

Mi'kmaq and Maliseet Tom Longboat Award Recipients' Experiences in Sport in the Maritimes

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Table of Contents

Abstract	3
Acknowledgements	5
Chapter 1: Introduction	7
Literature Review	13
Theoretical Framework	22
Thesis Format	33
Chapter 2: Mi'kmaq and Maliseet Tom Longboat Award Recipients' Experiences in Sport	40
Chapter 3: Aboriginal Athletes in the Maritimes: (Re)producing and Challenging Difference	78
Chapter 4: Conclusions	109

Abstract

This thesis employs postcolonial theory, a case study methodology, semi-structured interviews, and archival research to understand Mi'kmaq and Maliseet peoples' sporting experiences in the Maritimes region of Canada. Two publishable papers comprise this thesis. The first paper analyzes the obstacles the participants faced and the positive experiences they had in sport. The second paper examines the ways in which the concept of "difference" was reproduced and challenged through the participants' involvement in mainstream and all-Native sporting environments. Together, these papers bring much needed scholarly attention to Mi'kmaq and Maliseet peoples' involvement in sport in the Maritimes, while they also make a contribution to the existing body of literature concerning Aboriginal peoples' sport participation in Canada.

Dedication:

This thesis is dedicated to my father, Dr. Ernest Gary Lodge, who passed away on October 8th, 2009. Among the many lessons my dad taught my sisters and me, there are two that are the most significant for me: include the excluded and return love for hate.

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To my family: We have been on an unbelievable journey in the last two years. To my beautiful and intelligent sisters: You both inspire me on a daily basis! Our relationship has only grown and

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There is a dearth of information on Aboriginal peoples'¹ participation in Canadian sport. In particular, there is a scarcity of information regarding the sporting experiences of Mi'kmaq and Maliseet peoples in eastern Canada. In order to fill this gap, this thesis examines Mi'kmaq and Maliseet peoples' involvement in sport in the Maritimes, which includes the provinces of New Brunswick (NB), Nova Scotia (NS), and Prince Edward Island (PEI). Two articles comprise this thesis. Both serve to address three main objectives: 1) to fill a gap in the knowledge about Aboriginal male and female involvement in sport in Canada; 2) to increase our understanding of Mi'kmaq and Maliseet peoples' sporting experiences; and, 3) to expand our understanding of the ways in which colonialism has affected the lives of Aboriginal peoples in Canada, particularly through sport. To do so, I employed a case study research design with semi-structured interviews and archival research. The semi-structured interviews were conducted with nine Mi'kmaq and Maliseet athletes from the Maritimes who were recipients of a Tom Longboat Award (TLA) – an Award that recognizes the outstanding contributions of Aboriginal peoples to Canadian sport.

In this chapter, I provide an overview of the existing literature that pertains to and informs our current understanding of Mi'kmaq and Maliseet peoples' involvement in sport. Following the literature review, I outline my theoretical framework, methodology, methods, and analysis. The chapter concludes with a brief summary of the two papers that comprise this thesis, both of which focus on the experiences of the Mi'kmaq and Maliseet TLA recipients who were interviewed for this project.

Inception of the Tom Longboat Awards

In Canadian sport history there have been a limited number of athletes who have had an award named in their honour; one such athlete is Tom Longboat, an Onondaga runner from the Six Nations of the Grand River (Forsyth, 2005). He was one of the most talented long distance

runners in early 1900s. For example, in his third race he set the world record for the marathon, beating it by over five and a half minutes. At one point or another, he held every Canadian record from one mile to the marathon (Aboriginal Sport Circle). As a result of his accomplishments, he was inducted to the Canadian Sports Hall of Fame, the Canadian Olympic Hall of Fame, the Canadian Indian Hall of Fame and the Canadian Road Running Hall of Fame (Forsyth, p. 2). Additionally, it was in 1999 that “*Maclean’s* magazine named Longboat the top ‘star’ of the Twentieth Century” (Forsyth, p. 2). While his accomplishments have been the focus of a number of history books, movies, and other forms of public attention, little attention has been given to the Awards that bear his name, or to the athletes who have been named recipients (Forsyth, p. 2).

In 1951, the Department of Indian Affairs, the federal branch responsible for Indian administration in Canada, and the Amateur Athletic Union of Canada, the national governing body for amateur sport, established the TLAs (Forsyth, 2005) to recognize the accomplishments of Aboriginal athletes in Canada. These two organizations were responsible for the Awards until 1972. Beneath the celebratory image of the Award lay another objective, especially within Indian Affairs, which was to civilize Native youth through competitive sports and games. The call for nominations was distributed to regional superintendents and educational staff of residential schools. Nominees were evaluated on their leadership abilities in three areas: character, sportsmanship, and athletic achievement (Forsyth, p. 91). Additionally, both regional and national Awards were given out. Each region in Canada identifies a recipient; then a national recipient is selected from the pool of regional winners. This structure remains in place today.

Importantly, during the first era, “the structure of the awards reveals the various segments of society that were involved in selecting and celebrating Native athletic accomplishments” (Forsyth, 2005, p. 88). For example, at the community level of the Awards, Indian agents,

superintendents, local missionaries, and residential school authorities were responsible for identifying nominees. At the regional level, regional directors for Indian Affairs organized a committee, which included mainly officials from Indian Affairs and the AAU of C, to select the regional winner. While at the national level, the power to make decisions was controlled by the Honours and Awards Committee of the AAU of C. As such, the selection committees neglected the involvement of Native people; this ensured that the “vast majority of perspectives on Native involvement in sport were in line with the objectives of Indian Affairs and the AAU of C” (Forsyth, p. 89).

Though the Awards were established to recognize Native athletes who had made outstanding contributions to Canadian amateur sport, there was no mention of what type of sport was to be considered for the Awards, or whether status or non-status Indians, or male or female athletes were eligible. Once the Awards were distributed, it became obvious that they were for males with Indian status who participated in mainstream sports. Hence, during this era, the TLAs were “part of a larger project that equated Native participation in competitive amateur sports with the appropriate integration of Native men and women into mainstream Canadian society” (Forsyth, 2005, p. 91).

In 1973, responsibility for the TLAs was transferred from Indian Affairs and the AAU of C to the National Indian Brotherhood (NIB), which was the national political organizations representing status Indians in Canada, and the Canadian Amateur Sports Federation (CASF), which was the new national organization responsible for amateur sport. The transfer occurred because the AAU of C closed its doors, which resulted in the national aspect of the TLAs being reassigned to the CASF. Also contributing to the transfer was the fact that Indian Affairs shifted its focus away from sport and recreation and, thus, sought to pass on responsibility for the

Awards to the NIB. However, with this transfer, only administrative power was transferred and little decision-making authority was granted to the NIB. Consequently, “the Native political leaders, who intended to utilize the awards to promote Native self-determination, had little choice but to work within the boundaries constructed for them by the federal bureaucrats and the members of the CASF” (Forsyth, p. 143).

Despite this uneasy union, important changes in the structure of the Awards occurred during the second era of the Awards. At the local level, community recreation directors, community coaches, band councils, physical education teachers, school principals, and missionaries were now responsible for nominating athletes. Regional political organizations affiliated with the NIB, such as the Union of New Brunswick Indians and the Union of Nova Scotia Indians, selected the regional recipients. The NIB and the CASF selected the national recipient from the list of regional recipients, though the CASF still maintained greater control over the Awards (Forsyth, 2005). With the CASF having greater power at the national level, the power to decide which Native athletes were to be selected was still influenced by non-Native officials. In time, however, changes occurred that included greater Native involvement. For example, in 1986, the national selection committee included one federal official, one CASF member, two AFN representatives, and, significantly, a member of the Longboat family. The inclusion of a Longboat family member at the national level was noteworthy because it helped to demonstrate that the Awards were run by Native peoples for Native peoples (Forsyth, p. 129).

A number of other important changes occurred during the second era. First, the criteria for participating in the Awards were clarified: both male and female participants were eligible and the Awards were open only to athletes with Indian status as defined by the Indian Act. Another change occurred in 1974 when the Awards were revised to include 13 regions in

Canada: British Columbia, Yukon, Northwest Territories, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec, NB, NS, PEI, and NL. Prior to this change, NB, NS, PEI, and NL were part of one region – the Maritimes (Forsyth, 2005, p. 127). Additionally, in 1977, the national selection committee included a scoring system for the national Awards. The scoring system ensured a fair and efficient selection process was utilized by reducing subjectivity and diminishing accusations of favouritism towards national recipients (Forsyth, pp.133-134). Nevertheless, the construction of the scoring system was founded on performance outcomes. Hence, “the ranking system also served to reproduce and rationalize the mainstream sport model, which emphasized elite athlete development and participation in major international games” (Forsyth, p. 133). The scoring system, as a result, systematically marginalized participants who spent numerous hours participating in and helping to the build Native sport system (Forsyth, p. 134).

In 1998, the Awards were transferred to the Aboriginal Sport Circle, the national organization for Aboriginal sport and recreation development in Canada. The Aboriginal Sport Circle is still responsible for the Awards today (at the time of publication). As this era is beyond the scope of this research, little information on this era is included. Nonetheless, one important distinction between this era and the previous two eras was the implementation of gender equity criteria, which ensured recognition for male and female athletes (Forsyth, 2005, p. 157).

The TLAs represent an important site for investigation for a few reasons. Firstly, gaining an understanding about the Awards provides greater insight into who was responsible for nominating and awarding Aboriginal athletes in the Maritimes and in Canada (i.e., non-Native officials). Additionally, it also reveals who was being awarded for their accomplishments throughout the different eras (i.e., mainly male, Indian status athletes participating in mainstream sport). Lastly, this backdrop highlights the assimilative aims of the Awards. Hence, the TLAs

were far from “simple celebrations” about Aboriginal involvement in sport; rather, they were “part of a much larger project that equated Native participation in competitive amateur sports with the appropriate integration of Native men and women into mainstream Canadian society” (Forsyth, 2005, p. 91).

Furthermore, understanding the sporting experiences of TLA recipients from NS, NB, and PEI is crucial to this research because embedded in their stories is a wealth of knowledge about Aboriginal involvement in sport in the Maritimes. Not only were these participants very talented athletes, most were (and some still are) actively involved in coaching and administrative roles in sport. I had the opportunity to assist a SSHRC-funded project that examined TLA winners across Canada. Following the suggestion of the grant holders, I decided to investigate TLA recipients from the Maritimes. Due to the dearth of information on this topic, I wanted to examine the sporting experiences of Aboriginal peoples in the Maritimes. Moreover, I wanted to explore the ways in which colonialism has affected the lives of Aboriginal peoples in the Maritimes through sport. Hence, my research documents and analyzes these athletes’ sporting experiences in order to foster a deeper scholarly understanding of Aboriginal athletes’ experiences in sport in the Maritimes and throughout Canada.

Literature Review

Mi’kmaq and Maliseet Peoples of the Maritimes

The Mi’kmaq and Maliseet peoples, descendants of the Algonquians, are the two Aboriginal² groups that live in the Canadian Maritimes. The Mi’kmaq were historically located in northern NB, PEI, and NS, while the Maliseet were spread across southern NB along the Saint John River district (Howell, 1995; Miller, 2000). Currently, there are six Maliseet First Nations communities, all of which are located in southern NB, while there are twenty-four Mi’kmaq First

Nations communities throughout the Maritimes: thirteen in NS, nine in NB, and two in PEI (Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, 2010). The number of reserves in the Maritimes gives some context into the presence of Aboriginal peoples in this part of Canada and the number of potential Aboriginal sport participants in the Maritimes.

Repression of Aboriginal Cultural Practices

Like other Aboriginal groups in Canada, Mi'kmaq and Maliseet peoples' lives and cultures changed a great deal due to contact with European settlers. Mi'kmaq and Maliseet peoples' physical leisure practices were repressed through a number of colonial policies. For example, residential schools were the cornerstone of the Canadian government's plan to turn Aboriginal peoples away from their culture and toward European-based social and cultural practices (Miller, 1997), including physical activities such as sport and recreation.

Residential schools have been classified into two broad categories: (1) industrial schools or boarding schools, usually located far from Aboriginal families and reserves so that students resided there throughout the school year, and in many cases, for at least several years; and (2) day schools, located on or near reserves so that students lived with their families. There was only one known industrial school for Aboriginal peoples in the Maritimes: Shubenacadie Residential School. This school, similar to other residential schools across Canada, left indelible memories on a number of its students (Hornborg, 2008; Knockwood, 2001). For example, in her text *Out of the Depths*, Knockwood vividly described the brutal experiences that she and her fellow classmates endured as children at Shubenacadie. Indeed, the school has been recognized as a place that "white-washed" two thousand young people during the years it was open, from 1922 to 1968 (Hornborg). Similar to other such schools, one of the primary intended outcomes was to

make the “Mi’Kmaq children forget their former life and instead become assimilated into the English-speaking community” (Hornborg, p. 122).

In her account of life at Shubenacadie, Knockwood (2001) also recalled the children playing sports and games at school: baseball, skipping, skiing, skating, boxing, and hopscotch were mentioned. Knockwood also noted that boxing was a popular sport for boys, while calisthenics and physical training were provided to boys and girls. Thus, at Shubenacadie, the children were exposed to a variety of physical activities, but the activities were typically limited to Euro-Canadian style practices. Certainly, in order to help foster the adoption of Euro-Canadian activities, it was deemed by governmental officials imperative that Aboriginal cultural practices were repressed and regulated by government policies.

Traditional Aboriginal physical practices were also repressed. Aboriginal peoples’ dancing and singing, as well as their use of ceremonial body paint and materials, were thought by government officials to be indicative of devil worship, or, at best, were viewed as recreation or leisure and thus incompatible with a life destined for labour. Conversely, for Aboriginal peoples these practices were centrally tied to life on the land and cultural identity (Pettipas, 1994). Government officials knew the sacredness of these practices to Aboriginal peoples, so restricting and controlling these practices was imperative if Aboriginal peoples were to be “civilized.” By the 1880s, Indian agents in a number of cases encouraged Aboriginal people to substitute their ceremonies for Euro-Canadian sports and recreation, which were more comprehensible to non-Aboriginal sensibilities (Paraschak, 1998; Pettipas). As a result, some Aboriginal practices were banned. The Potlatch, which is a giveaway ceremony used by a number of Northwest Coast Aboriginal groups who inhabit the coastland and offshore islands from Southeast Alaska to Northwestern California, was officially outlawed in 1884; and the Sun Dance, which is an annual

cultural ceremony practiced by Plains Indians, was forbidden in 1885 by the *Indian Act* (Paraschak; Pettipas).

In short, those practices that were considered as “legitimate” by Euro-Canadians, such as Euro-Canadian-derived physical practices, including sports and games that were promoted by the government and educational and religious institutions, restricted the range of cultural practices Aboriginal peoples could engage in publicly (Paraschak, 1998). Many of the “legitimate” practices that were promoted in their place were sporting and recreational activities that were actively engaged in by non-Native peoples—though, in time, a great deal of these activities became well-liked by many Aboriginal peoples. Indeed, many of the participants in this research excelled in Euro-Canadian sporting activities and derived significant meaning from them.

A Brief History of Sport in the Maritimes

Sport in the Maritimes, as in the rest of Canada, has been a prominent aspect of life, both for Native and non-Native peoples. It is difficult to say when exactly Euro-Canadian sports became prominent in the Maritimes, but a few scholars have noted that a variety of sports were introduced to the Maritimes in the late 1800s (Howell, 2001; Young, 1988a, 1988b). These sports included baseball, softball, basketball, rugby, football, hockey, long distance running, and track and field. A brief historical overview of the sports in the Maritimes is important for this research as it situates the presence of these sports in the area. In addition, all of the sports discussed here were played by the participants and by other Aboriginal peoples in the area. Furthermore, since the introduction of organized sport, many team and individual sports have become popular for both non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal peoples alike.

Baseball and softball were both popular sports in the Maritimes for non-Native peoples. Nine years after the National Association of Baseball Players was formed in the United States,

the Halifax Baseball Club was formed in 1867. Howell (2001) noted that “In the years between Confederation and the First World War, baseball established itself as Canada’s summer sport of choice, pushing aside cricket and lacrosse” (p. 39). It was not until the late 1910s that the advent of softball was seen in NS. The game began indoors as a sport that could be played in the winter. Eventually it moved outdoors because its enthusiastic participants wanted to play year round. In time, softball became more favoured than baseball because people with varied skill levels could play it. Softball was not a sport for just highly skilled competitors; it also provided beginners with a fun past time and was far less expensive than baseball since participants needed less equipment and the field required less maintenance (Young, 1988a). Female participants were not far behind men in taking up the game. In 1927, the Halifax Ladies Softball League formed with six teams. By 1931, there were leagues available for women throughout the Maritimes: Moncton, Halifax, New Glasgow, Wolfville, Bridgewater, Truro, and Sydney (Howell).

