A Case Study of Alberta's Future Leaders Program (AFL): Developing Aboriginal Youth
Leadership through Cross-Cultural Mentorship, and Sport, Recreation, and Arts Programming

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THESIS

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Abstract

In this thesis, in which I use the stand-alone paper format, I employ a Foucauldian lens to examine Alberta's Future Leaders (AFL), an Aboriginal youth leadership development program. In the first paper, I identify how power relations shape AFL, including its ambitions and struggles towards developing sustainable programming. In the second paper, I examine AFL's cross-cultural approach to mentorship and the ways in which failing to address issues of culture (re)produces colonial relations of power. Overall, my findings highlight the importance of recognizing and problematizing the power relations at work within Aboriginal youth leadership development initiatives.

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Introduction

The thesis research contained herein is a case study of Alberta's Future Leaders program (AFL), an Aboriginal youth leadership development program that was initiated in 1996. The program, which is a partnership between the Alberta Sport, Recreation, Parks, and Wildlife Foundation, First Nations and Métis communities, and industry, uses sport, recreation and the arts, and mostly cross-cultural mentorship to establish sustainable sport, recreation, and arts programs, and develop Aboriginal youths ("Mentees") into future leaders throughout Alberta. AFL is directed by two program coordinators and advised by a Provincial Support Committee, which is a group of individuals from the Alberta government, industry, and non-governmental organizations. Each year, AFL hires seasonal Youth Workers and Arts Mentors who typically come from urban centres across Canada. Aboriginal communities that have applied for and have been accepted into AFL are, for three consecutive summers, provided with funding from industry sponsors and government to support sport, recreation, and arts programs for the summer as well as two workers to implement these programs. Notably, these workers are the Youth Workers and Arts Mentors that are hired and trained by AFL. While the Youth Workers and Arts Mentors seek to develop sustainable sports, recreation, and arts programs in the communities, they are also responsible to select Aboriginal youths as future leaders to participate as Mentees in a leadership retreat. This retreat is a highly anticipated event that AFL hosts every summer where the Mentees from all communities are brought together to participate in a week of leadership development workshops and activities. The hope is that at this retreat, the Mentees gain leadership skills that will translate into sustainable leadership for their communities. In sum, through the provision of staff and funding and facilitating a leadership retreat, AFL's ultimate goal is for its participating communities to establish self-sustaining Aboriginal youth leadership

as well as sport, recreation, and arts programming at the end of AFL's involvement.

In 2011, I actively participated in AFL's four main gatherings that were organized for the Youth Workers, Arts Mentors, and Mentees: the orientation, the midterm review, the leadership retreat, and the final review. The orientation involved a week of training in May for the newly hired and returning Youth Workers and Arts Mentors. The midterm review was held over three days in June where the Youth Workers and Arts Mentors met with the program coordinators in Edmonton. At the midterm review, AFL program coordinators led group sessions and activities that encouraged the Youth Workers and Arts Mentors to discuss any concerns they might have about the program; they also made sure to re-visit program objectives. In July, there were two weeks dedicated to the leadership retreat; half of the Mentees participated in the first week and the second half participated in the second week. The final review took place in the final week of August and offered the Youth Workers and Arts Mentors time to reflect on their summer experiences, decompress, and assess the program's strengths and weaknesses. In total, my participation involved engaging with AFL for five weeks between May and August 2011. My research focused on the power relations that have shaped and continue to shape AFL. Importantly, this focus, along with the methodology, and methods were co-determined with AFL's program staff and Provincial Support Committee members, and we had ongoing discussions throughout the research about the study's direction.

Literature Review

To situate my research with AFL, I briefly summarize the historical and socio-political issues that affect Aboriginal people in Canada – especially those that pertain to youth, sport, recreation, and the arts. Further, I also provide an overview of why and how Aboriginal youths in

Canada are produced as being in need of intervention and how sport and recreation are being used as tools to address this alleged need.

History of Aboriginal Youths' Involvement in Sport and Recreation

The use of sport and recreation as a means of intervening on Aboriginal youths' lives is a practice that can be traced back to when residential schools began in the 1860s (Neegan, 2005). Even though "Indigenous peoples had a highly developed system of education…[l]ong before Europeans came to North America" (Neegan, 2005, p. 5), Europeans felt Aboriginal children "should be ashamed of their language and culture and that their culture was inferior to European culture" (Neegan, 2005, p. 7). The shaming involved in residential schools cannot be taken lightly; Forsyth (2007) argued that residential schooling was "the most aggressive attempt to Christianize and civilize Aboriginal people" (p. 100). Involvement in Eurocentric sports and games were amongst the efforts staff at residential schools used to inculcate Aboriginal children with European culture to meet their assimilative goals (Forsyth, 2007; Paraschak, 1997). In an ethnographic recollection of interviews from residential school survivors by Haig-Brown and Nock (2006), interviewees mentioned activities they participated in – none of which came from Aboriginal cultures (e.g., boxing, soccer, basketball, gymnastics, brass band, and dance).

Importantly, the use of sport and recreation to change Aboriginal peoples' behaviour was not a practice exclusive to residential schools. For instance, in the 1960s the federal government in Canada was investing itself in "increasing Aboriginal Peoples' participation in competitive mainstream sport…like basketball and hockey" (Heritage Canada, 2005, p. 12). Forsyth (2007) explained that this era was when the Canadian government considered competitive sporting events to be more effective than military drills for Aboriginal peoples' assimilation into Euro-Canadian society. At this time, promoters of organized sport also saw the assimilatory potential

of sport – sport to them had become "an instrument for social and moral improvement and for nation building" (Howell, 2001, p. 4). Nevertheless, rather than practicing Euro-Canadian organized sports and games, sport, recreation, and physical activity, were for Aboriginal peoples intertwined with everyday life, personal, and community well-being, and survival (Heritage Canada, 2005). The Native Sport and Recreation Program is a prominent example of these tensions.

Established in 1972, the Native Sport and Recreation Program was a project managed by Fitness and Amateur Sport (now Sport Canada) (Heritage Canada, 2005) that sought to equip "isolated Indians areas in the prairies" (Paraschak, 1997, p. 5) to compete in mainstream Canadian competitions. In 1981, the Native Sport and Recreation Program's funding was discontinued and the program ceased to exist. Paraschak (1997) argued that this demise was related to two factors: first, the challenges native sport groups posed to the program's mainstream sport focus by participating in customary native-derived physical activities (e.g., powwows, Indian day celebrations, and traditional games), and; second, by a call from the federal government to assimilate Native peoples through sport during and assembly with Native leaders that was hosted September 1970 by the federal Minister responsible for sport at the time (Paraschak, 1997). Ultimately, Fitness and Amateur Sport lacked the capacity to broaden the mainstream sport focus to include customary Aboriginal-derived physical activities and Aboriginal leaders rejected the Minister's proposal. In other words, tensions between Aboriginal leaders and the government led to a "shift in policy direction" (Heritage Canada, 2005, p. 12) and thus the demise of the Native Sport and Recreation Program.

While the last residential school closed its doors in 1996 (Forsyth, 2007), the federal government continues today to assume legal, constitutional, and fiscal responsibility for

education on First Nation reserves in Canada (Canada Library of Parliament, 2011). Similarly, even though the Native Sport and Recreation Program ceased to exist in 1981 (Heritage Canada, 2005; Paraschak, 1997), sport and recreation can still be used as interventions on Aboriginal lives, particularly youths, today.

Interventions for Aboriginal Youths

A wide variety of statistics from education, employment, crime, and suicide are used to produce Aboriginal as being in need of intervention. With regards to education and Aboriginal youths, there is a "lower level of educational attainment and higher dropout levels of Aboriginal peoples compared with their non-Aboriginal counterparts" (Brigham & Taylor, 2006, p. 168). In 2006, 50% of the First Nations people aged 25 to 64 living on reserve and 30% living off-reserve had not completed high school (Statistics Canada, 2008). Comparatively, 15% of non-Aboriginal people had less than a high school education in 2006 (Statistics Canada, 2008). These statistics are significant because "In order to secure employment, educational success [for Aboriginal youths] matters more today than it did in past generations; a high school diploma is now the minimum requirement for many entry-level jobs" (Preston, 2008, p. 7). In terms of employment for Aboriginal people in Canada, whether the country is facing good or bad economic times, "employment among Aboriginal people in Canada remains lower, and unemployment rates higher, than those of the population in general" (Mendelson, 2004, p. 1). Additionally, Pendukar & Pendukar (2011) found that Aboriginal people face a 10% to 50% income and earnings gap compared to non-Aboriginal Canadian born workers with similar characteristics such as age and education. In a study on Aboriginal representation in the criminal justice system in Canada, LaPrairie (2002) found that education, employment, and income levels are possible risk factors related to delinquency and criminal behaviour.

Even though Aboriginal young offenders tend to commit the same types of offenses as non-Aboriginal youths (e.g., thefts or break and enters) in Canada, crime rates are comparatively higher for Aboriginal youths (LaPrairie, 1992). As Caverly (2007) attested, Aboriginal youths in 2004/2005 made up one-quarter of all sentenced custody admissions, yet they represent only 5% of the total youth population in Canada. Also, Aboriginal youth crime and disorder is compounded as the youth demographic represents the largest proportion of the population in Aboriginal communities (LaPrairie, 1992), which is concerning for not only crime rates, but also suicide rates. The Aboriginal youth suicide rate in Canada is estimated to be five to six times higher than that of non-Aboriginal youths (Health Canada, 2003). Indeed, "[h]igh rates of youth suicide and suicidal behaviour continue to be a disturbing reality for many Indigenous communities in Canada" (White, 2007, p. 213).

Shantz (2010) explained that cultural disruption with Aboriginal people in Canada is a consequence from colonialism and "has been linked to high rates of depression, alcoholism, suicide, and violence in many communities, with the greatest impact on youth" (p. 230). Instead of using these statistics to inform systemic societal change to challenge colonial legacies, however, they seem to more often be seen as evidence as to why Aboriginal youth are in need of intervention. Within existing Aboriginal youth intervention programs that seek to address difficulties that Aboriginal youths face as a result of legacies of colonialism, sport and recreation are common components.

Heritage Canada (2005) claimed, "sport has long been recognized by Aboriginal Peoples across Canada as a means to combat some of the negative factors affecting Aboriginal communities, in particular those affecting their youth" (p. 2). Similarly, Health Canada suggested recreation and sports programs for children and youth in Aboriginal communities are

effective in combating "boredom and alienation and foster peer support and a sense of belonging" (Health Canada, 2003, p. 56). The perception that sport and recreation can help to improve the lives of Aboriginal youth is also shared by AFL, as reflected in its use of sports, recreation, and arts "to meet the needs of Indigenous youth dealing with problems such as incarceration, alcohol abuse, reliance on social assistance, and suicide in rural and remote Alberta communities" (Rose & Giles, 2007, p. 435). Nevertheless, as Forsyth (2007) argued, "It remains to be seen how Aboriginal participants in contemporary sport will maintain their unique ways of living and doing sport when, perhaps, what they are being offered is a constantly unfolding set of opportunities to integrate into the mainstream" (p. 109). I argue that in consideration of Canada's colonial and recent history of using sport and recreation to intervene on Aboriginal peoples' – particularly youths', lives, serious attention needs to be given to the power relations at work within Aboriginal youth development programs that use sports and recreation. I conducted the research described below to address this issue.

Epistemology

Constructionism was my chosen epistemological approach. Within constructionism, meaning is not discovered, but constructed through human beings' interactions with the world (Crotty, 1998). As my research involves a program that implicates both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, it is critical that I adopt an epistemology that recognizes the existence of multiple truths. By operating through a framework that seeks to question, rather than impose meanings, constructionism helped me to address the ways in which individuals view the world – including youth programs, differently.

Theoretical Framework

Foucault's concepts of modern power, discipline, and discourse formed the theoretical framework for my research. These three concepts were helpful in questioning normative practices and power relations found within AFL.

Power

Foucault viewed power as something that circulates throughout modern societies (Foucault, 1980). Power thus is capillary-like as it channels out of and around everything. In Foucault's (1976/1990) words, "power is everywhere; not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere" (p. 92). Foucault (1976/1990) was explicit in his beliefs that modern power is something exercised, not possessed; as something relational; as something from below; and as something that only works in the presence of resistance. Foucault believed that modern power is something that is exercised, because to him, rather than being about having power "over" (i.e., power over someone or over something), modern power is about having power "to" (i.e., power to produce or to do). Modern power is driven by intent: "there is no power that is exercised without a series of aims and objectives" (Foucault, 1976/1990, p. 95). Such an understanding helps to isolate underlying interests in exercises of power.

In my research, I focused on understanding the workings of power within AFL, with a special interest on power relations between typically non-Aboriginal Youth Workers and Arts Mentors and the typically Aboriginal Mentees. Specifically, I sought to understand power by asking questions such as, "how, and who, is exercising power within AFL?" "What are the intentions of the people that are exercising power?" "Given that power and resistance coexist according to Foucault, from where do power and resistance stem within AFL?" Although these

questions assisted in deciphering modern power at work with AFL, Foucault's concept of discipline was also used to offer a more thorough understanding of power's effects within AFL.

