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### *A Comparison of Indigenous Sport for Development Policy Directives in Canada and Australia*

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# A Comparison of Canadian and Australian Sport for Development (SFD) Policy Directives for Indigenous Peoples

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**Abstract:** *In this study, we employ Bacchi's (2012) "What's the Problem Represented to be?" approach to guide our discourse analysis of federal Indigenous sport for development (SFD) policies in Canada and Australia. Through a review of government policies and reports, we highlight the often-divergent policy directives set out by federal departments in these two countries. Specifically, interdepartmental partnerships in areas such as health, education, and justice fail to be adequately facilitated through SFD policies in Canada, while, conversely, Australia has strived toward greater federal partnership-building. Within the identified Canadian and Australian policies, both countries have consistently presented sport as having the potential to contribute to Indigenous peoples' social and economic development, as well as to reconciliation, thus highlighting the growing institutional support behind Indigenous SFD. This policy analysis research provides a novel contribution to the growing overall body of literature investigating the politics of partnership-building in SFD initiatives.*

The field of sport for development (SFD) is at an interesting moment in its history. No longer a novel tool for exclusive use in "developing" countries, the conceptualization and proliferation of SFD organizations have globalized to a point where countries that have traditionally "delivered" transnational SFD initiatives are now also deploying similarly purposed domestic SFD initiatives. The Government of Canada (2005) encouraged this shift, and described the phenomenon as the "domestic transfer objective" of SFD (Hayhurst and Giles 2013). One result of this domestic transfer is the burgeoning presence of SFD initiatives in Indigenous<sup>1</sup> communities across Canada (Gardam, Giles, and Hayhurst 2017a). According

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1 A brief note on terminology: Following recent changes in accepted/preferred terminology, we use the term "Indigenous" in place of the legally identifying terms "Aboriginal" in Canada or "Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander" in Australia, except when remaining consistent with the terminology used within sport policies and reports.

to Schulenkorf (2017), “[F]rom an SFD perspective, sport is a conduit to achieving wider development outcomes rather an end in itself” (243). Recently, SFD in Canada has featured prominently in seminal work produced by both Indigenous leaders (e.g., Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada [TRC] Calls to Action 2015b) and governments alike (e.g., Sport Canada 2012). A similar movement is occurring in Australia. There is an increasing belief in Australia that sport can make an important contribution to a host of inequitable Indigenous development outcomes (e.g., Commonwealth of Australia [COA] 2013; Rossi and Rynne 2014; Ware and Meredith 2013). Some of the most prominent outcomes targeted through SFD include reconciliation, education, employment, and justice inequalities among Indigenous peoples in Australia and Canada (COA 2013; TRC 2015b).

The conceptualization and proliferation of SFD initiatives can be traced back to the United Nations’ advocacy of sport’s role in developmental areas in the early years of this century (Coakley and Donnelly 2009). A report by the UN Inter-Agency Task Force on Sport for Development and Peace (2003) described sport as “a cost-effective tool to meet many development and peace challenges, and help achieve the MDGs [Millennial Development Goals]” (2). The UN is not the first institution to describe sport in this light; sport has long been funded, promoted, or justified by public institutions of industrialized countries under the premise of “development,” including in the context of the colonization of Indigenous peoples (Coalter 2010). Nevertheless, Coalter (2010) has argued that the incredible platform, proliferation, and financial backing behind SFD organizations over the last two decades point to a movement that is distinct from previous iterations of sport used “for development.” Schulenkorf (2017) similarly connected this evolution of SFD to the recent and increasing critical study of SFD practices informing project design and management. Some historical elements of sport used for development purposes, notably the colonization of Indigenous peoples by Western countries (Giulianotti 2004), continue to have contemporary implications for SFD practice and policy alike (Darnell 2007; Hayhurst and Giles 2013).

Promoting sport in order to achieve development outcomes is a long-standing approach used by governments regarding Indigenous peoples living in Canada (Forsyth 2013; Miller 1997) and Australia (Smith and Westerbeek 2007; Thomson, Darcy, and Pearce 2010). There has been, however, a shift in the discourse surrounding Indigenous peoples’ participation in sport. The recent promotion of contemporary sport outcomes such as reconciliation (e.g., COA 2013; Government of Canada 2018; TRC 2015b) is a clear demarcation from historical outcomes related to Indigenous peoples’ participation in sport; namely, the use of sport for colonization purposes (Giulianotti 2004; Miller 1997). Canada and Australia are two countries with similar histories of colonization, and both countries have identified sport, and specifically SFD, as one method of reconciliation (COA 2013; Government of Canada, 2018; TRC 2015b). Thus, the shift in purported sport outcomes requires similar shifts in policy-making for both Canada and Australia.