One of the most widespread sports in the Maritimes, as in the most of Canada, was hockey, especially among working class men (Howell, 2001). In 1888, the first organized hockey league in NS was formed with six teams. In the late nineteenth century, teams in NS, NB, and PEI competed against one another (Howell; Young, 1988a). By 1900, in Halifax alone there were seven leagues operating, and by the 1920s there were several semi-pro leagues in the Maritimes.

Basketball was also prominent in the Maritimes. In 1894, three years after basketball was invented, it was being played in Amherst and Halifax, NS (Young, 1988a). In 1895, the Halifax YMCA had a house league that was comprised of eight teams, including junior and senior teams. A city-wide senior league was formed in Halifax in 1908. Participation for females in basketball was not far behind the men. In 1893 when James Naismith, the inventor of the game, was

teaching a class, three female participants asked if they too could play. Naismith adapted the rules and allowed them to play. The “girls’ rules,” implemented in 1894, included the prevention of the defender from “snatching” the ball from the opponent who was holding it. In addition, an “offensive player could only hold the ball for three seconds. [Afterward, it] had to be passed, shot or bounced. The dribble was limited to three bounces” (Young, p. 178). These rules were used in NS until the 1966-67 season, at which point the Maritime Women’s Intercollegiate Amateur Athletic Union implemented the “boys’ rules” instead (Young).

Although a considerable amount is known about Euro-Canadians’ involvement in sport in the Maritimes, there is a lack of information pertaining to Mi’kmaq and Maliseet peoples’ involvement in sport in this part of the country. An exception is *Northern Sandlots* (Howell, 1995), which provides a brief discussion of Aboriginal peoples’ involvement in baseball and softball in the Maritimes and highlights the lack of scholarly attention on Aboriginal involvement in these two sports and the implications of this gap for our understanding sport history. Howell observed that Aboriginal peoples’ participation in softball and baseball in the Maritimes has been largely invisible in public discourses, despite the fact that Aboriginal peoples have a long history of involvement in these two sports in the region. According to Howell, “anthropological research has told us something of [Aboriginal peoples’] early pursuits, but the reconstruction of the later sporting history of native peoples, particularly as it relates to games such as baseball, is exceedingly difficult because of the paucity of written sources” (Howell, p. 185). These later discussions on sport rely heavily on the memory of the Native athletes themselves and though these recollections are often contradictory, they provide a means to recuperate a history which has been “lost and ignored” (Howell, p. 185). Howell’s text is beneficial in that it provides a foundation upon which research, such as my own, can be built.

The Indian Summer Games is also important for this study since it provides much needed background information on how, when, where sporting events occurred in the Maritimes for Mi'kmaq and Maliseet peoples.

Indian Summer Games

All-Native sporting events, such as the Indian Summer Games, were an important part of Native sporting experiences in the Maritimes from the 1970s to the 1990s. The first Indian Summer Games took place in 1972 on the Tobique Indian Reserve in New Brunswick (Summer Games, 1972). Residents from reserves throughout the Maritimes, and occasionally Newfoundland, would compete. A variety of sports were offered at the Games; typical events were softball, baseball, track and field, cross country running, canoeing, horseshoes, as well as some traditional and cultural events, such as dancing and storytelling. The Maritime Indian Summer Games continued in the same fashion until 1976. Then, in 1977, the Games split into the Nova Scotia Indian Summer Games and the New Brunswick Indian Summer Games. The Games separated for several reasons: 1) there was a disagreement over scheduling of the Games the prior year; they were scheduled on the same weekend as the St. Anne's celebration, which upset the Nova Scotia and Mi'kmaq people, for whom it was an important religious holiday; 2) the Games were becoming too big for a single community to host; and 3) there was a lack of financial support to host the Games (*MicMac News*, 1977). As a result, each province hosted its own Indian Summer Games. The New Brunswick Games continued until 1985 and the Nova Scotia Games until 1998; the author does not know why the Games ended then. Nevertheless, the New Brunswick Indian Summer Games and the Nova Scotia Indian Summer Games recommenced in 2010. The Nova Scotia Games took place in Membertou (Aknutmaq.com,

2010) and the New Brunswick Games in Kingsclear (Office of the Premier, Aboriginal Affairs Secretariat, 2010; Robert Bernard, personal communication, June 29, 2010).

There were at least two important reasons that influenced the development of the Indian Summer Games in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. One motive was to provide Native peoples, especially youth, “with an opportunity of reinforcing and strengthening their identity as Indians by the large scale contact that would be afforded to them by participation in the Games” (*Agenutemagen*, 1973, p. 14). Another rationale was that the Indian Summer Games would provide the people with an opportunity to revitalize distinctively Native traditions that had been marginalized by colonization; reviving such practices was seen as a “positive reinforcement of the Indian culture identity” (*Agenutemagen*, p. 14). Hence, though the Games were an important way to encourage involvement in sport and physical activity, they also played a key role in the development of the social and cultural traditions of the Mi’kmaq and Maliseet. Despite the presence of these Games in the Maritimes, there was little acknowledgement of these Aboriginal athletes and communities in non-Aboriginal or mainstream sources, such as newspapers and the Sport Hall of Fames in the Maritimes.

Aboriginal Athletes’ Representation in the Maritimes

There have been a number of very talented Aboriginal athletes in the Maritimes, as demonstrated by the presence of TLA recipients from the region. In contrast, there are few Aboriginal inductees in the sports halls of fame in the Maritimes. Currently, there are no Aboriginal inductees in the NS Sports Hall of Fame. Of the 300 inductees in the PEI Sports Hall of Fame, there are only three Aboriginal inductees. In the NB Sports Hall of Fame, there are only two Aboriginal inductees (K. Ross, Curator/Exhibit Director, personal communication, March, 19, 2010; NB Sports Hall of Fame, n.d.). Additionally, there are no female Aboriginal athletes

recognized in any of the sports halls of fame in the region. Clearly, Aboriginal male and female athletes are represented in low numbers in the sports halls of fame in the Maritimes.

This negligible recognition contributes to the “symbolic annihilation” of Aboriginal athletes in general. The term symbolic annihilation refers to the condemnation, trivialization, or lack of attention devoted to a certain group; when symbolic annihilation of the group occurs, it [the annihilated group] no longer exists in the minds of other groups (Blair, 2001). A consequence of this erasure is that the needs and interests of the annihilated group are easier to ignore because their presence in society is not documented in the first place. Nevertheless, publicly available data about those who have been inducted into sports halls of fame in the Maritimes provides us with some contextual information, however cursory, about Aboriginal involvement in sport in the region.

Each of the three Aboriginal inductees in the PEI Sports Hall of Fame were distance runners of Mi'kmaq descent: Michael Thomas, Barney Francis, and William John Paul. Michael Thomas was born in 1885 in Lennox Island First Nations reserve, PEI. He was inducted into the PEI Sports Hall of Fame in 1980 (Ballem, 1983; PEI Sports Hall of Fame and Museum Inc, 2009b). Barney Francis, born in 1898, was also a runner from Lennox Island. He was inducted into the PEI Sports Hall of Fame in 1982. Francis established himself as a middle distance runner; he competed in the Canadian Track and Field Championships in 1923, where he won the one-mile race and recorded a new Maritime record for the distance (PEI Sports Hall of Fame and Museum Inc, 2009a). Lastly, William John Paul was born in Half Way River, NS, and moved to PEI after he married. He was inducted in the PEI Sports Hall of Fame in 2008. He started running at the age of 19 and continued for almost three decades, from the 1930s to the 1960s.

The NB Sports Hall of Fame has recognized two Aboriginal athletes: Roland Sappier (1969 Tom Longboat regional recipient), who was inducted as part of a baseball team, and Wayne Brown, who was inducted as a “builder” for his forty years of involvement in softball as an administrator, official, coach, and organizer (K. Ross, Curator/Exhibit Director, personal communication, March, 19, 2010; NB Sports Hall of Fame, n.d.). Wayne Brown was also the Host Chairman of the NB Indian Summer Games in 1983 and 1987 (NB Sports Hall of Fame). Alfred Sanipass (1968 Tom Longboat regional recipient and participant of this research) has also been inducted into the Canadian Boxing Hall of Fame, but he has yet to receive recognition from the Halls of Fame in the Maritimes.

TLA recipients and other Aboriginal athletes exemplify symbolic annihilation through the limited recognition they have received in the sport halls of fame in the Maritimes, as well as through the lack of scholarly and public (i.e., non-Aboriginal media) information about their involvement in sport. In spite of the growth of scholarly research and writing on Aboriginal people and sport in recent years (e.g., the mascot issue, Aboriginal people and Olympic Games), the dearth of information about the real-life experiences of Aboriginal athletes erroneously suggests that their accomplishments are not valuable, and that they are not important for understanding how to make sport more inclusive for Canadians, specifically Aboriginal participants (Forsyth, 2005).

Through a postcolonial investigation of Mi’kmaq and Maliseet TLA recipients’ experiences, this thesis aims to expand the body of knowledge concerning Aboriginal athletes’ contributions to Maritime and Canadian sport.

Theoretical Framework

Postcolonialism is central to my analysis of Aboriginal peoples in sport. As Young (2001) stated, postcolonialism is “a theoretical and political position which embodies an active concept of intervention . . . It combines the epistemological cultural innovations of the postcolonial movement with a political critique of the conditions of postcoloniality” (p. 57). In addition, postcolonialism involves questioning and challenging colonial knowledge, “writing back” against colonial views, and expanding theoretical structures that challenge Western ways of viewing the world (McEwan, 2001). Further, Young asserted that all people should be able to access and use whatever resources are available so as to ensure their own material and cultural well-being. As such, postcolonial theory acts as a critique of the major cultural inequalities that exist and of the divisions that remain since decolonization (Young).

Many scholars have stressed, however, that the development of postcolonial theory does not indicate that colonialism is over. For example, numerous scholars have noted that one of their reservations about postcolonialism is that the term may give the idea that colonial relationships are a thing of the past (McEwan, 2001; Mishra & Hodge, 2005), when in fact many colonial relationships continue to exist (McLeod, 2000). Thus, it is important to note that postcolonial theory addresses colonialism in both the past and the present. Indeed, Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin (2002) explained that the term “postcolonial” includes all of the people who have been socially and culturally affected by imperialism from the start of colonization to present day, while they also noted that “it is most appropriate as the term for the new cross-cultural criticism which has emerged in recent years and for the discourse through which this is constituted” (p. 2).

Applying postcolonial theory to my research is important for a few reasons. As defined by the *Indian Act*, TLA recipients are, with a few exceptions, all Aboriginal peoples (Forsyth,

2005). As a result of the Indian act, First Nations peoples struggle with the impact of colonization. Their lives have been affected and altered in a number of ways through the restriction and replacement of traditional cultural practices and residential schools, though these are just two examples among many. Furthermore, as sport has been acknowledged as a colonizing entity, it is appropriate to theorize it through a postcolonial lens. McEwan (2001) noted that “postcolonialism attempts to recover the lost historical and contemporary voices of the marginalized, the oppressed and the dominated, through a radical reconstruction of history and knowledge production” (p. 95). Certainly, TLA recipients represent marginalized voices in Canadian sport history. Due to these factors, postcolonial theory is an appropriate theoretical tool to employ for my research.

Epistemology

My research was guided by a constructivist epistemology. Crotty (1998) argued that constructivism focuses on the human construction of individual meaning, where meaning refers to the intentional connections individuals make between the various dimensions of their experiences. Such an approach is particularly important for my research as the experiences vary between each individual; hence, knowledge about the constructed meaning from such experiences are crucial to this project. In addition, since constructivism recognizes individual constructions of meaning, using such an epistemology ensures that the collected data is a co-construction between the interviewer and interviewee.

Methodology

For my research, I employed a case study methodology. Case study research is one of many ways of conducting social science research (Yin, 1994) and is often used when answering “how” or “why” questions (Stake, 2005; Yin, 1994, 2003). Yin (1994) noted that it is an

approach to research that allows researchers to illuminate “holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events such as individual life cycles” (p. 2). Additionally, case studies rely upon participants’ interpretations of a phenomenon, which allows the research to be guided by the participants’ experiences rather than the researcher’s (Stake). Furthermore, case studies can be used in a variety of situations because they provide “a unique example of real people in real situations, enabling readers to understand ideas more clearly than simply by presenting them with abstract theories or principles” (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison., 2007, p. 253). According to Zach (2006), case studies are often used when researchers try to obtain a greater understanding of a relatively small number of people, problems, or situations.

Case study research is consistent across most fields of study. Cohen et al. (2007) surveyed case study characteristics and found several similarities: they depend on rich and vivid explanations of events relevant to the case; they mix the description and analysis of events; they incorporate individuals or groups in order to understand their view on the event; they underline specific events relevant to the case; the researcher is actively involved in the case; and the richness of the case is revealed in a written report. In addition, case studies rely on the use of multiple sources of evidence in order to yield rich, detailed data (Yin, 2003).

According to Stake (2005), there are three different types of the case studies: intrinsic, instrumental, and multiple or collective. Intrinsic case studies are used first and foremost if a researcher wants to further understand a particular case. Stake has noted that intrinsic case studies are not undertaken because the case characterizes other cases or illustrates a particular problem; instead, they are undertaken “because, in all its particularity and ordinariness, this case itself is of interest” (Stake, p. 445). Instrumental case studies are characterized as cases that are studied to provide information on an issue or to re-evaluate generalizations (Stake). In

instrumental case studies, the case is of “secondary interest, it plays a supportive role, and it facilitates our understanding of something else” (p. 445). Finally, a multiple or collective case study is an “instrumental study extended to several cases” (Stake, pp. 445-446). For my thesis research, I conducted an intrinsic case study with the recipients of TLAs to gain information on Aboriginal experiences in sport in the Maritimes and then used these experiences to enhance our understanding of Aboriginal participation in sport in Canada.

Regardless of what type of case study a researcher employs, case studies provide a number of consistent benefits: they provide an abundance of information, which allows them to be easily understood; they often reveal unique features or results; they are realistic; and they can provide insights into and foster comparisons with other similar cases (Nisbet & Watt, 1984).

Nevertheless, despite their broad use, case studies also have weaknesses. Yin (2003) noted the great concern “over the lack of rigor of case study research” (p. 10), highlighting how many case studies are poor in quality and have biased results. Another frequently identified weakness is the inability to generalize from case study findings (Cohen et al., 2007; Yin). Presumably, in the eyes of some scholars, properly designed and impeccably executed case studies would increase their generalizability. Postcolonial scholars, however, are not typically concerned with promoting generalizability, and, in fact, refute attempts to find sameness in order to create truth (Ashcroft et al., 2002). Despite the weaknesses, employing a case study design with TLA recipients for my project was an effective approach for obtaining rich and vivid data, since it allowed me to gain greater insight into the participants’ sporting experiences and to obtain an understanding of Aboriginal sport in the Maritimes.

Methods

The selected methods for my research were in-depth, semi-structured interviews and archival research. I used purposeful sampling to identify the participants for my research. Purposeful sampling occurs when the researcher selects a specific set of individuals “because they purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon in the study” (Creswell, 2007, p. 125). The participants for my research fell into two categories. The first group includes male TLA recipients for the Maritimes region of Canada (n=5); these individuals won an Award between the years 1952-1972. The second group consists of all of the female recipients from the Maritimes (n=4), who won an Award between the years 1952-1985. Two time frames were utilized in order to ensure that there were more female participants in the study. If this was not done, there would have been only one female participant in my study, as there was only one female recipient before 1972. Snowball sampling, internet research, and advertisements in Aboriginal media (newspaper and internet) were utilized for the larger SSHRC funded project to establish contact with participants throughout Canada, including the Maritimes. After contact was established, and a date and time was negotiated with the participants, I traveled to the Maritimes to conduct the interviews and to carry out the archival research. The interviews lasted between 45 to 120 minutes and took place either in the participants’ home or in a public space such as a restaurant. Once I returned to Ontario, I transcribed several interviews and had the remaining interviews transcribed professionally. The transcripts were sent them back to each interviewee to obtain their feedback and approval. Feedback was requested on all aspects of the transcripts, which generally included the spelling of names and adding or removing information to ensure that s/he was completely satisfied with his or her account of their story. Once the final transcript was sent back to me, I mailed them their honoraria, and then conducted the analysis

and wrote this thesis. A final copy of the transcripts will be sent back to them with a copy of this thesis.

The Participants: Brief Sporting Biographies

John Sark won a national TLA in 1952, while his brother, Charlie Sark, won a regional TLA in 1960. John and Charlie Sark grew up in Lennox Island First Nation, PEI. Both John and Charlie attended Shubenacadie Residential School for two years, where they both recalled neither seeing the inside of a classroom nor playing any sports or games. After attending Shubencadie, John went to high school and then later attended St. Mary's University in Halifax, NS, where participated in a variety of sports, focusing mostly on football, basketball, baseball, and track and field. Charlie also played baseball and football, as well as hockey, softball, and rugby. He attended Saint Dunstan's University in Charlottetown, PEI.

