Îyacisitayin Newoskan Simakanîsîkanisak
'The (Re)Making of the Hobbema Community Cadet Corps Program'

by

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Abstract

In 2005, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) helped launch a unique afterschool program among the four Cree Nations of Maskwacis (formerly Hobbema), Alberta. The program, known as the Hobbema Community Cadet Corps Program (HCCCP), was widely celebrated among politicians, segments of the community, and especially in the mainstream media as an effective tool for 'gang prevention'; however, a closer look also revealed a more complex set of negotiations occurring at the local level. This multiyear, ethnographic case study draws from a series of open-ended interviews with Maskwacis parents, youths, sports administrators, journalists, and other agents in the community to critically examine the stories behind the *making* of the HCCCP. Guided by Pierre Bourdieu's relational sociology, the dissertation argues that, beyond a mere gang intervention program, the HCCCP also provided Maskwacis residents with an important site, and discourse, through which to conceive, negotiate, and, at times, contest their ideas about what it means (and doesn't mean) to be Maskwacis in the new millennium. The study thus challenges the mainstream media's singular depiction of Maskwacis residents, and also extends upon a body of sport studies literature that has been generally slow to integrate the diverse voices, experiences, and complex power relations that have shaped the cultural production of Aboriginal sport in distinct communities across Canada.

Preface

This thesis is an original work by Jordan Koch. The research project, of which this thesis is a part, received research ethics approval from the University of Alberta Research Ethics Board, Project Name "Sport and Leisure Experiences on a First Nation in Alberta," Pro00022397, May 10th, 2011.

To my friends in Maskwacis,

For your patience and encouragement, I am forever grateful.

And

To my parents,

The best teachers I have ever known!

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Ay hiy!!

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"I think you can marry Cree culture with things like ice hockey and the cadets, yes. The virtue is in doing that and in teaching those virtues … that's what we have is our virtues. That's what we live by is sharing, caring, loving. And you know what? You can integrate all of that into stuff like that. And that's part of our traditional teachings! You just have to find methods for doing it, you know? In those kinds of settings, yes, I think you can do it."

Holly Johnson, Samson Cree Nation, July 2013

CHAPTER I.

Introduction to Research

Since 1891, the four Cree Nations of Maskwacis, Alberta, have been publicly identified as 'Hobbema'. Situated a mere 80 kilometres southeast of Edmonton, along the Highways 2 and 2A *en route* to Calgary, the community of about 13,000 Cree members surrounds an old flag station that was built during the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR). The name 'Hobbema', originally bestowed upon this station by the once president of the CPR, Sir William Cornelius Van Horne, comes from the Dutch landscape artist, Meinhardt Hobbema, whose work Van Horne admired. For over a century, the name of this Cree community remained unchanged. On January 1st, 2014, however, after two years of petitioning the federal government for a formal name change, the Cree phrase 'Maskwacis' was officially restored to the region. Translated into English, Maskwacis means 'Bear Hills', a phrase reflective of the region's unique topography and local Aboriginal culture.[1] At one time, blueberry bushes covered the rolling hills in this entire land area, which attracted a high bear population that came to feed off the berries. A Maskwacis web release heralded the name change as marking the restoration of "pride in Cree values, languages, culture and history and a sense of belonging among our Nations, especially our youths" (Samson Cree Nation, 2013).

Though far from extensive, media coverage of this event reached outposts across Canada. Newspapers noted, for example, how the announcement was accompanied by a New Year's Eve celebratory round dance, pipe ceremony, community feast, and fireworks display that were widely attended by residents and stakeholders from around

[1] I acknowledge at the outset that the very term 'Aboriginal' is the object of a history of complex political struggles among what are actually diverse groups of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples across Canada and the globe. The on-the-ground realities of Aboriginality, of course, reflect a much more pluralistic and culturally dense set of identities than any singular term could reasonably hope to capture (see Smith, 1999: 6-7).

the region (Gerson, 2014; Klinkenberg, 2013; Mustafa, 2014). Others emphasized how the name change signalled a "long-desired step to empower the community bestowed with a name convenient to English speakers" (Cryderman, 2013); an assertion of "freedom of identity" (Morey, 2014); a "fresh start" (Robertson, 2014); and a sign of "hope for change" within Maskwacis (Gerson, 2014). Implied in almost every news article, however, was that the new name signalled the local Cree community's attempt to regain control over a region whose history had been marred by colonial struggle, and establish distance from a more dominant narrative that has been habitually associated with 'Hobbema' and widely circulated across the province of Alberta and throughout Canada. As the *Globe and Mail* implored, "The name Hobbema has been associated with boarded-up and burnt-up houses, shootings and infighting between gangs" (Cryderman, 2013). Citing one resident's perspective, the *Canadian Broadcasting Corporation* (CBC) reminded everyone that: "a new name will help reflect the area's changing reputation, helping to step away from its past notoriety" (CBCnews.ca, 2013a).

However brief, this anecdote invites a number of important sociological questions. First, this anecdote invites questions about the 19th century context within which this name change originally occurred and, relatedly, the colonial processes through which the modern Canadian nation state was built. Secondly, the struggles described here raise questions about who are, in fact, legitimate stakeholders in Maskwacis and the extent to which they have access and entitlement to the forms of social power in existence within the community, such as the ability to shape, declare judgement on, and officially *(re)make* the community's narrative(s). Furthermore, this anecdote invites questions about the complex power relations effective in the production of Aboriginal

street gangs as both news and as a matter of broad public concern in 'Hobbema'. Finally, this anecdote raises important questions about the construction of individual and community identity; the process of making sense of one's cultural authenticity; and the process of asserting cultural autonomy and agency at a unique time in Maskwacis's history – a time, to be precise, when the validity of its local struggles has been largely overshadowed by the racialized *moral panic* (Cohen, 1972) and social unrest accompanying a series of gang-related events in the community and their media projection.

In 2005 alone, for example, headlines such as 'Hobbema rocked by week of gang violence' (CBCnews.ca, 2005a), 'Hobbema Gangs get 'Hardcore'' (Jones, 2005), 'Sword Killer Draws Three Years' (Farrell, 2005), and 'Hobbema RCMP Carry Caseload 3.5 Times the National Average' (CBCnews.ca, 2005b) dominated news coverage and consistently framed Maskwacis as a community in crisis. What inevitably accompanied these spectacular headlines were a series well-advertised social policies targeting street gangs at both the federal and provincial levels, including, among other things: more rigorous legal provisions that defined street gangs as criminal organizations, stiffer prison terms for the commission of all gang-related offenses, multi-million dollar expansions to the provincial police force, and the federal government's enthusiastic endorsement of plans to radically expand Canada's existing prison facilities – all despite significant *decreases* in federal crime levels (The Canadian Press, 2012). These general strategies, it is worth noting, have been widely critiqued by scholars and social activists for their propensity to enhance racial profiling, for addressing only the symptoms of crime as opposed to its root causes, and for pandering to the public's fear and anxiety about crime,

street gangs, and the (usually ethnic) criminal 'Other' (see Bjerregaard, 2003; Comack et al., 2013; Hall et al., 1978; Wacquant, 2009). They have been further critiqued for exacerbating the already exorbitantly high rates of Aboriginal offenders currently incarcerated in Canadian prisons (Everett-Green, 2012; Office of the Correctional Investigator, 2012).

In Maskwacis, while similar political strategies were pervasive,[2] the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) also pursued localized alternative measures to combat street crime. In 2005, for example, amidst mounting public concern over issues of gang violence, the RCMP authorized two locally detached officers to seek out programming that might help to induce positive social change among Maskwacis youths. Drawing upon an extensive Canadian sport history in which military 'drill' training was used to curb deviance among Aboriginal youth, Sargent Mark Linnell and Constable Richard Huculiak – two non-Aboriginal RCMP members – partnered with local bandleaders from across the 'Four Nations' to establish what was widely (though somewhat mistakenly) declared the first Aboriginal cadet corps of its kind in the province of Alberta, the Hobbema Community Cadet Corps Program (HCCCP).

At its peak, the HCCCP boasted a membership list of over 1,000 local youths and was run by a volunteer team in excess of 70 formally trained instructors (Huculiak, personal files, July 2012). School buses, paid for by the community, provided transport for the cadets (both male and female between the ages of 6-18 years old) who trained twice per week at an old warehouse converted into a drill hall located just east of the

[2] In 2005-06, for example, the RCMP commissioned nine extra patrol officers to Maskwacis and established an on-reserve satellite police detachment in the Montana First Nation as part of an $8.6 million, five-year federal-provincial agreement to "take back its streets from the gangs that have run rampant during the past year" (Bhardwaj, 2006).

Samson Cree Nation town site. Old tires, hay bales, ropes, and donated sports equipment were dispersed around the drill hall and used to construct obstacle courses for the cadets. Snacks, too, were provided each night, and volunteer instructors helped to organize marching drills, participation in a variety of sports and games (floor hockey and dodgeball being among the most popular), and occasional training in different cultural pursuits, such as Cree language and drumming lessons. Field trips and participation in local parades and cadet corps jamborees were also a major component of the program, including a well-known international exchange with a sister 'corps' from Spanish Town, Jamaica – a trip that became the subject of two nationally broadcast documentaries: *Journey to Jamaica* (CBCnews.ca, 2009a) and *Journey to Canada* (CBCnews.ca, 2009b).

Almost instantaneously, the HCCCP generated massive media attention and spurred the production of another discourse that heralded the success of the cadet corps as a response to the initial moral panic. Headlines such as 'Doing Drills Instead of Drugs' (Pavlin, 2008b); 'Hobbema Recruits Teens from Gangs' (McLean, 2006); 'Group Mentality Helps Rescue Aboriginal youths' (Rogers, 2005), and 'Cadets Converting Gang Members into 'Nice Kids'' (CBCnews.ca, 2006) were among the over 405 radio, television, newspaper, magazine and telephone interviews; 1,650 newspaper, magazine, internet and community newsletters/articles; and 3 DVD documentaries that celebrated the HCCCP during its first five years alone (Huculiak, personal files, July 2012).[3] In 2009, the "symbolic capital" (Bourdieu, 1984) associated with this particular narrative climaxed when Blaine Calkins, Member of Parliament (MP) for the Wetaskiwin district of central Alberta, praised the HCCCP in the Canadian House of Commons as an "effective crime prevention initiative," and petitioned the federal government to support,

[3] These figures are courtesy of Richard Huculiak and dated until April 22nd, 2010.

help examine, facilitate, promote, and monitor First Nations community cadet corps programs across Canada[4] - an announcement that indirectly generated over $900,000 in unsolicited funds for the HCCCP from the National Crime Prevention Centre (NCPC).[5]

However, despite the apparent interest and political capital associated with the HCCCP's public narrative, this dissertation suggests that a diverse range of local experiences also accompanied the program's development. Specifically, this dissertation – a qualitative, ethnographic 'case study'[6] combining six years of fieldwork in Maskwacis with a total of 28 in-depth interviews with local stakeholders and residents – shines a critical light upon three key and interrelated social issues:

1) The dominant discourse surrounding Maskwacis and its youths population
2) The perceived impact(s) of this discourse upon community members' experiences of sport and everyday living;

   And, finally, I interrogate:

3) The range of experiences that accompanied the community's *(re)making of the HCCCP*.

My investment in these matters, to be clear at the outset, has been largely driven by the glaring cognitive disconnect between the media projection of Maskwacis and my lived experiences in the community over the past six years as: a neighbour, coach, physical educator, and eyewitness to the ambiguous impact that Maskwacis's stereotype as a 'Gang War Zone' (Kelley, 2010) has had upon the development of youth sport in the

[4] In fact, this was the third time MP Calkins had addressed the House of Commons in regards to the HCCCP, the previous two times being by special Members Statement and in recognition of the program's 1st and 2nd anniversary, respectively (Huculiak, personal files, 2012).
[5] See (openparliament.ca, 2009) to view MP Calkins full statement and the House's reactions.
[6] I use the term "case study" to highlight the specificity of the community in which this research takes place. The term further implies a highly focused and analytically intensive research program that is sensitive to the unique time and social context in which the program is grounded (see Flyvbjerg, 2011; Stake, 2005).

region. In accordance with the research agreement struck between the Samson Cree Nation's band council and myself (see Appendix A), I thus position this dissertation as both a critique of the mainstream media's production of Maskwacis gang violence, as well as an extension upon a body of sport studies literature that has been generally slow to integrate the diverse voices, experiences, and complex power relations that shape the cultural production of Aboriginal sport in distinct communities across Canada.

Until recently, much of the literature on Aboriginal sport in Canada had drawn attention to the largely repressive, colonizing role(s) that certain Euro-Canadian physical activities were employed to service in the lives of Aboriginal peoples (Forsyth, 2002; Heine & Wamsley, 1996; Kidd, 1983; Mason, 2008; Morrow, 1989; O'Bonsawin, 2002; 2006; 2013; Paraschak, 1990; 1997; among others).[7] While recent literature has greatly expanded upon this theoretical foundation (Forsyth & Giles, 2013; Forsyth & Heine, 2008b; Hallas, 2011; Hayhurst & Giles, 2012; Heine, 2013; Mason, 2010; O'Bonsawin, 2010; Paraschak, 2013; Paraschak & Thompson, 2013; Robidoux, 2004; 2006b; 2012), the central thesis of this body of literature remains, to paraphrase one of the field's leading scholars, that sport's "importance as a colonial design should not be lost" (Robidoux, 2006a: 212). Indeed, amidst numerous struggles to secure social and cultural hegemony in Canada, both church and state regularly emphasized training in 'appropriate' (i.e., Euro-Canadian) sports and games as part of a wider colonial strategy to replace 'traditional' cultural practices with more secular activities (Forsyth, 2005). For example, the provision of military drill training and calisthenics exercises within Canada's former residential schools – i.e., facilities that were built with the objective of *assimilating* Aboriginal youths into settler society – was once a commonly used practice

[7] See (Paraschak, 1989) for an important review of Aboriginal sport studies literature in earlier years.

by which the bodies and morals of upcoming generations of Aboriginal youths were to be 'tamed' according to settler values and state political agendas (Forsyth, 2013).

However, in focussing attention upon the Euro-Canadian designs imbedded within Aboriginal sport, largely unaccounted for in these investigations have been the subtle subversions, contradictions, and complex meanings generated *within*, rather than in opposition to, the taken for granted category of physical culture known as Euro-Canadian. In other words, Aboriginal physical culture has been habitually pitted *against* and/or *outside* of Western sport, rather than framed as something that could potentially survive within the "margins" of sport's dominant institutional framework (Robidoux, 2012). Read critically, this oversight runs the risk of trapping the discourse Aboriginal sport in the past through the implicit assumption that Aboriginal peoples who willingly participate in Euro-Canadian derived sports and games are – either consciously or through hegemony – complicit in their own colonization. *Real* Aboriginal sport, that is to say, has been tacitly construed as something that *was*, rather than something that *is* and that *continues to be*.

Guided by Pierre Bourdieu's relational sociology (Bourdieu, 1978; 1984; 1988b; 1990; 1998; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992; Brown, 2006; Swartz, 1997; Thorpe, 2009; Wacquant, 2004; Webb at al., 2002), this study privileges the various struggles, pleasures, and local agendas ensconced upon the HCCCP as key ingredients in the construction of Maskwacis physical culture. Specifically, I theorize Aboriginal sport (the HCCCP) not as a reflection of *one* colonialism in Canada, but instead as a key symbolic stake and object of struggle *in* a locally (i.e., Maskwacis) specific field of colonial power (1990; 1987; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992; Swartz, 1997). In this perspective, the

relationship between sport and colonialism is determined not by investigating the extrinsic physical cultural properties that differentiate Aboriginal from Euro-Canadian or Western sporting frameworks, but rather through rigorous investigation into the unique social histories and *internal-to-the-field* struggles that shape Aboriginal sport as an (il)legitimate expression of Maskwacis physical culture at a particular moment in time.

Accordingly, two specific questions have guided this dissertation, both of which were framed with a mind to Pierre Bourdieu's field-analytic perspective:

1) How have different agents in Maskwacis experienced (conceived and negotiated) the HCCCP, and
2) Why?

Three interrelated sub-questions flow from these broader questions:

1) Where is Maskwacis located vis-à-vis space, time, and the national (colonial) context in Canada?
2) Who are the various agents in Maskwacis and what is their specific relationship to the HCCCP and the shaping of its youth culture?
3) How has the HCCCP been mediated as something *other* than a gang intervention program in Maskwacis?

My argument, in brief, is that the HCCCP has born the freight of an assortment of different, sometimes competing, meanings and social agendas. Many residents, for example, criticized the mainstream media's stake in the HCCCP and accused Edmonton-based journalists of foregrounding Maskwacis deviance at the expense of *alternative* social programming in the community. Other residents viewed the HCCCP as a re-inscription of colonial power, and alleged that the RCMP were taking advantage of their

traditional 'warrior ethic' in order to promote a culturally foreign and statist agenda. Conversely, however, there were several parents that actively embraced the HCCCP as a *celebration* of Maskwacis's warrior spirit and as an extension of the community's proud military history. Beyond strategies for social change, therefore, or mere countermeasures to youth gang violence, the HCCCP also provided local residents, including youths, with a powerful vehicle through which to conceive, negotiate, and, at times, contest their ideas about *what it means (and doesn't mean) to be Maskwacis* in the new millennium.

However, despite Maskwacis's internal diversity, I also argue that the voices of a select few highly ranked agents, most notably journalists and members of the RCMP, have largely overshadowed what Bourdieu referred to as the 'positions' and 'dispositions' of alternative agents in the field (Bourdieu, 1984; 1993; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992; Swartz, 1997). As a consequence, the apparently *real* 'Hobbema' has been publicly framed, treated, and understood as a place where "Gangs, violence, alcohol are part of growing up" (Johnston, 2013); residents are terrified into a deafening a "code of silence" (Blatchford, 2011), "Gunfire rings" through its streets (Stolte, 2008), and where the HCCCP stands out as the lone protective enclave outside of which the threat of Aboriginal gang violence is ubiquitous. As we will see, the situation in Maskwacis is far more complicated. For example, the men and women who work every day in the band office, schools and health centers, ambulance and fire depots, at the gas pumps, convenience stores, and hockey rinks, as well as the hundreds of men/women and boys/girls who together organized, delivered, and participated in the HCCCP's twice-weekly programming: these, too, are the kinds of people who live in Maskwacis. This dissertation, by simply providing local individuals with a site at which to articulate and/or

(re)make the community's dominant narrative with respect to this one social program, provides a small but important window into that complexity.

In service of these arguments, the study is organized around an introduction, six Chapters, and a conclusion. In Chapter Two, I provide a brief review and critique of the Aboriginal sport studies literature in Canada. Chapter Three extends upon this scholarship by introducing a theoretical framework animated by Pierre Bourdieu's relational sociology. This theorization dovetails with a methodological framework that included the triangulation of textual (e.g., historical) materials with fieldwork observations and semi-structured interview data. Using Bourdieu's 'reflexive' sociological tools, Chapter Four extends Chapter Three's discussion by reflecting upon the multiple biases (i.e., personal, academic, and intellectual) that have both informed and limited this study's conduct. Chapter Five, then, proceeds to map in detail a few of the basic social and historical properties that have distinguished Maskwacis as a cultural field in central, Alberta, Canada, which include: localized refractions related to Canada's broader colonial history (e.g., what Bourdieu called the 'field of power'), Maskwacis's unique geography and history of resource (i.e., oil) wealth, as well as other contemporary sociological issues and trends that have impacted the development of youth sport in the region. In Chapter Six, Chapter Five's discussion is expanded upon by critically examining the relatively singular way in which the mainstream media, as a symbolically powerful agent in the field, have conceived and negotiated Maskwacis, and the HCCCP's role(s) therein. The chapter casts critical light upon the structural barriers journalists' face in their everyday struggles to create more holistic depictions of Maskwacis 'news', as well as the symbolically violent effects that dominant news stories have had upon the

development of youth sports and other opportunities in the region. Finally, Chapter Seven interrogates community members' own reflections upon the HCCCP and elucidates the diverse role(s) the program was perceived to service among the Maskwacis Cree Nations. In so doing, the chapter advances a vision of Maskwacis as internally diverse, complicated, and yet firmly anchored within the locally (i.e., *field*) specific context and the unique corpus of agents who inhabit Maskwacis's history and collectively *(re)make* their futures in Canada.

CHAPTER II.

Review of Literature

2.1 Introduction

This dissertation is framed as a review and critique of the growing body of literature devoted to the study of Aboriginal sport in Canada, situated within the larger body of literature devoted to the study of Canadian sport history and the sociology of sport. The study is framed in this way for two principal reasons. First, my fieldwork in Maskwacis consistently found that the category 'sport' (more so than 'youth development' or 'gang prevention', for example) better encapsulated the range of perspectives that surrounded the HCCCP and the role(s) it was perceived as servicing in the community. In short, while some individuals conceived the HCCCP as a crime prevention initiative, virtually all endorsed the program as sport-related, partly because a variety of sports and games were integrated into its weekly training regimens. My second justification for this framing is that youth cadet corps programs and military-drill styled training have deep roots in a Canadian sport historical and physical education context. Indeed, where references to youth cadet corps continually emerged was within the broader sport studies literature, outside of which I found surprisingly few scholarly references to Aboriginal cadet corps programs in Canada or elsewhere.[8]

The dissertation's title is a respectful manipulation of E.P. Thompson's (1963) seminal text, *The Making of the English Working Class*, widely considered to be a driving force of the social historical movement. Thompson's is one of the earliest among a wave of research to take issue with the top-down framing of history that at the time dominated academic knowledge in the West. His work was accompanied by the writings of

[8] The sparse literature on Aboriginal cadets outside the realm of sport included: Grekul & Sanderson, 2010; Harris & Ginsberg, 1968. J.R. Miller (1996) also provided valuable insight into the colonial history and structuring of Aboriginal cadet corps programs in Canada's former residential schools.

Raymond Williams (1961) and Richard Hoggart (1957), both of whom were instrumental figures in the development of the area later known as Cultural Studies. However, while all three scholars have been praised for their emphasis upon 'popular' and 'working class' culture(s), they have also been fairly criticized for interpreting these issues in relation to a largely European and male-centric understanding of class, paying little attention to matters of race, gender, or sexuality. Conversely, the pioneering efforts of W.E.B DuBois (1935) and C.L.R James (1938) have drawn significant attention to the complex racial identities and acts of resistance that occurred within even the most oppressive social and colonial settings, including the realm of sport (see James, 1963).

Emerging in the 1970s out of this same historical movement (Chakrabarty, 2004), the study of sport history and the sociology of sport have long been driven by similar political and analytic objectives. The research of Bruce Kidd (1996), Eric Dunning (1971), Allan Guttman (1978), John Hargreaves (1982), Jenifer Hargreaves (1986), Ann Hall (2002), Alan Metcalfe (1987), Richard Gruneau (1983), Patricia Vertinsky (1994), among many others, have challenged the uncritical acceptance of sport and the romantic ideals associated with its practicing. While critical literature on sport and race has been slower to emerge on the academic scene, a surge in scholarship over the past 20 years cast important light upon the complex intersections of race and power as manifested on the diverse playing fields of international sport.[9] My research draws significantly upon these scholarly developments; however, is in dialogue specifically with research focused upon Aboriginal sport in Canada and the broader Cultural Studies literature.

[9] For example, Doug Booth's (1998) *The Race Game: Sport and Politics in South Africa* is among several influential texts to have taken issue with the collisions of race, power, and sport within various inter/national frameworks.

In service of my review, the chapter is divided into three parts. In Part One, I introduce the sport studies literature and identify, in brief, the relationship between 'drill' and 'military'-styled physical education in Canada. Part Two builds upon this discussion by exploring the interconnections between Aboriginal sport history and military drill training, particularly as is related to the Maskwacis Cree Nations. Collectively, both parts function to blur the boundary between sport and military drill and contribute to the argument that sport as a tool for servicing a repressive, colonizing agenda in the lives of Aboriginal peoples in Canada has been emphasized in the literature. In contrast, Part Three situates my research within the emergent literature on Aboriginal sport in Canada (henceforth called 'Aboriginal sport studies'). The section describes how recent scholars have theorized the relationship between 'assimilation' and 'resistance', and argues that the literature has largely overlooked the diverse meanings that Aboriginal agents derive through their sporting experiences. Guided by Pierre Bourdieu's relational sociology, the chapter concludes by suggesting that a fruitful direction for this research is in framing Aboriginal sport (i.e., the HCCCP) not as a reflection of *one* colonialism, but instead as a key symbolic stake and object of struggle *in* a locally specific field of colonial power. The particulars of this framework are outlined in Chapter Three.

2.2 Part One: Situating 'Cadets' in the Canadian Sport Studies Literature

In Canada, sport historians have long drawn attention to the myriad ways in which nationalists extolled the virtues of sport and physical activity for its potential to socialize the young in desirable ways (Bouchier, 2003; Howell, 1995; Kidd, 1996; Morrow & Wamsley, 2005). Influential texts such as *Tom Brown's Schooldays* (1857) and *Tom*

Brown at Oxford (1861), for example, were widely distributed in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, as were the writings of Christian socialists such as Frederick Maurice and Charles Kingsley, all of which were encouraging of the view that youths' participation in appropriate, Muscular Christian-oriented sporting practices would impart important life lessons among youths an help to 'win the boy' to the ways of the church (Howell, 2001; Kidd, 1996). Participation in team sports and other socially sanctioned physical activities, therefore, was considered to be what Evangelical reformers labelled 'rational recreation'; that is, physical activity that would prepare Canadian boys to better carry out their occupational and spiritual pursuits (Howell, 1995: 110). By 1871, so widely embraced were sport's character-building claims that the major architects of sport and physical education in Canada, such as Dr. Egerton Ryerson – who is widely regarded as the founder of Canada's national education system - had established a system of universal, free, and compulsory public schools in which physical education was promoted to "curb the undisciplined urges of the body and enable the growth and maturation of the mind and spirit" (Kidd, 2006: 703). Chief among the activities practiced in these schools, however, was training in drill and military-styled calisthenics exercises (Morrow & Wamsley, 2005: 184). As Don Morrow and Kevin Wamsley (2005: 183) explained,

> Military drill was convenient; instructors – often discharged military personnel – were abundant; equipment was inexpensive and minimal; it could be conducted outside; and it fostered, or exemplified, prompt obedience by 'miniature adults'…

Several contextual variables enhanced this view of sport and drill-based physical activity among Canadian nationalists, social reformers, and early physical educators. For example, the country's relative proximity to the War of 1812, the United States Civil War

(1861-1865), and politicians' lingering fears about an American-led annexation of Canada supported the belief that harvesting a serviceable crop of young military personnel would potentially prove vital to the sovereignty of the emergent Canadian nation state. Canada's increased involvement in overseas warring missions, like the Boer War (1899-1902), also provided added incentive for training youths in the military style. Furthermore, drill and callisthenic exercises were also a big part of the British schooling system, which provided an important template upon which public schools in Canada and across the British Commonwealth were modelled (Sawula, 1974). However, as Don Morrow (1977) argued, probably the most influential variable that supported drill training in early Canadian public schools was the sizable monetary donation made by Donald Smith (a Scottish-born philanthropist, also known as Lord Strathcona) in 1909, known as the Strathcona Trust. Morrow (1977: 73) explained, "The Strathcona Trust embodies the first and very vital 'system' of physical education in Canada," the purpose of which was laid out explicitly in its constitutional framework:

> His (Strathcona's) object being not only to improve the physical and intellectual capabilities of the children, by inculcating habits of alertness, orderliness and prompt obedience, but also to bring up the boys to patriotism, and to the realization that the first duty of a free citizen is to be prepared to defend his country, the intention of the Founder is that, while physical training and elementary drill shall be encouraged for all children of both sexes attending the public schools, especial importance is to be attached to the teaching of military drill generally to all boys, including rifle shooting for boys capable of using rifles.

> All boys should, so far as possible, be made to acquire a fair acquaintance, while at school, with military drill and rifle shooting (as cited in Morrow, 1977: 83).

Under the Trust's agreement, therefore, military training and calisthenics exercises within Canadian schools had become institutionalised as *the* dominant physical cultural practice. The provision of drill training embodied the agendas of politicians and social reformers alike, many of which viewed participation in drill and calisthenics exercises as a cost effective strategy for exercising the bodies, minds, and morals of Canadian youths (Howell, 1995; Lenskyj, 1990).

To be sure, significant public opposition accompanied the Trust's emphasis upon military training for elementary school-aged children. Several critics, for example, criticized the potentially "irreparable harm" caused by teachers' promulgating the "automatic tin soldiers" model of physical education in elementary schools (Morrow & Wamsley, 2005: 177). Other groups contested drill on the grounds that it affiliated youths with the Canadian military, an organization that, at the time, discouraged the participation of women. As Helen Lenskyj argued, the Trust's emphasis upon militarism, together with the unequal distribution of funds, instructors, and material resources, resulted in "minimal benefits to girls' physical education" (Lenskyj, 1990: 217). Lenskyj (1990: 212-13) further argued,

> The question of military drill and cadet training for school-age boys had been debated in Ontario from Ryerson's time. On one side, it was argued that there were 'none so likely to avoid strife as those who are prepared for it', while others believed that values like love and peace should be instilled in children.

Indeed, public opposition to the Trust's "military connotations" was of sufficient persuasion as to actually delay Ontario's entry into the terms of the agreement for a period of over one year, and the province of Quebec never did formally enter into the Trust's terms (Morrow, 1977: 81). Nevertheless, as Colin Howell (2001: 35) noted, the Strathcona Trust influenced physical education in Canadian schools for decades after its inception, "linking exercise to moral and patriotic projects."

The relationship of these early histories to the development of Aboriginal sport in Canada is a matter to which significantly less scholarly literature has been devoted. While certain parallels exist between the Canadian public schooling system and the residential system in which over 150,000 Aboriginal youths were 'educated' (Forsyth, 2013), I have yet to discover any real historical evidence of public controversy and/or protest against drill's inclusion within the latter institutions. In contrast, Janice Forsyth (2013) discovered some evidence of the Canadian public's *support* for Aboriginal youths being trained in the military style, at least as expressed by members of the non-Aboriginal community. For example, the following passage described spectators' reactions to a 1951 gymnastics display involving Aboriginal pupils from the Kamloops Indian Residential School in British Columbia, Canada:

> For many spectators, the young bodies moving in formation reinforced the widespread belief that religious instruction, combined with formal schooling extolling the virtues of good citizenship, would teach the youth respect for discipline and deference to official authority (cited in Forsyth, 2013: 25).

Importantly, Forsyth (2013) urged sensitivity when analyzing the complex meanings embedded within peoples' interpretations of Aboriginal sporting practices, specifically in

regards to the radically different power relations and socio-colonial contexts that shaped the development of Aboriginal sport in Canada - a matter to which I now turn.

2.3 Part Two: Physical Education in Canada's Indian Residential Schools

> The ultimate goal of Canadian Indian policy was the political, economic, and cultural absorption of all Aboriginal peoples into the general citizenry and economy of the Canadian nation-state. The Canadian government adopted special legislation that imposed a wardship political status on all Aboriginal people and officially supported the destruction of indigenous cultural systems.
>
> Katherine Pettipas, *Severing the Ties that Bind*, 1994, p. 4.

The federal government's aggressive colonial campaign against Aboriginal peoples in Canada has become increasingly well documented in recent years (among a broad literature see Cardinal, 1969; Carter, 2010; Douglas et al, 2004; Miller, 1989; 1996; Pettipas, 1994). Germane to the current study is the manner in which drill training and military-styled physical education factored into this larger colonial design. As Forsyth (2005) noted, while the history of physical education in Canada is steeped in a tradition of drill training, where militarized-based physical education was most obvious was within Canada's former Indian residential schools, the purpose of which was to train Aboriginal youths, often aggressively, in the image of the Euro-Canadian settler (see Miller, 1996). Indeed, amidst numerous struggles to secure social and cultural hegemony in Canada, both church and state frequently employed Euro-Canadian derived sports and games as part of a wider colonial strategy to replace 'traditional' Aboriginal practices with more

secular activities, prompting Forsyth (2005: 44) to further argue that sports and games were "integral" to the Department of Indian Affairs assimilative program.

A brief commentary about residential schools is needed to lend context to the current review; however, a more in-depth analysis of the subject is provided in Chapter Five. According to the historian J.R. Miller (2003), the formation of residential schools in Canada dates back to at least as early as the 1600s, where the Recollets, a male Roman Catholic missionary body, sought to evangelize a group of Algonkian youths in the northeastern woodlands of what is now Ontario. Christian missionaries of various denominations were charged with running these schools in the earliest days with limited financial backing from the federal government, thus contributing to rudimentary learning facilities, deplorable living conditions, and generally poor standards of education. However, the construction of these schools greatly expanded following the passage of the Indian Act in 1876, a later amendment to which made school mandatory for First Nations students. High suicide, death, and disease are now known to have been pervasive in these institutions, an inevitable by-product to the physical, psychological, and sexual abuses that are also known to have been widespread in residential schools across Canada (see Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1996: 309-394).

In Maskwacis, an adhesion to Treaty Six permitted the establishment and maintenance of residential schools, the first of which, a boarding school, opened in 1894 on the Ermineskin reserve and was thus called the Ermineskin boarding school (1894-1991). By 1980, the facility had grown to become the largest Indian school of its kind in Canada, with Aboriginal students from several other reserves in Alberta, Saskatchewan, Métis students, and even some non-Aboriginal students in attendance (ecnationtalk,

2013). Classes in religion were, of course, a mainstay of the school's curricula, as it was the Oblates of Mary Immaculate (OMI), a Roman Catholic sect of Christianity, who headed the facility with limited financial backing from the federal government (Breton, 1968). Music was also encouraged, with at least one former student (Kenneth Wolfe) being awarded a scholarship in 1962 to attend summer music camp at Mount Orford in Quebec for his proficiency on the violin (Breton, 1968: 50).

However, despite growing public awareness about the atrocities incurred by generations of residential school students (see TRC.ca, 2014), relatively little is known about Aboriginal students' experiences of sport and physical activity whilst housed in these institutions.[10] Forsyth (2013) tackled this rather delicate subject matter in a recent book chapter, as well as tangentially in her PhD dissertation (2005), in which she explained that the types of sports and physical activities practiced in residential schools largely corresponded with those practiced within other public schools across Canada, an important distinction being the heightened militarization of student life within an Aboriginal schooling context. For example, the following citation from a Department of Indian Affairs training manual provides an important illustration of how sport might have *looked* for Aboriginal pupils in the early twentieth century. The citation describes the 'Fundamental Standing Position' for student callisthenic exercises in 1910:

> [The Fundamental Standing Position] should correspond to the position of a soldier when at "attention," except that the feet are from 60 to 90 degrees instead

[10] Several references to sport and physical activity are made sporadically throughout the academic literature on residential schools; however, still lacking is an in-depth analysis devoted exclusively to the study of Aboriginal sport in residential schools in Canada. John Bloom's (2000) *To Show What an Indian Can Do: Sports at Native American Boarding Schools* is probably the most definitive text on the subject, but focuses on the American context. David Kirk's (1998) examination of physical education in Australian public schools also affords valuable insight the structure and design of schools in the Commonwealth.

> of at 45, the heels should be together and on the same line, the feet turned out, the knees straight, the body being erect on the hips, which should be drawn slightly inwards, the chest expanded, but the abdomen held well in; the shoulders drawn well backwards and forced downwards so that they are level; the arms hanging naturally by the side in line with the heel; the head must be held erect with the chin in, the eyes looking straight to the front, and the weight of the body should rest on the balls of the feet (cited in Forsyth, 2013: 23).

This description conjures an image of physical education as intensely regulated, controlled, and entrenched in militarism. As Forsyth (2005: 23) explained, "The link between military training and nationalism was unmistakeable, as the drills were designed to replace tribal allegiances with a sense of patriotic duty."

Yet, beyond the actual mechanics of drill training for Aboriginal youths, it is important to note that the very structure and design of residential schools in Canada was oriented towards the militarization of Aboriginal student bodies. Students were made to march everywhere, were forced to line-up for meals, adhere to strict time schedules, and needed to be seen as submitting themselves entirely to the school's authority as part of their everyday rituals (Forsyth, 2013). Russell Modest, for example, was a member of the Cowichan First Nation who also served in the Second World War. In the following excerpt, Modest recalled how his years in the Coqualeetza Residential School in Sardis, British Columbia, prepared him for an eventual career in military service:

> We lined up every morning for whatever, breakfast, lunch, supper, church… So when I entered the military this was nothing new to me, I just blended right in with it and a little easier than some of the white boys who came out of the cities

> who had no inkling of any discipline in the military, if you will. So I was partly prepared. I left the school at age 16 and worked for a couple of years and … the day I turned 18, instead of going to work … in the logging industry … I went to the recruiting office and joined up (cited in Lackenbauer et al., 2009).

These reflections provide at least a cursory glimpse into the rules, regulations, and rituals that structured Aboriginal student life during the first half of the twentieth century. While the post-1951 schooling era ushered in a new emphasis upon competitive amateur sporting practices (Forsyth & Heine, 2008a), the underlying intentions and political philosophy that governed residential schools remained largely in tact across generations of Canadian physical education programing (Forsyth, 2006: 51).

The gendered ordering of sport and games in residential schools has yet to be fully addressed in the literature. In what is perhaps the only study that exists on the subject matter, Ann Hall (2013) noted that physical education for Aboriginal girls during the residential schooling era largely corresponded with the gendered ordering of other (i.e., Euro-Canadian) institutions. Boys were afforded far greater access to sporting equipment, clubs and sports teams, and were provided with lager amounts of leisure time than girls who, on the other hand, were typically confined to indoor spaces and limited to activities such as knitting, playing with dolls, outdoors walks, and later basketball (Hall, 2013: 72-73). This gendered ordering appeared to be consistent with the sport and physical cultural pursuits that were organized through Maskwacis's Ermineskin Boarding School. For example, a review written by Father Peter Breton, an OMI missionary stationed at Ermineskin in the 1950s, summarized the school's educational aims as follows: to train students in the "three R's, English, and practical training for life on the

Reserves, that is, land cultivation and cattle raising for boys, home economics for girls" (Breton, 1968: 21). Breton's report also highlighted the existence of "4H Clubs, Army Cadets, Boy Scouts, Girl Guides, and sports clubs in the line of hockey, ball, curling, etc." (Breton, 1968: 50), however, the details surrounding these activities (i.e., who participated? How often? And when?) were not elaborated upon in the report.

To date, I have discovered little information about the history of Army Cadets among the Maskwacis Cree Nations. According to military historian William Hampson, the formation of youth cadet corps programs in the community dates back to the mid-twentieth century when 'The Hobbema Army Cadet Corps', at the time designated 'the Hobbema Indian Cadet Corps', officially formed on October 14th, 1952 (R. Huculiak, personal files, 2012). The Corps disbanded on October 22nd, 1968, only to again be reactivated for a ten-month period from March 3rd to December 31st, 1975. Known as #2439 19th Alberta Dragoons Army Cadet Corps, the group was sponsored by the 'Catholic Indian League of Canada Hobbema Local' and affiliated with the nineteenth 'Alberta Armoured Car Regiment' (October 14th, 1952), as well as the nineteenth 'Alberta Dragoons' (January 1st, 1955). My review discovered no public record of peoples' actual experiences of sport and drill training within these groups and, as of May 15th, 2008, there remained only one living member from the original 'Army Cadet Corps' residing in the Maskwacis area.[11]

The aggressive colonial context in which Maskwacis's sporting experiences occurred invite important questions about the complex role(s) that sport potentially played in the lives of community members. Many scholars, for example, have cast critical

[11] The information for this paragraph was provided courtesy of Richard Huculiak, who received it by correspondence with William Hampson.

light upon the repressive, colonizing agendas that certain Euro-Canadian sports and games were employed to service in the lives of Aboriginal peoples in Canada (Forsyth, 2005; Kidd, 1983; O'Bonsawin, 2002; Paraschak, 1989, among others). Other scholars, however, have cast sport in a more ambiguous light. As Miller (1996: 179) explained, "former teachers and students agree unanimously that music and sports were the saving features of residential school experience." Indeed, in Maskwacis alone, several athletes went on to record remarkable feats following their initial training in residential school. Ted Hodgson (born 1945), for example, was introduced to the game of ice hockey through the Ermineskin Boarding School (Breton, 1968). In 1966, Hodgson became the stuff of local hockey legends when he scored the Memorial Cup winning goal for the Edmonton Oil Kings, capturing the most coveted prize in Canadian junior hockey. Hodgson later played four games with the National Hockey League's Boston Bruins and a combined 107 games with Cleveland Crusaders and Los Angeles Sharks of the World Hockey Association (legendsofhockey.com, 2014).

Wilton Littlechild (born 1944) is another residential school survivor who acquired several prominent awards for athletics following his experiences at the Ermineskin Boarding School, including the Tom Longboat Award as Canada's top Aboriginal athlete in 1967. Littlechild, moreover, has publicly credited his involvement in sport as the lone saving grace of his residential schooling experience:

> It [residential school] was a tough, traumatic experience, not to mention the abuse. You've heard of the abuses: physical, sexual, mental, spiritual, and cultural ones. […] Of all the abuses experienced, the sexual abuse and witnessing violence was an experience of severe trauma for me. I really had to work on myself, right to

> this day. In fact, I still work on my own healing journey because of what happened to me at residential school. The upside of all this was my survival, which was due in great part to sports. To this day I thank the Creator for exposing me to sport. It was really my vehicle of survival in residential school (Littlechild & Rice, 2011).

