showed good internal

consistency reliability (α = .82) and convergent validity, as supported by a correlation of r = .52 (p < .01) with a measure of pro-environmental behaviour (Dijkstra & Goedhart, 2012). In our sample, the climate change subscale showed excellent internal consistency reliability (α = .93).

Analysis

Analyses were conducted in four steps. First, percentage and patterns of missing data were assessed (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). The item-level percentage of missing data for each measure varied between 0.0% and 1.5% (i.e., seven missing values). The median number of missing values was 0.2% (i.e., one missing value). In total, 0.19% of missing data were observed. Results from Levene's test of equal variance were non-significant for each measure, suggesting that the data were missing at random. Given that percentages of missing data were small and missing at random, we proceeded to data imputation using a robust multiple imputations method (Schlomer et al., 2010).

The second step involved calculating descriptive statistics for all six measures and to assess normality (George & Mallery, 2018). Distributions of the white privilege subscale, antiracism subscale, disability subscale, and climate change subscale were deemed to be normal based on George and Mallery's (2018) cut-off scores of ±2.0 for skewness and kurtosis. However, the social justice subscale and the LGBT subscale had skewness values of -2.33 (SE = .11) and -2.39 (SE = .11), respectively, suggesting a small-medium asymmetrical distribution with a larger concentration of responses pertaining to higher scores (i.e., a negative skew). Both scales also showed a medium-large leptokurtic kurtosis, with a value of 7.89 (SE= .23) for the social justice subscale and a value of 5.70 (SE= .23) for the LGBT subscale. Nonetheless, all responses were within possible ranges. See Table 1 for a summary of descriptive statistics.

Step three consisted of performing the main analyses using structural equation modelling (SEM) in Mplus 8.5 to evaluate model fit. As normality could not be assumed for all measures, main analyses were run using the maximum likelihood estimator (MLR) as it is robust to non-normally distributed data (Byrne, 2016). This estimator extracts standard errors and tests for model fit. The model fit was assessed using a variety of indices that included the Comparative Fit Index (CFI), the Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), the Standardised Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR), the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), and a ratio of the normed chi-square statistic (SBχ^2) by degrees of freedom (*df*). The following cut-off scores were used as indicators of good model fit: CFI and TLI $\geq .90$, SRMR $\leq .08$, RMSEA $\leq .05$, and SBχ^2/df ≤ 5 (Hair et al., 2010). The model was deemed adequate if four of five fit indices met their respective criterion. In the SEM analysis, the white privilege subscale was the independent variable (IV), while the antiracism, disability, climate change, social justice, and LGBT subscales were the dependent variables (DVs). All variables were latent variables (i.e., integrated as the factor structure of the subscale rather than as the sum or average score). Multicollinearity was considered prior to running the main analyses, but was not found to be problematic, as all between factor Pearson correlations were <.90.

The fourth step consisted of testing the moderation effect of gender (man vs. woman) on the model to verify if it had a significant indirect effect on one or more of the relationships between the IV and the DVs. We started by testing a model in which gender was added as a grouping variable (using the *Grouping is* command in Mplus) and left all paths between the IV and the DVs unconstrained. The fit of the model was extracted to verify that it met the criteria of goodness of fit. We then ran the same analysis, but instead constrained all paths to be equal across gender. The presence of an indirect effect of gender on the model was determined if the

SBχ^2 value differed significantly ($p \leq .05$) across analyses (i.e., constrained vs. unconstrained). The difference in SBχ^2 was calculated in MS Excel using the formula *p*-value = CHISQ.DIST.RT(ΔSBχ2, Δ*df*). Upon observing a significant difference between the two models, a post hoc analysis was done, with all but one path between the IV and the DVs constrained (i.e., one path unconstrained and four paths constrained). Then, using the above formula, the fully unconstrained SBχ^2 was compared to the SBχ^2 value of the partially constrained chi-square for each path. This technique was repeated for all paths found significant across one or both genders.

Results

This section presents the results for the general model tested as well as the moderation analysis. All results are presented using standardised beta weights (β).

General Model

The SEM test resulted in an adequate model as all five indices met their respective cut-off criteria (CFI = .94; TLI = .93, SRMR = .06, RMSEA = .04, [90% CI = .04; .05] and SBχ^2/df = 1.87). Within-factor item correlations were included to ensure that shared variance was not accounted for multiple times in our model (i.e., to remove overlapping variance). However, when including all within-factor item correlations, convergence could not be achieved. As suggested by Muthén and Muthén (2020), we increased the Starts value and the number of iterations, but the model would still not converge. Thus, to achieve convergence, we decreased the number of predictors (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013) by only including *large* between-item correlation (i.e., $r \geq .50$). This allowed the model to converge, whilst removing the largest proportions of shared variance that could potentially impact the relationships between the DV and the IVs.