Reginald "Reggie" Paul received a regional TLA in 1957 for his success as a baseball player. He was born and raised in Woodstock First Nation, NB, and played for a number of teams in NB and Maine, USA. Reggie's sister, Carole Polchies, who was also born and raised in Woodstock First Nation, won a national TLA in 1979. Polchies played a variety of sports and her athletic career continued until she was 42 years old; she was most actively involved in softball, canoeing, horseshoes, and tennis. She was not only involved in sports as an athlete, but also as an organizer, such as at the Indian Summer Games. Polchies was the first editor of one of the all-Native newspapers that I investigated for my archival research. The newspaper was based out of Woodstock First Nation, and as the first editor, Polchies named the paper *Agenutemagen*, which translates into Story-teller.

Cynthia Gabriel won a regional TLA in 1966 for her involvement in a variety of sports, including badminton, volleyball, basketball, and softball. Her sport of choice, however, was

basketball. She was born in Woodstock First Nation, NB, and played basketball throughout the province. She remembers her love of basketball as a child and teenager. Cynthia also played softball as young adult for St. Mary's First Nation, NB, where she currently lives.

Alfred Sanipass grew up in Big Cove First Nation, NB. He won a regional TLA in 1968 for his accomplishments in boxing. Sanipass also played hockey and baseball at a recreational level. He started boxing at the age of seven. When he was young, his father built a boxing ring in their backyard for him to practice and compete against other boxers in the area. He participated in boxing until he was 21 years old. He won a number of competitions, including the New England Golden Gloves, and he even traveled to Las Vegas, Nevada to compete in the Nationals for boxing. Currently, all of his awards, medals, and newspaper clippings are posted in the local bar in Big Cove – a fitting way for a community to share and celebrate the achievements of “one of their own.”

Roland “Rollie” Sappier was raised in Tobique First Nation, NB where he started his baseball career at the age of 14 by playing for a men's team. Rollie received his regional TLA in 1969, when he was still in high school. He played baseball, volleyball, soccer, basketball, and badminton. He was also an avid long distance runner and track athlete. After high school, he continued to play baseball, and even competed in the first Canada Games. Rollie was inducted into the NB Sports Hall of Fame as part of his baseball team. He was also, and still is, actively involved in sports and recreation by assisting in and organizing the Indian Summer Games, coaching a variety of teams, and organizing recreational programs with the Union of New Brunswick Indians.

Marlene Ward was born and raised in Red Bank First Nation, NB. She received her regional TLA in 1975 for playing and coaching softball. She started playing softball at the age of

12 on a local women's team on her reserve. Later, when this team disbanded, Ward started her own all-Native team with girls from Red Bank First Nation and Eel Ground First Nation, a neighbouring First Nation reserve in NB. The team was called The Pink Panthers and they played in a non-Native league in the Miramichi Valley, NB. Ward played softball for 25 years, 15 years of which she was both a player and a coach. She is also qualified to coach national level softball. Ward also helped to organize the Red Bank Indian Summer Games in 1980.

Last but not least, Sherri Paul-Bartlett from Woodstock First Nation, NB received her regional TLA in 1985 for her involvement in a variety of sports, but excelled in basketball and badminton. Paul-Bartlett started her athletic career in junior high school in Woodstock, NB. She participated in badminton and basketball until she reached university. She currently coaches swimming in her community.

Semi-Structured Interviews

Interviews can be structured, semi-structured, or unstructured. A structured interview occurs when the interviewer has a pre-established set of questions to ask all participants (e.g., survey); there is little room for variation (Fontana & Frey, 2005). In a semi-structured interview, the interviewer has a number of questions to ask, but there is the opportunity to use probes to allow for elaboration (Fontana & Frey). For an unstructured interview, there are no pre-established questions. Rather, the interviewer and participant discuss a topic of interest, which allows the participant to significantly shape the overall direction of the discussion (Fontana & Frey).

For my research, the most appropriate form was the semi-structured interview. Semi-structured interviews have a number of advantages over other forms: they facilitate rapport/empathy, allow for greater flexibility than structured interviews, and allow the discussion

to go into novel areas (Smith & Osborn, 2008). Some disadvantages of the semi-structured interview, compared to a structured interview, are that semi-structured interviews take longer to conduct, because the questions should elicit lengthy, detailed responses, and are often more difficult to analyze than structured interviews (Smith & Osborn). Despite these potential weaknesses, the semi-structured interview was the most appropriate method for collecting the data for this project because it ensured there was consistency between each interview through use of an interview guide. Additionally, as I was dependent upon the participants for the collection and transfer of detailed, in-depth information during the interviews, semi-structured interviews provided an opportunity for this transfer of information to occur.

Archival Research

The second method that I used was archival research. This data collection technique allowed me to gain additional background information about the participants, their involvement in sport, and Aboriginal sport in the Maritimes. Archival research is the examination of “existing records of human behavior, such as public records (i.e. political and judicial records and transcripts of court trials) and private records (i.e. sales reports and personal, written documents)” (O’Hair & Kreps, 1990, p. 35). Archives can take many forms, including collections in libraries and museums, or even personal collections, but they are generally repositories for official government, organizational, or business records that have permanent historic value (Kridel, 1998). Archival records can, at best, only offer a partial understanding of historical events. Nevertheless, a well-rounded picture can be developed through the use of archival records, especially when it is supplemented with interviews.

For my project, archival research was conducted at four locations: the Library and Archives Canada, the Union of New Brunswick Indians (UNBI), the Provincial Archives of New

Brunswick (PANB), and the Archives Council of Prince Edward Island. In order to view the UNBI files, I had to receive permission from the UNBI; once this occurred, the Librarian at the PANB (where the UNBI files were housed) retrieved all of the sport and recreation files for me since the file names were not accessible to the public. In addition, at the PANB, I examined an all-Indian newspaper, which was published by the UNBI and based out of Woodstock First Nation, NB. The newspaper, *Agenutemagen*, ran on a monthly basis from 1971 to 1989, though not consistently. At the PANB, I also reviewed *The Bugle*, which was based out of the village of Woodstock, NS. The complete run for the years 1963 to 1977 was available on microfilm. I also reviewed microfilm of the *MicMac News*, an all-Indian newspaper based out of Membertou First Nation, NS, at the Library and Archives Canada. Many issues of the *MicMac News* were unavailable here, so I was unable to view all of its files. However, I soon discovered that the complete run (1965-1991) was accessible online through the Cape Breton Digital collection (http://collections.mun.ca/cdmcbu/browse.php?CISOROOT=/cbu_micmac), which I accessed to search for missing data. At the Archives Council of PEI, I reviewed two Charlottetown newspapers on microfilm: The Charlottetown *Guardian* (complete run, 1890-present) and *The Evening Patriot* (complete run, 1924-1991).

Analysis

There are a number of ways to analyze data; thematic analysis is one such method. Thematic analysis includes the “search for and identification of common threads [or themes] that extend throughout a set of interviews” (Morse & Field, 1995, p. 139) or data set within qualitative research (Boyatzis, 1998; Schwandt, 2007). A theme is recognized as “a pattern found in the information that at minimum describes and organizes the possible observations and at maximum interprets aspects of the phenomenon” (Boyatzis, p. 4). Thematic analysis can be used

to understand apparently unrelated information, examine qualitative text, or to thoroughly examine peoples' interpretations, situations, cultures, or interactions (Boyatzis).

Thematic analysis has a number of advantages: it is flexible because it is compatible with a variety of theories and epistemologies; it is relatively simple to learn and conduct; and, it is accessible to researchers with little or no qualitative research experience (Braun & Clarke, 2006). There are, however, some disadvantages. For example, themes can be abstract and thus difficult to recognize. Additionally, unless used with a theoretical framework, thematic analysis has "limited interpretive power beyond mere description" (Braun & Clarke). Frequently, multiple readings of the data are needed before the researcher can identify the themes that ultimately emerge (Morse & Field, 1995). Additionally, Braun and Clarke noted that the flexibility of thematic analysis is also a disadvantage because "it makes developing specific guidelines for high phase analysis difficult, and can be potentially paralyzing to the researcher trying to decide what aspects of their data to focus on" (p. 96). For the given research, thematic analysis was employed because it proved to be beneficial with the presentation of themes that were evident in the research. Thematic analysis was also compatible with my use of postcolonial theory because it helped to "anchor the analytic claims" (Braun & Clark, p. 97). Themes are discussed in detail in each of the papers that comprise this thesis.

Thesis Format

My thesis was written using the publishable paper format, and resulted in two papers. For both papers I employed a postcolonial theoretical framework, a case study methodology, and two methods: semi-structured interviews and archival research. In both papers I seek to understand the interviewees' involvement in both mainstream and all-Native sport in the Maritimes. In the first paper, "Mi'kmaq and Maliseet Tom Longboat Award Recipients' Experiences in Sport", I

sought to understand Mi'kmaq and Maliseet peoples' sporting experiences in NB, NS, and PEI. Two main themes emerged in the second paper. Firstly, in order to participate in sports the participants had to overcome considerable obstacles: racism and discrimination; financial constraints; geographic distance; and a cultural tug-of-war. Secondly, although there were obstacles that the participants encountered, the participants' involvement in sport provided them with a sense of accomplishment, self-esteem, and self-confidence, which was especially the case in all-Native sporting environments. In the second paper, "Aboriginal Athletes in the Maritimes: (Re)producing and Challenging Difference," I examined the ways in which difference was (re)produced and challenged through interactions between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples in sport. My article examines both the negative and positive notions of difference. According to the negative concept of difference, individuals who are viewed as being "different" are marginalized in society (Hall, 1997; Weedon, 1999). Difference as a positive concept, however, includes the celebration of being different from a white, Western norm (Hall; Weedon). The pattern of difference was present in both all-Aboriginal and mainstream sport. In this paper, it became evident that difference was (re)produced and challenged not only between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples but also within and between Aboriginal groups. Together, these two publishable papers make a small but important contribution to the body of knowledge that focuses on Aboriginal athletes' experiences in sport in the Maritimes.

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Footnotes

¹ The terms Aboriginal and Indigenous are used interchangeably in the proposal to discuss issues pertaining to Aboriginal people in Canada and in the world.

² In Canada there are three officially recognized Aboriginal groups: First Nations, Inuit, and Metis (Russell, 2000). First Nations refers to Aboriginal groups who spread across most of Canada, except the Arctic, Inuit are those Aboriginal groups who inhabit the Arctic, and Metis are those Aboriginal groups that are descendents of First Nations and Europeans.

³ A special thanks to Robert Atwin and Reginald “Catfish” Lloyd Ginnish (Tom Longboat Award recipients for 1974 and 1979 respectively) for taking the time to participate in an interview with me. These recipients fell outside of the time frame and, therefore, were not included in this research. Nevertheless, I interviewed both recipients and their material will be used in the larger SSHRC funded project.

Mi'kmaq and Maliseet Tom Longboat Award Recipients' Experiences in Sport

Abstract

In this paper I employ postcolonial theory to understand Mi'kmaq and Maliseet Tom Longboat Award recipients' experiences in all-Native and mainstream sport in the Maritimes region of Canada. Two main themes emerged: 1) the participants had to overcome racism and discrimination, financial constraints, geographic distance, and a cultural tug-of-war throughout their athletic careers; 2) despite the obstacles they encountered, the participants' sport involvement, especially within all-Native environments, gave them a sense of accomplishment, self-esteem, and confidence. These research findings expand our limited scholarly understanding of Mi'kmaq and Maliseet peoples' participation in sport in Canada and provides examples of the ways in which Aboriginal peoples have resisted colonial relations of power through sport.

Research has shown that despite the rich history of Aboriginal¹ peoples' involvement in sport and recreation in Canada, little is known about their participation in and experiences of sport (Forsyth, 2005; Forsyth & Wamsley, 2006; Giles, 2002, 2004, 2005a, 2005b; Henhawk, 2009; Howell, 1995; Paraschak, 1995, 1997, 1998). In particular, there is a dearth of information pertaining to Aboriginal peoples' participation in sport in the Maritimes region, including New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island (PEI), of Canada (Howell). In order to address this gap, I conducted semi-structured interviews with nine Mi'kmaq and Maliseet athletes from the Maritimes who received a Tom Longboat Award (TLA) – an Award that recognizes the best Aboriginal athletes in Canada.

In this paper, I used postcolonial theory and thematic analysis to identify and develop the themes that emerged from the interview transcripts. I found that the participants had to overcome obstacles, such as racism and discrimination, financial burdens, isolation on reserves, and experiencing a cultural “tug-of-war” where they felt as though they were constantly and precariously traversing a cultural divide between an Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal world in order to participate in sport. The results also showed that the participants' time in sport was not solely about conquering obstacles, but that their experiences – particularly in all-Native sport environments – also had positive outcomes, such as developing a heightened sense of accomplishment, self-esteem, and self-confidence. As such, this research broadens our scholarly understanding of Aboriginal peoples' involvement in sport in the Maritimes, particularly as it pertains to Mi'kmaq and Maliseet athletes. Further, my research serves to further illustrate the ways in which Aboriginal peoples resisted colonial relations of power through sport.

Review of Literature

Aboriginal Peoples in the Maritimes

When Europeans first arrived in North America, Mi'kmaq and Maliseet peoples inhabited Eastern Canada. The Mi'kmaq occupied northern New Brunswick, PEI, and Nova Scotia, and the Maliseet occupied southern New Brunswick and parts of Maine, USA (Miller, 2000). The Mi'kmaq and Maliseet are presently the two most prevalent Aboriginal groups in the Maritimes. There are six Maliseet First Nations communities, all in southern New Brunswick, and twenty-four Mi'kmaq First Nations communities in various parts of the Maritimes: thirteen in Nova Scotia, nine in New Brunswick, and two in PEI (Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, 2010). The Mi'kmaq and Maliseet, like all First Nations peoples in Canada, have managed to survive colonialism and imperialism, including European encroachment, occupation, and appropriation of their land base, as well as, for some, forced residential schooling, which dislocated generations of young people from their families and customs. Sport was part of the colonial project through the implementation of Euro-Canadian recreational practices in hopes to assimilate Aboriginal peoples (Paraschak, 1998). Despite its colonial roots, Euro-Canadian sport and recreation has become an integral part of Mi'kmaq and Maliseet life.

Aboriginal Sport in the Maritimes

Unfortunately, there is a dearth of scholarly information about Aboriginal people's participation in sport in general, and in the Maritimes specifically. An exception is Howell's (1995) historical examination of softball and baseball in the Maritimes, which makes specific references to the Mi'kmaq and Maliseet peoples. In *Northern Sandlots*, Howell examined the history of baseball in the Maritimes and found the written record to be largely devoid of Native involvement, despite the long history of Native excellence in this sport. Due to the lack of information, it is difficult to know with certainty when baseball was first played by Native people on the East Coast.

What is clear is that variations of baseball were played during the 1870s and 1880s by the Mi'kmaq in the Maritimes; such variations included “old fashion,” “spongy” or “raggy ball” - the names derived from the material used to make the balls (yarn or sponge rubber). These variations were played as late as the Second World War by men, women, boys, and girls (Howell, 1995). By the 1920s, baseball was the dominant sport played on many reserves throughout the Maritimes. Until the 1960s, it was mainly played by boys and men. Girls and women, as well as the elderly, however, gathered on the sidelines to watch the games, play cards, or host fundraisers for the teams (Howell). By 1960, softball had become more popular than baseball on reserves and was played by both men and women. One reason for this change in popularity was the placement of Native peoples onto a few large reserves, which broke up teams comprised of players from a number of smaller reserves (Howell). Softball became predominant throughout the Maritimes because it could be played by a variety of people with different skill levels and it was cheaper than baseball to play as less field maintenance was needed (Young, 1988a, 1988b).

Though little is known of Mi'kmaq and Maliseet peoples' involvement in sport, it is known that a significant part of their sporting experiences in the early 1970s through to the 1990s took place within the context of all-Native sporting events, such as the Indian Summer Games. In 1972 the first Maritime Indian Summer Games took place on the Tobique Indian Reserve in New Brunswick (Summer Games, 1972). Residents from different reserves in New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, PEI, and on occasion Newfoundland, would join in the competition. The Games offered a variety of sports, typically softball, baseball, track and field, cross country running, canoeing, horseshoes, as well as some traditional and cultural events such as dancing and storytelling. The Maritime Indian Summer Games were held from 1972 to 1976. Then, in 1977, the Games split

into the Nova Scotia Indian Summer Games and the New Brunswick Indian Summer Games. The Games were separated for several key reasons: 1) in 1976, there was a dispute over the timing of the Games, as they were scheduled on the same weekend as the St. Anne's celebration, which was a highly praised religious Mi'kmaq holiday – and this upset the Nova Scotia contingent; 2) the Games were becoming too large for one community to host; and 3) there was a lack of financial support (*MicMac News*, 1977). The New Brunswick Games continued until 1985 and the Nova Scotia Games until 1998, at which point they stopped taking place, for reasons unknown to the author. Both the Nova Scotia Indian Summer Games and the New Brunswick Indian Summer Games resumed in 2010. The Nova Scotia Games took place in Membertou (Aknutmaq.com, 2010) and the New Brunswick Games in Kingsclear (Office of the Premier, Aboriginal Affairs Secretariat, 2010; Robert Bernard, personal communication, June 29, 2010).