Policy-making, Bacchi (1999) argued, involves the explicit and implicit representation of the problems the policy seeks to address. In this study, we employ Bacchi’s (2012) “What’s the Problem Represented to be” (WPR) approach to guide our discourse analysis of federal Indigenous SFD policies in Canada and Australia. Through a review of government policies

and reports, we highlight the often-divergent SFD directives set out by federal departments in these two countries. In considering these SFD directives, we first provide an overview of SFD in Australia and then in Canada. Hereafter, we outline the methodological approach employed in this research. Using Bacchi's WPR approach, we then provide an analysis of government policies and reports related to Indigenous SFD in Canada and Australia. We conclude this paper with a discussion of domestic partnership-building for Indigenous SFD initiatives, as well as a discussion of the discursive practices employed in Canadian and Australian policy.

### **Sport for Development, Australia, and Closing the Gap**

In March of 2008, a number of stakeholders across Australia signed a statement of intent that confirmed their collective responsibility toward "Closing the Gap" with respect to a variety of outcomes (e.g., health, early childhood development, remote housing, schooling, and service delivery) between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians (Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission 2008). Arising from this statement was the National Indigenous Reform Agreement (Closing the Gap) (Council of Australian Governments [COAG] 2009). The objective of this agreement was to identify and commit "to targets addressing Indigenous disadvantage" (COAG 2009, 3). The stakeholders involved in the agreement identified seven targets with timelines of completion varying from within the decade to within a generation (COA 2017). Despite some noted improvements within each of the targeted areas, an overall lack of progress points to a failure in implementing the policy changes necessary to meet the Closing the Gap targets. Associated suggestions are that the development of and adherence to unsuitable policy have hampered improvements, and/or may be reflective of an underestimation of the scope of policy change required. Some in the Australian media have called the Closing the Gap targets "an outward-facing political gesture" (Daley 2017, para. 10) and no more than "PR and pageantry" (para. 7) that will not address deep-rooted and historical problems.

Interestingly, the original Closing the Gap agreement cited a number of "best practices" that could be used for future reference in efforts to reach the agreed-upon targets. The South Australian Aboriginal Sports Training Academy was one such best practice (COAG 2009). This academy was said to rely on partnerships with multiple industries and stakeholders and, through Aboriginal students' participation in the academy, was identified as a program that could contribute to multiple Closing the Gap building blocks (e.g., governance and leadership, safe communities, economic participation, health, and schooling) (COAG 2009).

The provision of a sport program as a model for Aboriginal youth development is not surprising. Indeed, the academy—and others similar to it—is part of a broader international movement promoting SFD. Australia is one example of a developed country with an increasing domestic SFD presence, particularly in Indigenous communities; this includes an increasing presence of sport development programs touting outcomes similar to those of SFD programs. Rynne (2016), for example, explored the pedagogical properties of local surfing SFD programs present in a variety of Indigenous communities in Australia; these programs "sought to connect specifically with issues related to reconciliation, education,

cultural cohesion and healthy lifestyles” (Rynne 2016, 607). In addition to SFD programs designed for Indigenous peoples living in Australia, Rosso, McGrath, Immink, and May (2016) highlighted SFD’s potential utility in building connections between Australian higher education institutions and communities. As such, it is representative of the recent expansion of SFD policy to include domestic priorities in countries that have been far more accustomed to providing such activities for neighbouring nations.