The beta weights between the IV were significant between all DVs, except for the disability subscale (β = .01, *SE* =.06, *p* = .91, R^2 = .00) that was non-significant. The regression

between the white privilege subscale and the antiracism (β = .59, *SE* =.05, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .35$), climate change (β = .62, *SE* =.04, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .38$), social justice (β = .50, *SE* =.05, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .25$), and LGBT (β = .57, *SE* =.05, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .33$) subscales were all positive and significant. Specifically, higher participant scores for white privilege (i.e., greater awareness of the existence of white privilege in society) predicted favourable attitudes toward social justice, higher importance attributed to climate change, greater awareness of prejudicial attitudes against the LGBT community, and a higher propensity to engage in antiracist behaviours. Scores for white privilege did not significantly predict participants' attitudes toward persons with disabilities. Table 2 presents the Pearson correlations between the DVs.

Moderation Effect of Gender

The moderation effect of gender was tested on the general model. Running the unconstrained model when adding gender as a moderator returned an acceptable model fit as all fit indices met their respective cut-off criteria: CFI = .90; TLI = .90, SRMR = .08, RMSEA= .05, [90% CI = .05; .06] and SBχ^2/df = 1.66. The beta weights for the antiracism (β_{Man} = .59, *SE* = .05, $p < .001$; β_{Woman} = .48, *SE* =.10, $p < .001$), climate change (β_{Man}= .64, *SE* = .05, $p < .001$; β_{Woman} = .53, *SE* = .08, $p < .001$), social justice (β_{Man} = .50, *SE* =.05, $p < .001$; β_{Woman} = .40, *SE* =.08, $p < .001$), and LGBT (β_{Man} = .62, *SE* = .05, $p < .001$; β_{Woman} = .21, *SE* = .10, $p = .03$) subscales were all positive and significant. As per the general model, the relationship between the white privilege subscale and the disability subscale was non-significant for both genders (β_{Man} = .03, *SE* = .07, $p < .001$; β_{Woman} = -.03, *SE* =.10, $p < .001$).

Next, we ran a fully constrained model to assess the chi-square fit index of the model when all paths between the IV and the DVs were forced to be equal across gender. The SBχ^2/*df* value and *df* were 4,056.86 and 2,429 for the fully constrained model and 4,034.22 and 2,424 for

the unconstrained model, with the difference between the values for both models significant at $p < .001$. We thus proceeded to run post-hoc analyses using the partially constrained models for the four DVs found to be significantly predicted by the IV for one or both genders. Two of the four paths tested returned significantly different. Specifically, the regression between the white privilege subscale and the climate change subscale was positive and significant for both genders, statistically stronger for men compared to women at $p = .02$. This result suggests that a greater awareness of the existence of white privilege in society is a stronger predictor of attitudes toward the urgency of climate change for men than it is for women. In a similar manner, a greater awareness of the existence of white privilege also significantly predicted a greater awareness of prejudicial attitudes against the LGBT community, with this effect significantly stronger for men than for women at $p < .001$. Regarding the antiracism subscale and social justice subscale, although the values for the beta weights differed quantitatively, the gap was not significant. Figure 1 depicts the standardised regression weights for the overall group and for both groups.

Discussion

The purpose of the study was to examine white privilege in Canadian high school sport by investigating white coaches' perspectives on social justice issues. Results from the SEM analyses indicated that coaches who had greater awareness of the existence of white privilege in society held more favourable attitudes toward social justice, climate change, the LGBT community, and engaging in antiracist behaviours. Given that most white people are socialised to be blind to the privileging dynamics of whiteness (i.e., silent socialisation approach; Hazelbaker et al., 2022), the results of the present study support the worth of initiatives aimed at helping white people to: (a) recognise they have a race; (b) appreciate the role that racial discrimination plays in society; and (c) develop an alertness to the unearned advantages of white privilege. In

sport, getting white coaches with a known disregard for racial issues (Newman et al., 2020) to become more aware of white privilege may serve as an important steppingstone in developing greater awareness of other key social issues related to gender, sexuality, and the environment. In relation to Kochanek and Erickson's (2020) call to reimagine sport coaching as a more critical praxis, results suggest that initiatives to get coaches to be more aware of white privilege are needed if the entanglement of race, gender, sexuality, disability, and environmental issues are to be legitimately addressed in sport (Leonardo, 2004). Sport is inextricably entangled with myriad social issues that cannot be examined in silos. Everyone involved in sport must do their part to promote equity, diversity, and inclusion in ways that address the many entangled facets of social justice. Conversations surrounding social justice and white privilege must work to include all facets of social justice, not just race and/or gender, as is often the case. Hopefully, the present study can serve as an instigator for addressing the elephant in the (research) room regarding the need to combat white silence (DiAngelo, 2012) and white fragility (DiAngelo, 2015), among other social justice issues, in sport coaching. Future research should examine how white coaches can actively serve as agents of change in promoting social justice amid the ongoing slow violences that continue to permeate across sport and coaching circles (Sullivan et al., 2021).