Stories like these shed important light upon sport's potential ambiguity within a residential schooling context. As Forsyth (2013: 5) explained, sport can be read as having a somewhat paradoxical impact on Aboriginal students' lives in residential schools:

> …it gave them a brief reprieve from the physically gruelling and highly regulated way of life that characterised most schools, yet this reprieve was part of an assimilative strategy that was used to discipline their 'savage' ways and, in turn, transform them into 'normal' Canadian citizens.

The remaining pages of this chapter shed further light upon the nature of this paradox by critically exploring the emergent trends in the Aboriginal Sport Studies literature.

2.4 Part Three: Emergent Trends in Aboriginal Sport Studies

Aboriginal Sport Studies remains a relatively young and growing body of literature. Apart from one edited collection (Forsyth & Giles, 2013), I am aware of only one scholarly book (Robidoux, 2012) devoted exclusively to the study of Aboriginal sport in Canada. As the editors of *Aboriginal Sport in Canada* explained, "students, established scholars, and the general public must wade through an array of sources in a variety of fields just to formulate a basic outline of the materials available on this topic" (Forsyth & Giles, 2013: 3). Accordingly, literature for this section was collected using mainly the

Sport Discus database and other popular search engines. Specific keywords were used to help identify relevant journal articles and retrieved from the University of Alberta library. Published abstracts and articles included in peer-reviewed conference proceedings were also examined to gain a better handle on the direction of current research in the field.[12] The review, therefore, attempts to analyze, assess, and organize the dominant themes that have guided scholarship to date; however, several articles were inevitably overlooked or omitted from the review.

Following Victoria Paraschak (1989), my review of literature found that research on Aboriginal sport has typically explored the ways in which various colonial structures have set powerful limits upon the experiences of Aboriginal peoples in Canada. Specifically, Paraschak (1989) identified three broad themes that have guided the existing literature. First, Paraschak (1989) explained, scholars have drawn significant attention to the largely stereotypical ways in which Euro-Canadian conceptualizations of 'race' (i.e., group based racial distinctions) have provided an explanatory tool for Aboriginal sporting behaviours. For example, Bruce Kidd's (1983) exploration of the media and biographical accounts of the Mohawk runner Tom Longboat – i.e., one of Canada's most accomplished long distance runners in history - demonstrated the self-serving ways in which Longboat's non-Aboriginal contemporaries interpreted his athletic feats. More specifically, while Longboat's successes were publicly attributed to his possessing 'innate' biological advantages over other, non-Aboriginal competitors, Longboat's

[12] Search terms included: Aboriginal/Native/First Nations sport. Finally, several global accounts of Aboriginal sport were considered to encourage a more complex reading of the themes that are guiding current investigations on this topic, but the Canadian context is privileged.

failures were typically rationalized by equating Aboriginal peoples with various racial and culturally constituted character flaws.[13]

Secondly, Paraschak (1989) described Aboriginal peoples' exploitation in the Euro-Canadian controlled sport industry as a dominant theme in the literature. More precisely, sport studies' scholars have heavily critiqued the ways in which Aboriginal athletes have been used to support the image of white/settler superiority over the 'primitiveness' of Aboriginal populations in Canada. For example, Mike Heine and Kevin Wamsley (1996) explained how, despite being systematically excluded from 'mainstream' sporting events, Aboriginal peoples in Dawson City, Yukon, were almost always included in festivals designed to celebrate the Dominion; however, their inclusion was intended to reflect the cultural superiority of the settler population; i.e., Aboriginal participants were positioned to either the side of "pageantry" or the "ridiculous" in these festivals. Similarly, Courtney Mason (2008) examined the ways in which white tourism executives in Banff National Park utilized 'Indian' imagery as a strategy to market the Park's "natural" landscape to wealthy tourists. For both Mason (2008) and Heine and Wamsley (1996), therefore, exploitation occurred when Aboriginal peoples were included in sport-related events solely for the purposes of projecting an image that was in

[13] In a similar vein, sport studies scholars have documented how Aboriginal lacrosse players were at one time deemed 'professional' by virtue of their race and were thus prohibited from competing against other amateur (white) competitors in major competitions (Fisher, 2002; Morrow, 1989; Vennum, 1994). The alleged biological relationship of race to performance has also been manifest in more subtle fashions, where ideas surrounding race have (seemingly unintentionally) encouraged non-white athletes to pursue certain sports - or positions within a particular sport – rather than others. For example, Chris Hallinan (1991) explained how Aboriginal peoples in Australian rugby have tended to occupy the wide positions, compared to non-Aboriginals who have habitually occupied the central team positions (i.e., positions that are said to demand greater intellectual prowess). The filtering of racialized athletes into particular positions is a phenomenon commonly referred to in the literature as "stacking" and has been most obviously documented in scholarship related to African-American athletes (Coakley, 1995: 249-255).

accordance with Euro-Canadian expectations (i.e. the wild but domesticated "Indian" and wilderness frontiers), and aligned with the interest of capital.[14]

Finally, Paraschak (1989) identified ethnocentric distortion as a dominant theme in the Aboriginal sport studies literature. Indeed, several studies have shown how markers and symbols of Indigeneity have been unilaterally removed from their original contexts, distorted to fit the marketing expectations of dominant (white) populations, and applied as homogenous labels for what are actually diverse groups of Aboriginal peoples in Canada (see O'Bonsawin, 2013; 2006; 2003). For example, Christine O'Bonsawin (2013) explored the offensive manner in which an Inuit inuksuk was used by Canadian Olympic organizers in Vancouver 2010 to promote "a deep appreciation for Canada's indigenous heritage," despite Aboriginal peoples' clear and consistent protests against the emblem's inclusion in the Olympic Games (O'Bonsawin, 2013: 55).[15] Likewise, a 1993 edition of the *Journal of Sport and Social Issues* was devoted exclusively to examining the highly discriminatory uses of Native American mascots, images, and logos in various sport and societal contexts; e.g., the Edmonton Eskimos, the Atlanta Braves, the Washington Redskins (see Wenner, 1993).

Collectively, these critiques, albeit not readily discernable from one another, have drawn important attention to the complex colonial power relations that have shaped,

[14] Relatedly, scholars have shown how Aboriginal imagery and the exceptional performances of 'token' Aboriginal athletes have historically been used to conjure illusions of racial equality and progress on both national and global stages (O'Bonsawin, 2013; 2002). For example, Christine O'Bonsawin (2002) showed how federal politicians used the media's portrayal of the Firth sisters - two Loucheaux-Métis athletes from Inuvik, Northwest Territories – to massage an image of unity, progress, and territorialisation in an era of tense Canadian regionalism. Greg Gardiner's (2003) analysis of the Australian print media's representation of Aboriginal athletes in the 27th Olympiad provides another illustration of this trend. Like O'Bonsawin (2002), Gardiner (2003) observed that Aboriginal success in sport was used to promote an agenda of national unity and racial equality, despite clear evidence to the contrary in a variety of other social realms.

[15] Similarly, O'Bonsawin (2003) described the ways in which a 'traditional' Aboriginal dance that was organized for the 1936 Olympiad celebrations in Berlin, Germany, was framed so as to reflect the triumph of European 'civilization' over Aboriginal 'barbarism'.

commoditized, and set powerful limits upon the development of Aboriginal sport in Canada. Moreover, in framing their investigations, scholars have traditionally abstracted their arguments from a small range of documentary materials; e.g., media sources and other empirical resources produced by a mostly non-Aboriginal population (Forsyth, 2002; Heine & Wamsley, 1996; Kidd, 1983; O'Bonsawin, 2002; Mason, 2008; Paraschak, 1990). Read critically, therefore, the absence of primary materials taking into account Aboriginal voices has directed researchers' attention towards the more repressive (i.e., Euro-Canadian) gaze constituting Aboriginal sport, and steered our focus away from the more constitutive functions that sport and physical culture play(ed) in the lives of Aboriginal peoples in Canada. As Forsyth and Giles (2013: 233) cautioned,

> Archives generally tell the tale of people in positions of power, not the marginalized and dispossessed. Fieldwork, including oral interviews, requires a significant amount of time and is costly – a deterrent for students on limited budgets and researchers who do the best they can to stretch their granting dollars. As a result, Aboriginal people's voices are often fragmented, distorted, muted, or altogether absent.

To be sure, scholars have long alluded to the voices, experiences, and assertions of agency generated through Aboriginal peoples' participation in sport. Most investigations, for example, have at least acknowledged that Aboriginal peoples have inevitably created and consumed sport in ways that did/do not conform to a strongly critical reading of sport's production. Writing about the introduction of Euro-Canadian sport in the Prairie Provinces, for instance, John Dewar (1986) argued that Aboriginal

pupils who were trained in residential schools inevitably interpreted physical education according to their own cultural norms and sensitivities. Dewar (1986: 29) wrote,

> The Cree words for running and dancing have a deeper meaning than their English counterparts. The connotation of running in the Indian culture was that of an uplifting and an offering of the body to the Great Spirit. The concept of muscular Christianity that was espoused by many of the missionaries who established the residential schools was a good fit with the closely related physical and spiritual nature of the Indian. Those teachers who projected this sporting interest were among the more successful in making a contribution towards and establishing rapport with their captive charges.

Dewar's (1986) reflection insinuated that Aboriginal youths had the capacity to subvert both the meaning and, to a lesser degree, the structure of physical culture within residential schools. However, still lacking in most analyses is a theorization of Aboriginal sport that takes into account the more embodied nature of identity, as it is difficult to imagine any child being fully conscious of such intense spiritual emotions.

Similarly, Paraschak (1998) devoted significant attention to documenting the acts of resistance that have accompanied the development of Aboriginal sport in Canada, including: Aboriginal peoples continued practicing of 'traditional' activities *in spite* of a federal order prohibiting them from doing so;[16] the formation of an all-Aboriginal lacrosse tournament in the 1930s following their exclusion from 'amateur' lacrosse tournaments; organized protests against the unauthorized use of Aboriginal symbols and mascots in sport and other related contexts; and, finally, Aboriginal peoples

[16] In Maskwacis, for example, certain ceremonies, such as the Sundance, never seized being performed in spite of this ceremony's near complete prohibition in other First Nations in Canada (Pettipas, 1994: 162).

demonstrations of sovereignty at world championship sporting events. Among other examples (Giles, 2004; Forsyth & Heine, 2008b; Mason, 2010; Paraschak, 1995; Robidoux, 2004; 2006a; 2012), the evidence cited by Paraschak (1989) shows that, as opposed to a purely passive role, Aboriginal peoples in Canada have always used sport as a medium through which to assert their own cultural agency and solidarity irrespective of the forms of discrimination that have set limits upon their sporting experiences.

However, recent critiques of Aboriginal Sport Studies have argued that scholars' habitual framing of Aboriginal 'resistance' in sport as if on a binary axis *against* (or completely severed from) from 'assimilation' has inadequately captured the complexity and embodied nature of colonial struggle (Robidoux, 2004; 2012). In a well-known journal article, for example, Paraschak (1997) used Anthony Giddens (1984) theory of "practical consciousness" to critically examine Aboriginal peoples' divergent sporting experiences of living in the northern vs. southern regions of Canada.[17] The central premise to this framework was that: "lived experiences of groups … lead to naturalized beliefs about reality which differentially 'structure' the possibilities those groups imagine" for themselves (Paraschak, 1997: 2). In other words, how sport is conceived by Aboriginal peoples in the north vs. those living in the southern parts of Canada is reflective of the lived experiences of these communities; i.e., as part of their divergent "practical consciousness." Paraschak (1997) argued, therefore, that Aboriginal peoples living in the southern regions of Canada, in closer proximity to 'mainstream' society, are more likely to have adopted a Euro-Canadian sporting framework (i.e., sport forms and values), whereas Aboriginal peoples living in the north (i.e., where settler encroachment

[17] Precursors to this study include Paraschak (1990) and Paraschak (1995) in which two different Aboriginal-controlled sporting systems were critically analyzed.

has been slower to develop) are more likely to have preserved their traditional sporting practices.

Yet, as Michael Robidoux (2004: 296) pointed out, Paraschak's (1997) principal observation has problematic consequences. Specifically, what constitutes sport for Aboriginal peoples in southern Canada is largely taken for granted without ever questioning whether the same sport could be experienced differently. Read critically, this oversight runs the risk of trapping the discourse of Aboriginal physical culture in the past by making the implicit assumption that Aboriginal peoples who willingly participate in so-called Euro-Canadian sports and games are – either consciously or through hegemony - being complicit in their own colonization. Robidoux (2004) here identified what I believe is perhaps the strongest distinction between the prevailing literature and what I view as an emergent trend. Specifically, the unequal (colonial) power relations reflected in sport's (re)production have habitually occupied the central object of scholars' focus. Questions like: how are Aboriginal peoples and cultures re-presented in Canadian sport? How is Aboriginal sport organized differently than so-called 'mainstream' sport? have guided the prevailing literature. These questions have been explored by reading Aboriginal sport – i.e., its representations, forms, and physical distinctions from mainstream sport - as a *text* reflective of a larger colonial narrative in Canada. Overlooked in these investigations, therefore, have been the subtle subversions, contradictions, and complex meanings generated *within*, rather than in opposition to, the taken for granted category of physical culture known as Euro-Canadian.

In contrast, recent scholarship on Aboriginal sport has complicated this depiction by teasing apart the more nuanced, complex, and potentially divergent meanings

embedded within Aboriginal peoples' sporting experiences. For example, Paraschak (1999: 74-75) advanced a similar critique of the sport studies literature in a subsequent conference presentation for the *North American Society for Sport History* (NASSH),

> …our interest in native peoples as 'the Other' leads us to focus more so on their being 'different', that is to say, how their practices differ from those of anglo-americans. Native involvement in mainstream activities is configured as an assimilative practice, regardless of the values they bring to that activity. Thus we assume that native participants operating according to the "performance principle" in arctic sports [for example] are playing 'traditional' games, while native participants engaged in softball, using cooperative values, are considered to be playing 'mainstream' sports.

Accompanying Parschak's (1999) observation has been new theoretical and methodological approaches that have disrupted the rigid dichotomy of Aboriginal vs. non-Aboriginal physical culture. For example, in another conference presentation, Paraschak (2003) employed the postcolonial theories of Homi Bhabha as a way of re-imagining Aboriginal physical culture in the Northwest Territories (NWT). More specifically, Paraschak (2003) argued that, as opposed to a melting pot analogy, the distinct cultural values that Aboriginal peoples ensconced upon sport in NWT distinguished these practices from those practiced in the more southern parts of Canada, regardless of the cultural origins of the particular sport being practiced.

Similarly, Robidoux (2004) examined the raw racialized discourses permeating Aboriginal-white relations in a youth hockey league in southern Alberta. A combination of ethnographic fieldwork and interview techniques informed his reading of how

Aboriginal youths in the Kainai First Nation experienced ice hockey differently from other, non-Aboriginal youths in the neighbouring towns and cities. Robidoux (2004) framed these discourses according to what he called the "situated realities" of the Kainai First Nation and its surrounding areas; that is, as a localized reading of the particular social, racial, and material context of southern Alberta. In contrast to Paraschak (1997), therefore, Robidoux (2004) demonstrated that Kainai youths' adoption of ice hockey did not necessarily translate into the community's adopting the "practical consciousness" of dominant society. Rather, Robidoux (2004) argued, Aboriginal participants appeared to attach very different meanings and social values to ice hockey than did their non-Aboriginal competitors. Indeed, the discrepancy between Aboriginal vs. Euro-Canadian interpretations of ice hockey was of sufficient force as to actually result in Kainai's youths' expulsion from league play. This, Robidoux (2004) further argued, demonstrated the inequitable power relations that permeated the region's sports infrastructure.

Forsyth and Heine (2008b) discovered a similar incongruence between the 'official' discourses of Aboriginal sport – as articulated in a *Public Use Facilities Study* and the *Winnipeg Free Press* – and the socially mapped experiences of Aboriginal youths in Winnipeg, Manitoba. Specifically, the authors described how Aboriginal youths in Winnipeg effectively manipulated urban space in order to satisfy their own leisure demands:

> ...in spite of the infrastructural obstacles that they [Aboriginal youth] face, and in spite of their marginalization in the city's dominant recreation landscape, Aboriginal youth have the ability to shape and create their own recreational landscapes and practices, particularly by constructing meaningful recreational

> spaces outside the area of recreation validated in dominant discourses that emphasize sports participation. In this way, these Aboriginal youth are able to circumvent the barriers created by the effects of the dominant discourse (Forsyth & Heine, 2008b: 107).

Using a research method that more actively recruited participants' perspectives, the authors discovered that Aboriginal youths had conceived and negotiated urban sport *differently* than what was implied in the city's more 'official' administrative discourses. For both Robidoux (2004) and Forsyth and Heine (2008b), therefore, these differences illustrated a much more complex set of negotiations occurring at the grassroots level; i.e., negotiations that did not square with scholars' top down (textual) framing of Aboriginal sport in Canada.[18]

Finally, Robidoux's (2012) *Stickhandling through the Margins* provided rich insights into the complex negotiations of ice hockey occurring in various First Nation communities across Canada. Similar to military drill, for example, ice hockey was introduced to Aboriginal peoples in Canada by way of the residential schooling system as a strategy to facilitate their assimilation into settler society. However, as Robidoux (2012) contended, First Nations' ice hockey did not develop in complete solidarity with colonial ideals or intentions. Rather, Robidoux (2012: 5) argued, 'Traditional' Aboriginal practices "have imposed themselves on the Euro-Canadian construct of hockey, making hockey a key site of cultural enunciation, not cultural capitulation." In other words, Robidoux (2012) argued that distinct Aboriginal meanings have become encoded within sport's dominant institutional framework; i.e., within the 'margins' of sport's framework,

[18] Robidoux (2006b) used a similar methodological framework to explore how Aboriginal sports imagery and mascots were effectively re-appropriated by Aboriginal peoples in various local contexts.

thus reconfiguring ice hockey as a liminal space within which Aboriginals peoples have effectively struggled and *resisted* assimilation. Robidoux's (2012) text, therefore, revealed a far more complex and fluid interaction between Aboriginal physical culture, localized histories and communities, and larger colonial forces that have influenced First Nations peoples over the past five centuries in Canada.

Alongside other scholarship (Giles, 2004; Forsyth & Heine, 2008b; Paraschak, 2003, among others), Robidoux's (2012) text marked an important analytic shift away from the mostly textual driven focuses on Aboriginal sport in Canada, to analyses more consciously rooted in the complexities of human experience. Still, two interrelated critiques remain of the broader Aboriginal Sport Studies literature: 1) scholars consistent rendering of Aboriginal sport as the product (or text) of colonialism, and; 2) scholars general under-theorizing of our own relationship to the Aboriginal communities that, through our words and actions, we help to (re)create in the academic field.[19] I close this chapter, therefore, with a brief commentary about each of these critiques.

First, with important exceptions (Giles, 2004; Robidoux, 2012; 2004; Forsyth & Heine, 2008b), Aboriginal sport in Canada has been generally theorized in the singular – i.e., as reflections of *one* colonialism – and has emphasized the physical properties that have, historically at least, differentiated 'traditional' Aboriginal sport from so-called 'Western' or 'mainstream' sport. As a consequence, Aboriginal sport in Canada has been rarely theorized with sensitivity to the distinct local-colonial contexts in which sport occurs, or with sensitivity to the unique corpus of agents who, with diverse investments and capabilities, have shaped the opportunities available in First Nation communities. Largely overlooked, therefore, have been the potentially diverse meanings that

[19] Two notable exceptions to this critique include Giles (2005a) and Robidoux (2012).

Aboriginal agents derive through sport (either within or between particular communities). Put differently, the focus upon Aboriginal 'difference' in sport (whether chronicled by a sport's extrinsic properties or by the values through which a particular sport is constituted) has overshadowed the possibility of Aboriginal 'density', implying that Aboriginal peoples are prone to experiencing sport in relatively the same (i.e., homogenous) fashion regardless of the distinct community in which a sport is practiced.

Audrey Giles (2004), for example, documented the range of viewpoints that different agents had ensconced upon the Dene Games in the Northwest Territories, specifically in regards to peoples' understandings of 'tradition'. Giles's (2004) emphasis upon the differential meanings that existed *within* a particular First Nations community marked an important departure from previous explorations focused upon the differences *between* Euro-Canadian and Aboriginal populations.[20] However, in a final analysis, the divergent perspectives that Giles (2004) elucidated so carefully in her ethnographic fieldwork did not bear significant freight upon her reading of Dene sport or 'tradition'. The reason why certain 'traditions' were maintained, Giles's (2004) suggested following her reading of Keesing (1989), stemmed from the Dene community's largely pre-reflexive desire to maintain cultural autonomy from the 'West' by preserving those 'traditions' that exhibited the most obvious physical distinction from those practiced within other (i.e., non-Aboriginal) communities. In this view, therefore, Dene sport was conceived relative to a singular colonial narrative that would be interpreted similarly anywhere in Canada; i.e., the specificity of the Sambaa K'e region, the Nation's unique

[20] Paraschak (1990) also alluded to the divergent perspectives that surrounded the eligibility status of Aboriginal women in the "All-Indian sport system" on the Six Nations Reserve in Ontario.

residents, and the discrepant power relations that exist within the community itself did not, in the end, weigh heavily into Giles's (2004) analysis.

Conversely, Heine (2013) used Pierre Bourdieu's "logic of practice" to explain how Aboriginal peoples in the north – the Inuit and Dene, specifically – practiced sport and games according to their own cultural "meaningfulness," even when played in a more formalized or competitive sport setting. For example, Heine (2013) demonstrated how Aboriginal participants in the Arctic Winter Games (AWG) emphasized cooperative values as well as the functional significance of activities like finger pull and stick pull, which have historically been developed to enhance local hunting and fishing skills. These 'alternative' values and cultural skills, Heine (2013) argued, have been adapted over time to suit the Dene land-based way of life and, as such, they deviate from the more commonly held virtues celebrated in organized sports competition. For Heine (2013), therefore, the "logic of practice" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992) massaged through the AWG dovetailed with the distinctive physical landscape and cultural lifestyles of Aboriginal peoples living in the north, as opposed to being rooted in any kind of pre-reflexive desire to maintain cultural autonomy from the colonial regime.

The framework I propose in the following chapters incorporates key theoretical and methodological insights from what I have identified here as emergent trends in the literature (Forsyth & Heine, 2008b; Giles, 2004; Heine, 2013; Robidoux, 2012; 2006b; 2004). Guided by Pierre Bourdieu's relational sociology, the framework I propose re-directs attention away from the physical properties that differentiate Aboriginal sport from so-called Euro-Canadian sport in Canada, and towards the varied ways in which different social agents have conceived and negotiated Aboriginal sport in distinct First

Nation communities. Specifically, the framework I propose theorizes Aboriginal sport (i.e., the HCCCP) not as a reflection of *one* colonialism, but instead as a key symbolic stake and object of struggle *in* a locally specific 'field of colonial power'. This framework also allows me to address the second critique introduced above; that is, scholars general under-theorizing of our own relationship to the Aboriginal communities that, through our words and actions, we help to (re)create in what Bourdieu (1990) called the 'academic field'.

2.5 Chapter Summary and Concluding Remarks

This chapter provided a review and critique of the Aboriginal Sport Studies literature. My argument, in brief, was that questions surrounding Aboriginal peoples' experiences of sport have been largely overshadowed by investigations into the social structures that have shaped, and set decisive limits upon, the development of Aboriginal sport in Canada. Guided by Pierre Bourdieu's relational sociology, the ensuing chapter proposes four important and interrelated contributions to the literature. First, my research is grounded within a specific First Nation community in central Alberta, Canada. Secondly, my study concentrates analysis upon the hierarchical field positions from which different Aboriginal agents conceive and negotiate sport at a particular moment in time. Thirdly, my study utilizes a series of in-depth, semi-structured, and open-ended interviews with Maskwacis residents and other (Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal) agents in the community as its primary evidence. Finally, my framework demands analytic sensitivity (or 'reflexivity') about the researcher's own socialization, biases, and

investments in this research – an analysis I flesh out in greater detail in Chapters Three and Four of this dissertation.

CHAPTER III.

Theory & Methods

3.1 Introduction

This dissertation's framework constitutes somewhat of a departure from those guiding much of the prevailing literature on Aboriginal Sport Studies. As Chapter Two noted, sport as a tool for servicing a largely repressive, colonizing agenda in the lives of Aboriginal peoples in Canada has been a theme well emphasized in the literature, contributing to a more deterministic portrayal of Aboriginal sport. Recent studies, in contrast, have drawn important attention to the complex acts of resistance asserted within various Aboriginal sporting contexts, including those expressions that have utilized both 'traditional' and Euro-Canadian derived sport forms. In so doing, these latter studies have called into question the 'discourse of difference' rooted in colonialism in which whole genres of Aboriginal physical culture have been all-too-readily dismissed as either a) completely colonizing or b) completely emancipatory based upon their perceived (in)coherence with an allegedly 'sovereign' (i.e., pre-colonial) Aboriginal subject and/or sport form. The tension between these two constructions is that, in one instance, the unequal power relations inherent in *one* colonialism appear to be almost everywhere in Canadian sport (they are *reflected* in its very production), and, in the next instance, these tensions appear to nowhere at all, divorced from the socio-historic and economic-political (i.e., colonial) conditions in which they are contemporarily ensnared.[21]

In this chapter, I attempt to disrupt this tension altogether by fissuring the idea of colonialism itself.[22] Following Pierre Bourdieu's relational sociology (Bourdieu, 1990;

[21] See Bourdieu (1987) for a similar tension between the two dominant renderings of law; i.e., the instrumentalist vs. the formalist perspective.
[22] My fissuring of colonialism into separate but interlocking fields of struggle resembles Chris Andersen's (2014) fissuring of law into separate but interlocking social fields.

1987; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992; Swartz, 1997, among others), I argue that, in Canada, what we normally think of as colonialism is better thought of as a series of separate yet interlocking 'fields' of colonial struggle. While colonialism, and specifically Canada's brand of colonialism, bears certain "homologies" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992: 106) across cultural fields (e.g., themes of white privilege and Aboriginal dispossession exist throughout Canada), I suggest that such resemblances are better thought of as only relationally connected to one another, "as a resemblance within a difference" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992: 106). In this theoretical perspective, therefore, analytic sensitivity must be expressed to the larger (i.e., national) colonial context in which *all* cultural fields exists – i.e., in what Bourdieu might have called the 'field of power' - but in a manner that considers this context's *refraction* (Andersen, 2014) into (and out of) the distinctly local 'cultural fields' in which people struggle.[23]

In support of this framework, I have organized this chapter into two parts. In Part One, I introduce a framework for theorizing Maskwacis, Alberta, as a unique cultural field *in* colonialism, with the HCCCP's meaning(s) signifying an object of struggle therein. The general function of this framework will be to conflate the discourse of colonialism with the (mediated) *lived experiences* of Maskwacis residents and other agents in the field as they conceive, negotiate, and struggle over the HCCCP's localized meanings and functions within the community. Part Two builds upon this framework by outlining the particular research methods I have used to illuminate Maskwacis as a cultural field within a larger 'field of (colonial) power'. These included: a mixture of

[23] Chris Andersen advocated the term "refract" (as opposed to 'mediate', for example) as it "better captures the ways in which the epistemological and ontological relationships between 'concept' and 'empirical context' have been derived" (C. Andersen, personal communication, January 2012). This term also incites a more visual understanding about the complex process through which 'macro' power relations bear freight upon local settings, without constituting them directly.

ethnographic observations, interviewing techniques (both of the formal, semi-structured style, and of the more informal, conversational variety), and textual analysis. The chapter concludes with a critical reflection about the limitations of Bourdieu's framework, including a discussion about the ethical limitations that have shaped this study's conduct.

3.2 Part One: Pierre Bourdieu's Cultural Field

Pierre Bourdieu's framework has informed sport studies scholarship for at least the past two decades, including, for example, within discussions related to boxing gyms (Wacquant, 2004), youth soccer leagues (Swanson, 2009), adventure racing (Kay & Laberge, 2002), high school rugby in Australia (Light & Kirk, 2000), the Olympic Games (Koch & Brown, 2011), among several others. For David Brown (2006), at least part of the reason for Bourdieu's growing popularity in sport studies is that Bourdieu himself devoted significant attention to the study of sport and physical cultural practices (Bourdieu, 1988b; 1984; 1978). Indeed, Bourdieu's seminal text *Distinction* (1984), as well as his research on *Sport and Social Class* (1978), both acknowledged sport as a key sociological issue. Furthermore, Bourdieu's conceptualization of sport as both an institution and practice has informed several investigations into physical culture and the body (see Forsyth & Heine, 2008a; Heine, 2013; Koch & Brown, 2012; MacAloon, 1988; Thorpe, 2009; Tomlinson, 2004, among others). For example, Lisa Swanson (2009) used Bourdieu's framework to investigate the subtle (and often pre-reflexive)[24] ways in which upper-class 'soccer moms' in the United Sates manipulated the terrain of youth sport to preserve the elitist boundaries of what she called the 'field of suburbia'. In addition to economic constraints, Swanson (2009) argued that the struggles surrounding an elite

[24] By pre-reflexive I mean intuitive, subconscious, and naturalized reflections.

squad of adolescent boys (e.g., who participated? who coached? what values were disseminated?) were contested according to a mostly middle-to-upper class 'habitus' – i.e., another of Bourdieu's key theoretical concepts – that excluded *alternative* social values from the sport, most notably those held by working class parents and their children. Soccer, in this way, provided upper class mothers with a symbolically powerful medium through which to reproduce and disseminate their social values (indeed privileges) amongst their sons and in their suburban communities (Swanson, 2009).

In a similar vein, Richard Light and David Kirk (2000) used Bourdieu's framework to analyze how the sport of rugby cultivated hegemonic masculinities among adolescent boys enrolled at a private school in Australia. The authors argued that participation in school rugby exposed the boys to an intensive training regimen in which the toleration of pain and self-sacrifice were cherished above all other values, thus nourishing a 'habitus' that rewarded aggression and masculine domination. The authors further argued that exposure to this training regimen unnecessarily marginalized *alternative* expressions of masculinity and femininity, restricting the boys' overall development and limiting their potential for growth. Significantly, the article highlighted how embodied privileges, gender orders, and unequal social relations are reproduced by discursive regimes focused on sport, education, and the body (Light & Kirk, 2000).

However, despite Bourdieu's increased popularity, still largely underutilized by sport and cultural studies scholars has been his 'field analytic perspective'. David Swartz (1997: 291) explained, "Of all his concepts, field is currently the least well understood and yet the most promising for future sociological work." In short, Bourdieu's 'cultural field' provides a heuristic device for explaining how culture operates at a more

institutional level, enhancing our understanding of culture as a mediating force for class, gender, race, and power relations (Swartz, 1997: 291). As Jen Webb, Tony Schirato, and Geoff Danaher (2002: 21-22) explained, "A cultural field can be defined as a series of institutions, rules, rituals, conventions, categories, designations, appointments and titles which constitute an objective hierarchy, and which produce and authorise certain discourses and activities."

More precisely, Bourdieu argued that each day, stakeholders (which could be either people or institutions) encounter various cultural fields, which, as a collective, comprise the totality known as 'society' or social space (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Each field, therefore, is comprised of a unique corpus of stakeholders (or agents) occupying a series of relational, and hierarchically arranged field-positions. These agents are united, sometimes only, by their belief that the stakes - the "deep structures" of the field (Swartz, 1997: 125) - are worth pursuing in the first place. In Bourdieu's words, therefore, cultural fields consist of:

> A network, or configuration, of objective relations between positions. These positions are objectively defined, in their existence and in the determinations they pose upon their occupants, agents or institutions, by their present and potential situation (situs) in the structure of the distribution of species of power (or capital) whose possession commands access to the specific profits that are at stake in the field, as well as by their objective relation to other positions (domination, subordination, homology, etc.) (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992: 97).

In simpler terms, Bourdieu's field-analysis, like the rest of his sociology, endeavoured to disrupt the more monolithic conceptualizations of culture and society

which he regarded as saturating twentieth century scholarship (Bourdieu, 1990; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992; Swartz, 1997; Webb et al., 2002). Instead, Bourdieu conceived 'society' not as a unified, homogenous, or singular overarching entity, but rather as a series of individual spaces of competition, what he referred to as 'cultural fields'. These 'fields', Bourdieu argued, are relatively distinct social spaces that are each governed by their own distinctive logic, what Bourdieu called 'doxa' – i.e., "a set of core values and discourses which a field articulates as its fundamental principles and which tend to be viewed as inherently true and necessary" (Webb et al., 2002: xi).

'Capital', for Bourdieu, figured as another key analytic concept that he used to help explain how, why, and for what agents in a field struggle (see Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992: 118-120). Importantly, Bourdieu conceptualized 'capital' as existing in both material (e.g., dollars and cents) and symbolic forms (e.g., style, taste for food, command of language, among other distinctions). As in a poker game, Bourdieu argued, agents imbued with varied amounts of capital (poker chips) manoeuver, contest, and invest their resources in ways that best position them to advance their status in the field (the game). Players with a larger stack of poker chips, by extension, hold a relative advantage over other, smaller stacked players in the game and are thus able to pursue more conservative betting strategies. Conversely, players with a smaller stack of poker chips (e.g., fewer economic, social, and/or cultural resources) are relatively disadvantaged in the game and are thus pressured into taking bigger risks in order to enhance their field position (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992: 98-100). Collectively, therefore, 'field' and 'capital' helped Bourdieu to explain the complex relationship

between objective social structures and everyday practice, and further encouraged the view of social practice as productive; i.e., all agents participate in 'the game'.

However, Bourdieu did not conceive social practice (i.e., agents viewpoints or 'betting strategies') as taking place autonomously from the field's structure. Rather, Bourdieu understood agents' activities as intimately tied to their inherited capital (i.e., field position) and the historical and material conditions to which they have been exposed over time. Bourdieu's edifice 'habitus', therefore, was introduced to accommodate this observation and as a way to help him transcend the traditional sociological antimony between 'structure' vs. 'agency' (or 'subjectivism' vs. 'objectivism') (Swartz, 1997: 52). Habitus, in short, designates an agent's (or population's) "way of being," "habitual state," "predisposition," "tendency," "propensity," and "inclination" to act/react within cultural fields (Bourdieu, 1977: 214). Bourdieu (1977: 78-79) explained,

> In practice, it is the habitus, history turned into nature, i.e. denied as such, which accomplishes practically the relating of these two systems of relations, in and through the production of practice. The 'unconscious' is never anything other than the forgetting of history which history itself produces by incorporating the objective structures it produces in the second nature of the habitus.

For Bourdieu, therefore, habitus constitutes the social embodied: "social reality exists, so to speak, twice, in things and in minds, in fields and in habitus, outside and inside of agents" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992: 127-8).

An important corrollarly to Bourdieu's argument that social agents internalize our external social relations is that cultural fields are spaces in which the "misrecognition" (Bourdieu, 1990) of power is a structural feature. In other words, that agents typically see

their surroundings as the product, or extension, of "the natural order of things," rather than as the product of a particular kind of social and historical struggle, permits the wielding of what Bourdieu's called "symbolic violence" (see Webb et al., 2002: 24-26). Bourdieu (1998: 17) explained,

> [symbolic violence is violence] wielded with tacit complicity between its victims and its agents, insofar as both remain unconscious of submitting to or wielding it … the people involved are manipulated as much as they manipulate. They manipulate even more effectively the more they are themselves manipulated and the more unconscious they are of this.

I will return focus to this concept in later chapters, specifically as related to my own 'habitus' and 'symbolic violence' in Maskwacis; i.e., a context in which, as a Euro-Canadian male, I was never formally socialized. For now, however, my purpose is to demonstrate how all three of Bourdieu's edifices - field, capital, and habitus - are relationally connected in the sense that one generates the others: "It is their combination that produces practice" (Swartz, 1997: 141).

In his introduction to Bourdieu's 'reflexive' sociology, Loïc Wacquant (1992: 26) provided the following anecdote to illustrate the manner in which all three of Bourdieu's key edifices inform social practice:

> A middle-class academic who has never been in a ghetto gym or attended fights in a small club can hardly, on first look, grasp the pugilistic interest … that leads subproletarian youngsters to value and wilfully enter into the self-destructive occupation of boxing. Conversely, a high-school dropout from the inner city cannot apprehend the reason behind the intellectual's investment in the arcane

> debates of social theory, or his passion for the latest innovations in conceptual art, because he has not been socialized to give them value.

Wacquant's (1992) example demonstrates the 'fish out of water' syndrome experienced by social agents when traversing social spaces (i.e., cultural fields) in which they have not been socialized. The middle class academic bearing witness to the gym fight for the first time acts from a foundation of learned experience (i.e., habitus) that mediates poorly within this new environment. In other words, the embodied capital celebrated in a boxing gym calibrates differently than in the world of academia, which has its own, more 'refined', scholastic capital at stake.

The consequence to viewing culture and society in these terms is the relative scrutiny that gets placed upon specific social spaces (i.e., fields), the regularities or rules therein, and the varied ways in which diverse social agents conceive and negotiate these spaces in relation to their personal histories and differential status or field position. Bourdieu, therefore, presented cultural fields as a "way of thinking" relationally, calling attention to the underlying power relationships that exists between social agents (see Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992: 224-235). As Bourdieu explained, constructing a field:

> requires and enables us to make a radical break with the substantialist mode of thought (as Ernst Cassirer calls it) which tends to foreground the individual, or the visible interactions between individuals, at the expense of the structure relations – invisible, or visible only through their effects – between social positions that are both occupied and manipulated by social agents which may be isolated individuals, groups or institutions (Bourdieu, 1993: 29).

This approach has important consequences for the critique of sport studies literature discussed in Chapter Two. Specifically, Bourdieu's framework diverts attention away from sport's extrinsic properties (i.e., the object), and redirects the researcher's focus towards the underlying power relations between social agents that constitute sport (or understandings of that sport) as legitimate. Aboriginal sport, in other words, is framed not as a mirror reflection of a pre-existing colonialism (e.g., Euro-Canadian vs. 'traditional' Aboriginal sport), but as an active and dynamic process through which colonial power is re-constituted within cultural fields. As Bourdieu (1978: 826) explained, "…*the social definition of sport* is an object of struggles…" (Bourdieu, 1978: 826)

Importantly, however, Bourdieu framed cultural fields as spaces that are influenced by the social struggles of other, more powerful cultural fields. For example, in what Bourdieu (1993; 1984) called the 'field of cultural production', social agents (such as artists, writers, and museum curators) struggle for varieties of *cultural* and *symbolic* capital; i.e., the "degree of accumulated prestige, celebrity, consecration or honour," and "forms of cultural knowledge, competences or dispositions" (Johnson, 1993: 7). Whereas a highly ranked agent in the 'economic field' (Bourdieu, 1983) may afford the purchase or commissioning of a prestigious art piece, thus altering artistic output, Bourdieu (1993; 1984) demonstrated that the 'field of cultural production' is a field governed by the virtue of "art for art's sake" over the pursuit of financial profit. Hence, the struggling artist who displays her artwork in discrete cultural venues (or not at all, for that matter), and who values the pursuit of art over the pursuit of money will, according to the logic of the field, rank higher than the populist artist who succumbs to the temptations of producing 'tacky' art for the purposes of mass consumption. Nevertheless, the fact that economic capital

(e.g., funding) persuades artists to produce certain genres of artwork illustrates a degree of relative interconnectivity between the two cultural fields. As such, Bourdieu argued that cultural fields are *semiautonomous* entities whose autonomy (or relative immunity from the struggles occurring within other cultural fields) depends upon their overall status within the 'meta'-field that he termed 'the field of power', which he defined as a "transhistorical structure" representative of the "fundamental opposition of the division of labour of domination" across all society (cited in Wacquant, 1993: 24).

The 'field of power' provided Bourdieu with a heuristic device for explaining how conceptually broad institutions – such as the state, for example - bear freight upon the structure of relations within virtually *all* cultural fields, but without necessarily determining, defining, or constituting agents' struggles directly. Bourdieu explained,

> the external determinations that bear on agents situated in a given field (intellectuals, artists, politicians, or construction companies) never apply to them directly, but affect them only through the specific mediation of the specific forms and forces of the field, after having undergone a re-*structuring* that is all the more important the more autonomous the field, that is, the more it is capable of imposing its specific logic, the cumulative product of its particular history (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992: 105-106).

Bourdieu expressed preference for the term 'field of power' (as opposed to dominant class, for example) to emphasize the 'relational' properties of power; i.e., as a reminder that members of the so-called dominant class are not holders of a thing we call power, but are rather imbued with species of power (or capital) through the struggles occurring within cultural fields (Swartz, 1997: 136; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992: 76).