In a review of the literature concerning sport and recreation’s role in Indigenous communities in Australia, Ware and Meredith (2013) identified a number of development areas where well-developed sport and recreation programs could contribute to Indigenous communities. The authors noted evidence that among the potential outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples’ participation in sport are “improvements in school retention [rates], attitudes towards learning, social and cognitive skills, physical and mental health and wellbeing; increased social inclusion and cohesion; increased validation of and connection to culture; and crime reduction” (Ware and Meredith 2013, 1). These outcomes certainly appear lofty, yet they fall in line with similar discourses produced by influential proponents of SFD, such as the United Nations (e.g., United Nations 2003) and international NGOs (e.g., Right to Play). Rossi (2015) argued there is a “genuine possibility” (193) that sport can contribute to Indigenous community development and to meeting the targets set out in the Closing the Gap policy. Rossi and Rynne (2014) stated that “sport programmes may well be one of the *few* ways to foster *certain* social outcomes and broader ‘welfare’ objectives” (1042, italics in original). The objectives referred to here by these authors include the right to take responsibility, which they argue is crucial for self-determination and capacity building (Rossi and Rynne 2014). Sport for development programs, the authors argued, can facilitate individual and community responsibility for well-being, particularly among Indigenous youth, by helping to build economic and education capacity in the community (Rossi and Rynne 2014). Taken together, multiple authors have identified SFD programs as potential contributors to closing the gap in Indigenous/non-Indigenous outcomes in Australia. Indeed, Rossi (2015) stated that “we are far from expecting too much” (193) of sport’s role as a tool for development. For sport governing bodies and government funding agencies, increased institutional and public support of SFD could have tremendous financial and policy implications.

There is, however, a need for caution. Internationally, Coalter (2013) described SFD outcomes as often overstated, and questioned the rigour of some of the existing SFD research. Canada is considered to be a country politically and socioeconomically similar to Australia, and this includes similar Indigenous/non-Indigenous relations (O’Faircheallaigh 2015). Like Australia, there is also an increasing SFD presence in Indigenous communities in Canada (Gardam et al. 2017a).

### **Sport for Development, Canada, and Indigenous Peoples**

Residential schools in Canada were created through a government partnership with churches and were in operation from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century to the late 21<sup>st</sup> century. Indigenous youth were removed from their homes and communities for the purposes of forced

assimilation into Euro-Canadian culture (TRC 2015a). Over this period of time, an estimated 150,000 Indigenous children attended residential schools, and many reported suffering physical, mental, and/or sexual abuse (TRC 2015a). Residential school administrators often used sport for colonization purposes (Miller, 1997), yet, for some residential school students, sport was a lifeline that helped them endure the abuses suffered at the school (Forsyth 2013; TRC 2015a). Thus, sport has a complicated role in the colonization of Indigenous peoples in Canada.

Today, SFD programs for Indigenous peoples in Canada are promoted using rationales similar to those used by former residential school sport and recreation administrators, namely, the promotion of the “health, education, and ‘self improvement’” of participating Indigenous youth (Hayhurst and Giles 2013, 507). Whereas discourses produced through residential schools emerged under the guise of colonialism, some recent discourses have been situated under the rubric of reconciliation (e.g., Government of Canada 2018). An overlap in historical and contemporary discourses is thus problematic. The authors of a recently completed scoping review of Indigenous SFD in Canada (Gardam et al. 2017a) identified a number of published studies that examined this expanding area of youth development. The results highlighted the diverse forms of SFD delivered to Indigenous youth in Canada. For example, international non-governmental SFD organizations such as Right to Play (RTP) are increasing their presence in Indigenous communities across Canada, such as through RTP’s Promoting Life-Skills in Aboriginal Youth (PLAY) program (e.g., Coleby and Giles 2013; MacIntosh, Arellano, and Forneris 2014). The PLAY program is a collaboration funded by Right to Play, Indigenous communities, provincial and federal governments, and various private corporations. Smaller organizations such as Alberta’s Future Leaders (Galipeau and Giles 2014; Rose and Giles 2007) and Outside Looking In (Rovito and Giles 2013) provide programming similar to organizations formally conceptualized as SFD, but they incorporate recreation and arts-based development. The scope of SFD in Canada is further widened with the increasing presence of extractive industries (e.g., oil, gas, and mining) funding sport, recreation, and development programs for Indigenous youth in communities affected by resource extraction (Gardam, Giles, and Hayhurst 2017b). The joint prominence of extractive companies (e.g., Stimson et al. 2001) and capital earmarked for sport in regional and rural contexts (e.g., Tonts 2005) points to a comparable widening of SFD in Australia.

