

**WOMEN AND NONBINARY PEOPLE'S UNDERSTANDINGS OF THEIR SPORTS-
BASED ACTIVISM**

by

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Women and Nonbinary People's Understandings of their Sports-based Activism

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the degree of Master of Arts

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Abstract

The primary objective of this research is to determine how women and nonbinary people perceive their activism in the sporting or greater world. The hope of this research is for others to continue their activism and create a more equitable and inclusive sport setting and society. Women and nonbinary people involved in sport including athletes, board members and sport organization founders were purposefully recruited to participate in a study concerning sports-based activism. A narrative methodology was employed using two semi-structured interviews. In line with narrative methodologies smaller participant range and more personable accounts, three participants were interviewed. Using a critical intersectional lens, this research asked women and nonbinary individuals involved in sport about their activism. I focused on three research questions and pulled out multiple themes from participant narratives. When discussing how women and nonbinary people understand and navigate systems that are often inequitable and discriminatory, themes included that sport spaces are exclusionary, critical perspectives are lacking and there are constraints to change within sport. Regarding how identity relates to social justice, participants spoke on sport categorization, how people seek belonging and how groups who share identities do not necessarily share values. Lastly, relating to activism impact, participants focused on family dynamics and sport politics, how social change is facilitated as well as difficulties and enablers in relation to social change. This research builds on existing literature by including narrative perspectives of sports-based activism, focusing on intersectional identities and including people involved in sport beyond the athlete. Moreover, practical recommendations about how organizations might be more inclusive from the activists are included.

Lay Summary

In this research, I explore the narratives of three Canadian sports-based activists. Using semi-structured interviews and photo-elicitation to prompt storytelling, I asked participants questions regarding sport as an inequitable structure, how their identity affects their activism and their perceived impact on local and sporting communities. These questions garnered discussions surrounding coaching, barriers, categorization, social change and more. These themes were analyzed using an intersectional and critical framework which looks at relations of power and oppression. This research also provides recommendations for sporting organizations to be more inclusive. Findings support the need for ongoing conversations regarding activism and to continue to make sport more equitable for everyone.

Preface

- Hannah Sanvido, with the guidance of Dr. Petherick and Dr. Forde, identified the need to interview sports-based activists in the lower mainland. Hannah Sanvido conducted the six interviews. Dr. Petherick and Dr. Forde provided feedback and guidance throughout the analysis process.
- There have been no publications in relation to this thesis.
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Chapter 1. Introduction

Raven Saunders, an Olympic shot-putter, used her arms to form an “X” over her head while getting her medal to represent the intersection where all identities meet (Calow, 2022). Raven, a Black woman who is part of the LGBTQ2IA+¹ community and an advocate for mental health, used the “X” protest to symbolize the political, social and cultural minoritized roles people are forced into (Calow, 2022). Raven’s activism using an “X” symbolized that no one identity can tell the full story of a person. Instead, overlapping identities that are nuanced and change based on the setting one is in better represent an individual (Hill Collins & Bilge, 2020). This protest, relating to the intersections of identities, is an example of intersectionality that describes how one’s identities must be looked at as interweaving and interdependent. Raven is an activist, someone who uses their platform to purposefully enact change (Calow, 2022; Wilson, 2012). Sport is inequitable for women (Cooky, 2017; Benzing, 2022; DuBose, 2022), queer people (Buzinski, 2013; Denison et al., 2021; Travers, 2006), racialized people (Chin, 2020; Mason, McHugh, Strachan & Boule, 2019; Stronach & Maxwell, 2020), disabled people (Kiuppis, 2018) and more. Sport is built for a particular person and everyone who does not fit into this restrictive category is forced to navigate a system that was not designed for them, oftentimes on their own. One challenge to this status quo is activists fighting for change. This research explores the narratives of sports-based activists whose mission is to make the sporting world more inclusive.

¹ LGBTQ2IA+ is an acronym to describe those who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, two-spirit, asexual and more and sometimes the acronym changes to include more or less identities (Denison, Bevan & Jeanes, 2021).

Research Questions and Theoretical Framework

The purpose of this study was to better understand the intricacies and nuanced experiences of sports-based activists. These narratives can provide guidance for other activists and can provide tangible recommendations for organizations to become more inclusive. My study is guided by the following research questions:

- 1) How do women and nonbinary sports-based activists understand and navigate systems that are often inequitable and discriminatory?
- 2) Based on an intersectional lens, how do activists see their identities in relation to their fight for social justice within sport?
- 3) How do women or nonbinary sports-based activists perceive their impact on sporting and local communities?

This thesis addresses the above research questions through an intersectional (Hill Collins & Bilge, 2020) and critical approach (Sparkes & Smith, 2014). Intersectionality, a term first introduced by Kimberlé Crenshaw, serves as the theoretical framework for this study. Hill Collins and Bilge (2020) described intersectionality as a framework for examining how social inequality is produced and maintained through power dynamics such as racism, sexism, heterosexism as well as how these power dynamics overlap and intersect. Topics such as race, gender, social class, sexuality and disability are discussed by the participants in how these identities affect their experiences and approaches to activism. Allan (2006) contended that the matrix of domination within intersectionality encompasses a specific arrangement of overlapping oppressive systems within a particular historical and social setting and can be organized through domains of power including interpersonal, disciplinary, structural and cultural. Hill Collins (1990) provided a salient example of how one's position in relation to oppression is constantly

shifting. For a Black woman, her race is important when house hunting, her gender when becoming a mother, her social class when applying for credit, her sexual orientation when with their partner and her citizenship status when applying for a job (Hill Collins, 1990). In line with intersectionality, a critical lens is adopted which examines how social constructs such as gender, race, class and other social divisions contribute to societal disadvantages or advantages (Sparkes & Smith, 2014). Speaking to people on the ground who are embedded within sport organizations to understand their interactions with activism and sports exclusionary norms is an important way to work towards inclusivity.

Brief Overview of Prior Research

This thesis highlights how particular people navigate sport and delves into the stories, opinions, experiences, and insights of three activists that fight for social inclusion. This research is needed as it utilizes activists' narratives to explain the inequities within sport and then looks at their insights to identify ways to further inclusion. Sports are inequitable for people who hold particular identities, and sport will continue to remain inequitable until people create change. These changemakers are activists. Many groups of athletes have fought for access and many competitors have used their athletic status to advocate for issues within sport and beyond (Schmidt, 2018). Schmidt (2018) echoed that many well-known athletes use their athletic platform to advocate for social change in sport. An activist is someone who creates intentional action that works towards social change (Calow, 2022; Wilson, 2012). For the purposes of this thesis, the term activist was used to describe anyone advocating for inclusion within sport and participants were able to self-identify as activists rather than meeting specific criteria. This component of self-identifying lessened a barrier to participation as it recognized that activism could look very different including creating organizations, protesting or changing policy. Within

an inequitable sporting system, activists are needed to ensure all people can meaningfully participate in sport.

Gender is an important topic to review when looking at inequitable systems within sport, and understanding the problem of gender inequity within sport and how activists address this problem is important (Harvey, Horne, Safai, Darnell, & Courchesne-O'Neil, 2013). Sobal and Milgrim (2019) contended that women and men develop different interests in sport based on their socialization. They explained that differences in how men and women relate to sport reflect changes in social values, opportunities, resources and media exposure (Sobal & Milgrim, 2019). Moreover, Sobal and Milgrim (2019) revealed that a hierarchical gender power structure relies on dominant perspectives of men, allowing little nuance for feminine, masculine, or other understandings of gender. Gendered sport organization refers to the binary division of men and women into separate categories when competing in sports, a common structure in both recreational and competitive leagues. Girls and women continue to face sport inequities due to systemic gendered sport organization and discriminatory systems, leading to higher dropout rates and less competitive choices (Green, Thurston, Vaage & Moon, 2015). Importantly, Cooky (2017) highlighted the false idea that gender equality in sport has been achieved and any discrepancy in participation is the result of personal choice. This incorrect idea that the only thing stopping gendered sport equity is individual choice is important to challenge, as there are many barriers to sport participation including those that play out through power dynamics. Barriers to participation are not limited to athletes, as women who also hold coaching roles face a multitude of challenges including lack of diverse representation in elite roles, lack of criticality regarding their overlapping identities, women not being adequately promoted and men athletic

directors often recruiting coaches who are men (Benzing, 2022; DuBose, 2022; Melton & Bryant, 2017). Women face additional sporting barriers in comparison to men.

Those who do not fit the gender binary of masculine or feminine also face exclusion within sport. Braumüller, Menzel and Hartmann-Tews (2020) as well as Barras (2021) stated that sport segregation of men and women athletes hinders those who reject or do not fit into this binary. Van Anders et al. (2019) defined gender nonbinary as an individual who exists outside of the man/male/masculine and woman/female/feminine gender duality. Being nonbinary could mean one rejects gender altogether or identifies with multiple genders (Van Anders et al., 2019). Braumüller et al. (2020) suggested that transgender men challenge sport structure less than transgender women as transgender men are accused less of having unfair advantages. Braumüller et al. (2020) also revealed that transgender men challenge the binary less than nonbinary people as they can fit within the gender binary confines of sport. These findings led the authors to conclude that transgender men have fewer prejudices against them within sport and therefore participate more. Barras (2021) explained that even though nonbinary people may not identify in the binary spectrum, many found themselves conforming to masculine or feminine identities in sport settings, even if this was uncomfortable. Given the scholarship surrounding inequity for nonbinary people in sport, it is evident that more research is needed to explore how nonbinary activists navigate sports.

The fight for social justice is a common thread amongst sports-based activists focused on inclusion. Cooky and Antunovic (2020) highlighted sport as a site of social justice that can create change within wider society. Moreover, Calow (2022) explained that “sport sociology research that employs intersectionality is embedded in activism for social justice through its explicit aid in calls to action for inclusive, empowering practice within and beyond sport” (p. 3). Social justice,

a key component of this research as well as intersectionality (Hill Collins & Bilge), plays out through actions of inclusion and empowerment (Calow, 2022). People who fight for social justice are often critical of the status quo (Hill Collins & Bilge, 2020), mirroring how activists fight against dominant and oppressive sporting structures. While the above section highlights how women and nonbinary people are excluded within sport, this research investigates how women and nonbinary people possess multiple identities and how these intersecting identities create a complex picture of power and discrimination (Hill Collins & Bilge).