To carry out field-analyses, Bourdieu identified three key and interrelated steps (see Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992: 104-105). Importantly, these steps are not concrete manoeuvres that must be completed in sequence (or even at all) in field-animated analyses. Conceptualized for this study, the three steps are as follows: 1) analyze Maskwacis's position vis-à-vis space, time, and national (colonial) context in Canada (what Bourdieu called the field's position relative to the 'field of power'); 2) identify the hierarchical positions of different agents in the field, specifically as related to the HCCCP (what Bourdieu called "the objective structure of the relations between the positions occupied by the agents"), and; 3) locate the disposition (i.e., habitus) of the field's agents, and, most notably, the 'position' and 'disposition' of the researcher himself.

For this study, the 'field of power' means situating Maskwacis, as a cultural field, within a larger Canadian state 'meta-narrative' (i.e., one 'field of colonial power'), but in terms that emphasize the state's refraction into the unique space, place, time, and lived experiences of Maskwacis community members. For example, national policies such as the Indian Act, social and political regulations related to First Nation farming, cultural and religious practices, economic development, educational procedures (including former residential schools in Canada), among other state-sponsored activities, have contributed to a general disparity between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal populations in Canada. These disparities is to what we traditionally make reference in discussions of colonialism, or more regularly, *colonial history*. Framing Maskwacis as a cultural field vis-à-vis the 'field of power', therefore, requires analytic sensitivity to the ways in which the community's localized practices interact with broader national (and increasingly globalized) forces – a task reserved for Chapter Five of this dissertation.

In keeping with Bourdieu's ontological precepts (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992: 26-35), I have adopted a mixed-methodological framework to accommodate these 'steps', the details of which I outline below and also in Chapter Four.

3.3 Part Two: Research Methods (The Nuts and Bolts)

As Chapter One noted, the impetus for this research stemmed from a series of informal experiences and personal interactions I shared with Maskwacis residents as a youth lacrosse coach and regular visitor to the community. In academic parlance, therefore, the study emerged from a series of "naturally occurring" (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007: 99) oral accounts and conversational interviews with community leaders, residents, and other key gatekeepers in the community.[25] The nature of these experiences was such that they illuminated my understanding of Maskwacis and informed my (desired) relationship to the field. Furthermore, these experiences motivated both the direction and general framing of this dissertation's methods, particularly in regards to the study's heavy emphasis upon interview data.

Formal Interviews, Recruiting, and Sampling Techniques

A total of 28 formal, semi-structured interviews with Maskwacis residents and other stakeholders comprised the primary evidence for this dissertation. Characteristics of this style of interview included: the researcher led the interview, questions were open-ended and contained a mixture of both directive and non-directive questions, and the type

[25] Characteristics to this style of interview include: primarily non-directive, spontaneous type questions, and useful for understanding the overall research questions as well as providing important insight into other research-related subject matters (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007: 99).

of information collected was in-depth (Gray, 2009: 374).[26] The technique's strength, as Michael Patton (2002: 348) explained, is that "open-ended questions … offer the persons being interviewed the opportunity to respond in their own words and to express their own personal perspectives." Importantly, all participants included in this study possessed some form of investment in the community's youth culture and, by extension, in the HCCCP's direction and objectives. While this selection criterion may seem broad, it is consistent with Bourdieu's (1993: 46) description of a field's stakeholders as have "nothing in common" beyond their participation in a struggle to impose meaning upon an object or stake in a cultural field. As such, I was particularly interested in recruiting interviewees from a wide range of class, race, and gendered backgrounds in the hopes of maximizing my understanding of the field's complexity.

Participant recruitment and 'formal' interviews commenced during May 2012 and continued until December 2013, following almost four years of ethnographic fieldwork and relationship building in Maskwacis. Participants were recruited through a purposive sampling technique. For example, in the earliest stages, a common snowball technique was pursued to locate participants. Chris Graton and Ian Jones (2004: 103) explained that, in snowball sampling, "you locate your initial participants, and these initial participants identify further potential participants themselves." Initial participants were referred to the researcher by 'gatekeepers' and 'sponsors', both of which are terms of reference for person(s) that influence (either positively or negatively) the researcher's access to the population he/she wishes to investigate. While sponsors tend to be those individuals occupying official titles in the community, gatekeepers refer to those individuals in

[26] Chris Graton and Ian Jones (2010: 287) described this interview as "following a series of predetermined questions, but with the option of developing additional questions during the interview depending upon the responses given."

possession of more informal types of social capital (see Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007: 46-49). Building strong relationships in Maskwacis was a critical first phase of this research and will be further elaborated upon in Chapter Four. A basic list of interviewees included in this research and their relationship to the field is outlined below:

The Mainstream Media

Journalists played a unique role in the HCCCP's development by communicating the program's success to broader audiences both in, and outside of, the field. The narratives they supported (and the styles in which such narratives were reported) also impacted the development of other sporting programs in the community.

Band Councillors

Band councillors played an important role by shaping public policy and by channelling (or stifling) the delivery of resources to sport programs.

Schoolteachers and Physical Educators

Schoolteachers and physical educators expressed strong investment in the types of activities to which Maskwacis youths have access.

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP)

The RCMP held a unique stake in Maskwacis and the HCCCP in the twofold sense of policing and developing youths through sport.

Sport and Recreation Administrators

Sport and recreation administrators held a unique stake in the HCCCP in the sense that they struggled with (and often against) other sport-related programs in the region. They also provided valuable insight into the

complex variables that have shaped the development of Maskwacis sport over time.

Parents

All parents interviewed for this study had their children enlisted in Maskwacis's sport and recreation programming, including (but not always and/or exclusively) the HCCCP. Parents offered valuable insight into the principal outcomes they desired from their child's participation in sport.

Youth (formerly) enrolled in the HCCCP

As cadets themselves, youths were both the object and subject of the HCCCP's 'legitimate' function in Maskwacis. Youths also provided valuable insight into their social worlds and the principal objectives they hoped to achieve through sport. For ethical reasons, all youths interviewed for this study were over the 18-years-old (see discussion below).

Miscellaneous

This category of agent included workers, residents, and many non-Aboriginal sporting administrators who were peripherally affiliated with the HCCCP and/or other sport and recreation programs in Maskwacis. These individuals provided valuable insight into the social setting and general context in which the HCCCP emerged.

Importantly, the above individuals were not bound to a single field position. Interviewees were, of course, found to occupy multiple social positions in Maskwacis; e.g., parents were also teachers, band councillors were also sport administrators, among other examples. Emphasis should be placed, therefore, upon the field's fluidity and upon

the complexity of individuals' role(s) therein. Relatedly, a limitation to this style of interview is the amount of time, labour, and human resources that are required for its being carried out. John Creswell (2003: 164) explained, "In many experiments … only a convenience sample is possible because the investigator must use naturally formed groups (e.g., a classroom, an organisation, a family unit) or volunteers as participants in the study," and the time and labour required to recruit and interview participants is substantial. Given this limitation, generalizations about agents' perspectives cannot be substantiated by any statistical representations. Rather, emphasis should be placed upon the exploratory nature of this research and upon the fact that population representation was not its principal objective. However, an important strength of this approach, as Sherri Jackson (2003: 58) noted, is that "[interviews] allow the researcher the greatest amount of flexibility in asking questions and far more leeway in response interpretation [than do other survey techniques]." Follow-up interviews were also conducted with several participants as a means to clarify agents' perspectives and to pursue emergent themes, which added further time and labour costs to this research.

Three sample interview-guides are included as Appendix D to demonstrate the general tone and trajectory of the study's interviews; however, interviews varied considerably from participant-to-participant and inevitably departed from the script. A formal 'list of participants' is also included as Appendix E, as is a list of participants' field positions. Importantly, ensuring participants' anonymity meant having to disguise aspects of peoples' identity when requested; e.g., name, age, and editing out parts of the transcript that might potentially reveal an individual's true identity. Despite limitations,

however, attempts were made throughout the study to honour the specificity that is demanded of Bourdieu's theoretical framework.

Textual Materials and Data Analysis

A wide variety of literature on Canadian history (the West specifically), government documents and journalistic accounts of Maskwacis (specifically as related to the community's current social context), and other ancillary resources related to population trends in the area were considered throughout this dissertation. Examples of these materials included: scholarly research related to the broader national political (colonial) context in Canada (e.g., the 'field of power'), and local documentation and scholarly research related to Maskwacis's social context. Several informal documents, such as the HCCCP's official web page, various program manuals, and promotional materials were also reviewed throughout this study to provide insight into these same issues, as well into the specific details surrounding the HCCCP itself; i.e., its history, public framing, and 'official' objectives in Maskwacis. My analysis of these materials was enhanced (and guided) by community members' own reflections about the unique, field-specific properties of Maskwacis relative to other communities in Canada.

All data (observational, interview and textual) was analyzed using a broadly conceived strategy of triangulation. Robert Stake (2005: 454) explained, "Triangulation has been generally considered a process of using multiple perceptions to clarify meaning, verifying the repeatability of an observation or interpretation." Though the more common definition of triangulation suggests that a kind of "validity" will be achieved (Hamersley & Atkinson, 2007: 184), following Jane Ritchie (2003: 44), the value of triangulation

rests not in its ability to infer "validity," but in its potential to extend analysis through the use of multiple perspectives and different readings. Norman Denzin and Yvonna Lincoln (2005: 5) explained, "...the use of multiple methods, or triangulation, reflects an attempt to secure an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon in question," not necessarily a correct or more "valid" one. This view is consistent with what Winona Stevenson described as a traditional Cree perspective in that "truth (validity) or *tapwê* is bound in the integrity of the person sharing knowledge," not in its testability (cited in Kovach, 2009: 148). Exploring multiple data sets, therefore, afforded an appropriate strategy for gaining insight into Maskwacis's history and current social context. However, to echo Michael Robidoux (2012), this research presents only mediated accounts of peoples' experiences that have, of course, been altered by the study's context, the participants' memory, and by the researcher's own 'personal', 'academic', and 'intellectual biases' (see Chapter Four).

Ethical Considerations

Both the Samson Cree Nation's Band Council and the University of Alberta's Research Ethics Board (REB) approved this dissertation's protocol (see Appendix A and B, respectively).[27] Accordingly, the following research practices guided my interviews:

- All participants were over the age of 18-years, which meant that no vulnerable persons were interviewed during this study's completion; i.e., a practice that is consistent with REB's guiding principal of 'respect for vulnerable persons'.

[27] According to the REB, ethical research is conducted within a "moral imperative" that translates into six guiding principles (Rogers, 2007). These include: 1) respect for human dignity, 2) respect for free and informed consent, 3) respect for vulnerable persons, 4) respect for privacy and confidentiality, 5) respect for justice and inclusiveness, and 6) balancing harms and benefits.

Importantly, this decision was arrived at in consultation with Maskwacis leadership groups (mainly Samson's band council), who advised that parents might feel uncomfortable by my soliciting interviews with their children, especially given the race, gender, and time restrictions of this research project.

- Prior to conducting any formal interviews, I typically conducted at least one recruitment interview (either over the telephone or in person) at which the participant's ethical and legal rights were clarified.
- Participants were provided a 'recruitment letter' and 'consent form' in which the study's objectives and the participant's ethical rights were explained (see attached ethics protocol and consent form, Appendix B and Appendix C, respectively).
- Informed consent was sought by making aware the following: I am a researcher at the University of Alberta, the aims and objectives of my research, what will happen during the interview (e.g., types of questions that will be asked), that participants are free to withdrawal from the interview at any time, and that, although their identities can be kept confidential (unless otherwise requested or permitted), the results of this research may be presented in various public, academic, and community forums.
- Participants were given the opportunity to remove their transcript (or parts of it) from the study for a period of at least two weeks following the date of the formal interview; however, accommodations were made to all participants wishing to edit, clarify, and/or remove sections of their transcript at any point throughout the study's write-up.

- Participants were assigned pseudonyms (which were selected at random by the researcher) to disguise their true identity, unless otherwise requested or permitted by the participant. See Appendix E for a list of participants.
- Formal interviews were recorded with a digital audio-recorder and transcribed by the researcher (Jordan Koch). Certain emotions (e.g., laughter, anger, shock, among others) were also transcribed in an effort to retain the overall tone and non-discursive communications that permeated the interviews.
- Transcripts were occasionally edited for clarity purposes, usually at the request of a participant; however, an effort was made to maintain the verbatim transcript whenever possible. Importantly, at no point was a transcript's integrity or particular excerpt's meaning ever compromised for editorial purposes.
- Digital transcripts were transferred to a USB storage device and secured in a locked space with the researcher.
- Only participants, the researcher, and his supervisor (Dr. Jay Scherer) were allowed access to the original transcripts and the primary audio recordings, unless otherwise requested or permitted by the participant.
- Any information that the researcher suspected as potentially compromising of an individual's good standing in the community was vetted through the interviewee prior to its inclusion in the final text, or omitted altogether.

Finally, Chapter Nine of the Tri-Council Policy Statement for *Research involving the First Nations, Inuit and Métis People of Canada* (TCPS), as well as Indigenous Methodologies literature was consulted throughout this research (Battiste, 2008; Kovach, 2009; Smith, 1999; among others). In accordance with the general directives of these

texts, I have invested significant time and energy trying to learn the unique protocols and cultural sensitivities required to act ethically in Maskwacis; or, in other words, trying to learn *what ethics actually looks like from the perspectives of my participants*. This task required ongoing communication with Samson leadership, various Aboriginal mentors, and other community members. Moreover, this task required my sharing with participants various ideas, arguments, and draft copies of my research as it evolved in the field. As the Mi'Kmaw scholar Marie Battiste (2008: 503) explained,

> Above all, it is vital that Indigenous peoples have direct input into developing and defining research practices and projects related to them. To act otherwise is to repeat that familiar pattern of decisions being made for Indigenous people by those who presume to know what is best for them.

The cultural biases associated with this dissertation are analyzed in greater detail in Chapter Four, as are the various ethical strategies that I have adopted to help mitigate their impact. The basic theoretical limitations are outlined below.

Theoretical Limitations: Bourdieu and the 'Logic of Reproduction'

Bourdieu's most provocative insights on the intermingling of habitus, capital, and field involved his studies on French society in the 1960s and 1970s in which he sought to show the intimate relationship between peoples' class background, for example, and things like art, music, and food preferences (see Bourdieu, 1988a; 1984). In *Distinction*, for example, Bourdieu's (1984) used a wide spectrum of research data to reveal how the largely pre-reflexive judgements executed in everyday living, such as which sports individuals prefer, operate as species of power (i.e., capital) that differentiate people

according to lines of class, region, and family backgrounds. However, Bourdieu's arguments were enhanced by the fact that his most celebrated texts concentrated upon highly differentiated settings, and were supported by a vast range of statistical data (Bourdieu, 1993; 1988a; 1984; Swartz, 1997: 135). Applied to a smaller-scale research context (such as Maskwacis, for example), Bourdieu's more structuralist leanings have been accused of locking social agents into particular 'dispositions' (or habitus) based upon whatever field-position they occupy, by extension downplaying agents' propensity for change (Apple, 1985; Giroux, 1983; Gorder, 1980; Jenkins, 1982; Swartz, 1997).

For example, Jennifer Hargreaves (1994: 21) criticized Bourdieu's conceptual framework as being overly deterministic in the context of women's sport, arguing that: "Bourdieu tends to treat people as if they are properties of the system and fails to appreciate how cultural fields … contain the capacity for people/women to resist and change social/gender relations." David Swartz (1997: 121) echoed this critique and explained, "fields capture struggle within the logic of reproduction," and, as such, they are principally concerned with how society's "elite" reproduce their power through (mostly) unconscious choices and social activities, thus neglecting to consider how power is potentially contested and transformed by society's dominated classes. Michel de Certeau (1984: 59) summarized this critique in *The Practice of Everyday Life*:

> Bourdieu's texts are fascinating in their analyses and aggressive in their theory. In reading them, I feel myself captive to a passion that they simultaneously exacerbate and excite. They are full of contrasts. Scrupulously examining practices and their logics – in a way that surely has had no equivalent since Mauss

– the texts finally reduce them to a mystical reality, the *habitus*, which is to bring them under the law of reproduction.

Despite critiques, scholars from across disciplines have praised Bourdieu for the relative depth and scrutiny pursued in his analyses. Regarding Bourdieu's studies on Kabylia, Algeria,[28] for example, de Certeau (1984) praised Bourdieu's analysis for introducing a heightened level of complexity, identifying a series of patterns, contours, and internal contradictions surrounding the community's matrimonial strategies. Given the complexity of these "tactical" manoeuvrings, however, de Certeau (1984) argued that Bourdieu should be humbled by his inability to possess a set of articulated rules which were not themselves being outmanoeuvred and outwitted by operations more cunning than his own. De Certeau (1984) thus critiqued Bourdieu for doing his best to escape this insight by "imprisoning these devices behind the bars of the unconscious and to deny, through the fetish of the *habitus*, what reason would have to have if it is to be more than *la raison du plus fort*" (de Certeau, 1984: 60).

In Bourdieu's defense, David Brown (2006: 163) argued that "... Bourdieu's conceptual work (as well as the work of others who draw upon it) has evolved considerably in the 1990s into a more reflexive, relational, and multi-dimensional perspective." Specifically, Brown (2006) argued that Bourdieu's framework assumes multiplicity and the potential for agents to incite both symbolic and material changes to the social order. Brown (2006), therefore, employed Bourdieu's theoretical tools for studying the gendered body in sport, focusing specifically upon sport's *subversive*

[28] See Bourdieu (1977; 1990) for discussions on his research in Algeria.

potential within patriarchal settings.[29] David Swartz (1997: 123) echoed these sentiments and explained, "Fields are sites of resistance as well as domination, one being relationally linked to the other." This reading of Bourdieu resembles de Certeau's (1984) own conceptualization of power as a sort of double-bond helix that acts (through what de Certeau called 'strategies') and reacts (through what he called 'tactics') against itself in a reciprocal and intimately relational fashion.

In tune with these observations, this dissertation embraces Bourdieu's view of cultural fields as simultaneously sites of resistance and domination. Moreover, I employ the term 'interest' as an alternative to 'habitus' to describe participants' often-divergent commitments in Maskwacis. I find this term better suited to Maskwacis's relatively small-scaled social context and to the study's limited number of participants.[30] As a consequence to this deployment, however, the researcher must also account for his personal 'interests' and social position vis-à-vis the field of study. Indeed, like all social agents, my voice (via this dissertation, for example) constitutes my own participation in the struggle to control the HCCCP's 'legitimate' definition in Maskwacis. Bourdieu (1990) insisted that the 'biases' associated with the researcher's personal, academic, and intellectual interests be acknowledged throughout all phases of a research project, an assertion that distinguished Bourdieu's empirical sociology from that of his

[29] David Brown (2006: 177) further argued, "...sportswomen (and sportsmen) undoubtedly can come to embody the generative potential for symbolic and material challenges or *subversions* to the naturalized ascriptions and legitimations of the gender order."

[30] Furthermore, Bourdieu also used the term 'interest' as a way to "break with the 'enchanted' vision of social action that clings to the artificial frontier between instrumental and expressive or normative behaviour and refuses to acknowledge the various forms of hidden, nonmaterial profits that guide agents who appear 'disinterested'" (Wacquant, 1992: 25-6).

contemporaries (see Callewaert, 2006)[31] - and, incidentally, the matter to which I now turn my attention in the following chapter.

3.4 Chapter Summary and Concluding Remarks

This chapter outlined the Theory & Methods that have guided this dissertation. The framework contributes to the Aboriginal Sport Studies literature in several interrelated areas: First, applying a field-analytic perspective to Maskwacis promotes investigation into the complex power relations that differentiate a field's agents, thus focusing attention upon peoples' capacity to inform the production of Aboriginal sport (i.e., the HCCCP) at a particular moment in time – that is, at an *instance* of colonialism. This application departs from previous scholarly framings in which emphasis was placed upon the form, representational features, or extrinsic properties of Aboriginal sport in Canada. Secondly, emphasis is placed upon the generative strategies employed by Maskwacis's residents as they conceive and negotiate the HCCCP, thus marking an important contribution to the literature by positioning all agents in a field as active producers of culture, as opposed to passive inheritors. Thirdly, my use of this framework extends the network of discussions surrounding the internal-to-the-community complexity and ongoing struggles that shape the development of Aboriginal sport in Canada as they occur within distinct First Nation communities. Fourthly, this study's framework dovetails with a research methodology that includes in-depth, semi-structured interviews with various agents in Maskwacis; which, at present, is a largely underutilized

[31] For Callewaert (2006), Bourdieu's emphasis upon 'reflexivity' distinguished his empirical sociology from the work of his contemporaries, such as Michel Foucault. Wacquant (1992: 36) explained, "If there is a single feature that makes Bourdieu stand out in the landscape of contemporary social theory, it is his signature obsession with reflexivity."

methodology in the literature. Finally, applying a field-analytic perspective in Maskwacis demands the researcher's heightened 'reflexivity' about his own socialization and personal stake in: the community, the 'academic field', and in relation to broader colonial power structures – a matter to which I now turn my attention.

CHAPTER IV.

Methodological Reflections

> *My mother said that we are all pieces of clay. Upon each of us are the fingerprints of the different people we have met in our lives and the experiences we've shared. Always remember that your actions in Hobbema will be interpreted through these fingerprints. Keep that in mind and be mindful of the sorts of fingerprints you want to leave on others.*
>
> Bruce Barry, *personal communication*, January 10, 2012.

4.1 Introduction

As Chapter Three noted, Pierre Bourdieu considered theory as a type of methodology in and of itself (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992: 26-35). This understanding of theory *as* method is consistent with what Cree scholar Margaret Kovach (2009) described as an Indigenous research framework, the purpose of which is to illustrate the fusion of both knowledge system and method: "An Indigenous research framework acts as a nest," Kovach (2009: 42) explained, "encompassing the range of qualities influencing the process and content of the research journey." Following Bourdieu (1990), Kovach (2009), and Indigenous Methodologies literature, this chapter endeavours to unpack the 'journey' out of which this dissertation emerged, paying particular attention to the social biases that shaped this study's conduct. The chapter's discussion, therefore, is supported by a variety of ethnographic fieldnotes that were taken at various points during my academic program.

In his review of Bourdieu's work, David Swartz (1997: 270) posed the question: "How can one practice a social science – itself a symbolic enterprise – and yet not reproduce the effects of social distinction Bourdieu so vigorously denounces?" Put differently, Swartz (1997) asked: how is it possible for Bourdieu to practice a symbolic

enterprise (such as sociology) and not, in the end, simply reproduce the effects of social distinction inherent in any symbolic practice? The substance of this question is of particular concern in the context of research programs involving Aboriginal communities whose knowledge, cultures, and traditions have, historically, been exploited by Euro-Canadian researchers (among a vast literature see Battiste, 2008; Kovach, 2009; Menzies, 2001; Smith, 1999). In this chapter, therefore, I address this question by practicing what Bourdieu (1990) called "reflexive" sociology. Specifically, Bourdieu (1990) argued that every sociological inquiry requires a simultaneous inquiry upon the individual researcher, as well as on the social conditions under which his/her academic craft is made possible. He thus identified three main 'biases' upon which researchers' are to critically reflect throughout their work, which include: 1) the social origins (class, gender, ethnicity, etc.) of the individual researcher, what Bourdieu called *personal bias*; 2) the position of the researcher vis-à-vis his/her status in the 'academic field', that is, the researcher's *academic bias* as manifested "in the objective space of possible intellectual positions offered to him or her at a given moment, and, beyond, in the field of power;" and 3) *Intellectual bias*, which Bourdieu (1990) described as the researcher's inclination to treat the social world "as a set of significations to be interpreted rather than as concrete problems to be solved practically" (Wacquant, 1992: 39). These 'biases', like Bourdieu's entire sociology, were conceived as *relational* entities; i.e., they are the 'fingerprints' that simultaneously shape our lives, our research, and our relationships with one another.

In addressing these biases, I have divided this chapter into three parts. In Part One, my *personal biases* are described as they emerged while entering the 'field' of Maskwacis. Specifically, the section describes my apprehensions as a white male

researcher seeking to build relations in a First Nations community of which I was not a part and had never been formally socialized. Part Two builds upon this discussion by analyzing the ethical considerations associated with my 'academic bias' as refracted through the broader history of non-Aboriginal researchers conducting research within (or usually 'on') Aboriginal communities. Lastly, Part Three describes the *intellectual bias* that shaped this study's conduct, including a discussion about the current challenges faced by university graduate students seeking to forge ethical collaborations with Aboriginal communities in Canada. The types of strategies I employed to help mitigate these biases are also discussed throughout this chapter, most notably as they relate to my interactions with Samson Cree Nation's band council, the HCCCP, and other agents in the community.

4.2 Part One: Personal Bias

In August 2008, I visited Maskwacis for the first time as youth lacrosse coach. Headlines like: 'Gunfire Rings through Hobbema' (Stolte, 2008), 'Gangsters Kill Young Mom' (Lillebuen, 2008a), 'Toddler Latest Victim of Reserve Malaise' (Simmons, 2008: B1), and '$50,000 Bounty on Hobbema Killers' (Cormier, 2008) dominated media headlines that same year, and have not since completely receded. Accompanying these headlines, as Chapter One noted, were also a series of aggressive legal provisions and well-advertised law and order styled 'solutions' for dealing with crime, poverty, and violence related to street gangs (CTV.ca, 2009), all of which amplified the public's growing concern about Maskwacis as 'dangerous' (more on this in Chapter Six). As a result, I had grown to develop a very specific idea about Maskwacis and the sorts of

people that I would encounter there, despite having never been to, or really known anybody from, the community – a notion, of course, with roots in a much larger colonial history in which I was also pre-reflexively invested.

Since that time, I have had the privilege of experiencing Maskwacis in a variety of capacities, including as a regular participant on a men's hockey team, a guest at Cree ceremonies, and, most frequently, as a friend and guest at various community events and informal social gatherings. All of these experiences, it should be noted, took place at the height of the media's frenzied concern with Maskwacis gang violence. All of these experiences, it should be noted more forcefully, contradicted the media-endorsed stereotyping of the community as 'gang torn'. On a personal level, moreover, these experiences also forced consideration of a host of different issues related to: my own socialization as a white male of middle-class origin from south-western Ontario, Canada; the presuppositions I carry with me and have unknowingly internalized over time; and the ways I perceive and am perceived by others in the field. Indeed, visiting a First Nation as a white male lacrosse coach, as a researcher, or in any other capacity, was to submit myself to a scrutinizing gaze that, through the privilege of whiteness, I have not had to experience in many other areas of social life in Canada. The initial nervousness I felt when travelling to Maskwacis, especially after being primed with a range of negative press reports and public images of Aboriginal gang violence; the relative dis/comfort I felt when talking to non-Aboriginal people about Maskwacis as opposed to speaking with other Aboriginal friends (i.e., the varying degrees of reactivity I felt and witnessed in myself and others); and the palpable anxiety I felt when being the only non-Aboriginal

person at various community events and ceremonies, were all experiences that forced consideration of the deeply *embodied* politics, and privileges, of my racialized identity.

In an effort to unpack these experiences, I consulted with various Aboriginal mentors and community liaisons throughout virtually all phases of this dissertation. Bruce Barry, an Anishinaabe pipe holder for the Anishinabek (the people), was one of my earliest contacts in the field and, in many ways, functioned as the proverbial 'gatekeeper' for this study. At the outset, Bruce explained to me some of the local politics and ideological complexities surrounding my researching in Maskwacis, a matter which he agreed to walk me through under the condition that I fully commit to experiencing the community in a variety of capacities, including by attending ceremonies and by way of other, less formal, interactions, such as playing sports. Bruce also insisted that Maskwacis's distinctiveness *as a people* be honoured throughout my research, which he suggested would best be achieved by my spending time within the community as well as within other, neighbouring, Aboriginal and First Nations communities in Alberta; i.e., an approach that is consistent with what Cree scholar Margaret Kovach (2009: 49-50) described as a Plains-Cree centered research methodology:

> From a traditional Cree perspective, seeking out Elders, attending to holistic epistemologies, and participating in cultural catalyst activities (dream, ceremony, prayer) are all means for accessing inward knowledge. According to Plains Cree culture, teachings come from many places. We need to open ourselves to those teachings and then give ourselves time to integrate them so that we can be of use to our community. This requires preparation by the researcher, something that is unique to each individual. It is a process that can never lend itself to a check-box,

universal approach, rather it is personal work that must be done by the researcher in conjunction with her world (both inner and outer).

Since this research began, I have attended sweat lodge, round dance, night lodge and sun dance ceremonies, powwow celebrations, as well as several other formal and informal gatherings in Maskwacis, such as hockey games, rodeos, dinner meetings, and other kinds of social events. I have also received counsel and spiritual mentoring from Elders in the region in an effort to explore my identity at a deeper level. The frequency and easy-going atmosphere permeating these exchanges provided important entry points into Maskwacis and also afforded key sites at which to nourish "rapport" with a broad spectrum of community members.[32] As Andrea Fontana and James Frey (2000: 132) explained, rapport is achieved when "the researcher … [is] able to take the role of the respondents and attempt[s] to see the situation from their viewpoint, rather than superimpose his or her world of academia and preconceptions upon them." These experiences also provided an important opportunity to interact with community members beyond my formal identity as an 'academic', making my stake in Maskwacis more personal, complex, and enduring.

Finally, Bruce advised that I maintain a fieldwork journal so as to have a running account of my research and to document the personal changes I experienced over the course of my fieldwork. For example, the following excerpt, drawn from one of my earliest journal entries, describes the first hockey game in which I participated at the Ermineskin Cree Nation's arena. The excerpt highlights the embodied political experiences that have incited (and continue to incite) critical reflection upon 'why' I

[32] Michael Patton (2002: 365) defined rapport as "a stance vis-à-vis the person being interviewed."

think, experience, and relate to the social world the way that I do; i.e., the bundles of social, political, and cultural relations etched into the core of my *habitus*.

Carter greets me at the arena doors. We shake hands, grab our hockey bags, and head down the hallway towards the dressing rooms. Carter smiles before we entering the dressing room and, sensing my nervousness, says,

Carter: "Listen, you should expect to get pushed around a fair bit tonight. More than likely you'll have to scrap. I didn't wanna tell you this earlier because I was afraid you wouldn't play, and we needed an extra body. I got your back when it happens though so don't worry. Just keep your chin tucked and do your best."

Jordan: "You serious?"

Carter: "Hoka hey!" (An affirmative local saying that, loosely translated, means 'right on').

We enter the dressing room, which feels much quieter than to what I am accustomed. There are eight men between the ages of 20 and 45 sitting half dressed, tying up their laces, and taping up their hockey sticks.

Carter: "This is Jordan from the University Alberta. He has been helping me with some research and rodeo stuff."

The other men greet me politely with head nods and handshakes. I find a seat in the corner, setting my bag down and trying hard not to draw attention to myself. Carter and I chat quietly about rodeo-related events, while the others chat amongst themselves. However, my mind constantly wanders to my impending fight. I re-tape my stick nervously while Carter converses with the others about our team's game plan.

The referee enters our dressing room just prior to game time and shakes everyone's hand. The ref then proceeds to share a story from the community's peewee tournament at which he worked on the weekend:

Referee: "The tourney went really well. Our teams didn't 'show' like they usually do, but a few managed to capture bronze at least. The thing that choked me up, though, was how the Môniyâw parents get so worked up about coming here. It's bullshit. I mean this one woman wouldn't even let her kid go to the bathroom without adult supervision, as if 'the Natives' were going to get him. How offended do you think she would be if I acted that way in Camrose, eh?"

The other men in the dressing room suddenly turn their heads in my direction to gauge my reaction and remind the referee of my (non-Aboriginal) presence.

Referee: "Whoops! No offense, bro."

(Laughter by all)

Jordan: "None taken, man."

We make our way to the ice and enjoy a brief warm-up skate, after which I get slotted onto a forward line with two of the younger players from our team. I skate nervously for the first couple of shifts, anxiously awaiting my fight. As the game progresses, however, it becomes increasingly obvious that no assault or physical altercation of any kind is going to occur. In fact, the spirit of game was the total opposite. Players on both teams rejoiced in each other's good plays, and even more in their team's missed plays. Carter pulls me aside after the first period and, with a smile, tells me that there hasn't been a fight in this league for years.

Carter: "Admit it! You were scared, huh? See what those stories can do to you?"

We both laugh and I breathe a heavy sigh of relief.

The game ends in a three-three tie and eventually goes to a shoot-out. Out of nowhere, a player from the other team's bench shouts, "Send in the Swedish Import!" (Making a playful reference to my obvious whiteness).

(Laughter by all)

I skate the puck down the ice and the goalie rejects my shot with ease, as usual. The next nine shooters also have their shots rejected and, with no clear end in sight, the referee blows his whistle and gives the game to the goalies, reaffirming the light spirited atmosphere that permeated the past 60 minutes of play.

As this excerpt illustrates, my regular presence in Maskwacis combined with discussions with Aboriginal mentors, residents, cultural liaisons, and other agents in the community, even crashing at friends' places periodically throughout the week after hockey games, helped draw attention to the locally specific politics and perceived implications of my relationship to the field. However, while these experiences illuminated parts of my habitus, other 'personal biases' proved harder to negotiate. For example, it became increasingly obvious over the course of my fieldwork that the people with whom I had built the strongest relationships were of a similar age, gender, and general disposition to my own. In particular, my relationships with Maskwacis women were virtually non-existent during the early phases of my fieldwork. My *gendered* habitus, therefore, provided access into a very specific cross-section of the community, excluding from my observation a whole range of potential agents. The nature of this bias, moreover, proved especially difficult to negotiate in the latter phases of my fieldwork, most notably with respect to the HCCCP and my efforts to recruit female cadets as interviewees.

Joining the HCCCP

I first joined the HCCCP's instructor team in July 2012 as a volunteer physical educator, which proved to be yet another critical phase of this research. How I came to occupy this role was by way of an informal meeting with the HCCCP's director, Major Trent Young, who, at that time, had recently been promoted to the rank of Major; i.e., the HCCCP's highest rank. The HCCCP's former directors, Sargent Mark Linnell and Constable Richard Huculiak, had just retired from Maskwacis's police force and also from their roles with the HCCCP. Consequently, the HCCCP was undergoing a period of massive transformation, which Trent had agreed to steer the program through with assistance from former cadets, a newly hired RCMP member, and a handful of other community members who regularly volunteered with the program. Funding from the National Crime Prevention Center (NCPC), which had provided the bulk of the HCCCP's funding since 2009, was also flowing once again after a momentary seizure in 2011. Finally, the HCCCP had recently secured a new home in the Pannee building (an active rodeo facility) on the Ermineskin First Nation, which was colloquially referred to as Head Quarters (HQ). This last point is critical, as, in the months' prior to securing the Pannee building, youths from across the Four Nations had to be inconveniently ushered from gymnasia-to-gymnasia for HCCCP training sessions, a trend that contributed to a sharp decline in the HCCCP's youth attendance numbers. The new facility helped to reverse this trend, and, with youth attendance again on the rise, my offer to volunteer with the program was greeted with enthusiasm and valued as an important act of reciprocity.

Thus, for over 18 months, I attended the HCCCP's Tuesday (and some Thursday) night training sessions, assisting with set up, youth supervision, equipment care, and physical education. My responsibilities grew to encompass a range of other miscellaneous duties, such as lending a hand in the kitchen, helping youths with schoolwork, and providing regular transport to a group of instructors (all men over the age of 18-years) who lived and worked on different parts of the reserves. The regularity of these informal interactions, in a setting that was "backstage" (Goffman, 1959) to the typical research-participant relationship, enabled the developing of strong working relationships with the HCCCP's instructor team, Maskwacis youths, parents, and other HCCCP affiliates, including the RCMP. However, an important limitation of this research emerged as I sought to transition my fieldwork into the study's 'formal' interviewing phase. More specifically, what became apparent as I tried to solicit interviews from a broad cross-section of community members was that, much like the rest of my fieldwork, the instructors with whom I had connected the strongest were, in fact, males closely aligned with my own disposition; i.e., age, sense of humour, hobbies, and general interests. Hence, securing interviews with female HCCCP instructors, especially younger females (e.g., 18-20 years), proved a unique challenge of this research.

In an attempt to help mitigate this gendered bias, I solicited advice on female recruitment strategies from two senior female HCCCP associates, both of whom were over the age of 50 and had children and grandchildren involved as cadets. Both associates were appreciative that I sought their advice on this particular subject and enthusiastically donated their guidance, which included their suggestion to host a focus group at which all (male and female) instructors could participate. On June 25th, 2013, therefore, I held an

impromptu focus group to which all of the younger HCCCP instructors were invited. This technique proved highly effective and further encouraged those who naturally shy away from one-on-one interviews to share their perspectives in a more open and relaxed setting. The focus group also resulted in my eventual securement of a 'formal' interview with one of the younger female HCCCP members, Chelsey Buffalo, who grew up as a cadet and continues to volunteer regularly with the program.

4.3 Part Two: Academic Bias

The notion of *academic bias* signalled a shift in Bourdieu's (1990) focus from the individual researcher to the institutional context in which all researchers struggle for academic distinction and for other resources. Specifically, Bourdieu (1990) cautioned researchers that the projects and 'knowledge' we produce are constitutive of a stake within a particular ('academic' or 'intellectual') field of production, and should not, therefore, be conflated with what he called the 'practical logic' of everyday living. My dissertation, in other words, contributes to a specific body of literature and is also constitutive of a strategy to imbue myself, as a prospective academic, with a mark of scholarly distinction; i.e., a PhD. The *indirect* relationship between the 'academic field' and other cultural fields presents a unique challenge to scholars wishing (and sometimes insisting) that our research provides a *direct* social benefit to the communities with whom we work; i.e., an observation that, as we will see, has particular consequences for scholars claiming their projects as 'direct' contributions to Aboriginal communities in the wake of a longstanding history of Indigenous knowledge exploitation.

The Aboriginal anthropologist Charles Menzies (2001: 22) explained, "Underlying the contemporary relations between researchers and Indigenous peoples is a history of forced relocation, systematic discrimination, and expropriation of resources and territory." The often abusive nature of such relationships, of course, extends deep into the realm of knowledge production and continues to be debated within academic circles (among a vast literature see Battiste, 2008; Kuper, 1988; Mihesuah, 1998; Smith, 1999; Tilley & Gormley, 2007; Torgovnick, 1990). Indeed, as Mäori scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999: 1) explained,

> The word itself, 'research', is probably one of the dirtiest words in the indigenous world's vocabulary. When mentioned in many indigenous contexts, it stirs up silence, it conjures up bad memories, it raises a smile that is knowing and distrustful. (…) It is a history that still offends the deepest sense of our humanity.

Like Smith (1999), Aboriginal scholars have long criticized the biases that underpin western research and upon which the 'academic field' was founded. Marie Battiste (2008), Margaret Kovach (2009), Charles Menzies (2001), and Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999), for example, have all argued that the production of academic knowledge, the acquiring of, and claiming ownership over, 'new' knowledges, and the hierarchical ordering of specific types of knowledge, are as much a part of colonialism as are the exploitation of Aboriginal lands and resources. For example, scholars' habitual privileging of Western scholars and theoretical frameworks (such as Pierre Bourdieu's, for example) has generated significant controversy among academic circles, as 'Indigenous knowledge' systems are relegated to society's margins (Barnhardt & Kawagley, 1999; Battiste, 2008; Ermine, 1995; Horsthemke, 2004; Kovach, 2009;

Moodie, 2004; Smith, 1999).[33] Marie Battiste (2008: 500) explained, "Different groups in society use knowledge and control of knowledge and its meanings in order to exercise power over groups." Such has been the case in the areas of (physical) education, medicine, and anthropology, for example, as dominant groups have infused only certain forms of knowledge with reward, and, by so doing, have devalued "epistemic difference" (Kovach, 2009: 29).

In this study, while still acknowledging the substantial limitations of the field in which I work, I have sought to confront these tensions by way of an ongoing effort to harmonize this study's framework with the practices and underlying paradigms advocated by Indigenous Methodologies literature; e.g., grounding research in a specific community, avoiding pleas to the universal as is enshrined in what we call 'modernity', and emphasizing what Bourdieu, and several Aboriginal scholars, called the *primacy of relations* in research design and practice (Wacquant, 1992: 15). Additionally, I have strived to include in this study (and base my arguments around) an abundance of excerpts drawn from personal interviews with Maskwacis residents, a practice that is consistent with the theoretical foundation of Indigenous Methodologies literature in which the Indigenous voice is privileged over all others (Battiste, 2008; Kovach, 2009). My intention, to be clear, has not been to feign objectivity, deny inequity in our (the

[33] In recognition of the internal diversity, complexity, and contradictory nature of all knowledge systems, George Sefa Dei, Budd Hall, and Dorothy Rosenberg (2000: 6) offered the following definition of what they considered an 'Indigenous knowledge': "We conceptualize an 'indigenous knowledge' as a body of knowledge associated with the long-term occupancy of a certain place. This knowledge refers to traditional norms and social values, as well as to mental constructs that guide, organize, and regulate the people's way of living and making sense of their world. It is the sum of the experience and knowledge of a given social group, and forms the basis of decision making in the face of challenges both familiar and unfamiliar. For millennia, many indigenous cultures were guided by a world view based on the following: seeing the individual as part of nature; respecting and reviving the wisdom of elders; giving consideration to the living, the dead, and future generations; sharing responsibility, wealth, and resources within the community; and embracing spiritual values, traditions, and practices reflecting connections to a higher order, to the culture, and to the earth."

researcher and the researched) power relationships, or to retreat into the background as a 'neutral' observer (as if those positions were even possible). Rather, my inclusion of these excerpts was intended to: make this text accessible to non-sociologically trained readers (and thus to democratize its contents);[34] to honour the multivocality of human experience in Maskwacis by providing a small snapshot thereof; and, finally, to hopefully disrupt the authority of my own (i.e., the researcher's) voice and re-present Aboriginal peoples' experiences as expressed *in their own words*, albeit mediated by the academic field and the biases associated with my personal and intellectual limitations.