Similar to the Closing the Gap targets in Australia, the need for action on Indigenous sport policy and development has been recognized in Canada through the recently completed TRC (2015b) as an important step to “redress the legacy of residential schools and advance the process of Canadian reconciliation” (1). With a recent budget announcement of \$47.5 million dollars earmarked for Indigenous youth sport—specifically to “help scale up a highly successful model developed by Right to Play” (Government of Canada 2018, 137)—the Canadian federal government has clearly identified SFD and non-Indigenous SFD organizations as stakeholders in reconciliation. The purpose of this paper is to compare policy developments in the two countries related to Indigenous SFD, using federal government policies and reports. This comparison highlights the often-divergent policy directives set out by the respective governments, which, we argue, may influence

partnership-building among stakeholders involved in Indigenous SFD.

### **“What’s the Problem Represented to be” Approach**

Those who employ the WPR approach to policy analysis critically examine the production of “problems” produced in government policy (Bacchi 1999). Bacchi (2012) identified government legislation and policy as the “obvious starting points for analysis” (22). Yet, she also argued that general government reports are similar to policies in that they both construct/produce problems and, as such, both can be included in a WPR approach. The aim of the WPR approach is to identify the implicit forms of truth that inform prevailing policy discourses, and their effects (Bacchi 2012). In other words, and grounded in Foucault’s (1980) understanding of discourse, through our analysis of government policies and reports, we will identify the discursive practices in sport policy that are both a production and a reproduction of dominant forms of knowledge (Bacchi and Bonham 2014). Markula and Pringle (2006) argued that “knowledge is discursive and discursive practices form knowledge” (53). Discursive practices in policy produce problems—rather than solve them—and as a consequence produce society’s perception of these problems (Bacchi 2012). Bacchi (1999) considered this the “explicit or implicit diagnosis of the ‘problem’” (2). Problems do not decide policies; rather, the effects of discursive practices within policies decide, define, and represent problems.

For marginalized communities, such as those generally targeted in SFD interventions, policies often frame problems as the responsibility of the specific population, with the intended outcome of deflecting responsibility away from government (Giles, Brooks-Cleator, McGuire-Adams, and Darroch 2014). A particular strength of the WPR approach is its focus on examining the “competing constructions of issues” (Bacchi 1999, 5), as the process of defining certain problems necessarily excludes the construction of others. As such, the WPR approach encourages investigation into the issues that fail to be addressed in policies as much as those that are addressed (Bacchi 1999).

### **Methods**

In this study, we use the WPR approach to guide our discourse analysis of Australian and Canadian sport policies related to Indigenous SFD. There is some precedent for this work. For example, Alexander and Coveney (2013) convincingly used Bacchi’s WPR approach to examine and compare Canadian and Australian childhood obesity public health discourses. Thus, we consider Bacchi’s WPR approach suitable for use with discourse analysis.

Phillips and Hardy (2002) described discourse analysis as, at a basic level, the process of examining the “relationship between discourse and reality” (3). Social realities are produced and normalized through the collective power of discourses, which are found and analyzed in bodies of related texts (Phillips and Hardy 2002). The texts in question for this study are Canadian and Australian sport policies and reports. Our task as discourse analysts, guided by Bacchi’s WPR approach, is to identify dominant discourses produced and reproduced within those sport policies and reports.

We identified Canadian and Australian SFD policies through a review of federal databases and websites. General sport reports published by the Australian and Canadian governments were also included, partly because they produce problems in a fashion similar to policies (Bacchi 2012), but also because reports are often used to inform future policy-making. The Sport Information Resource Centre website, the government of Canada's Culture, History and Sport website, and the government of Australia's Clearinghouse for Sport website were the three resources used to identify sport policies and reports. Because of the dearth of available policies and reports specific to SFD, we required a broader review of sport documents. This necessitated further identification within these documents of objectives, goals, or discussions related to Indigenous SFD. The inclusion and exclusion criteria were as follows: We included policies or reports if they discussed Indigenous SFD, if they discussed SFD as part of a national strategy, or if they discussed sport's role in contributing to broad Indigenous development goals (such as the Closing the Gap targets). In line with Schulenkorf's (2017) assertion that SFD is characterized by the use of sport to achieve "wider development outcomes rather [than as] an end in itself" (243), we excluded policies or reports if they focussed exclusively on sport participation and elite athlete development, or if they focussed on a specific population other than Indigenous peoples (e.g., policies on the inclusion of persons with disabilities in sport).