Discipline

Foucault saw discipline as a way of exercising power to control the body at an individual and population levels (Shogan, 2004). As Rail and Harvey (1995) stated, discipline for Foucault involves "concrete and distinct forms of power that are tools for the domination of bodies" (p. 165), which Mills (2003) explained is usually achieved through an individual internalizing control and developing self-discipline. According to Foucault (1977), "discipline produces subjected and practised bodies, 'docile' bodies" (p. 138). Shogan (2004) explained that for Foucault docile bodies are in fact "productive bodies – bodies that are able to carry out precise, often rarified skills" (p. 14). In my research, I explored whether or not/how Foucault's idea of discipline and docile bodies were at work within AFL. Specifically, I was interested in how discipline can be exercised as a form of social control exercised through discourse.

Discourse

Foucault saw discourses as "verbal traces left by history" (O'Farrell, 2005, p. 133) that shape ideas in society and are taken for granted as being "true" (Smith Maguire, 2002). As Mills (2003) noted, discourses are complex and do not exist in a vacuum; conflicts between discourses and social practices are on-going. Contributing to the complexity of discourses is that at various times there is "a multiplicity of discursive elements that can come into play" (Foucault, 1978, p. 100), otherwise known as the discursive field. The discursive field involves discourses that compete and contradict one another and relate to "the relationship between language, social institutions, subjectivity, and power" (Weedon, 1997, p. 34). There are several discourses that are prominent within the existing literature on Aboriginal youths: Aboriginal youths are "at-risk"

or vulnerable (Wang, 2010; Wieman, 2006); Aboriginal youths are prone to unemployment and a lack of education (Conrad, 2004; White, 2007); Aboriginal youths are susceptible to corruption (Harding, 2006) and addictions (Conrad, 2004; White, 2007); Aboriginal youths need to learn leadership skills (Crooks, Chiodo, Thomas, & Hughes, 2010; Klinck et al., 2005); and sport and recreation programs are "good" for Aboriginal youths (Findlay & Kohen, 2007). Together, these discourses encompass a discursive field that produces Aboriginal youths as inherently inferior to non-Aboriginal youths and in need of outside expert intervention, typically from non-Aboriginal sources.

Based on the above, I argue that Foucauldian theory offers a sophisticated theoretical tool through which to examine exercises of power, discourse, and the disciplining of Aboriginal youths through sport and recreation.

Methodology

The methodology I adopted for this research was an exploratory case study; the case in question was AFL. According to Bloor and Wood (2006), a case study "aims to understand social phenomena within a single or small number of naturally occurring settings" (p. 27). Tellis (1997) identified six different types of case studies: exploratory, explanatory, descriptive, intrinsic, instrumental, and collective. This case study was exploratory, which as Gagnon (2010) explained, "deals with a subject that is clearly important but has previously been neglected for various reasons" (p. 15) and the questions asked are open-ended (Gerring, 2007).

While my research with AFL fits the above criteria, there are three more issues that informed my decision to use case study as my methodology: first, case studies' link to my epistemology of constructionism; second, case studies' strengths and weaknesses, and third, careful consideration of the complex skill set required by a researcher to conduct a quality case

study. The basis of my epistemological approach of constructionism is that it leads us to question society's common-sense understandings of reality (Crespo Suarez, 2003). As my research deals with Aboriginal youths, a marginalized population, there are multiple realities at play, some of which involve contrasts between Aboriginal and Eurocentric worldviews (Brown & Strega, 2005). Case studies are in-depth as they generate sufficient detail to help understand these multiple realities. The strength of using case studies is that as a methodological approach they provide depth, flexibility, an emphasis on context, and rigour. Hence, case studies are useful in producing in-depth understandings of a subject (Bloor & Wood, 2006; Gerring 2004; Lincoln & Guba, 2002; Platt, 1988; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2009). Unlike traditional experiments that deliberately separate context from phenomena in order to control for variables, case study research provides opportunity for rich results from collecting information on the multiple influences on case under investigation (Yin, 2009). In order to collect information on these influences, multiple sources must be consulted, which requires the use of multiple methods.

With multiple methods, the researcher is able to consult a wide variety of potential data (Gerring, 2004). Common methods in case study research include interviews, observations, documentary methods, field notes, and audio and video recording (Bloor & Wood; Yin, 1994). The multiple methods involved in case study research helps to refute alleged claims that case study research lacks rigour (Yin, 1994).

Multiple methods also contribute to the time consuming nature of case study research, as it produces a large amount of data (Yin, 1994). Collecting, managing, and analyzing a large data set requires a considerable time investment. Yin (1994) noted, however, that unlike ethnographic research, case studies are not synonymous with being time-consuming. In an ethnographic study, the researcher must be completely immersed in the field, which requires a

significant length of time (O'Reilly, 2004). On the other hand, the multiple methods required in a case study helps to generate thorough results without requiring that the researcher to be fully immersed in the field for extended amounts of time. To this end, within the time constraints of a Master's of Arts thesis, a case study was the most feasible methodology

Methods

I employed four different methods of data collection for my research: participant observation, focus groups, semi-structured interviews, and archival research. The selection of these four methods was guided by the needs expressed by AFL's staff and the Provincial Support Committee members; they also help to meet the criteria of case study research, which requires the use of multiple methods (Yin, 2009). The participant observation and focus groups occurred in Alberta during the course of the summer of 2011. Out of the eight focus groups in total, six included AFL's Youth Workers (n=17) and Arts Mentors (n=4), and two involved the Mentees (n=17). The semi-structured interviews were conducted in January and February 2012 with members of the Provincial Support Committee (n=5): two interviews were over the phone and the other three interviews were in person. The last method, archival research, was conducted in Ottawa, as the documents were electronic files that AFL shared with me and consisted of the 2011 recruitment poster, orientation manual, and annual reports. As I continue to discuss the four methods I used, I will show what each method entailed, and why it was best suited for my research.

Participant Observation

In participant observation, the intent is to listen carefully and keenly observe "what is going on among people in a given situation or organization or culture in an effort to more deeply understand it and them" (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994, p. 64). Di Domenico and Phillips (2009)

explained in similar terms that participant observation is more than observing, it is about

interacting with participants through field work that involves "informal interviews and/or

conversations; analysis of other materials and evidence encountered while in the field;

biographies, life histories, and personal accounts and stories of participants; and researcher

documentation [e.g., field notes] or diaries" (p. 652). I took field jottings (Bernard, 1988) that

covered the five weeks I spent between May and August 2011 as a participant observer with

AFL, where I participated in four organized AFL gatherings: the orientation, midterm review,

leadership retreat, and final review, which are detailed above. Since I could not observe

everything all the time, I focused my field jottings on instances related to power relations as well

as cultural relevancy that I observed. The power relations I focused on were related to when

different actors within AFL would interact (e.g., Youth Workers and Arts Mentors with

Coordinators or Mentees with Youth Workers and Arts Mentors). As for cultural relevancy, I

focused on instances when culture was acknowledged or ignored by AFL. My field jottings were

written initially by hand during my participant observation. Then, at the end of each day, I typed

out all my field jottings on my laptop in order to fill in any gaps in the notes that might have

occurred when my participation in activities constrained my ability to write detailed notes (e.g.,

canoeing, rock climbing, or swimming). Thus, my field jottings turned into field notes, which

Gambold (2009) argued are necessary to translate field work into a case study and consequently

are considered to be a primary source of data in case study research.

Focus Groups

Focus groups are a form of group interviewing that involves the "systematic questioning

of several individuals simultaneously in a formal and informal setting" (Fontana & Frey, 2005, p.

703). Focus groups are a unique method of group interviewing because researchers who use

focus groups aim to gain insight of a group's beliefs and norms through "intra-group" interaction (Bloor & Wood, 2006). Focus groups contributed to the richness of my data by revealing group dynamics and interaction through discussion that would not have been apparent otherwise (Bloor & Wood, 2006). The group dynamics and interaction during the eight focus groups was genuine, which I attribute to the rapport that developed between the participants and me, as I engaged alongside them in all the activities throughout the four gatherings. As a result, the focus group transcripts became especially rich sources of data, as they contained detailed personal accounts of Youth Workers', Arts Mentors', and Mentees experiences with AFL, which I transcribed verbatim. All participants (n=38) had an opportunity to review and make any corrections or deletion to the transcripts for the focus group(s) in which they participated and no significant changes were requested.

Semi-Structured Interviews

In contrast to quantitative interviews that include surveys and standardized interview schedules, interviews that are semi-structured are much less structured (Bloor & Wood, 2006). They are *semi*-structured because an interview guide with precise questions is prepared in advance, yet the questions are open-ended, which helps to encourage a conversational feel rather than just question-and-answer (Gagnon, 2010). The interview guide prepared ahead of time in part shapes the interview, but it also changes according to the concerns and comments that surface during the interview (Bloor & Wood, 2006).

AFL's Provincial Support Committee members were recruited through individual email invitations to participate in semi-structured interviews. Five long-time members of the Committee agreed to be interviewed. The interviews were conducted throughout January and February 2012: two were phone interviews and the other three were conducted in person in

Edmonton. The Provincial Support Committee members were invited to participate in

interviews because of their familiarity with AFL's history and because they have a great deal of

influence on the program's direction. Another method that provided critical information was

archival research, which I conducted on the electronic documents AFL shared with me.

Archival Research

Archives are rich sources of data that come in various forms, including text, still and

motion pictures, audio and visual recordings, and maps (Miller & Yang, 2007). The National

Archives and Records Administration (2001) explained that archives "are important

organizational records preserved permanently because they reflect what an organization did and

how it went about doing it" (para 1). The archives involved in this research were electronic text

documents pertaining to AFL's programs in 2011. These documents consisted of the recruitment

poster, orientation manual, reports about each community, and the executive annual report. AFL

Program Coordinators and the Provincial Support Committee authored all of the archives I

examined, with the exception of the community reports. The community reports were written by

the Youth Workers and Arts Mentors and then edited by AFL staff and members of the

Provincial Support Committee. As such, I was cognizant that archives "are prone to distortion

either through purposeful omission or tradition" (Miller & Young, 2007, p. 281).

Altogether, archival research, semi-structured interviews, focus groups, and participant

observation were strong methods for my research with AFL. The combination of methods

allowed me to collect 540 pages of text, which I then analyzed through Foucauldian Discourse

Analysis (FDA).

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Analysis

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My use of Foucauldian discourse analysis (FDA) was informed by my use of a

Foucauldian theoretical framework. The objective in FDA is "to identify the discourses

operating in a particular area of life and to examine the implications for subjectivity, practice,

and power relations that these have" (Burr, 2003, p. 170). Simply put, FDA seeks to understand

power-discourse relationships (Willig, 2003).

Burr (2003) argued that the variety of text or artefacts that could carry meaning in FDA is

endless and could include, but is not exclusive to "family photographs, choices of interior decor,

hairstyles, road signs and written instructions on bottles of medicine" (p. 170). Typically,

however, the most commonly used form of data for analysis involves written texts (e.g.,

transcripts of conversations or interviews) (Burr, 2003), which was precisely the contents of my

data set: field notes, interview transcripts, as well as text-based archives). After having revisited

my theoretical framework, reviewing the discourses at work within the literature, and carefully

reading the 540 pages of text produced from interview transcripts, field notes, and archival

documents, I proceeded with applying Willig's (2003) six-stage process of FDA.

In stage one of Willig's (2003) six-stage process of FDA, the researcher identifies the

discourses at work (Willig, 2003). In stage two, the researcher aims to situate the discourses at

work within broader discourses (Willig, 2003). Stage three is when the researcher examines

what these discursive constructions are doing or achieving and what this means for the subjects

involved (Willig, 2003). Stage four is where the researcher identifies subjects' positions relative

to the discursive constructions (Willig, 2003). In stage five, the researcher identifies how these

positions affect each subject's ability to exercise/resist power (Willig, 2003). Finally, in stage

six, the last stage, the researcher seeks to grasp the subjective experiences shaped by the

subject's positions (Willig, 2003). In sum, FDA helped me to tease out the discourses and power

that shape AFL, the results of which can be found in the two stand-alone papers that follow.

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Power Relations and Sustainability in Aboriginal Youth Leadership Development: A Case Study

Abstract

Since 1996, Alberta's Future Leaders Program (AFL) has offered youth leadership development programs in Aboriginal communities throughout Alberta. AFL's programs are led by two kinds of leaders: Youth Workers and Arts Mentors who are expected to develop Aboriginal youth leaders (Mentees) within the communities in which they work. Importantly, these leaders are seasonally employed, typically non-Aboriginal post-secondary students from urban centres. Through a Foucauldian lens, I discuss the discourses and complex nexus of power relations that inform AFL's ability to develop Aboriginal youth into sport, recreation, and arts leaders as well as sustainable programming. I argue that colonial relations of power can be reproduced when predominantly Euro-Canadian, post-secondary students from urban centres are hired temporarily, equipped with resources, sent into Aboriginal communities, and are tasked with developing Aboriginal youth into future leaders.