Participant Overview

For this study, I utilize a narrative methodology to hear the stories of three sports-based activists. In this section, I briefly overview the three participants, foreshadowing some of their main points. The Literature Review in Chapter 2 is based off the narratives of the activists I spoke with and provides context for the discussions that come up in the narratives. To better situate the topics in the Literature Review, the participants are introduced below.

Nat (they,he) is a softball player and board member of the Mabel League, the single largest queer sporting organization in Canada. Nat grew up playing softball and once he moved to Vancouver, he identified that he was hungry for queer athletics and a space he felt like he belonged, which began his involvement in the Mabel League. The Mabel League was created initially for lesbians to exist outside of what cisgender and heterosexual people expect from queer people. Nat shared stories of reducing harm when recognizing they did not have equitable uniform sizes, how members of their team reproduced patriarchal gender norms when discussing masculine versus feminine queer people, their league debated hiring an interpreter for a disabled athlete and explained that sport culture is rooted in capitalism, cisheteronormativism and ableism.

Dom (she/her) is heavily involved in girls and women's soccer as an athlete and board member. Dom works within dominant sporting systems to bring up issues of inequities and apply pressure to those able to make change. She recognizes the many forms of activism and believes activism is only successful if multiple people are collaborating towards a mutual goal in their own unique way. Dom contends that those in power should be creating structural change within sport. Notably, Dom has been using her knowledge of soccer organizations and her resources as a post-secondary instructor for years to prove that children should be allowed on the sidelines of women's soccer games to provide greater equity and to keep mothers engaged in sport. Dom persistently brings up equity issues until they are solved.

Rosalin (she/her) is the founder of the Indigenous Physical Activity and Cultural Circle (IPACC), an organization that focuses on sport and traditional activities to promote health and wellness. Working at IPACC, Rosalin recognized chauvinism as well as lateral violence within the Indigenous community. Before founding this organization, Rosalin was a high-level strength and conditioning football coach who faced challenges when trying to advance into the National Football League (NFL). Rosalin recognized that being a woman and wanting to be a mother often conflicted with their goals of coaching in the NFL, a dream she eventually gave up to start a family and focus on their organization. Rosalin builds the community she wants to see.

Rationale for my Study

The purpose of this study is to hear from sports-based activists regarding how sport is inequitable, how their identity affects their activism and their perceived impact to further the conversation regarding sports-based activism and encourage others to fight for inclusion within sport and beyond. This study was concerned with listening to and telling the stories of sports-based activists, recognizing their multiple identities and interpreting how their narratives fit

within sport culture. Multiple scholars have focused their studies on athlete activism (Cooky & Antunovic, 2020; Kluch, 2023; Martin et al., 2022; McClearen & Fischer, 2021; Schmidt, Frederick, Pegoraro & Spencer, 2019; Wilson, Van Luijk & Boit, 2015; Yan, Pegoraro & Watanabe 2018), however I wanted to add to this field by expanding the conversation past athlete activists. To do this, I conducted semi-structured interviews with three activists who held multiple sporting roles such as athlete, board member, volunteer, coach and founding a sport organization, recognizing that individuals surrounding sport also make important contributions to activism. Most of the examples the activists gave surrounded their secondary role within sport, outside of being an athlete, showing the importance of speaking to people adjacent to athletes. To get a better understanding of each interviewee, I utilized a narrative methodology to honour the intricacy of their experiences, understanding each participant as a complex person who is also embedded within society (Sparkes & Smith, 2014). This methodology provides an addition to the field of sports-based activism in that it recognizes everyone's experience, thoughts and opinions as unique and valuable. To broaden participants narratives, I also incorporated photo elicitation, a technique that multiple researchers have utilized (Allen, 2020; Caron, Schaefer, Andre-Morin, & Wilkonson; Hurworth, Clark, Martin & Thomsen, 2005; Mills, 2017; Mills & Hoerber, 2013). Hapeta, Palmer, Kuroda and Hermansson (2019), after completing their study concerning sport, ethnicity and inclusion, determined that future research should examine participants' lived experiences through an intersectional lens. Precisely, this study combines these two suggestions, detailing and analyzing participant narratives using an intersectional framework. This research relates the participant narratives to power and social change within activist efforts. Furthermore, this thesis provides tangible recommendations for organizations to follow when wanting to become more inclusive. Although suggestions for making sport more

inclusive exist, the addition of focusing on narratives makes it so that everyone's stories and ideas are added to the literature. Overall, this research added to the field by interviewing activists beyond the athlete, utilizing a narrative methodology that incorporated photo elicitation and providing insight into how sport can become more equitable.

Outline of the Thesis

My research builds upon the growing academic and media attention given to athlete led social justice by exploring narratives from Canadian women and nonbinary sports-based activists to understand how they navigate inequitable systems, how their identities influence their activism and their perceived impact on sporting and local communities. This thesis is divided into 6 chapters. In Chapter 2, the Literature Review begins with my theoretical framework. It then focuses on inequities in sport including gender, queerness, coaching and barriers. Next, the Literature Review overviews sports-based activism including how change is measured, belonging within sport, consequences for engaging in activism and activism burnout. Chapter 3, the Methods, presents my philosophical underpinnings, the data collection including a narrative approach, semi-structured interviews and photo elicitation, the sampling framework including participants, the recruitment process and the inclusion criteria as well as data analysis and ethical considerations. Chapter 4, the Participant Profiles, highlights the narratives of three participants, Nat, Dom and Rosalin. Chapter 5, the Results and Discussion, is separated into three sections relating to the three research questions. It begins by examining sport as an inequitable structure, recognizing three subthemes including sport spaces as exclusionary, lack of critical perspectives and constraints to change in sport. Next, this chapter focuses on how identity relates to social justice highlighting categorization, how people seek belonging and how groups that share identities do not necessarily share values. This chapter concludes by referring to the impact of

activism, particularly family dynamics and sport, how social change is facilitated, difficulties in relation to social change and social change enablers. Chapter 6, the Conclusions and Recommendations has sections pertaining to the overview of findings, contributions, reflexivity, recommendations and closing. Chapter 6 is followed by the References and then the Appendices.

Chapter 2. Literature Review

The Literature Review focuses on sport inequities and components of sport activism. To begin, terms are defined to situate activism within sports-based literature. Next, the Literature Review overviews an intersectional and critical theoretical framework. This section acknowledges how people hold multiple identities and discusses how power and privilege are interwoven. The Literature Review then discusses inequities in sport, beginning with analyzing gender, and queerness, and then focusing on what these inequities look like specifically with regard to coaching and barriers. Next, it outlines how social justice activists have historically engaged with sport to affect change. Specifically, it speaks to how change is measured, belonging in sport, consequences for engaging in activism and activism burnout.

This chapter focuses on the significance of activists, social politics, power and sport as an institution; important terms to first define. Wilson (2012) defined an activist as “someone who ‘acts’ on social, political and environmental significance, and [as] someone who acts strategically with others, on the basis of shared values, to create a more just society” (p.103). Calow (2022) described activism as “an intentional action that challenges the status quo and aims towards positive social change and equity” (p.4). Activists work together to create social change. Despite individuals, such as stakeholders or fans criticizing activists in the sporting realm for bringing their struggles to an arena they believe it does not belong to, Darnell et al. (2021) argued that sport is deeply intertwined with politics. Wilson (2012) contended that politics, in a sociological setting, is a process where power is obtained and used in social life. Hill Collins and Bilge (2020) asserted that power includes interpersonal, disciplinary, cultural and structural domains. Sport provides a platform to understand the influences of inequity, activism and power related to social change. Shorkend (2019) reported that "modern sport is precisely the

institutionalization of sport as media, economics and politics converging on a scale never exceeded in history" (p. 63). This indicates that sport consists of a variety of organizations and functions as a social institution. Situating sport as a social institution allows for critical engagement with how certain cultural norms and understanding of society and politics are produced and reproduced and thus become taken-for-granted within sport. Sport activism can show up in two different but related ways. Harvey et al. (2013) revealed that an activist might use sport as a conduit for their broader activism, or challenging aspects of sport might be the focus. Similarly, Davis-Delano and Crosset (2008) suggested that although some sports-related activists aim to change sport, many activists hope to affect change beyond the athletic realm. For example, Tommie Smith and John Carlos, African American sprinters, used the 1968 Olympic athletic stage to raise their fists, donning black gloves, to stand with oppressed Black people worldwide (Nittle, 2021). These two athletes used sport as a stage to affect change in broader society. In terms of activism within sport, the Canadian women's soccer team who won the Tokyo 2020 Olympics, have been fighting against budget cuts for the women's program (Ahmed, 2023). These athletes are using their activism to improve the sporting sphere and make it more equitable for people of any gender. Within my research, I delve into the unique ways that each participant advocates for inclusion within sport, ultimately showing that there are many forms of activism and that each form is needed to further change. To understand how activists narrate their experiences of sport and social change, it is first important to discuss intersectionality and a critical framework, as they are the basis for this project.