In all, three policies were identified that included discussion on SFD in Canada: The Physical Activity and Sport Act (Government of Canada 2003), Sport Canada's Policy on Aboriginal Peoples' Participation in Sport (Sport Canada 2005), and the Canadian Sport Policy (Sport Canada 2012). Additionally, the Canadian federal government's 2018 budget allocated funding for Indigenous youth SFD, and specifically identified Right to Play as a key funding beneficiary. The federal budget is both a result of and precursor to policy decisions, and thus is an appropriate document to include for the purposes of this research. It is important to note that discussions surrounding sport used as a tool for social development in the four documents are not all conceptualized specifically as SFD; this could certainly be a by-product of the underdevelopment and lack of institutionalization of the SFD field in Canada (Forsyth and Paraschak 2013).

We also identified four Australian government policies and reports. Two of the documents, *Australian Sport: Emerging Challenges, New Directions* (COA 2008) and *The Future of Sport in Australia* (COA 2009), briefly discussed sports' role in Closing the Gap in Indigenous welfare outcomes. Conversely, Indigenous SFD was discussed at much greater length in *Sport—More Than Just a Game* (COA 2013) and *Supporting Healthy Communities Through Sports and Recreation Programs* (Ware and Meredith 2013).

## Results

Sport was used in both Canada's (e.g., Forsyth 2013; Hayhurst and Giles 2013) and Australia's (e.g., Armitage 1995; Tatz 1995) colonial past for a host of reasons related to assimilation and cultural repression. In recent years, sport has been presented in sharp contrast to colonialism and is now instead touted as a tool in processes such as reconciliation and self-determination. We identified discourses in Canadian and Australian contempo-



rary policies that justify the use of SFD in addressing issues—or problems—such as youth suicide, poor educational attainment, and unemployment. Canadian discourses identified SFD as a method of reconciliation to help address these problems, which are often tied to colonialism. A second discourse we identified in Canadian sport policies and reports was the tendency to separate developmental outcomes through sport from other government departments' initiatives in Indigenous development. We identified two discourses in the Australian policies. The first discourse was the widespread acknowledgement produced by the Australian government that sport has a positive and significant impact on Indigenous well-being. The second discourse identified was that Indigenous sport stakeholders found there to be a lack of intergovernmental collaboration, which was positioned as a limitation to development outcomes.

### **Canadian Sport Policies**

The 2018 Canadian federal budget is the most recently published document identified in this research, as well as the Canadian document that most specifically identifies SFD in light of reconciliation. For example, the section title of the budget describing SFD is “Indigenous Sport,” which falls under the broader chapter of “Reconciliation.” The Indigenous Sport section is prefaced with the following: “Indigenous youth are far more likely than their non-Indigenous peers to be in care, not to complete high school, to be unemployed and to suffer from poor health” (137). The budget then identifies Right to Play’s “highly successful model” (137) as the primary funding beneficiary of \$47.5 million for the “use of sport for social development in more than 300 Indigenous communities” (137). Thus, under the chapter of the budget titled “Reconciliation,” the Federal government produced the “problems” justifying the government’s support of SFD—unemployment, poor health, poor education attainment, etc.—and further identified a non-Indigenous, international non-profit organization as the primary agent to address those problems.

Sport Canada’s Policy on Aboriginal Peoples’ Participation in Sport (2005) cited similar “problems” for justifying SFD: “Sport has long been recognized by Aboriginal peoples across Canada as a means to combat some of the negative factors affecting communities” (2). The policy (2005) justifies federal investment in sport “as a tool for social development” (2) for a host of reasons, including saving taxpayer dollars through reduced health care costs, and an enrichment of Canadian values. There was recognition in the policy that Sport Canada should collaborate with Aboriginal Sport Circle, the national body for Aboriginal sport, to identify sport priorities for Aboriginal peoples. According to the policy (2005), youth sport and recreation, as identified by Indigenous peoples, are “one of the primary means for community wellness: as preventative medicine for the social dilemma that Aboriginal youth face” (Aboriginal Sport Circle as cited in Sport Canada 2005, 4). The policy (2005) recognized that Indigenous peoples experience barriers to sport participation such as racism, limited infrastructure capabilities, geographic isolation, and reduced economic opportunity. The policy (2005) cited the need both to recognize these barriers and to work to address them through increased sport participation. A lack of awareness on the part of Indigenous peoples of the health benefits of sport participation was also cited as a barrier to such participation;

this seemingly conflicts with the policy's acknowledgement that Indigenous peoples are the primary proponents of Indigenous sport participation, or, alternatively, suggests that Indigenous peoples participating in sport are unaware of its health benefits.