Finally, crafting this research has involved a long-term commitment to discussing ideas, theories, analyses, and biases with a wide range of Aboriginal community members as they emerged in the field. For example, scheduling regular appointments with participants, providing formal community updates, and delivering regular public presentations in Maskwacis all proved indispensible techniques for communicating my ever evolving research arguments to the field's stakeholders, and for hopefully helping to repair the often strained relationship that exists between the academy and Aboriginal communities in Canada. Another strategy that was instrumental to this study's methodology, and for mitigating academic bias, was my forging a strong relationship with Samson Cree Nation's band council – the details of which are outlined below.

[34] Indeed, several of Bourdieu's critics have accused his framework of being inaccessible to readers, arguing that his fissuring culture and society into a seemingly endless array of cultural fields and 'sub-fields' obscures the relationship between social research and living socially (Apple, 1985; Giroux, 1983; Gorder, 1980; Jenkins, 1982). Conversely, several of Bourdieu's supporters have celebrated the complexity of his sociological analyses for these very same reasons; that is, Bourdieu's theories have been lauded for helping to prevent the easy conflation of everyday logic with the fuzzy, so-called 'practical logic' of everyday living (Swartz, 1997).

Addressing Band Council

On September 13th, 2011, I presented my research proposal to Samson Cree Nation's band council and formally requested their permission to conduct research in their territory. The meeting's central purpose was to honour the community's protocol, which included an offering of tobacco and roughly two metres of white broad cloth folded in a specific fashion (B. Barry, personal communication, September 2011). The meeting's secondary purpose was to solicit council's advice on crafting a study that was: 1) in the interest of the community, 2) ethically conducted, and 3) communicated back to leadership in a fashion that was deemed appropriate and culturally sensitive. I was advised early on to solicit the approval of only one First Nation (vs. all four) in Maskwacis for the simple reason that each First Nation holds different election periods and that maintaining formal relationships across the bands would be impractical. Approaching a specific band council shortly after an election period was also recommended as the best strategy to ensure that my research was supported throughout its entirety. Indeed, having the same leaders who initially approved the study guide it through to its completion was integral to keeping my research focused and in accordance with community expectations. I credit this decision to Bruce Barry who offered sage advice on the timing and organization of my research proposal. Nowhere in the literature on Aboriginal sport, Indigenous Methodologies, or in the TCPS did I find such useful and practical advice for approaching First Nations leaders.

The following fieldnote recorded on the day of my formal address to Samson's band council, September 13th, 2011, illustrates how this meeting shaped the overall trajectory of my dissertation and my relationship to the field:

Early this week I was advised that my presentation to band council would most likely require rescheduling in lieu of a recent death in the community. The tragedy involved a young woman, Susan Radcliffe (a pseudonym), and, according to newspapers, was gang related. A community-wide funeral was to be held on the afternoon of the 13th, which meant that council's regular monthly meeting would be delayed. However, early this morning, I received an email from Arlette Saddleback, the recorder for Samson, advising that my presentation was a 'go' and that council would, in fact, hear my request.

Bruce picked me up at 9:00am and we drove to Hobbema, the whole way chatting over the details of my presentation.

Bruce: "Introduce yourself, your family's history, where they came from and that sort of thing. People will want to know what brought you to Alberta and, more importantly, what drew you to Hobbema. Council will want to know that you have invested time in the community and that other community members have also placed their trust in you. That's important. And don't use academic jargon!"

We arrived at Samson's band office shortly after 11:00am and Bruce alerted the receptionist to our presence. The receptionist advised that we should return in a few hours, as our presentation was not scheduled until later that day.

To pass the time, Bruce and I left the band office and visited with some friends at the ambulance depot where we learned of another layer to Hobbema's tragedy. Supposedly, one of Edmonton's major newspapers had printed a photograph of the wrong Susan Radcliffe (also from Hobbema) underneath their story of her 'death'. The error outraged people across the Four Nations and I was advised to

exercise extreme caution in my presentation, especially as a white person requesting permission to re-present community events to broader audiences. We were called into council's chambers at 2:00pm. The anxiety (and doubt) I experienced under these circumstances was indescribable; however, everyone on council was very collegial and welcoming. Following a brief introduction from Bruce, I was invited to describe what I hoped to achieve through my dissertation. My anxiety mounted as I fumbled to describe the contributions and social benefits my dissertation would provide the community, which, I later learned, actually helped to win council's approval at they wanted to see humility and honesty as opposed to arrogance. The talking points that gained the most traction was my request to meet regularly with council members and to assist in their creation of an alternative narrative on Maskwacis youths; i.e., one that ran counter to the media's sustained projection of Hobbema as 'gang torn'.

Immediately following my presentation, council passed a Band Council Resolution approving my research by a vote of five-to-three (see Appendix A). The main issues of concern involved the community's previous relationships with the media, academic researchers, and the likelihood that I, as a non-Aboriginal 'outsider', would distort local events for personal gain. Council members further interrogated my identity and previous experiences in Maskwacis in an attempt, as I would later learn, to identify the types of cultural interventions I might require in order to facilitate my entry into the community. I was also asked to maintain regular meetings with council members, keep them updated on my research, and to solicit their advice on analysis when needed – a commitment that I have (and continue to) honour(ed) throughout this study.

I would be remiss were I to omit one last critical commentary about the ethical fragility of working in this research context. Indeed, as Bourdieu (1990) cautioned, the academic observer who, as part of his/her craft, collapses a whole range of social viewpoints and complex human interactions into a single voice (his/her own) always runs the risk of wielding a particularly pernicious form of 'symbolic violence' against those other viewpoints. This risk, I would argue, is of a greater magnitude in the context of prospective researchers who, with little room for error, gamble years of tuition fees, personal and social capital on the mere hunch that community leaders will see merit in the academic program that he/she proposes. As noted above, for example, significant groundwork had to be laid prior to receiving an audience with Samson leadership, all without the guarantee that my request would be approved or even heard. Additionally, years were spent preparing for cross-cultural research in Maskwacis through university courses and through other independent research activities. The connection between acting 'ethically' and acting from a lower ranked academic field position, therefore, is a matter with significant implications for both the researcher and the external communities within which we work and from whom we aim to learn. The ethical implications of this tension as a graduate student at the University of Alberta are a matter to which I now turn.

4.4 Part Three: Intellectual Bias

The third pillar of Bourdieu's (1990) reflexive sociology concerns the material conditions that make possible the researcher's craft. As previously noted, Bourdieu described a sort of ideological fissure between scholarly modes of thinking and writing, and the more applied, "practical logic" of everyday living (see Bourdieu & Wacquant,

1992: 36-46). The researcher's trending towards "theoreticism," Bourdieu argued, "abstracts from consideration not only the practical knowledge of actors but also the theoretical practices of the researcher" (Swartz, 1997: 59). In other words, since the researcher's job is to retreat from the social world in order to observe and construct social scientific claims about its nature, the researcher's own craft presumes his/her relative social and economic freedom (indeed privilege) from these other pressures. The theoretical and material condition upon which the researcher's craft hinges, therefore, is an aspect of what Bourdieu (1990) called *intellectual bias*, and reflecting upon it has been especially significant to this study's development.

Since 2008, a number of social factors have influenced my ability to engage scholarly activity at the University of Alberta. Specifically, the time, energy, and financial support required to build ethical relations, observe, interview, transcribe interview data, share research findings with community members, as well as the time needed to reflect critically upon my embodied privileges has required my access to a variety of key economic, social, and cultural resources. For example, the following fieldnote draws attention to a particular interaction I shared with other HCCCP volunteers following a regular Tuesday night Cadets practice. The interaction describes the first HCCCP session to which I brought a draft of my dissertation, a gesture that was greeted with a mixture of both enthusiasm and concern:

> *Cadets was a hoot tonight! We organized a massive dodgeball game and everybody got involved. […] It seems that I'm finally at the stage where I can bring completed chapters from my dissertation in to share with HCCCP administrators. My original goal for tonight was to have Trent read Chapter*

Seven; however, as other instructors noticed he and I chatting in the office they came by to check-in on what I had written. It wasn't long before a whole group of instructors starting reading my work, asking questions about the next chapter, the one before that, and the one before that. It was a really rewarding experience overall and I got some amazing feedback on how to improve my work. One instructor even offered to re-translate my subtitles into Cree and jokingly accused me of using 'friendship center' Cree as opposed to 'authentic' Cree language. In general, Trent and the others were stoked about the direction my project had taken and offered to read more chapters as they are written. The really exciting thing about all of this was the sheer richness of peoples' ideas for how to improve my arguments. The terrifying thing, however, is how much work it will be to integrate even a fraction of their ideas into the final product.

As this excerpt demonstrates, establishing an environment in which knowledge sharing, transparency, and reciprocity was encouraged required far greater personal investment than I had originally anticipated, on behalf of both the community and myself. My ability to perform these tasks ethically, moreover, was made possible only by a very particular set of conditions. For example, that federal granting agencies such as the Social Science and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) have focused initiatives around 'sport participation' and have generally supported my fieldwork was paramount to this study's ethical completion. The University of Alberta has also looked favourably upon research involving Aboriginal peoples in Canada and has contributed valuable funds to this research, as have Drs. Jay Scherer and Nicholas Holt, who have provided a steady paycheque by employing my services as a research associate for over three years. My

relative youth and social freedom were also imperative to this research, freeing up time that would otherwise had to have been invested fulfilling family obligations.

However, even with these advantages, the time that I was able to spend in Maskwacis, travelling to and from the community, versus the time required for other duties (e.g., teaching, research demands, publishing, among other tasks) set decisive limits upon this dissertation's complexion and conduct. For example, the particular kind of "free time" required for scholarly contemplation, what Bourdieu called *skholé*, "the condition of existence of all scholarly fields" (Webb et al., 2002: xv), was especially necessary for this research program, as it would be for *any* cross-cultural research program involving Aboriginal communities. A sort of paradox of privilege, therefore, underpinned this dissertation from the 'get go' where, on the one hand, my racialized privileges, as well as class and gender privileges, enabled (and socialized) my seeing value in the acquisition of a PhD; yet, on the other hand, these same privileges hindered my ability to gain insight into Maskwacis and my personal biases in a timely fashion.

Put differently, that I am a white male in a faculty and profession dominated by individuals who embody a similar race, class, and gendered disposition to my own is, of course, related to larger (colonial) struggles that continue to inform academic research in Canada. The flip side of this paradox, of course, is that, for much of my life, these privileges have effectively insulated me from having to critically engage the embodied politics associated with my identity; i.e., my embodied privileges. Consequently, then, to get up to speed on discussions of race (or Aboriginal history, gender, sexuality, and disability privileges, for that matter) meant my having to engage a discussion with, and about, individuals whom, by virtue of their *not* having lived the blissful ignorance of

whiteness, are exponentially better versed on these issues than am I. To paraphrase Tim Wise (2011), the nature of this paradox is akin to having a conversation about a book's contents with individuals who are 300-pages in when you have only just read the preface.

Noteworthy, then, is that scholars' ability to pursue complex and potentially delicate research projects are inversely diminished as demands grow with respect to such things as student teaching, publishing, tuition and housing costs, among other issues. By way of example, that the Faculty of Physical Education and Recreation does not guarantee graduate student funding after four years of study (a tenure that is far below a PhD student's average rate of completion) implicitly discourages a variety of questions, studies, and people from academic consideration. An issue of pressing social concern for *all* scholars, therefore, and the broader community of Alberta, is how the increasingly restrictive socio-economic context of academia (i.e., a matter that is itself linked to the academic field's position relative to the 'field of power') impacts upon both current and future academic programming. Indeed, on August 23rd, 2013, the University of Alberta's president, Indira Samarasekara, announced $56 million dollars in operating cuts to be made by 2015, the largest one-year cut in the university's 106-year history. In the wake of Samarasekara's announcement, social sciences and humanities funding was eviscerated, whole faculties (including the Faculty of Native Studies) were widely rumoured to be on the brink of collapse, and tuition fees and rates, especially among international students, soared to new heights. At the same time, housing prices and the costs of student living in Edmonton rose steadily alongside Alberta's surging population and corresponding oil boom. The message to students, in particular those forced to commute from rural areas or First Nations communities, was that pursuing academic programs that take longer to

complete, require difficult and complex critical thinking, or exhibit limited earning potential (such as those studies engaging Aboriginal communities in any capacity *beyond* resource extraction) are undervalued pursuits, which is a message that stands in stark contrast to the clear and valid concerns of Aboriginal scholars regarding the time, sensitivity, and personal investments that are required to work ethically with Aboriginal communities. Indeed, as Allison Tom and Carol Herbert (2002: 599) poignantly summarized in their article *'The Near Miss': A Story of Relationship*, "how easy it is to unintentionally harm people we wish to learn from and listen to when we misunderstand them."

4.5 Chapter Summary and Concluding Remarks

This chapter analyzed the dissertation's nature and ethical conduct. Following Pierre Bourdieu's (1990) 'reflexive' sociology, the chapter argued that *all* research (i.e., the types of questions we ask, are able to ask, and how we ask them) is predicated, sometimes very powerfully, upon the personal, academic, and intellectual contexts in which we, as individuals and as researchers, are intimately ensnared. The ensuing chapter extends upon this argument by investigating the distinct cultural field within which my ethnographic fieldwork - and the HCCCP - developed, the Maskwacis Cree Nations.

CHAPTER V.

Mapping Maskwacis

5.1 Introduction

The Maskwacis (Bear Hills) region, formerly known as Hobbema, is comprised of four First Nations in central Alberta, Canada. Collectively, the Samson (Nipisihkopahk/'willow meadows'), Louis Bull (Kispahtina/'the end of the hill'), Montana (Akamihk/'across the river'), and Ermineskin Cree Nations (Neyaskwayak/'the Northern treeline), cover approximately 319.8 square kilometres of open prairie and woodlands. Located right along the Highways 2 and 2A (major highways connecting Edmonton to Calgary), the population is always in flux, with estimates ranging anywhere from 12,000 to 15,000, as people travel to, from, and across the reserves daily to access social services, employment opportunities, leisure pursuits, and other public amenities. The sheer size of Maskwacis territory is complemented by its relative proximity to other neighbouring towns and cities, such as Wetaskiwin, Ponoka, Camrose, Millet, and Leduc. Indeed, the city of Edmonton, Alberta's Provincial capital, is situated only a mere 80-kilometres northwest of Maskwacis, and the cities of Red Deer and Calgary, also major metropolitan centers in Alberta, are accessible by a relatively short drive to the south.

Historically, Maskwacis territory provided a meeting ground for a range of Aboriginal groups in Western Canada (Goyette & Roemmich, 1995), the diversity of which is preserved in the names of many of the region's surrounding areas. Ponoka, for example, the Blackfoot word for 'elk', is also a town located approximately 10 kilometers southeast of Maskwacis and refers to the herds of elk that inhabited the tract of land between there and what is present-day Red Deer (a region formerly known as 'Waskasoo'

(elk), by the local Cree).[35] Wetaskiwin, likewise, a city of about 12,000 people located approximately 17 kilometers northwest of Maskwacis, is a name derived from the Cree phrase wîtaskiwinihk, meaning "the hills where peace was made." The phrase is in reference to a famous peace pipe shared between a Blackfoot and Cree Chief in 1867 that marked the end of a long feud between the two groups (City of Wetaskiwin, 2014). Wetaskiwin is also the city in Alberta that boasts the largest per capita Aboriginal population in the province, with Aboriginal peoples (many from Maskwacis) comprising approximately 12% of the city's total population (Aboriginal population profile for Edmonton, 2006). All of this is to say that, while on a map, Maskwacis territory may appear geographically fixed, demographically, culturally, *and* historically, the field's reification (Bourdieu, 1990; 1987) exhibits far greater fluidity and is, therefore, less easy to define; an analytic distinction that, though subtle, presents an important challenge to the often-fetishized expectations of Aboriginal peoples in Canada as merely people living 'on reserve', and prevents the easy conflation of 'community' with a reserve's geographic boundaries.

This chapter maps, in broad strokes, a few of the basic historical properties that distinguish Maskwacis as a cultural field in central, Alberta, Canada, in the present day. The chapter is organized around three main discussion points, all of which address the dissertation's stated commitment to 'locate Maskwacis vis-à-vis space, time, and the national (colonial) context in Canada'; i.e., *one* 'field of colonial power'. In Part One, Canada's broader colonial history is discussed and connected to the contemporary social context within the Maskwacis Cree Nations. In Part Two, I discuss the emergence, and

[35] The land formerly known as 'Waskasoo' later became anglicised to 'Red Deer' by the first European settlers due to the western Canadian elk's resemblance to the red deer of Scotland (City of Red Deer, 2014).

local-historical rootedness, of Aboriginal street gangs in Maskwacis territory; i.e., a refraction that, as Chapter Six illustrates, has grown to become Maskwacis's dominant public narrative. More precisely, this section examines how several key properties - such as the discovery of oil and gas in Maskwacis territory, the community's proximity to two penitentiaries, among other factors – nourished an environment towards which social predators gravitated during the 1980s, 1990, and early 2000s. Finally, in Part Three, I discuss the sociological trends that have impacted upon the development of Maskwacis's youth sport opportunities in the region. Collectively, these sections help to provide a colonial prism through which the cultural production of Maskwacis sport (i.e., the HCCCP) is interpreted in the dissertation's ensuing chapters.

5.2 Part One: Maskwacis and the 'Field of (Colonial) Power'

> …I could argue, to simplify greatly, that there has occurred, since the construction of the dynastic state and, later, of the bureaucratic state, a long-term process of concentration of different species of power, or capital, leading, in a first stage, to private monopolization – by the king – of a public authority at once external and superior to all private authorities (lords, bourgeoisie, etc.). The concentration of these different species of capital – economic (thanks to taxation), military, cultural, juridical and, more generally, symbolic – goes hand in hand with the rise and consolidation of the various corresponding fields. The result of this process is the emergence of a specific capital, properly statist capital, born of their accumulation, which allows the state to wield a power over the different fields and over the various forms of capital that circulate in them.

Pierre Bourdieu on the 'field of power' and the nation state

(Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992: 114).

If Bourdieu positioned cultural fields as sites of struggle in which agents compete for capital, colonialism in Canada has consisted of a series of historical struggles for both the material and ideological resources (i.e., the substance) of colonial power. As Jane Hiddleston (2009: 2) explained, "the colonial project involves the literal process of entering into a foreign territory and assuming control of its society and industry, and, on a more conceptual level, the *post facto* promulgation of a cultural ideology that justifies the colonizer's presence on the bases of his superior knowledge and 'civilization'." There is, of course, not space to do explanatory justice to the vast range of colonial struggles through which the colonial project has been played out in Canada over the past 200 years. At a purely political level, however, there are a number of significant threads to which we can point as being reflective of a wider colonial structure. Indeed, as Canada's first Prime Minister, Sir John A. Macdonald, explained in 1887, "The great aim of our legislation has been to do away with the tribal system, and assimilate the Indian people in all respects with the other inhabitants of the Dominion as speedily as they are fit to change" (Sessional Papers, 1887, 37). From the *Indian Act*[36] through to the *White Paper*,[37] this

[36] Established in 1876, the *Indian Act* was the centrepiece of Canadian legislation governing the lives of Aboriginal peoples. Under this Act, officials from the federal government had empowered themselves to closely supervise the land, economy, politics, education, and even the personal decisions of Aboriginal peoples, whom they regarded as children or "wards" of the state (Miller, 1989). The practical function of the Act was to consolidate all of the different rules and regulations that impacted First Nations people in Canada into one governing document. Though amended over 70 times since its inception, the Act has never wavered from its original intent: to civilise and assimilate Aboriginal peoples in the image of the settler (see Frideres, 1999; Miller, 1989; Tobias, 1976, among other sources).

[37] The Liberal government's 1969 *Statement of the Government of Canada on Indian Policy*, known also as the *White Paper*, was supposed to be the first federal document to take seriously the government's consultations with "Indian people" about their conditions and desired direction in Canada. However, the end result of a year's worth of intensive discussion and debate with Aboriginal peoples was the government's advancement of a series of self-serving recommendations that essentially denied Indian

general political posture had remained consistent across several generations of federal governments in Canada, which has contributed to a general disparity between Aboriginal and settler populations from coast-to-coast-to-coast. Yet, as Harold Cardinal (1969: 3) famously retorted in *The Unjust Society*, "Indians have aspirations, hopes and dreams, but becoming white men is not one of them."

According to historian J.R. Miller (1989), around the 1830s in Canada is when the style of relationship between European settlers and Aboriginal peoples shifted from one of 'non-directed change' - that is, the kinds of mutual exchanges and adaptations that occur gradually across populations - to a bond characterized by a more aggressive, 'directed' style of cultural exchange. Miller (1989: 96) explained,

> Directed cultural exchange, which usually set in when the immigrants outnumbered the indigenous population ..., subjected the more vulnerable of the two parties not just to the rules and sanctions of their own society but also to the taboos and requirements of the more powerful group. It was, in short, coercion. The consequence of such a pattern of change was usually the undermining of the weaker party's beliefs, social and political structures, and psychic well-being.

By the 1870s, for example, Aboriginal peoples across the Prairie Provinces were already suffering from racial marginalization, declining natural resources, and rapid cultural change brought on by a transforming economy and the encroachment of white settlement (Taljit, 1992: 137). The ravages caused by settler born disease coupled with the loss of the buffalo also devastated Aboriginal livelihoods, which opened the door for a wide

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status, justified government disengagement from Indian affairs, and absolved the federal government of its commitments and responsibilities to Aboriginal Canadians (see Cardinal, 1969).

variety of social, economic, and cultural institutions to further exploit the already subjugated position of Aboriginal peoples in Canada.

In Alberta, for example, a notable refraction of these forces was the socially contentious circumstances under which Treaty Six was signed in 1876 (see Goyette & Roemmich, 1995: 92-95). As Maskwacis scholar and Treaty Six member, Shauna Bruno, explained, "The treaties provided the legal basis for the government to use their power and control over the land and the peoples of that land, in addition to imposition of law and order, thus claiming the prosperity resulting from production on the land" (Bruno, 2010: 47). The Treaty's ambiguous wording has also been the subject of significant debate, which reflects the degree to which government administrators and Aboriginal leaders departed in their views about the direction of Aboriginal-settler relations in the Prairie West (Asch, 1997; Goyette & Roemmich, 1995: 95-101; Miller, 1989; Taljit, 1992: 137). As Miller (1989: 168-169) explained:

> Indians thought that they had concluded treaties of friendship and mutual assistance, while agreeing to the entry into their lands at some future date of agricultural settlement. The government in Ottawa believed that the treaties secured the Indians' surrender of whatever claim they had to the vast lands of western Canada.

As early as January 1883, in fact, Chiefs Samson and Ermineskin appealed their grievances over Treaty Six directly to the Canadian Prime Minister in a letter that argued that "the government had broken its treaty promises, that Canada was trying to exterminate them slowly by starvation, and that the Blackfoot in the south could count on fair rations because they were well-armed" (cited in Goyette & Roemmich, 1995: 99).

While, in 1885, many of the Maskwacis Cree did fight back alongside Louis Riel's North-West Uprising, as the Uprising collapsed in the years following, so too did Maskwacis's hopes of mounting a formidable armed resistance against the encroachment of white settlement, and the white settlers soon returned to the area (York, 1989: 92).

Alongside these struggles, a series of Department of Indian Affairs policies further strained Aboriginal development in the Prairie West, widening the gap of relative prosperity between Aboriginal and settler populations in Alberta. After 1896, for example, Indian Affairs had unconditionally surrendered much of the fertile reserve land owed to Aboriginal Canadians to European homesteaders under the guise that white farmers would make better use of it than would "the Indians" (Taljit, 1992: 149). Policies promoting 'allotment in severalty' and 'peasant farming' also did little to nurture the traditional lifestyles and social patterns of Aboriginal communities in Maskwacis. Officially framed as policies to *benefit* those Aboriginal peoples unequipped to maintain complex farming machinery, according to J.R. Miller (1989: 200), "the real reason [for the promotion of peasant farming] was that department officials in the west did not want Indians to advance to anything beyond subsistence peasant status." Indeed, rather than assist their transition into a new economy, agricultural promotions such as these essentially constituted a full frontal assault on Aboriginal land-use practices and the communal system of living that had proven so integral to their survival in the region (Taljit, 1992). Noteworthy, however, is that many of the Aboriginal inhabitants protested against the subdivision of their reserve lands into individual plots and successfully resisted the government's veiled attempts to "extinguish Indian identity and reserves" (Miller, 1989: 200).

In Maskwacis, an adhesion to Treaty Six permitted the establishment and maintenance of residential schools, the first of which - a boarding school - was opened in 1894 on the Ermineskin First Nation and was thus called the Ermineskin boarding school. The policy behind these institutions, as Chapter Two noted, was the complete assimilation of Aboriginal youths into settler society, or, as one Ottawa bureaucrat famously described the government's intent: "to kill the Indian in the child."[38] By the 1965-66 school year, over 750 local youths (boys and girls) were enrolled in the school (Breton, 1968: 49). By 1980, moreover, the facility had grown to become the largest Indian school of its kind in Canada, with Aboriginal students from several other reserves in Alberta, Saskatchewan, Métis students, and even some non-Aboriginal students in attendance (ecnationtalk, 2013). While the actual practice of boarding students ceased in 1975, the school remained under federal authority until as late as 1991, almost a full century after its doors were first opened to Maskwacis's youths (ecnationtalk, 2013).

The "troubled legacy" (Miller, 2003) of residential schools in Canada has, of course, become increasingly well known in recent years (among a vast literature see Barman et al., 1986; Miller, 1996; Milloy, 1999). In 2007, for example, residential school survivors launched the largest class action lawsuit in Canadian history against the federal government for the widespread hardships that were suffered by generations of Aboriginal youths while housed in these institutions. Survivors' testimonies revealed that incidences of physical, sexual, and psychological abuse were pervasive in residential schools (see TRC.ca, 2014), and further demonstrated that the intergenerational trauma and fallout from these experiences is still widely felt today on a number of social, personal, and

[38] This now famous citation was first uttered by an unnamed Ottawa bureaucrat, and is often mistakenly accredited to Duncan Campbell Scott, the deputy superintendent of the Department of Indian Affairs from 1913 to 1932 (see Abley, 2013).

cultural trajectories in Canada.[39] In Maskwacis, for example, the employment of corporal punishment, a substandard quality of education, the generally poor sanitary conditions leading to unusually high rates of mortality, and the "deliberate policy of cultural transformation" (Taljit, 1992: 143) deployed at the Ermineskin boarding school, among other acts of abuse, have been widely attributed to the ongoing manifestation of numerous social ailments within the community. Indeed, as Grant Stonechild (a pseudonym), a resident now in his mid-50s explained of Ermineskin's residential school,

> *GRANT: A lot of Canadians don't understand the full impact of residential schools and still, to this day, there are tons of people that don't know about that. And all of that negative stuff that happened back then, you know … now we're dealing with the residual effects of that broken down system. You can't tell me that if I were to go into your community and forcibly remove your kids and force them to speak a new language and believe in a new idea and if they don't, of course, they are going to get beat and this and that … you don't think that there are going to be some problems, you know? For sure there will be. And this happened for generation after generation. We are going to deal with this for some time, until people now can start to address these things and can start to look for solutions for these things.*

As Grant noted, the government's prolonged execution of such practices has contributed to a theme where structural manifestations of white privilege and Aboriginal dispossession exist across a whole variety of cultural fields in Canada. At a national level,

[39] The lawsuits eventually ended in an out-of-court settlement that included, among other stipulations, hundreds of millions of dollars in damage compensations to residential school survivors. The settlement also mandated that a Truth and Reconciliation Committee (TRC) be created to interview and archive survivors' experiences of residential school (see TRC.ca, 2014).

for example, the health and social welfare of Aboriginal peoples in Canada is ranked well below the average population, with 96 out of the bottom 100 ranked communities on the Community Well-Being Index being First Nations (Community Well-Being Index, 2009). Other statistics for Canada include: the average life expectancy rate for Aboriginal peoples is seven years shorter than the lifespan for non-Aboriginal Canadians; the disability rate among Aboriginal children is over twice the national average; and the levels of diabetes, disability, suicide, poverty, and unemployment among Aboriginal peoples (particularly those living on-reserve) are all significantly higher when compared to non-Aboriginal peoples in Canada (Hurtig, 2008). I include these statistics not only as a means of attracting attention to the symbolic and raw physical violence that has been inflicted historically, and sustained socio-politically and culturally, upon Aboriginal peoples in Canada, but also to demonstrate the manner in which colonial struggle has become embedded within a series of complex processes, structures and institutions.

For example, the overrepresentation of Aboriginal peoples in Canadian Correctional facilities is a theme that is of particular relevance to this research. In 2012-2013, Aboriginal peoples accounted for approximately 22% of all prison inmates in Canada while comprising only 4% of the total population (AROCI, 2013). In Alberta specifically, the overrepresentation of Aboriginal peoples spiked to 40% for those sentenced to custody in 2010-2011, while comprising only 5% of the Province's total population (Dauvergne, 2012). Similar incarceration rates were found among Canada's younger generations of Aboriginal peoples as well, with Aboriginal youths aged 12-17 years accounting for approximately 26% of those entering federal corrections in 2010-2011 (while comprising just 6% of the total population), and approximately 40% in the

province of Alberta (while comprising 9%, respectively) (Munch, 2012). Although these figures have been generally attributed to the "enduring fragmentation" and "loss of identity" experienced through colonization (Martel & Brassard, 2008: 340), as Canada's correctional investigator, Howard Sapers, also noted, "the increasing costs of corrections in Canada and rising inmate numbers are inseparable from a number of significant legislative measures," such as the expansion of mandatory minimum sentencing, the tightening of parole review criteria, and the reduction in credit for time already served in pre-trial custody (AROCI, 2011-2012). In Maskwacis, however, a distinctly local refraction has also been linked to this broader national trend, the emergence of Aboriginal street gangs.

5.3 Part Two: Colonial Refractions and the 'Gangs of Hobbema'

Understanding the emergence of Aboriginal gangs in Maskwacis is a matter that requires sensitivity to local, provincial, and broader national and globalizing forces.[40] In 2002, for example, the *Canadian Police Survey on Youth Gangs* found that criminal groups comprised of 40 or more members existed in at least 20 cities across Canada

[40] To be sure, the ambiguous definitions of 'street gang' make it difficult to discern when Aboriginal gangs, or any category of gang, for that matter, first emerged in Maskwacis. In 2002, the federal government passed Bill C-24, which offered the following definition of an organized crime group:

- A group, however organised, that is composed of three or more persons in or outside Canada; and,
- has one of its main purposes or main activities the facilitation or commission of one or more serious offences, that, if committed, would likely result in the direct or indirect receipt of a material benefit, including a financial benefit, by the group or by any one of the persons who constitute the group (EPS Gang Unit Handbook, 2005).

While Bill C-24 provided an important guide for legal purposes, critics have argued that this definition does not take into account the more complex nature and local structure of street gangs (see Grekul & LaBoucane-Benson, 2006). Mark Totten (2009: 2), therefore, offered the following definition for Aboriginal street gangs in an effort to clarify the issue: "visible, hardcore groups that come together for profit-driven criminal activity and severe violence. They identify themselves through the adoption of a name, common brands/colours of clothing, and tattoos to demonstrate gang membership to rival gangs."

(Astwood Strategy Corporation, 2003).[41] By 2006, the annual report of Criminal Intelligence Service Canada (CISC) entitled *Organized Crime in Canada* identified over 300 crime groups operating across the country, 30 of which were operating out of Alberta (CISC, 2006: 26).[42] The report further estimated that there were approximately 12,000 gang members and gang associates in Canada, located in every province except for Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland and Labrador. While researchers have linked the government's shift towards neoliberal citizenship, the retrenchment of the welfare state, and the lack of much needed social services, such as financial and cultural supports for new immigrants and political refugees arriving in Canada,[43] to the growth in Canadian street gangs (Dickson-Gilmore et al., 2003; Pearce, 2009; Comack et al., 2013), in an Aboriginal-specific context, this growth has also been attributed to a another key socio-historic variable. As the authors of *Indians Wear Red* explained,

> While critical gang studies researchers have drawn attention to the impacts of economic restructuring and the neoliberal withdrawal by the state from the provision of social benefits as crucial factors in explaining the proliferation of street gangs globally, a crucial factor in accounting for Aboriginal street gangs in Canada has been the ongoing impact of colonialism (Comack et al., 2013: 15-6).

[41] This particular survey was the first of its kind in Canada and was conducted to "assess the extent and characteristics of the youth gang problem in communities throughout Canada, as reported by law enforcement agencies." For their purposes, the authors defined 'youth gang' as "a group of youths or young adults in the respondent's jurisdiction, under the age of 21, that the respondent or other responsible persons in their agency or community were willing to identify or classify as a gang" (Astwood Strategy Corporation, 2003: iii).

[42] By 2009, the *Provincial Threat Assessment on Organised Crime in Alberta and Northwest Territories* documented at least 83 street gangs throughout the region, a marked increase from the 2006 CISC report (CISA, 2009).

[43] See Pearce (2009: 81-98) for a short discussion on the consequences of not providing adequate social support to political refugees arriving in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Indeed, in Maskwacis, as in many First Nations and urban Aboriginal communities across Canada, the relatively high concentrations of youth street gangs has been widely attributed to the colonial processes described earlier in this chapter, such as the complex legacy of residential schools and other racist policies (Chettleburgh, 2008; Comack et al., 2013; Grekul & LaBoucane-Benson, 2006; Totten, 2009; 2012). However, with sensitivity to these historical processes, the emergence of Aboriginal street gangs in Maskwacis territory also corresponded with a number of very local (i.e., field-specific) colonial refractions, two of the most notable of which being: 1) the mid-century discovery and development of Alberta's biggest oil deposit on First Nations reserve land, and 2) Maswkacis's relative proximity to two Alberta-based correctional facilities. I address each of these factors separately in the following paragraphs, though significant parallels exist between both of them.

In 1952, an oilfield was discovered on Maskwacis's land near Ma-Me-O Beach, the once traditional fishing grounds of all Four Nations (York, 1989). By the early 1970s, the community's development of these resources had reached a point where many band members were receiving royalty cheques in excess of $500/month, a windfall that sparked a boom in the population (Contenta, 2008). As the oil flowed more freely into the 1980s, Maskwacis bands were receiving royalties of approximately $185 million per annum (York, 1989: 89), a financial influx that at first seemed like a godsend for a community stricken by poverty due to colonialism. For example, Maskwacis's resource wealth enabled the creation of a host of businesses and other opportunities in the Four Nations, including: Samson Oil and Gas Inc. (an energy company), Peace Hills General Insurance, and Peace Hills Trust (a company with a total of eight offices nationwide) (C.

Yellowbird, personal communication, March 2014). Housing facilities, well-built schools, two local hockey arenas, an impressive rodeo and powwow grounds, an Education Trust Fund valued at approximately $24 million, and a Heritage Fund valued at $380 million were also the product of Maskwacis's oil wealth. However, as Geoffrey York (1989: 89) explained, the legacy of Maskwacis's wealth is also one of ambiguity:

> In the history of Canada, very few communities have ever been transformed from poverty to wealth so suddenly. As the oil money poured into Hobbema, the social upheaval was traumatic. Alcoholism increased, cocaine arrived on the four reserves, families broke apart, and the suicides mounted steadily.

Indeed, as Maskwacis's oil production increased during the 1980s and the 1990s, so too did the rate of suicide, substance abuse, and the level of violent crime across the reserves. Between 1980-1987, for example, Maskwacis's suicide rate was among the highest levels in North America, reaching approximately 160 times the national average for women, and 83 times the average for men (Gee, 1989: 3).

At the same time, Maskwacis's youths were being faced with intense peer pressure as it had become common knowledge that, upon their eighteenth birthday, youths who had been required to have their royalty cheques held in a government-run trust account, would be receiving a lump sum payment of anywhere between $18,000 to $200,000 (Hobbema Talk Tape, 2006). As one Samson resident now in her mid-60s, Ashley Bluejacket (a pseudonym), explained, the prospect of 18-year-olds in possession of large sums of cash attracted scores of investment-seekers to Maskwacis, as well other types of social predators:

ASHLEY: And then there was the whole eighteen thing, the age of majority. We had money going into peoples' accounts … some of their per capita was going into a trust account. When you turned eighteen you had a trust fund. Some people received over $100,000 dollars. And you would see exactly what they did with their money. It was a big party. It was a big … I mean I have a friend whose daughter got into an accident on her … the day after her eighteenth birthday she rolled her brand new automobile. She's paralyzed for life. She's in a wheelchair. You see … that's just one. There are so many different stories. You see outside individuals coming in, loan sharks. "You have two kids I see." They somehow got a hold of band lists and would approach these individuals. "Hey, you're turning eighteen in a couple of months. You want some money now? I'll give you some money." We had pawnshops. We had Mary K distributors doing that, becoming loan sharks. […] We had a sales lady who was selling Mary K and making good money with Mary K. She decided that she was going to be a loan shark. She would approach these individuals. Her interest rate was 100%. I'll give you $1,000 and you pay me back $2,000. So, that got out of hand. It was unbelievable. Individuals who were in care, who weren't with their family and were in foster homes, all of their per capita went into a trust fund. Some of them were getting almost a quarter of a million dollars when they turned eighteen. We had some long lost band members who didn't know they were members. All of their money was going into a trust for years and years. There are a few individuals who got quite a substantial payment when they found out that they belonged to the nation. […]

But how can I put this? There have been a lot of non-Native individuals who have taken advantage of us. Modular homes, for example. Once they got their hand in the cookie jar, you know, they decided that they wanted a little bit more. It really hurt us. It really hurt the plans that we had for … I mean this modular plant was going to employ fifty of our nation members. Eventually we could be building our own houses. Maybe we could, you know, move into something… I have a modular home. I have had it for the last nine years now. I know individuals who received a modular home the same year that I did and, you know what? There is no warranty on it. There is no one to come and say, "Oh, we messed up on this wall. We messed up on this." There is no one to come and fix it. […] One year later the plant was gone. It was shut down. The one individual that was running it has a beautiful modular home off the reserve. It's probably four or five times the size of the modular homes that we have, and he got it for free. So, we had individuals who did that to us. They took us for a ride. And then what do we do? All of the costs for legal fees and everything, where are we going to get the money to do all of that? It's not a winning battle when we try and charge individuals. They take all of the paper work. We've been burned so many times. That's just one example. There are so many other investments that have gone wrong.

As stories of loan sharks, con artists, and excessive partying became prevalent in Maskwacis, so too did the rates of drug and alcohol abuse escalate. In 1986 alone, for example, 54 drug and alcohol related deaths were reported in Maskwacis, as well as 19 motor vehicle accidents, the majority of which were drug and alcohol related (Gee, 1989: 3). These numbers dropped significantly in 1988, but only after the community had made

a concerted effort to expand social services and introduced a 24-hour suicide intervention program (Gee, 1989: 3). Drug dealers also flocked to Maskwacis in the form of street gangs and competed aggressively, often violently, for their piece of the community's lucrative trade (A. Bluejacket, personal communication, August 2012). However, what exacerbated the influx of social predators into the community was Maskwacis's proximity to two Alberta-based penitentiaries, the Pe Sakastew minimum-security prison in Maskwacis and the 'Edmonton Max' facility located just north of the reserves. As Constable Stephen Reid, an RCMP member detached to Maskwacis since 2008, explained, Canada's prisons share a significant relationship with local gang activities:

> *STEPHEN: It has been told to me that the prisons are huge breeding grounds for gang activity because, if you want to survive, you have to join a gang. That's the basic mentality. And then when they come back to their community, they bring their colours back with them and their association. Like, a lot of the gangs here are from Samson True Soldiers. That's a localized gang. They had to get their drugs and their power and guns through another source, so they affiliated with other named gangs outside of the community. I'm not sure of their affiliation, but it's the same within the maximum prison in Edmonton.*

The close relationship between Aboriginal prison gangs and Aboriginal street gangs in Canada has become increasingly well documented in recent years (Buddle, 2011; Chettleburgh, 2008; Comack et al., 2013; Goodwill, 2009; Grekul & Laboucane-Benson, 2006). As the Criminal Intelligence Services of Canada (CISC) explained, "In Alberta, Aboriginal-based gangs that once existed primarily in prisons for protection purposes have now recognized the financial benefit of trafficking hard drugs (e.g.,

cocaine) on the reserves" (CISC, 2006: 5). Other RCMP members in Maskwacis have echoed these assertions and argued that the prison system, or failure thereof, ought to shoulder much of the blame for intensifying the development of Aboriginal street gangs in the community. Chief Superintendent Doug Reti, for example, the former Director of the RCMP's National Aboriginal Policing Services and a one time service member to Maskwacis, offered these candid remarks to a Senate committee studying the effects of a new tough-on crime law: "Many of the youth we were dealing with, if they were not gang members going into jail, they certainly were coming out" (cited in Contenta, 2008).