Theoretical Framework

My theoretical framework informed the planning and development of interview questions, the analysis of the interviews and the writing of the final paper. For this study, I

adopted a critical lens (Sparkes & Smith, 2014) focused on intersectionality (Hill Collins & Bilge, 2020). A critical lens is a thought process that examines forces such as race, capitalism, gender and class, recognizing that social constructs contribute to societal advantages and disadvantages (Sparkes & Smith, 2014). This frame of thought fits seamlessly with intersectionality. Intersectionality is utilized throughout my work, as I interviewed individuals whose perspectives on sport and activism have been shaped by varied and intersecting forms of identity. Intersectionality is also relevant for my second question on how one's identity may affect their social justice pursuits. Intersectionality recognizes gender, sexuality, disability, ethnicity, social class, nation, religion, and race as relevant social divisions, but more so looks at these categories through power relations including sexism, racism, class exploitation and heterosexism (Hill Collins & Bilge, 2020). Identifying power relations that exist among identity groups is important to critically analyze, in order to understand how power operates in certain settings. No identity is inherently less than, instead, power relations and dominant structures or norms create inequities and oppression. Crenshaw (2013) discussed the problematic nature of looking at discrimination from a single identity lens. Crenshaw (2013) highlighted a legal case where Black women argued that General Motors (GM) was discriminating against and not hiring Black women. At the time of the court case, evidence showed that GM did not hire Black women prior to 1964 and all Black women hired after 1970 lost their jobs due to layoffs. The company, looking through a single identity lens, argued that they were hiring women, albeit white woman, and that they were hiring Black people, albeit Black men. At this time, Black women had no avenue to claim discrimination under sexism or racism as GM was claiming that they hired women as well as Black people (Crenshaw, 2013). The court denied the plaintiffs request for a suit, stating that the "plaintiffs have failed to cite any decisions which have stated that Black

women are a special class to be protected from discrimination” (Crenshaw, 2013, p.141). By not acknowledging the intersectionality of Black women, racism and sexism were able to combine and oppress them. This intersectional example speaks to how a Black woman is unable to separate from their race or gender and how the separation of social divisions is impossible if issues of ethical responsibility and equity are to be addressed.

Hill Collins and Bilge (2020) explained that power is best understood by looking at social divisions that influence each other. Although these identities are referred to as social divisions, a key element of intersectionality is that identities can never actually be separated (Hill Collins & Bilge, 2020). For example, Mann and Krane (2019) looked at lesbian experiences in sport and pointed out that queer identities interact with other factors such as race or class, causing unique athletic experiences. They spoke about identity as multilayered, acknowledging that generalizations should be unpacked and that lesbians can have contradictory experiences (Mann & Krane, 2019). This example points to the necessity of taking up an intersectional lens to examine the diverse and interwoven characteristics of people (Hill Collins and Bilge (2020) as well as looking into narratives from a larger structural angle to expose the social norms that contribute to power and oppression (Sparkes & Smith, 2014). Hill Collins and Bilge (2020) defined intersectionality, a term coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw, as follows:

Intersectionality is a way of understanding and analyzing the complexity in the world, in people, and in human experiences. The events and conditions of social and political life and the self can seldom be understood as shaped by one factor... When it comes to social inequality, people's lives and the organization of power in a given society are better understood as being shaped not by a single axis of social division, be it race or gender or class, but by many axes that work together and influence each other. Intersectionality as

an analytic tool gives people better access to the complexity of the world and of themselves (p.11).

Intersectionality recognizes that no singular aspect of identity can be properly analyzed without looking at the multitude of characteristics that make up an individual. For example, Melton and Bryant (2017) looked at women in sport leadership, providing a specific example within tennis where they compared the treatment of Serena Williams to Maria Sharapova and Roger Federer. Critics called Serena Williams's attire flashy and self-absorbed whereas Sharapova's mini dress remained a neutral topic and Federer's sophisticated white blazer was praised (Melton & Bryant, 2017). Adopting a critical intersectional approach can help to explain the different ways that Federer, Sharapova and Williams were represented and treated within tennis and by sports media. Examining the intersections of race, gender and class, within the social context of tennis, can provide insight into the differential treatment received by the three tennis players in ways that cannot be adequately explained through frameworks that consider race, gender, class or other social categories in isolation.

When adopting intersectionality as a critical framework, six themes arise including inequality, power, relationality, social context, complexity, and social justice (Hill Collins & Bilge, 2020). Hill Collins and Bilge (2020) contended that intersectionality exists due to the prevalence and concern for social inequality, recognizing that multiple factors cause inequality. As mentioned previously, power and intersectionality are interwoven. Instead of solely looking at the dimensions of sex, race, gender, dis/ability and more, intersectionality theory recognizes the systems of power that are present and overlap across these categories (Hill Collins & Bilge, 2020). Next, relationality rejects a binary way of thinking, instead looking through a both/and framework that examines interconnectedness such as race and gender (Hill Collins & Bilge,

2020). Power, for example, is better described in relational terms, between individuals, structures and across certain settings (Hill Collins & Bilge, 2020). This means that while an individual may hold power in one environment, they may face discrimination in another space. Hill Collins and Bilge (2020) reported social context as understanding the intellectual, historical and political landscape, and how these realizations shape the way we think and act. Taking all these points into consideration, complexity describes how all the core themes relate, creating the foundation for intersectionality (Hill Collins & Bilge, 2020). Lastly, those who utilize intersectionality as an analytical tool often employ a social justice framework (Hill Collins & Bilge, 2020). The individuals who take this approach are often critical of the status quo, recognizing that just because there may be an illusion of fairness, many social factors intersect to create an uneven playing ground (Hill Collins & Bilge, 2020). In the case of sport, activists recognize that the sporting world, and the greater community, uphold inequities that need to be addressed. All the main elements of intersectionality, and more importantly their relationship with one another, serve as a framework for critically analyzing social actions and institutions. No individual holds one identity, so it is important to recognize each person as they are and to look at how each aspect of their identities intersect. The tenets of intersectionality support a critical approach by examining how interweaving social categories affect sports-based activists.

Given that power is relational, it shapes how social change both emerges and evolves. Hill Collins and Bilge (2020) contended that power falls into four distinct domains including interpersonal, disciplinary, structural and cultural. Interpersonal power relations are dependent on how people relate to one another and who is disadvantaged or advantaged during social interactions (Hill Collins & Bilge, 2020). Allan (2006) and Hill Collins (1990) identified this domain as influencing everyday life through interactions with others that often go unnoticed. To

create change within this domain, one must first understand the ways that they have been personally victimized, then they must understand how their own actions upholds another's subordination (Allan, 2006; Hill Collins, 1990). The disciplinary domain of power refers to the differential treatment of people in terms of the rules that apply to them and how strictly they are enforced (Hill Collins & Bilge, 2020). Within sport, some players might not even get an opportunity to play due to their gender or age, highlighting how disciplinary power makes options viable to one player and out of reach for another (Hill Collins & Bilge, 2020). Looking at disciplinary power and how it relates to interconnecting identities further emphasizes the importance of understanding intersectionality. Allan (2006) contended that the disciplinary domain of power controls oppression, expressing itself through organizational protocol that works to manage and order human behaviour through surveillance, rationalization and routine. This domain of power allows discrimination to be hidden under organizational policy or the guise of equal treatment or efficiency (Allan, 2006).

Structural power speaks to how power is distributed within an organization (Hill Collins & Bilge, 2020) and how social institutions reproduce subordination of particular groups, relying on segregation to produce injustice (Hill Collins, 1990). Allan (2006) dictated that the structural domain of power is concerned with religion, polity, law and the economy, setting the processes that organize power relations. For example, all Black people were not able to vote until 1965 with the Voting Rights Act, even though they were constitutionally enabled to vote in 1870; the structural domain sets the organization of power and is slow to change as it favors those already in power. Lastly, Hill Collins and Bilge (2020) described cultural power as the facade that a level playing field exists. Cultural power explains how power operates in terms of (re)producing ideas related to the status quo (Hill Collins & Bilge, 2020) and legitimizing oppression (Allan, 2006).

Cultural power links together the other three facets of power through societal values, images, language and ideas (Allan, 2006). Furthermore, the cultural domain of power is taught and reinforced within school, media, religion, family history and community (Allan, 2006; Hill Collins, 1990). All these power dynamics intersect to create a complicated system of who has power, in what situation someone would have power and why and demonstrates the ever-tightening power system that perpetuates inequities. These facets are important to consider when looking at who struggles within sport, what they struggle with, who is at the forefront of activism and who is silenced. In conclusion, both individual and systemic systems of power intertwine to create inequitable circumstances.

Understanding conditions of power is important when engaging with the narratives of sports-based activists, as power, or lack thereof, cause social inequities in sport and are relevant to how sports-based activists are treated or how successful their social justice pursuits are. Power imbalances and intersectionality are relevant to all three research questions as these concepts can account for discriminatory systems, how identity affects social justice and the extent of one's perceived impact. The above section outlined an intersectional (Hill Collins & Bilge, 2020) and critical approach (Sparkes & Smith, 2014) that I utilized for this thesis. It first defines intersectionality and a critical approach. Next, it refers to the six themes of using intersectionality as a critical tool including inequality, power, relationality, social context, complexity, and social justice (Hill Collins & Bilge, 2020). Finally, this section concludes by diving into power, explaining the interpersonal, disciplinary, structural and cultural domains of power.

Inequities in Sport

Sport is not fair. Hill Collins and Bilge (2020) revealed that sports fans would be outraged if a football field was on a hill, giving the advantage to one team while disadvantaging

another, and yet the gendered, classist, and racist structures of sport cause advantages and disadvantages at all levels of sport. A hill is a physical structure where people can deduce a clear disadvantage. In contrast, one's identities are complexly interwoven and fully intertwined, yet they are not always taken into consideration. For example, in a particular context it might seem like gender is the source of oppression when in fact gender, race, social class and sexuality all interplay to create challenging circumstances. In other words, it is difficult to identify intangible facets of one's identity because identities are inseparable. By not recognizing these often-invisible identities, social inequalities can be ignored within sport. Hill Collins and Bilge (2020) contended that cultural power describes how particular discourses and ideologies relating to fairness, equality and competition become dominant and taken-for-granted. Many inequities exist within sport and are relevant to the first research question about how activists navigate inequitable sport spaces. While this section does not cover all inequities, it contains a few key areas of exclusion related to sport that provide context for the narratives of the activists I interviewed. First, I dive into how gender can influence one's sporting experience. Next, I look at queer people to give examples of how they have been treated in sport and how they use sport to their advantage. After, coaching is discussed to highlight how women and mothers encounter discrimination within sport leadership. This section ends by talking about logistical and socio-cultural barriers that might prevent someone from meaningfully engaging with sport and how one's identity plays a role in the barriers they face.