There were at least two key motives that drove the development of the Indian Summer Games in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. One reason was to provide Native people, specifically youth, “with an opportunity of reinforcing and strengthening their identity as Indians by the large scale contact that would be afforded to them by participation in the Games” (*Agenutemagen*, 1973, p. 14). Another reason was that the Indian Summer Games would offer the occasion to revive distinctively Native sporting practices that had been marginalized with colonization; reviving such sporting practices was viewed to be a “positive reinforcement of the Indian culture identity” (*Agenutemagen*, p. 14). Thus, while the Games were a significant means through which to encourage participation in sport, they were also key sites for the rearticulation of the social and cultural practices of the Mi'kmaq and Maliseet peoples. Important to the

development and implementation of these Games in the Maritimes was the Native Sport and Recreation Program (Paraschak, 1995).

In 1972, a significant initiative implemented and administered by Fitness and Amateur Sport, the federal body responsible for sport development in Canada, was the Native Sport and Recreation Program. The Native Sport and Recreation Program was an “experimental” program created to assist Native organizations to develop sport and recreation on and between reserves, such as the Indian Summer Games (Paraschak, 1995). The Program was developed in an attempt to increase participation levels and create more opportunities for Native athletes in sport while advancing performance levels at “competitive events with other Canadians” (Briefing package for the continuation of the Indian Sports and Recreation Program, n.d., p. 5). In 1981, after nine years of operation, the Native Sport and Recreation Program was terminated due to a change in priority at Fitness and Amateur Sport. The focus shifted from promoting sport and recreation to “disadvantaged” populations, which were those less fortunate classes of people, to producing elite athletes - and “it had become clear...that Native programs...were not going to produce elite calibre athletes in Euro-Canadian sports” (Paraschak, p. 12). The objective of the Native Sport and Recreation program by government officials was to fully integrate Native athletes into mainstream sport. Native leaders preferred, however, to have an all-Indian sport system that was completely segregated from the mainstream sport system or partially segregated by including all-Indian teams into the Euro-Canadian sport system. The importance of having an all-Indian sport system or teams was essential to Native leaders as they saw the Program as an opportunity to “combat Native social problems with a positive alternative – sport – and as a chance to increase their own sense of dignity and distinctiveness” (Paraschak, p. 13). Ultimately, the Native Sport and Recreation Program “was terminated not because it was unsuccessful in meeting its

objectives, but rather because the means preferred by Native people to meet those objectives were perceived by government officials to fall outside 'legitimate' Euro-Canadian guidelines" (Paraschak, p. 13). The funding provided by the Program facilitated sport and recreation to Native peoples in the Maritimes and, with the demise of the program, it ultimately affected the amount of money that went into sport and recreation for Native people (Paraschak), including programs such as the New Brunswick and Nova Scotia Indian Summer Games.

An important aspect of Aboriginal sport in the Maritimes was the recognition that Aboriginal athletes received from winning the TLAs, which were inaugurated in 1951. The Awards recognized Aboriginal athletes who excelled in Canadian amateur sport at both a regional and national level (Forsyth, 2005). The top Aboriginal athletes were selected from each region as regional winners. From these winners, a national recipient was selected. During the first two eras of the Awards, which was between 1951-1972 and 1973-1998, the Maritimes only made up one region. It was not until 1998 that the Maritimes was divided into each respective province to comprise three regions for the purpose of the Awards (Forsyth). The TLAs are the longest running awards recognizing Aboriginal athletes. Without these Awards many Aboriginal athletes would not be recognized for their achievements. Furthermore, the recipients of these Awards possess significant knowledge about Aboriginal sport as they not only represent the best of the best Aboriginal athletes, but they were often involved in a number of sports in the region.

As mentioned above, our scholarly understanding of Aboriginal peoples' involvement in sport in the Maritimes is limited. The research presented herein uses postcolonial theory to build on past research (i.e., Howell, 1995; Paraschak, 1995) by gathering and analyzing first-hand accounts from Mi'kmaq and Maliseet athletes who won a TLA during the first two eras of the Awards. Thus, the actual timeframe that delimits this study is 1952-1985, the exact years in

which the participants won an Award. As such, my research makes an important contribution to the body of knowledge concerning Aboriginal peoples' sport participation in Canada by providing much needed attention to Mi'kmaq and Maliseet peoples' sporting experiences. At the same time, it also generates information that will help practitioners to better understand the ways in which Aboriginal peoples are simultaneously both enabled and constrained by sport's structure – a need that is recognized in *Sport Canada's Policy on Aboriginal Peoples' Participation in Sport* (2005).

Postcolonialism

Postcolonialism is “a theoretical and political position which embodies an active concept of intervention within such oppressive circumstances. It combines the epistemological cultural innovations of the postcolonial movement with a political critique of the conditions of postcoloniality” (Young, 2001, p. 57). Postcolonialism also involves questioning and challenging colonial knowledge, “writing back” against colonial views, and expanding theoretical structures that challenge Western ways of viewing the world (McEwan, 2001). Furthermore, postcolonial theorists work to recuperate the voices of colonized peoples, such as Aboriginal peoples in Canada.

The use of postcolonial theory for my research is important for a few reasons. The participants in this research are all First Nations peoples, specifically Mi'kmaq and Maliseet; their lives have been shaped in profound ways by the *Indian Act*, the federal statute that guides government involvement in Aboriginal peoples' lives in Canada (Paul, 2006). One need only look to the restrictions and emplacement of traditional cultural practices and the establishment of residential schools for instructive examples of how the lives of First Nations peoples have been shaped by the *Indian Act* (Miller, 1997). Postcolonialism also addresses the fact that colonialism

is an ongoing issue that affects Aboriginal peoples' lives. One of the ways in which colonialism has been enforced is through sport; indeed, sport has served as a colonizing entity within Canada (Forsyth, 2007; Giles, 2008; Paraschak, 1998).

Postcolonial theorists also recognize the importance of giving research participants the opportunity to share their voices and their understandings of the phenomenon under investigation. For the research at hand, such sharing was enabled through the use of case study research, semi-structured interviews, and archival research. As a result, a postcolonial lens is appropriate for my research as I have collected, analyzed, and constructed the participants' voices with the intent of rendering their experiences, which were deeply influenced by colonialism, as visible and central to Canadian sporting culture, especially in the Maritimes.

Methodology

For my research, I used a case study approach to illuminate the “holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events” (Yin, 1994, p. 2). Case studies rely upon participants' interpretations of a phenomenon, which allows the research to be guided by the participants' experiences rather than the researcher's (Stake, 2005). Zach (2006) noted that case studies are often used when researchers try to obtain a greater understanding of a relatively small number of people, problems, or situations. The principles underlying case study research are consistent across most fields of study. Here, I point to the work of Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2007), who have maintained that case studies depend on rich and vivid explanations of events relevant to the case, mix the description and analysis of events, incorporate individuals or groups in order to understand their views on the event, explore in detail specific events relevant to the case, and reveal the richness of the data in a written report. Importantly, case studies rely on the use of multiple sources of evidence in order to yield thick, detailed data (Yin, 2003).

For the purposes of this paper, I conducted an intrinsic case study. An intrinsic case study is one in which the researcher, first and foremost, wants to further understand a particular case (Stake, 2005). In this study, the case I aim to better understand is Aboriginal sport in eastern Canada, with a specific focus on Mi'kmaq and Maliseet TLA recipients' experiences in sport. These participants were chosen because they represent rich sources of information pertaining to Aboriginal sport, as most recipients were involved in sports for a number of years and, thus, have a wealth of knowledge on Aboriginal sport in the Maritimes. The stated timeframe for the study is from 1952 to 1985 as these are the dates that mark the dates between which the participants won an Award.²

Methods

Careful decisions must be made when selecting research methods to ensure that they will work in concert with the study's chosen theory and methodologies. The two chosen methods were semi-structured interviews and archival research. The semi-structured interview was used as the main source of data collection. This method provided an opportunity for both the researcher and the participants to co-construct the text; this co-construction ensured that the participants not only had an opportunity to be a part of the research, but also that their knowledge and opinions were communicated to the researcher. Additionally, the semi-structured interview also ensured there was some uniformity in terms of the information collected from each participant, which was obtained through the use of an interview guide that had the same key questions for each participant.

Purposeful sampling was used to identify the participants for my research. Purposeful sampling occurs when the researcher selects a specific set of individuals because of their knowledge and experience with the central phenomenon (Creswell, 2007). Snowball sampling,

internet research, and advertisements in Aboriginal newspaper were used to identify and then establish contact with the participants. As part of the larger project, an advertisement calling for recipients of the TLAs between 1951-1998 throughout Canada was placed in the *Windspeaker*, which is an Aboriginal newspaper distributed throughout Canada. Carole Polchies responded to this advertisement. I contacted Polchies and she provided me with the contact information for Alfred Sanipass, Marlene Ward, Cynthia Gabriel (formerly Paul), Reginald Paul, Sherri Paul-Bartlett, and Roland Sappier. The contact information for John and Charlie Sark, who are brothers, was given to me by Dr. Forsyth (the Principal Investigator). I then established contact with the participants by phone or email and we arranged a time to conduct the interview. Table 1 outlines the participants who were interviewed.

Table 1

Research participants

Name	Date	Award (R or N)	FN/Residence	Highest Level of Play
John Sark	1952	National	Mi'kmaq/Lennox Island, PEI	University
Reginald Paul	1957	Regional	Mi'kmaq/Lennox Island, PEI	Regional
Charlie Sark	1960	Regional	Maliseet/Woodstock, NB	University
Cynthia Gabriel(f. Paul)	1966	Regional	Maliseet/Woodstock, NB	High School
Alfred Sanipass	1968	Regional	Mi'kmaq/Big Cove, NB	National
Roland Sappier	1969	Regional	Maliseet/Tobique, NB	Provincial
Marlene Ward	1975	Regional	Mi'kmaq/Red Bank, NB	Provincial
Carole Polchies	1979	National	Maliseet/Woodstock, NB	Regional
Sherri Paul-Bartlett	1985	Regional	Maliseet/Woodstock, NB	High School

My research was thus informed by nine semi-structured interviews with five male and four female participants. Of the nine participants, four are Mi'kmaq (three males and one female) and five are Maliseet (two males and three females). All participants were recipients of the either a regional or a national TLA. All of the male participants won a TLA between 1952 and 1972, while all of the female participants won a TLA between 1952 and 1985. Initially, the timeframe

selected for this study was 1951-1972. It was soon extended to 1985 because between 1952 and 1972 there was only one female TLA recipient. Expanding the timeframe to 1985 thus enabled me to include more female recipients in this study.

The semi-structured interviews concentrated on the participants' experiences in sport in the Maritimes. Most participants' sporting days were in the past; however, Paul-Bartlett and Sappier are still involved in sport as coaches, and Charlie Sark still plays hockey. All of the interviews, except one, were conducted individually and in-person. One interview, however, was conducted with Polchies and Paul at the same time, at their request. A follow-up interview was conducted via email with each Polchies and Paul-Bartlett in order to gain a greater understanding of the Indian Summer Games. The interviews took place in one of three settings: at the participants' home, work, or in a public location, such as a restaurant. The interview questions included but were not limited to the following: How did you first become involved in sport? What sorts of activities did you participate in? What sorts of sports did you participate in? Where? With whom? Did you travel a lot to compete? Did you receive a lot of coaching? What are some of your more memorable moments of your days in sport? How has being a TLA winner shaped the way you think about yourself? The interviews were between 45 and 120 minutes long. After each interview, I transcribed the data verbatim and mailed the transcripts back to each interviewee to obtain their feedback. The participants were asked to correct any information that was erroneous, such as the spelling of names or places. They were also requested to add or remove any information that they did not want made public; these revisions were left to their discretion. Once all of their input was documented, they sent the transcripts back to me and the appropriate changes were made to the transcripts. The participants were contacted throughout the analysis and write-up when clarification was needed.³

The second method that I employed was archival research, as this data collection technique allowed me to gain additional information about the TLA recipients who participated in this study. Conducting archival research also allowed me to obtain a greater understanding of the context of the athletic and recreational opportunities available to Aboriginal peoples in the Maritimes during the periods in which the participants were involved in sport. Archives can take several forms, including collections in libraries and museums or personal collections. However, archives are generally understood as a repository for official government, organization, or business records that have historic value (Kridel, 1998). For this research, archival research was conducted at the Library and Archives Canada, the Union of New Brunswick Indians (UI), Provincial Archives of New Brunswick (PA), and Archives Council of Prince Edward Island. At the UI, I viewed all the files that pertained to sport and recreation. Additionally, I reviewed the files of four newspapers: two all-Indian and two mainstream newspapers. I viewed the newspaper files of the *Agenutemegan*, an all-Indian newspaper based out of Woodstock First Nation. At the Library and Archives Canada, I reviewed the microfilm of another newspaper called the *MicMac News*, which was an all-Indian newspaper based out of Nova Scotia. The microfilm was incomplete as only some of the years that I was interested in viewing were available; however, I was able to access the complete run (1965-1991) of the *MicMac News* online through the Cape Breton Digital collection (http://collections.mun.ca/cdm-cbu/browse.php?CISOROOT=/cbu_micmac). At the Archives Council of PEI, I reviewed microfilm of two weekly newspapers that were recommended by the participants: The Charlottetown *Guardian* and *The Evening Patriot*. In terms of delimiting my search, I examined the years in which the participants were known to have excelled in sports (e.g., the year s/he won the TLA and the years s/he participated in sports). I organized the collected documents by

participant and by topic, such as the Native Sport and Recreation Program and the Indian Summer Games, to name two key headings.

Additional archival information was provided by the participants themselves, many of whom gave me access to their personal collections, including pictures, newspaper clippings, certificates, and other documents: I asked if they might be willing to bring these or other important personal mementos to elicit further thought and dialogue during the interview process. All of the participants, except one, shared parts of their personal collections with me. In the case of the exception, that interview occurred unexpectedly at the participant's place of work, not at home, where that person's personal collection was held.

Analysis

I used thematic analysis, which is used for encoding qualitative information based on identifiable themes (Boyatzis, 1998; Schwandt, 2007), and as a means to organize and “make sense” of the broader themes that characterized the participants' sporting lives. A theme is “a pattern found in the information that at minimum describes and organizes the possible observations and at maximum interprets aspects of the phenomenon” (Boyatzis, p. 4). The interview transcripts and archival documents were reviewed multiple times in order to acquire a thorough understanding of the content (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Codes, which identify the most basic segment of data “that can be assessed in a meaningful way regarding the phenomenon” (Braun & Clarke, p. 88), were then applied to the data. A number of codes emerged: experiencing racism, socializing, participating in all-Native sporting events, participating in non-Native sport events, and making friends. Codes were then combined to identify the dominant themes and sub-themes (Braun & Clarke). One theme that emerged pertained to the obstacles the participants faced during their athletic careers, and the sub-themes were racism and

discrimination, financial constraints, geographic restraints, and a cultural “tug-of-war.” Another theme that emerged related to the participants’ positive experiences in sport, which included the sub-theme that all-Native sporting environments provided the participants with an area that supported their Indianness, whereas outside of these contexts they were constantly reminded of their Native “otherness.”

Results

Overcoming Obstacles

In my study, all of the participants spoke in some detail about the many obstacles they had to face and overcome during their experiences as athletes. Four main sub-themes emerged from the data: racism and discrimination, financial constraints, geographic distance, and a cultural “tug-of-war.”

Racism and discrimination.

Racism and discrimination was, and still is, very much a part of the lives of Aboriginal peoples in Canada. This ongoing issue is a result of colonialism and colonial practices enforced by successive Canadian governments (Huff, 2001). Thus, it is no surprise that the participants reported enduring racism and discrimination during their athletic careers, whether on the field, in the arena, or in trying to gain access to or participate on non-Native teams.

Many of the participants spoke about the racism they faced. Specifically, eight out of the nine participants made some mention about their experiences with racism in sport. For example, Ward played and coached on an all-Native softball team in a non-Native league near Red Bank First Nation, New Brunswick. When asked about the racism her team encountered, she noted that the racism was “horrible.” Her team, the Pink Panthers, was the only all-Native team in the Miramichi Valley Softball League in New Brunswick in the 1970s. Ward reported that fans

would stand behind the back stop and they “would be calling us squaws and they would be calling us names [and] putting us down...They couldn’t put us down for our ability, [so they] put us down for what we were” (M. Ward, personal communication, March 25, 2010).

Additionally, Charlie Sark stated that he experienced racism at all the levels of play that he reached, from minor hockey to Canadian Oldtimers Hockey. A specific example he shared occurred when he was playing football at the University of New Brunswick. He said,

I was playing a football game...one autumn afternoon. After the play was complete I was approached by the ref who said, ‘You are out of this game.’ I asked why and he said, ‘I was a bad egg and I should not be on the field.’ I asked again and he said, ‘I don’t want your kind on this field.’ I asked is it because I am native and his answer was, ‘That’s right.’ (personal communication, December 19, 2011)

Racism was an everyday reality for the recipients whom I interviewed for this project. Charlie Sark also shared his thoughts about why he was often one of the only Native athletes on the teams for which he played. He said, “there was never any other Native players [on his teams]. I tried different times to get other Native boys to come play, but they wouldn’t come; they didn’t want to hack the racism” (personal communication, March 30, 2010). He believed that racism deterred Native athletes from playing in the mainstream sport system.