According to both residents and scholars, the onset of this gang-related trend in Maskwacis, and in prisons across Canada, dates back to the early 1990s when the approach of Correctional Services was to concentrate Aboriginal prison members from across western Canada into one facility, the Stony Mountain penitentiary in northern Manitoba (Chettleburgh, 2007; Comack et al., 2013; Contenta, 2008; Pearce, 2009). Within this more focused setting, prison officials found that gang formation swelled to such proportions that it threatened the very safety and integrity of the prison itself (Contenta, 2008). Correctional Services responded to this threat by shipping Stoney's Aboriginal gang members out of the facility and into different penitentiaries across Canada, including to the Edmonton Max and Pe Sakastew facilities (K. Buffalo, personal communication, August 2012). However, as the authors of *Indians Wear Red* explained, the strategy backfired: "…the street gangs responded in entrepreneurial fashion, using the new locations as a business opportunity to recruit even more members and expand their operations" (Comack et al., 2013: 124).

Violet Soosay, for example, served as warden of the Pe Sakastew minimum-security prison during the 1990s. In a 2008 interview with the *Toronto Star*, Soosay described having witnessed first-hand the aggressive recruiting tactics employed by Aboriginal gang members within the Maskwacis facility, many of whom had been previously displaced inmates from the Stoney Mountain penitentiary (Contenta, 2008). According to Soosay, upon their release from prison, many of the newly converted gang members, now equipped with a more sophisticated set of criminal skills and networks, returned to Maskwacis in search of money and new recruits for the then burgeoning business of drug dealing. Soosay explained, "Drug dealers would come into the community and start giving free drugs to 16-year olds. And when they reached the age of majority they came to collect," (Soosay, 2008, cited in Contenta, 2008). Thus, Maskwacis youths, and their oil money, not only provided prime targets for gangs, but once their addictions set in, these youths also served as important conduits for the reproduction of gang violence across the community (S. Reid, personal communication, August 2012).

For Chettleburgh (2008), the situation in Maskwacis brought to the fore the variety of ways in which First Nations in Canada are still governed by a political system that is inadequately suited to accommodate their contemporary needs. Chettleburgh (2008) noted that, for years, Maskwacis residents had protested against the federal government's forced 'lump sum' method of royalty compensation for Aboriginal youths, sought to increase the age of majority, and sought to attach conditions to the distribution of Maskwacis's oil royalties. My fieldwork also discovered that several residents had raised issue with the colonial processes described earlier in this chapter and argued that Aboriginal youths were especially vulnerable to the predatory tactics of loan sharks, drug

dealers, and other forms of exploitation (A. Bluejacket, personal communication, January 2012). However, despite these objections, under the *Indian Act*, and specifically the Minor Money provision section of this *Act*, the practice of doling out royalty cheques in Maskwacis in excess of $200,000 to 18-year-olds continued unabated for almost two decades (Chettleburgh, 2008). Handcuffed by Indian and North Affairs Canada (INAC), who served as the federally appointed trustee for Maskwacis's resource revenue, the objections of band members were ultimately squashed by a rigid government policy and the inertia added by the few stakeholders most invested in maintaining the status quo. Moreover, as trustee for Maskwacis's oil money, INAC - now Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development (AAND) - held Maskwacis's finances under the General Revenue section of banking, which meant that, for years, millions of Maskwacis's finances sat idle and accrued only minimal interest rates (B. Barry, personal communication, October 2011).

As oil royalties depleted into the early-to-mid 2000s, infighting between street gangs intensified in Maskwacis as various groups fought over the last drops of oil money. Lester Underhill (a pseudonym), for example, a now retired RCMP member who patrolled Maskwacis throughout the 1990s and 2000s, explained the significant impact that these economic transitions had upon the escalation of violence in the community.

> *LESTER: Yeah, it was brought to the attention of those [RCMP] back then [In the year 2000], but the gangs weren't at each other to the extent that they were at this time [in 2008]. As the money started to recede there were smaller pockets of money that came forth because they had all of these youths that were receiving large sums of money when they turned 18. That started to recede quite a*

bit and, because of that, these guys were fighting over the last reminisce of the resources that were there. You don't have that now to that extent. There is still money there, but they're not doling it out like they used to back then.

In 2006, INAC was officially removed as trustee of Maskwacis's (Samson's) resource revenue following a 16-year protracted legal battle revenue and millions of dollars in legal fees. Shortly thereafter, approximately $350-million was transferred to the community and the practice of delivering royalty cheques to 18-year-olds was gradually phased out (Chettleburgh, 2008). The community's remaining financial resources has since been re-invested into a variety of secure, interest-friendly, financial instruments (Chettleburgh, 2008). For example, in Samson's first fiscal year as trustee of its own money, the Nation earned approximately three times the annual rate on return than INAC had in previous years, a difference of approximately $27.5 million (Buehler, 2009). While community leaders from both the Samson and Ermineskin Cree Nations, respectively, have since sued the federal government for its colossal mismanagement of their resources, in 2009, the Supreme Court of Canada rejected Maskwacis's requests for compensatory payments, and, by so doing, quashed the community's hopes of ever regaining lost revenue (Buehler, 2009). The Supreme Court's decision was the product of over twenty years of court battles and millions of dollars worth of legal fees; i.e., figures that pale in comparison to the over two billion dollars worth of interest money that the community estimated to have sacrificed through INAC's mismanagement of their resources (Buehler, 2009). Coupled with the closure of Maskwacis's last oil well in 2007, however, the Supreme Court's decision has had a significant impact upon a whole range of social programs across the region, including those of the sport and recreation variety.

5.4 Part Three: Sporting Trends

Well, specifically for Hobbema, we had the oil royalties. And that really benefited a lot of things. There was a lot of good that came out of it. There was funding for the minor hockey program. Now that the oil revenue is gone, we had to kind of flip it on its head and say, "Okay parents. This funding that you've been accustomed to for so many years is now your responsibility." And now we have such a high rate of unemployment … a lot of people living on or below the poverty line. And then you give them an expensive sport like hockey… So, maybe we need to focus more on soccer. […] I mean this is the lowest budget we have had to work with in 30 years of any Chief and Council because of the oil royalties. Now we're expected to do the most with it. Our numbers are … our population has increased to where we are reproducing at an exponential rate. We've got such high numbers. The problems are multiplying, but the funding is decreasing. So, that's the challenge we have right now. I guess there is still that expectation, whether perceived or real, that we have this money that's going to save us. I think one of the things that kind of lends into that belief is the trust fund that we have set aside. People have to understand that that's not something that … it's not a pool that we can just continually draw from. We're basically living off the interest, and so we're susceptible to whatever the markets do. If the markets are bad, you know, we don't have a lot to play with.

Mario Swampy, Samson Band Councillor, October 2012

According to many residents, the glory days of Maskwacis sport were during the late 1970s and the 1980s, at the peak of the Four Nations oil boom. Throughout the 1980s, for example, the Hobbema Hawks were a celebrated Junior A Hockey club in Alberta, with several former players and local youths being recruited to major American colleges, various professional leagues, and even the National Hockey League (NHL). Hung throughout the halls of Maskwacis's two locally-owned and operated hockey facilities (located on the Samson Cree and Ermineskin First Nations, respectively), are various team jerseys, photographs, and awards of past players and hockey teams, many of whom still reside within, or in close proximity to, the community and regularly volunteer as part-time coaches (J. Crier, personal communication, July 2012). As Mario Swampy noted, however, the transition from economic prosperity to relative scarcity had a significant impact upon the sporting opportunities that are available to Maskwacis youths. By the 1990s, the Hawks, like many other sports teams and recreation programs in the community, gradually ceased operations due to a lack of funds (C. Yellowbird, personal communication, September 2013). Such occurrences were, of course, exacerbated by a variety of other sociological factors that have snowballed over the past two decades.

In recent years, for example, Maskwacis's population has grown - and is still projected to grow – considerably. Between 2006-2011, the number of people actually living on all Four Nations grew 13.4%, compared to just 10.8% for the province of Alberta, and 5.9% growth for all of Canada (Statistics Canada, 2011).[44] This statistic is even more impressive when noting how Canada's west shifting financial economy and associated population migrations *into* Alberta have meant that, more than ever, people are

[44] Population growth per First Nation broke down as follows: Ermineskin First Nation grew 28%, Samson 13% percent, Montana 2.8%, and Louis Bull 10.9% (Statistics Canada, 2011).

leaving the reserves in search of employment (C. Yellowbird, personal communication, October 2012). By the year 2026, moreover, the local population is projected to nearly double in Maskwacis, with approximately 70% of community members presently under the age of 30 (Samson Education Trust, 2008). At the same time, levels of social inequality have also expanded in Maskwacis, as they did in many other communities across Alberta (Hiller, 2007). Poverty and homelessness grew significantly in the late 1990s and mid-2000s, as exploding off-reserve housing prices, rental rates, and the depleting number of quality on-reserve jobs and housing units stretched the limits of Maskwacis's working poor, many of whom have been forced to travel significant distances in search of work (C. Yellowbird, personal communication, August 2012).[45] Greg Crane (a pseudonym), for example, a former youth lacrosse coach for the Louis Bull First Nation, described the impact of these trends upon the provision of sport and recreation programming in Maskwacis:

> *GREG:Those who work are often working out of Hobbema in Northern Alberta working in Fort McMurray, working construction in Edmonton … I don't know, I'm just naming a couple of examples that seem to pop into mind. So, those who are leaving Hobbema to work away, it makes it difficult for them to go to their kids' sport games. There are those factors as well. It's not a two and a half kid with a white picket fence family structure and there is … there are a lot of people working out of the reserve, which I think makes it hard for traditional family things such as taking your kids to sport to really catch on.*

[45] In 2008-2009, for example, Maskwacis posted an adult unemployment rate of about 30%. In the Samson Cree Nation specifically, the community posted a median income of $19,776 for all census families compared to $73,823 for the province of Alberta as a whole (Chettleburgh, 2008).

Exacerbating these challenges is the striking lack of public services and transit facilities in Maskwacis, especially in the wintertime. Indeed, accessing employment and sporting facilities, both on and off the reserves, is a far greater challenge for those individuals who are living and are forced to travel across the expansive rural parts of Maskwacis in search of various opportunities. As Greg continued:

> *GREG:The other thing is that there is no car and there's no bus system. There is no way for them [youths] to get there. So, [in the case of lacrosse, for example] this one guy is sponsoring it in the band. He literally drives around to the home of every child with a van, picks them up, and drives them there and then meets the coach. And then they play and he picks them all up again and drives them back. So, these kids are waiting for this van for a long time. They don't know when it's going to come. It might be late. So, they are really making a commitment to do this. They want to do it. Once they show up, they get like an hour … an hour and a half of it (shocked tone). So, you can really tell the appetite for it is there.*

Amidst these field-specific barriers, maintaining sport, recreation, and other social services in Maskwacis has been substantially constrained by several government policies. Since 1996, for example, the Canadian federal government has enforced a 2% per capita spending cap on core First Nations services, thus lagging far behind the actual growth rate for Maskwacis (Canadian Center for Policy Alternatives, 2012: 35-46). In 2010, therefore, First Nations citizens across the country received less than half the amount of core service funding per capita than did non-First Nations citizens; i.e., an average of $8,750 per citizen compared to $18,724 for other Canadians (Canadian Center for Policy Alternatives, 2012: 35-46). Mitigating these limitations in Maskwacis has, thus, required

a variety of innovative and field-specific approaches, the most basic of which has involved the strategic pooling of resources across the Four Nations. However, as Derek Bruno, a Samson Cree Nation band councillor, explained in a recent interview, executing collaborative sport projects and other social programs in Maskwacis is a task that is not without difficulties:

> *DEREK: They have to work collectively, together. These are some of the things that need to be addressed continually. It seems that we have to do it on an ongoing basis because it's always new leadership coming in; always new, you know, because there is always a change-over, so you have to go in and kind of re-educate them again. […] Those are some of the challenges. It's very unique. A lot of people don't understand that from the outside. "Why can't they just…" you know? It's not like that. It's very complicated.*

Derek's excerpt identified the intimacy between the Four Nations as a distinctive local property that, in many ways, has provided Maskwacis residents with an important economic advantage, at least in terms of programming opportunities. By coordinating their resources, that is, Maskwacis leaders and sports administrators have been able to deliver a wider spectrum of sport and social programs, such as minor hockey leagues and subsidized transport for youths attending the HCCCP.[46] However, the varying population numbers within each First Nation, their different financial resources, community priorities, and election periods for band councils, not to mention their distinctive social

[46] John Crier, for example, was the director of the youth hockey program at the time of our first interview. He described how youth hockey teams in Maskwacis have benefited from these internal-to-the-field complexities: "*Hobbema is unique because we have Four Bands. We can get our talent pool from all Four Bands. And there's a lot of talent in the Four Bands. It's also a positive to have four chiefs and councils that will … that want to support the youth in any way they can. If you give them a direction, they will give you their full support. That's what they want too. They want to see positive role models out there, coming back and giving these kids something that they can identify with, something that they love.*"

histories, have constrained leaderships' ability to secure overall community cohesion, especially in the context of reduced federal support and depleting local resources. Nevertheless, other Maskwacis residents have described additional areas in which community cohesion is nourished as a basic property of the field. For example, in the following excerpt, John Crier, the one-time director of Maskwacis's youth hockey program, described a key front on which members from all Four Nations are united:

> *JOHN: The other unique thing about living in Hobbema is that we learn how to stand with one another, stick up for each other. If you play hockey down south and you play in Hockey Alberta, in the leagues … I mean, Morley, Sarcee, Siksika, and Kainai and Piikani … all those nations, you know, they can play in the same league. So, they're not the only Native team in the league. Up north the racism and the prejudice is not as prevalent. It's still there but it's just not as prevalent. There are a lot of Métis up north. Everybody knows somebody that has some Native blood. Up north they've got Saddle Lake, Frog Lake, Onion Lake, Alexis, and Sturgeon, you know? All of those guys can play in the same leagues as well. Here, in central Alberta, we are alone in our league. And central Alberta, I believe, is pretty high on racism. I mean there are KKK rallies right here in central Alberta. There's … in Red Deer it's pretty prevalent. I know a lot of good people in Red Deer, but it's still there.*

John's excerpt identified Maskwacis's physical *and* symbolic isolation from other Aboriginal communities in central Alberta as a unique property that confines, as well as binds, the experiences of its residents. The lack of neighbouring First Nations with whom to interact has meant that Maskwacis youths, and other residents, have been implicitly

forced to seek out and engage predominantly non-Aboriginal communities within which to play sports and for other social outlets. This marks an important property that distinguishes Maskwacis as a cultural field within the larger 'field of (colonial) power'. Specifically, the marginalization experienced by Aboriginal peoples in Canada is, to an extent, amplified in Maskwacis by virtue of the community's relative isolation from other racialized populations with whom to interact. Indeed, the inherent privileges enjoyed by non-racialized (white) individuals in Alberta was driven home at a later point in my interview with John when, inadvertently, I exposed my personal investment in, and blindness to, the embodied capital associated with my own non-racialized identity as a Euro-Canadian male from Edmonton:

> *JORDAN: My experience in the community is … I mean I'm a white guy and I feel very safe whenever I go on the ice or anywhere that I play in Hobbema. But when I first started coming out I had been primed with these media images of Hobbema…*
>
> *JOHN: Yeah.*
>
> *JORDAN: And it contributes to a certain kind of nervousness.*
>
> *JOHN: Yeah. Growing up, my dad was in residential school for nine years. So, he … I don't know. He was … he wasn't treated as much as other boys should have been treated. He got whipped for speaking his own language. They cut his hair off; things like that. If you ever stepped out of line, you wouldn't get a talking too; you'd just get a belt or a strap, because that's how residential school was. And that's not just my dad. Everyone in my generation had a mother and a father who had gone through the same thing.*

JORDAN: You're about 30?

JOHN: Yeah. So, my dad naturally has … he had a tendency when he was done residential school to be defensive and not want to trust, you know, the white people. Those values were taught to me at a young age, just like everyone else in here. It's just an ongoing theme where we were always taught, "Be on your guard. Never trust an outsider because you never know what they're going to do to you." And that's another thing that needs to be dealt with. I mean there is racism out there, but there's also some on our part because some of us just haven't learned to trust yet. It's hard. My dad was lucky. There were some - a lot of people actually - that were sexually abused during residential schools. It's really hard for them to trust. They had kids and now their kids don't want to trust. So, yeah, when there is an outsider that comes in, they aren't as open as they should be. I mean they're not going to be violent, but they just won't open up to any outsider other than their family. That's another ongoing thing that I think needs to be dealt with.

JORDAN: So, like an outside team coming in too?

JOHN: Yes, anyone that's not from the community they have been taught not to trust. It's just … it's family values. I mean my grandfather was in the era where it was illegal to have powwows and sun dances and you needed a pass to get off the reserve to go to the town. He grew up with the same mistrust. "Don't trust them." And that's just the value not just on our reserve, but also probably on reserves all across Canada. It's hard to get over that. I went to school off reserve, so I grew up around a lot of guys in Wetaskiwin. To this day we are still awesome

friends. I learned to trust. They're the same people. They're just like me. They eat and sleep the same way. I don't see any difference. When I do come across a guy that is offensive to my people I just try and figure out what his problem is. If he doesn't want to talk it out, you know, then he's got issues.

This excerpt offers a very powerful illustration of Canada's colonial struggle as refracted within Maskwacis, particularly as related to the divergent patterns through which Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples have been exposed over time. However, unlike the largely embellished stories of gang violence reported on in the mainstream media, and the heavily mythologized notions of Indigenous 'savagery' preserved in certain sports imagery, both of which will be unpacked in Chapter Six, the histories remembered by John and his family are located firmly in a very real and very recent colonial struggle; specifically, a struggle in which the bodies of Aboriginal youths were especially targeted for acts of violence. These reflections ought to serve, therefore, as a powerful reminder of an inherent privilege associated with whiteness in Alberta (and in Canada generally), that is, one in which sensitivity to the Aboriginal 'Other' is *allowed* to overwhelm one's capacity to reflect critically upon the manner in which the non-Aboriginal body is perceived in Maskwacis and in other social contexts. As the Métis scholar Chris Andersen (2011b: 165) explained, "An unfortunate reality of colonialism is that non-Indigenous people get to choose when and how they have relationships with Indigenous people(s)." Thus, while Maskwacis is conveniently located in terms of travel accessibility, an undercurrent of racism symbolically exacerbates community members' physical isolation from other Aboriginal communities. Indeed, the pervasiveness of the 'taken for granted' privilege associated with whiteness, as an embodied species of

cultural capital in the region, is such that it evades the minds of (self-declared) liberal individuals (myself included) who, with the best of intentions, have experienced colonialism differently and, as such, remain self-absorbed in our own apprehensions, racial insecurities, and non-Aboriginal *habitus*.

5.5 Chapter Summary and Concluding Remarks

In this chapter, a few of the basic properties that distinguish Maskwacis as a cultural field were discussed. The three main points that were identified included: 1) the colonial and intergenerational refractions of macro-political decisions into the lives and everyday living patterns of Maskwacis residents; 2) the emergence, and local-historical rootedness, of Aboriginal street gangs in Maskwacis territory; i.e., a matter that was itself shown to be linked to both broader historical and locally-specific colonial relations and events; and 3) finally, the current sociological trends impacting upon the development of youth sport in Maskwacis, such as the community's central Alberta location and the general cohesiveness stimulated by the community's relative isolation from neighbouring Aboriginal communities. Collectively, these sections demonstrated that Maskwacis community members have experienced colonialism in a variety of field-specific fashions.

In the following chapter, I extend upon this argument by exploring the manner in which the Maskwacis Cree Nations are further shaped by the symbolic power of the mainstream media. Specifically, Chapter Six critiques the media's production of Maskwacis gang violence and analyzes the perceived impacts that these news stories have upon the development of youth sport and other opportunities in the region. Coupled with the field-specific properties identified above, Chapter Six explores another layer of colonial power through which Maskwacis sport (i.e., the HCCCP) has been mediated.

CHAPTER VI.

Redd Alert!

The Media, Moral Panic, and the *Making* of Maskwacis Sport

6.1 Introduction

At a Tim Horton's coffee shop on the outskirts of Edmonton, a friend and I caught notice of the cover story for the April 26th, 2010 issue of *Metro*, a freesheet newspaper produced regionally and distributed across Edmonton and neighbouring areas. The headline "20 Dogs Rescued from Hobbema" was accompanied by a blown-up photograph of a one-eyed dog oozing puss and dried blood from its surgically removed eye-socket. Underneath the image was a short story describing packs of stray dogs running wild throughout the community, alerting *Metro*'s readership to the potential threats posed by these animals to the health and safety of Hobbema-area residents. The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) also picked up on this story and enhanced it. Under the headline "Animal rescue group helps with Hobbema's stray dogs," a short video clip contrasted the compassion of animal rescuers against the socially harsh environment responsible for producing such an abundance of neglected and wounded animals. For added context, the clip drew vivid parallels between the wild dogs of Hobbema and a reserve in northern Saskatchewan where, earlier that same year, a 10-year-old boy had been fatally mauled by a pack of stray dogs (Stewart, 2010).

By themselves, stories like these perhaps seem inconsequential in that they appear as merely reporting a phenomenon, stray dogs in Hobbema, that many community members would themselves recognize as being of some social concern. However, bolstered by a pattern of similarly framed 'news' stories, and an even longer pattern of colonial 'Othering' (Hall, 1996) in Canada, the abstractions generated by this more or

less singular representation are perverse in so far as wildness, aggression, and dysfunction have, especially for youths, become virtually synonymous with almost every facet of Maskwacis's public identity. Indeed, the "Orientalizing" (Said, 1978) effect suggested in this particular script was punctuated by a conversation between two elderly men sitting next to us at the café who proceeded to describe the abundance of ways in which this story further validated their pre-established view of Maskwacis as a community "gone to the dogs."

In this chapter, I critique the mainstream media's stake in Maskwacis, specifically as related to the media's impact upon the *making* of Maskwacis sport. My argument, in brief, is that local journalists and editors have, by their selective interventions in the field, played a powerful role in socially constructing and amplifying the "preferred meaning" (Hall, 1997: 228) of Maskwacis's people to an assumed audience who lives predominantly off-reserve. As a consequence, even stories with comparatively little, *if any*, connection to violence – say, a youth cadets corps program, for example – have had their meanings heavily defined by their relationship to Maskwacis's more dominant public framing as 'gang torn'. My purpose, then, is twofold: 1) to critique the mainstream media's production of Maskwacis's gang violence, and 2) to problematize this narrative's impact upon the context of everyday living in the community, specifically as it relates to the development of youth sport and the HCCCP.

In service of these objectives, the chapter is divided into four parts. In Part One, a small sample of news stories is provided and Maskwacis's dominant narrative critiqued; a narrative, that is to say, in which deviance has been shown to trump compassion and where stories of crime and gang violence overwhelm the sheer banality and complexity

of everyday living. Part Two builds upon this critique by interrogating the critical reflections of three Edmonton-based journalists who, in conversational interviews, described the 'behind the scenes' processes and complex decision making strategies that have shape(d) their (re)production of Maskwacis news.[47] In Part Three, I examine the perceived impacts of Maskwacis's dominant narrative upon the broader context of community experiences. Interviews with a range of Maskwacis residents, and other community members, described the media's fixation on Aboriginal gang violence as having a mostly repressive impact on the community, such as contributing to the erosion of pride, culture, and also exacerbating Maskwacis's social and cultural marginalization on-reserve. Conversely, Part Four closes the chapter by exploring the creative ways in which certain, well-positioned agents in the field (e.g., the RCMP) were able to harness the media's generative properties in *the making of the HCCCP*. However, in accessing the media's capital, I also argue that agents were implicitly pressured into placating, even embracing, Maskwacis's dominant narrative as 'gang torn', thus demonstrating cultural fields as simultaneously sites of resistance as well as domination.

6.2 Part One: Producing Moral Panic and the 'Gangs of Hobbema'

"A Small community dealing with a Big City Problem: Gangs and Guns"

Peter Mansbridge*, CBC's The National,* April 17th, 2008

Let me state clearly, at the outset, that the aim of this chapter is *not* the reduction of violence (gang or other) to the mere symbolic dimensions of the mainstream media.

[47] Conversational interviews were audio recorded; however, these interviews differed from other (formal) interviews in that they were highly spontaneous and did not flow from an interview guide. All interviewees (both formal and conversational) provided oral or written consent to have their voices audio recorded.

Indeed, the colonial structures informing the context of everyday living in Maskwacis, as Chapter Five explained, have, in certain areas at least, contributed to the heightened manifestation of a number of social ailments within the community relative to many others across Canada. Yet, as Martin Sánchez-Jankowski (1994) illustrated in his examination of Chicano street gangs in the United States, and Loïc Wacquant (2008) reiterated in his comparative analysis of the American ghetto and French working class Banlieus, there often exists a sizeable fissure between the media projection of a given social phenomenon and its 'on the ground' realities. My more specific argument, then, is that the internal design and makeup of the Edmonton-based news media (and those of the other news agencies that feed off their resources) have *amplified* stories of Maskwacis gang violence *at the expense of* most other news stories taking place in the community. The CBC's prime time journalist, Mark Kelley, for example, epitomized this coverage in a 20 minute long special news report in which he declared the Samson Cree Nation a "Gang War Zone" *in spite* of Chief Yellowbird's insistence that only one percent of the population were involved in any gang-related activities whatsoever (Kelley, 2010).

The following pages provide a small sample of typical news stories featuring Maskwacis, most notably as they appeared in *The Edmonton Sun* and *The Edmonton Journal*. My intention is not to deny the events described in these stories, but rather to sketch in broad strokes the image of Maskwacis that has been cultivated most forcefully in the mainstream media. Consider the following headlines and their captions:

> *'Mom Vows to Leave Reserve: Gunfire rings through Hobbema'*
>
> "Kerry Soosay often awakes to the sound of gunfire coming from the abandoned, burned-out houses behind his home in the Hobbema townsite."

Stolte, *The Edmonton Journal*, April 17th, 2008

'Manhunt Begins for Shooting Suspect from Troubled Alberta Aboriginal Community: Mounties say Shooting is Gang Related'

"A manhunt is underway for a 19-year-old man in connection to a gang-related shooting that left one Hobbema teen dead last weekend."

Salz, *The Edmonton Sun*, February 8th, 2013

'Gangsters Kill Young Mom: Loveable 20-year-old Slain when Hobbema House Sprayed with Bullets'

"13-year-old … and seven friends were silenced around midnight when they peered out the second-storey bedroom window of the Hobbema home to see nearly a dozen men standing together, watching the girls in the dark. The girls dropped to the floor just as the bullets started flying, seven rounds hitting the house."

Lillebuen, *The Edmonton Journal*, August 18th, 2008a: A1

'Youths Charged in Death of 5-year-old Hobbema Boy'

"Two youths have been charged with manslaughter and a third is being sought in the case of a five-year-old boy shot dead as he slept in his Hobbema home."

QMI Agency, *Saultstar.com*, January 11th, 2012

'Hobbema Gangs Homemade Problem'

"Hobbema's gangs are mostly the homegrown kind – brothers and cousins from troubled homes with easy access to alcohol and crack cocaine."

Stolte, *The Edmonton Journal*, July 13th, 2011

'CeaseFire Eyed for Hobbema: RCMP Considering New Chicago Program that Stops Crime Before it Starts'

"Police officers are examining a US crime-reduction program as one of the possible next steps in curbing gang violence on Hobbema's four townsites. The program treats gang violence like a medical outbreak that can be contained or stifled in the same way as a cholera or tuberculosis epidemic…"

Lillebuen, *The Edmonton Journal*, December 1st, 2008b: A14

However brief, the image conjured in these storylines is of a community infested with gangsters, thugs, and social degenerates - a social purgatory in the middle of central Alberta and "a microcosm of everything that's wrong with the reserve system in Canada" (Simmons, 2008: B1). Other headlines such as 'Hobbema, Alberta: a town in a "state of crisis"' (Offman, 2008), 'Hobbema home to deadliest block in Canada' (Larson, 2011), 'Hobbema suffering Heinous Murder Rate' (Rodrigues, 2011), 'Man who shot Hobbema toddler blacked-out drunk' (CBCnews.ca, 2010), 'Hobbema Stabbing Sends Three to Hospital' (Roth, 2013), 'Police comb scene of 16-year-old's Death in Hobbema' (CBCnews.ca, 2013b), and 'Hobbema Residents still Fear Gang Violence' (Asquith, 2012), among many others, consistently draw attention to the extreme end of violence occurring on the reserves while paying little attention to the complexity and sheer density of life experiences that exists across the Four Nations. The strikingly visual descriptions and images of burnt down houses, police manhunts, rogue gunfire, and 13-year-old girls awakening to the sight of 'nearly a dozen men standing together, watching the girls in the dark' are simultaneously gripping and emotionally distressing. However, the near uniform presence of such images, as Paul Gilroy (1987) astutely observed in his critique

of popular representations of 'inner city' black youths in the United Kingdom, implicitly locks Maskwacis residents into a 'problem/victim' couplet that simultaneously robs them of both agency and morality. Perhaps the strongest evidence of this framing appeared in the final caption (above), specifically as related to the deeply ideological implications generated by re-presenting Maskwacis youths as analogous to a 'medical outbreak' requiring 'containment' so as not to spread or infect the perceived stability of Canada's more morally upright (i.e., non-Aboriginal) citizens. Indeed, Maskwacis's public framing is remarkably consistent with Canada's grander colonial narrative in which the discursive construction of 'Indigenous savagery' vs. 'European civilization' has surrounded all sorts of (physical and ideological) interventions into lives of Aboriginal peoples (see Carter, 1993; Harris, 2002; Lawrence, 2004; Wilson & Peters, 2005, among others).

In sociological terms, this type of news is consistent with what Stanley Cohen (1972: 9) described as a "moral panic," where "a condition, episode, person or group of persons emerges to become defined as a threat to societal values and interests."[48] Erich Goode and Nachman Ben-Yehuda (1994: 169) explained, "With the eruption of a given moral panic, the battle lines are redrawn, moral universes are reaffirmed, deviants are paraded before upright citizens and denounced, and society's boundaries are solidified." The body of literature that has since emerged out of Cohen's (1972) concept converges around the media's ability to conjure fear and panic about an (usually ethnic) 'Other' – a symbolic "folk devil" who stirs the exaggerated reactions of the media, law enforcement,

[48] Other conditions of a 'moral panic' include: "its nature is presented in a stylized and stereotypical fashion by the mass media; the moral barricades are manned by editors, bishops, politicians and other right-thinking people; socially accredited experts pronounce their diagnoses and solutions; ways of coping are evolved or … resorted to; the condition then disappears, submerges or deteriorates and becomes more visible" (Cohen, 1972: 9).

politicians, action groups, and the general public.[49] In the case of 'Hobbema', the image, or "folk devil" that has been symbolically cast out and paraded before its readers is not a single or solitary figure, but rather an entire community of "devils" drawn very obviously and powerfully along racial lines. The media's sequestering of this 'devil', moreover, has been made all the easier by Maskwacis's apparent racial, cultural, and geographic isolation on reserve; a corollary to which being that, for the majority of Canadians who have never been (and will likely never travel) to Maskwacis, and the same holds true for most other First Nations in Canada (particularly those in remote northerly regions), the media has played a fundamental role in actively and selectively defining what significant events are taking place on these reserves, while at the same time offering powerful interpretations and frameworks for how to understand those events.

Accordingly, even the 'positive' news stories and proposed solutions to Maskwacis's gang violence have been publicly framed as exceptional. For example, 'Hobbema man proof good things can happen' (Salz, 2012), 'Traditional sport breathes life into Native community' (Wingrove, 2007), 'Alberta First Nations hope basketball tournament helps repair reputation' (Wingrove, 2012), and 'Soup line helps rebuild Hobbema's sense of community' (Stolte, 2011) are but a few headlines that, in a peculiar twist of irony, reinforce Maskwacis's stereotype while simultaneously articulating the 'good things' happening there as exceptionally rare occurrences. Indeed, the ideas captured in the above headlines are well-aligned with what Stephen Karpman (1968) described as a 'drama triangle' in that they habitually emphasize three distinct social identities: 'villains, victims, and rescuers' – i.e., an explanatory triad that has been

[49] Goode and Ben-Yehuda (1994) provide an important overview of 'moral panic' inspired literature. Also see Jackson and Rudman (1993) and McCorkle and Miethe (1998; 2002).

widely used in media studies as a tool for critiquing the journalistic tendency to over-simplify complex social events (Galician, 2009).

Of course, by far the most extensively covered 'solution' to Maskwacis's gang violence has been the state-sponsored onslaught of a series of aggressive, law-and-ordered styled policies targeting street gangs/'villains'. For example, in October 2008, Alberta's Premier, Ed Stelmach, announced a $42.4 million dollar federally financed plan to combat organized crime across the province with four new organized crime teams made up of 83 officers and civilians (Audette, 2008). According to Stelmach, "The infusion of officers sends a clear message to those who have no respect for the law; the message is: 'We're coming after you'" (Audette, 2008). At a federal level, this representation of gang violence was also pervasive. In February 2009, for example, the Stephen Harper-led Conservative government tabled new anti-crime legislation "cracking down" on street gangs (CTV.ca, 2009). The proposed legislation would expedite the judicial process by: making gang-related killings an automatic first-degree murder charge; issuing mandatory minimum sentencing for drive-by shootings acted out on behalf of a criminal organization; and also by raising the minimum jail sentence to fourteen years for all aggravated assault charges against a police officer (CTV.ca, 2009).

In Maskwacis, the other widely covered solution to gang violence was the local formulation of an RCMP-led youth cadet corps program (i.e., the HCCCP) that became renowned for providing 'at risk' Aboriginal youths with "an alternative to a gang lifestyle of violence, drugs and drive-by shootings" (Seskus, 2007). Indeed, in its first five years of operation, the HCCCP had already been the subject of over 405 radio, television, newspaper, magazine and telephone interviews; 1,650 newspaper, magazine, internet and

community newsletters/articles; and three DVD documentaries: *Shades of Blue* (Poizner, 2007), *Journey to Jamaica* (CBCnews.ca, 2009a), *Journey to Canada* (CBCnews.ca, 2009b).[50] However, consider for a moment the following headlines and the public narrative they articulate: 'Cadet corps helping keep kids off streets' (Anonymous, 2006); 'Hobbema hopes to draw kids into cadets, not gangs' (CBCnews.ca, 2005c); 'Hobbema cadet program cuts crime' (Seksus, 2007); 'Doing drills instead of drugs' (Pavlin, 2008); 'Native cadet program marching kids away from gangs (CBCnews.ca, 2011); 'Group Mentality Helps Rescue Aboriginal youths' (Rogers, 2005), and 'Cadets Converting Gang Members into 'Nice Kids'' (CBCnews.ca, 2006). While, at first glance, stories like these might be interpreted as an important counter-narrative with which to balance the overwhelmingly bleak portrayals of Aboriginal dysfunctionality, if read critically, the perhaps unintended, though implicit, connotation advanced in these storylines is the reproduction of long-standing colonial ideologies in which 'deviant' Aboriginal youths require 'taming', 'civilising', and 'rescuing' by the RCMP as "moral entrepreneurs" (Becker, 1963) of the state. In the very least, headlines like these make it difficult for newsreaders to imagine a space *outside* the HCCCP's protective purview where the threat of Aboriginal gang violence is not ubiquitous in Maskwacis - a framing that, as we shall see, has become a source of contention among several segments of the community.

6.3 Part Two: The Behind the Scenes Production of 'Hobbema'

> *I think it's obvious that it's more expensive to travel than it is to stay in the city. If you go through The [Edmonton] Journal, for example, there is a city-plus section.*

[50] These figures are courtesy of Richard Huculiak and dated until April 22nd, 2010.

It's the city and a certain area around the city. To be honest, I don't remember if Hobbema falls into that or not. I think it might not. It might be just outside, which means that if I want to write an article about Hobbema, I would want to aim for … I would want … well, that kind of goes with anything … any feature that I write, I am trying to write it for the front page. And if it doesn't go on the front page then, well … then that's disappointing because I put a lot of effort into it.

Lindsay Vaughan (a pseudonym), Journalist, Edmonton, AB.

Personal communication, November 8th, 2009

That the media's production of daily news is implicated in a range of seemingly benign behind the scenes decisions is a phenomenon scarcely in need of re-stating. Since Stanley Cohen's (1972) *Folk Devils and Moral Panics*, for example, scholars from across disciplines have expanded their analyses into the media's uncanny ability to conjure fear and panic through its coverage of particular social events that, when analyzed soberly, are far less threatening than their media projection would imply (among a vast literature see Bourdieu, 1998; Herman & Chomsky, 1988; Corner, 2007; Hall et al, 1978; McCorkle & Miethe, 1998). The nature of these more tacit journalistic pressures, all of which were enhanced in the context of an Aboriginal community that is both culturally and geographically removed from Edmonton's downtown-based media hub, expose underlying cracks in the news industry's oft-made claims to truth, objectivity, and neutrality, and thus raise important questions about the range of social, economic, and cultural factors that impact upon the end-production of Maskwacis news.

To begin, we must first acknowledge the underlying social and economic pressures currently shaping what Pierre Bourdieu (1998) referred to as the 'journalistic

field'. As Edward Herman and Noam Chomsky (1988: 14) observed, today's media sources are overwhelmingly constrained by "market-profit-oriented forces" that inevitably trump journalistic integrity. In Canada, for example, the 2010 collapse of the CanWest Global Empire and the shaky ascendance of the Postmedia Network Inc. provided a striking reminder of the news industry's vulnerability to the increasingly volatile Canadian and globalized market place. Mass layoffs, declining budgets, and voluntary staff retirements across the country have impacted upon virtually every aspect of Canadian news production. As the revenue streams from advertising shrink, the pressure intensifies upon news agencies to *seek out* dramatic news stories that appeal to wider audiences and help to secure valuable investment dollars. Indeed, as Ben Bagdikian (1992: 8) observed, today's newspapers have "been altered to create editorial content not primarily for the needs and interest of the audience, but for the audience collecting needs of advertisers."

For example, consistent among my interviews with all three Edmonton-based journalists (all of whom worked for CanWest/Postmedia Network news agencies) was their experiencing pressures to select news stories that were simultaneously "interesting," "captivating," "significant," and "different" from other social events, as well as sufficiently provocative as to warrant space on the "front page" of the newspaper and the mobilization of costly resources for travel to Maskwacis; e.g., vehicles, photographers, and manpower. Joel Barton (a pseudonym), for example, wrote several articles on Maskwacis as a crime reporter. He provided the following reflection when asked about Maskwacis's relatively singular depiction in the popular press:

JOEL: That's the thing. Because it's far away it can be a whole lot harder to find those [positive] stories, unless we're outright told about them. The thing about a newspaper is that there has to be a hook. There has to be something new. You have to basically answer in the reader's mind why what they are reading matters. So, often that is something new that is happening, or something that is changing. That can be a lot harder to find in terms of good news. And that's why there is that criticism all of the time that so much of the news is bad, and so much of it is negative because, more often than not, the good things that happen in society are quietly happening and they are harder to peg down and to say "'A' is doing this; 'B' is doing this." It's just happening. The last … my last shooting story I did out there, a woman was shot inside a house … a known gang house, where there were a bunch of other kids, and she was not the intended target, which is why I went out there. Honestly, if there was a shooting out there that was not fatal I would not be going out there unless there was something different about it. But, in that story, I also tried to talk about how things were changing in a general sense; how there have been less of these sorts of incidents lately; how the houses have been painted so that the gang symbols are gone now. I try to talk a little bit more about some of the programs that are out there, whereas I don't know if I could as easily write a story about just the program. It would be a lot harder to get that story into the paper.

Joel's reflection demonstrates that the journalistic impulse to fixate upon the "extraordinary, dramatic, tragic" (Hall et al., 1978: 57), in anything that breaks the routine, was especially pronounced in the context of news stories featuring Maskwacis.