Gender

Understanding gender within sport is important when providing a foundation for the first research question referencing inequitable and discriminatory systems as well as the second research question focused on identity. Gender is important to understand as the binary of men

and women as well as masculinity and femininity affect sport activism. Butler (2013) contended that masculinity and femininity are not inherent, but rather maintained through everyday acts such as repetition of gendered behaviour like wearing makeup for someone who identifies as a woman. Eisend and Rößner (2022) further explained that gender is socially constructed and lies on a continuum with masculine and feminine on opposing ends, while Butler (2004) contended that there is a strong societal desire to maintain the binary as necessary. Butler (2004) critiques the gender binary, explaining that the variations of gender that do not fit into the masculine or feminine binary are still a very much integral part of gender. Particularly, defining gender within the binary of masculine and feminine reinforces the regulatory operation of power that maintains the status quo (Butler, 2004), a byproduct of cultural power (Hill Collins & Bilge, 2022).

Understanding the gender binary, specifically the separation of masculinity and femininity, can provide a better understanding of hegemonic masculinity. Grindstaff and West (2011) asserted that hegemonic masculinity varies with time and place but in Western society prioritizes middle-class, white, strong, in control, assertive veering on aggressive, rational and competitive breadwinners. This statement that sport favours masculinity reveals the cultural dynamics of sport (Hill Collins & Bilge, 2022) identifying that masculine individuals often hold more power within sport spaces. Hegemonic masculinity is a concept that centers on masculine dominance, justifying the subordination of those who do not identify as a man or do not portray stereotypical masculine roles or behaviors (Cooky, 2017). The current hegemonic masculinity model of sport privileges masculinity, risk and dominance (Harvey et al., 2013), which does not translate to an inclusive space for all. Reproducing ideas rooted in hegemonic masculinity, which the current sporting culture does (Cooky, 2017), justifies the continuation of inequities. Sport rooted in hegemonic masculinity (Cooky, 2017), which can be understood through the cultural

domain of power that legitimizes oppression by reproducing the status quo (Allan, 2006; Hill Collins, 1990), can exclude girls and women from sport.

Women, within a system rooted in hegemonic masculinity and masculine dominance, are often undervalued. Gentile, Boca and Giammusso (2018) explained that in line with feminine stereotypes, women are typically viewed as the weaker gender and not suitable for sports compared to men. Cooky (2017) echoed this sentiment, suggesting that using sport to socialize boys and men into hegemonic masculinity poses challenges for girls and women to enter the playing field. Gentile et al. (2018) further explained that so-called masculine sports are categorized through strength, aggressiveness, physical contact and face-to-face opposition whereas feminine sports are understood to be expressive, graceful and focused on aesthetics. These stereotypes rooted in the gender binary negatively affect girls and women, affecting their performance and making it harder for them to be athletes when they are forced to navigate dominant sporting norms (Gentile et al., 2018). This hardship gives reason to focus on the ways that activists address the gendered structures of sport. Although there are some shifts towards greater gender equity in sport, they do not go far enough. A model of sport that prioritizes masculine dominance (Harvey et al., 2013) is damaging and even dangerous to women, leading to pay inequity, lack of women leaders and sexual assault in sport (Cooky, 2017). To create equity in sport, social inequalities must be addressed, something that activists in sport are seeking (Green et al., 2015). The prejudiced structure of sport for girls and women is a reason the research includes the perspectives of women activists in sport.

Within a sport landscape rooted in masculine dominance, a specific example of how gender expectations and stereotypes can play out is through mandated sporting uniforms that have a greater focus on sexuality than performance. Using social policy to dictate the wearing of

a particular uniform that is sexualized is a hidden way that organizations can maintain sexism, providing an example of disciplinary power (Hill Collins, 1990). Recognizing that the domains of power often overlap, inequitable uniform rules also relates to structural power in that the organizations are the ones to dictate policy, in this case reproducing sexist rules that ultimately segregates the women's team (Hill Collins, 1990). DuBose (2022) and Bokak-Lindell, (2021) spoke about the Norwegian Handball team getting fined for wearing shorts instead of the mandated bikini bottoms at a championship, to outline a gendered double standard. Fining the team relates to disciplinary power (Hill Collins & Bilge, 2022) as the women's team was fined for not complying with a sexist rule that did not apply to the men. Particularly, the way that bureaucracy plays out within sporting organizations allows sexist policies to exist, allowing the organization to control a specific population (Hill Collins, 1990). DuBose (2022) spoke about how the German women's gymnastics team wore unitards that extended to their ankles and elbows to take a stand against sexualization in sport. In this case, the German Federation agreed that sports should be a space where women feel comfortable in their clothing, but unfortunately not all organizations are as understanding. During the Rio Olympics of 2016, an androgynous model named Rain Dove wore masculine and feminine athletic wear to exemplify the "exploitation" accompanying women's sporting uniforms (DuBose, 2022). Dove took a stand to address the unequal treatment of gender within sporting wear, something an activist would do. Dove and a menswear designer agreed that athletic wear should be made to improve performance, not sexually exploit athletes (DuBose, 2022). The examples above show that women often deal with the sexualization of sports uniforms, unlike men. Moreover, it speaks to how decisions or rules are made within an organization and how activists can be the ones to come in and challenge them. Ensuring athletes feel comfortable and respected in their uniforms

will further inclusion, an area where activists can step in to challenge these policies that segregate and produce injustice (Hill Collins, 1990). These cases surrounding uniforms show why an activist might fight for functional and appropriate uniforms for all athletes.

Like uniforms, other policies meant to reproduce or legitimize harm, provide examples of the ways in which sport can implicitly exclude. Cooky (2017) explained that because of the success of previous activism and the increased representation of girls and women in sport, people believe there is now equal opportunity for sport participation and that any ongoing gendered disparity in participation is rooted in individual choice. This surface level understanding of gendered sport participation does not consider lack of access or discrimination. Moreover, dismissing disparate impacts by claiming that outcomes are the result of individual decisions, does not consider the complex ways that people may be excluded from sport based on their social location (Hill Collins & Bilge, 2022). Nguyen, Gibbs, Elsey and Luther (2017) spoke about how accommodations for men and women at high-level tennis tournaments are often inequitable, with fathers having access to nursery facilities and mothers often having competitors babysit their children during tournaments. This example illustrates an inequality between how men and women athletes are supported (i.e., sexism), but as an example, it also shows how an intersectional lens provides a more complex understanding of how people are excluded from sport. The lack of nursery facilities does not affect all women the same. Women players who are mothers and who are more financially precarious will be affected. In this example, intersectionality that focuses on gender and social class suggests that mothers in a lower social class might have added difficulties caring for their child while playing tennis. This might cause someone in this situation to eventually drop out of sport, whereas the mother who can afford childcare, or the father who has a nursery facility available, do not need to worry about this.

These gendered policies that overlap with social class reproduce dominant power (Allan, 2006; Hill Collins, 1990).

McGannon, Tatarinic and McMahon (2019), in reference to elite athletes who are mothers, explained that a mother must navigate expected behavior and cultural norms which emphasizes caring for their children over competitively training, leaving them vulnerable to psychological distress and guilt. Tekavc, Wylleman and Cecić Erpič (2020) cited that even for mothers who knew they would continue their high-level athletics after childbirth, some had mixed feelings regarding motherhood because it took time away from their athletic career and they were unsure if they could successfully return to sport. McGannon, McMahon and Gonsalves (2018) found similar results, expressing that there is a delicate balance between being an athlete and being a ‘good’ mother. The authors explained that cultural norms dictate that ‘good’ motherhood focuses on being a caretaker which can constrain physical activity pursuits (McGannon et al., 2018). Tekavc et al. (2020) explained that for some, having a child ends their athletic pursuits, a situation that occurs more so for mothers than fathers. Parenthood having a different outcome for mothers versus fathers in sport relates to intersectionality, particularly cultural power that reproduces the status quo (Hill Collins & Bilge, 2022), in this case mothers needing to navigate a culture where motherhood does not neatly coincide with athletic pursuits. The process of pregnancy as well as childbirth at minimum disrupts a person’s athletic journey (Tekavc et al. 2020). This means that to have a child, it is the child bearer that is forced to take time off. If people who have children are forced to choose between their athletics and their role as a caregiver, it may lead to them dropping out of sport. Understandings of what makes a good mother, and particularly the norm that dictates that good mothers focus on their children and not sport, are rooted in structural and cultural forms of power that get reinforced by media, school

and community (Allan, 2006). Overall, being a girl, women, or someone who does not conform to the traditional values of masculinity will likely face additional barriers within sport.

Queerness

Continuing to look at inequities through an intersectional framework, queer people face additional barriers in the sporting realm. Queer, in this context, is an overarching term describing people who identify on the spectrum of non-heterosexuality including but not limited to lesbian, bisexual, demisexual, pansexual and asexual and/or they reject binary gendered assumptions, identifying as non-cisgender including nonbinary, trans, genderfluid, queer and more (Atkins, 2012). Despite men fitting under the queer umbrella, for the purposes of this research, men are not included. Sporting experiences of lesbians and transgender people are explored through the literature to briefly delve into queer sporting experiences. Denison et al., (2021) proposed that there has been extensive research proving that LGBTQ+ people experience exclusion and discrimination within sport. Historically, women's sport has centered on homonegativism and heteronormativity, focusing on white, middle-class values in settings such as the Olympics, professional sports or post-secondary institutions (Mann & Krane, 2019). The complexities of sexuality, race and social status, including how they weave together, are components of intersectionality (Hill Collins & Bilge, 2020). Mann and Krane (2019) explained that sport culture upholding hegemonic masculinity is more likely to create hostile environments for lesbian athletes. Travers (2006) echoed that sport teaches individuals that it is better to be a boy and that boys must prove they are nothing like girls, so they do not appear gay. In this way, queerness is seen as negative when people are taught to not appear gay.