In instances where the participants were the only Native people on the team, if racism occurred, the participants were forced to deal with the racist slurs by themselves. For Polchies, racism was the most difficult obstacle she had to overcome while playing sports, especially when on the softball field: “If we made spectacular plays out in the field, it would be ‘Go back to where you came from.’ The word reservation would not be used, but we knew what they meant”

(personal communication, November 14, 2010). Additionally, the participants generally believed there was discrimination in accessing and playing for non-Native teams:

To stay on that team you had to be a little better than some of those [non-Native] people that were playing on that team, otherwise you didn't get called... And we knew that, so you had to try your darndest to stay on the team... you had to be better than they [non-Native peoples] were because of our nationality... you had to be far better.... Every game you had to. (C. Polchies, personal communication, March 18, 2010)

Polchies and Paul both clearly felt that racial discrimination was at work, which resulted in them feeling that they had to be better than their non-Native teammates in order to access and maintain a position on non-Native teams.

Not all participants had to deal regularly with racism and discrimination. John Sark, who played high school and university football at St. Mary's in Halifax in the late 1940s and early 1950s, explained that while he faced racism, he was fortunate to have people who defended him. Further, Paul-Bartlett acknowledged that she only experienced discrimination from one coach during her athletic career (personal communication, March 18, 2010). Paul-Bartlett noted that she "never wanted to feel [discrimination]. So I'd just put it in the back of my head. It's better there [because] who cares if he doesn't like me because of my colour or my race" (personal communication, March 18, 2010)? Thus, in a sense, Paul-Bartlett ignored the discrimination and tried not to let it affect her; however, in another sense, she also did not want to deal with the discrimination and, in response, pretended that it did not happen. In these situations, participants still had to negotiate their feelings towards racism and discrimination even when such sentiments were subtle or less overt.

Financial constraints.

Common amongst most participants were the financial constraints they faced, which they identified as obstacles to their participation in sport. From the 1940s through to the 1970s, the period of time when most of the participants were involved in sport, the participants stated that many First Nations peoples in the Maritimes could not afford to pay for equipment, facilities, or transportation to attend games or tournaments. Ward noted that her team received some financial assistance from her Band Office, but it was limited. Ward further explained some of the everyday challenges that were associated with gaining access to competitive softball:

None of us were working and it was hard on our parents having to support [us children] financially. Even though Red Bank [band] would give us the bus and they would give us the gas card [to pay for gas to get to games], we still have to feed ourselves, we still have to house ourselves [at the] games. We would sleep in the van sometimes. We would bring tents with us. We had sleeping bags...We were poor, Native people were very poor at that time. All you got was welfare. (personal communication, March 25, 2010)

Additionally, Ward also noted that when she first started playing baseball in 1967 at 12 years of age, gaining access to equipment was also difficult due to financial constraints:

It was tough playing sports because there was nothing [in terms of equipment]. I was 12 years old when I got into organized ball. I played for the women's baseball team from Red Bank and they didn't even have gloves. Everything was bare-handed. I think I was the first one on the team to have a glove. The way I got a glove was that... I heard...that somebody had lost a glove on the blueberry plains...[so] I looked and I looked and I looked, day in and day out. After about a year...I found it and by this time all the elements had got to it, all the rain had got to it and the sun had got to it. It was faded and

the lacing in some parts was coming out...I took string and I put that glove back together again. That was the glove I started with. (personal communication, March 25, 2010)

Clearly, financial constraints posed barriers to sport participation, but they did not prevent some athletes from taking part in sport. For these athletes, resourcefulness was a valued skill that often enabled their involvement.

Many of the participants mentioned that sporting equipment, such as tennis racquets or baseball bats, was frequently homemade; there was little mention of ever getting new sporting equipment. Polchies also described how she and other athletes in Woodstock First Nation made hockey equipment, “which consisted of newspapers for shin-guards” (personal communication, November 10, 2010). Once Polchies’ parents noticed her high level of interest in sport, she received some help from her parents with buying equipment, but they still had to make compromises (personal communication, April 18, 2011), such as having to borrow or purchase cheaper equipment, because there was little money to pay for new equipment.

Geographical restrictions.

Issues tied to geography were also prominent obstacles to the participants’ sport involvement. For most of the participants, their reserves were located some distance from the nearest non-Native community, where the bulk of organized, competitive sporting opportunities – and prospects of being scouted for other teams – took place. For example, Polchies, and Paul both had to walk over three miles to get from Woodstock First Nation, New Brunswick to Woodstock, the neighbouring non-Native community, to travel to softball, hockey and baseball practices (personal communication, March 18, 2010). Similarly, Sappier noted that on the occasions when he could not get a ride or hitch-hike, he had to walk up to seven miles to get from Tobique First Nation, New Brunswick to the nearest town to attend practices and games. In

the winter Sappier was fortunate to be able to walk across the frozen river, a short-cut that would reduce the distance he travelled to four miles, one way (personal communication, March 17, 2010). Gabriel, also from Woodstock First Nation, described walking home after school sport practices in the winter, when she almost “froze to death.” Charlie Sark lived on Lennox Island First Nation reserve in PEI; there was no bridge or ferry built connecting Lennox Island to the mainland of PEI until the mid 1970s; this made residents of Lennox Island extremely isolated, even more so than the participants who lived on other reserves in the Maritimes. In the winter, it was easier to travel to the mainland for sport practices and games since residents could skate or walk across the river when the ice was thick enough (personal communication, March 30, 2010). As such, for many, traveling to and from sport practices and events was no small barrier due to where the reserves were situated in relation to non-Native communities.

Cultural tug-of-war.

One interviewee, Sappier, described a cultural “tug-of-war” as an obstacle to sport participation. Sappier felt that he was caught in between two cultures as a result of integrating with non-Native people in sport:

One thing I really felt was that, it's like you're caught in the middle. There's a cultural tug-of-war there and it's like....you're not red enough for the people that are on reserve, but you're not white enough for the people that are off reserve...It's like that, my own people in the community would look at me, said “ahhh, you're an apple. You're red on the outside but you're white on the inside.” (personal communication, March 16, 2010)

Even though Sappier was the only participant who spoke of this tug-of-war, it is a compelling example of the obstacles with which he had to deal as a First Nations athlete. The experience of being caught between two cultures may have been an obstacle not only for Sappier, but also for

other Native athletes who were eager to participate in sport, yet did not want to be ridiculed by community members for playing on a non-Native team. Thus, it was a catch-22: in order to play sports at a more competitive level and take advantage of a wider range of sporting opportunities, Native peoples often had to leave the reserve and play on non-Native teams; if they left, as did Sappier, they were criticised for doing so.

Positive Facets of Sport Participation

Despite having some very difficult experiences in sport, the participants also reported that their sport participation had positive facets. In particular, they pointed to the ways in which sport participation developed their self-esteem and self-confidence, and the ways in which participation in all-Native competitions was an important part of their sporting experiences.

Self-esteem and self-confidence.

The participants stated that sport participation led to enhanced self-esteem and self-confidence, which they carried with them while they pursued other life goals, especially those pertaining to education. Ward believed that winning accolades through her sport involvement increased her self-esteem and self-confidence, which encouraged her to continue her education as an adult, despite having dropped out of school in seventh grade due to the racism she faced at school: “I had won the Tom Longboat medal...championship trophies, MVP, and All-Star trophies...I had medals galore...that's what gave me the confidence to accomplish anything I wanted to” (personal communication, March 25, 2010). She further stated,

if it wasn't for sports and my success in sports, I don't think I would've went to university and accomplished what I did in university. If I didn't have that confidence building, this whole process of keeping this team alive, working hard, problem solving...the stuff I had to do to make things happen [such as] forming an all-Native women's softball team...It

would've been very easy for me to quit but...I didn't quit. (personal communication, March 25, 2010)

In a similar vein, participation in sport was what kept Gabriel in school. She explained that her mother wanted her to stop playing basketball when she was young. Gabriel was part of a large family; as the oldest girl, her role was to help around the house. The pressure to conform to gendered family norms was a problem for Gabriel, who responded to her mother's insistence with a crafty ultimatum: "my mother didn't like the idea of me playing basketball [at school]...by then I loved it and I said if I can't play basketball, I don't want to go to school" (personal communication, March 22, 2010). After this conversation, Gabriel continued to play basketball *and* go to school.

Seven of the nine research participants attended college or university, while two went on to attend graduate school. These participants continued their education after high school at a time when First Nations peoples rarely did so (Tait, 1999); many attributed their scholastic success to their sports participation. Certainly, for many of the participants, a significant portion of their sporting experiences was positive, as it helped to foster a sense of accomplishment, self-esteem, and self-confidence, which helped to foster success in other aspects of their lives. Additionally, another positive aspect of the participants' experiences in sport was participating in all-Native sporting events.

All-Native sporting environments.

The participants in this study competed in mainstream sport; however, they also competed in all-Native events. The participants noted that all-Native sporting events, such as the Indian Summer Games, constituted an important and positive part of their sporting experience as Aboriginal athletes. Most participants spoke in some detail about playing and often "kicking

butt” at the Indian Summer Games (S. Paul-Bartlett, personal communication, March 18, 2010). The Games provided the participants with the motivation to form teams, hold practices, and engage in competition in an environment created and controlled by Native peoples. It was an empowering environment for many participants. Polchies noted that she felt the “Native Summer Games were an inspiration to us. When we knew they were coming up, we would gather a team from our communities and practice so that we could come home with trophies” (personal communication, November 14, 2010). That being said, the Indian Summer Games was not the only opportunity for the First Nations in New Brunswick to come together and engage in competitive sport:

We always had tournaments with the neighbouring communities, such as Tobique, Kingsclear and Oromocto reserves. [We also had competitions] in Tobique on the...feast day of Saint Anne. Sports would take place in Tobique, where the males and females would be involved with all aspects of sports with various reserves taking part for the weekend. This event was held every year at that particular reserve and on other special weekends, events would be held at the other reserves. (C. Polchies, personal communication, November 14, 2010)

Furthermore, specific to the Aboriginal women, Polchies recalled,

the First Nation women living on reserves decided to have their own teams in softball, hockey, tennis (doubles), bowling, pitching horseshoes. We realize[d]...that was the way to go, instead of trying to get on teams individually, knowing we would never be accepted equally as our non-Native counterparts. (personal communication, November 14, 2010)

Thus, based on Polchies' perception, not only did the all-Native sporting events provide spaces for the Aboriginal men and women to come together, they also frequently offered a place for the women to dodge the discrimination and unequal treatment associated with playing for non-Native teams. Moreover, several of the participants showed increased excitement when talking about their involvement in all-Native competitions. Their tone and demeanour drastically changed when speaking about playing for all-Native teams. For some, there was a sense that such experiences were the highlights of their athletic careers and, hence, were positive aspects of their experiences in sport.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to explore the sporting experiences of Mi'kmaq and Maliseet TLA winners' experiences in the Maritimes. My research has exposed some of the everyday struggles and positive experiences that Native athletes faced while participating in sport in the Maritimes between the 1950s and 1980s. In the ensuing sections, I employ postcolonial theory to analyse the themes outlined in the results section to provide a more nuanced and deeper understanding of colonialism and its implications for Aboriginal peoples' sport participation in the Maritimes.

Key Obstacles Shaped by Colonialism

The key obstacles that the participants endured included racism, discrimination, financial constraints, geographic barriers, and, for at least one participant, a feeling of a cultural tug-of-war. Overcoming these obstacles was imperative if the participants wanted to participate in sport, as there were few opportunities on their reserves, and sporting opportunities off-reserve were often rife with the institutional racism.

Institutional racism is “both a racist theory and a social practice embedded in institutions that systematically exclude subordinate members from equal participation and treatment in society” (Reid, 2004, p. 33). Institutional racism was and remains present within the Canadian government through legal foundations that have resulted in the “dispossession, disempowerment, and impoverishment” of Aboriginal peoples in Canada (Huff, 2001, p. 261). An example of institutional racism occurred in the educational system in Canada. Residential schools were set up by the Canadian government with the objective of Christianizing and civilizing Aboriginal children (Miller, 1997). Moreover, during the transition from the colonial era to Confederation, Aboriginal peoples were regarded as an obstacle to the progress of Canada as a nation; this interpretation of Aboriginal peoples in Canada was apparent in various government policies and practices, such as forced relocation to reserves, assimilation, and the creation of the residential school system (Huff). The dominant approach to “dealing” with Aboriginal peoples throughout the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries enabled racism and discrimination against Native peoples to flourish, which continues today. Indeed, in virtually all areas of modern existence, Native peoples are still victims of racial discrimination (Huff); one such area is sport and recreation.

The presence of systemic racism and discrimination was evident in the participants’ discussion of their sporting experiences. For some participants, racism and discrimination were the most difficult obstacles they had to overcome. For example, the participants believed they had to be better competitors and athletes than their non-Native counterparts in order to make the roster for a non-Native team. In addition, these participants were in an environment where they were continually vulnerable to the possibility of racism and discrimination by teammates, coaches, or spectators. For this reason, they were never in a sporting atmosphere where they

could be completely comfortable and feel secure about their status on the team. Moreover, in mainstream sport, many Aboriginal athletes must frequently “reflect [on]...feelings of social disadvantage” (Hallinan & Judd, 2007, p. 432) as they are constantly reminded of their “otherness.” Furthermore, as the participants were involved in sport between 1940 and 1985, they were very much a part of a time when the Canadian government – and in many cases its citizens – refused to accept Aboriginal identities and diversity (Huff, 2001).

A piece of federal legislation that is important to understanding the obstacles associated with life on reserves is the *Indian Act* (Department of Justice Canada, 2011), which was established by the Canadian Government in 1876. The *Act* was historically established to prevent Aboriginal lands from being encroached by non-Aboriginal settlers and “to establish Aboriginal autonomy from the developing society” (Forsyth, 2007, p. 37). In time, however, government and policy-makers construed the *Indian Act* as a way to control Aboriginal peoples’ lives (Forsyth). The implementation of the land restrictions that were enforced in the *Indian Act* placed Aboriginal peoples in limited geographic spaces known as reserves (Dickason, 1992). The implications of placing Aboriginal peoples on small parcels of land, often situated some distance from mainstream cities and towns, are seen in the participants’ sporting experiences: the location of the reserves, even if they were only a few kilometres from the nearest non-Native community, restricted opportunities for Aboriginal athletes’ sport involvement.

Another prominent obstacle to sport participation that can be linked to the *Indian Act* was the participants’ financial positions. For example, “since a band does not have corporate status, it cannot acquire or hold real property,” thus, inhibiting economic development and employment on reserves (Cassidy & Bish, 1989, p. 47). Moreover, in order to play sport, whether at a recreational or competitive level, money for equipment, registration fees, and travel to and from

games and practices was needed. As noted by Peters (2001), “the systematic underdevelopment of reserve areas and First Nations economies and populations” (p. 41) has contributed to First Nations’ poverty in Canada. Obtaining employment on the reserve was often difficult, as there were few opportunities for work; obtaining employment off-reserve was often impossible due to racism and discrimination (Huff, 2001). These factors consequently limited the amount of money the participants had for sports participation. In order to engage in sport, the participants had to craft homemade equipment, borrow equipment, or find equipment around the reserve; only on the rare occasion did they have equipment bought for them. Additionally, methods of transportation to and from games and practices often involved walking or hitch-hiking, though generous community members would sometimes provide transportation in their private vehicle. Certainly, colonial relations of power contributed to the socio-economic conditions that inhibited the participants’ sport involvement.

The colonial power relations have, in turn, divided many Aboriginal and Euro-Canadian peoples and cultures. These relations of power became evident in an obstacle that one participant faced, where he experienced a feeling of being caught in a cultural tug-of-war. First Nations athletes in the Maritimes often had to play for non-Aboriginal teams in order to further their athletic careers. In so doing, they also often had to deal with racism from non-Aboriginal peoples, as well as from First Nations community members who had negative feelings toward Euro-Canadians for past and present injustices. First Nation community members who played on non-Native teams frequently had their identity questioned by other First Nations – such as when Sappier was called an “apple.” Yet, by participating in non-Native sport, Native athletes challenged the colonial relations of power that produced them as the Other. That being said, the athletes had little choice but to negotiate the obstacle of a cultural tug-of-war if s/he wanted to

further his or her athletic career. Thus, by participating in non-Aboriginal sporting environments, and despite the criticism from both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples, Sappier resisted colonial relations of power.