Deprived of the necessary tools and resources to investigate and describe the gamut and complexity of events happening in the community, journalists, as a part of their "professional ideology" for what constitutes 'good news' (Hall et al., 1978: 56), have been structurally encouraged to *seek out* stories that adhere to a particular kind of journalistic script. As Bourdieu (1998: 20) explained, "The daily papers are under pressure to offer a daily dose of the extra-daily," which in part explains the attention given to "usual unusual" events like murders and gang violence. The end result, by both structure and design, is that journalists are tacitly – if not explicitly – drawn, and encouraged, to *amplify* the acts of deviance that they seem so absolutely committed to controlling through the field's devotion to unbiased news production. A further consequence to these social forces is that journalists must regularly omit from the public transcript important details that could potentially inform, though inevitably distract from, a story's raw sensationalism. Bourdieu (1998: 7) explained,

> Given the lack of time, and especially the lack of interest and information, (research and documentation are usually confined to reading articles that have appeared in the press), they [journalists] can not do what would be necessary to make events (say, an outbreak of violence at a high school) really understandable, that is, they cannot reinsert them in a network of relevant relationships (such as the family structure, which is tied to the job market, itself tied to government hiring policies, and so on).

As a result, therefore, news stories that feature Maskwacis are made to appear as a "series of unrelated flash photos" (Bourdieu, 1998: 7) involving Aboriginal gang violence, as opposed to a network of complex social issues and relationships that are rooted in local,

provincial, national and globalizing forces (see Chapter Five). Indeed, as Joel explained (above), those events that are *"quietly happening," "harder to peg down,"* and are revealing of their effects only in the long term, such as the benefits of a drama program, language classes, or youth cadet corps program, for example, are generally eclipsed by primary news stories that adhere to a succinct, and spectacular, public narrative.

Interestingly, Joel – like all interviewees – appeared to possess an acute awareness of media bias against Maskwacis and noted how, on several occasions, he actively tried to circumvent these pressures through the creative *styling* of his news stories. Due to the industry's pressure for a *"hook,"* however, Joel's inclusion of a more 'positive' storyline that featured Maskwacis was made possible only by its somewhat creative conflation with another, 'negative' storyline. Joel's manoeuvrings, therefore, raise important questions about the process of 'identification' and 'contextualization' that journalists are forced to negotiate in their production of Maskwacis news. As the authors of *Policing the Crisis* (1978: 57) explained,

> If the world is not to be represented as a jumble of random and chaotic events, then they must be identified (i.e. named, defined, related to other events known to the audience), and assigned to a social context (i.e. placed within a frame of meanings familiar to the audience). This process – identification and contextualisation – is one of the most important through which events are 'made to mean' by the media. An event only 'makes sense' if it can be located within a range of known social and cultural identifications.

For Maskwacis, the *primary* or *cardinal news value* (Hall et al., 1978: 56) has almost exclusively involved stories of Aboriginal gang violence. Stories that deviate from this

identification, therefore, are 'made meaningful' for news audiences only by their re-insertion *into*, and framing *against*, this primary contextualization, which "*sets the limit* for all subsequent discussion by *framing what the problem is*" (Hall et al., 1978: 62).

Another journalist (Conner Gladstone, a pseudonym) reiterated Joel's sentiments and further elaborated upon the journalistic gymnastics that are required when trying to produce a more optimistic spin about life in the Four Nations:

> *CONNER: Well it [i.e., a positive story on youth sport] was an assignment that was floating around the newsroom for a while. We had a couple of issues with it because the [Edmonton] Journal … you see, it's the Edmonton Journal and most of the staff work for the City Plus section, whereas most of the A section is foreign and national news. Hobbema isn't City Plus. It's too far to be considered City Plus. That's part of the reason why Hobbema isn't covered a lot of the time. So, we had to kind of twist and manoeuvre to get it into the Alberta section, which is usually a page, if that. Space is always a concern of a newspaper, as are resources, and Hobbema required the renting of a car and a full day with me and a photographer. Once those two things were approved, we just set up a day where we could go and watch the kids play. Of course, once we expressed some interest in doing that, everyone involved in it were elated to have us come, have us cover it, have us be there, be aware of it and everything. So, yeah, I think it was someone who actually called me, but I'm not sure why it happened that way. The call had come before I had even arrived at the Journal. It had just been kicked from reporter to reporter until someone actually got around to doing it because it was a struggle for resources.*

Conner's reflection, like Joel's, exposed the structural barriers encountered when journalists attempted the production of *any* news stories featuring Maskwacis, let alone one of a more positive nature. Strained for resources (e.g., financial, material, and human), news space (only one page for provincial news), driving distance to the reserves, competition with other provincially scaled news stories, among other variables, journalists have been strongly pressured into framing a certain kind of narrative about life in the community; a narrative, it must be recalled, which is itself "inter-textually" (Hall, 1997: 232) situated within a larger colonial narrative involving other First Nations in Canada, the majority of which have long faced similar barriers to news reporting (see Francis, 1992). Curiously, though, the barriers identified by journalists appeared to run counter to community members' expressed enthusiasm at the mere prospect of having a more 'constructive' and/or 'positive' news story produced about their youths. Indeed, the general excitement Conner claimed to have encountered while working on the above 'positive' news story suggests that, far from being passively concerned about their youths' media projection, Maskwacis residents care a great deal about the stories that culture spins about their community and, in some incidences, have actively struggled to define that transcript. However, the relative inability of *all* stories (especially those of a 'positive' orientation) to be taken seriously – i.e., *it had just been kicked from reporter to reporter until someone actually got around to doing it* – suggests that there exists an internal-to-the-field hierarchy and clear discrepancy between the stories valued by the media, and the events that Maskwacis residents themselves deem as being newsworthy.

Joel (introduced above) elaborated upon the field's hierarchy in the following excerpt, specifically as it relates to the role(s) that "cultural intermediaries"[51] (Bourdieu, 1984) play in the making of Maskwacis news:

> *JOEL: Well, with Hobbema it's a little more … I mean, usually with Hobbema, if there is something that has happened then we will hear about it first from the RCMP in a release that comes out to us. Sometimes we'll hear STARS fly out for an incident and that will kind of peak our interest. The RCMP is usually the first to tell us what happened in that sense too. It's … our lines of communication – on Samson especially - …it can be kind of hard to keep sources out there. I mean, not a lot of people have phones out there. It's more likely that they have Internet access than they do a phone line. It's just different I guess. Yeah, the last strong contact I had out there … just out of the blue their email stopped working. Every time I'm out there I really try and go and meet new people I can call so that they can tell me what is going on because it's very small out there, especially on the Samson town site which is where most of the unfortunate action is.*

The above excerpt reveals a potentially stark divide between newsmakers and the proverbial 'objects' of their news stories in Maskwacis. Beyond the inherent challenges of being non-Aboriginal (white) journalists reporting events happening in a First Nation,[52] the struggle for resources, time, and information have also set decisive limits upon the quality of relations that were able to be established between Edmonton-based

[51] Bourdieu first introduced the term 'cultural intermediaries' in his book *Distinction*; however, the concept has evolved considerably from its original usages (see Negus, 2002). The term highlights the complex role(s) played by the cohort of middle class workers engaged in "occupations involving presentation and representation … providing symbolic goods and services" to broader audiences (Bourdieu, 1984: 359).

[52] For example, non-Aboriginal journalists lack of fluency in cultural protocols (e.g., the offering of tobacco in exchange for stories), and residents' hesitancy to divulge sensitive information to 'outsiders' in light of a longstanding history in which Aboriginal knowledges have been exploited for Euro-Canadian gain (see Chapter Four), are all potential variables contributing to the fragility of local-media relations in Maskwacis.

journalists and Maskwacis residents. Moreover, the transitory nature of journalism as a profession, especially in recent years, has also inhibited journalists' ability to forge strong and sustainable relationships in Aboriginal communities; i.e., a limitation that can be seen in the fact that already two thirds of the journalists interviewed for this study have resigned from their posts at their respective newspapers to pursue work elsewhere.

Additionally, as Joel also explained, journalists' (in)ability to secure 'strong' and reliable 'contacts' are, in a very practical sense, limited by the small size and reduced access to technological devices in Maskwacis, such as cell phones and Internet services. While these barriers may, in part, reflect the complex colonial history and systemic poverty levels that exist in parts of the reserves, the varying degrees of reactivity encountered by Conner's earlier pursuit of a more 'positive' news story vs. Joel's emphasis upon *"where the unfortunate action is"* in Maskwacis suggests that an alternative rationale may also be at play. More specifically, the varying degree of reactivity that journalists claimed to encounter depending upon their news story suggests that Maskwacis residents are privy to the media's distorting power and, for obvious reasons, have refused to cooperate or be rendered complicit in the reproduction of their community's stereotyping. Hence, journalists have, by both design and by process of elimination, been forced to rely heavily upon the RCMP as their key intermediary of Maskwacis news; i.e., a matter that itself presents several potential points of conflict in terms of achieving 'balanced' news production. As Vince Sacco (1995: 146) explained, "The police role as the dominant gatekeeper means that crime news is often police news and that the advancement of a police perspective on crime and its solution is

facilitated."[53] The implications of this relationship for Maskwacis news are elaborated upon in the following sections, specifically as they relate to the HCCCP's development.

6.4 Part Three: The Media and the Making of Maskwacis Sport

As Chapter Two noted, several studies have critiqued the media's tendency to misrepresent Aboriginal peoples, culture, and imagery in various sporting contexts (Forsyth, 2002; Gardiner, 2003; Heine & Wamsley, 1996; Kidd, 1983; Mason, 2008; O'Bonsawin, 2002; Wenner, 1993, among others). While such research has drawn important attention to the media's distorting potential, the literature has yet to address the media's actual impacts upon Aboriginal peoples' experiences of sport and recreation. Carter Yellowbird, for example, is a father of two, businessman, and former pro rodeo athlete from the Samson Cree Nation. He is also one of the *many* Maskwacis residents whose local experiences departed sharply from the media's depictions of the community:

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[53] Noteworthy, however, is that the RCMP, as *the* dominant gatekeeper of Maskwacis news, are also ensnared in a complex social struggle and filtering process that ultimately shapes their role(s) as cultural intermediaries. Lester Underhill (a pseudonym), for example, a now retired RCMP member from Maskwacis who also functioned as the media's chief liaison for local news, explained:

> *LESTER: One of the jobs that I was tasked with, basically, was to let the world know that this was happening: "We're having all of these problems and have limited resources. It is pretty chaotic and we need some assistance here." That message was sent out there and thus we were able to build up our membership, you know, and that capacity … get some of the resources that were out there. All of a sudden there were a number of different initiatives, both federal and provincial, to come here and try and help with some of the problems that we were dealing with. So, it [the media] was good in that context because we needed the help. At the same time, there was that balance of … well, now everybody thinks it's so crazy out here that you can't even drive through it without ducking down and having somebody shoot at you, right?*

Lester's reflection illustrates that the RCMP in Maskwacis have historically found in the mainstream media a useful ally for a range of different issues. Deprived of adequate policing resources, for example (i.e., a matter that may have more to do with federal cutbacks to First Nations police services than with actual *increases* in the levels of on-reserve 'gang violence'), Lester noted that the RCMP had turned to the mainstream media as an ally for building greater awareness and capacity within their police detachment; a decision that resulted in *"a number of different initiatives, both federal and provincial*." However, the 'balancing' act Lester described also illustrates that, in accessing these resources, the RCMP was forced to reproduce Maskwacis's dominant narrative as 'gang torn'.

CARTER: They [residents] kind of make fun of it, you know? But really, they don't realize the harm that it's causing the community. You look at the high unemployment rate and economic development. Who's going to come on reserve, on Samson Cree Nation in Hobbema, to do business with the First Nation? They kind of laugh about it and shrug off what they're talking about, but it doesn't really hit them what effect it can have on the community, right? […] I know of a few people that are non-Native and work within the … on the 611 highway with the power company. They come on reserve. I heard one of my buddies talking … he's a non-Native … and they pick straws for the person who has to come onto the reserve. Nobody wants to come on the reserve to work on the secondary highway, especially Samson. It's like going into a warzone, they say. A lot of people are scared. I asked, "Why are you guys scared? There's nothing to be scared of." I see that a lot. I see that a lot when I drive by Hobbema and there's people working for Telus, the government, or highway people. I just drive by slow and they keep their heads down. They don't want to look up. They're scared to look at people, the Natives. Sometimes I will honk the horn to get them to look up at me. I will just smile at them and nod my head, you know? That's all it takes, eh? They'll start to talk to each other and realize that it's not so bad. Still, the press does … something to a person and to a culture. It takes away the culture. It takes away the language. It can affect the language.

JORDAN: How so? In what way does it take away the culture?

CARTER: It takes away the culture and language because people are afraid to be seen as being from Hobbema. A lot of people I know, like the kids … my

kids. I see that in my kids too, my youngest kid. She's not in Hobbema. She's in Red Deer. She told me that she would get picked on and pushed aside because she was 'a girl from Hobbema' and 'her dad lives in Hobbema'. That's how it affects a person and takes away a culture. You can end up being ashamed of who you are.

In the above excerpt, Carter identified very powerfully what he believed *all* community members – even those living off reserve – are made to suffer as a result of the broad public media narrative of gang violence that surrounds Maskwacis. For Carter, racial profiling, discrimination, and the widespread fear of potential violence have contributed to Maskwacis's systematic alienation from a whole series of integrated realms of culture. Thus, community members wishing to dispel popular myths and stereotypes, while dispossessed of the power to control their own public representation, are forced to exaggerate their hospitality to others as a means to hopefully draw 'positive' attention to their community; i.e., taking extra care to honk, smile, nod one's head. However, as Robin Kelley (1994) discovered in his study of 20th century race politics in the United States, having to perform these acts potentially induces other forms of collateral violence. Kelley (1994: 8) explained, while the "mask of grins and lies" enabled many black 'southerners' to wage a kind of "underground" battle against the status quo, and *outside* the terrain of dominant institutions like the mainstream media, the 'mask' exacted a heavy price from those forced to wear it: "The inner pain," that is, "generated by having to choke back one's feelings in the face of racism could create tensions" (Kelley, 1994: 8). For Carter, for example, the 'inner pain' that was generated by having to perform these tasks translated into the erosion of pride, Maskwacis culture, and Cree language,

especially amongst the younger generations of Aboriginal youths. Hence, the mythologies secreted by the mainstream media have spread beyond their target (i.e., non-Aboriginal) audiences, and penetrated the psyche and identities of the very people whose lives these stories claim to represent and are all-too-frequently guilty of distorting. As Frantz Fanon (1967: 116) explained in *Black Skin, White Masks*: "I am the slave, not of the 'idea' that others have of me but of my own appearance." I am "fixed" by it.

Like Carter, most interviewees recited a range of venues and diverse social settings at which their experiences of racism and marginalization were pronounced. These experiences ranged from everyday acts of avoidance and prejudice in the streets, sidewalks, restaurants, and the shopping centers of neighbouring towns and cities, to the more systemic forms of alienation and maltreatment that have occurred in elementary schools, health centers, hospitals, and other key sites of cultural exchange. Emily Bradshaw (a pseudonym), for example, is a Euro-Canadian schoolteacher who has worked fulltime on the Ermineskin Cree Nation for over a decade. In the following excerpt, she described how Maskwacis's students have, even by teachers, been heavily alienated due to the community's popular stereotype as 'gang torn':

> *EMILY: I mean, you hear a lot from the media. You hear a lot through the media that just doesn't match what you know of the community, you know? People here talk jokingly about it being a "warzone." I used to have people saying, "Do you feel safe out there?" I had one colleague who was in her first year teaching out here and her parents made her quit because they were worried about what they were hearing in the news. I just … the only way I can describe the media is that it just doesn't match what I know of the community.*

As Emily revealed, outsiders' fears of incurring a potentially violent assault in Maskwacis have, on occasion, translated into peoples' total avoidance of the community. Experiences of this sort were described by virtually every individual interviewed for this study as being pervasive across a broad range of social, economic, and cultural contexts in Maskwacis. Significantly, however, the images conjured in the mainstream media stood in complication to what interviewees described as their lived experiences on the reserves; i.e., virtually all claiming that they experienced a glaring cognitive disconnect between Maskwacis's media projection and its 'on the ground' realities.

Stewart Schmidt, for example, served as the director of Maskwacis's paramedic outfit at the time of our interview. As a paramedic, Stewart had born firsthand witness to many of the community's most vulnerable moments over the past two decades, including all of the incidents outlined in the aforementioned media headlines. Nevertheless, Stewart had this to say about Maskwacis's media projection versus his lived experiences there:

> *STEWART: Yeah, I think that perception becomes somewhat jaded without knowing the truth about what the community is. It's really all about the people, right? 99% of the community is great, but there is always that focus on the handful that seems to get talked about in the media. I mean I've never had that experience in the years I've been there. I mean I've never felt unsafe. I've never felt any of those stereotypes that are portrayed in the media. There is just that disconnect between perception and reality. I think it's a great community because there is that … you have those elements where no matter how tough it gets or hard it gets it just keeps moving on. You hear these stories about the different initiatives in the community and, you know, I think that's the best thing about the*

community. You have that pride not only in working there, but you get that sense of pride in the community, right?

The "*disconnect between perception and reality"* was a common theme expressed by virtually all participants interviewed for this study. As opposed to violent, therefore, Stewart framed Maskwacis's various grassroots initiatives and the local acts of resilience to oppressive conditions as more accurately reflective of the community's cultural identity. Accordingly, Stewart identified "tightness," sense of community, and pride as key ingredients in the construction of Maskwacis's local culture; a tightness that, ironically, many residents described as being made all the stronger in the face of the widespread racism and media profiling endured by Maskwacis.

Thomas Bruno, likewise, perceived disconnect between Maskwacis's dominant media projection and his experiences as a 19-year-old in the community. Noteworthy is that, at the time of our interview, Thomas was living with his Kokum (grandmother) and older brother near the Samson townsite, and divided his time fairly evenly between working as her primary caregiver and another part-time job he held as a school janitor:

THOMAS: It's all the negative stuff. I mean I remember when that little girl got hit by a stray bullet, I think it was, or a drive-by … that little 2-year-old out in the yard. The next week or so after that, in the paper, there were comics or whatever that was supposed to make a statement. The one said Calgary, Edmonton, and then had the one guy pointing a gun and on his arm it said Hobbema. I didn't like that at all. Yeah, that's what Hobbema is like: "You're going to see some guy pointing a gun and showing you where to go," (said in a sarcastic tone). It's like, "It's not that bad!" All they focus on is negativity, "So and so got shot in Hobbema

today" or "Car accident in Hobbema due to drunk driving." It's all focused around death, drinking, drugs, gangs … none of it focuses on the good programs.[54]

Thomas' reflection is noteworthy for the layers of complexity it unveils related to peoples' everyday experiences in Maskwacis. Indeed, as Thomas explained, issues of poverty and homelessness *are* pervasive within some corners of the community. Especially in the aftermath of the accidental shooting of a two-year-old toddler in the summer of 2010 – the incident to which Thomas alluded above – the public was particularly focused upon Maskwacis gang violence. The community was again brought under scrutiny when, in the summer of 2012, yet another accidental shooting resulted in the death of a five-year-old boy, this time while sleeping in his bed. That both incidents happened within a short walking distance from Thomas's home, however, did not impede his unwavering condemnation of the media's fixation upon *"negativity."* In emphasizing the tragic, Thomas argued, the media have overlooked entirely the community's more caring and compassionate acts; i.e., those qualities that he feels more accurately capture the complexity of everyday life in Maskwacis.

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[54] Thomas's excerpt continued as follows: *"I mean we've got a soup kitchen. That, I think, is a big step because there are people who don't really have food all of the time in their fridge. […] That probably doesn't seem like a lot for a lot of people but giving out food is a big deal. A lot of the people that I know, the older guys … I know a lot of these real shady looking older guys that people will think are real bad people, you know, but they're just down on their luck. That's another thing too, is those people are portrayed as like bad people in the news because they sometimes do things that they shouldn't to get by. But when you're desperate … desperate times call for desperate measures. Sure, it may not have been the best choice to make, but it's what a person is pushed to around here. That seems a little negative but it's all leading up to the little things that can make a difference. It's the little things. Like, you don't need to make a big difference and have this all-around known program to make a difference. You just need to try and help someone in the simplest way; giving someone something to eat; something to drink; somewhere to be when they have nowhere to be, you know; something to wear when they have nothing to wear; helping out anyone in anyway. That's another thing too is that, the same place they have the soup kitchen, every once and awhile they'll put out tables and tables of clothes and it just says, "Free clothes." If you need clothes, go grab some clothes; grab a jacket; grab some shoes. None of that is ever shown in the paper. None of that gets focused on. None of it even gets mentioned. It's small-time to a lot of people. It doesn't affect their lives, so why bother?"*

In the context of sport, Maskawcis residents recalled an abundance of different incidences in which they felt discriminated against due to the community's stereotyping. Jason Seright, for example, in his mid-40s at the time of our interview, grew up playing competitive ice hockey for the (former) 'Junior A' Hobbema Hawks. Jason later became a schoolteacher and sports administrator in Maskwacis, coaching his son who also grew up in the community. Between he and his ex-wife (also a schoolteacher and coach from Maskwacis), they share over 30-years worth of coaching and athletic-related experiences in the region. In our interview, Jason shared several anecdotes in which he emphasized the media as playing a largely repressive role in the development of Maskwacis sport:

> *JASON: Well, when we applied … so, when I started in '94 that was the first year that we were accepted into the Leduc Athletic Association. That was a junior high league. So grades 7, 8, and 9. One of the conditions that they had was that we had to be a travelling team because … first of all, because they said it was our probationary period. So, two or three years went by and we were still a travelling team. And then it came out, "Well, none of the communities really want to go to your … to your area." The fear of going onto the reserve, playing there and of what might happen, things like that. […] Some people admitted it, but it wouldn't have been said in an open meeting. But other colleagues of mine would tell me that some parents expressed that to them. It may have even come up in one of our athletic meetings. It's been a while so it's tough to remember back 18 or 20 years. And then there was another incident too where they were actually trying to … we wanted to get into the high school leagues, you know, rather than just playing against reserve schools. We wanted to get established in … we wanted to*

have kids in cross-country, golf, basketball, volleyball, and this and that. So, we applied to get into the AFAA. Ermineskin has been in that league since 2000. I think Samson may have been in there at one point and may have had to withdraw because of the … so, when you get in you have to … there are certain rules and procedures that you need to follow. If you're going to cancel a game you have to give notice and you have to do this… And I think one of the things is that they probably had us on a very short leash. If it were another town they probably would have had a little more leeway and said, "Okay, not a big deal." That's why I think there was a little bit of reluctance or resentment, or just lack of cooperation to really keep us in that league. It was almost like we had to be better than the other smaller communities to prove that we deserved to be there. So, and then there was actually something about four or five years ago... I remember another teacher calling me and saying, "You know… they're trying to kick us out of this league. Do you remember any of these incidents?" I said, "Well, number one, we never defaulted on anything. We always followed our rules." They were trying to say that we didn't follow the rules, but what happened was that there was an increase in some of the violence … or the media was portraying the community as not a safe place. That got out and then these communities and some of the other people jumped on the bandwagon and said, "We don't want to go there. They've got gangs. They've had some shootings. It's not safe for us to go there." Yet at no point in that whole time, from 2000 to 2008, did anybody ever tell us or say that safety was an issue or anything like that. So, there were those types of obstacles that the schools and community had to deal with.

Jason's reflections are significant in that they draw a direct, and sustained (i.e., *18-20 years*), connection between his school's struggles to access integrated realms of physical culture and the largely fetishized and media-manufactured *"fears"* of travelling to the reserves for the purposes of sport. As noted earlier, experiences of this sort were pervasive in the reflections of virtually every participant interviewed for this study, including individuals of both Euro-Canadian and Aboriginal ancestry.[55] However, while the mainstream media's projection of Aboriginal street gangs can be fairly accused with having *fuelled* the public's fear and anxiety about Maskwacis, as Chapter Five also noted, similar alienating practices have their roots in a much larger colonial history - a point that was certainly not lost on Jason or other community members interviewed for this study:

> *JASON: Well, I think it's not just the media and it's not just racism. There is stuff that has been going on for years and years. Like, you look at the residential school system and how that has affected parents in the community. Look at the Indian Act and how that sort of governs the community. There are all these rules, laws, and regulations that the Aboriginal people need to follow or are supposed to follow and that no other group in Canada has them applied to. It wasn't until the late '60s that Aboriginal people could vote. We weren't allowed*

[55] Tom Engel, for example, was the president of the Alberta Lacrosse Association at the time of our interview. In the following excerpt, Tom described an incident in which two senior lacrosse teams had expressed reluctance to travel to Maskwacis for an exhibition game due to the largely manufactured fears of potential violence generated by the media: "*It's so bad that, when we tried to have a couple of senior teams play an exhibition game … or league game there, which we did get off the ground. The ALA said, "Okay, we want two Senior B teams to play there and put on a show. We'll pay whatever differences there are in travel and that sort of thing." So, we did get a couple of teams go there. But, we had resistance from one team saying, "Oh, who's going to provide all of the security guards to watch our cars so that they don't get stolen or trashed?" I just sent a heat seeking missile email saying, "That's just outrageous!" You know, my wife and I drove down there and all these kids come in from Medicine Hat to play a pee-wee game and there's no security there, you know, that's just ridiculous! They're not going to get attacked! But that's just the perception or the stigma, right?"*

to go into the bars until the late '60s. We couldn't own property. So many things like that on top of the racism, on top of the negative stereotypes, on top of the media publicity, on top of the residential schools, you know. And there is still that … what do you call it? Paternalistic thing, where the government feels that we are still very much kids and they are acting like parents to us. "We know what's best for you. You guys have to…" That's sort of the way that whole Indian Act is set up. They don't do that with any other group. And throughout the process I'm not even sure if they've ever even talked to the Aboriginal people or really listened to them and asked, "What do you guys want?" It's always been, "No, this is what's best for you."

Jason's reflection draws important connections between the more contemporary experiences of racism in Maskwacis and what Chapter Five described as the 'field of colonial power'. Of course, similar alienating practices are far from unprecedented in the history of Aboriginal sport in Canada. Incidences of Aboriginal athletes being barred from 'amateur' lacrosse competitions (Fisher, 2002), hockey leagues (Robidoux, 2004), and various other sport and cultural festivities have all been well documented by sport studies scholars (see Chapter Two). Most recently, for example, Michael Robidoux (2004: 292) documented how non-Aboriginal parents in southern Alberta described travelling to the Kanai First Nation for ice hockey as a "journey into danger, where people are villainous, wild, and uncivilized." For Robidoux (2004), these sentiments exemplified the preservation of a largely fictitious narrative in Canada of Aboriginal peoples as violent - a stereotype that, Robidoux (2004) further claimed, was supported by

an abundance of sports imagery in which Aboriginal violence has been fetishized.[56] The result of these collective practices, Robidoux (2004) argued, was the negative racialization of Aboriginal peoples in Canada and, for Kainai youths in particular, their eventual expulsion from the region's minor hockey program. Robidoux (2004: 292) explained,

> Although Kainai Minor Hockey was responsible for many of the infractions documented, it is also true that there are communities in southern Alberta that do not want Kainai to be part of their sport associations because they want nothing to do with Kainai. In other words, it is not desirable for these communities to go to the reserve to play hockey because it is not desirable to go to the reserve in general.

The struggles Robidoux (2004) identified strongly resemble those encountered by Carter, Emily, Stewart, Thomas, Jason, and others interviewed for this study. However, as Chapter Five also noted, these wider colonial struggles have contributed to a variety of local, field-specific colonial refractions.

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[56] Indeed, several studies have critiqued the violence celebrated in Aboriginal mascots, logos, and other sports imagery for its potential continuance of longstanding colonial stereotypes and associations of Aboriginal peoples with ideals of wildness, aggression, and savagery (Frazier, 1997; King & Springwood, 2001; Lapchick, 1996; Robidoux, 2004; 2007). In a local sporting context, for example, the Blackfoot scholar James Dempsey (cited in Salz, 2011) has accused the Edmonton Eskimos of the Canadian Football League (CFL) for aligning the hyper-masculine and aggressive qualities celebrated in gridiron-styled football with the perceived hostility of Canada's Inuit population. Other scholars, too, have drawn attention to the "stereotypical understandings" (Robidoux, 2004: 295) of Aboriginal culture that is reinforced within the everyday vernacular of modern day sports in which, for example, one-sided victories are equated with 'massacres', the illegitimate selling of tickets is referred to as 'scalping', and an overly-aggressive stick check in both ice hockey and lacrosse (i.e., Canada's two national sporting pastimes) is colloquially referred to as a 'tomahawk chop'. For example, the 1993 edition of the *Journal of Sport and Social Issues* was devoted almost exclusively to examining the issues and controversies surrounding the use of Native American mascots, images, and logos in sporting contexts; e.g., the Atlanta Braves, Washington Redskins, Chicago Blackhawks, etc. (see Wenner, L.A., ed., 1993). The most definitive text on this subject matter is (King & Springwood, 2001).

For example, despite Maskwacis's relative proximity to neighbouring towns, cities, and highways, Maskwacis still finds itself inconveniently secluded from most other First Nations and Aboriginal communities in Alberta. Coupled with 'outsider' (white) privileges and the media-endorsed fear about Aboriginal gang violence, the onus to travel and *seek out* sites of cultural exchange has fallen squarely upon the shoulders of Maskwacis parents and their youths, with little incentive for outside communities to reciprocate. John Crier, for example, the director of Maskwacis's youth hockey program, elaborated upon the racialized 'double standard' endured by Aboriginal youths:

> *JOHN: They get labeled as a killer, as someone who's going to beat you up, someone who's aggressive, someone who's unapproachable. And these boys are the total opposite. I mean we're being labeled because of the one percent in our community. It's tough. There were some incidents where, based on the shootings in the town site, teams didn't want to come here to play because they feared for their safety.*
>
> *JORDAN: And there's never been an incident other than in the news that has contributed to this fear?*
>
> *JOHN: No. They heard in the news that there were shots fired in the community, someone got stabbed or an inmate escaped from the prison there, and they fear for their safety. They do not want to come here even though the RCMP is just down the road. There are cameras all over this building! I mean, to me, this is the safest place you'll ever be. And they refuse to come just because they fear for their safety. By right, I can say that I don't want to go to Red Deer because*

there was a murder there last week and I fear for my kid's safety, but it just doesn't have the same effect.

John's reflections demonstrate the multiple ways in which the media's production of Aboriginal aggression and violence have been used to justify Maskwacis's alienation from sport and in other areas. As Stuart Hall (1997: 231) explained, "In representation, one sort of difference seems to attract others – adding up to a 'spectacle' of otherness." For Maskwacis, the cumulative effect of this 'spectacle', as John explained, is the preservation of colonial power and the legitimization of white privilege. In the manner of a tourist, for example, the Euro-Canadian sports person enjoys the privilege of coming and going to Maskwacis as he/she pleases, facing little reprisal for either avoiding or terminating their relationship with the community's sports leagues. Conversely, for Maskwacis residents, the decision to eschew relations with individuals from outside of their community carries with it a more punitive dimension. Indeed, the ramifications of such avoidance practices in a First Nations context, as Robidoux (2004) also discovered in his study of Kanai's youth hockey program, is their community's removal from dominant sports institutions and Aboriginal peoples further marginalization in the area.

John elaborated upon this privilege in the following excerpt, specifically as related to the psychological taxations imposed upon Maskwacis youths who are forced to leave the reserves for the purposes of sport:

JOHN: We get labeled everywhere we go. The Edmonton Sun labels us pretty definitively. Every time there is a shooting or a death in the community the Edmonton Sun is all over it. I mean it was front-page news when my nephew passed away from a gunshot. That was from the drive-by. He was sleeping in his

bed and he died. The news was all over it. Our boys were labeled as killers, going from town to town. Our bantam boys went to Stettler and one of those boys on the team called them "Baby Killers." "Why don't you go home you baby killers?" That's, you know … how do they get labeled like that? What does a 13 year old say to that? He's going to be mad, especially if one of them is related to my nephew. He was enraged. The ref has no idea what's going on and starts kicking them all out. The fans are feeding into it. The parents in Stettler are feeding into it. All they see is angry … angry Native kids. And they're going to label them too. "They're getting mad for no reason." That's how it is everywhere we go. It's a common label, that we're always angry, that we're violent, and the other stereotypes that we're late, lazy, always into drugs and alcohol. It's tough for the kids. I know what they're going through.

A common theme emerging from peoples' reflections is the flagrant stereotyping and subsequent demonization that Maskwacis youths have experienced across a full range of sport and societal contexts. Ironically, as John noted, Maswkacis's media coverage has contributed a kind of self-fulfilling prophecy in which Aboriginal youths have occasionally (re)acted violently to the (usually unrecognized) 'symbolic violence' (Bourdieu, 1998) to which they have been forcibly exposed. This observation is similar to Chris Hallinan and Barry Judd's (2007: 13) reflections on Aboriginal basketball in Australia: "Aboriginal sportspeople who compete at the level of local amateur competition are burdened with the task of representing not only themselves but also 'their' race, culture, and community," and all within a setting that routinely reinforces dominant ideas about Aboriginal peoples in Australia. For Carter, Emily, Stuart, Thomas,

Jason, John, and many other community members, the media's sustained representation of Maskwacis's gang violence has, therefore, wielded an unsettling, and unsettled, form of symbolic violence against Aboriginal youths by mobilizing in its reader the very reality it has attempted to showcase. The result, at least in terms of sport, has been the cultivation of a relationship that, ironically, has been kept alive almost entirely by the ongoing efforts and sacrifices made by the very individuals stigmatized in the media as hostile, violent, and physically threatening towards non-Aboriginal 'outsiders'.

6.5 Part Four: The Media and the Making of the HCCCP

> *I believe that this was the first ever positive thing that I ever heard of coming from the media. And, of course, the cadets program was a positive thing. So, yeah, I think the media played a really big part in selling this program, especially to get NCPC (National Crime Prevention Center) funding. Because it went political and because it was televised and all of that stuff, like, they made with the snap of their thumbs … they said, "You have to fund this program." It extremely helped us. And even for the support that we received across the nation through the past CBC documentaries - like, through the little blogs that I read – it's great knowing that the people out there know … some people … lots of people know the benefits of a youth program like this. And for those that work in a First Nations community, to truly understand that and really want to donate and give to the program and maybe even develop their own, eh?*
>
> Major Trent Young, Ermineskin Cree Nation, July 2013

There is little doubt among those closest to the HCCCP that the mainstream media has been an instrumental ally and key contributor to the program's growth. Securing funds for food, drink, sporting equipment, youth transport, uniforms, badges, field trips, among other expenses, has been a major hurdle for HCCCP administrators, especially considering Maskwacis's expanding youth population and the depleted budgets of Maskwacis band councils (see Chapter Five). From early on, therefore, HCCCP administrators have been forced to seek out alternative pockets of funds to help support the program, often turning towards the mainstream media as a vehicle through which to mobilize financial and other resources. The general consensus among those interviewed was that, as the program grew in both size and media profile, so too did its relative funding and political capital; i.e., a relationship that culminated in over $900,000 in unsolicited funds being awarded to the HCCCP from the National Crime Prevention Centre (NCPC).

In 2009, for example, Richard Huculiak (one of the HCCCP's founding RCMP members and a key builder of the program) explained that harnessing the media's generative potential was an important strategy for building the HCCCP's success:

> When the CBC TV Edmonton complete their second documentary on the HCCCP/NIB [Jamaica Cadets] visit to Canada (expected by October 2009), the world will send more positive comments to the CBC and HCCCP websites offering financial and other support to the HCCCP and NIB. The new CBC TV documentary information will assist the University of Alberta and Health Canada Research/Evaluations to "showcase" the HCCCP to the world as an accepted,

> respected and worthwhile youth development leadership program that has the potential to assist youth around the world (R. Huculiak, personal files, 2009).

As this excerpt reveals, Huculiak, and others, actively (and effectively) solicited news agencies as a means to mobilize backing from a whole range of potential stakeholders; e.g., financial backers, politicians, government agencies, university and health researchers, among others. However, the extent of the media support that the HCCCP received relative to most other sport-related programs in Maskwacis has raised important questions among community members about: 1) the relative (in)ability of *all* agents in Maskwacis to harness the media's generative properties, and 2) the HCCCP's relatively 'singular' public narrative vs. the range of alternative voices that accompanied the program's evolution. I address each of these critiques separately in the following pages; however, the second critique will be examined more fully in Chapter Seven.

Mario Swampy is a parent and band councillor from the Samson Cree Nation who, for years, also worked as an athletics administrator in the community. In a recent interview, Mario described the local challenges that band administrators face in their efforts to secure funding for sport and recreation programming: *"It's tough to keep staff when you can't support them financially; and it's even tougher to keep peoples' interest when the program itself is always changing staff members, locations, and is generally inconsistent,"* (M. Swampy, personal communication, September 2013). Mario further emphasized that, as a consequence to these limitations, local sports administrators have been pressured into pursuing more creative measures to support their programs. On the HCCCP's resourcefulness, for example, Mario explained:

MARIO: I'm going to be honest with you. I was in support of it [the HCCCP]. I thought it was a great idea. But to receive the funding that these guys did, they had to hype it up. They taught the kids to march in parades, which was great. I mean it did provide a lot of positive exposure to these kids. […] I mean they were boasting that they were expanding by the hundreds every week to the point where, "We have over 1,000 cadets!" I think, "How much quality time and input can two individuals have with all of these kids?" Yeah, I mean, can they really have a lasting impact? What they did was great. I think that they taught them discipline through what they were doing with the marching. And I know they impacted certain kids who they really took under their wing and let run with it. […] I think to keep the funding flowing the way it was, they had to hype it up the way they hyped it up. So, the media got this glamorous story, but the substance of it was … I think that a couple community members bought into it and ran with it. They were the ones making a difference, but there were still the challenges of involvement … parental involvement and community involvement.

In the above excerpt, Mario credits the mutually constitutive bond between the mainstream media and the HCCCP's "glamorous" narrative as a key ingredient in their securement of funding. In so doing, he identified several overlapping agendas that had to be negotiated while administrators sought to access the media's more generative properties. To secure financial resources, for example, HCCCP administrators had to actively, and creatively, angle the program in a fashion that rendered it marketable to the agendas of local journalists who, as noted in previous sections, placed greater emphasis upon the production of *"glamorous"* and captivating news stories. Indeed, much like

journalists described having to *"twist"* and *"manoeuvre"* in order to secure resources to support their stories (e.g., vehicle, manpower), HCCCP administrators, too, were, according to Mario and other interviewees, pressured into framing the HCCCP in a particular kind of light.

These reflections suggest that Maskwacis's sports shared a somewhat hierarchical relationship with the media based upon a program's relative articulation with the community's dominant narrative as 'gang torn'. Jason Seright (introduced above), for example, emphasized how several, equally relevant sport and social events were regularly overlooked by the media in their pursuit of more glamorous news stories:

> *JASON: Umm, yeah, it just seemed like [the media and outside political leaders] were pretty quick to jump onboard with the cadet program. And yet, even back then, they had the Indigenous games going on, they had the minor hockey system going on, they had the first graduates coming out of the high schools, there were those things going on. There were some positive things going on and some positive young male/female role models that were coming out and doing good things, but a lot of focus was placed on this cadet program. I guess I just sort of wondered about and questioned that: why that and not some of the other things? Why not focus on what the high schools are doing, you know? And maybe if they would have then maybe the media wouldn't have gotten carried away with all the violence that they were portraying. […] I think it was that whole political game where you get some maximum exposure or big bang for your buck. And that's the thing that they wanted. And why did they want to jump on it? Well, because it was*

linked to the RCMP and the RCMP has got a long history of, you know, doing some good things.

Jason offered important insight into the media's perceived relationship to sport, politics, and community development in Maskwacis. For Jason, the media played a pivotal role in communicating to both local (i.e., field-specific) and broader public audiences what significant events are taking place in Maskwacis while, at the same time, also offering powerful interpretations for how to understand those events (Hall et al., 1978: 60). According to Jason, therefore, the media's potential to empower local role models by sharing their success stories were inadequately utilized in Maskwacis, as journalists instead focused upon the more negative stories associated with Aboriginal gang violence. This theme of the media as a potential facilitator for youths and community empowerment was consistent among virtually all the participants interviewed for this study, many of whom shared Jason's disappointment that journalists' had failed to capture, even moderately, the full range and complexity of 'positive' news stories taking place across the reserves. Thus, while Jason accepted the HCCCP as a potentially empowering news story, he appeared to resent journalists' lacklustre effort to share other, equally valid news stories about the community with broader public audiences.

Importantly, Jason suggested that the HCCCP's status was linked to the hierarchical relationship between the RCMP, the mainstream media, and other high-ranking political and funding agencies. Other community members, too, have echoed these sentiments, and provided strong anecdotal evidence to support their view that only certain stakeholders (and sports programs) were attended to by mainstream media (J.