Brittany Griner is an openly queer basketball athlete that has dealt with homophobia in the sporting world. Mann and Krane (2019) spoke about Griner, a Women's National Basketball

Association (WNBA) athlete who is openly lesbian. Despite Griner signing with Nike and starring in the WNBA's marketing campaigns, Mann and Krane (2019) contended that sport is grounded in heteronormativity and has a contentious relationship with lesbian participants despite the facade of a more inclusive environment. Before Griner was praised for publicly coming out, years earlier, their Baylor University coach told them to hide their sexual identity for fear of hindering the university's recruitment strategy (Buzinski, 2013). Specifically, the Baylor coach thought that people would be less interested in coming to their school if Griner's lesbian identity was condoned (Buzinski, 2013). Even though there was no explicit rule about coming out, there was a custom that forced Griner into hiding their identity (Buzinski, 2013). The disciplinary realm of power is present in this case, as Griner was told not to reveal their sexuality publicly, whereas heterosexual players did not experience these same instructions. In other words, the Baylor coach decided to enforce the rules to varying degrees for different individuals based on their sexuality (Hill Collins & Bilge, 2020). Moreover, cultural power dictates norms within sport (Allan, 2006), in this case reinforcing that sport culture is heterosexual. Mann and Krane (2019) discussed that fans only accept athletes when they adhere to the gender binary. Hill Collins (1990) explained that organizations remain dedicated to controlling their participants, in this case using Griner's sexuality, a signifier of difference, to oppress. Similarly, Melton and Bryant (2017) suggested that exclusion in sport and society occurs when an individual does not subscribe to certain binaries such as gender or sexuality. Looking at literature on queer people in sport shows the inequitable systems these participants face, relating to the first research question on unfair structures. Concerning intersectionality, Melton and Bryant (2017) explained that having marginalized identities increases the likelihood of discrimination, for example a

racialized, lesbian women might face prejudice when trying to navigate masculine-dominated, heterosexist, predominately white sport systems.

Transgender individuals face multiple barriers within sport. Transgender or trans refers to a variety of gender identities where people find that the gender label they were assigned at birth does not adhere to how they feel (Hargie, Mitchell & Somerville, 2017). Travers (2006) cited sport as one of the many institutions filled with tension regarding the acceptance of trans people. Sharrow (2021) detailed many examples of sport's exclusive underpinnings related to trans people including sport specific anti-trans campaigns, groups in support of eligibility standards based on biology, self-identified activist groups fighting for trans exclusion as well as legislation being proposed to hinder trans athletes. The above example of the self-proclaimed activists is an important reminder to stay critical, as these groups claiming to be activists are working towards exclusion. Quinn, a Canadian National World Cup soccer player and openly transgender athlete, said that before publicly coming out as transgender, it took years to deal with the constant transphobia that came their way (Schultz, 2020). The transphobic comments that Quinn faced provide an example of interpersonal power in that these people were upholding the subordination of another, but also cultural power in that Quinn faced derogatory comments from people working to uphold the status quo that only cisgender people should be playing sports (Allan, 2006; Hill Collins, 1990; Hill Collins & Bilge, 2020). Michelle Dumaresq, a Canadian transgender downhill mountain bike racer won the women's championship in 2003 and their second-place competitor wore a t-shirt entitled "100% Pure Woman Champion 2006" (Travers, 2006). This example reiterates the cultural and interpersonal domains of power (Hill Collins & Bilge, 2020). In this example, the second-place finisher adhered to the belief that transgender women are not women, and that losing to a transgender woman represented an act of unfairness

or injustice. Moreover, interpersonal power was at play (Hill Collins & Bilge, 2020) as Dumaresq was oppressed during their interaction with the second-place competitor and this competitor was upholding Dumaresq's subordination through their transphobia. Travers (2006) spoke about a transgender woman named Renée Richards whose sport participation was strongly opposed as many competitors believed they still had a male identity, arguing Richards had a physical advantage due to testosterone and better athletic opportunity due to their male privilege. The above examples of prejudiced and violent acts against transgender and lesbian individuals relates to the first research question regarding inequitable sporting landscapes. One's queerness would also be relevant to the second research question on how identities affect sport activism.

People who do not fit into the gender binary are discriminated against within sport, starting from childhood. Hargie et al. (2017), in their study on the sporting and leisure experiences of transgender people, discussed how physical education (PE) reproduces gendered stereotypes and excludes people who do not adhere to the gender binary. A participant in Hargie et al.'s (2017) study stated that during their transition, they veered away from team sports, instead focusing on individual sports to avoid the fear of gender exposure. Furthermore, for transgender individuals, physical education classes can feel exclusionary due to the discomfort of gendered change rooms (Hargie et al., 2017). In these examples, even though a participant may want to partake in an activity, structural barriers can cause undue worry. This follows an earlier theme that sport participation does not come down to individual choice alone. There are also more targeted and blatant examples of discrimination against transgender athletes. McSpirtt, Shortway, Mattioli and Garcia (2022) talked about how certain places in the United States have policies in schools that completely exclude trans or nonbinary people, forcing them to participate based on their sex assigned at birth. McSpirtt et al. (2022) further discussed that states have

exclusionary trans policies and some have no policies at all. Lacking policy that includes the right for transgender or nonbinary people to participate in sport leads to inequality when individual entities are left to make their own decisions, meaning they could discriminate based on gender. These policies are often put forward based on the assumption that transgender women athletes possess an advantage and excluding trans athletes from sport is necessary to maintain fairness and a level playing field. This is an example of what Hill Collins and Bilge (2020) refer to as the cultural domain of power, maintaining norms that legitimize oppression (Allan, 2006).

While sport can be a negative environment for transgender athletes, sport can also act as protection. In a study related to trans experiences in martial arts, Kavoura, Channon and Kokkonen (2021) revealed a link between sport and political activism. One participant explained that they knew they needed to learn how to fight when they were nearly attacked by fascists during a leftist demonstration (Kavoura et al., 2021). Participants in the study practiced martial arts, a sport they deemed as more gender inclusive, to empower themselves and to be better prepared should fascists approach them (Kavoura et al., 2021). In this example, sport is used as a protective tool against unjust political attacks. Sport can act both as a site of protection as well as a site of discrimination, pointing also to the complexities of intersectionality (Hill Collins & Bilge, 2020). Outside of specific acts of activism, Kavoura et al. (2021) proposed that trans members in the sporting community challenge the normative binary structure of sports, an act of activism in itself.

Coaching

A multitude of authors have examined how women in sport leadership are disadvantaged (Benzing, 2022; DuBose, 2022; Kluch, Y., 2023; McGannon et al., 2018; Melton & Bryant, 2017; Nguyen et al., 2017; Schull & Kihl, 2019). Title IX is an example of an initiative to

provide more gender-equitable sport participation. Title IX, a gender equity law passed in 1972 in the United States, forced educational institutions to create equitable gender programs, including sport, through federal funding (Nguyen et al., 2017). Despite this landmark success for women in sport, an overwhelming number of Title IX complaints relate to sport, revealing that girls and women do not have equitable access or opportunity to sport despite the law. Moreover, since the passage of Title IX, women in coaching positions have actually decreased (Benzing, 2022). Benzing (2022) pointed out that not enough women in sport leadership is not due to a lack of women applying, lack of commitment or lack of qualified coaches, but rather due to a lack of critical perspectives on women's intersecting identities, lack of men coaches championing their coworkers, athletes and parents not doing enough to support women coaches, and organizations not developing adequate policy to engage women coaches. DuBose (2022) and Melton and Bryant (2017) shared further insights, citing men athletic directors' tendency to recruit men coaches, lack of diverse representation in top-level positions, lack of equitable tolerance concerning parenting among men and women, pressure to perform in a masculine-dominated arena, limited responsibility in sporting roles and women not being fairly promoted as a few reasons that women have a difficult time breaching high level coaching positions.

There are many more reasons why women face disadvantages in the realm of coaching. Burton (2015) contended that there is an underrepresentation of women in leadership within all levels of sport. Based on this information, it is important to increase women in sport leadership. Canadian Heritage (2021) stated that the Canadian Government hopes to achieve gender equity within sport by 2035 by putting money towards increasing women in officiating, coaching and leadership positions, showing that women in sport leadership is on the radar. Next, the sport culture must shift. Harvey et al. (2013) outlined how an increase in women leadership and

coaching does not address unequal opportunity if sport itself continues to be rooted in hegemonic masculinity. Both increasing women in leadership roles and working on creating a more inclusive sport culture are important to create more equitable sport spaces. Looking through an intersectional lens, racialized women also have trouble finding coaching positions. Black women face intersecting, complex and multiple oppressions including having a difficult time finding management or coaching positions, prejudiced assumptions that they are players and not coaches, lack of professional development opportunities, facing situations that leave them feeling isolated, underappreciated and intimidated and being silenced through inadequate studies and insufficient representation of their successes which can be attributed to their marginalized gender, social class and race within sport (Carter-Francique, 2020; Rankin-Wright, Hylton and Norman, 2019; Spaaij et al., 2015). Once again, intersectionality denotes overlapping identities that cannot be analyzed on their own (Hill Collins & Bilge, 2020), in this case of Black sportswomen, race, social class and gender. Rankin-Wright et al. (2019) revealed that Black women coaches masked their diversity in a 'gendered white mask' to negotiate layers of oppression and better align themselves with current hegemonic masculine sporting norms that prioritize white men (Grindstaff & West, 2011). Black women coaches facing additional barriers relates to Hill Collins and Bilge's (2022) explanation of interpersonal power which is rooted in social interactions, in that white men have power in coaching spaces, so Black women must align themselves with white men in order to succeed. Furthermore, this example illustrates cultural power surrounding the hegemonic nature of sport which dictates the particular beliefs of what a coach is or how a coach should act, in this case the norm being that coaches are white men (Hill Collins, 1990). Utilizing intersectionality to dissect how racialized women fair within sport leadership is a necessary step to lessen barriers in the future.

Kim Ng's story of being the general manager (GM) of the Miami Marlins serves as an example of how hegemonic masculine ideals relating to leadership continue to limit opportunities. Melton and Bryant (2017) looked at an article which detailed why Ng may not have gotten the GM role earlier in her career. The reasons included her weakness in scouting, despite the article speaking on how proficient she was in scouting, bad timing and lack of fit (Melton and Bryant, 2017). The article went as far to say that the launch of Ng's career began when she started golfing with the other men in Major League Baseball, displaying her competitiveness and playing from the same tees as the men. This example relates to the cultural domain of power (Allan, 2006), which in this case dictates that activities outside of leadership roles influence who ultimately gets the role, showing how the culture of sport leadership is rooted in competitiveness.