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Introduction

Aboriginal peoples represent a demographically young and rapidly growing segment of the Canadian population. The median age of the Aboriginal population in Canada is 27 and only 5% of this population is over 65 years of age, whereas the non-Aboriginal population's median age is 39.5 and 13.7% of non-Aboriginal peoples are over 65 years of age (Statistics Canada, 2006). Troublingly, however, Aboriginal youths have disproportionately low levels of educational attainment (Crooks, Chiodo, & Hughes, 2010; Howard, 2010; Kimberly & Cox, 2003), high rates of incarceration (Howard, 2010; LaPrairie, 1992), and high rates of suicide (Brascoupé & Waters, 2009; Howard, 2010). As a result of these statistics, Aboriginal youths in Canada have been constructed as being in need of interventions that address the issues that they face. Alberta's Future Leaders Program (AFL) is one such intervention.

Established in 1996, AFL uses sport, recreation, and the arts to foster Aboriginal youths' leadership development (Rose & Giles, 2007). Its programs are led by two kinds of leaders: Youth Workers, who are selected by the Alberta Sport, Recreation, Parks & Wildlife Foundation (ASRPWF), as well as Arts Mentors, who are selected by the Alberta Foundation for the Arts. Two Youth Workers or a Youth Worker and an Arts Mentor work in pairs in Aboriginal communities throughout Alberta that have applied and been accepted for inclusion in AFL. Communities are involved in AFL for three to five consecutive summers, after which time the community is meant to be self-sufficient in the provision of sustainable sport, recreation, and arts programming (Rose & Giles, 2007).

Once the pairs are in the communities, they are expected to develop sustainable sport, recreation, and arts programs while mentoring the Mentees (who are Aboriginal youth that have been identified as future leaders by the Youth Workers and/or Arts Mentors, as well as by their

communities). To build on the Mentees' leadership potential, AFL invites them to participate in a week long, overnight leadership retreat with Mentees from all the communities involved with AFL for that summer.

Currently, there is a dearth of information that documents youths' experiences working for and participating in Aboriginal youth leadership development through sport, recreation, and arts programs; further, there are few understandings on the power relations and sustainability of such programs: the case study presented herein helps to fill these voids. Through a Foucauldian lens, I sought to understand (1) the power relations at work within AFL; (2) how these relations shape the Youth Workers', Arts Workers', and Mentees' experiences, and; (3) how these tensions shaped AFL's sustainability mandate.

By looking at how power relations, discipline, and discourses inform AFL, this paper is an attempt to make sense of some of the current struggles taking place in sport, recreation, and arts programs for Aboriginal youth leadership development.

Review of Literature

The existing research related to Aboriginal youth development emphasizes several main areas: leadership, risky behaviours, barriers to participation, stigma and marginalization, and sustainability in sport and recreation for development. Below, I provide an overview of these areas of research and, where possible, show their connections with AFL.

Leadership

A fundamental aspect of the vision for AFL is to offer leadership development opportunities to youths living in Aboriginal communities in Alberta. In offering these leadership opportunities, AFL aims to help strengthen and empower the youth that participate in AFL's programs (Alberta's Future Leaders, n.d.). Given that none of the Youth Workers and Arts

Mentors are residents of the communities in which they work and given that the majority of these seasonal employees are non-Aboriginal, it is important to examine the literature on leadership in Aboriginal communities and how it differs from Euro-Canadian styles of leadership.

Leadership as a concept varies depending on context and cultures. As MacNeil (2006) suggested, "there are significant differences in the needs, styles and practices of leaders, depending on a host of cultural or identity factors" (p. 39). The differences between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal views of leadership can be depicted through the use of a pyramid shape that shows where a leader is positioned relative to the people s/he leads. As Julien, Wright, and Zinni (2010) explained, a non-Aboriginal leadership approach typically position the leader at the top of the pyramid. The approach is hierarchical, individualistic, focused on the short term, and best interests of program rather than participants. On the other hand, in Aboriginal cultures the pyramid is inverted: the leader has a collective approach to leadership (Felicity, 1999). In other words, "Aboriginal leaders are participative by nature, non-authoritarian and egalitarian" (Julien et al., 2010, p. 115). An additional concern that extends beyond contrasts between leadership styles when introducing non-Aboriginal leaders into an Aboriginal context is the risk fostering "[a] belief that race makes no difference" (Glover, 2007, p. 204) or "colour-blindness" (Darnell, 2010; Glover, 2007). In such cases, race-based inequalities are obscured and "Whiteness" becomes "the standard and those who assume Whiteness as the stewards of change" (Darnell, 2010, p. 414), which ultimately promotes colonial relations of power.

To date, there is very limited literature that explores the ways in which leadership development programs for Aboriginal youth account for culture, if at all, as well as the consequences and power relations that ensue out of racial neutrality that stems from failing to account for cultural dimensions of leadership. If Aboriginal youth development programs are to

develop culturally competent Aboriginal leaders who will grow up to be healthy, successful

members of society, who, for example, avoid risky behaviours, such issues need to be examined.

Risky Behaviours

Even though Aboriginal youths participate in the same kinds of risky behaviours as non-

Aboriginal youths, the rates are higher for Aboriginal youths. Some of the risky behaviours

Aboriginal youths participate in that are discussed in the literature include: criminal involvement

(Andersson & Ledogar, 2008; Mathew, 2009; Rojek, Veal, & Shaw, 2006), suicide attempts

(Andersson & Ledogar, 2008; Brascoupé & Waters, 2009), smoking (Andersson & Ledogar,

2008), alcohol consumption (Andersson & Ledogar, 2008; Flicker, Smilie-Adjarkwa, Dagnino,

Ricci, Koleszar-Green, & Mitchell 2007; Mathew, 2009), unsafe sex (Andersson & Ledogar,

2008; Flicker et al., 2007), violence (Andersson & Ledogar, 2008; Mathew, 2009), and drug use

(Andersson & Ledogar, 2008; Flicker et al., 2007; Matthew, 2009). As Flicker et al. (2007)

explained, such risky behaviours may serve as coping mechanisms for hardships Aboriginal

youth face such as poverty, racism, and personal and structural violence, which are often

products of legacies of colonialism and the residential school system. As a result of these

concerns, one of AFL's main areas of focus is the use of sport, recreation, and arts programming

to offer opportunities for alternative coping mechanisms and ultimately minimize Aboriginal

youths' engagement in risky behaviours. In fact, as Rose and Giles (2007) explained, AFL was

created to address issues such as involvement in crime, alcohol abuse, and suicide in Aboriginal

communities in Alberta.

Despite a wealth of statistics that paint Aboriginal youths as inherently flawed, engaging

in risky behaviours, and being in need of intervention, there are many Aboriginal youths who do

not make risky choices – who instead thrive and make incredible contributions to both

Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal societies. Factors that influence Aboriginal youths' tendencies to engage in or reject risky behaviour include resilience (Crooks, Chiodo Thomas, & Hughes, 2009), life challenges (Flicker, Smilie-Adjarkwa, Dagnino, Ricci, Koleszar-Green, & Mitchell, 2007), peers, personal choice and enjoyment (Conrad, 2004).

Crooks et al. (2009) found that many Aboriginal youths demonstrate resilience, which is an important area to focus on within the realm of youth leadership development, as Aboriginal youths who are strongly resilient are better equipped to make healthy choices. Focusing on Aboriginal youths' resilience results in a strength-based approach to development, one that problematizes the tendency to view Aboriginal youth as inherently troubled, risk-taking individuals.

Blodgett et al. (2008) found that sport and recreation can be effective in promoting values of persistence and success to Aboriginal youth; these values can have a positive impact on factors such as resilience, influence of peers, day-to-day adversity, and personal choice. Developing an understanding of the experiences of the youth involved with AFL can help to identify resiliency can be enhanced through leadership development and ultimately reduce rates of participation in risky behaviours. Nevertheless, even though sport, recreation, and the arts have been identified as enabling Aboriginal youth to become more resilient and avoid risky behaviours, these youth often face barriers to participation in such activities, and accordingly, to the benefits that these activities might provide.

Barriers to Participation

The barriers that Aboriginal youths face to participation to sport, recreation, and the arts include both social and systemic power relations that inhibit or prevent participation. *Sport Canada's Policy on Aboriginal Peoples' Participation in Sport* (Heritage Canada, 2005)

identified the following barriers to Aboriginal peoples' involvement in sport: awareness, economic circumstance, coaching capacity, distance, jurisdiction, racism, and sport infrastructure. Similarly, Wall (2008) indicated that racism, socioeconomic status, and education were barriers specific to Aboriginal youths' involvement in sport and recreation. As well, sport and recreation participation is less accessible for Aboriginal peoples living on-reserve than off-reserve (Findlay and Kohen, 2007), which can be attributed to First Nations people's segregation from facilities and services (Reid, Tremblay, Pelletier, & MacKay, 1994). With regards to the arts, according to Crooks, Chiodo, Thomas, Burns & Camillo (2009), Aboriginal youths' participation in arts and crafts with Elders is beneficial for them understanding and interpreting cultural identity; this can be difficult to arrange, however, as Aboriginal Elders represent a shrinking demographic (Statistics Canada, 2006) and there is often an intergenerational disconnect between Aboriginal youth and Elders (Friedel, 2010; LaPrairie, 1992; Neegan, 2005). Further, addressing barriers to participation is not just a matter of Aboriginal youths deciding to participate in programs: the ones that are offered are often financially inaccessible (Heritage Canada, 2005) and, as I show below, can (re)produce stigma and marginalization.

Stigma & Marginalization

Aboriginal youths are discursively produced as unruly and undisciplined bodies (Roussell & Giles, 2011), which fosters their stigmatization and marginalization. Stigma and marginalization are serious issues that Aboriginal youth face in everyday life. Hogeveen (2005) explained that Aboriginal youth "are among the most marginalized in Canadian society" (p. 287). Johnson (2003) defined stigma as, "a negative social label that identifies people as deviant not because their behaviour violates norms but because they have personal or social characteristics that exclude them" (p. 313). According to the United Nations Educational,

Scientific and Cultural Organization (2010), stigma and marginalization interact.

Marginalization is a consequence of stigma; it involves the exclusion of people and is "the

context in which those who routinely experience inequality, injustice, and exploitation live their

lives" (Brown & Strega, 2005, p. 6).

Heine and Forsyth (2007) found that Aboriginal youths who are unable to overcome

barriers to participating in any mainstream sport (e.g., basketball, volleyball) are often

stigmatized and marginalized with the following assumption from non-Aboriginal mainstream

sports leaders: in the event that a mainstream sport cannot be accessed, Aboriginal youths always

have access to, and enjoy, traditional Aboriginal sports and games (e.g., powwow dancing) and

can practice them instead. Such an approach that mimics positive youth development practices

in that it "homogenizes [youth] experiences, simplifies [youth] identities, and conceptualizes

[youth] through one dominant cultural frame" (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002, p. 85). As such,

sport, recreation, and arts programmers for Aboriginal youth development must be aware of the

ways in which barriers, including marginalization and stigmatization, serve to limit Aboriginal

youths' access to sport, recreation, and arts programs and they must find strategies to try to

address these issues – especially if they hope to establish sustainability in their efforts.

Sustainability in Sport and Recreation for Development

According to Kidd (2008), "[d]uring the last two decades, there has been a concerted

effort to remobilize sport as a vehicle for broad, sustainable social development, especially in the

most disadvantaged communities in the world" (p. 370). This argument can be extended to

Aboriginal communities in Canada. AFL, which was established in 1996, is part of this trend.

In AFL's efforts to use sport and recreation for development, it maintains a special interest in

doing so in a sustainable fashion. AFL's 2011 *Youth Worker/Arts Mentors Orientation Manual*

stated, "The long-term goal of the Alberta's Future Leaders Program is to leave behind an ongoing support network for youth programming. Your role [as a Youth Worker or Arts Mentor] is to find out what the community wants for sustainable youth programming" (p. 11). Finding out what the community wants, as well as using existing community resources and engaging in a consultative joint planning process is an ideal approach according to Kidd (2008). Nevertheless, Skinner, Zakus, & Cowell (2008) cautioned that sport for development initiatives often adopt a top-down approach, which results in a program that fails to connect with the community as it is not premised on the existing community's needs and assets. Skinner et al. (2008) also explained that a "one size fits all approach will not meet all community needs" (p. 23). Both a one-size-fits-all and top-down approach not only constrain a program's ability to establish sustainability, it also risks perpetuating legacies of colonialism, as sport was used as vehicle for development in colonial times (Levermore, 2008). As Giulianotti (2004) explained, "we must bear in mind the historical relationship of sport to forms of colonialism and neo-colonialism" (p. 367). Thus, in order to develop sustainable sport and recreation for development programming that does not perpetuate legacies of colonialism, a needs and asset-based approach specific to a community and its members is essential.

Theoretical Framework

I examined how relations of power shape through a Foucauldian theoretical framework. In particular, I focused on Foucault's concepts of modern power, discipline, and discourse.