Crier, personal communication, July 2013).[57] For example, Ashley Bluejacket, a long-time sports administrator from Maskwacis, described a rare occasion when members of the mainstream media did, in fact, travel to Maskwacis to cover a 'positive' news story:

> *ASHLEY: When you look into the success stories, I mean, there are so many of them. We've invited the media so many times. "Hey, we're having midget provincials here!" We would only get one little tiny write-up in the Wetaskiwin or Ponoka newspaper. Four kids were selected to be flag bearers for the World Juniors. "I'm not available," said the media. We called The Edmonton Sun, The Edmonton Journal, The Wetaskiwin Times, and The Ponoka Herald. Ponoka came out and, you know, what did they do? They picked one boy. There were four boys that got picked! […] Still, if you really look into it, what they did was, "The boys are from this gang torn community," you know? "So and so had problems growing up and is trying to point out the right path for his kids." That's great, but there was still a part of it that, well, you know what they're focusing on. I mean there is just no background. That happens over and over with so many things. There are so many other stories. That just floored us.*

[57] John Crier (introduced above), for example, described the hockey program's failed attempt to secure media coverage for several youth hockey-related events in Maskwacis:

> *JORDAN: You've told me that, in the past, you have solicited newspapers to come out to Hobbema and tell a story about something positive that is going on.*
> *JOHN: Oh yeah.*
> *JORDAN: Cover the midget provincial championships, for example.*
> *JOHN: Yeah, we hosted the midget AA championships here. Every team that came out said that it was an awesome experience. They loved our facilities. They loved the people. They said that everyone was friendly and that they'd come back if they had the chance. And those were the eight best teams in Alberta at the time. The news didn't want to come out and show it. They talked about who won the tournament but that was it (disgruntled laugh). I mean there is a lot of positives but the news don't want to reflect it. We've got a lot of young, talented people that are going on to bigger and better things, but's it's not news.*

Ashley here alluded to the media's propensity for 'Othering' Makwacis youths in a manner that is quintessentially negative. As noted earlier, even the so-called 'positive' news stories that feature Maskwacis are framed in a way that emphasizes the alleged backdrop of gang violence and despair from which all *non-gang* members have, by implication, emerged triumphantly. Maskwacis youths are hereby stereotyped not only by virtue of their non-whiteness, but more specifically as a result of their 'Indianness', which has habitually isolated them as either the 'perpetrator' of violence (e.g., the gang member) or, in the context of a more 'positive' news story, as its 'victim' and/or 'hero', desperate for relief from a gang torn community (Gilroy, 1987). The result of this collective framing, of course, is the perpetuation of a very specific public narrative associated with Maskwacis gang violence, the role(s) of Aboriginal sport therein, and the subsequent downplaying of any internal conflicts, limitations, and/or complexity.

6.6 Chapter Summary and Concluding Remarks

This chapter critiqued the media's production of Maskwacis gang violence. In Part One, the image of Maskwacis that was articulated most forcefully in the mainstream media was showcased and critiqued. In Part Two, I interrogated how Edmonton-based journalists conceived and negotiated Maskwacis news according to a variety of factors, which included: economic pressures, space and time issues, racial and cultural barriers, struggles identifying and maintaining positive relations with Maskwacis gatekeepers (other than RCMP members), and their having to negotiate longstanding colonial tensions in the region. In Part Three, I expanded this critique and examined the perceived impacts of Maskwacis's dominant narrative upon the broader context of community experiences.

Interviewees described the media as having a mostly repressive impact upon the field, including their enhancing: the reproduction of colonial stereotypes, the erosion of community pride and cultural practices, and the community's alienation from various social, cultural, and economic venues. Finally, Part Four closed the chapter by discussing the creative ways in which certain, well-positioned agents in the field were able to harness the media's generative properties by aligning their program with Maskwacis's dominant narrative. Thus, the following chapter seeks to expand this discussion, and further challenge Maskwacis's stereotyping, by critically exploring the range of alternative narratives and social agendas that also accompanied the HCCCP's development. The diverse voices and experiences that were, for the most part, omitted from the public transcript are the matter to which I now turn my attention.

CHAPTER VII.

Îyacisitayin Newoskan Simakanîsîkanisak

'The (Re)Making of the Hobbema Community Cadet Corps Program'

7.1 Introduction

Hung on a wall tucked away in an upstairs corner of the Heritage Museum in Wetaskiwin, Alberta, surrounded by an antique trading post and old military memorabilia, is a small black and white photograph bearing the caption "Hobbema Air Cadets." In the photograph are depicted 27 Aboriginal youth donning military fatigues and standing outside of what appears to be an old school house. According to the museum's curator, the photograph was taken in the 1950s and the schoolhouse was the former residential school on the Ermineskin First Nation in Maskwacis. At first glance, the photograph might be critically read as depicting the colonial machine at work. Residential schools, of course, epitomized the most aggressive colonial tactic adopted by the Canadian federal government in their efforts to assimilate Aboriginal youths in the image of the settler, and the practicing of military drill constituted the example *par excellence* of Michel Foucault's (1977) 'disciplinary' regime – a regime whose very objective it was to thwart individual creativity and the capacity for dissension by regulating the minutia of everyday life.[58] The composite of these settler institutions (i.e., the school and the military activity) is of an Aboriginal culture under assault by a colonial institution and physical cultural practice that, historically at least, was introduced to

[58] Indeed, military-based physical activity and the rigid structuring of public schoolhouses were two key models used by Foucault (1977) to illustrate what he argued was a new genre of social control that emerged out of the Classical Age. Foucault (1977) argued that by coordinating the specific details related to the body's movement in time and space - what Foucault called techniques of 'discipline' - participation in 'drill', for example, would produce 'docile bodies'. This, in turn, contributed to the re-production of social control by its manufacturing social bodies that were docile, productive, and receptive to external control; i.e., what Foucault (1977: 138) called the body's 'docility-utility'.

Aboriginal youths as a means to facilitate the government's agenda to 'kill the Indian in the child'.

While volunteering at a youth cadet night in Winter 2013, I was approached by Major Trent Young (the HCCCP's 21-year-old director) who showed me a similar black and white photograph of Maskwacis youths from the same era that he had uploaded onto his iPhone. Trent had recently discovered the photograph hanging on the wall of an upstairs office building on the Ermineskin Cree Nation (in Maskwacis) and had requested the manager's permission to re-post the image on the HCCCP's new website. Probed for his interpretation, Trent explained the community's proud military history and the traditional 'warrior ethic' that he believed the photograph very powerfully celebrated. For Trent, therefore, and presumably the individuals who originally posted the photograph, the image represented not a capitulation to colonial tactics, but rather a continuance of local traditions and an enunciation Cree culture. Hence, Trent's plan to re-post the image was driven by a desire to inspire, not quash, the imaginations of Maskwacis youths, and a yearning to reinvigorate pride in Maskwacis history and warrior culture.

This anecdote reveals a number of interesting paradoxes. First, it reveals at least two divergent meanings derived from the same depiction of a social phenomenon, meanings that were easily overlooked by my 'first glance' reading described above. Second, this anecdote raises important questions about the complicated history of military drill in a First Nations context (as Chapter Two described) and the potentially conflicting meaning(s) generated by its re-emergence in Maskwacis. Finally, Trent's interpretation of this photograph tells us something important about the construction of individual and community identity in the contemporary era; the process of making sense of one's

cultural authenticity; and the process of discovering human agency and community pride at a unique time in Maskwacis history – a time, to be precise, when the validity of Maskwacis's local struggles has been largely overshadowed by the racialized *moral panic* (Cohen, 1972) and social unrest that has accompanied a series of gang-related events in the community and their media projection.

In this chapter, I interrogate these paradoxes through the lens of a series of interviewees' reflections about the HCCCP and its' perceived meaning(s) in Maskwacis. While officially framed as a tool for 'gang prevention', interviewees described the HCCCP as servicing an abundance of different, sometimes competing, meanings and social agendas. Many individuals, for example, celebrated the HCCCP's capacity to prevent street gangs, encourage discipline among Aboriginal youths, and restore social order to the community. Other agents, however, were highly critical, even condemning, of the RCMP's investment in Maskwacis youths and they accused the program of re-inscribing longstanding colonial power relations. Despite these discrepancies, however, what remained consistent among peoples' reflections was the notion that a 'core' Aboriginal culture does, in fact, exist in Maskwacis. Regardless of the origins of a particular sport form, or the roots of a particular physical cultural practice, the cadets and the community had no problem identifying certain practices as distinctly Cree. Thus, while problematizing the view that one identifiable or 'legitimate' definition of the HCCCP existed in Maskwacis, this chapter ultimately embraces a somewhat 'Cree' understanding of Aboriginal physical culture as firmly rooted within the locally (i.e., *field*) specific context of Maskwacis, Alberta, and the unique corpus of agents who simultaneously inhabit the field's history and actively *(re)make* their futures in Canada.

In service of this argument, the chapter is divided into four parts. In Part One, I review, in brief, Maskwacis's unique military history and explore a few of the current Aboriginal cadet corps programs with which Trent (and other local stakeholders) have claimed the HCCCP holds a more direct connection. In Part Two, the HCCCP (i.e., how it was conceived, negotiated, and why) is analyzed with sensitivity to these local histories, as well as to the other field-specific properties outlined in Chapter Five. Part Three extends this analysis by interrogating the cultural threads that appeared to bind agents' experiences across the field, my goal being to illuminate the particular discourse through which Maskwacis physical culture was constituted. Finally, Part Four concludes the chapter by investigating the critical reflections of an important, though seldom interviewed, agent in the field, Maskwacis youths. Former cadets (now in their late teens and early twenties) described having ensconced several different agendas upon the HCCCP: from the seemingly prosaic 'meeting new friends', 'chasing girls/boys', and just plain 'having fun', to the more ambitious and politically charged agendas of improving themselves, their community, and inducing broad structural changes for Aboriginal youths in Canada. On the whole, these reflections shatter the media's violent and passive consumptive characterizations of Maskwacis youths and, instead, emphasize youths, and other community members, as actively engaged in a struggle to *(re)make the HCCCP* and the broader context of community of relations in Maskwacis.

7.2 Part One: Locating 'Cadets'

As Chapter Two noted, there exists an extensive historical relationship between military drill and the public and residential schooling systems in Canada (Forsyth, 2005;

2013; Miller, 1996; Morrow, 1977). However, beyond the residential schoolyard, Aboriginal peoples in Canada also have an extensive history of involvement with the Canadian military. In *Forgotten Soldiers*, for example, Fred Gaffen (2012) argued that Aboriginal soldiers were instrumental to Canada's 20th century war efforts despite encountering systemic discrimination on the frontlines and, later, being virtually excised from the Canadian history books. Blackfoot scholar James Dempsey (1989) reiterated these sentiments and noted that Aboriginal peoples in World War One had enlisted at roughly the same rate as (if not greater than) their non-Aboriginal contemporaries; i.e., approx. 35% of eligibly aged men. Indeed, Aboriginal soldiers featured prominently in the War of 1812, the Boer War (1899-1902), World Wars One (1914-1918) and Two (1939-1945),[59] the Korean Conflict (1950-1953), and several other Canadian military and peacekeeping missions (see Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1996: 523-576).

In Maskwacis specifically, band members from all Four Nations have an accomplished military history and have long celebrated the Aboriginal contribution to Canada's wartime efforts. In 1989, for example, the Ermineskin Cree Nation hosted a massive Powwow celebration to honour the sacrifices of Aboriginal war veterans from across Canada and the United States. Over 43 Maskwacis war veterans attended the ceremony (Brown, 1989), including the kin of Henry (Ducky) Norwest - the famed Métis Cree sniper killed in action in WWI - whose extended family still reside in Maskwacis (Chaisson, 1989). More recently, the community secured approximately $30,000 in federal grant money to help support the construction of a Maskwacis Cree Veterans Monument, which was an extension upon an earlier initiative to have war tributes posted

[59] The Aboriginal contribution to World War Two was also staggering, with Aboriginal volunteers comprising the largest recruitment pool out of any other ethnic group in Canada (Brown, 1989).

at every on-reserve cemetery in which a Maskwacis service member is buried. The Monument is to be permanently displayed in the Samson Cree Nation's townsite and will bear the names of over 55 local veterans (D. Bruno, personal communication, June 2014).

Of course, Maskwacis's relationship to the Canadian military has not always been as a strategic ally *to* the federal political agenda. As Chapter Five noted, for example, several Maskwacis Cree joined Louis Riel's North-West Uprising in 1885, ransacking a farm, a Hudson's Bay trading post, and forcing almost all of the white settlers to abandon the region (York, 1989: 92). The Uprising forever changed Maskwacis's socio-political landscape as its collapse forced many of the Aboriginal inhabitants to flee south in search of refuge from the Canadian military, sacrificing a significant chunk of their lands in the process.[60] The story of Chief Big Bear is also well known among Maskwacis residents, many of whom share kinship relations with the legendary Chief (C. Yellowbird, personal communication, August 2014). In the 1870s, Big Bear became an icon for Aboriginal resistance in Western Canada when he initially refused to sign Treaty Six. Prior to his incarceration in 1885, Big Bear led a warrior society throughout northwestern Canada and into United States in an effort to unite an Aboriginal confederacy capable of resisting the Canadian state's forced incursion into their traditional lands. Big Bear is well known to have advocated peace over violence and military altercations (see Dempsey, 1984).

Albeit only scratching the surface, these events provide at least a cursory glimpse into the complex colonial histories through which Maskwacis community members have

[60] In the wake of the Uprising, land originally set aside for the Bobtail Band in Maskwacis was reduced from 31.5 to 10 square miles and the title transferred to the Montana Band of Indians, which, at that time, also included several families from Morley, Enoch, and the Samson Cree First Nations in Alberta (Montana First Nation v. Canada, 2007: 277). The matter has since undergone significant protest within the Canadian court system; however, the Montana First Nation has thus far been unsuccessful in their attempts to reclaim lost lands and resources (Montana First Nation, 2002).

conceived and negotiated the HCCCP, specifically as related to the program's heavy emphasis on drill training and other military-styled extracurricular activities. In more recent years, however, the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) have also expanded their initiatives into Aboriginal communities in an effort to make military service more appealing and culturally salient to Aboriginal youths, which provided agents with another point of reference through which the HCCCP was conceived and negotiated.

Since 1990, for example, the Bold Eagle program operating out of Wainwright, Alberta (approx. 200 kilometers east of Maskwacis) has offered First Nations youths a free six weeks training course in general military knowledge, weapons handling, navigation, first aid, drill, survival skills, and cultural awareness activities (National Defence, 2014). The program begins with a cultural camp run by Elders and educates Aboriginal youths about their peoples' long history of military involvement in Canada (National Defence, 2014). Similar programs, such as Black Bear (est. 2008) and Raven (est. 2003), offer financial compensation, school credits, and tuition incentives for Aboriginal youths who express even a mild interest in the Canadian military (National Defence, 2014), thus presenting them with a potentially viable alternative to the swelling rates of unemployment on many First Nations throughout Canada (see Chapter Five).

However, while sharing important links with these broader histories and CAF programs,[61] the HCCCP owes its more specific origins to a particular First Nations cadet corps program that first emerged in 1996 in the Canadian province of Saskatchewan. The program's founder, RCMP Corporal Rick Sanderson, a Cree man from the James Smith First Nation also in Saskatchewan, encountered elevated rates of "addictions, crime, and

[61] The HCCCP has received sponsorship support from the Canadian Armed Forces and also played host to several Bold Eagle information and recruitment sessions (J. Koch, fieldnotes, June 2014).

poverty" among local youths while stationed at the Carry the Kettle First Nation near Regina (Willems, 2004). In an effort to curb these trends, Sanderson teamed up with several local community members (including schoolteachers, parents, and a First Nations military veteran) to establish an afterschool program for 'at risk' Aboriginal youths. The program, known as the Community Cadet Corps (CCC), also integrated a wide range of physical and cultural pursuits into its regular training regimen; e.g., sports, games, and spiritual activities. With the RCMP's assistance, the CCC has since spread its framework to over 32 First Nations in Saskatchewan, nine in Nunavut, five in British Columbia, one in Manitoba, and one in Labrador (Willems, 2004), according to the latest count.

In 2005, Sanderson was invited to Maskwacis to discuss the potential merits of establishing a CCC among the Four Nations. Inspired by Sanderson's visit, the RCMP sponsored three Cadet Corps Instructor Training courses (held between October 2005 and August 2006) at which a total of 66 community instructors were trained (R. Huculiak, personal files, July 2012). On November 22nd, 2005, Alberta's first ever CCC programs commenced operation on the Montana, Ermineskin, and Samson Cree First Nations in Maskwacis, with the Louis Bull First Nation joining up a few months later on May 26, 2006. Eventually, all Four Nations were merged into one solitary Corps as a means to ease the time demands being asked of local volunteers and to also more effectively utilize the community's limited financial resources. Collectively, the newly amalgamated 'Hobbema Community Cadet Corps Program' comprised the largest CCC of its kind in the world (R. Huculiak, personal files, July 2012). However, while the HCCCP emerged under the auspices of the CCC's broader 'crime reduction' framework, as the following

excerpts demonstrate, peoples' investments in the program were far more complex than any single iteration could ever hope to capture.

7.3 Part Two: Community Reflections on the HCCCP

In 2009, at the HCCCP's peak popularity, the program's official webpage (operated by the RCMP at the time) framed its objectives as follows:

> A comprehensive crime reduction initiative to disrupt gang activity, drug abuse, associated violence and to educate the Aboriginal youth about the dangers of these activities in the Cree First Nations community of Hobbema, Alberta (HCCCP, 2009).

This agenda, as previously stated, demonstrated the HCCCP's close connection with the Canadian government's longstanding deployment of sport as a strategy for social control. However, as my interviews with Maskwacis community members revealed, the HCCCP's 'official' agenda also resonated with many local aspirations for the program.

Debora Young, for example, was a single mother of two teenaged boys when the HCCCP first emerged in 2005. In a recent interview, Debora described how she actively encouraged her sons, especially her youngest (Trent, 14-years old), to join the HCCCP as a way of acquiring 'discipline' and as a way to stay out of trouble:

> *DEBORA: Well, at the time, in 2005, any kind of program that would help a Hobbema youth with discipline I thought that was good. It has got a greater element of discipline than you would find in a hockey program, let's say. My older son played a bit of elite hockey for a while. It was great when he had a great coach. There were a few years when he had a great coach. So, yeah, I was after*

the discipline: anything that could help my son to become more disciplined … because there is such a drug culture in Hobbema. You don't want your kid falling prey to that. And it's so pervasive. And Linnell and Huculiak (the two main RCMP/HCCCP administrators) were so amazing with our kids. They're just such great mentors and they know how to push them. My youngest son really saw value in that because they saw value in him. It's really that simple. And having male mentors – those positive male role models – that was really important for him and other youths at that time.

In the above excerpt, Debora suggested that the HCCCP's 'official' agenda was well aligned with her views as a parent, single-mother, and resident of the Ermineksin Cree Nation. Specifically, Debora valued the HCCCP above all other local programs precisely *because* discipline was advocated as one of the program's core virtues. However, the discrepancies she identified between the HCCCP as a conduit for discipline versus other youth programs in the community, such as ice hockey, for example - i.e., a sport that has also been critiqued for its disciplinary properties (Robidoux, 2001) -, is not clear-cut or obvious, and thus raises important questions about the HCCCP's potentially divergent "distributional significances" (Bourdieu, 1978) both in, and outside of, Maskwacis. More specifically, while ice hockey's disciplinary techniques may, to outsiders, resemble those practiced in the HCCCP, Debora's investment in a *"greater"* disciplinary agenda for local youths was, in part, motivated by a distinct social context in which she felt Maskwacis's 'drug culture' was *"pervasive"* and the propensity for all youths, especially young teenaged males, to fall *"prey"* to these pressures was considered a real threat. Hence, Debora's perspective, while on the one hand affirming of the HCCCP's 'official'

agenda, might also be critically read as her acknowledging, and attempting to resist, a more local colonial refraction by affiliating her sons directly with the RCMP.

Similarly, Jason Seright, a 46-year-old Cree man from Saskatchewan who migrated to Maskwacis as a teenager and later became the principal of Maskwacis's Outreach School, conceived the HCCCP as a positive constituting space in which local youths could recreate. However, unlike Debora, Jason also implied that 'discipline' and 'distraction' from deviance was a generative property associated with virtually *all* well run extracurricular activities in the community, not just the HCCCP:

> *JASON: Yeah, that's what I liked about that: it was giving them something else. You know, if the kids weren't interested in hockey, if they weren't interested in athletics or some of the other programs, this was something that would fill a void and help some of those students. It would give them that extracurricular and keep them off the streets for a couple of hours on a regular basis and maybe provide some of that discipline that they needed, that athletics or sports can do and that other types of clubs or activities can do as well. That was what I liked about it. That's how I thought it could have benefited the students.*

Collectively, the nature of these, and other, community reflections suggests agents' somewhat shared investment in the HCCCP as a possible alternative to 'the streets', and as a conduit for disseminating good morals among Maskwacis youths. As Chapter Two noted, this viewpoint is consistent with the agendas of late 19th and early 20th century social reformers in Canada, many of whom advocated participation in 'appropriate' (i.e., Euro-Canadian) sports and games as part of a wider strategy for instilling discipline, morality, and social order among Aboriginal youths (Morrow & Wamsley, 2005). While

the apparent fluidity between these past and present articulations of sport might, at first glance, suggest peoples' blind acceptance and/or complicity in the *reproduction* of an overarching colonial agenda, these reflections, it could equally be said, reveal that agents have not merely passively consumed 'official' ideologies, but have rather "re-employed" (de Certeau, 1984) the HCCCP as a culturally salient means through which to combat *against* a very local-colonial refraction associated with street gangs; i.e., an observation, of course, that is not without ambiguity and/or void of colonial power.

John Crier, for example, (introduced in Chapters Five and Six as a 30-year-old parent, hockey coach, and the director of Maskwacis's youth hockey program) described the HCCCP as providing youths with an important social venue at which to acquire positive life skills. Similar to previous reflections, however, John's investment in this agenda also stemmed from a very distinctive socio-colonial context in which Aboriginal youths were especially targeted for acts of violence, aggression, and other forms of racism and symbolic degradation:

> *JOHN: I thought it was very good. I mean it's doing the same thing that we're trying to do. We're trying to teach the kids responsibilities, goals, and values. It's keeping them busy so that they're not at home being bored or out in the streets doing who knows what. I think we need more programs like that. I know that the cadet corps does teach them a lot of responsibility and a lot of pride within themselves, you know, to be proud of themselves. A lot of our kids that go through hockey, they go to these places where they just despise us. They're almost beaten into a fear, like they don't want to play anymore. They don't want to be on that ice. They're not proud. When they see one of our boys acting out in*

aggression, you know, they're not proud to be from Hobbema. They're, you know … they're labeled. The cadet corps teaches them to be proud of who they are and where they're from. For me, I mean it's the same thing as what I want to do. These boys should be proud to play here. They should be proud of their community and where they're from. No matter what bad apples are doing what out there, you've still got to be proud of where you're from.

In the above excerpt, John identified the HCCCP, and organized sports generally, as a valuable cultural resource through which personal and civic pride could be promoted among Maskwacis youths. Interestingly, John speculated that 'pride' was paramount to youths' success within (and often against) the harsh and highly racialized social, economic, and cultural contexts in which, as Chapters Five and Six observed, Maskwacis youths have been systematically *"labeled"* as violent, *"despised,"* and *"beaten into fear"* by their neighbouring communities and by colonially-informed power relations. John, therefore, conceived the HCCCP as a positive social venue at which youths could repair their confidence, nourish pride, and *restore* a sense of identity and cultural sovereignty in the face of racism – an assertion that, while seemingly ironic given the tenuous history of sports such as military drill and ice hockey in Aboriginal communities (see Chapter Two), also raises questions about the potentially alternative, *Aboriginal* designs and agendas ensconced upon these practices in Maskwacis.

This theme of Aboriginal designs as being (re)inscribed upon a traditionally 'western' sports framework was vividly explored in Michael Robidoux's (2012) *Stickhandling through the Margins*. Akin to the reflections discussed above, for example, Robidoux (2012) suggested that First Nations' experiences of ice hockey – a sport that,

similar to military drill, was introduced to Aboriginal peoples in Canada by way of the residential schooling system – did (and does) not occur in total opposition to Euro-Canadian designs, but rather takes place within the "margins" of sport's dominant system. Specifically, Robidoux (2012) argued that First Nations ice hockey possesses a variety of localized meanings and values, which thus alters these practices (or 'signs') and effectively subverts colonial power. Robidoux (2012: 19-20) explained,

> At the level of sign, even the most mundane cultural expression is understood to be charged with meaning. Through their performativity within a local framework, the colonial difference is exposed without slipping into a pointless search for authenticity – questing for signs of authentic cultural practices versus those influenced or based in modernity (Robidoux, 2012: 19-20).

However, while Robidoux (2012) demonstrated how western sporting frameworks and philosophies could be simultaneously endorsed and subverted by First Nations' participation in ice hockey, largely unexplored in his text were the potential incongruities that existed within these communities. More precisely, Robioux's (2012) emphasis upon how First Nations sporting experiences *differed* from other (i.e., Euro-Canadian) communities, neglected to consider whether the same sport could be experienced differently *within* First Nations themselves; a surprising omission given the book's stated intention to "locate cracks in the colonial imaginary" (Robidoux, 2012: 14).

Not surprisingly, my fieldwork encountered a wide range of views and contradictory interpretations of the HCCCP and its perceived function(s) in the community. In *Warrior Publications*, for example, an Aboriginal activist writing under the alias ZigZag (2008) accused the RCMP of trying to utilize the HCCCP as a tool for

funnelling vulnerable Aboriginal youths away from local street gangs and into what he identified as a larger and even deadlier gang, the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF):

> Instead of Indian Posse and Redd Alert, these youths have joined another, even larger and more deadlier gang: the Canadian Armed Forces. This gang is tasked with enforcing the will of the gang leaders (the government and corporations), who continue to loot and plunder not only Indigenous lands here, but also those of tribal peoples in Afghanistan and Haiti (ZigZag, 2008).

Thus, while ZigZag's (2008) critique targeted both the HCCCP and other Aboriginal military programs (e.g., Bold Eagle and Raven), the thrust of his/her critique concerned the capitalist-colonial regime that, through their military training, rendered Aboriginal youths complicit in their own exploitation.

Similarly, Logan Sweetgrass (a pseudonym), a 50-year-old businessman of middle-class origin and the father of two young adults in the Samson Cree Nation, questioned the HCCCP's cultural salience for Maskwacis youths. Logan further criticized what he believed was the RCMP's role in the reproduction of colonial power relations:

> *LOGAN: I don't agree with the Cadets, personally. It's a way of promoting the RCMP who organized the initiative. It's like the government and the way they forcibly grabbed the kids. It's a lot like the Indian agent who grabbed the kid, forced him back in there, cut their braids off, put them in boarding school, take away their language. That's exactly the way I see the Cadet program. They go in there and think they are doing good: "Get them off the street," you know? These kids are troubled kids. That's the way I see it. You have troubled kids and the only way to fix it is to get them to stand there and march? They think it's the only thing*

they can do? I don't agree with that. I think that's bullshit. There's other ways of doing it through the culture. They didn't emphasize culture enough in the Cadet Corps. It's the môniyâw way. The non-Native way, right? That's their way. It's not our way. […] I try to listen to as many people as I can. I've listened to Elders on this. My part of the family has been fortunate enough not to be involved in any of the gangs and drugs that have been happening in Hobbema. But the way I see the Cadet program is that it's another gang issue. I think it's another gang. It's almost like another gang because people were in a form of desperation. The majority of them were in a form of desperation. They have nowhere to go, but to go to the Cadet program to make them feel like a group. The gang members have no place to go so they join gangs. Everybody wants to be part of something. I correlate those two together. It's almost the same, if you know what I'm talking about. The Cadet program is like the gang program, you know? It's like, "Come to our group and we'll make you feel better" or "Come to our group and we'll make you feel like a family." They'll help you here and they will help you there. […] You have gang members up here and you have the RCMP out there. They're both in there grabbing people, pulling people them in together. The RCMP forcing them is a way of forcing the people. I see that. "Remember, follow the rules while you're here. Follow the rules." Everyday you see it. Give the people space and time to find themselves, who they really are. Bring some economic development into Samson Cree Nation. Bring some initiatives. The Cadet program to me is not the answer. Our nation has our way of doing it. Our way of doing it, you know?

In the above excerpt, Logan drew vivid parallels between the HCCCP and the assimilatory tactics employed in Canada's settler-colonial history. He justified this analogy using two separate yet interlocking critiques: 1) the contemporary (i.e., field-specific) context in which Maskwacis's social and economic resources have been heavily constrained, and 2) a history of broader colonial patterns in Canada. I will address each of these critiques separately in the following paragraphs, although obvious connections exist between the two of them.

First, Logan identified Maskwacis's chronic underemployment and diminished capacity to subsidize youth programs (as described in Chapter Five) as indicative of residents being deprived of any 'real' life choices; i.e., "*They have nowhere to go but to go to the Cadet program to make them feel like a group."* Similar to ZigZag, therefore, Logan accused the RCMP of trying to take advantage of this context by recruiting the community's most *"troubled kids"* into a culturally foreign/statist program in which they would be compelled into accepting the RCMP (most of whom were of Euro-Canadian ancestry) as viable cultural mentors. While, on one level, Logan's argument validates the HCCCP's 'official' agenda to prevent street gangs by providing an affordable alternative to 'the streets' and deviant forms of leisure, for Logan, this scenario revealed a far greater and more damning colonial refraction; that is, a refraction in which the ability *to be Maskwacis* has been compromised by the community's virtual dependence on the state.

Secondly, Logan's comparing the RCMP to the Indian Agent who "*grabbed the kid," "cut their braids off,"* and forcibly *"put them in boarding schools"* demonstrated very powerfully the colonial prism through which the HCCCP was conceived and

negotiated by (at least some) Maskwacis residents.[62] For Logan, the RCMP's stake in the HCCCP stemmed not from a genuine desire to ameliorate broad structural issues in Maskwacis, but from a more intuitive desire to *colonize* Aboriginal youths by *"forcing them"* into *"the môniyâw way"* of life and thereby enhancing state authority; i.e., *"Remember, follow the rules while you're here."* Importantly, however, the target of Logan's critique was not the actual sport *per se* (i.e., not 'marching'), but rather the RCMP's heightened involvement in the HCCCP and their overall status in the field. This observation departs from a theme identified in Chapter Two's review of literature in which the degree of cultural authenticity – or relative colonial intrusion – in Aboriginal sport was discerned by examining the perceived *differences* between 'Euro-Canadian' and 'traditional' physical cultural pursuits. Indeed, as Logan proclaimed, the hierarchical arrangement of the field's agents (i.e., agents' relative status/colonial power) constituted the eminent 'signifier' of colonial struggle, not the HCCCP itself – an observation that raises important questions about the processes through which certain physical cultural practices, at least, are conceived, negotiated, and *Indigenized* by a community over time.

[62] Other individuals, such as Sarah Shields (a pseudonym), for example, a non-Aboriginal woman from a neighboring town who regularly volunteered with the HCCCP between 2008-2009, identified the RCMP's stake as an "unspoken" tension that permeated the program throughout her years of involvement: *"There was definitely a portion of the community that felt like, you know, this is the whole colonialism thing all over again. You know, "Who are they [the RCMP] to be telling us how to raise our kids and what to do with our kids?" There absolutely was a section of the community that felt that way. Now, whether their kids were involved or not … I mean, if you felt that way, why would you bring your kids there? But I think that sometimes parents occasionally did anyways because the kids wanted to go. I'm sure there would have been those situations where, "My cousin and my best friend are going, why won't you take me? Can I go?" I'm sure there was some cases where parents reluctantly let their kids go, but I'm not aware of any specific situations like that. […] It was kind of that 'unspoken thing' that nobody, you know, it was just awkward. Nobody wanted to talk about it."*

7.4 Part Three: Re(Cree)ating the HCCCP

In the Canadian novel *Indian Horse*, Richard Wagamese (2012), an Ojibway novelist from northwestern Ontario, portrayed the fictional life of Saul Indian Horse, an Aboriginal boy introduced to the game of ice hockey through his experiences at residential school. The school's harsh tactics, abusive hockey coach (the school priest), and the deprivation of cultural sustenance weighed heavily on Saul's psyche, manifesting in a variety of lifelong struggles to which the reader is steadily exposed. However, as the following passage illustrates, Saul's journey was also one of complex resistance and cultural (re)discovery, with the skating rink providing Saul a site of colonial oppression, as well as a powerful vehicle for his personal and cultural liberation:

> The white people had denied us the privilege of indoor arenas, the comfort of heated dressing rooms, concession stands, glassed rinks, scoreboards and even a players' bench. We stood behind the boards, stamping our skates in the snow to keep our feet warm. In the coldest weather we took turns heading to the shack for warmth, leaving just six players from each side on the ice. The goalies would take turns too. But we played each game out. No game was ever called because of weather. We skated through blizzards, deep Arctic freezes and sudden thaws that turned the ice to butter. The game brought us together in a way that nothing else could, and players and fans alike huddled against whatever winter threw at us. We celebrated every goal, every hit, every pass. Sometimes there were fights as there are so often in the game, but they were never bitter, never carried on beyond the next faceoff. We came from nations of warriors, and the sudden flinging down of

> sticks and gloves, the wild punches and wrestling were extensions of that identity (Wagamese, 2012: 110-111).

In this passage, Wagamese brilliantly captured ice hockey as a metaphor for Saul's colonial struggle. The rundown and dilapidated arena facilities, improvised resources, frigid temperatures, and government-led assault on 'traditional' Aboriginal cultural practices have, as Wagamese's passage demonstrated, set decisive limits upon the comfort and style of the activities that are pursued in this scene. However, instead of surrendering to these pressures, Wagamese portrayed Ojibway culture as emerging from *within* the 'cracks' of the colonizer's framework; i.e., as metaphorically cutting through the colonial regime like steel blades through ice. These 'cracks', the reader learns, opened up new spaces for Saul and his Aboriginal teammates to interpret, play with, and ultimately (re)make their identities as 'warriors'.

The underlying premise captured in Wagamese's (2012) text resonated profoundly with virtually every phase of my fieldwork in Maskwacis. Residents consistently described a number of very distinct cultural threads that bound their experiences across the field, often despite encountering various forms of social and economic limitations. Cameron Littlefoot (a pseudonym), for example, first joined the HCCCP's volunteer staff in 2009 at the age of 21. Prior to joining cadets, Cameron consulted a variety of friends, former cadets, and other community members, including Elders, trying to gain a better understanding of the HCCCP's relationship to local culture:

> *CAMERON: To me, the HCCCP is … I think it all goes along with the Elders' analogies. We are warriors. We're Cree warriors at that. Our people have fought in all kinds of wars, new and old. We've got to know our culture. We've also got*

> *to train ourselves as leaders and warriors because most … The Elders would explain how Cree people are natural leaders because we always … we never had someone to come in and tell us what to do back in the day. We established amongst ourselves. We were civilized. We discussed things. We always chose our own leaders, but in a way we were all leaders because each person meant a different thing in the tribe. They associate being warriors with being part of our culture. That's where drill and training our bodies, training our minds, and all of that discipline and drill connects with Cree language and lesson planning and drumming. All of that is a part of our culture, being warriors and speaking our language and doing ceremonies. I think that it's because I always associated those two together that that is how it seems, you know?*

In the above excerpt, Cameron identified a critical link between the HCCCP and what he, as taught to him by an Elder, described as Cree warrior culture. In Cameron's view, therefore, the HCCCP exhibited important continuity with Maskwacis history, warrior culture, and Aboriginal identity. Cameron, thus, conceived military training not as repressive and/or threatening to local culture, but as reinvigorating of Maskwacis identity. Moreover, Cameron envisioned Cree warrior culture as encompassing a wide range of cultural pursuits, including drill, physical and mental training, Cree language lessons, and drumming. Accordingly, then, Cameron did not view *"Training ourselves as leaders and warriors"* or *"being warriors"* as something that could only occur along strict lines of race, culture, or even gendered 'differences', but as rather something that unfolded along complex, dynamic patterns of what Roger Bastide (1978) called "syncretism," a process through which new definitions of what it means to be Maskwacis are allowed to emerge

from the raw materials provided by other populations elsewhere in the world. Such an interpretation of Maskwacis culture transgresses the 'discourse of difference' rooted in a purely abstract and/or pre-colonialist understanding of Aboriginal (physical) culture, and instead emphasizes *Cree warrorism* as dynamic, implicated within modernity, hybridity, and as reflective of an embodied *habitus-field* complex that is simultaneously 'structured' and 'structuring' (see Chapter Three).

The association of Cree warrior culture with the HCCCP raises questions about the gendered implications of this discourse in Maskwacis. Interestingly, the HCCCP's sizeable female membership base did not appear to dissuade peoples' association of Cree 'warriorism' with the HCCCP's agenda, even despite the traditionally masculine properties associated with warrior discourse in Maskwacis (C. Yellowbird, personal communication, December 2014). This observation marks a shift from the findings of previous sport studies literature in which Aboriginal groups fought to preserve gendered distinctions in sport as a means to retain their cultural sovereignty. For example, Giles (2013) found that, in the Dene Games of the Northwest Territories, Aboriginal organizers staunchly refused women's and girl's participation in sport on the grounds that it contradicted Denendeh 'tradition'. While organizers were fluid in their interpretations of other 'traditions' (e.g., the use of modern sports equipment), issues of gender were viewed as less adaptable. However, as Giles (2013: 157) also argued, "The tendency to represent traditional cultural practices and history across Denendeh … as static, uniform, and beyond debate results in a failure to acknowledge the fluidity of tradition and the people who live it."

Similarly, my fieldwork encountered incongruities between peoples' interpretations of Cree warrior culture and the HCCCP as an expression thereof. Debora Young (introduced above), for example, recalled a particular tension that she encountered while making a presentation on the HCCCP to a group of Maskwacis band councillors:

> *DEBORA: There was one year … I can't remember, but we were doing some kind of a presentation on the cadet corps program to my Chief and Council. There was a councillor there who had a lot of negative comments. I don't know. Finally one day I said to him, "Were you beat up by a cop when you were 15 or something? You seem to be making this all about you and not actually seeing the merit of this program," you know? I said to him … I said, "Until you revive … until you and other men of the community revive the Warrior Society, what else do we have? What else is the community offering?" So, he shut up after that because he knew I meant it, eh? [...] An Elder told me that why these gangs are forming is because it's in them. It's in their blood to be warriors, and now they are … they are nothing because the community has such limited resources to deliver to our youths. We're not delivering. It's like the wounded trying to deliver to their youth, eh? It was that type of thing.*

As this excerpt and the previous section (7.3) illustrated, the HCCCP was not uniformly received and/or accepted in Maskwacis, nor were peoples' interpretations of Cree warrior culture wholly intact. However, the discrepancies between peoples' viewpoints, as Robidoux (2012) also suggested of those between Euro-Canadian and First Nations interpretations of ice hockey, contributed to the emergence of new "dialogic spaces" into which to insert - confirm, deny, and struggle over - localized knowledges and the

meaning(s) of cultural practices. Paramount, for example, is Debora's assertion that the formation of local street gangs constituted a natural, and deeply embodied (i.e., *"It's in their blood to be warriors")*, extension of Maskwacis's traditional warrior ethic. For Debora, the absence of any 'real' or 'authentic' cultural mediums through which Maskwacis youths, male or female, were able to *live out* this core property of their identity and physical culture – such as the kind of Warrior Society led by Chief Big Bear, for example – resulted in the inevitable emergence of *alternative* expressions of warrior culture, of which the formation of street gangs constituted another variation. Debora thus conceived and advocated the HCCCP as a socially productive outlet for Aboriginal youths to perform their embodied identities *as warriors*, providing them with at least a moderately acceptable (and safe) social venue at which to reclaim and express this inherent property of both self and physical culture; an outlet, of course, that remained only partial due to the colonial refractions in which Maskwacis finances, personnel, and other resources were scarce.

This theme of Maskwacis 'warrior culture' as supressed through colonialism but not lost bears resemblance to the themes of alterity and identity explored in the writings of Michel de Certeau, the French historian and cultural theorist. In 'The Beauty of the Dead', for example, de Certeau, Dominique Julia, and Jacques Revel (1986) analyzed the close relationship between the French government's efforts to thwart cultural diversity in the nineteenth century and the establishment of 'popular culture' as an area of study. Specifically, the authors pointed to the French government's aggressive efforts to consolidate the country's diverse dialects into one uniform language - through mass censorship campaigns, for example - as evidence of the active suppression of 'authentic'

popular culture (conceived as a plurality). The systematic nature of these campaigns prompted the authors to ask whether or not an analysis of France's 'popular culture' was even possible, or would simply add another layer of distortion to an already subjugated history; i.e., "grafting itself upon a prior violence" (de Certeau et al., 1986: 134). Despite acknowledging clear limitations, however, the authors maintained that scholars should focus their analyses upon resuscitating the neglected capacity of their 'objects' to return and haunt the present, thus altering the existing power relations and preventing our progression towards an increasingly opaque 'truth' – an agenda that de Certeau rigorously pursued in his later works (see de Certeau et al., 1975; de Certeau, 1986; 1997, among others).

De Certeau's notion of a suppressed culture slinking through the margins of political repression and surviving into the present day resonated with my fieldwork in Maskwacis. However, taken to its logical extension, the framework de Certeau advocated also runs the risk, as Jeremy Ahearne (1995: 154) identified, of surrendering interpretive control to a potentially nihilistic relativism that dilutes (if not erases) French claims to 'authenticity' in the very same moment that it is declared into existence. Put differently, if 'authentic' French culture (or warrior culture, for our purposes) can be re-inscribed everywhere – in the "strange expanses of silence" and in the "geography of the *forgotten*" (de Certeau et al., 1986: 131) - can it truly be said to exist anywhere?