An absent discussion of broader issues affecting Indigenous community development reflects the Canadian Sport Policy's (2012) reluctance to facilitate interdepartmental collaboration in areas of Aboriginal SFD. Forsyth and Paraschak (2013) highlighted the Canadian Sport Policy's (2012) position that implementation of the policy must "respect the existing roles and responsibilities of the federal and provincial/territorial governments" (15). The policy (2012) cited "jurisdictional realities" (15) for the need to respect governmental and departmental roles. Paradoxically, the authors of the policy (2012) later stated that linkages between federal and provincial/territorial departments are "one of the single most critical indicators of the Policy's success" (16). The policy appears to struggle with promoting intergovernmental, interdepartmental, and cross-stakeholder collaboration while simultaneously stressing that provinces and territories should promote "sport and its values *within their jurisdictions*" (17, emphasis added) while "respecting government roles and responsibilities" (22).

There are numerous stakeholders involved in supporting sport in Canada. The Canadian Sport Policy (2012) identified broad areas of sport for which the varying levels of governments (i.e., local, provincial/territorial, federal) hold or share primary responsibility. Many areas are shared across governments through bilateral agreements. Non-profit organizations, the private sector, and national sport organizations are similarly responsible for supporting and collaborating with partners across sport sectors in Canada. Nevertheless, Sport Canada's Policy on Aboriginal Peoples' Participation in Sport (2005) had previously pointed to the "silo structure of government" (5), which, the authors argued, stood as a barrier to inter-departmental collaboration in areas of health, education, etc. While the Policy on Aboriginal Peoples Participation in Sport (2005) specifically identified Aboriginal Sport Circle as a stakeholder in sport policy in Canada, the Canadian Sport Policy (2012) only identified Aboriginal Affairs as a stakeholder in sport (Aboriginal Affairs is now two Federal departments: Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada; and Indigenous Services Canada). The policy's omission of Aboriginal Sport Circle is particularly striking in view of Canada's two-stream approach to sport development (i.e., Aboriginal System and Mainstream System).

The Physical Activity and Sport Act (Government of Canada 2003) does not fully address the issue of collaboration, merely stating that the federal government may come into partnership with "any province or territory respecting the implementation of the Government of Canada's policy regarding sport" (4).

### **Australian Sport Policies**

The Australian government has adopted the clear position that sport has a role in contributing to Indigenous communities' well-being, particularly as it relates to the Closing the Gap targets. This discourse is fairly consistent throughout sport policies that discuss community

and elite sport development, as well as sport policies that discuss more traditional SFD initiatives. In a report on the future of community and elite sport in Australia, the panel of the report concluded, “The potential for sport to contribute to ‘Closing the Gap’ in Indigenous health and well-being is widely recognised” (COA 2009, 39). An earlier report regarding the direction of sport in Australia stated that the target of Closing the Gap in life expectancy could be achieved with sport through “positive outcomes in areas such as physical wellbeing and mental health, education and social dysfunction” (COA 2008, 8). While these two reports merely included these assertions as part of much broader discussions of the role of sport in Australia, a report authored by the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs (HRSCATSIA) directly discussed the use of sport as a tool for Indigenous peoples’ development (COA 2013). The committee received reports from academics, Indigenous youth sport organizations, and government agencies from across Australia to inform its view that “sport has an indelible impact on Indigenous wellbeing and mentoring and can contribute to achieving Close the Gap targets in health, education and employment” (COA 2013, 2). Finally, in a report produced for the Australian government’s Closing the Gap Clearinghouse, Ware and Meredith (2013) performed a literature review and synthesis and came to similar conclusions as the above reports—sport can improve Indigenous well-being and the health of communities.