Power

In Foucault's (1976/1990) words, "power is everywhere; not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere" (p. 92). In claiming that power is everywhere, Foucault believed that power lies "between every point of a social body, between a

man and a woman, between the members of a family, between a master and his pupil, between everyone who knows and every one who does not" (Foucault, 1980, p. 187). Foucault also believed that power is not something that is exercised and not possessed: "No one, strictly speaking, has an official right to power; and yet it is always exerted in a particular direction, with some people on one side and some on the other" (Foucault & Deleuze, 1977, p. 213). I used such an understanding to help to isolate underlying interests in exercises of power within AFL, as it facilitated understanding where power was being exercised and resisted. As well, Foucault's concept of discipline helped to further understandings of exercises power within AFL.

Discipline

Foucault believed that one way of exercising power is through discipline. Foucault (1977) defined discipline as a coercive act aimed to regulate bodies into docile bodies, which is achieved by fixing individuals in time and space. Foucault (1977) traced discipline's origins to monasteries and armies and then extended its practice to institutional settings like schools, hospitals, and prisons. Since through discourse, subjects are positioned in ways that enable or inhibit exercising power through forms of disciplining action (Foucault, 1980), discourses are central to discipline. Thus, understanding discourses that involve Aboriginal youth was also imperative in my research with AFL.

Discourse

Discourse is not a linguistic concept for Foucault; rather, discourse for Foucault is "a system which structures the way that we perceive reality" and as "something which constrains our perceptions" (Mills, 2003, p. 55). The term discourse involves a group of statements that produce knowledge on a topic, otherwise known as a discursive formation (Foucault, 1972). Foucault (1980) claimed that discourses are not closed systems and we must allow for "the

complex and unstable process whereby discourse can be both an instrument and an effect of power, but also a hindrance, a stumbling block, a point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy" (p. 101).

Foucauldian theory thus served as a productive theoretical framework through which to examine exercises of power, discourse, and the disciplining of Aboriginal youth and their bodies through the sport, recreation, and arts programming offered by AFL.

Methodology

My methodology of choice was the exploratory case study, with AFL being the case at hand. Gagnon (2010) defined case studies as offering "in-depth understanding of phenomena, their constitutive processes and the actors involved" (p. 2). What is unique about case study research is its expansive interest in an individual case (Silverman, 2004; Stake, 2005). An exploratory case study research is one of many approaches to case study research that is most appropriate in cases that have not undergone extensive empirical research (Ogawa & Malen, 1991). Exploratory case studies are "suggestive and instructive, not definitive or conclusive" (Ogawa & Malen, 1991, p. 271). Generally, case studies work best for research that asks "how" or "why" questions, when the researcher has minimal control over events in the study, and when the issues tied to the research are current (Yin, 1994). Finally, case study research relies on multiple sources of evidence (Yin, 2002), which calls for multiple methods.

Methods

My research was guided by the needs expressed by AFL's program staff and AFL's Provincial Support Committee (an advisory group made up of government, industry, and NGO representatives) during extensive in-person, telephone, and electronic mail communications. Together, we decided that data collection methods for this study, which represents only a portion

of a larger research project, would include focus groups and participant observation that would occur throughout AFL's 2011 summer program. The University of Ottawa's Research Ethics Board granted ethics approval before I began to collect any data. In accordance with ethical standards, all participants over 18 completed consent forms; participants under 18 completed assent forms and their legal guardians completed parental consent forms. The participants consisted of 17 Youth Workers, four Arts Mentors, and 17 Mentees. All four Arts Mentors and eight of the Youth Workers were female, and nine of the Youth Workers were male. Four Youth Workers were of Aboriginal heritage, yet only one was employed for the entire summer: two left the job midway through the summer, one left three quarters through the summer, and one was hired to replace one of the Youth Workers who had left the program. None of the Arts Workers was of Aboriginal heritage. All the Mentees came from Aboriginal backgrounds: eight were male and seven were female. In total, there were 38 participants in the focus groups.

Focus Groups

Over the course of AFL's 2011 program, I conducted two focus groups at each of the four gatherings over the summer (eight in total). Importantly, all participants provided informed consent through signing consent forms or, in the case of some Mentees who were minors, assent forms and parental consent forms. The first two focus groups took place during the orientation week in May; the objective was to gain insight on the Youth Workers' and Arts Mentors' expectations of their experiences with AFL before entering the communities. The third and fourth focus groups were held during the midterm review in June; here, the questions I asked initiated discussion about the Youth Workers' and Arts Mentors' experiences relative to their initial expectations of the program. The fifth and sixth focus groups occurred during the first and second weeks of the leadership retreat in July. The participants for these focus groups were the

Mentees; the questions concerned their experiences with and expectations of AFL. Finally, I

held the seventh and eighth focus groups with the Youth Workers and Arts Mentors during the

final review; the focus was on their overall experiences with AFL as well as their thoughts on

AFL's weaknesses and strengths. Throughout the focus groups, the participants seemed very

open in expressing their feelings and opinions. I believe that the participants' openness was

fostered due to my presence as an overt participant observer. I sent transcripts to each

participant for the focus group(s) in which s/he participated, which served as an opportunity for

the participants to review what they said and make any adjustments they felt were necessary.

Out of the 11 (out of 38) participants who responded, the general feedback was that the

transcripts required minor to no revisions.

Participant Observation

Participant observation involves first-hand experience (Di Domenico & Phillips, 2009)

where a researcher takes part in the facets everyday life of "a group of people as one of the

means of learning the explicit and tacit aspects of their life routines and culture" (Dewalt &

Dewalt, 2002, p. 1). I chose to conduct overt participant observation because "by actually being

with the people of interest, novel and firsthand insights are often obtained" (Di Domenico &

Phillips, 2009, p. 653). Further, it was important to me and ethically prudent that the participants

be aware of the purpose of the research in which they were participating (Di Domenico &

Phillips, 2009). Since observing everything all the time was not possible, I made field jottings

(Bernand, 1988) pertaining to instances involving power relations and culture throughout the

activities in which I participated. For my research, observing an instance of power relations

referred to interactions between actors within AFL that involved the exercise or resistance of

power (e.g., program coordinators with Youth Workers and Arts Mentors or Mentees with Youth

Workers and Arts Mentors). Instances involving culture refers to situations where culture was acknowledged or ignored throughout AFL's four gatherings. In this regard, I noted when AFL programming incorporated cultural elements (e.g., teaching Youth Workers and Arts Mentors about Aboriginal cultures) or if programming appeared to mimic Eurocentric ideals of youth development. At the end of each day, I used the field jottings to develop lengthier and more detailed field notes on my laptop.

Analysis

I used Foucauldian Discourse Analysis (FDA) to analyze my data. The aim of FDA is to explore "the relationship between discourse and power" (Willig, 2003, p. 173). To explore this relationship, FDA examines how discourses shape and sustain unequal power relations (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997). I applied FDA to my field notes, eight focus group and five semi-structured interview transcripts, and archival documents, in order to unpack the power relations, discourses within AFL. I used Willig's (2003) six stages of FDA to understand the power relations within AFL and how they interacted with dominant discourses to shape the Youth Workers', Arts Mentors', and Mentees' experiences with and of AFL.

Results

My findings revealed three dominant discourses at work in AFL: First, sport, recreation, and the arts are "good" for Aboriginal youth and their communities. Second, Aboriginal youth as well as their communities are seen as being "at-risk." The final discourse was that sustainability in programming is important.

Sport, Recreation, and the Arts are "Good" for Aboriginal Youth and their Communities

During a session where members of the Provincial Support Committee (a group that advises AFL that is comprised of representatives from government, industry, and NGOs) were

sharing their knowledge about AFL's history and what the Youth Workers and Arts Mentors should expect in the communities, one of the Provincial Support Committee members stated, "Sports is a great way to reach the kids" (personal communication, April 29, 2011). In a focus group later in the orientation week, an Arts Mentor echoed this thought by stating, "My job is to promote personal growth by using art, sport, and most importantly leadership" (personal communication, May 4, 2011). Then, during the leadership retreat in July, one of the Mentees said that one of the best aspects so far of having AFL in his community was, "All the sports going on and activities" (personal communication, July 19, 2011). Finally, at the final review week, a Youth Worker stated, "You just kind of hope that there are more people who want AFL, or I shouldn't say AFL, but who want sports, rec[reation], and arts in their community, than those who don't want it" (personal communication, August 25, 2011). These kinds of comments, which focused on sport and recreation's inherent values, were prevalent throughout the summer. Another prominent discourse I found related to a concern that drove AFL's initial creation, which is that Aboriginal youth and their communities are "at-risk".

Aboriginal Youth and their Communities are "At-risk"

The shaping of the discourse that the Aboriginal youth with whom they would be working were "at-risk" began during the orientation week, when the Provincial Support Committee members in attendance explained to the Youth Workers and Arts Mentors that AFL was created to help address crime rates and that it helps to "keep youth out of the justice system and improve their quality of life" (personal communication, May 1, 2011). A few days later, AFL coordinators talked about how the communities can get stuck in "negative energy" and that "AFL's feedback can be really uplifting; the Youth Worker and Arts Mentor might be the first positive feedback [the youth] receive" (personal communication, May 7, 2011).

The Mentees also constructed themselves as being at-risk. One Mentee said, "For me, I've learned a lot of new experiences and challenges [through AFL] – and I'm glad I did before I got into drugs and alcohol" (personal communication, July 12, 2011). Along the same lines, another Mentee stated that AFL shows, "that there's better things to do with my time instead of always getting into trouble or something. It'll show the right road I guess" (personal communication, July 19, 2011).

The discourse that Aboriginal youth and communities are "at-risk" was, nevertheless, also challenged. For example, at orientation, a member of the Provincial Support Committee stated, "the communities don't need saving; they're proud of their existing capacity" (personal communication, May 1, 2011). During the Midterm Review, an Arts Mentor explained that in the community in which she was working, she had "not really seen what they [identify] as being specific large problems, such as alcoholism and drug abuse" (personal communication, June 14, 2011). Indeed, the Youth Workers and Arts Mentors sometimes challenged the dominant discourse that Aboriginal youth and their communities are "at-risk"; meanwhile, the Youth Workers and Arts Mentors also challenged AFL's sustainability mandate.

Sustainability is Important

While AFL is a short-term program funded through government and industry sponsors, it also claims to not be a "helicopter program" (i.e., comes into a community for a brief time and then leaves), a notion that was challenged by the Youth Workers, Arts Mentors, and Mentees. During the orientation week, the program coordinators stated, "AFL is not a helicopter program; the program strives for sustainability" (personal communication, May 5, 2011). At the Midterm Review, the Youth Workers and Arts Mentors reviewed and shared their goals and concerns for the summer. Their lists included having the communities gain independence from AFL and

carry on with sustainable programs (personal communication, June 14, 2011). Further, at the leadership retreat, a Mentee stated, "I will need to be able to…keep these programs going for many generations" (personal communication, July 19, 2011). Then, at the Final Review, one Youth Worker stated, "My youth, at least when I left, they were considering applying for this job [as a Youth Worker or Arts Mentor] next year, which is really cool" (personal communication, August 25, 2011). As demonstrated above, AFL Coordinators, Youth Workers, Arts Mentors, and Mentees agreed that sustainability is important for AFL.

Despite the importance placed on sustainability, AFL Coordinators, Youth Workers, Arts Mentors, and Mentees seemed to struggle with the how to obtain it. For example, during a focus group at the midterm review, when the Youth Workers and Arts Mentors were asked what they thought the program's goals were and how confident they felt in achieving its goals, one Arts Mentor said,

> I think that a huge goal that's talked about a lot is sustainability – and I guess I just don't really feel confident that this program does that…And I think that saying that I'll go there and I'll get people to start programming themselves [is silly.] [If you want that,] well, then offer them a summer job [as a Youth Worker or Arts Mentor]. (personal communication, June 14, 2011).

This point related to a second one: Funding is required to sustain programming.

During the orientation week, AFL coordinators explained to the Youth Workers and Arts Mentors that the industry sponsors are a "huge part of the program and need to be recognized." They also said, "the communities cannot afford the program on their own" (personal communication, May 3, 2011). In a focus group during the orientation week, one Youth Worker, who was returning for a second year with the program, asked, "Would this program exist without

sponsorship?" (personal communication, May 4, 2011), which raised the excellent point of how the programs would become self-sustaining in each community when AFL and its funding pulls out after three to five years of programming.

Another issue affecting AFL's sustainability is that each community typically has different Youth Workers and Arts Mentors each summer, which only provides the opportunity for short-term relationships to develop between the Youth Workers/Arts Workers and Mentees. During a focus group at the orientation week, a Youth Worker who had held the same position the previous summer noted, "One thing about this program is that it doesn't give us enough time to build strong relationships" (personal communication, May 4, 2011). This sentiment was mirrored by a comment from a new Youth Worker, who noted, "I'm only there for four months and it's a really short amount of time" (personal communication, May 4, 2011). The Mentees felt similarly that more time was needed with the Youth Workers and Arts Mentors: "I get to be good friends with them and stuff and when they leave, it's kinda sad" (personal communication, July 12, 2011). Another Mentee said: "They usually come in May and then I only have till August. Well, for me personally, I would have, like, wanted them there longer and everything" (personal communication, July 19, 2011).