Positive Facets of Sport Involvement

Despite the difficulties the participants faced in overcoming obstacles to sport participation, there were – often simultaneously, positive aspects of their experiences in sport. As Carter (1999) aptly noted, Aboriginal peoples cannot be viewed merely as “passive victims;” instead, they need to be regarded as “active agents” in their own lives, as “actors with strategies and interests of their own that they rigorously pursued. They had some control over their own fate, despite the uneven power relationships that eventually favoured Europeans” (p. 9). Indeed, despite the large obstacles with which the participants had to contend, they used their sport involvement to become celebrated athletes and to develop a sense of accomplishment, self-esteem, and self-confidence. The participants’ sporting and educational achievements are emblematic of the ways in which they served as active constituents in their own history instead of “victims of an imposed and alien one” (Peers, 1996, p. 9). Furthermore, such achievements in sport prove that colonization can be resisted and is not always a totalizing process that fully appropriates colonized peoples’ lives.

Another positive aspect of the participants’ experiences in sport was the presence of all-Native sporting environments. The Indian Summer Games and other all-Native sporting events created spaces where the participants were able to be proud of their Maliseet and Mi’kmaq heritage. Huff (2001) noted, “over the past century, the Canadian government has attempted to destroy aboriginal religions and cultures, oppress Indian languages and destroy Indian families” (Huff, p. 264) through, for example, efforts to eliminate First Nations’ cultural and traditional

practices. In response, Maliseet and Mi'kmaq peoples have sought to exercise their individuality and promote their cultures. One such way this has occurred is by creating and engaging in all-Native sporting events.

All-Native sporting events created a space that the scrutiny, racism, and discrimination that often surrounded Mi'kmaq and Maliseet athletes' participation in non-Native sporting environments was absent. All-Native sporting environments generally created a safe place for the participants, where they competed with fellow First Nations athletes and their Otherness was not constantly (re)produced. All-Native events ensured they could be "Indian" and not be marginalized for their heritage. As such, all-Native events often represented a space where Mi'kmaq and Maliseet peoples could feel comfortable and be proud of their Indianess, promote and participate in activities on their own terms, and resist colonial practices and policies.

Conclusion

This paper contributes to our understanding of Mi'kmaq and Maliseet peoples' experiences in sport in the Maritimes, and to our understanding of Aboriginal participation in Canadian sport history. Furthermore, it brings to light both male *and* female Aboriginal athletes' experiences in sport, attention which is exceedingly important as female Aboriginal athletes have often been neglected in discussions of Aboriginal sport (Paraschak, 2007; Paraschak & Forsyth, 2010, 2011). Furthermore, this research exposes some of the complexities that surround Aboriginal peoples' involvement in sport. Racism, discrimination, financial and geographic constraints, and a cultural tug-of-war were obstacles that many TLA winners faced, and it was essential for the recipients to overcome those obstacles if they wanted to remain in sport. Additionally, these "success" stories represent anomalies, since it appears as though other

Aboriginal people opted out mainstream sport in order to avoid dealing with these and other challenges.

Despite these obstacles, the participants also had positive experiences throughout their sporting careers, which were evident in their self-reported increased self-esteem and self-confidence. These positive experiences illustrated the degree of agency they practiced in their sporting careers and lives as Aboriginal athletes. Furthermore, a positive part of the participants' sporting experiences was also demonstrated through participating in all-Native competitions, as the interviewees reported being able to create a place that fostered their identity as Aboriginal athletes.

Mi'kmaq and Maliseet athletes' participation in sport is not a history of passivity in the face of obstacles. Quite to the contrary, my research has shown that many of the obstacles faced by TLA recipients in the Maritimes resulted in these athletes and their communities to use sport as a space within which they had the opportunity to disrupt colonial relations of power. As such, while these athletes often faced incredibly difficult obstacles, their participation in sport, and particularly predominantly Eurocanadian forms of sport, resulted in them changing not only Aboriginal peoples' experiences of sport, but also the very face of Eurocanadian sport.

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Footnotes

¹ In this paper, the terms Aboriginal, Indigenous, and Native are used interchangeably when discussing Aboriginal peoples in Canada and in the world. In Canada, First Nations, Inuit, and Metis are all officially recognized as Aboriginal groups (Russell, 2000). First Nations refers to Aboriginal groups who spread across most areas in Canada, except the Arctic. Inuit refers to those Aboriginal groups who reside in the Arctic. Metis are those Aboriginal groups that are descendents of First Nations and Europeans.

² This research is part of a larger SSHRC funded project with Dr. Janice Forsyth (The University of Western Ontario) as principal investigator and Dr. Audrey Giles (University of Ottawa) and Dr. Michael Heine (The University of Western Ontario) as co-investigators. The larger project is national in scope and documents and analyzes the sporting experiences of Aboriginal athletes who received a TLA between 1951 and 1998.

³ A final copy of the transcripts will be sent to the participants once the final thesis and papers are completed.

Aboriginal Athletes in the Maritimes: (Re)producing and Challenging Difference

Abstract

For this paper, I utilized postcolonial theory and a case study research design to examine Mi'kmaq and Maliseet peoples' involvement in sport in the Maritimes region of Canada and to examine the two sporting environments in which the participants were involved, specifically the mainstream sport system and all-Native sporting events. I employed semi-structured interviews with nine participants and archival research to collect the data. The main theme to emerge from this study was the way in which "difference" was both challenged and (re)produced by the participants. The findings from this research contribute to our scholarly understanding of the practical and theoretical conditions that have shaped, and continue to shape, Mi'kmaq and Maliseet peoples' sporting experiences in the Maritimes, as well as throughout Canada.

There is a dearth of scholarly work that examines Aboriginal sport practices in Canada (Forsyth, 2005; Paraschak, 1995, 1997, 1998). The lack of information is particularly apparent for the region in eastern Canada known as the Maritimes: New Brunswick (NB), Nova Scotia (NS), and Prince Edward Island (PEI) (Howell, 1995). In this paper, I address this deficiency by examining the sporting experiences of high achieving Mi'kmaq and Maliseet athletes in these three provinces. Specifically, I interviewed nine individuals who are recipients of the Tom Longboat Award, which recognizes outstanding Aboriginal athletic achievements in Canada. By combining an examination of interview data and archival records with the application of postcolonial theory, I outline the ways in which difference was both (re)produced and challenged through interactions between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in mainstream and all-Aboriginal¹ sport settings. As such, this research makes an important contribution to our scholarly understanding of Mi'kmaq and Maliseet involvement in sport— a subject that has been largely neglected.

Literature Review

Aboriginal People in the Maritimes

When Europeans first arrived in North America, Mi'kmaq and Maliseet peoples occupied the eastern part of what is now Canada: the Mi'kmaq inhabited northern NB, PEI, and NS whereas the Maliseet inhabited southern NB and parts of Maine (Howell, 1995). The Mi'kmaq and Maliseet were and remain the most prominent Aboriginal groups in the Maritimes. Presently, there are 24 Mi'kmaq and 6 Maliseet First Nations communities in the Maritimes. Like all Canadian First Nations peoples, the Mi'kmaq and Maliseet have had their lives profoundly shaped by colonialism and imperialism. The regulation of their cultural traditions and the implementation of Euro-Canadian sporting practices is merely one prominent example. Below, I

provide a brief outline of the history of Aboriginal cultural regulation in Canada and its connection to Aboriginal sport, the history of Aboriginal involvement in sport in the Maritimes, and the struggles of Aboriginal people in trying to gain access to competitive sport opportunities in that region. This contextual information is important because it lays the groundwork for understanding the themes identified in data I collected.

Cultural Regulation of Aboriginal Cultural Practices

The history of Euro-Canadian repression of traditional Indigenous physical practices is important for understanding Aboriginal peoples' participation in sport today. During the 1880s, Aboriginal cultural practices were viewed as religious and thus heathen and, as a result, were suppressed by various religious authorities in cooperation with the federal government (Paraschak, 1998). For example, the Potlatch was officially outlawed in 1884 and the Sun Dance was forbidden in the 1885, both by the *Indian Act* (Paraschak; Pettipas, 1994). These ceremonies were to be replaced, in part, by Euro-Canadian sport and recreation practices, which were more aligned with European social, economic, and religious sensibilities and practices (Paraschak; Pettipas). Many Aboriginal forms of play, games, and recreation were repressed and replaced with Euro-American physical practices, which were deemed proper and more civilized by Euro-Americans. Indeed, Euro-Canadians largely constructed and controlled access to the physical practices that were deemed acceptable for Aboriginal peoples (Paraschak). Though there is little information about cultural repression that occurred specifically in the Maritimes, it is likely that forms of cultural repression that took place in other parts of Canada also took place among the Mi'kmaq and Maliseet peoples. Despite the fact that Euro-Canadian physical practices were once part of an initiative to assimilate Aboriginal peoples in Canada, Euro-Canadian sports and games

ultimately became popular among Aboriginal peoples, who often shaped them to serve their own purposes.

Aboriginal Sport in the Maritimes

Limited research exists about Aboriginal peoples' participation in sport in the Maritimes. Additionally, in most of the history books devoted to sport in the Maritimes, there is an overwhelming lack of Mi'kmaq or Maliseet representation (Howell, 1995). One exception, however, is Howell's historical examination of softball and baseball in NS and other parts of the Maritimes.

Howell (1995) observed that the history of Aboriginal involvement in baseball in the Maritimes has largely been invisible, despite the fact that Aboriginal people in the region have a "long sporting history, in which games of chance, ball games of various sorts (including lacrosse), and contests that emphasized physical skills, such as spear-throwing and archery, were immensely popular" (Howell, p. 185). Howell's social history of baseball in the Maritimes offers a broad overview of Mi'kmaq and Maliseet peoples' involvement in sport. Although it is difficult to know when their involvement began, evidence points to variations of baseball being played by Mi'kmaq Indians during the 1870s and 1880s. At the same time, a variation of baseball called "old fashion," "spongy," or "raggy ball," a game named for the yarn or sponge rubber ball that was used, was popular in First Nations communities in the Maritimes. In contrast to the male-dominated sport of baseball, "raggy ball" was played by both men and women, with games being documented as late as the Second World War (Howell). However, in the 1920s, when the modern game of baseball came to dominate sports participation on reserves, the game was played by strictly men and boys.

In spite of its popularity, by 1960, baseball became a “thing of the past” and “baseball was eclipsed by softball” (Howell, 1995, p. 191). The interest in baseball declined for several reasons. First, the postwar policy that placed Native people onto a few large reserves, a political act that geographically rearranged the configuration of old teams (Howell) and, as a result, no longer were the teams of old able to play with each other. In addition, softball rose in popularity because it was cheaper than baseball to play: less equipment was needed and the field required less maintenance (Young, 1988). Despite the implementation of reserves, sports such as baseball and softball that were played by the residents of these geo-political spaces “served then as now to bring native people together” (Howell, p. 191). For example, during baseball games, the women and the elderly would frequently gather on the sidelines to be a part the collective experience of community sport. Sometimes the spectators would engage in card games. At other times, they would host fundraisers for the teams. Indeed, many Aboriginal baseball players, as well as Aboriginal contestants in various sports, were highly skilled and accomplished athletes. Nevertheless, very few of them have received official public recognition for their contributions to sport – a fact that becomes clear when the limited number of Aboriginal inductees into the Sport Halls of Fame in the Maritimes is considered.

Aboriginal Athletes in the Maritimes

Prominent Aboriginal athletes in the Maritimes are represented, albeit in low numbers, in the Sports Halls of Fame in the Maritimes. For instance, among the 300 or so people who have been inducted into the PEI Sports Hall of the Fame, three are Aboriginal – all of whom were male distance runners of Mi’kmaq descent: Michael Thomas, Barney Francis, and William John Paul. Born in 1885, Michael Thomas, from the Lennox Island First Nations reserve in PEI, was inducted into the PEI Sports Hall of Fame in 1980 (Ballem, 1983; PEI Sports Hall of Fame and

Museum Inc, 2009b). He was well known for his athletic talent throughout the Maritimes. According to a 1909 article in *The Daily Patriot*, Thomas was an “example of the prodigious talent exhibited by many First Nations athletes” (Public Archives and Records Office, n.d.). Born in 1898, Barney Francis was also a runner from Lennox Island, who was inducted into the PEI Sports Hall of Fame in 1982. After beginning his athletic career in the 1920s, he soon established himself as a strong middle distance runner. For instance, he competed in the Canadian Track and Field Championships in 1923, where he won the one-mile race and recorded a new Maritime record for the distance (PEI Sports Hall of Fame and Museum Inc, 2009a). Finally, William John Paul was inducted in 2008. Paul was born in 1912 in Half Way River, NS; he moved to PEI after he married. He started running at the age of 19. His running career lasted almost three decades, during which time he ran more than 500 races, which ranged from 5 miles to the marathon. He ran in the 1936 Boston Marathon where he placed 13th out of 385 starters (PEI Sports Hall of Fame and Museum Inc, n.d.).

Whereas the NS Sports Hall of Fame has no inductees, the NB Sports Hall of Fame has recognized two Aboriginal athletes. They are Roland Sappier (1969 Tom Longboat regional recipient), who was inducted as part of a baseball team, and Wayne Brown, who was inducted as a “builder” for his involvement in forty years of softball as an administrator, official, coach, and organizer (K. Ross, Curator/Exhibit Director, personal communication, March, 19, 2010; NB Sports Hall of Fame, n.d.). Wayne Brown was also the Host Chairman of the NB Indian Summer Games in 1983 and 1987 (NB Sports Hall of Fame). Equally important as the recognition given by the regional sport halls of fame, Alfred Sanipass (1968 Tom Longboat regional recipient) has been inducted into the Canadian Boxing Hall of Fame. Altogether, these examples suggest a disconnect between the observed “prodigious talent exhibited by many First Nations athletes”

(Public Archives and Records Office, n.d.) and the low numbers of First Nations competitors who have been recognized for their talents by the authoritative and legitimating sport halls of fame in the Maritimes. This disconnect is further revealed when First Nations peoples' involvement in sport is examined in detail.

While some Aboriginal people have benefitted from being involved in certain forms of sport (Hargreaves, 2000), their involvement has taken place under certain limiting conditions. In particular, the mainstream sport system has proven to be intolerant of difference, especially concerning Aboriginality. Indeed, sport was often used as a tool for assimilation (King, 2005; Miller, 1997; Paraschak, 1997). Nevertheless, today, Aboriginal peoples' involvement in sport can be understood as a form of resistance to Euro-Canadian sport; indeed, sport is an avenue through which Aboriginal peoples can resist colonization (Rigney, 2003). Such resistance is important, since Aboriginal peoples have been marginalized from the existing structure of sport due to ideas about difference, racist assumptions, and inferiority to white Europeans. Hargreaves (2000) argued that Aboriginal sport activities are attempts to seize power, to alter the way Euro-Canadian culture is privileged over Aboriginal cultures, and to "recreate and redefine" (p. 102) Aboriginal identities that were – and are – often viewed as inferior to and different from Euro-Canadians. Aboriginal sport is thus a site for the (re)production of colonial power relations, as well as a means for Aboriginal people "to break into structures of power in those institutions" (Hargreaves, p. 102). In order to conceptualize the ways in which Mi'kmaq and Maliseet peoples' involvement in sport in eastern Canada both (re)produces and challenges difference, I turn to postcolonial theory.

Theoretical Framework

Young (2001) stated that postcolonialism is “a theoretical and political position which embodies an active concept of intervention within oppressive circumstances. It combines the epistemological cultural innovations of the postcolonial movement with a political critique of the conditions of postcoloniality” (p. 57). In addition, postcolonialism involves questioning and challenging colonial knowledge, “writing back” against colonial views, and expanding theoretical structures that challenge Western ways of viewing the world (McEwan, 2001). Furthermore, postcolonial theory “attempts to recover the lost voices of the marginalized, the oppressed and the dominated, through a radical reconstruction of history and knowledge production that seeks to recover the agency and resistance of peoples subjugated by...colonialism” (McEwan, 2009, p. 212). As such, postcolonial theory acts as a critique of the major cultural inequalities that exist and of the divisions that remain since decolonization (Young). Decolonization is the process of exposing and disassembling colonialist power, including all the institutional and cultural influences that have remained since colonialism (Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin, 2000).

The production of difference has played an important role in colonial practices and exercises of power. In the eighteenth century, the development of the natural sciences resulted in attempts to classify people into distinct, hierarchically organized races. Europeans were characterized as gentle and inventive, while people of colour, in particular black Africans, were characterized as indolent and negligent (Weedon, 1999). Additionally, the characterization included,

an evaluative dimension which linked character to body and privileged the category of Caucasian bodies over all other types. The meanings attributed to nineteenth-century racial categories included value judgments about beauty, intellect, morality, emotionality,

sexuality and other physical capacities. These judgments about the meaning of racial difference – whether implicitly or explicitly racist – were used to justify practices such as colonialism, slavery and segregation, and they have become part of an often-unquestioned set of assumptions which still permeates Western cultures today. (Weedon, p. 153)

Accordingly, non-Caucasian individuals, such as Aboriginal peoples, were classified as racially “different” and were subsequently treated as inferior. racist assumptions

Difference and how it pertains to Aboriginal peoples is important for this research, for it informs the ways in which Aboriginal peoples are often viewed, socially, culturally, and politically, in Euro-Canadian dominated contexts, such as sport. Difference can be interpreted as positive, such as in a celebration of difference from the norm of white, Western ideals; however, it can also be interpreted as negative, such as in the marginalization of individuals whom society views as “different” (Hall, 1997; Weedon, 1999). As such, recognizing and accepting difference within sport may be viewed as a progressive act that “signifies an acceptance of a rich, diverse perhaps previously excluded set of body cultures” (Jarvie, 2006, p. 228) such as Aboriginal peoples’ involvement in mainstream and all-Native sport.