This, I argue, is where Bourdieu's theoretical framework offers an important compass by which to navigate such theoretical pitfalls. As Chapter Three noted, Bourdieu did not conceive social practice as constantly mutating or as born out of an infinite number of potentialities. Rather, Bourdieu emphasized culture as a discourse that gets

shaped (limited, in fact) by a field's specific contours; i.e., a field, for example, of which Maskwacis community members are both the residue of its past and the makers of its future. Indeed, as Thomas, Debora, and several others participants declared, the existence and expression of Cree (warrior) culture was not everywhere ubiquitous: Cree culture was conceived as a locally formulated discourse and as firmly rooted within Maskwacis's history, tradition, and the people who simultaneously inhabit and, through struggle, *(re)make* its meanings and its boundaries. As Cree scholar Margaret Kovach (2009: 61) explained, "What we know flows through us from the 'echo of generations,' and our knowledges cannot be universalized because they arise from our experience with our places." In this perspective, then, Maskwacis's community members, regardless of any divergences between their relative 'position' and 'disposition', are constitutive of *one* field; i.e., they are ingredients in a local (and *living*) cultural design that is itself dynamic, internally diverse, and complicated, and that transforms in tension with broader colonial forces. These contours, therefore, the 'deep structures' of the field, are simultaneously structuring, and structured by, a *habitus-field* complex that unconsciously and epistemologically *binds* the community, despite whatever discrepancies may exist.

An underlying theme emerging from the above reflections is community members' collective investment in the notion that there are, in fact, 'Cree ways' of doing things. Indeed, even if those ways are contested and the boundaries around what is (and is not) 'Cree' are fluid and contested, the HCCCP has provided an important site, and discourse, through which Maskwacis residents (male and female) have, at a particular moment in time, claimed ownership over the symbols and practices that define (and that do not define) their own imagined communities. For example, the HCCCP as an

expression of Cree 'warriorism' did not preclude the community's female population from registering as 'cadets' - a population that, in fact, comprised the bulk of the HCCCP's regularly attendees. However, while the presence of girls potentially demonstrates the fluidity of Cree 'warriorism' as a gendered construct, as Holly Johnson, a Maskawacis band councillor now in her 50s, also explained, reducing the HCCCP's interpretative framework to a conduit for Cree warrior culture ignores the alternative, *gendered* histories of military drill training in Maskwacis. For example, Holly described the HCCCP's resemblance to another once popular sport program in Maskwacis in which she recalled participating as a teenager:

> *HOLLY: Yep, we had a Hobbema "all-girls" marching band. It was all-girls for I don't know how many years, but for the last two years they allowed guys to come in and it was called "the Hobbema marching band." It was no longer the "all-girls," it was "the Hobbema marching band." I was involved for maybe three years until it just died. I think it was just funding … yeah, actually a lot of it was just funding. Everything just folded and it was a done deal. But, you know, all the people that were involved in that would be around my age or older. You see the discipline and you see that … because we had to go through all of that. We had a regiment. We had to get up early. We had to march for hours and hours on end. We had to get it 100% right before we were all dismissed for breakfast or whatever, you know? So, we were all in that. And that's what I see the cadet corps as doing, with the discipline and what not. It was fun!*

In the above excerpt, Holly outlined a personal, inter-generational, and yet distinctly local (i.e., field-specific) cultural framework through which the HCCCP was mediated. For

Holly, however, the HCCCP was not viewed as a reification of 'Cree warrior identity', an anti-gang strategy, and/or as an extension upon the community's extensive military history. Rather, the HCCCP, she believed, resembled a former marching band program of which, as a teenager, she recalled being quite fond. Holly thus valued the HCCCP as a conduit for Maskwacis youths, especially young women, to reconnect with this altogether different property of Maskwacis's physical culture; i.e., a property, of course, that also emphasized discipline, group cohesion, and pleasure.

7.5 Part Four: Youths' Reflect on the HCCCP

In his text *Yo' Mama's Disfunktional!* historian and Black Studies scholar Robin Kelley (1997: 41) used the following metaphor to explain a habitual oversight in social scientific literature concerning Black expressive cultures in America's poorest urban neighbourhoods,

> …rather than hear the singer they analyze the lyrics; rather than hear the drum they study the song title. Black music, creativity and experimentation in language, that walk, that talk, that style, must also be understood as sources of visceral and psychic pleasure. Though they may also reflect and speak to the political and social world of inner city communities, expressive cultures are not simply mirrors of social life or expressions of conflicts, pathos, and anxieties.

Kelley's (1997) passage, while differing radically from Maskwacis in context, raises important questions about an oversight in Aboriginal sport studies, specifically in regards to scholars' relatively slow integration and theorization of the rich and complex meanings that Aboriginal actors have themselves ensconced upon sport. While most journalistic

accounts of Maskwacis sport (i.e., the HCCCP) have, as Chapter Six observed, heavily reduced the complexity of Aboriginal sport to a set of racialized coping mechanisms and/or attempted escapes from reserve life, the literature's striking lack of Aboriginal voices, specifically youth voices, has not especially challenged the singularity of this framing. Rather, in focusing their attention upon the barriers *against* which Aboriginal youths have been forced to struggle, largely unaccounted for in these texts has been an answer to the question: *for what*, in fact, *are Aboriginal youths struggling?*

Trent Young's (introduced above) involvement with the HCCCP dates back to 2005 when, as a 14-year old living in the Ermineskin Cree Nation, he attended cadets for the first time. In a recent interview, Trent recalled with affection a wellspring of experiences that he enjoyed through his participation in the program, ranging from locally rooted practices and performances, trips across Western Canada and to other First Nations, to travels to far away places such as Spanish Town, Jamaica. Most memorable for Trent, though, was the range of people with whom he was connected through his involvement in cadets, including his now partner and the mother of his two children, Alisha Saddleback. When asked why he first joined the HCCCP, Trent explained:

> *TRENT: When I first heard of the cadet corps program I was 14 years old. I was still living at my mom's. I think I was in grade 8 or grade 9, around there. It was actually my older brother who brought home a registration form from his school, 'cause he used to go to school here on the reserve in Ermineskin. He told my mom that this program would probably be good for me. Also, to add to that, my cousin Sean called me and asked if I was going to go to this cadet night. At first I was a bit weary of it, thinking, "Cadets? Ah maybe…" But once he told me*

how many people were going, I decided, "Ah sure. I'll check it out." So, after that first night there was, ho-lei, how many parents signing up their kids? There were at least 60 kids being brought out by their parents. Some kids were already there. My mom signed and did the registration form right there. That was the first time that I saw Huculiak and Linnell. It was November 24th, 2005, something like that. So, I went there with Sean and we … we went to the cadet night in Ermineskin, just at the high school here. We used to use their gymnasium. And from that first cadet night … I can't remember what all of the activities we did were, but the first thing that I remember is this RCMP member with this loud voice, out of nowhere saying, "Form up! Make three ranks!" We were wondering well, "What is this? What … what are these ranks? Why is he yelling at us?" (Laugh) Sure enough, he told us how and we were standing there in three ranks and, yeah, just with our hands behind our back. And from there, that was cadets. It used to be once a week. These two guys would come out with all their paperwork and at the gymnasium we would do a bunch of these activities out of … there was no sports equipment that was provided. It was the benches and the ropes that were already there set up. They would run this two-hour program, just us. And it was fun. It was fun. It was a great place to go with my … to go meet friends, and that's where I met more friends … more of my friends.

In the above excerpt, Trent described how his decision to join cadets was initially driven by a basic desire to meet up with friends, family members, and simply recreate after school. Although living with his mother at the time on the outskirts of the Ermineskin Cree Nation, Trent had, until then, few opportunities to hang out and interact with other

Aboriginal youths in Maskwacis as he was made to attend school off reserve in the neighbouring city of Wetaskiwin. He thus conceived the HCCCP as a valuable cultural resource through which to expand his friendship circle, connect with other Aboriginal youths, and simply 'have fun' on a regular basis. Moreover, Trent's insistence that 'having fun' was a primary reason for his involvement in 'cadets' underscores the importance of leisure and pleasure for understanding Aboriginal sports and games. Indeed, meeting new friends, recreating, and simply having fun with their peers were youths' most commonly cited justifications for having joined the HCCCP.

For example, Daniel Baptiste, a former cadet and now instructor from the Samson Cree Nation, recalled having joined the HCCCP as a teenager primarily as a means to have fun, meet new friends, and socialize with other youths from across the Four Nations:

> *DANIEL: When I was a cadet the best part about it was that it had a lot of kids and a lot of friends … a lot of faces you'd see at cadets. It was just fun to have all of your friends in one place at the same time. It was a social type of thing. It wasn't like that before cadets came in. It was basically like Samson to themselves … the kids to themselves. I think it wasn't like that before, but I think that because of the gang lines, it was different. They were not social with each other. Like, Samson wasn't social with Ermineskin, Louis Bull, or Montana.*
>
> *JORDAN: So, there were more territorial divides, I guess.*
>
> *DANIEL: Yeah, until the cadets came in and got everybody together and then everybody knew everybody. Hobbema's a small place but it feels a whole lot smaller when you can't visit with people from the different reserves, especially with no transit and all that.*

Daniel's excerpt, like Trent's, provided strong evidence of the HCCCP as a positive constituting force in Maskwacis for youths to congregate, socialize, and simply have fun with others on a twice-weekly basis. As Daniel explained, the HCCCP's meaning and social significance as a site of leisure and pleasure was, for many, enhanced by the relative dearth in available transport services across the Four Nations as well as other social and regional divisions. Indeed, as Chapter Five noted, the lack of transport services naturally prohibited many youths from interacting with one another in the after school hours, especially for those living on the outskirts or more rural parts of the reserves. While Daniel did not suggest that the HCCCP remedied any broad structural issues, he certainly believed that the program provided a large group of youths with an otherwise unavailable forum at which to build relationships, play, and establish more amicable social relations across the Four Nations. Thus, by simply providing a free and accessible sports program, the HCCCP circumvented certain properties of the field and opened up new and meaningful cultural spaces for youths to interact, negotiate their identities, and potentially expand the social boundaries of their community.

However, while some youths used the HCCCP primarily as a means to cultivate friendships, several of the older teenagers used the program to forge another kind of relationship. Thomas Bruno, for example, was thirteen years old when the HCCCP originated in 2005. As a teenager from the Samson Cree Nation, Thomas recalled being initially hesitant to join the HCCCP on the grounds that several of his older peers teased cadets as "goody goodies," which further attests to the HCCCP's implication within local gender and identity struggles. Thomas's perspective later changed, though, when a girl he admired joined the HCCCP and encouraged him to follow suit. The experience altered

Thomas's perception of the HCCCP and, as the following excerpt reveals, he also discovered other features of the program that were equally enjoyable and motivating:

> *THOMAS: Well, with me and some of the other kids I think the reason why it really gets us going is, like, we're not seeing it as, "I'm joining this instead of joining a gang." I was like, "I'm doing this because…" It's like a fantasy everyone has. Little kids play all these kinds of war games. They think, "This is probably the training that they get before they get into the battlefield." They get really pumped up about that. It's like … and the possibility that, if you stick with this program, you could probably go places and maybe even get recommendations to an actual police cadet corps: "So and so did this and that in this cadet program. He wants to try and become an officer now," and then he gets accepted at whatever police cadet corps program. There are kids out there who want to actually become law enforcement, which is surprising because a lot of kids get mad about law enforcement. From what I hear from Constable Reid, some kids get mad at him and, like, "Blah, blah, blah, you're the cop that took my dad away." Surprisingly enough, though, there's probably a good majority of them who would like to go into some sort of law enforcement or probably even enlist in the military. I could see myself doing that one day.*

Thomas's reflection reveals a number of important insights into how Maskwacis's diverse youth population conceived and negotiated the HCCCP. Firstly, Thomas's reflection suggests that a certain level of playfulness permeated the HCCCP's training routines. Whether driven by fantasy war games, the chance to socialize with their peers, or the prospect of having a romantic encounter with another teenager (as was Thomas's

initial ambition), Maskwacis youths felt motivated to join (or avoid altogether) the HCCCP for a variety of different, not necessarily discrete or mutually exclusive, social and personal reasons. Secondly, Thomas described the existence of a somewhat ambiguous relationship between the RCMP and several Maskwacis community members, including several of its youths. While this tension inevitably reflects a much broader colonial history of Aboriginal policing, it also raises important questions about the social impact(s) that Canada's most recent turn towards suppressive 'law and order'-styled policing strategies has had upon community relations. Indeed, as previous chapters have illustrated, the swelling incarceration rates of Aboriginal peoples in Canada have been especially pronounced in the Province of Alberta, thus adding further strain to an already fragile police–community relationship that exists in First Nations such as Maskwacis.

Curiously, though, as Thomas pointed out, the existence of this general tension did not impede many Maskwacis youths from seeking to utilize the HCCCP as a possible training ground for obtaining future employment as a police officer and/or through a career in military service. While, in one sense, this reflection might be critically read as the HCCCP's complicity in the reproduction of a "symbolically violent" (Bourdieu, 1998) colonial power relationship between the state and Aboriginal youths - a relationship where, as previously agents reflected, joining forces with the colonial regime is presented as the only viable alternative to a life of poverty -, as Thomas suggested, the HCCCP's relationship to Maskwacis youths is far more complex. Indeed, while it is true that some boys and young girls may have conceived the HCCCP as a means of upward social mobility in the face of poverty, my interviews found that most participants simply derived some kind of pleasure through their affiliation with cadets.

Chelsey Buffalo, for example, was one of the HCCCP's founding female members. In a recent interview, Chelsey recalled having joined cadets in 2005 as a twelve year old while living with her mother and attending school on the Samson Cree Nation. When I asked Chelsey to explain her reasons for joining the HCCCP, Chelsey emphasized the sheer joy and pleasure that she experienced through marching, socializing with her peers, and from participation in other drill-based activities; i.e., all factors that have kept Chelsey interested and actively engaged in the HCCCP for the past 10 years:

> *CHELSEY: The first thing I liked was the drill. That was my number one. It was because I never thought too highly of myself. So, just like remembering all of the drills and knowing the timing and everything just made me feel like I was a part of something. I loved it. The second thing was the trips! And meeting up with my friends every week. It used to be only weekly. Now it's two nights a week. We went to a lot of parades and camps, which were always really fun. It wasn't until a couple of years ago that we started to go to camps, which I really loved. Everything about the program, when I think about it, I just absolutely love it.*

In this excerpt, Chelsey identified a range of positive functions that the HCCCP has serviced in her personal life. From a space in which to socialize, gain confidence, and exercise, to a vehicle through which she has been able to travel across the country and the globe, Chelsey has relished in almost every aspect of her HCCCP experiences. Out of all of Chelsey's HCCCP memories, though, 'drill' was identified as her *"number one"* pleasure. While this ordering may, in part, reflect certain gendered differences (i.e., Aboriginal girls were not traditionally socialized to conceive themselves as 'warriors', for example), several of the male cadets whom I interviewed also emphasized 'drill' as *"fun"*

and as a valuable tool for building cultural and community cohesion; i.e., an assertion that certainly obscures the purely disciplinary reading of drill's history in Aboriginal communities (see Chapter Two).

Garret Saddleback, for example, first joined the HCCCP as a thirteen-year-old high school student. Although living in the heart of the Samson Nation's townsite, Garrett described feeling somewhat isolated from his peer group due to the simple fact that he was less *into* ice hockey than were many of the other boys his age. For Garrett, therefore, the HCCCP presented an important alternative to Maskwacis's more dominant sporting pastime, and also contained fewer entry requirements (e.g., costs) than most sports:

> *GARRETT: Why did I keep going to cadets? I don't know. I guess it was whatever a cadet corps would be described as: drill, working with other people, learning survival skills, physical activity and all of that, and friends … having other friends that were in cadets and thinking … yeah, and the people of course … obviously the faces, like, "I've got to see so and so and all of them." I guess it's that feeling that everyone felt: "We're the Hobbema Cadets!" I don't know … just … it's like I said, "What describes a cadet corps?" Everything that we do at cadets, teaching the kids … well, when I was a cadet, like, I don't know, somebody barking orders, "Troop!" and a lot of the yelling … one thing I liked was sounding off by numbers … like, how everything just goes with … it's supposed to go a certain way. The one time we had … when I was a cadet we had an order called, "Advance and review order." It was a pretty long thing we had to do, but it was cool seeing the turnout at the end. Near the end of it … we would start in a straight line, and then when we were done we would all be like this*

(showing me). We would all be facing our rifles, "Hoorahh!!" And that was the end of that. It was … just, like, seeing the turnout of that. And, again, even when we were marching, "Left! Bend the right foot!" Working together with more than a handful of people all doing the same thing … well, not the same thing, but all working towards the same kind of goal, that's probably the thing that kept me going back. Well, there were a lot of things. I don't know. It just kind of … one of the things that just … that sounds so cool is, on a cadet night, is when you hear that (marching sound). Like, just hearing that all at once. That one time … we were all standing in one line, all the way down. I don't know. We just kept going and, just hearing that, like, that's a lot of feet. Surely, I don't know, maybe one day they'll all just go together, all stand at attention at once. I don't know, just the way it was … the cadets were doing drill!

The above reflections shed important light upon the complex relationship that exists between a particular sport 'form' and the dense meanings enshrined within Maskwacis's internal-to-the-field experiences. Collectively, the array of meanings Maskwacis youths derived through their participation in cadets resembled what Michel de Certeau (1984) called the *Bricoleur*, for whom the point of consumption is creative. For de Certeau (1984), although the sorts of social histories identified in previous chapters play a vital role in constructing things like sport, for example, how such practices come to be conceived and negotiated in distinct locales is incredibly diverse, inventive, and constitutes an active process of *bricolage*. For Garrett, therefore, as was true for many of the cadets I interviewed, participation in marching and other drill-based physical activity was not only conceived as pleasurable; more often than not, drill was also "re-employed"

(de Certeau, 1984) as an assertion of individual agency, culture, and community identity. In this sense, youths' embracement of drill training must be understood as embodiments of the class, race, and gender struggles in which they sought to: expand their social network across, and beyond, the Four Nations boundaries; assert their identities as Cree 'warriors'; pursue 'leisure and pleasure' with their peers; and, finally, as embodiments of their cultural and community cohesion and solidarity in the face of widespread racism.

7.6 Chapter Summary and Concluding Remarks

This chapter examined the HCCCP from the perspective of various agents. Following a brief review of the community's military history and current Aboriginal cadet corps programs in Canada, the HCCCP (i.e., how it was conceived, negotiated, and why) was analyzed with sensitivity to Maskwacis's *field*-specific properties. My argument, in brief, was that the HCCCP's 'official' agenda inadequately captured the community's internal-to-the-field complexity. However, while problematizing the view that one identifiable or 'legitimate' definition of the HCCCP existed in Maskwacis, the chapter ultimately embraced a somewhat particularistic understanding of Aboriginal sport as firmly rooted within a locally (i.e., *field*) specific context and the unique corpus of agents who simultaneously inhabit the field's history and collectively *(re)make* their futures in the community. Thus, although peoples' ideas of Aboriginal sport were fiercely contested, the chapter identified as a central facet of Maskwacis culture the deep-rooted sense of community, common history, and peoples' collective investment in the notion that there is, in fact, a Maskwacis culture and a Cree way of doing things.

CHAPTER VIII.

The Natural Symbol

"This is a Natural Symbol," said the Elder, his right index finger tapping the palm of his left hand. "I was alone hunting in the woods when I discovered it."

The young man listened.

"That's when I caught notice of her, a white tail, strutting through the long grass. The time was late, around 7:00-8:00 o'clock. I would have lost her forever had I not acted quickly. She stood calmly as I took aim."

"BOOM!" the Elder exhaled, slapping both hands on his knee tops.

"Birds fluttered up into the sky as the bullet seared through her flesh, her head jerking backwards as she loaded her hind legs and sprang to life, vanishing from the openness and into the trees. I ran to catch her, crackling over sticks and fallen leaves, tracking the blood trail through the woods, zigging and zagging from right to left."

The Elder paused, tapping his palm with his index finger.

"But, you see," he continued, "the trail drew back towards the long grass, making the shape of an almost perfect circle."

A puzzled look washed over the young man's face.

"You see," the Elder laughed, "I had tracked the blood trail all this way only to find myself back at the exact place from whence I had set out. Back to the zig-zags! I stood there exhausted in her pool of blood, confused, no deer, and no clear path to

follow. As I raised my eyes skyward, pleading to the Creator for guidance, I caught notice of a small smattering of blood high upon a few tree leafs."

The Elder motioned skyward as if tickling the bloodied leafs with his fingertips.

"Re-energized," the Elder continued, "I ran through the woods in pursuit of the deer, following the exact trail as before, zigging, zagging, and circling through the long grass. I tracked the deer all the way until the path veered sideways, taking me deeper, deeper, and DEEPER into the woods and in a direction that I had never before been!"

Concluding Remarks

The HCCCP's 21-year old Major, Trent Young, recounted this story to me on the evening of April 26th, 2013, at Barney's Lounge in Wetaskiwin, Alberta. An Elder, Virgil Ermineskin, had shared it with Trent earlier that year in reference to a hunting trip from which he had recently returned. According to Virgil, the deer's peculiar pathway through the brush line and into the trees was emblematic of what he called a 'Natural Symbol', that is, a symbol whose origins and design are rooted in the supernatural. Trent's retelling of this story was motivated by its strong resonance with what he believed was the Natural Symbol of the HCCCP, a program that has evolved considerably since its inception in 2005 and has long historical roots among the Maskwacis Cree Nations. While reciting to me this story, Trent retraced the Natural Symbol onto a Keno card that he had pulled from his jacket pocket. "Each stroke of my pencil," Trent explained, "represents a bend in our program's storyline. Each bend is a reminder of the places we have been and the range of visions - the zigzags - that have propelled us forward through this complicated maze of human experience."

This dissertation cast critical light upon a very small and incomplete corner of this maze. At its most basic level, the study constitutes my own stake in Maskwacis (by way of the academic field), my vision, and my personal *remaking of the HCCCP* as I experienced the program as a researcher, local volunteer, friend, and visitor to the community at a particular moment in time. While I have attempted to mitigate the gross limitations inherent in my 'position' and 'disposition', my vision remains only partial and fragmented, as is the same for all individuals discussed in this research. My hope, however, is that this text will have satisfied the objective for which it was originally

intended; that is, to have re-presented Maskwacis how I experienced the community: as a place that is alive with nuance and contradiction; fluidity, change, and hope; and that, in stark contrast to its media portrayal, remains firmly grounded in a complex solidarity and general cohesiveness that permeates the community on several distinct levels.

In support of this vision, the study has contributed to a number of important and ongoing conversations. First, this study has contributed to the Aboriginal Sport Studies literature by exploring the subtle subversions, contradictions, and complex meanings generated *within*, rather than in opposition to, the taken for granted category of physical culture known as Euro-Canadian. Using Pierre Bourdieu's relational sociology, the study contributed a novel theorization of Aboriginal sport that helped to showcase the diverse ways in which social agents conceived and negotiated the HCCCP with varying degrees of effectiveness. This framework dovetailed with an underutilized methodology in the literature that included the triangulation of textual materials, fieldwork observations, and interview data. Secondly, this study has offered a reflexive account of the embodied qualitative research process as experienced within a specific First Nations community. Using Bourdieu's 'reflexive' sociological tools, the dissertation examined the multiple biases (i.e., personal, academic, and intellectual) that have informed this study's conduct. The strategies that were employed to help mitigate these biases were also discussed, which included my sustained investment in the community, my regular participation in Cree ceremonies, sports programs, and other social gatherings, and the partial grounding of this research within Indigenous Methodologies literature.

In Chapter Five, the study identified some basic properties that distinguished Maskwacis as a cultural field. These included localized refractions related to: Canada's

broader colonial history, Maskwacis's geography, history of oil wealth, youth street gangs, as well as the contemporary sociological trends impacting upon the development of youth sport in the region. Collectively, these properties provided an empirical lens through which peoples' experiences of sport were examined, contributing to the literature a renewed focus upon the localized designs (and struggles) that informed sport's development. In Chapter Six, the study contributed to a broader public discourse that concerns how Aboriginal peoples, specifically youths, are represented in the mainstream media. The Chapter also contributed to the literature by problematizing the media's relationship to Maskwacis sport, arguing that, while largely repressive, certain well-positioned agents in the field (e.g., the RCMP) were able to harness the media's generative properties to promote the HCCCP; however, agents' ability to do so meant their having to embrace Maskwacis's more dominant public narrative as 'gang torn'.

Finally, Chapter Seven interrogated community members' own reflections upon the HCCCP and explored the diverse meanings that the program was believed to service in Maskwacis. While many people, it was argued, viewed the HCCCP favourably, others were critical, even condemning, of the program's colonial overtones. By grounding this complexity within Maskwacis's field-specific context, the study contributed a theorization of Aboriginal sport as defined by epistemological 'density', as opposed to 'difference'. The Chapter also contributed to the literature a theorization of Aboriginal youths as actively engaged in a struggle to conceive, negotiate, and *(re)make* the HCCCP according to their own values, desires, and poetic aspirations for Maskwacis's future.

To some, understandably, the contributions of this research might seem arcane in light of the pressing social issues in Maskwacis and in many other Aboriginal

communities across Canada. After all, at a national level, this *is* a country facing what United Nations official James Anaya declared "a crisis when it comes to the situation of indigenous peoples of the country," (The Canadian Press, 2013); a place where over 1,200 Aboriginal women have been reported either missing or murdered in the last seven years *without* federal inquiry into this racialized patterning; a place where, between December 11th, 2012 and January 24th, 2013, Chief Theresa Spence of the Attawapiskat First Nation in northern Ontario launched a six-week hunger strike to raise public awareness about the deplorable housing conditions on First Nations across Canada; and, most notoriously, this *is* a country in which the federal government's wholesale neglect of First Nations treaty rights and systematic dismantling of environmental protections has inspired scores of Canadian protestors to flood the streets and perform non-violent flash mobs under the anthem *Idle No More* for over one year … and counting.

I want to assure readers invested in tackling these pressing social issues that our interests are not entirely unrelated. Indeed, it has been over 35 years since Stuart Hall, Chas Critcher, Tony Jefferson, John Clarke, and Brian Roberts (1978) published their insightful critique of 'mugging' in 1970s Britain, the contents of which demonstrated how changes in broader political and economic structures, fuelled by the mainstream media's panicked narrative on 'Black' youths as muggers, enabled certain ideological interventions into the lives of the United Kingdom's most marginalized communities. Harsher prison terms, increased police surveillance of inner city (black) 'trouble spots', diminished criminal protection for youths, and a general recoiling of the welfare state accompanied a spike in unemployment and a growing ethnic population who became the "signifier" (Hall et al., 1978: 339) of the crisis in Britain's urban colonies.

Today, in an altogether different context than 1970s postwar Britain, supposedly deviant groups, in Maskwacis's case Aboriginal youths, have been periodically singled out and placed at the epicentre of a series of racialized moral panics, all amid changing social and political landscapes that have set decisive limits upon the lives of Aboriginal peoples in Canada. Aboriginal peoples, especially youths, have been disproportionately strained by the recent economic downtown, the dismantling of the welfare state, and the onslaught of aggressive law-and-order styled 'solutions' to crime that have accompanied a growing disparity and economic polarization across Canada and the globe. The prevalence of these trends, and the usually one-dimensional depictions of Aboriginal peoples who have lined the streets in protest thereof (Wilkes et al., 2010a; 2010b), point to an ongoing need for scholars and policy makers to re-revisit and ultimately destabilize the underlying narratives in which *all* social interventions, even well-intended ones, are rooted, framed, and, in the end, publicly understood. As the postcolonial scholar Edward Said (1993: xii-xiii) once wrote,

> The main battle in imperialism is over land, of course; but when it came to who owned the land, who had the right to settle and work on it, who kept it going, who won it back, and who now plans its future – these issues were reflected, contested, and even for a time decided in narrative. As one critic has suggested, nations themselves *are* narrations. The power to narrate, or to block other narratives from forming and emerging, is very important to culture and imperialism, and constitutes one of the main connections between them.

Following Said, Pierre Bourdieu, Robin Kelley, Stuart Hall, and the growing chorus of Aboriginal writers and cultural studies scholars for whom the interrogation of dominant

ideological narratives constitutes a key battlefield upon which we, as academics and social activists, are well equipped to struggle (Boyden, 2005; King, 2003; Robinson, 2000; Van Camp, 1996; Wagamese, 2012; among others), I also hope that this study contributes a small counter-narrative against the largely fetishized characterisations of Maskwacis upon which so much public (mis)understandings have been based.

In closing, I want to emphasize my sincere hope that this text will have met the expectations and standards of the academy and the First Nations community with whom I have had the privilege of interacting these past six years. As a prospective scholar, I am encouraged by the direction that Aboriginal Sport Studies has taken in recent years. Victoria Paraschak, Janice Forsyth, Christine O'Bonsawin, Audrey Giles, Michael Robidoux, Joannie Halas, Michael Heine, Ann Hall, among others, have made significant contributions to a body of literature that has been historically dominated by the voices and achievements of an elite squad of white male athletes. Despite these contributions, however, there is still important work to be done. Future studies would benefit greatly from a more sustained focus on Aboriginal girls and women's experiences of sport and physical activity in Canada. Additionally, the diverse geographical regions in which Aboriginal sports are practiced are in need of far greater contextualization, especially in the Maritime Provinces, diverse urban centers, and in the more northerly parts of Canada. Finally, very few studies have tried to understand Aboriginal sport as a site of postcolonial cultural formation within a Canadian or Aboriginal specific context. These possibilities, among others, make Aboriginal sport a particularly fruitful area for future researchers to explore, and a potentially valuable site at which to expand our knowledge of the social world and our relationships with one another.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Band Council Resolution

File Reference:
2011-2012-774-#139

SAMSON CREE NATION

COUNCIL RESOLUTION

DATE: 13th (Day) September (Month) A.D. 2011 (Year). Place: Samson Cree Nation

THE COUNCIL OF THE SAMSON CREE NATION DO HEREBY RESOLVE:

WHEREAS a duly convened meeting of the Samson Cree Nation Chief & Council was held on September 13th, 2011; and

WHEREAS Jordan R. Koch, PhD student at the University of Alberta advised the Chief and Council that he wishes to conduct research in the Samson Cree Nation Territory with a goal of:
Producing a detailed investigation into at least one grassroots sports-related campaign that has emerged from within the community in recent years. This research investigation will consider how different stakeholders in the community have perceived and responded to a particular grassroots solution intended to incite what has been labelled as positive social change in Samson (ie: what do stakeholders feel is good about it, bad, and why and what, if anything has been in effect).
Producing a critical review of the media's coverage of gang violence in Hobbema. This review will examine the structures of the mainstream media (mainly The Edmonton Journal and the Edmonton Sun) and explore how Hobbema has been portrayed to a mostly urban audience as a failing community in crisis. Jordan will include in this critical review interviews with relevant journalists from the mainstream newspapers as well as various community members from the Samson Cree First Nation, people whose experiences likely stand in complication to the media-endorsed stereotyping of their community as gang controlled.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Samson Cree Nation Chief & Council do herein grant Jordan R. Koch permission to attend upon, and undertake research in the Samson Cree territory, as part of his research for his Doctor of Philosophy ("PhD") studies, on the following basis:

1. He learn a basic understanding of, and be mindful of while conducting his research, Samson Cree Nation cultural customs and practices, and promises to present his research in a culturally appropriate contest; and
2. He approach his research on a collaborative basis, following the accepted fundamental principles of ethical research with ethnocultural populations and communities; and
3. Prior to submitting any research for publication, based on his research in the community, he will provide a copy of it for review by the Chief and Council for their comments as appropriate; and
4. Upon the request of Chief and Council of the Samson Cree First nation, Jordan commits to presenting any research findings from the proposed study to members of the Samson Cree Nation, as well as to other stakeholders in the community, in a manner and fashion the Chief and council deem appropriate.

Chief Marvin Yellowbird

Councillor Derek Bruno | Councillor Florence Buffalo | Councillor Kirk Buffalo

Councillor Kurt Buffalo | Councillor Holly Johnson | Councillor Koren Lightning-Earle

Councillor Willy Lightning | Councillor Larron Northwest | Councillor Jerry Saddleback Jr.

Councillor Vern Saddleback | Councillor Elroy Strawberry-Rain | Councillor Mario Swampy

Appendix B

University of Alberta Research Ethics Board Forms

(i) Recruitment Letter (Sample)

Researcher:
Jordan Koch, PhD student
Professor
Faculty of Physical Education & Recreation
Professor

University of Alberta
Edmonton, AB T6G 2H9
jrkoch@ualberta.ca
(780) 708-1599

Supervisors:
Dr. Jay Scherer, Associate

Dr. Chris Andersen, Associate

Dr. Karen Fox, Professor
Physical Education & Recreation
University of Alberta
Edmonton, AB T6G 2H9
jay.scherer@ualberta.ca
(780) 492-9146

DATE *[Date to be Inserted]:*

Dear [Name of Person to be Inserted]:

My name is Jordan and I am a graduate student in the Faculty of Physical Education & Recreation at the University of Alberta. I would like to ask for your help with a study. The purpose of this study is to learn the diverse perspectives held by stakeholders on sport initiatives in Hobbema, specifically the youth Cadet Corps.

I would like to arrange an interview with you to discuss your thoughts on this matter. The interviews will last no more than one hour. **Information that you provide may be used for academic papers and conferences. The results may also provide feedback for sport organizations and the programs they provide.**

You will be interviewed at a location that is convenient for you.

If you are interested, please contact Jordan by phone (780-708-1599) or e-mail (jrkoch@ualberta.ca). I can answer any questions you may have.

Interviews will be audio-recorded (unless otherwise requested), typed and stored in a locked file cabinet (in a locked office). You will be assigned false names (again, unless you request otherwise). Only the research team will have access to this information.

There are no known risks associated with participating in this study. If you do not want to answer any questions this is fine. Participating in this study is strictly voluntary. That means that you do not have to help me. If you decide to help, but later change your mind, that is fine too. You can withdraw from the study at any time, for any reason. If you want your information removed from the study, simply call or e-mail Jordan **up to two weeks after you have completed your interview. If you choose to withdraw from the study and you inform Jordan within this time period, your information will be destroyed.**

Concerns
If you have other concerns about this study, you may contact Dr. Kelvin Jones, who is the Chair of the Research Ethics Board for the Faculty of Physical Education and Recreation at the University of Alberta (Tel: kelvin.jones@ualberta.ca, 780-492-0650). Dr. Jones has no direct involvement in the study.

Thank you.

Appendix C

Consent Form (Sample)

PLEASE SIGN THIS FORM TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY

Part 1: Researcher Contact Information		
Researcher: Jordan Koch, PhD Student Affiliation: Faculty of Physical Education & Recreation, University of Alberta Contact: jrkoch@ualberta.ca phone: (780) 708-1599		
Supervisors: Dr. Jay Scherer, Dr. Chris Andersen, Dr. Karen Fox Affiliation: Faculty of Physical Education & Recreation, University of Alberta Contact: jay.scherer@ualberta.ca phone: (780) 492-9146		
Part 2: Consent of Participant		
Do you understand that you have been asked to be in a research study?	**Yes**	**No**
Have you read and received a copy of the Information Sheet?	**Yes**	**No**
Do you understand the risks involved in taking part in this study?	**Yes**	**No**
Have you had an opportunity to ask questions and discuss this study? (If you have any questions, please contact Jordan Koch)	**Yes**	**No**
Do you understand that you are free to refuse to participate, or to withdraw from the study at any time, without consequence, and that your information will be withdrawn at your request?	**Yes**	**No**
Do you understand the issue of confidentiality? (see information sheet) Do you understand who will have access to your information?	**Yes**	**No**
Part 3: Signatures		
I agree to take part in this study: Yes ☐ No ☐ **Signature of Participant**: _____ Contact information (phone/e-mail): _____ **Printed Name**: _____ **Date**: _____		

Appendix D

General Interview Guide (Sample)

Below is a list of all the types of questions I plan to ask. The guide will be modified according to the stakeholder and the context of the interview, but the general questions and character of the guide will likely remain the same.

- What is your relationship with Hobbema?
- Tell me about the community. How do you perceive or experience life there?
- What makes life good in Hobbema? What are the strengths, advantages, etc.?
- What makes life difficult in Hobbema? i.e., what are the weaknesses, disadvantages, etc. (probing for examples about the nature of the field, its relationship in terms of geography, prison, oil, etc. *Note: I want to get a sense of its location vis-à-vis the national context; i.e., "field of power").
- What makes Hobbema different/ similar to other communities (Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal) in Canada? (Here, I want to establish a feel for Hobbema as understood/ experienced by the different stakeholders who comprise and have influence on it. Again, I want to get a sense of its location vis-à-vis the national context; i.e., "field of power").
- How did you come to learn about the HCCCP?
- Under what conditions did the HCCCP come into existence? What did life in Hobbema look like in 2005? (Probe for examples about the nature of the field and the status of youth culture in the community).
- What were the initial reactions to the program? How did people feel about it? (Probing for illustrations of divergent/ parallel commitments for who the interviewee identifies as stakeholders in the program and how they conceived and negotiated the HCCCP. I am looking for insight into the positioning of stakeholders in the field, shared assumptions, etc.)
- How did/ do you personally perceive the HCCCP? Has your perception of the HCCCP changed over time? If so, how or why?
- What do you like about the Cadet Corps? (Probe for examples and details of feelings, impressions and attitudes … strengths/ weaknesses)
- What do you dislike about the Cadet Corps? (Probe for examples and details of feelings, impressions and attitudes … strengths/ weaknesses). *Note: The above

three questions are really looking for insight into the specific investments of stakeholders; i.e., what they stood to gain and lose by its functioning.

- How did your perception of the HCCCP influence your relationship with it? (Probing for examples about how the they personally negotiated the HCCCP in the community)

- What role do you think the Cadet Corps plays in the community, especially as it relates to youth? (Probing for example about stakeholders perceptions about the role of the HCCCP in its shaping – either positively or negatively).

- Why do you think youth (and other stakeholders) participate in the Cadet Corps?

- What (if anything) changed about the HCCCP since its inception in 2005? (Probing for information about the rise and fall of the HCCCP and the changing landscape of stakeholder relations in Hobbema since 2005).

- Do you have anything else you would like to share or ask of me?

Appendix E

List of Participants

Below is a list of participants and their relative field position in Maskwacis. Importantly, ensuring participants' anonymity meant my having to disguise aspects of their identity when requested; e.g., name, age, and properties of their field position. However, attempts were made to honour the specificity of Bourdieu's field-analytic framework wherever possible.

- Carter Yellowbird — Parent, businessman, rodeo athlete, Samson Cree Nation, late-40s.
- Mario Swampy — Parent, (former) sports administrator, Band Councillor, Samson Cree Nation, mid-30s.
- Derek Bruno — Parent, Band Councillor, Samson Cree Nation, mid-30s.
- Holly Johnson — Band Councillor, sport administrator, Samson Cree Nation.
- Trent Young — Cadet, HCCCP Major, Ermineskin Cree Nation, early 20s.
- Thomas Bruno — Cadet, Samson Cree Nation, early 20s.
- Garrett Saddleback — Cadet, Samson Cree Nation, early 20s.
- Daniel Baptiste — Cadet, Samson Cree Nation, early 20s.
- Chelsey Buffalo — Cadet, Samson Cree Nation, 19-years-old.
- Debora Young — Parent, HCCCP administrator, school teacher, Ermineskin Cree Nation.
- John Crier — Parent, Maskwacis hockey director, Samson Cree Nation, early 30s.
- Jason Seright — Parent, (former) sport administrator, school teacher, principal of the Maskwacis Outreach School, 46-years-old.
- Stephen Reid — RCMP officer, Maskwacis detachment, mid-30s.
- Stewart Schmidt — Maskwacis paramedic (supervisor), Millet, AB.
- Tom Engel — President - Alberta Lacrosse Association, Edmonton, AB.
- Richard Huculiak — RCMP member, Maskwacis, AB.
- Mark Linnell — RCMP member, Maskwacis, AB.

Pseudonyms (selected at random by the researcher)

- Ashley Bluejacket — Mother, volunteer sports administrator, Samson Cree Nation, mid-60s.
- Grant Stonechild — Parent, sport administrator, Samson Cree Nation, mid-50s.
- Greg Crane — (former) Lacrosse coach, Edmonton, AB., mid-30s.
- Lester Underhill — (former) RCMP officer, Maskwacis, mid-50s.
- Emily Bradshaw — School teacher, Edmonton, AB.
- Sarah Shields — HCCCP volunteer, Wetaskiwin, AB.
- Lindsay Vaughan — Journalist, Edmonton, AB.
- Conner Gladstone — Journalist, Edmonton, AB.

- Joel Barton Journalist, Edmonton, AB.
- Logan Sweetgrass Parent, Businessman, Samson Cree Nation, late 40s.
- Cameron Littlefoot HCCCP instructor, Samson Cree Nation, early 20s.