Discussion

Based on the above data, I argue that colonial relations of power between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in Canada are (re)produced when predominantly Euro-Canadian, post-secondary students from urban centres are given resources, sent into Aboriginal communities and trained to, in Foucauldian terms, discipline Aboriginal youth into becoming leaders of self-sustaining (though resource-poor) sport, recreation and arts programs – particularly when these

programs are framed as "good" for Aboriginal youths and their communities by non-Aboriginal people.

Sport, Recreation, and the Arts are "Good" for Aboriginal Youth and their Communities

The discourse that sport, recreation, and the arts are "good" for Aboriginal youth and their communities went unproblematized throughout the summer. In this discourse, sport, recreation, and arts are framed as tools for development and Aboriginal youths and their communities as being in need of development.

Blodgett et al. (2008) made a similar claim and expressed that sport and recreation are good for Aboriginal youth as such activities promote values of persistence and success. Within AFL, this discourse is problematic for a number of reasons. The Youth Workers and Arts Mentors are nearly all non-Aboriginal; as such, they may not be equipped to promote anything other than Euro-Canadian ideals of youth development – or, put differently, their idea of the "good" may be reflective of Euro-Canadian cultural practices. Further, such a discourse relies on the neo-liberal assumption that an individual simply needs to adopt certain behaviours (in this case, Euro-Canadian sport, recreation, and arts activities) in order to be successful. It thus fails to problematize the social and economic contexts in which Aboriginal youths lead their lives and the ways in which they are inhibited from accessing "the good." Finally, it fails to question the apparent desirability of involvement in Euro-Canadian practices. As a result, such an approach to Aboriginal youth development runs the risk of attempting to discipline (in the Foucauldian sense) Aboriginal youth with Euro-Canadian practices, which (re)produces colonial discourses of non-Aboriginal superiority, such as the one that asserts that all Aboriginal youth and their communities are at-risk.

Aboriginal Youth and their Communities are "At-Risk"

There is extensive literature that supports the discourse that Aboriginal youth are "at-risk" Andersson & Ledogar, 2008; Brascoupé & Waters, 2009; Flicker, Smilie-Adjarkwa, Dagnino, Ricci, Koleszar-Green, & Mitchell 2007; Mathew, 2009; Rojek, Veal, & Shaw, 2006); AFL Coordinators, members of the Provincial Support Committee, Youth Workers, Arts Mentors, and perhaps most interestingly the Mentees themselves all contributed to this discourse. The discursive field also contains resistive discourses, marginal though they may be, that Aboriginal youth and their communities can, nevertheless, display resilience, as was stated by several participants. The discursive construction of Aboriginal youths and their communities as being at risk (of apparently failing to obtain Euro-Canadian forms of success) is what positions the Youth Workers and Arts Mentors as change agents who exercise power to discipline Aboriginal youths. While the Youth Workers and Arts Mentors might be change agents, they are temporary fixtures in the communities in which they work. Further, their work does not address the socio-political conditions (e.g., chronic underfunding of housing, health, and education) that produce Aboriginal youth as being at risk. Given that the program addresses issues of individual choice and not the broader social conditions that lead to Aboriginal youths making choices that lead to them being at risk, the potential for the program to be successful in attaining its goals is questionable.

Sustainability is Important

From the beginning of the summer, AFL coordinators explicitly told the Youth Workers and Arts Mentors that AFL is not a "helicopter program" (personal communication, May 5, 2011). My findings revealed that this claim was but one example of how sustainability is important but also a struggle for AFL. The issues that contributed to this struggle pertained mainly to time and funding. As mentioned, each community involved with AFL is sent two

workers (either two Youth Workers or a Youth Worker and an Arts Mentor) for three to five consecutive summers. Importantly, the pair of workers differs in each community from year to year; Youth Workers and Arts Mentors are rarely sent back to the same community after completing one summer of work. The Youth Workers and Arts Mentors who are sent into the communities bring with them a surge of industry and government funding to support the Youth Workers' and Arts Mentors' wages as well as their programming efforts. Once three to five summers have passed, the community members are left to carry on sports, recreation, and arts programming initiated by AFL without AFL's support of human and financial resources.

Sport Canada's Policy on Aboriginal People's Participation in Sport (Heritage Canada, 2005) identified economic circumstance, coaching capacity, distance, jurisdiction, racism, and sport infrastructure as barriers to participation in sport for Aboriginal peoples. Further, Findlay and Kohen (2007) remarked that recreation was more difficult to access for those living on-reserve than off-reserve. While AFL addresses a number of these barriers, under its current framework, the impact on the Aboriginal youths and their communities is temporary, which is perhaps an indication of how non-Aboriginal forms of leadership are focused on short-term objectives (Julien, Wright, & Zinni, 2010). In reaction to AFL's short-term impacts, the Youth Workers, Arts Mentors, and Mentees, expressed in the focus groups that they felt the impacts should long-term, which aligns with the program's mandate to develop sustainable programming and Aboriginal youth leadership.

The Youth Workers', Arts Mentors', and Mentees' interests in AFL having long-term impacts revealed an important tension in AFL's sustainability mandate. In order for AFL to achieve sustainability, the program has to recognize that sustainability takes time to develop plus programs need funding in order to run. As well, sustainability cannot be fostered if relations of

power between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people rooted in colonialism are at work as it constrains any possibility of ownership and instils dependence for Aboriginal youth and their communities in the sports, recreation, and arts programs that AFL initializes. To this end, I propose three recommendations for AFL to not only address sustainability, but also cultural relevancy and power relations.

Recommendations

The first recommendation is that AFL should introduce a phase where communities gradually transition into gaining independence from AFL and complete logistic and financial ownership of the programs so communities would be better positioned to sustain programs when AFL's support ends. Specifically, each year that AFL works within a community would need to function as building blocks towards a final year where financial and human resources stem primarily (if not entirely) from the community's efforts. Some examples of measures AFL could implement include hiring from within the community, as well as generating awareness and understanding of possible grant and sponsorship opportunities and how to access them.

In response to the time that it takes to foster sustainability, the second recommendation is to develop an incentive program (e.g., a wage increase or financial bonus) for Youth Worker and Arts Mentors to return to the same community – ideally for three consecutive summers. Finally, I propose that AFL should invest greater effort in recruiting and hiring more Aboriginal Youth Workers and Arts Mentors. In particular, hiring Aboriginal Youth Workers and Arts Mentors to work in their own communities might be particularly fruitful. As a result of such efforts, the power relations within AFL would shift to where the Youth Workers and Arts Mentors are positioned as allies, rather than development stewards or educators (Darnell, 2010), which would create fertile grounds for developing sustainable programming.

Conclusions

Despite AFL's best intentions to develop Aboriginal youth leaders and sustainable sport, recreation, and arts programs, there are power relations at work rooted in colonialism that constrain the program's ability to meet these objectives. Specifically, AFL (re)produces relations of power in which the typically Euro-Canadian outsider is the "expert" on how "at-risk" Aboriginal youth should be disciplined, into following "better" Euro-Canadian ways of living. While such an approach might provide a memorable summer experience for the Youth Workers, Arts Mentors, and Mentees, I argue that it will not lead to the program meeting its goals. The power relations need to shift to where Aboriginal youth, Elders, and the community members are the experts on their own lives and programs that are meant to ameliorate the conditions in which they live. As a result of such a shift, AFL would be better equipped to meet the needs of Aboriginal youth involved in the program, which would inform and thus facilitate their leadership development efforts. As well, if sustainability remains within AFL's mandate, the financial resources and time required for a program to become sustainable need to be recognized and addressed. As it stands now, communities rely on industry and the provincial government for AFL funding, funding that disappears once AFL's three to five year commitment to the community ends. Addressing the broader relations of power rooted in colonialism that result in widespread poverty in Aboriginal communities needs to be addressed before sustainable programming becomes even a possibility.

If these concerns are addressed, AFL will be able to demonstrate it is not a "helicopter" program and it will be more likely to succeed in helping Aboriginal communities develop their own youth leaders.

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An Examination of Cross Cultural Mentorship and Aboriginal Youths' Leadership

Development

Abstract

In this paper I employ Foucault's concepts of power, discipline, and discourse to analyze

Alberta's Future Leaders Program's (AFL). AFL is an initiative in which mainly non-Aboriginal

Youth Workers and Arts Mentors mentor Aboriginal youth in Aboriginal communities in Alberta

through the use of sport, recreation, and arts programming. My findings reveal that AFL uses a

largely universal approach to programming, one where cultural differences are often overlooked.

Specifically, I argue that youth mentorship that does not prioritize cultural relevancy does not

attend to issues pertaining to colonialism's legacy and risks, in a Foucauldian sense, disciplining

Aboriginal youths in ways that re-affirm colonial relations of power between Aboriginal and

non-Aboriginal people.

Introduction

A growing number of scholars (Felicity, 1999; Preston, 2008; Wall 2008) have highlighted the need to recognize Aboriginal youths as future leaders in Canada, especially due to the fact that they represent a young and rapidly growing segment of the population and the "young labour force" (Preston, 2008, p. 2). Alberta's Future Leaders Program (AFL) has been responding to this need since its establishment in 1996. AFL is an initiative that uses mostly cross-cultural mentorship with two groups of mostly non-Aboriginal employees, Youth Workers and Arts Mentors, mentoring Aboriginal youths, who are referred to as Mentees, to facilitate Aboriginal youth leadership development in Alberta. As AFL was created in response to crime, alcohol abuse, and high rates of suicide in Aboriginal communities in Alberta (Rose & Giles, 2007), the Youth Workers and Arts Mentors are meant to mentor Aboriginal youths away from these negative life trajectories. Even though youth mentoring is a widely used practice within youth development that has grown tremendously in recent years (Rhodes, Liang, & Spencer, 2009), programs that specifically provide mentorship for Aboriginal youth are uncommon (Klinck et al., 2005). As such, there is a lack of knowledge concerning power relations at work within non-Aboriginal mentor/Aboriginal mentee contexts. Further, according to Perry (2001), there is a tendency in cross-cultural youth settings to downplay white privilege and deny the importance of culture. Given this claim, along with the significant and growing number of Aboriginal youths in Canada, cross-cultural mentorship for Aboriginal youths' leadership development is a rich area of study. In this paper, I seek to understand to what extent and how power relations, discipline, and discourses shape AFL's mentorship practices.

Drawing on the findings from focus groups, participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and archival research, I identified two dominant discourses that shape AFL: first,

mentorship can help Aboriginal youth to avoid negative life trajectories and, second, youth leadership development is universal. As a result, I argue that if cultural relevancy is not prioritized in cross-cultural youth mentorship programs with Aboriginal youths, issues pertaining to colonialism's legacy can overlooked and there thus is an increased likelihood of disciplining (Foucault, 1977) Aboriginal youths in ways that re-affirm colonial relations of power between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people.

Review of Literature

Within the existing literature, Elders and mentoring, cross-cultural mentorship, and cultural relevancy are prominent topics that can be used to inform our understanding of Aboriginal youth leadership development. Below, I provide an overview of these areas and relate them to my research with AFL.

Elders and Mentoring

Aboriginal cultures in Alberta traditionally relied on Elders for guidance (Council on Aboriginal Initiatives, 2012; Ungar & Liebenberg, 2008). Chansonneuve (2005) explained that Elders in Canada are

> recognized for their wisdom, their stability, their humour and their ability to know what is appropriate in a particular situation. The community looks to them for guidance and sound judgment. They are caring and are known to share the fruits of their labours and experience with others in the community. (p. 4)

Despite colonialism's legacies, Aboriginal peoples continue to maintain deep respect for their Elders (Rosenberg, Wilson, Abonyi, Wiebe, & Beach, 2008). Some important examples of how Elders play essential roles in Aboriginal youths' development include knowledge sharing from Elder to youth (Mathew, 2009; Sinclair & Pooyak, 2007; Waters, 2009), the presence of Elders

in educational settings (Preston, 2008), and the informal social control Elders provide in communities (LaPrairie, 1992). Further, Wall (2008) found that Aboriginal youths consider Elders to hold a wealth of knowledge about their cultures and communities.

Even though Elders can command respect that is founded in their experience and knowledge (Giles, Castleden, & Baker, 2010), this respect may be waning. According to Fox (2007), due to increased pressures from tourism industries, Aboriginal traditions are often treated as spectacles and the emphasis of performance is more on capital gain than traditional practice, which has damaged cultural interconnections between healers, Elders, natural forces, spiritual practices, and kinship relationships. Further, while Elders are respected for their lived experiences and knowledge, they are sometimes limited in their knowledge about current issues that Aboriginal youths face, such as sexual abuse or illegal drug use (Andersson & Ledogar, 2008). In addition, Elders may not speak the same language as Aboriginal youths (Friedel, 2010). According to Friedel (2010), the intergenerational disconnect that exists between Aboriginal youths and Elders is rooted in residential schooling and other colonial practices and policies that removed Aboriginal peoples from or prohibited their involvement in their cultures and traditional practices. Finally, while Aboriginal peoples in Canada represent a demographically young population (Statistics Canada, 2006), Elders are a growing minority (Statistics Canada, 2008). As a result, Elders are consequently vulnerable to community marginalization and exclusion.