When Melton and Bryant (2017) critically investigated Kim Ng's historic rise to becoming a GM, they recognized that Ng's challenges were not adequately represented, that the stories told came almost solely from men and that the narratives reinforced the status quo that for women to succeed they must act like men. Reinforcing dominant norms that allow for oppression is a component of cultural power (Hill Collins & Bilge, 2022; Allan, 2006). The above examples show that Ng had the qualifications to become a GM much sooner, however the dynamics of power slowed her ascent. Melton and Bryant (2017) reported that Ng acknowledged how ethnicity and social class played a role in her career, however the article written about her downplayed her intersectional qualities. Ng, early in their career, worked as an unpaid intern to break into the field, revealing the advantages of being in a higher social class as she received financial support from her parents during this time. In contrast to this privilege, Chin (2020) recognized that Ng was overprepared, doing double the work and not getting as far as others, a

fate that many racialized people face. Chin (2020) explained that being an Asian-American woman doubled her struggle to break into a high-level sport role, facing barriers due to her intersecting identities. Major League Baseball rarely promotes women or racialized people into these positions, reproducing the status quo of power (Chin, 2020). Looking specifically at Kim Ng, a racialized woman (Melton & Bryant, 2017), as well as the previous example of Black women coaches (Grindstaff & West, 2011), intersectionality shows that race causes additional hardships on top of being a woman in sport, particularly when sport norms favour white men (Grindstaff & West, 2011). Thus, intersectionality is important to consider when looking at sporting leadership, and who can become successful.

Being a woman in a sport leadership role is challenging, and being a mother in sport leadership poses additional barriers. I would like to acknowledge that it is not just women who bear children, a reminder that intersectionality is always present, however most of the research on sport related to people who can give birth focuses on mothers. This may speak to power, relative to whose stories get to be told. Schull and Kihl (2019) studied female college athletes and their perceptions regarding gendered coaching. They suggested that when speaking about leadership, it is important to determine who is included and excluded. Within their study, Schull and Kihl (2019) asserted that the lack of narratives surrounding mothers in sport leadership roles is because the experiences of mothers in leadership roles are not valued. Although one participant mentioned motherhood, it was to proclaim that mothers should not conflate their roles as a caretaker and a coach (Schull & Kihl, 2019). In contrast, the same participants praised coaches who were fathers for displaying fatherly traits focused on leadership (Schull & Kihl, 2019). This finding revealed that “motherhood is not perceived as a leadership advantage and does not benefit female coaches the same way that fatherhood advantages male coaches” (Schull

& Kihl, 2019, p.8). This reiterates the importance of intersectionality in helping to think about how people's social location and relative privilege is influenced by intersecting social categories. Clarkson, Cox and Thelwell (2019) compared and contrasted experiences of women head coaches within youth, talent development and elite levels of English football. The authors found that within youth coaching, proving oneself, gender stereotypes and confidence were themes. At the talent development coaching level, women battled work life commitments, marginalization, and lack of upward career mobility. Finally, within high-level women coaching, experiences included sexism and tokenism. These examples show not only the difference between mothers and fathers regarding coaching, but also point to the difference between women and women who are mothers, in that mothers are further disadvantaged within coaching. In conclusion, women, with their various identities of race or motherhood, face additional challenges within sport leadership.

Barriers

Scholars have outlined several logistical and sociocultural barriers that hinder participation in sport (Jenkin, Eime, Westerbeek, O'Sullivan & Van Uffelen, 2017; Somerset & Hoare, 2018). Somerset and Hoare (2018) conducted a systematic review to determine barriers for children participating in sport. Their research indicated a myriad of reasons children might not engage in sport including socio-economic, environmental and interpersonal causes. Barriers identified included cost of participation, fear of humiliation, gender roles, lack of time and being bullied (Somerset & Hoare, 2018). These obstacles can be rooted in intersectionality as cost of participation and lack of time might relate to social class and gender roles. While some barriers were based on the child not wanting to participate, many of the examples related to the exclusion of children who may otherwise be interested. This reiterates that sport participation is not merely

dependent on individual choice. Jenkin et al. (2017) identified interpersonal barriers, including competing priorities and perceived social expectations, policy barriers such as risk management or organizations that focus on youth or elite athletes as well as organization barriers like lack of facility access, lack of club capacity and lack of playing opportunities. Any or all of these barriers could explain why an individual may not participate in sport.

Sport, operating within the context of capitalism, can also cause barriers to inclusion. Kaufman and Wolff (2010) revealed that athletes are driven by market forces and if these forces become too set on profit, human potential and individual experience may not be recognized. This insight speaks to how an individual player may lose their sense of self within the sporting world if they become identified only for how successful they can perform and for how long they perform. Spaaij and Westerbeek (2010) contended that the main concern of sport businesses is to maximize economic capital. Talking about capitalism, Pirgmaier (2020) said that people are structurally disposed to take advantage of each other. Moreover, Pirgmaier (2020) explained that competition, profit seeking and exploitation are normalized and protected under capitalism. Unhealthy competition, profit seeking, nor exploitation rarely leads to a more inclusive space. Furthermore, Gómez, Opazo and Martí (2008) agreed that commercialization of sport produces exploitation. This emphasis on capitalism and commercialization provides social context by explaining the context within which sport takes place (Hill Collins and Bilge, 2020). When sport is for profit, organizations might be hesitant to make changes that may be in opposition to the current sporting culture.

Not all groups of people experience barriers the same way. Overlapping and interesting identities can lead to different sport barriers for different people. Using intersectionality, specifically the interconnectedness of race and social class, to understand potential reasons for

sport inequities, Mason et al. (2019) as well as Stronach and Maxwell (2020) stated that urban Indigenous people face barriers to participation based on financial constraint, equipment costs, lack of access to coaching and difficulty attaining transportation. A participant from Mason et al.'s (2019) study poignantly pointed out that “we don’t have access to a laundry machine to wash our clothes so. . .so just getting to school is a challenge. . .let alone getting out onto a school sport team. . .as playing on one costs you” (p. 7). This youth identified that their family did not have enough money for basic needs so sport was not an option, pointing to a social class barrier. Furthermore, Mason et al. (2019) stated that discrimination and racism is a major obstacle to sport participation for Indigenous youth in Western Canada. Jolly, Cooper and Kluch (2021) also looked at racial identity and revealed that there are nuanced systemic barriers that racialized people face including lack of diversity in sport leadership, making it challenging for underrepresented people to move through predominately white and male spaces. Jolly et al. (2021) explained how damaging the lack of racialized sport leaders is since the support of high-level management is needed to create institutional change. They argued that the active resistance to diversity in leadership can come from gender or colour blindness, othering marginalized populations or the false idea that one can achieve upward mobility based on merit alone (Jolly et al. 2022). Having more racialized coaches in sport leadership positions is a step towards inclusion, a sentiment to the many ways that progress might occur, a topic that is explored in the next section on sports-based activism.

Outside of race, there are many other facets of one’s identity, including queerness, disability and class, that could cause someone to have to navigate additional barriers. Looking at queerness, Barras (2021) revealed that within sport, if a trans or nonbinary individual is not able to present as their desired gender, it creates access challenges for participation within changing

rooms, pools or gyms. At the intersection of another identity, Kiuppis (2018) revealed that typical barriers for disabled people include lack of awareness of able-bodied people on how to meaningfully engage disabled participants, not enough accessible facilities, lack of opportunities, limited information and few resources. Moreover, Nobis and El-Kayed (2019) identified that class matters greatly within sports clubs whereas recreational or school-based sports are more accessible to all social classes. These examples relate to the disciplinary, cultural, and structural domains of power which speak to the ways that systems/structures/institutions are produced, policed, and reproduced in ways that advantage particular groups in particular contexts (Allan, 2006; Hill Collins, 1990). In this case, sport systems create barriers for queer people, disabled people and people from a lower class. These varied examples explain how people who hold different identities face different barriers within sport, making it important to consider each person's unique identities when analyzing power dynamics within sport.

Diving further into how barriers can be affected by one's identity, sometimes discrimination comes from within. People who share identities can also perpetuate harm, extracting barriers to meaningful sport participation. I first look at the ways in which Indigenous people can perpetuate lateral violence. Whyman, Adams, Carter and Jobson (2021) defined lateral violence as the propensity of people from marginalized groups to direct their anger and frustration from their oppression to others within their group. Whyman et al. (2021) contended that lateral violence is present within the Indigenous community in the following ways. First, it can show up as physical violence, gossiping, bullying, social isolation or backstabbing. Second, Whyman et al. (2021) argued that it is normalized and common in Indigenous populations. Lastly, lateral violence has substantial negative effects on the wellbeing and identity of Indigenous people. Langton (2008) suggested that the sexual abuse and assaults by police

officers, colonial officers, general citizens and more resulted not in an uprising against their oppressors, but instead in lateral violence towards their own Indigenous communities. Moreover, Langton (2008) revealed that lateral violence can look like character assassinations, innuendo or verbal abuse against those who are also victims. The lateral violence that occurs within Indigenous communities also plays out within sport, creating spaces that are not inviting.

Similar to Indigenous groups, within the queer community, intergroup conflict also exists. Queer theory has been used to examine gender and sexuality within lesbian-identified sporting spheres. Barriers for trans athletes in these spaces still exist due to some lesbian players' narrow view of the gender binary and the dominant idea that suggests trans women have natural unfair advantages in sport (Kavoura et al., 2021). Just because individuals might identify as queer, it does not mean that they are supportive of all people who have queer identities. Gunn, Hoskin and Blair (2021) spoke about internalized homophobia, or the adoption of other people's homophobic and undesirable views regarding sexual minorities. Tran, Sullivan and Nicholas (2022) did extensive research on microaggressions in the queer community and found these have a negative impact on one's wellbeing, particularly their mental health. Furthermore, their study found that in-group microaggressions from the queer community felt more painful because of feeling betrayed and having heightened expectations of the group (Tran et al. 2022). Particularly, groups that share identities do not always share values.