The second major discourse relates to the lack of coordination among governments and stakeholders and the subsequent thwarting of positive outcomes through Indigenous sport and SFD (COA 2008; 2009; 2013). This lack of coordination is not exclusive to Indigenous sport; community and elite sport recommendations produced by government and independent reviewers alike have failed to be implemented in all areas of the Australian sport system (COA 2008). For Indigenous sport, part of the issue is the fragmentation of funding across governments and sport stakeholders (COA 2008). The funding and delivery of Indigenous sport often involves “all three tiers of government and a variety of agencies in each sector, including sport and recreation, health, education, infrastructure and Indigenous affairs” (COA 2009, 60). Due to a lack of cooperation and coordination among these sectors, inefficiencies and deficiencies arise, thereby “limiting the positive long-term impact sport can have on Indigenous Australians, particularly youth at risk” (COA 2009, 99). A submission from Vicsport in Australia to the HRSCATSIA summarized this issue:

sport must be combined with other government services in tackling health inequalities in Indigenous communities: To solely focus on sport as a determinant of wellbeing fails to appreciate the vital role that all government departments play in the health of communities including key community services such as education, employment, health, law and order. All relevant government departments should be working towards a whole of government approach in tackling health inequalities prevalent in Indigenous communities. (COA 2013, 30)

A similar submission to the committee by Left-Field Business Solutions took this point further, arguing that “partnerships between the sports industry and service providers of health, education, employment, social wellbeing and justice should be mandatory” (COA

2013, 12–13). The Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure argued that the absence of these partnerships and the lack of communication among governments and stakeholders in the sport sectors are the primary reasons why the “duplication of efforts” exists and positive outcomes through Indigenous sport are limited (COA 2013, 30). As such, the HRSCATSIA “considers that the Ministers for Indigenous Affairs, Sport, Health and Education need to take a more collaborative approach when developing sport programs in their portfolio areas” (COA 2013, 32).

## **Discussion**

The purpose of Bacchi’s (2012) approach to policy analysis is to identify the “problem” that is discursively produced in government policy or reports. In Canada, the documents we examined linked sport to improved outcomes for a myriad of Indigenous issues. The federal government’s 2018 budget linked Indigenous youth’s participation in SFD with building a sense of identity. Indigenous youth identity-building can be considered one part of reconciliation in response to the historical repression of Indigenous cultural identity. The government’s budget advocated for funding Right to Play’s approach to SFD, as opposed to approaches created by and advocated for by an Aboriginal-led organization such as the Aboriginal Sport Circle. Coalter (2010) identified cases in which distinctions between previous colonial iterations of sport used for development are blurred with the current SFD “movement.” Continuity in colonial sport practices is clearly problematic, but particularly in view of the number of SFD programs designed for Indigenous peoples that are, in part, tied to reconciliation (e.g., Rynne 2016). The Canadian government’s promotion of Indigenous youth “identity-building” through Right to Play, as opposed to through an Aboriginal-led organization, is one such example in which reconciliation efforts through SFD are potentially problematic. Other authors have found similar continuity in historical colonial sport practices with contemporary neo- or post-colonial practices (Hayhurst and Giles 2013; Darnell 2007). Had the Canadian Sport Policy (2012) recognized stakeholders beyond the Federal Aboriginal Affairs Department, as the Policy on Aboriginal Peoples’ Participation in Sport did by recognizing the Aboriginal Sport Circle, there would have existed a policy directive to fund or collaborate with Indigenous-led organizations, and thus potentially better facilitate reconciliation.

A notable absence from Canadian sport policies is a discussion of the institutional barriers that have in part contributed to the identified “problems”—low educational attainment, unemployment, etc.—that SFD is intended to address. The absence of a discussion of these institutional barriers within the policies and reports is significant; their absence (Bacchi 1999) necessarily excludes their construction as the “problem.” Rather, the problem that is produced within the Canadian documents is the lack of Indigenous sport participation. Thus, poor educational attainment, for example, can be improved through increased SFD funding, rather than equitable federal education funding for Indigenous youth. This representation and focus on sport excludes the construction of the complex issues affecting the health and lives of Indigenous peoples.