Part of this waning respect, marginalization, and exclusion can be seen in how Elders are not being sought after as potential mentors for Aboriginal youths - despite the fact that Elders are ideally suited for such a role (Felicity, 1999; Wall 2008). Indeed, research has shown that cultural identity development for Aboriginal children and youth is reliant on relationships with,

and healthy influence from, older family members (Mussell, Cardiff & White, 2004). Further, a report by Sinclair and Pooyak (2007) entitled *Aboriginal Mentoring in Saskatoon: A Cultural Perspective*, which included input from youths, Elders, and community participants, found that

> When the participants were asked to define what might be some culturally relevant ways to enhance Aboriginal mentorship they all responded: "Elders need to be involved from the beginning". Elders provide "guidance, leadership, wisdom, support to the staff, and children", "take time to reflect" and are described as being "methodical"' about their approach in assisting the agency or program staff. Elders also are able to provide important cultural teachings to the mentors and mentees. (p. 40)

Despite Elders' knowledge, skills, and cultural roles, youths mentoring youths is a current trend in mentoring practices. For example, Elders play small roles within AFL's staff orientation and programs; instead, AFL employs an approach that focuses on youths mentoring youths (Rose & Giles, 2007). According to Crooks et al. (2010), mentorship from older Aboriginal youths can provide the connection to a role model that Aboriginal youths require for positive development. Importantly, however, the majority of AFL Youth Mentors and Arts Workers are non-Aboriginal.

Cross-Cultural Mentorship

In cross-cultural mentorship (e.g., non-Aboriginal youths mentoring Aboriginal youths), mentors must avoid setting the expectation that the mentee should mimic the mentor, which could exacerbate colonial relations of power between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people and promote perceptions of non-Aboriginal superiority (Rose & Giles, 2007). Such superiority can be perpetuated through the denial of culture. Perry (2001) explained that when a group of people denies having culture, it "connotes a relationship of power between those who 'have' culture

(and are, thus, irrational and inferior) [e.g., Aboriginal peoples] and those who claim not to (and are, thus, rational and superior) [e.g., non-Aboriginal peoples]" (p. 86).

Culture plays an important role in youth mentorship. Aboriginal peoples and Euro-North Americans have different approaches to mentorship. According to Klinck et al. (2005), the overarching difference is that the Euro-North American approach to mentoring is typically authoritative, while the Aboriginal approach is more casual. These differences between mentoring are not opposing sides of a dichotomy, but rather ends of a continuum that promote the same intention: to have strong role models for youths (Klinck et al., 2005). While having an Aboriginal mentor (from peer age up to Elder age) for Aboriginal youth is favourable (Klinck et al., 2005; Sànchez, & Colón, 2005; Sinclair, & Pooyak, 2007), Klinck et al. (2005) argued that Aboriginal role models can be difficult to find due to high rates of residential school trauma, drug and alcohol abuse, and involvement in criminal activity. Furthermore, potential mentors within Aboriginal communities are typically unavailable, as they are often already highly engaged in the community and spread thin as a result (Sinclair, & Pooyak, 2007). As such, cross-cultural mentorship is an option that may hold promise. Even though a cross-cultural approach might help to respond to the apparent "shortage" of Aboriginal mentors, which I would argue is a problematic assertion in and of itself, non-Aboriginal mentor/Aboriginal mentee mentoring practices can be fraught with colonial discourses of non-Aboriginal peoples' purported superiority.

Rhodes, Liang, and Spencer (2009) examined ethical principles of youth mentoring relationships and cautioned that "[p]ower differentials inherent in the ages and roles of the adults and youth can widen when there are also differences in class and cultural backgrounds" (p. 454). As Sinclair and Pooyak (2007) noted, "Aboriginal youth are often positioned to see non-

Aboriginal people as power brokers" (p. 6). In order to ensure cultural differences are accounted

for, youth mentorship programs must offer cultural awareness training to help to raise the

mentor's awareness of potential issues such as cultural biases or blind-spots (Rhodes, Liang, &

Spencer, 2009; Sànchez, & Colón, 2005). Klinck et al. (2005) explained that a non-Aboriginal

mentor's knowledge of Aboriginal peoples' cultures, histories, and social contexts could help in

the development of the mentor/mentee connection. Rhodes et al. (2009) recommended that staff

receive cultural awareness training prior to commencing such a mentoring relationship, but they

also argued that the ongoing supervision of cultural awareness in practice is also essential "as

new situations arise[,] so that mentors can openly acknowledge any biases that they may hold

and remain open and non-judgmental" (p. 456). Another critical factor to fostering a positive

cross-cultural mentorship environment involves ensuring a program is culturally relevant.

Cultural Relevancy

Sinclair & Pooyak (2007) claimed that cultural relevancy in programming exists when a

program respects cultural traditions and protocols. The need for closer attention to cultural

relevancy in Aboriginal youth development programming was clearly expressed by Crooks et al.

(2009) who argued, "programs cannot be one-size-fits-all, and that most mainstream programs

do not adequately match the unique needs and strengths of Aboriginal youth" (p. iii). In fact,

there is growing recognition that many programs across Canada are not adequately meeting these

needs (Crooks et al., 2010). Part of this inability to meet Aboriginal youths' needs might be due

to constructions of whiteness as cultureless/normal (Frankenberg, 1993; Perry, 2001), which

serves as a discourse that exacerbates power relations rooted in colonialism (Comeau, 2005) and

neglects to recognize and respect cultural differences (Perry, 2001). Sinclair and Pooyak (2007)

contended that it is insufficient to include token cultural elements in programs that employ cross-

cultural mentoring for Aboriginal youth development (e.g., integrating smudge ceremonies within training sessions); instead, program leaders for such programs must be culturally competent so that they can offer more nuanced and meaningful cultural elements in mentorship programs for Aboriginal youth, which can be achieved through collaborating with community members in hiring and training processes. Collaborating with the mentees also has a role to play in mentorship programs between Aboriginal mentees and non-Aboriginal mentors.

According to Sinclair and Pooyak (2007),by using a collaborative approach that engages Aboriginal youths mentees in planning and implementing programs, Aboriginal youths become co-creators and develop ownership of programs in which they are engaged. Crooks et al. (2010) explained that when Aboriginal youths are involved in programming efforts, it accomplishes several things: stronger understanding and integration of youths' cultural identities; enhancement of youth engagement; fosters youth empowerment, and; establishes and maintains effective partnerships. On the other hand, these benefits are unlikely to occur when Aboriginal youths are excluded from programming efforts; such programs risk failing to meet their participants' needs and can thus struggle to achieve program success. Collaboration with Aboriginal youths thus promotes cultural relevancy in programming, as through this involvement program leaders can better understand the youths' cultures, develop cultural competency, and thus be capable of planning programs in a culturally relevant manner. Indeed, as Laden-Billings (1995) noted, "Culturally relevant teachers utilize students' culture as a vehicle for learning" (p. 161).

The above literature illustrates that cross-cultural mentorship between non-Aboriginal mentors and Aboriginal mentees is a practice that requires attention to culture and relations of power at work. Understanding the ways in which a program like AFL deals with these issues can offer important insights into the ways in which Aboriginal youth development through sport,

recreation, and arts programs can be structured and delivered so that they do not re-affirm relations of power that resemble those found in colonial acts throughout history.

Theoretical Framework

My analysis of AFL's mentorship approach is grounded in Foucault's concepts of modern power, discipline, and discourse. These concepts can be used to identify the ways in which dominant relations of power serve to privilege some and marginalize others.

Power

Foucault had a distinct way of looking at power. Power to Foucault is not necessarily an oppressive force; rather, power to Foucault (1977) is productive. Accordingly, to Foucault (1990), "there is no power that is exercised without a series of aims and objectives" (p. 95). Also, power "brings into play relations between individuals (or between groups)" (Foucault, 1982, p. 786). In order to identify relations of power within AFL's mentoring practices, I sought to understand how discipline was being exercised within AFL.

Discipline

Discipline to Foucault "is a technique of power which provides procedures for training or for coercing bodies (individual and collective)" (Smart, 2002, p. 85). Foucault (1977) explained that discipline leads to a domination of bodies that fosters social surveillance and "normalization" (i.e., a person self-disciplining him/herself into both believing and acting on the idea that only normal/right or abnormal/wrong ways of doing things exist). As a result, discipline produces docile bodies (Foucault, 1977). The goal of discipline is typically to have individuals behave in ways that aligns them with dominant societal discourses.

Discourse

Foucault did not study discourse in a traditional linguist sense; rather, he was interested in how discourse works as a system of representation (Hall, 1997) that constructs our sense of reality (Mills, 2003). In other words, according to Foucault, discourse shapes the ideas in society that are taken for granted as being "true" (Smith Maguire, 2002). Discourse also "influences how ideas are put into practice and used to regulate the conduct of others" (Hall, 1997, p. 44). Taken together, Foucault's concepts of power, discipline, and discourse are productive tools with which to examine AFL's approach to cross-cultural youth mentorship.

Methodology

Consultations with AFL's two program staff and AFL's Provincial Support Committee (a group of individuals from the government, industry, and NGOs that advises AFL) occurred through email, by phone, and in person at the beginning as well as throughout this research. These initial consultations were used to co-determine the research objectives, questions, methodology, and methods. Then, throughout the research process, AFL program staff and Provincial Support Committee's members were regularly updated and consulted to ensure they were satisfied with the direction of the research.

Based on feedback I received from AFL's program staff and Provincial Support Committee members, I employed an exploratory case study methodology. Gerring (2007) defined case study research as "the intensive study of a single case where the purpose of that study is – at least in part – to shed light on a larger class of cases (or population)" (p. 20). According to Gagnon (2010), an *exploratory* case study, focuses on previously neglected subject matter. The questions asked are open-ended (Gerring, 2007), which highlights the exploratory aspect of this approach to case study research. Importantly, case studies call for the use of

multiple methods. For this research, data were collected through focus groups, participant observation, archival research, and semi-structured interviews, which I outline below.

Methods

Prior to the commencement of data collection, the research project received approval from the University of Ottawa's Research Ethics Board. Further, all participants completed consent forms or, in the case of minors, parental consent and assent forms.

Focus Groups

Two focus groups were held at each of AFL's four main gatherings (resulting in a total of eight focus groups). Six of the focus groups were with the Youth Workers and Arts Mentors, and two focus groups included only the Mentees. The first two focus groups were held the first week of May 2011. During these focus groups, the 13 newly hired and eight returning Youth Workers and Arts Mentors (who were divided into two groups each time to make the numbers more manageable) shared their expectations for the summer before entering the communities. Six weeks later, during AFL's midterm review session, I conducted two more focus groups; one was with the new staff and the other was with the returning staff. The topic of discussion for these, the third and fourth focus groups, was how the Youth Workers and Arts Mentors felt about their experiences so far relative to their initial expectations. The next set of focus groups were conducted approximately a month later with the Mentees (n=17) from each community that was participating in AFL programming during the summer of 2011. These focus groups occurred at a ranch where AFL's leadership retreat was held. AFL's leadership retreat is a weeklong trip organized for the Mentees from all of the communities involved with AFL for the summer. I asked the Mentees to share their experiences with and expectations of AFL, especially concerning the leadership retreat. The last two focus groups were conducted on at the end of the

summer at AFL's final review gathering. For these focus groups, I divided up the partners who

worked together in each community so that one was in each focus group. In these, the seventh

and eighth focus groups, the Youth Workers and Arts Mentors were invited to discuss their

experiences with AFL and were asked to express their thoughts on the program's strengths and

weaknesses. The data from these focus groups were complemented by the data collected through

participant observation.

Participant Observation

Marshall and Rossman (2010) described participant observation as a method that

"demands firsthand involvement in the social world chosen for study – the researcher is both a

participant (to varying degrees) and an observer (also to varying degrees)" (p. 140). It is a key

method in qualitative research as it "enables researchers to access what their subjects actually do,

rather than what they say they do" (Bloor & Wood, 2006, p. 71). I was a participant observer at

each of the four gathering AFL held in 2011 (orientation = one week, midterm review = one

week, leadership retreat = two sets of one week, and final review = one week), which allowed

me to engage with the Youth Workers, Arts Mentors, and Mentees for a total of five weeks.

Notably, observing everything all the time is an impossible task. As such, my observations

focused on instances of power relations and of culture (i.e., exercises of power between actors

within AFL and circumstances where culture was acknowledged or ignored within AFL). Such

situations revealed important tensions that were premised in power relations at work within the

program. Throughout my experiences as a participant observer, I made field jottings related to

the instances of power relations and culture that I observed. Field jottings are notes with key

words and phrases that capture a written record of events and impressions (Emerson, Fretz, &

Shaw, 2011). The jottings served as a basis from which I developed field notes at the end of each day when I typed the notes onto my laptop.