Although no significant relationship was found between white privilege awareness and attitudes towards persons with disabilities, it is crucial to continue to investigate disability as interrelated with race, gender, sexuality, and the environment. Moving forward, researchers must engage these intersectional areas of study to explore more deeply the ways in which entangled privilege and inequity related to race and disability (among other social identities) shape sport participation outcomes for youth and coaches (Leonardo & Broderick, 2011). For example, in disability critical race studies, Banks (2015) and Banks and Hughes (2013) explored how views

on disability and race are influenced by understandings of other social issues and identities. Future research could study these topics in sport coaching using similar theoretical framing.

Considering nearly three quarters of coaches in our sample reported obtaining coaching certification, coach education may serve as a worthwhile avenue for increasing coach awareness of white privilege and social justice issues. Coach education should at the very least expose coaches to the fundamental principles of critical consciousness (Newman et al., 2022). Aligning with our results and the CPYD framework, coach education efforts could benefit from following the three steps of critical consciousness, whereby critical reflection (i.e., acknowledgement of social inequities) leads to political efficacy (i.e., belief that one can effect positive social change), which in turn leads to critical action (i.e., positive social justice activism and advocacy; Gonzalez et al., 2020). In concrete terms, coach educators should find ways to assess coaches' level of critical reflection (i.e., awareness of white privilege and social justice) prior to implementing initiative for increasing coaches' political efficacy and critical action. Solid understandings of coaches' awareness of white privilege and social justice can help lay the foundation for critical actions (e.g., proactively addressing racism, discussing white privilege with young athletes) that disrupt normative coaching practices and create safe sport spaces for all youth (Lusted et al., 2021). More aware coaches can teach youth athletes about the transformative potential of social justice in sport (Camiré, 2022), eventually translating into more critically conscious adults. For coaches who tend to miss opportunities to address social justice, coach education initiatives should be geared at helping them probe the dominant values and overt/covert power relations shaping coaching dynamics (Mills et al., 2022). Despite its importance, coach education remains imperfect and is not a panacea given that access to information does not always lead to behaviour change (Whitley, 2021). The limits of information remain an obstacle coach educators must

address through continued assessment of coach education programs. Given the limits of coach education, the path toward social justice activism among white coaches requires further thought.

Results from the moderation analyses indicated that a greater awareness of the existence of white privilege in society was a stronger predictor for men than it was for women in terms of their attitudes on the urgency of climate change and prejudicial attitudes against the LGBT community. As Leonardo (2004) reminded us, the relationships between racism and gender inequities must be discussed as entangled. Considering the results of our moderation analyses, future research should be conducted that explores intersectional privileges to fully grasp the relationships between race/ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and social justice advocacy/activism in youth sport coaching. Moreover, the results related to climate change raise important issues as environmentalism is rarely addressed in youth sport research, even though fields of play and sporting structures require a stable climate to host sporting events (Welch et al., 2021), pointing to the need for more research related to white privilege, social justice, and the environment.

Limitations and Future Directions

This study is an important step toward acknowledging the influence of white privilege in youth sport and better understanding youth sport coaches' perspectives on social justice issues. Nevertheless, study limitations must be acknowledged. First, results must be interpreted with some caution given that the study was cross-sectional and the questionnaire self-reported. Other variables not included in the model must be considered as potentially influencing social justice attitudes. Future research should explore the use of mediated and moderated mediation models related to white privilege and social justice attitudes. Second, a self-selection bias must be considered, meaning that coaches supportive of social justice efforts may have been more likely to complete the survey. Third, no behavioural measures were included as the focus was on

456 exploring coaches' attitudes. Future research should examine more closely if/how attitudes
457 ultimately translate (or not) into social justice activism and advocacy (i.e., behaviour). Fourth,
458 the study only included participants who identified as either man or woman. Moving forward,
459 researchers must find ways to meaningfully include gender-expansive coaches in their samples,
460 despite the challenges of doing so. Fifth, the LGBT subscale limited the study to attitudes on
461 lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people collectively, instead of probing attitudes on unique
462 populations. Future research must explore attitudes related to other genders (e.g., genderfluid,
463 Two-Spirit), agender peoples, people of varying sexual orientations (e.g., pansexual, asexual),
464 and those who identify as queer using scales accounting for all equity-deserving groups[4].

465 **Conclusion**

466 The study adds to the literature by directly addressing white privilege and social justice in
467 youth sport; thus, responding to Kochanek and Erickson's (2020) call to reimagine sport
468 coaching as a more critical praxis. Results indicated how coaches who have a greater awareness
469 of the existence of white privilege in society have a higher likelihood of also having favourable
470 attitudes toward a variety of social justice issues (e.g., antiracism). Moving forward, sport
471 coaching cannot continue to espouse ideals of colourblindness, meritocracy, and egalitarianism
472 at the expense of reinforcing systems of inequity and oppression. Silent socialisation approaches
473 in sport that maintain white privilege and white supremacy must be dismantled by direct
474 engagements in social justice activism and advocacy.

[4] Although terms such as equity-denied or equity-seeking are commonly used in social justice literature, we have opted to use equity-deserving, which includes (but is not limited to) Black, Indigenous, People of Colour; women; people with disabilities; LGBTQI2S+ people; people from low-resourced communities (Gurgis et al., 2022).

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