In its negative connotation, difference pertains to “the exclusion and marginalization of those who are defined as ‘other’ or as outsiders” (Woodward, 1997, p. 35). In a Western, colonizing framework, Aboriginal peoples’ identities have been constructed as being different from and inferior to Euro-Canadian people. In sport, this negative connotation of difference occurs when people who traditionally have not had access to sport, such as Aboriginal peoples, are further marginalized and excluded from accessing mainstream sport opportunities because of ideas about otherness, or because of experiences of racism and discrimination when they do

participate. As such, key concepts in postcolonial theory, particularly those used to understand difference, make crucial contributions to my research.

Methodology and Methods

It is important to note that, similar to sport, research has been used as a colonial tool. Through research, Aboriginal people in Canada have been exploited and tyranny of colonial power has been concealed. This injustice can be attributed to a number of factors or causes: a deficiency of culturally appropriate ethical standards for research, a lack of respect for cultural beliefs, a failure to conduct research based on community views and needs, and a misuse and exploitation of Indigenous knowledges (Brown, 2005). It should not come as a surprise, then, that the term “research” is a despised word among many Indigenous people (Smith, 2008). To avoid (re)producing colonial research relations, I attempted to balance the uneven power relations that are inherently part of the research process. I did so by ensuring that the interviews were conducted in a setting that was comfortable for the participants. For example, this occurred in instances where participants’ requested to have the interview in a public place versus their home even though it was more beneficial for me as the researcher to conduct the interview in the home where personal memorabilia was readily available. In addition, during the interview, if I sensed there was discomfort surrounding certain subjects or questions, I did not push to discuss the subject further. Further, after the interview data was transcribed verbatim, I sent the transcripts to each participant so that s/he had an opportunity to remove or add any information that s/he felt necessary.

The chosen methodology for my research was a case study. Yin (1994) noted that a case study is an approach to research that allows researchers to illuminate “holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events such as individual life cycles” (p. 2). Additionally, case studies rely upon participants’ interpretations of a phenomenon, which allows the research to be guided

by the participants' experiences rather than those of the researcher (Stake, 2005, 2006).

According to Zach (2006), case studies are often used when researchers try to obtain a greater understanding of a relatively small number of people, problems, or situations.

An intrinsic case study is primarily used if a researcher wants to further understand a particular case (Stake, 2005). I determined that an intrinsic case study would be the most suitable form of case study to use because it would enable me to obtain vivid and detailed data, which would thereby allow me greater insight into the participants' sporting experiences. As such, the specific intrinsic case study under examination was the sporting experiences of Mi'kmaq and Maliseet athletes who won a Tom Longboat Award between 1952 and 1985 - these years comprise the exact period in which the participants won an Award.

I used and purposeful sampling to identify the participants. In this type of sampling, the researcher selects a specific set of individuals "because they purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon in the study" (Creswell, 2007, p. 125). I used the snowball method, internet research, and advertisements in Aboriginal newspapers to establish contact with a total of nine participants. For the snowball method, I asked participants who self-identified for the research if they recognized other names on the list and might be willing to contact them to verify their interest and availability for the study.

All participants in this research were recipients of either a regional or national Tom Longboat Award, and fell into one of two groups: the first group included male recipients (n=5) (these individuals won the Award between the years 1951-1972); the second group included female recipients (n=4) (these individuals won an Award between the years 1952-1985). The years 1951-1972 represent the first of three eras associated with the management of the Awards. Documenting the athletic experiences of the recipients who won an Award during the first era is

important as it allows for a greater understanding of sport during this time period and an important contribution to Canadian sport history. In addition, due to the lack of information pertaining to female Aboriginal athletes generally (Hall, 2002; Paraschak, 1995), it was important that I open the time frame to 1985, as there was only one female participant who won a Tom Longboat Award before 1972. Opening up the time frame ensured a greater number of female participants in the study.

Table 1 outlines the participants from the Maritimes who were interviewed for this project.

Table 1

Research participants

Name	First Nation	Community	Year Won (R/N)	Sports played	Highest Level of Play
John Sark	Mi'kmaq	Lennox Island FN, PEI	1952 (N)	Football, basketball, baseball, track & field	University
Reginald Paul	Maliseet	Woodstock FN, NB	1957 (R)	Baseball, hockey	Regional
Charlie Sark	Mi'kmaq	Lennox Island, PEI	1960 (R)	Baseball, hockey, football, softball, rugby	University
Cynthia Gabriel (formerly Paul)	Maliseet	Woodstock FN, NB	1966 (R)	Basketball, softball, volleyball, badminton	High School
Alfred Sanipass	Mi'kmaq	Big Cove FN, NB	1968 (R)	Boxing, hockey, baseball	National

Roland Sappier	Maliseet	Tobique FN, NB	1969 (R)	Baseball, volleyball, track & field	Provincial
Marlene Ward	Mi'kmaq	Red Bank FN, NB	1975 (R)	Softball	Provincial
Carole Polchies	Maliseet	Woodstock FN, NB	1979 (N)	Softball, canoeing, horse shoes, blowing, tennis	Regional
Sherri Bartlett	Maliseet	Woodstock FN, NB	1985 (R)	Basketball, badminton	High School

I opted to use semi-structured interviews because it is a particular form of human interaction where knowledge is created through dialogue (Kvale, 2008). In a semi-structured interview, the interviewer has a number of questions to ask, but there is the opportunity for probes to allow for the elaboration of responses beyond those that were pre-determined (Fontana & Frey, 2005). Additionally, the semi-structured interview ensured that there was some uniformity in terms of the questions asked of each participant, and provided insight into topics that the researcher had not thought of or was aware of. Therefore, the semi-structured interviews allowed for compelling and robust data.

I conducted eight in-person interviews with nine participants. One interview occurred with two participants, Polchies and Paul. This set-up was requested by the participants, who are siblings that live near each other. The interviews focused on the participants' experiences in sport. Most often such experiences were in reference to the distant past; however, Bartlett and Sappier are still involved as coaches and Charlie Sark still plays hockey. The semi-structured interview questions included but were not limited to the following: How did you first become involved in sport? What sorts of activities did you participate in? What sports did you participate

in? Where did you play? And with whom? Did you travel a lot to compete? Where was the furthest you traveled? Did you receive a lot of coaching? What are some of your more memorable moments of your days in sport? The interviews lasted between 45 and 120 minutes and were carried out at one of three places: at the participants' home, work, or at a public location such as a restaurant. As mentioned above, I transcribed the interviews verbatim and sent them to the participants for their feedback and approval. The participants then sent the transcripts back to me and a final copy will be mailed to them for their files. During the writing process, I contacted the participants via phone or email if further questions or clarification was required.

The other method I used was archival research. O'Hair and Kreps (1990) noted that archival research is the examination of accessible records, such as public records (political and judicial records) or private records (personal, written documents). Archival research was conducted at the Library and Archives Canada, the Union of New Brunswick Indians (UNBI), the Provincial Archives of New Brunswick (PANB), and the Archives Council of Prince Edward Island. This data collection technique allowed me to gain additional background information about the participants' involvement in sport, as well as about Aboriginal sport in the Maritimes.

After I received permission from the UNBI, the Librarian at the PANB retrieved all UNBI files that pertained to sport or recreation (specific file names were inaccessible to the public). In addition, as recommended by the UNBI, the PANB also retrieved the *Agenutemegaen* (which translates into Story-Teller), an all-Indian newspaper based out of Woodstock First Nation, NB, which was published by the UNBI. Of note, a participant in this study, Polchies, was the first editor of the *Agenutemegaen*. The newspaper ran on a monthly basis from 1971 to 1989, though the publications were not always consistent. At the Library and Archives Canada, I also reviewed microfilm files of the *MicMac News*, an all-Indian newspaper based out of Membertou,

NS. However, I was unable to view all the files for the *MicMac News* at the Library and Archives Canada because many years were unavailable. Later, I discovered the complete run (1965-1991) of the *MicMac News* was accessible online through the Cape Breton Digital collection (http://collections.mun.ca/cdm-cbu/browse.php?CISOROOT=/cbu_micmac). I also reviewed *The Bugle*, which was based out of Woodstock, NS. The complete run for the years 1963 to 1977 was available on microfilm. At the Archives Council of PEI, I reviewed two Charlottetown newspapers on microfilm: The Charlottetown *Guardian* (complete run, 1890-present) and *The Evening Patriot* (complete run, 1924-1991). After being referred to these periodicals by Charlie Sark, I reviewed the years 1957-1962, which corresponded to the years of his involvement in sports.

By reviewing these files, in combination with the interview transcripts, I was able to glean important information about all-Native sporting events and their importance in the Maritimes. Additionally, through conducting the archival research I was able to learn more about the participants' involvement in sport that was not discussed in the interviews; this involvement occurred at an organization level through coaching or administering the Indian Summer Games. The archival information also enabled me to ask participants for more detailed information on specific topics that are not thoroughly addressed in the scholarly literature, such as the Indian Summer Games.

Analysis

Thematic analysis is used for coding qualitative information based on codes or themes (Boyatzis, 1998; Schwandt, 2007). Codes categorize aspects of the data that help the researcher to better understand the phenomenon being examined (Braun & Clarke, 2006). A theme is “a pattern found in the information that at minimum describes and organizes the possible

observations and at maximum interprets aspects of the phenomenon” (Boyatzis, p. 4). After I transcribed the interviews verbatim and the participants approved their contents, I carried out multiple readings of the transcripts to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the data (Braun & Clarke). Next, I coded and analyzed the transcripts. The codes included the following: experiencing racism and prejudice, socializing with Native and non-Native teammates, participating in all-Native and non-Native sport events, making friends, attending the Indian Summer Games, and receiving Tom Longboat Awards. After I identified the codes, I then considered how certain codes formed overarching themes. The themes that emerged from the codes were the ways in which participation in sport both (re)produced and challenged difference between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples.

Results and Discussions

The two of the most prevalent themes emerging from the interviews with the Tom Longboat recipients from the Maritimes was how their interactions in sport (re)produced and challenged notions of difference. This pattern was noticeable in all-Aboriginal and mainstream sport environments.

(Re)producing Difference

In relation to Euro-Canadians, Aboriginal peoples in Canada continue to be a minority numerically, culturally, and politically, and have habitually been characterized as the Other (Paraschak, 1997). Participants reported that the colonial trope of the Aboriginal Other repeatedly occurred on and off the playing field in mainstream sport environments. For instance, most of the participants discussed experiencing racism and prejudice due to mainstream prejudices against their Native ancestry. For example, Ward reported,

Oh my gosh, that [racism] was a horrible obstacle especially in the beginning. ...[there was] a lot of bad racism. ...and they would be calling us squaws...they would be putting us down. They couldn't put us down for our ability. They'd put us down for what we were. (personal communication, March 25, 2010)

Ward describes that racism came in the form of the racist discourse of *squaw*, which is a derogatory description largely applied to Aboriginal woman by non-Aboriginal people. The *squaw drudge* is seen as a “squat, haggard, papoose-lugging drudge, who toiled endlessly” (Smith, 1987, p. 65). Additionally, Charlie Sark stated, “being the only Native [person] on the teams I played with, it left the audience with a large target to vent their frustrations on with any menial tactic” (personal communication, December 19, 2011). Furthermore, as a result of racist ideas about Nativeness that permeate many aspects of the mainstream sport system, the participants were viewed as being different from non-Native participants and were consequently often subjected to racism. While living in Lennox Island, PEI, John Sark described that his community was “a really close community because basically we weren't accepted outside the community too much. You were put in a position where you stay over there [on the reserve] you're safe there” (personal communication, March 30, 2011). Thus, not being accepted in non-Native communities created an environment where discrimination and racist behaviour was a reality when participating in sport off the reserve.

Not all participants, however, reported experiencing the same degree of racism. Paul-Bartlett recalled, “I don't think they could tell I was Native...I mean I sort of look [Native]...most people think I'm from Hawaii. They don't think I'm Indian” (personal communication, March 18, 2010). For Paul-Bartlett, perhaps because she did not look Native, she was on the receiving end of what she perceived to be less racist behaviour. As such, it is

likely that Paul-Bartlett had to negotiate race differently than other Native athletes who somehow fit stereotypical ideas about what Native people look like. However, she still had to deal with racism whether it was directed at her or not, as she was Aboriginal; if racist behaviour was evident, it concerned all Aboriginal people, including her.

These scenarios of racism describe the way in which difference was (re)produced through the participants' involvement in sport. In the case of Ward, Charlie Sark, and Paul-Bartlett, Western ethnocentrism, through its negative perception of difference and racist assumption about Nativeness, was used to discriminate against and/or marginalize Native peoples. Most participants, eight out of the nine, expressed experiences with racism, which they reported as making their involvement in mainstream sport and growth as athletes very challenging. Charlie Sark noted: "I have been told by many play announcers that they could not understand how I continued to play with all the racist distraction" (personal communication, December 19, 2011).

Another way in which difference was (re)produced was through the lack of recognition that the Tom Longboat Award recipients received for their achievements in sport. The participants believed they received little attention from the mainstream because they were Native: "Native people were so marginalized in society that there was no way for a Native athlete to be truly recognized and put on a National team, it was like the chances of winning the lotto...I mean it just didn't happen" (M. Ward, personal communication, March 25, 2010). For example, the participants' and their Aboriginal peers' lack of opportunity to be selected for national teams likely contributed to the current situation where, of all three Sport Halls of Fame in the Maritimes, there are only three known Aboriginal inductees, two of whom were inducted as part of a term.

The participants acknowledged that their accomplishments most often received recognition from Aboriginal sources, such as all-Aboriginal newspapers or the Tom Longboat Awards. For example, Ward noted that one of her career highlights included being named MVP for the Indian Summer Games in 1972. Importantly two notable exceptions were two of the participants in this research: Sappier, who was inducted into the New Brunswick Sports Hall of Fame, and Sanipass, who was inducted into the Canadian Boxing Hall of Fame.

Worth noting are participants' varying opinions about receiving recognition from the Aboriginal sporting community in the form of a Tom Longboat Award recipient. Paul noted that winning the Award "doesn't affect me in any way. It's not known by too many people. It's not like the World Series or Stanley Cup. Everybody knows if you are in the Stanley Cup or the World Series...but Tom Longboat, who's he?" (personal communication, March 18, 2010). Gabriel stated that she would have appreciated information about the Awards at the time she was named a recipient because her lack of biographical knowledge about Tom Longboat and the history of the Awards meant that she did not fully appreciate receiving the Award. She did not recognize the Award's significance or the effect it had on her until later in life, when she carried out her own research on Tom Longboat. Furthermore, Gabriel did not understand that she won the Tom Longboat Award for being Native *and* for being involved in sports. She did not, in fact, know the Award's meaning until we spoke on the phone prior to the interview, which was years after she had won the Award (personal communication, March 22, 2010). Despite not knowing, Gabriel still felt that the Award shaped her in some regard. Gabriel expressed:

I'm sure it [the Awards] has [shaped me]. I'm sure it has because coming from an Indian reserve going into a White community to go to school. I think the thing where it tells me who I am, the thing that's says I'm Native...whether I'm on the reserve or I'm not on the

reserve...But, now that I've read a book and seen the documentary on it, it would have been really good to have had that [information on Tom Longboat] before I won or sometime when I won. (personal communication, March 22, 2010)

Polchies, on the other hand, noted that she "felt pretty good for a while when I got my award, but, as he [Paul] says, you come back [to the reserve] and you say you won the Tom Longboat Award and the [community] doesn't know what is it" (personal communication, March 18, 2010).

The participants in this research were also recognized for their accomplishments in all-Aboriginal newspapers. The *MicMac News* and the *Agenutemegan* were two all-Aboriginal newspapers in the Maritimes. These newspapers reported on a variety of all-Native sport competitions, which included the Indian Summer Games, baseball, softball, hockey, and any other events that occurred on reserves throughout the region. Most of the participants interviewed for this project were featured in these newspapers at one time or another. In addition, Sappier, Sanipass, and Charlie Sark received some attention from non-Aboriginal newspapers for their accomplishments – these articles were part of the participants' personal collections (since reference details were not usually included as part of their files, the sources remain unidentified). It was, however, striking that the *Woodstock Bugle* made little mention of Aboriginal athletes. This information gap occurred despite Woodstock First Nation being so close to Woodstock, NB, where the newspaper was published. Furthermore, the dearth of information about Aboriginal athletes in the *Bugle* is especially striking in light of the members of Woodstock First Nation being actively engaged in sport, as evident by the number of TLA recipients from this reserve. Thus, although some recognition was given to a few participants from mainstream

Maritime newspapers, much of the recognition devoted to the participants came from all-Native sources.