Archival Research

Archives are first-hand accounts of history (Caseñas & Kalsbeek, n.d.) that are stored as records of data, which are available to be selected for analysis in research (McBurney & White, 2009). Notably, "archival records are an invaluable tool of data gathering for case study research that is focused on the past and its impact on the present" (Stan, 2009, p. 29). As with first-hand accounts, archives offer only a partial view of history, but one that can nonetheless complement other accounts.

The archival records I obtained included AFL's 2011 recruitment poster as well as AFL's internal reports from 2011. The reports are electronic documents that AFL granted me permission to access that consisted of the annual executive report as well as reports written by the Youth Workers and Arts Mentors from each community. While these documents provided important background information, I also used semi-structured interviews to gain insight into AFL's establishment and current direction.

Semi-Structured Interviews

In semi-structured interviews, the interviewer asks precise questions that are both structured and open-ended (Gagnon, 2010). Semi-structured interviews are conversational; they are "shaped partly by the interviewer's pre-existing topic guide and partly by concerns that are emergent in the interview" (Bloor & Wood, 2006, p. 104). The semi-structured interviews were conducted in January and February 2012 over the phone (n=2) and in person (n=3) with five members of the Provincial Support Committee. The individuals who are on the Provincial Support Committee not only help to shape the program, they also have a great deal of knowledge

of AFL's history and insight as well as influence into its future directions. As such, they were ideal individuals to interview.

Collectively, focus groups, participant observation, archival research, and semi-structured interviews were robust data collection methods for my research with AFL.

Analysis

I used Foucauldian Discourse Analysis (FDA) to analyze the data. FDA is concerned with "the relationship between discourse and power" (Willig, 2003, p. 173) as discourses "are strongly implicated in the exercise of power" (Willig, 2008, p. 113). Through analyzing discourses, we can better understand the ways in which discourses shape and sustain unequal power relations (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997). I applied FDA to the participant observation field notes, the focus group and semi-structured interview transcripts, and the archival documents. To do so, I used Willig's (2003) six stages of FDA: The first stage seeks to identify discursive constructions (Willig, 2003); the second stage aims to "locate the various discursive constructions of the object within wider discourses" (Willig, p. 175); the third stage is about looking more closely at "the discursive context within which the different constructions of the object are being deployed" (Willig, 2003, p. 175); identifying the subject's position is the focus of the fourth stage; the fifth stage "is concerned with the relationship between discourse and practice" (Willig, 2003, p. 176), and; the final stage's focus is on the participants' subjective experiences (Willig, 2003). Through applying these six stages of Willig's (2003) FDA, I was better able to understand how power, discourse, and discipline within AFL's cross-cultural mentoring practices shape AFL. Importantly, in June 2012, I presented the draft research results to AFL program staff. They expressed strong support of the findings, which are outlined below.

Results

I identified two prominent discourses in my data. The first discourse was that cross-cultural mentoring helps to prevent or halt the negative life trajectories Aboriginal youths face. The second discourse was that youth leadership development is universal.

Discourse One: Mentorship Can Prevent or Halt Negative Life Trajectories

Participants argued that AFL Youth Workers and Arts Mentors help Mentees to avoid an inevitable trajectory of poor education, unemployment, and incarceration. At the midterm review, a Youth Worker expressed that she found that many Aboriginal youths with which she worked saw attempts at educational attainment as futile exercises (personal communication, June 14, 2011). Overall, what this Youth Worker found was that the youths projected a sense of hopelessness and assumed that they would fail if they had ambitions towards education attainment and employment. A member of the Provincial Support Committee noted that the education system on reserves, where education is a federal responsibility, is not up to par with provincial standards and high school completion rates on reserves are low (personal communication, January 30, 2012). This individual also noted that on the reserve, "chances of employment are next to nothing" (personal communication, January 30, 2012).

In order to avoid this seemingly inevitable downward spiral, participants drew on a discourse that Youth Workers and Arts Mentors could help to show Mentees different perspectives that the Mentees could then adopt in an effort to change their lives for the better. At midterm review, a Youth Worker stated, "I think we really do make a difference in some of these youths' lives and give them a different perspective; we open new opportunities; we give them the hope to dream" (personal communication, June 14, 2011). The "different perspective" largely stems from the fact that most of the Youth Workers and Arts Mentors are non-Aboriginal outsiders to the communities. A Youth Worker who used the approach of showing Aboriginal

youths "something else" stated, "we made the cross-cultural exchange our bigger strength: trips to the city, conversations about music, and the world outside [a community], and opportunities, and our own backgrounds" (personal communication, May 4, 2011). Accordingly, one Mentee explained that AFL can "show us what we could do with our future. They take us to new places and they show us new things and I just think that's really great" (personal communication, July 19, 2011). A Mentee communicated how she appreciated what the Youth Workers and Arts Workers had to offer as outsiders:

> They do really good…broadening our scope on the world and every time I'm with them I learn something new because they're not from our settlement: they're brand new people…Brand fresh new people…and you have countless things to learn…doesn't matter what it is or when it is but it's valid and incredibly useful information that you wouldn't know if you didn't…if you yourself didn't leave the settlement. (personal communication, July 19, 2011)

In addition to broadening the youths' perspectives, according to a member of the Provincial Support Committee, as outsiders, the Youth Worker and Arts Mentors are also "able to expose kids to something positive…for a lot of Aboriginal kids, they don't have a dream because they don't know what to dream about…this allows them to or teaches them how to dream" (personal communication, January 30, 2012). In a similar vein, another member of the Provincial Support Committee said. "They've seen…all their life… their dad and their mom not getting up to go to work, and if you can show them something else and a different lifestyle and a different way of life, some of those kids are going to pick up on that" (personal communication, February 6, 2012).

Some Mentees noted how they were picking up on this "different lifestyle" modeled by the Youth Workers and Arts Mentors. One observed, "For me, I've learned a lot of new experiences and challenges [through AFL] and I'm glad I did before I got into drugs and alcohol (personal communication, July 12, 2011). A member of the Provincial Support Committee echoed this sentiment: "If kids are busy stealing second base, they're not stealing something else" (personal communication, January 30, 2012).

Discourse Two: Youth Leadership Development is Universal

A universal approach to youth development and culture transcended AFL throughout the summer, with the exception of the orientation week. The orientation week was an exception as it at times drew attention to the importance of culture and cultural differences in AFL's. Notably, the week was facilitated by an Aboriginal man who once worked for AFL and an Aboriginal Elder who sits on the Provincial Support Committee spoke to the Youth Workers and Arts Mentors about how to act and work in Aboriginal communities (Field Notes, May 2011). Despite these measures, however, many of the Youth Workers and Arts Mentors made comments that downplayed white privilege and promoted the idea of cultural sameness.

For example, during a focus group at midterm review, one Youth Worker said:

…they're just kids. You don't have to treat them any differently [than non-Aboriginal kids]. They have the exact same mannerisms, the exact same behaviours as other kids. So it's really like, it's not a big deal. I think people might almost say it's a big deal, but in reality they're quite similar to [kids from] a small town. (personal communication, June 14, 2011)

Indeed, differences between cultures were not given much credence by the Youth Workers and Arts Mentors. One of the questions I raised during a focus group the midterm review was,

"Have you felt equipped so far to work in an Aboriginal community?", which a Youth Worker responded to with: "Most of us aren't Aboriginal so of course we're not equipped. But in the same way, I mean it's not THAT different" (personal communication, June 14, 201). At the midterm review, I also asked the Youth Workers and Arts Mentors if they had incorporated Aboriginal cultures into their programming. One Arts Worker said her community contact (the main contact person within each community for the Youth Workers and Arts Mentors) specifically told her *not* to incorporate Aboriginal cultures into programs (personal communication, June 14, 201). One Youth Worker answered this question by explaining he felt "it would be kind of insulting for me to organize an 'Aboriginal themed' activity" (personal communication, June 14, 2012). While these mentors were prohibited from or uncomfortable with incorporating Aboriginal cultures into programming, another Youth Worker noted, "I'm not going to assume there's interest in Aboriginal activities just because they're Aboriginal" (personal communication, June 14, 2011). Essentially, whether they were uncomfortable, prohibited, or assumed there would be no interest, the Youth Workers and Arts Mentors typically did not incorporating Aboriginal cultures into their programming. Rather, the Youth Workers and Arts Mentors employed a universal approach to youth development, which was based on the assumption of all children essentially being the same and thus having the same youth development needs.

This universal approach to youth leadership development was also present in the programming offered at the leadership retreat – a highly anticipated week during which select youths who showed potential (and thus became Mentees) were expected to develop tools that would enable them to develop into "future leaders." Over the seven days, the Mentees, who were joined by one or both of the Youth Workers and/or Arts Mentor who worked in their

communities, participated in "outdoor adventure activities and leadership theory based sessions to develop effective communication, personal habits, maintain a positive attitude, promoting your reputation, responsibility, accountability, authority perceptions, working with others, community development, youth action, decision-making and problem solving" (AFL, 2011, p. 8). During the leadership theory based sessions, facilitator administered the *Culture-Free Self-Esteem Inventory* (CFSEI-2) to the Mentees. The CFSEI-2 is a questionnaire that was designed by Battle (1992) as a measure of self-esteem that is purported to work with members of any culture. Further, Aboriginal cultural practices were mentioned/drawn upon sparingly: by special guests to the retreat, during a community building activity, and when a morning lecturer noted that eye contact can be a sign of disrespect when communicating with Elders (personal communication, July 13, 2011).

AFL's lack of emphasis on culture resulted in some tensions with the youths that the Youth Workers and Arts Mentors were to develop into leaders. In a focus group, one Mentee at the leadership retreat said,

> Well, I think there are some misunderstandings between cultures. I guess sometimes it may be offensive; it may not be intended to be offensive…[but] there are cultural differences; it's a big thing. And that I don't think they [the Youth Workers and Arts Mentors] are prepared for certain cultural differences…They just thought they were going to go into a community to help do these things...They weren't trained to understand that the youth were of a different culture…what I would like to see and what I kinda thought this would be was to encourage leadership *and* preserve the culture kinda thing. Well, I would like to see that at least. It may not be a goal - a goal of this program - but

that's just something I think would be a nice goal for them. (personal communication,

July 19, 2011).

While this Mentee remarked that the is a lack of awareness regarding cultural differences from

the Youth Workers and Arts Mentors, a comment one Youth Worker said at the final review

exemplified this point: "the [Aboriginal] people themselves…for me, are very similar to the

people that I've worked with in the past in other youth work [settings]" (personal

communication, August 25, 2011).

One possible explanation to the Youth Workers' and Arts Mentors' lack of cultural

awareness is that in the summer of 2011, only one out of the 21 Youth Workers and Arts

Mentors who worked for AFL for the entire summer were of Aboriginal heritage (there were

three individuals of Aboriginal heritage who worked for AFL for part of the summer; one young

woman left midway through the summer, one young man left towards the end of the summer,

and one young woman was hired to replace the young woman who left). According to a member

of the Provincial Support Committee, having all Aboriginal employees would be ideal, as they

would carry similar cultural backgrounds as the youths they are meant to mentor; nevertheless,

other members of the Provincial Support Committee noted that Aboriginal staff are difficult to

recruit and seldom meet AFL's hiring criteria (personal communication, January 30, 2012),

which places a strong emphasis on post-secondary education (AFL 2011 Recruitment Poster).

As another member of the Provincial Support Committee noted, "the original vision [of AFL]

was [to have Aboriginal youth workers] but it is very, very tough to find them out there…right

now I see that as being one area we can work on: increasing the Aboriginal youth workers that

work for us" (personal communication, February 6, 2012).

Discussion

The results of my research illustrate how a universal – or supposedly colour blind,
approach to programming is practiced by AFL and its Youth Workers and Arts Mentors. As a
result, cultural relevancy is not prioritized and the program risks (re)affirming colonial power
relations between non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal people through the discipline (in Foucauldian
terms) of Aboriginal youths through Euro-Canadian practices. Consequently, the power
relations at work make it difficult for AFL to achieve its objectives.

The first discourse I identified as being employed by those involved in AFL, that cross-
cultural mentorship can prevent or halt negative life trajectories, is especially reflective of
Foucault's (1977) concepts of power and discipline. According to the literature as well as my
findings, Aboriginal youths typically view attempts to complete high school and pursue post-
secondary education as futile. Low educational attainment, as well as weak job prospects on
reserve, also results in low employment rates for Aboriginal youths (Preston, 2008).

In light of these concerns related to education and employment for Aboriginal youths,
AFL must use caution in its ambitions to develop Aboriginal youth through employing non-
Aboriginal mentors. The discourse that is produced is that Aboriginal peoples simply need a
good (i.e., non-Aboriginal) example to follow (one that is impossible to find in Aboriginal
communities) – that they need to be disciplined, in a Foucauldian sense, so they can then be
successful. Such an exercise of disciplinary power is in part rooted in viewing all youth as the
same and denying culture and associated colonial practices as being of any importance (Comeau,
2005; Frankenburg, 1993; Perry, 2001).   Such a cultureless approach presents "a set of
normative cultural practices against which all are measured and into which all are expected to
fit" (Frankenburg, 1993, p. 204). By hiring as mentors individuals who do not face the same
challenges as the Aboriginal youth they are mentoring, the power relations at work that enable

non-Aboriginal peoples to be more successful in gaining access to post-secondary education and employment are ignored and relations of power rooted in colonialism are (re)affirmed.