This portion of the Literature Review detailed the many ways that sport is inequitable. First, I spoke about gender, in particular the ways in which the gender binary is not representative of everyone and how the gender binary causes discrimination towards girls and women. Moreover, the portion on gender spoke about hegemonic masculinity, gender stereotypes, sexist uniforms and motherhood. The next section highlighted queerness, discussing

examples of a homophobic culture within sport, outlining transphobia within sport and how sport can sometimes act as protection for queer people. I then transitioned into what these inequities look like regarding coaching and barriers. I reviewed coaching, citing research that showed how and why women are underrepresented in all levels of sport leadership. Lastly, I reviewed barriers to sport, writing about logistical and sociocultural barriers. Moreover, when discussing barriers, I also included how one's identity could affect the barriers they experience, explaining how people who share the same identity can still perpetuate harm towards each other, giving examples of lateral violence in the Indigenous community and tensions between queer groups. All of these sections gave examples of how sport is not inclusive to all.

Sports-based Activism

As shown above, sport is inequitable. For sport to become more equitable, there must be people willing to create change. These people are activists. Activists are those who work towards social change through deliberate actions (Calow, 2022; Wilson, 2012). First, I explore the many ways in which change is measured and can occur. I recognize that change is not always linear, being mindful to not define success too broadly to avoid performative activism. Moreover, I investigate how resources contribute to success. The second part of this section relates to belonging within sport, detailing how everyone wants to feel included and how sports groups focused on identity can bolster inclusion. Social capital is then examined in relation to the connotation of sports holding positive values. Third, the consequences for engaging in sports-based activism are detailed. This section looks at how facets of one's identity can affect their activism and how disciplinary power affects activists differently. Lastly, activism burnout is highlighted, explaining how challenging it is to be an activist and how people, based on their identities, experience burnout differently. Since there are many reasons an individual might be

excluded from sport, the success of activism, for the purpose of this paper, is rooted in creating a more inclusive environment.

How Change is Measured

This section talks about successes within sports activism, avoiding performative actions, working towards systemic change, how progress is not always linear, how resources bolster success and the ways in which sport is organized to better understand how activism plays out. Success is not easily definable within activism. Wilson et al. (2015) proposed that gaining recognition, influencing public policy, raising awareness, creating community cohesion, promoting dialogue, aiding personal healing, offering belonging to a group or developing new norms might all be indicators of successful efforts towards social change. Even organizing an event when the environment is politically volatile (Wilson et al. 2015) or existing in sport can in certain contexts constitute successful activism (Kavoura et al., 2021). Certain sport organizations or clubs that focus on an identity such as gender, race or sexuality, might also denote successful activism by existing when the system has traditionally tried to exclude them. Darnell, Razack and Joseph (2021) reiterated the point of multiple successes, acknowledging that increasing diversity of those represented and facilitating different groups coming together can be a noble goal. In this way, having marginalized voices within sports-based social justice could denote progress. Harvey et al. (2013) as well as Cooky (2017), in contrast, argued that simply having more representation may not automatically indicate progress if sport itself is still underlined by hegemonic masculinity, tradition, cisheteronormativity, whiteness and so on. Having more representation while potentially not addressing the negative aspects of sport culture speaks to the many ways that change occurs, a topic that is explored later. Jolly et al. (2022) focused on tangible allyship as an avenue towards successful change and provided a framework for allyship

as activism to address barriers for racialized athletes and coaches at both an individual and institutional level. Individually, ally activists should intentionally use their privilege to challenge norms and empower marginalized groups, ensuring their plan is action oriented (Jolly et al. 2022). At an institutional level, an ally can be an activist if they use their institutional power to provide resources to tackle or eliminate systemic barriers (Jolly et al. 2022). As shown above, activism can be successful in multiple ways, however, including multiple avenues of success could also result in performative activism.

By continuing to broaden the definition of success, one must be cautious of outlining accomplishments too broadly or focusing too heavily on performative action. Thimsen (2022) described performative activism as the difference between what was said and what was done. Speaking up in relation to social change is important, but it is important to follow it up with action. It is also necessary to analyze if the action is rooted in social justice. Sharrow (2021) detailed an unlikely alliance between self-proclaimed women sports activists and conservative groups who raised transphobic concerns about trans people playing sport, claiming that trans women are biological men that should not compete on women's sports teams. These so-called activists are a reminder to be critical of how activism and success are measured. Particularly, measuring success by an increased number of activists is not valid if certain activists work towards exclusionary goals. Disciplinary power explains how rules are enforced more strictly, in this case for trans women who do not fit the gender binary whereas cultural power (Hill Collins and Bilge, 2020) is present in that these groups believe that nonbinary and trans folks hold unfair advantages within sport (Kavoura et al., 2021). These self-proclaimed activists and conservative groups are working to maintain the status quo, in opposition to inclusive sporting spaces. In this way, we should be critical of who we label as an activist.

Being critical about what constitutes success is important, just as looking at the ways in which change can occur is essential. Relating to success, change or progress might come at varying levels. Agyemang, Singer and Weems (2020) interviewed high-profile athletes who identified systemic change as important when referring to Colin Kaepernick and the systematic flaws within the criminal justice system in the United States. Fernández, Kirshner and Lewis (2016) talked about how systemic change demands interventions across numerous settings and levels of analysis. Fernández et al. (2016) looked at the criminalization of youth and suggested that the systemic change must look at school districts, local schools, state policies and police departments. In a similar fashion, looking at systemic change within sport might involve local provincial and federal organizations to push change. Systemic change is a helpful way to bring about more inclusion, but it is not the only way to create equitable sport spaces.

Striving for social change is an important part of activism, but it is important to acknowledge that change is not always linear or simple and efforts which may not immediately result in systemic change might help to lay a foundation for future efforts. Jolly et al. (2021) explained how Adidas wrote on social media after the murder of George Floyd, an innocent Black man, about moving forward together. While Jolly et al. (2021) recognized these actions as performative in nature, they contended that these statements do offer increased social awareness, an outlet for allyship, a message for activists to hold the company accountable along with the potential for systemic change. This explains that change is not always straightforward, and even when an organization engages in performative allyship, there can be positive discourse or outcomes surrounding it. Title IX, a gender equity law that required educational establishments to have equitable gender programs (Nguyen et al., 2017), may not have ridded the sporting culture of hegemonic masculinity (Harvey et al., 2013; Cooky, 2017), however having more

women in sport spaces is progress as it creates a path for other women to follow. Changes to address gender inequality may not address the underlying ideologies that (re)produce power imbalances, however they can still denote change. These points explain that it will take multiple stages of change to create true sport equity.

Activists can critically engage with sport, but to facilitate inclusive change, having resources is beneficial. Wilson et al. (2015) concluded that resources can greatly determine success or failure, whether you have more or less respectively. Resources might include website designers, connections with journalists or funding (Wilson et al. 2015). Having more access, whether it be to people, power or money, might allow one to better promote their cause or create policy that is more equitable. Related to inclusion, Kiuppis (2018) revealed that disabled people have less access to resources and Jolly and Chepyator-Thomson (2022) explained that Black athletes acknowledged racial marginalization in that they were not offered adequate resources. Not all groups of people have equal access to resources. Structural power dictates that certain individuals inherently have more resources based on their role in a sporting organization, a disadvantage to those assigned less power (Hill Collins & Bilge, 2020). Looking at how resources influence activism is relevant in answering the third research question pertaining to an activist's perceived impact.

To better understand activism and ways to be successful, it is important to understand the ways in which sport is structured. Activism can be present within dominant sporting structures, or activism can occur within organizations that are created almost in defiance of the mainstream. Gómez et al. (2008) identified mainstream structure as governing bodies who work to regulate and administer sport focusing on competition, rules, development and administration. This line of sport organization is rigid and guided by competition. Structural power is present here as

traditionally, mainstream sports work to maintain cultural norms that focus on sport as a business, athletic performance and dominance which ends in separation (Hill Collins, 1990). In contrast, Gómez et al., (2008) talked about sport entities whose goal is more social, fulfilling a community's needs for physical activity and connection. In this structure, leadership within the organization still holds power, but they may be more able to create policies and curate organizational norms that are rooted in inclusivity. Sport entities have this flexibility as their target is connection, not competition. Both forms of sport exist and each space allows for challenges and successes when fighting for inclusion within them.

Belonging in Sport

One mark of success is activists creating belonging for those who may feel marginalized within sport, in other words creating more inclusion. One way to encourage belonging is to create sport spaces tailored to individuals who have traditionally not been the target audience of sport. In other words, sport categories related to certain identities may foster inclusivity. Walseth (2006) studied 21 young Norwegian Muslim women using life history interviews to assess their level of belonging within sport. Walseth (2006) found that multiple participants felt a sense of belonging within their sport, explaining sport as a site of social support, sport as a place of refuge and sport as an important part of identity confirmation. Mason et al. (2019) identified that inclusion can be found outside of mainstream sporting spaces, finding that Indigenous youth were more assured and comfortable when playing with other Indigenous youth. Being more comfortable playing alongside people who share their identities highlights the success of alternative sporting spaces for marginalized groups. Indigenous sports can cultivate a sense of pride and belonging, as another youth stated that seeing an Indigenous athlete made them realize that they could be one too, empowering them and raising their confidence in school and sports

(Mason et al. 2019). Mason et al. (2019) also explained that participating in all Indigenous sports leagues allowed the youth an opportunity to play without fees. Getting to play sports without a financial burden can be a way to lessen the barrier of social class. Having specific leagues, such as all Indigenous leagues that cater to a particular identity, helps to create belonging.

One's identity can determine where they feel like they belong. Spaaij (2015) spent three years doing ethnographic research among Somali Australian youth at community soccer clubs in Melbourne to better understand how youth negotiate belonging. Spaaij (2015) discussed how certain people can grant belonging, as evidenced by the Somali youth trying to fit into their new country. Aggerholm and Breivik (2021) explained that the building of social solidarity and cultural identity within a subgroup can lead to belonging. Belonging was explained by Aggerholm and Breivik (2021) as multifaceted and included a rootedness in shared social values, expectations, one's environment, obligations and heritage. Research suggested that clubs focused on cultural identity let Aboriginal people (re)connect with their language, stories, culture, community and history (Doyle, Firebrace, Reilly, Crumpen & Rowley, 2013). Henhawk and Norman (2019) contended that Indigenous communities are working to regenerate physical activity practices centered on understandings of relationship. Furthermore, Doyle et al. (2013) suggested that by competing as an Aboriginal club within mainstream society, they work towards demanding recognition, respect and equality for Aboriginal people. This occurs when visiting teams experience Indigenous culture and language through a positive lens (Doyle et al., 2013). Moreover, Doyle et al. (2013) suggested that Indigenous sports teams promote equality, and all who are around them, including players that come from mainstream teams, become involved in a journey that encourages acceptance towards leadership and healing. In this way, Aboriginal clubs playing in mainstream sport is a call for reconciliation (Doyle et al., 2013) when traditionally

they have not been welcomed into mainstream sporting society. Forming and working together in particular identity groups, in the above example Indigenous youth, can lead to further belonging.