Within the Australian documents, sport is produced in a similar manner; progress in areas of health, education, crime-prevention, and economics are all touted benefits of Indigenous peoples' participation in sport (COA 2008; 2009; 2013; Ware and Meredith 2013). A further similarity between the two countries' sport documents is the support of partnership-building between and within government sectors and non-governmental stakeholders. While Sport Canada's Policy on Aboriginal Peoples' Participation in Sport (2005) did identify the siloed structure of government as a hindrance to the above-mentioned socio-economic benefits of sport participation, the Canadian Sport Policy (2012) did little to influence change in this structure (Forsyth and Paraschak 2013). Within Australian sport documents, however, there is recognition that the current government structure used to deliver SFD and its related proposed socio-economic outcomes is failing (COA 2009; 2013a). Partnerships in the delivery of SFD should be "mandatory" (COA 2013a, 13) between the relevant government sectors responsible for SFD's associated outcomes. It should be noted that the *recognition* of past and current failures related to government sport delivery structures (as noted in the Australian documents) does not necessarily *result* in future redressive policy changes; Australia need only look to the Canadian Sport Policy to recognize that calls for mandatory partnership-building necessarily require a subsequent and appropriate policy response. De Coning and Keim (2014), in their research on sport and development policies in African countries, argued that linkages between sport and development policy with policies in areas such as health and education were "often coincidental or based on working realities" (303). Considering the similar "duplication of efforts" (COA 2013, 30) identified by Australian SFD stakeholders, it appears that the siloed structure of SFD policy is perhaps a global phenomenon, and worthy of further study.

There is also a dearth in both the Canadian and Australian documents of discussions related to SFD's mixed effectiveness (Coalter 2013). Taking Bacchi's (2012) approach under consideration, we must question *why* this discussion is absent. We argue that the absence in policy of a critical discussion of SFD is, in part, due to a willingness on the Canadian and Australian governments' behalf to exploit the positive discourses surrounding SFD outcomes through the uncritical domestic transfer of SFD programming. Producing sport outcomes as a way of reducing suicide and building identity (Government of Canada 2018) certainly provides a more compelling justification for domestic SFD than would a nuanced analysis of government and non-government-delivered SFD programming in Indigenous communities. Discursively producing Indigenous peoples as the primary advocates for SFD, as was done in the Canadian documents, has the effect of shifting responsibility for SFD outcomes to Indigenous communities and provides further justification for domestic SFD. In Australia, the unambiguous association of positive SFD outcomes with seminal policy like Closing the Gap creates a discursive space in which competing evidence is likely to be marginalized. As progress in reaching the Closing the Gap targets continues to idle, the institutional support behind Indigenous SFD will likely remain, due to the strategic discourses employed by governments. These discursive practices have collectively produced Indigenous SFD in Canada and Australia as successful and encompassing (not to mention economically palatable) solutions to deep-rooted and complex problems.

## Conclusion

In the consultations leading up to the development of the Canadian Sport Policy (2012), the Round Table on Sport and Aboriginal Peoples (Sport Canada 2011) recommended that “the CSP [Canadian Sport Policy] be adopted as federal policy that would guide other departments beyond Canadian Heritage” (6). Instead, the policy (2012) emphasized the importance of partnerships among government departments without properly facilitating this collaboration (Forsyth and Paraschak 2013). By failing to identify the Aboriginal Sport Circle or other Indigenous-led sport organizations as key stakeholders for sport in Canada, the Canadian Sport Policy (2012) lends support to the funnelling of SFD dollars to non-Indigenous organizations such as Right to Play. The government partly justified the distribution of such funding under the rubric of reconciliation. Similarly, the Australian government has recognized reconciliation as an important function of SFD programming in Indigenous communities. An examination into claims that reconciliation can be supported through SFD falls beyond the scope of this study; nevertheless, we identified little policy evidence supporting that claim. Both countries’ governments should thus implement the policy directives required to help facilitate reconciliation efforts through SFD, including prioritizing the support of Indigenous-led organizations. In future Canadian and Australian policies that discuss SFD, Indigenous-led organizations should be identified as key stakeholders in the delivery of SFD programming, and, subsequently, in efforts at reconciliation through sport.

Research into the developmental outcomes of Indigenous SFD is incomplete without a discussion of the institutional influences beyond sport sectors. Similarly, sport policy-makers should be cognizant that using sport to promote broad SFD outcomes uniquely in areas such as education, health, employment, and youth justice both reduces and ignores the many issues that remain beyond the developmental reaches of sport. Instead, collaboration across government departments and policy-makers should indeed be further promoted in the development and implementation of Indigenous SFD policies. We identified calls for such collaboration in the Australian documents; however, the Canadian documents we reviewed provide evidence that calls for collaboration across departments and sectors are incomplete without the subsequent appropriate policy response.

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