As stated in the literature, Aboriginal cultures traditionally relied on the guidance of Elders (Klinck et al., 2005); however, apart from serving in an advisory role on the Provincial Support Committee, AFL Youth Workers and Arts Mentors, and the program in general, seldom includes Elders in its programming. Instead, AFL focuses on the use of primarily non-Aboriginal youths to mentor youths. Since the literature emphasizes Elders' traditional roles and strengths as appropriate leaders for Aboriginal youth (Felicity, 1999; Matthew, 2009; Rosenberg, Wilson, Abonyi, Wiebe, & Beach, 2008; Small, 2007; Wexler & Goodwin, 2006), I had not expected that AFL's cross-cultural approach would be valued to the extent that it was by the Youth Workers, Arts Mentors, Mentees, and the Provincial Support Committee. Indeed, the vast majority of the Mentees stated how much they enjoyed having the Youth Workers and Arts Mentors bring their different perspectives and experiences to their communities and felt that they had a positive impact on their lives. This appreciation is meaningful since in a cross-cultural mentoring relationship, "a strong bond can offset cultural differences" (Rhodes et al., 2009, p. 456), which can consequently foster a positive cross-cultural environment. Positive cross-cultural environments between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples are significant because, as Williams and Tanaka (2007) explained, they create opportunities for learning and knowledge translation, which can help to offset power relations that reflect relations of power found in colonial acts. Nevertheless, the apparent benefits of learning from non-Aboriginal peoples could also be rooted in a discourse of white cultural superiority; that learning about white culture is "good" for Aboriginal youths) – a discourse upon which *both* Aboriginal youths, as well as Youth Mentors and Arts Mentors may have (consciously or unconsciously) drawn.

Youth Leadership is Universal

Even though having non-Aboriginal Youth Workers and Arts Mentors might be deemed valuable for the cross-cultural exchange opportunities they can offer, this approach also hinders AFL's capacity to address issues related to culture. A dynamic is thus created where the Youth Worker and Arts Mentors risk being positioned as figures whose job it is to discipline, in a Foucauldian sense, Aboriginal youth into adhering to Euro-Canadian cultural practices. I argue that AFL's hiring practices contribute to this issue.

While members of the Provincial Support Committee claimed that finding Aboriginal Youth Workers and Arts Mentors was a challenge, AFL's recruitment tactics do not appear to focus on recruiting Aboriginal employees. In the 2011 recruitment poster, under a heading that read "What qualifications, qualities and experience do I need?", eleven points were listed: four points concerned possessing a driver's license, first aid and CPR certifications, having a criminal record check, and having a personal vehicle; five points addressed experience with youth, programming, sports, recreation, arts, being self-motivated, having good communication skills, and being a team player, and; two points addressed educational background ("Recreation, Physical Education, Fine Arts, Education, Native Studies, Social Work, Child/Youth Care or relevant post secondary education"), and one point included having a "willingness to live and learn in another cultural setting." Notably, while Native Studies was included in the education background, post-secondary education was a required qualification – a serious barrier for Aboriginal peoples interested in applying for these positions since there is "a relatively lower level of educational attainment and higher dropout levels of Aboriginal peoples compared with their non-Aboriginal counterparts" (Brigham & Taylor, 2006, p. 168). This recruitment poster (which is distributed mainly throughout university and college networks) does not seem to differ

significantly from a recruitment advertisement that could be used for a youth development program for non-Aboriginal youths. As a result, AFL's recruitment tactics primarily attract Euro-Canadian post-secondary students from urban centres and do not stress the importance of knowledge of Aboriginal cultures, which contrasts with the program's stated interest of recruiting and retaining Aboriginal Youth Workers and Arts Mentors.

Another important component that shows how AFL struggles with cultural relevancy is the leadership retreat. Emblematic of this struggle was the daily programming structure, which involved morning lectures on leadership development and afternoon adventure activities, all of which were facilitated respectively by a non-Aboriginal college professor and non-Aboriginal staff from an outdoors adventure company. The use of the allegedly "culture free" CFSEI-2 is another example of the ways in which AFL struggles with cultural relevancy. Holaday, Callahan, Fabre, & Hall (1996) administered the CFSEI-2 to 634 children from seven different cultural backgrounds, including Inuit, and concluded that the CFSEI-2 is actually not "culture-free." Specifically, Holaday et al. (1996) found that

> The significant differences between groups on all scales of the CFSEI-2 scales indicate that statements describing the experience of self-esteem are endorsed differently by young people living in different geographic locations, having different family and economic situations, or belonging to different races or ethnicities, or any combinations of these factors. (p. 550)

In addition to having Aboriginal backgrounds, which can vary considerably, the Mentees at the leadership retreat live in geographic locations and have family and economic situations that – by and large, differ dramatically from the Youth Workers' and Arts Mentors'. The assumption that culture essentially does not matter in youth leadership development and in measuring the degree

to which it is obtained (e.g., through the CFSEI-2) promotes unequal power relations (Sinclair & Pooyak, 2007), as it fosters the understanding that cultural variables are unimportant, when they can and do exert a strong influence on the ways in which Aboriginal peoples live their lives. In other words, by not prioritizing cultural relevancy, the program fails to recognize the very real barriers that Aboriginal youth face and, as a result, AFL cannot address these barriers in a way that would bring about change. Instead, the approach is disciplinary, in a Foucauldian sense, with an underlying message that the youths participating in AFL can be like the Youth Workers and Arts Mentors if they just choose act like them.

Conclusion

Since youth mentoring and leadership programs are on the rise and the Aboriginal youth population in Canada is growing at a rapid rate, the findings presented in this article are timely. Specifically, this article helps to raise awareness of the ways in which Aboriginal youth leadership programs can (re)affirm colonial power relations between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people through discipline if cultural relevancy is not prioritized.

As AFL is premised on building youth leaders, I would like to end this article with the Youth Workers', Arts Workers', and Mentees' suggestions for how AFL could better incorporate and reflect Aboriginal cultures: involve more Elders; provide more cultural awareness training to Youth Workers and Arts Mentors; and, hire more Aboriginal people as Youth Workers and Arts Mentors. By acting on these suggestions, AFL would be better situated to challenge the discourses and disciplinary practices upon which many of its employees and participants drew, which I argue perpetuate relations of power that are rooted in colonialism.

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Conclusions

My thesis explored an Aboriginal youth leadership development initiative called Alberta's Future Leaders Program (AFL). More specifically, the two articles that comprise this thesis addressed three research objectives: first, to increase knowledge about Aboriginal youths' and predominantly non-Aboriginal employees' experiences AFL; second, to examine AFL's use of cross-cultural mentorship with predominantly non-Aboriginal mentors and Aboriginal mentees; and third, to develop an understanding of the power relations that shape AFL.

This conclusion includes brief summaries of both articles, which is then followed by my general conclusions pertaining to the importance of addressing power relations and culture within Aboriginal youth leadership development programs. I then provide recommendations for AFL and suggest areas of future research. To close, I offer some final reflections.

Article Summaries

In the first article of my thesis, "Developing Alberta's Future Leaders: Discourse, discipline, and Aboriginal youth leadership development," I used Foucault's (1977) concepts of power, discipline, and discourse to examine AFL's interest in and capacity to develop Aboriginal youth leadership and sustainable sport, recreation, and arts programming within the communities it serves. Overall, this article illustrated that by using Euro-Canadian leadership practices to develop Aboriginal youth leadership and sustainable programming in Aboriginal communities, power relations premised by non-Aboriginal superiority are (re)produced.

In the second article, "An examination of cross cultural mentorship and Aboriginal youths' leadership development," I used a Foucauldian lens to examine AFL's cross-cultural approach to mentorship. My aim in doing so was to better understand if and how cross-cultural mentorship (re)produces colonial relations of power. I identified a lack of cultural awareness amongst the Youth Workers and Arts Mentors. These individuals downplayed differences

between Euro-Canadian and Aboriginal practices and spoke to the universal nature of leadership development with youth. I argued that these universal leadership beliefs reinforce white cultural superiority. Consequently, issues tied to legacies of colonialism were not accounted for within the program. I argued that this failure to account for colonial relations of power in the employees' use of sport, recreation, and the arts to discipline (in a Foucauldian sense) Aboriginal youth (re)produces of colonial power relations. The findings in this article are important as they reveal that cross-cultural mentorship can be used to discipline Aboriginal youths to adopt Euro-Canadian practices if cultural relevancy in programming efforts is not prioritized.

Main Conclusions

Overall, my findings suggest that by attempting to develop sustainable programming and leadership in a short time frame, by hiring few Aboriginal peoples, by failing to build the program on a strong understanding of what Aboriginal leadership looks like, and by designing a program that takes a deficit based approach, AFL offers an Aboriginal youth leadership development program that does not meet its considerable potential. Instead, what results is a program that provides summer-long entertainment for Aboriginal youths, but has a limited ability to challenges the dominant relations of power that produce Aboriginal youths as being in need of intervention from typically Euro-Canadian "experts" who often have little knowledge of Aboriginal culture. I argue that the degree to which cultural relevancy is prioritized in an Aboriginal youth leadership development initiative reflects power relations at work within the program. In the case of AFL, cultural relevancy has yet to be prioritized, which not only reflects, but also reaffirms relations of power rooted in colonialism.

Recommendations

I propose six recommendations for AFL that stem from my research findings. The first is for the program to adopt a strength-based approach (Crooks, Chiodo, Thomas, & Hughes, 2010) that recognizes Aboriginal youths and the members of their communities as resourceful and resilient. Such an approach would challenge the current deficit-based approach (Crooks et al., 2010), which serves to (re)produce the discourse that Aboriginal youths are destined to follow a negative life trajectory, which thus produces them as in need of expert, outside forms of intervention. My second recommendation is to provide in-depth cultural awareness training for all Youth Workers and Arts Mentors. I argue that culturally aware and competent Youth Workers and Arts Mentors would result in stronger, more successful efforts at youth development. Third, hiring more Aboriginal Youth Workers and Arts Mentors; the Youth Workers and Arts Mentors could then better relate to the Aboriginal youths and community members, and vice versa. Fourth, involving more Elders in the program is necessary to help to build stronger ties in the communities; Elders would contribute critical cultural knowledge and culturally relevant mentorship. The fifth recommendation is to offer an incentive for Youth Workers and Arts Mentors to return to the same community (if so desired by the community) for consecutive summers. One possible incentive could be to give a bonus or a higher salary to returning Youth Workers and Arts Mentors. My final recommendation is that AFL needs to better define how it measures success. Currently, few Mentees become Youth Workers or Arts Mentors and communities have difficulties in maintaining summer youth programming once AFL ends its three to five year commitment. This does not, however, necessarily mean that the program is a failure. Provincial Support Committee members noted that youth gain important employment skills and leadership through their experiences as Mentees. Some past Mentees may thus take the skills they developed within AFL and use them in other forms of employment and

in other leadership realms (e.g., politics). As it stands, however, AFL these forms of success are not recognized as program goals.

Future Research

The case study research I conducted with AFL led me to realize that Aboriginal youth leadership development is poorly understood – especially in a cross-cultural mentorship context. To better comprehend the nuances and implications of cross-cultural Aboriginal youth leadership development, future research with AFL should include interviews and/or focus groups with program coordinators, past AFL Youth Workers and Arts Mentors, and most importantly, a broader array of community members, especially Elders, in order to gain their understanding of AFL's impacts. Also, there are few studies that specifically look at the experiences of non-Aboriginal mentors working in Aboriginal communities. To this end, another relevant focus for future research would be to examine the ways in which non-Aboriginal Youth Workers and Arts Mentors are affected by their involvement in AFL. Over the past sixteen years, the program has provided hundreds of Canadians with opportunities to live on reserves and in Métis settlements. Thus, understanding the impacts that these experiences have had on their lives, and particularly career trajectories, would make a valuable contribution to understanding AFL's legacy.

Final Words

Given the growing Aboriginal youth population and popularity of youth development programs, I hope that this thesis provides those who work in and study sport, recreation, and the arts programs for Aboriginal youths with the opportunity to reflect on and, more importantly, act on the importance of recognizing and addressing relations of power rooted in colonialism that can permeate such programs. I believe that such reflection and action are necessary for enabling Aboriginal youth development programs to meet their considerable potential to challenge

dominant relations of power and, in turn, contribute to broader social change.

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Contributions

Miriam Galipeau developed, designed, and undertook this thesis, its theorization, analysis, and writing. Dr. Audrey Giles supported all aspects of the dissertation's development, theorization and analysis, and provided assistance and input into writing and reviewing the final product. Both papers will be published with Galipeau as first author and Giles as second.