The negligible recognition received by the participants who competed in the mainstream system contributes to their “symbolic annihilation” (Blair, 2001). The term *symbolic annihilation* refers to the condemnation, trivialization, or lack of attention devoted to a certain group; when symbolic annihilation of the group occurs, the annihilated group no longer exists in the minds of other groups (Blair). A profound effect of this erasure is that the needs and interests of the annihilated group are easier to ignore because their presence in greater society is not documented in the first place. For the most part, the participants only received recognition within Indigenous circles. It could be argued that the participants have been symbolically annihilated by the mainstream sport system because there was limited recognition of their athletic achievements in and by national teams, mainstream newspapers, and Sports Halls of Fame in the Maritimes. This problem suggests that Aboriginal accomplishments were not worth identifying or reporting, which further demonstrates the (re)production of racial difference in its negative form. Yet, despite the ways in which difference was (re)produced through marginalization and exclusion, there were also instances in which difference was challenged between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples.

Challenging Difference

Even though negative racial differences were often reified, differences were also often challenged as the participants, on occasion, became friends with their non-Native teammates; thus, reflecting the positive notion of difference. In particular, four participants made some mention of befriending their non-Native teammates, whether it was making a life-long friend or making a new friend for just the one season. While playing sport in elementary, junior high, and

high school, Paul-Bartlett played on “mixed” teams that were comprised of Native and non-Native girls. Paul-Bartlett remembered the enjoyment she obtained from going on overnight trips with her teammates:

The trips themselves [were fun]...because they were away trips and you get to stay in a motel room with your girlfriends and you know, we'd sit and giggle and fart and whatever all night and just have a ball. It was fun - the travel was fun, just going with them and being part of that. (personal communication, March 18, 2010)

Thus, Paul-Bartlett attained a sense of enjoyment from participating with both Native and non-Native teammates and feeling as though she was a valued member of the team. Sappier described a similar sense of belonging as Paul-Bartlett, while he also saw himself as a mediator between the two cultures:

You know, with the sports...it kind of gave you a sense of belonging...Most of my teammates and people that I associated with usually [I was] almost a go-between for other First Nations and kids that were in the school. You know, you're kind of the buffer...so in a way it was good for my schoolmates that [were] from Tobique [Indian Reserve] and [they] would say “well, look, [Roland's] doing all this and you know he's making all these friends.” In most cases when one of...my friends that were from the [non-Aboriginal] community which otherwise wouldn't have had the opportunity to...meet them, [my Aboriginal friends], and say ‘well, look they're not so much different than we are’, you know [and say] ‘I mean look at Rollie...he's First Nation [and] he'll tell you that he is, but he's no different than anybody else and that...really

applies to other kids from the [First Nation] community-that they're not so much different either. (personal communication, March 16, 2010)

Sappier's quote illustrates how his participation in mainstream sport challenged non-Aboriginal perceptions of racial difference. That is, some participants became friends with their non-Native teammates and developed a sense of belonging and acceptance in an environment where Native athletes were few in number. As such, the participants who befriended their non-Native peers challenged the negative concept of difference by facilitating the conditions for their peers to come to a new (presumably less discriminatory) understanding of what it means to be Native. Whether intentional or not, as cultural mediators, the participants helped to create a space where Native and non-Native people could learn from each other.

(Re)producing Difference Between and Within First Nations

Though the concept of difference is typically used to analyze the (re)production of difference between groups (e.g., colonizer/colonized), in my research, I found that difference was also (re)produced among Mi'kmaq and Maliseet peoples through their involvement in sport. Here, difference was (re)produced through the expression of team rivalries. For example, an illustration of the rivalry between Maliseet and Mi'kmaq communities occurred when Ward's team was playing against Kingsclear First Nation, NB. The team members from Kingsclear were Maliseet, while the team on which Ward played was comprised of Mi'kmaq athletes from Red Bank First Nation and Eel Ground First Nation. She described how her team was "stoned" with rocks and wine bottles upon leaving Kingsclear after winning an important semi-final game with the score 48-0 (personal communication, March 25, 2010). In another example, her team played in Burnt Church, NB, which is another Mi'kmaq community. Here, the team bus was also pelted with rocks upon leaving a game. When I asked if she would speculate about why such violent

rivalry occurred, she said that beating another First Nation was viewed as “a personal attack on them individually and on their community” (personal communication, March 25, 2010). Though no other participant mentioned similar experiences, these examples reveal that difference was not only (re)produced between Native and non-Native athletes, but also between First Nations peoples and within the same First Nations.

Acknowledging differences among First Nations is an important aspect of this research as failing to do so may contribute to homogenizing the experiences of Aboriginal peoples in sport. Through recognizing difference between Mi’kmaq and Maliseet peoples, as well as within the same First Nations, it became apparent that each community has its own values, beliefs, and historical backgrounds. Acknowledging such differences is important for better understanding the important role that sport has played in the lives of individuals and within communities. Additionally, this finding challenges the idea of pan-Indianism, which views all Aboriginal people as members of a homogenous group. It is thus vital that the experiences of those interviewed are not generalized to all Aboriginal people or to all Mi’kmaq and Maliseet peoples.

Conclusion

This paper has demonstrated the ways in which difference was (re)produced and challenged through the experiences of the nine Mi’kmaq and Maliseet participants in sport. Although difference was often challenged through the involvement of Mi’kmaq and Maliseet peoples within sport, it is evident that difference was also (re)produced. Poignant demonstrations of (re)producing difference are evident through the experiences of racism and prejudice that many participants faced. Nevertheless, this racism was something that the participants had to negotiate and endure if they wanted to participate in sport. Moreover, the participants also revealed heterogeneity between Native and non-Native athletes. This heterogeneity demonstrated

how the notion of difference that often marginalizes people was challenged as these athletes experienced enjoyment and a sense of belonging through their interactions with non-Native athletes, which created the positive sense of difference. Lastly, difference was (re)produced through the interactions of Mi'kmaq and Maliseet peoples, which was evident in the violence and rivalries that transpired in the participants' sporting competitions. This finding thus "writes back" against the colonial view that Aboriginal peoples are a homogenous group. Importantly, this research illustrates how colonialism has influenced the sporting experiences of Mi'kmaq and Maliseet athletes in the Maritimes, which appeared in the ways in which difference often caused Othering and racism. Furthermore, the use of postcolonial theory demonstrates *how* and *what* colonialism has done to victimize Aboriginal peoples in sport.

Investigations of Mi'kmaq and Maliseet peoples' involvement in sport is important because it contributes to the scholarship on Aboriginal peoples in sport in Canada, while it also offers knowledge that is specific to Mi'kmaq and Maliseet peoples –information that has been largely absent in sport scholarship. Though there is currently little research on the involvement of Mi'kmaq and Maliseet peoples in sport in the Maritimes, this research demonstrates that these two First Nations peoples have been involved in sport for decades and that there is much to learn from their experiences.

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Footnotes

¹ The terms Aboriginal, Indigenous, and Native are used interchangeably in this paper to discuss issues pertaining to Aboriginal peoples in Canada and in the world. In Canada there are three officially recognized Aboriginal groups: First Nations, Inuit, and Métis (Russell, 2000). First Nations refers to Aboriginal groups who spread across most of Canada, except the Arctic; Inuit are those Aboriginal groups who inhabit the Arctic; and Métis are those Aboriginal groups that are descendents of First Nations and Europeans.

Conclusions

This thesis explored Aboriginal peoples' involvement in sport in the Maritimes region of Canada, which includes the provinces of Nova Scotia (NS), New Brunswick (NB), and Prince Edward Island (PEI). I interviewed nine Mi'kmaq and Maliseet participants, each of whom received a Tom Longboat Award (TLA) between 1952 and 1985. The TLAs are annual awards that were inaugurated in 1951 and recognize Aboriginal people who have made a significant contribution to Canadian amateur sport; these Awards still continue today. I had the opportunity to assist a SSHRC-funded project that was investigating the experiences of TLA winners across Canada. Following the advice of the grant holders, I focused my research on the Maritimes region of Canada, and thus the Mi'kmaq and Maliseet TLA residents who live there. I was interested in understanding the experiences of Aboriginal athletes participating in sport in the Maritimes and the ways in which colonialism had an impact on their sporting experiences.

The two articles that comprise this thesis addressed three main objectives: to make a contribution towards filling the gap of information concerning Aboriginal peoples' involvement in sport in Canada; to increase knowledge of Mi'kmaq and Maliseet peoples' sporting experiences; and to continue to expand our understanding of the ways in which colonialism has influenced the lives of Aboriginal peoples in Canada, particularly through sport. This conclusion will begin with a brief overview of each of the papers that comprise this thesis and will then examine the broader issue of colonialism that intersects both papers. I will then discuss areas for future research and I will conclude by discussing my research's implications.

Article 1 –Mi'kmaq and Maliseet Tom Longboat Award Recipients' Experiences in Sport

In the first article, I investigated Mi'kmaq and Maliseet peoples' experiences in sport in the Maritimes. I employed postcolonial theory to understand the participants' experiences and I used archival research in addition to semi-structured interviews to gain a more nuanced and

detailed understanding of Aboriginal sport in the Maritimes. As a result, I was able to reveal that the participants' experiences in sport included both (and often simultaneously) challenges and benefits, which occurred in both mainstream and all-Native sport. The challenges came from the obstacles the participants faced in playing sports, which included racism and discrimination, financial constraints, geographic distance, and a feeling of a cultural tug-of-war. Nevertheless, in spite of these obstacles, the participants also experienced benefits from their sport involvement, such as feeling a sense of accomplishment, self-esteem, and self-confidence. Though current research discusses the difficulties that Aboriginal peoples often face in accessing and participating in sport (King, 2005; Paraschak, 1989; 1998), my research also showed that there were benefits that were accrued through their sport involvement. As such, the information gleaned from this paper complicates our understanding of Aboriginal peoples' involvement in sport as it reveals *both* positive and negative aspects of their sporting experiences.

Article 2- Aboriginal Athletes in the Maritimes: (Re)producing and Challenging Difference

In the second article in my thesis, I used postcolonial theory to examine the participation of Aboriginal athletes in both all-Native and mainstream sport to consider the ways in which difference was (re)produced and challenged. I collected data through conducting nine semi-structured interviews and archival research. My article examines both the negative and positive meanings of difference. A negative notion of difference is seen when those individuals considered to be "different" are marginalized in society (Hall, 1997; Weedon, 1999). A positive notion of difference, however, is the celebration of being different from the white, Western norm (Hall; Weedon). Difference was (re)produced through the way in which the participants experienced racism, discrimination, and marginalization for their Otherness. My research also revealed that difference was (re)produced between and within Aboriginal groups by the rivalries

that occurred between Mi'kmaq and Maliseet peoples and within Mi'kmaq peoples. On the other hand, difference was also challenged, for example, when the participants befriended their non-Aboriginal teammates. This paper exposes the complex ways in which colonialism affected Mi'kmaq and Maliseet peoples' involvement in sport.

Colonialism and Aboriginal Sport

Taken together, the two papers that comprise this thesis reveal that colonialism had a significant impact on TLA recipients' experiences in sport. Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin (2000) noted that the term colonialism is significant in understanding European expansion and the cultural exploitation that occurred as a result. With colonial expansion, relationships between the colonizer and the colonized were secured into a "rigid hierarchy of difference deeply resistant to fair and equitable exchanges, whether economic, cultural, or social" (Ashcroft et al., p. 46). Aboriginal peoples in Canada were oppressed and marginalized as a result of this hierarchy of difference. For example, through the Canadian government's attempt to displace and repress Aboriginal cultures and traditions (Pettipas, 1994), Euro-Canadian-derived physical practices, such as Euro-Canadian sport, were promoted and Aboriginal traditional physical practices were repressed. The longstanding affects of colonialism can be seen in the obstacles that the nine Mi'kmaq and Maliseet athletes encountered, including being marginalized for their differences.

As a result of colonialism, Aboriginal peoples in Canada are habitually depicted as the Other, culturally and politically (Paraschak, 1997). My research revealed that the colonial trope of producing Aboriginal peoples as the Other frequently occurred in and through sporting experiences; for example, it occurred when athletes experienced racism on and off the field. Consequently, it is possible that the (re)production of the negative notion of difference limited the involvement of Aboriginal peoples who did not want to tolerate being cast as an Other, such

as the many Aboriginal peoples who were avid athletes but who did not participate in mainstream sport. And, for some Aboriginal athletes, the (re)production of difference left a negative impression of what sport was like for Aboriginal peoples.

My thesis also revealed the ways in which colonialism, especially as articulated through the *Indian Act*, has influenced Mi'kmaq and Maliseet peoples' sport experiences. For example, as a result of the *Indian Act*, Aboriginal peoples were placed on reserves and were restricted financially (Department of Justice, 2011). As my thesis details, these issues, though seemingly divorced from sport, exerted a strong influence on each participant's sporting experiences through being victimized by racism and discrimination and by being restricted both geographically and financially by living on reserves. On the other hand, my research has also demonstrated that Aboriginal peoples have resisted the harmful effects of colonialism and have even taken some of the colonizers' physical practices and used them to their own advantage. Resistance often occurred when Aboriginal people in the Maritimes united to form all-Native sport environments that celebrated their identities and cultures. All-Native sporting events, such as the Indian Summer Games, provided spaces where Mi'kmaq and Maliseet peoples were often safe from the scrutiny, racism, and discrimination that often surrounded their participation in non-Native sporting environments. Nevertheless, all-Native sporting environments were not always entirely safe spaces, which was illustrated in the rivalries that occurred between communities. Furthermore, the athletes gained a sense of accomplishment, self-esteem, and self-confidence through their sport participation in both mainstream and all-Native sport. By prevailing over the struggles they often faced when participating in sport, they illustrated the possibility of resisting colonial practices because they were not defeated by the effects of

colonialism. Such resistance further reveals Aboriginal peoples' strength and agency in the face of significant obstacles.

Future Considerations

Through my research with nine Mi'kmaq and Maliseet TLA recipients that reside in the Maritimes region of Canada, I found that considerably more work needs to be completed in order to gain a greater understanding of Mi'kmaq and Maliseet peoples' sporting experiences. Further investigation is particularly warranted in the Indian Summer Games. A prominent theme to emerge in my findings was the importance of the Indian Summer Games that occurred in NB and NS. Further research on the Indian Summer Games, especially pertaining to which sports were played at these Games and by whom, would be beneficial for gaining a more detailed understanding of Mi'kmaq and Maliseet peoples' involvement in sport and the ways in which sport was used to achieve non-sporting goals. Additionally, this research could examine the different sporting relations between First Nations communities as well as between Native and non-Native peoples.

There also remains a considerable dearth of information pertaining to Aboriginal women's involvement in sport. Thus, another area that needs further study is Mi'kmaq and Maliseet girls' and women's sport experiences. These stories are important to document in order to obtain a more complete understanding of Aboriginal peoples' in sport and would be helpful in examining broader issues pertaining to gender.

Another area for future research is an examination of the role of sports and games at Shubenacadie Residential School. Two of the nine participants involved in this research attended Shubenacadie and though little information was shared, it is clear that their time at this school exerted a strong impact on their lives. An examination of residential school sporting experiences

could provide information on *if* and/or *how* these experiences influenced residential school survivors' participation in Euro-Canadian-derived physical practices and all-Native contexts.

Lastly, in this thesis, one significant limitation is that I have examined Mi'kmaq and Maliseet athletes' experiences together and have privileged their similarities as First Nations over their differences as unique cultures. Future studies should examine each community's unique culture and it informs its history of physical practices. Such research will make important contributions to understanding the complexities and nuances that exist in Aboriginal sport in the Maritimes specifically and in Canada more generally.

Implications of this Research

The research that comprised this thesis provides a glimpse into Mi'kmaq and Maliseet peoples' sporting experiences in the Maritimes. These papers not only reveal what the participants had to endure and overcome if they wanted to be involved in sport, but also that the participants' time in sport encompassed many positive and enjoyable moments. In addition, both papers offer a small but valuable contribute to the scholarship on Aboriginal peoples in sport. The first paper demonstrates the complexities that were involved in the sporting experiences of the participants who regularly had to negotiate both the challenges and positive aspects of their sports participation. In addition, one of the key findings of the second paper was the way in which the notion of pan-Indianism can be contested through sport competition between First Nations communities.

Nonetheless, for the participants, their love and passion for sport coupled with the benefits and positive aspects of their sporting experiences outweighed the negative aspects of their sporting experiences. Overall, these participants' stories are not just about struggling to

participate in sport – they are also about the ways in which the participants used sport to enrich their lives and challenge repressive social relations of power.

This research also shows the ways in which colonialism had connections to sport and, accordingly, how it is impossible to separate our understandings of Aboriginal peoples in sport from history. As such, this research is important for filling the gap that currently exists pertaining to Mi'kmaq and Maliseet peoples' participation in sports in Canada, while it also gives more attention to the TLAs and TLA recipients. With this research, it is my hope that in the future more attention will be paid to these Mi'kmaq and Maliseet TLA recipients, and that their stories will be recognized by both the general public and by academics.

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