Another aspect that fosters belonging is social capital (Walseth, 2008). Zhou and Kaplanidou (2018) relayed that social capital reveals the relationships between people who benefit the community such as civic engagement and social participation. Siisiainen (2003) referenced Pierre Bourdieu's understanding of social capital, explaining that it is associated with social relationships that increases the chances of someone gaining what they want. Social capital is a resource concerned with community networks and collective membership who share particular values (Siisiainen, 2003). Walseth (2008) explained that social capital is rooted in standards of cooperation, trust, mutual support, civic engagement and social connections. Walseth (2008) further made a distinction between bridging social capital and bonding social capital in relation to sport. Bridging social capital in sport organizations refers to the process of getting to know people who may be different from you whereas bonding social capital is defined as activities that work to better the relationships between people who are like you (Walseth, 2008). Sport can create social capital as it contributes to increased trust in sport, society and democracy, reduces crime, challenges negative stereotypes, creates solidarity, belongingness and comradery and upholds social values (Aggerholm & Breivik, 2021; Seippel, 2006; Spaaij & Westerbeek, 2010; Stronach & Maxwell, 2020; Zhou & Kaplanidou, 2018). The idea is that sports are good for participants but also that sports contribute to a positive society. People can achieve the benefits of participating in sport as it offers them capital. There are benefits from being part of an environment that derives advantages from sport participation. When society values sport, or when participants view sport as inherently positive, it could be hard to examine

its downfalls. This is where activists must come in and critically engage with the culture of sport to promote inclusion, however this role does not come without consequences.

Consequences for Engaging in Activism

Keeping in mind an intersectional lens that looks at overlapping identities, gender and race can determine the consequences for speaking out against injustice. Concerning athlete activism, Schmidt et al. (2019) described how sexism, racism and white nationalism are used to discredit activists. Schmidt et al. (2019) looked at Facebook narratives surrounding Megan Rapinoe and Colin Kaepernick following their protests during the playing of the national anthem before their sport. When Colin Kaepernick took a knee during a NFL preseason game in solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement, some Facebook users tied race and sex into the matter, calling Kaepernick a poor excuse of a man or citing that Black men only produce hate (Schmidt et al., 2019). This negative reaction from social media users explains that for Kaepernick, his sex and race are intertwined, and he experienced discrimination surrounding both identities. Cultural power within sport (Hill Collins & Bilge, 2020) played out when individuals on facebook attacked Kaepernick as he was working to upset the current norms of sport (Davis-Delano & Crosset, 2008) that is not interested in racism. Rapinoe, an acclaimed soccer player in the National Women's Soccer League, also took a knee during the national anthem in solidarity with Colin Kaepernick protesting the oppression of Black and racialized people (Schmidt et al., 2019) but was not met with the same attacks on their identity (Davis-Delano & Crosset, 2008). Calow (2022) explained that racism and white supremacy worked together, as even though both athletes were significantly attacked online, the comments Kaepernick was receiving were directed at his intersecting identities of gender and race, whereas Rapinoe's identities were not targeted. Relating to intersectionality, Calow (2022) suggested that

Rapinoe's whiteness gave her more privilege to protest with less consequences than her racialized teammates may have faced. Comparing Rapinoe and Kaepernick's similar protests, Rapinoe still plays soccer, while Kaepernick lost his career and was blacklisted from the NFL. Kaepernick losing his position shows the very real consequences for displaying activism within one's career, something that activists must consider before going public. Calow (2022) explained that Rapinoe was able to protest without any threat to her life, unlike Kaepernick. Looking at the similar protests but differing treatment of each activist is an important reminder to always look at the ways intersectionality is present (Hill Collins & Bilge, 2020), in this case Rapinoe's whiteness shielding her from targeted comments whereas Kaepernick's Blackness became a source of discrimination when people specifically targeted his race.

Despite Rapinoe not garnering the same personal attacks that Kaepernick received, Rapinoe's activism was met with sport policy restrictions. Shortly after Rapinoe took a knee, US soccer created a policy that required players to stand respectfully for the anthem before their games (Madu, 2017). Sport policy plays a key role in how sport is shaped and shows what is important to an organization. Viollet, Scelles and Peng (2023) defined sport policy as a framework of objectives, principles, and intentional or unintentional actions developed by credible agencies aimed at a certain goal. Structural power dictates how organizations provide resources (Hill Collins & Bilge, 2022) and in the case of US soccer's policy, they used their power to prevent athletes from challenging the status quo. In the case of Rapinoe, US soccer thought it was most important that players stand during the anthem, rather than challenging systems that harm Black people. Madu (2017) noted that this policing of activism was counter to US soccer releasing a statement that the national anthem provides an opportunity to reflect on one's liberties. In other words, the organization explained that the anthem is an opportunity to

ponder one's rights while simultaneously and contradictorily dictating how the players can reflect. US soccer released a statement saying the anthem was for reflection, but in practice did not take action to uphold these claims. This policy details disciplinary power (Hill Collins & Bilge, 2020) in that the governing body decided to create an entirely new rule to force Rapinoe not to kneel. Structural power (Hill Collins & Bilge, 2020) in the case of Kaepernick and the lack of sport policy enacted, determined that no changes would be made, however cultural power, and the disdain for people going beyond their athlete role (Hill Collins & Bilge, 2020), worked to maintain the status quo of athletes staying in their lane and not speaking out. Kaepernick was never signed in the NFL again (Schmidt et al., 2019). Despite a lack of policy on the part of the NFL and Kaepernick, sport culture still disadvantaged him.

Within sports, athletes are encouraged to adhere to sporting norms, and if they do not, they are punished. Discipline and differential treatment based on how one associates is a facet of power (Hill Collins & Bilge, 2020). Nguyen et al. (2017) spoke about high-level women golfers being questioned about president Donald Trump when a tournament was hosted on a course owned by the former United States president. Nguyen et al. (2017) contended that speaking up against dominant norms holds a great deal of risk in a career that is fragile and where one must win to make a living. These examples highlight how if an individual attains high-level athletic status, it is often in their best interests to stay politically and socially neutral. If someone advocates for their own marginalized identity, it might be especially hard as Melton and Bryant (2017) revealed that those just starting their sporting careers are quite concerned about how they are perceived at work and will downplay certain characteristics like their sexuality and gender. This fits into intersectionality as one considers their age, gender, sexuality, social class and seniority when determining how to act or what is socially acceptable to say (Hill Collins &

Bilge, 2020). Melton and Bryant (2017) noted that while women with more prestigious or long-term roles feel more comfortable acting how they want without fear of repercussions, they still alter their communication style for different audiences. Hapeta et al. (2019) echoed these findings by reporting that sport leadership experiences for Māori women include multiple barriers and a need to negotiate their presence within a patriarchal and racist sport culture. Athletes may not feel able to speak out due to the power struggles that exist within sport's culture rooted in hegemonic masculinity (Cooky, 2017). These discriminatory practices relate to power dynamics within intersectionality (Hill Collins & Bilge, 2020) and to the first research question on how activists negotiate discriminatory sport settings. Discrimination within sports activism can escalate into unsafe environments for athletes. Women face negative consequences navigating the masculine world of sport, just as being an activist might pose real world threats. Darnell et al. (2021) showed that many forms of protest are not safe for women and can end in abuse or violence. This dangerous environment may be a reason that individuals do not publicly identify as activists as it goes against normative sporting values.

Activism Burnout

Relating to the third research question on the impact that activists believe they have on their community, stress, fatigue and burnout are important topics. Multiple researchers indicated that activism is difficult to sustain (Gorski, 2019a; Kluch, 2023; Martin et al., 2022). Kluch (2023) and Martin et al. (2022) relayed that being an activist takes a significant amount of emotional labour. Kluch (2023) studied collegiate athlete activists and determined that this exhaustion is partially caused by activism being all consuming and something they can never take a break from. If an activist burns out, they will not be able to effectively impact the community. Gorski (2019a) defined activist burnout as the long-term stress associated with

activism. It can also be thought of as extinguishing a fire, leaving the activist to become cynical, ineffective and exhausted (Gorski, 2019a). If an activist is burnt out, they are unable to work towards sport inclusion.

Not all people experience the burden of activism similarly. Gorski (2019a) further differentiated marginalized identity activists, such as racial justice activists of colour, versus privileged identity activists, such as white activists, and described how each group experienced burnout differently based on their identities. Specifically, almost all the interviewed activists of colour explained that they felt burnout due to racism endured during their activism, something that white activists did not experience (Gorski, 2019a). Gorski (2019a) identified three main reasons for activist burnout. First, activists carry the burden of knowing that social inequity exists and yet systemic change moves painstakingly slow. Second, the environment can cause stress including infighting between activists or the assumption that one will dedicate their life to the cause. Third, burnout might be caused by retaliation, including sexual assault, police brutality, online harassment or murder. Gorski (2019a) identified that activists of colour experience much harsher retaliation than white individuals. This differential treatment of activists based on race shows how disciplinary power enforces stricter rules or consequences on certain groups (Hill Collins & Bilge, 2020), in this case activists of colour facing more oppressive conditions. The disparity between activists in relation to their race also exemplifies the structural inequalities and racism that racialized activists face in addition to the struggles that all activists face. Martin et al. (2022) identified a whole range of challenges when interviewing white athletes who self-identified as racial justice activists. They identified bare minimum support, perceived lack of impact, fear of harm and difficulty speaking out against the normative culture as challenges to engaging in activism (Martin et al. 2022). Stress, commitment and

sustained effort is required of all activists looking to create change, however, racialized activists must endure all of this along with racism and racist systems that work in opposition to them.

This section of the Literature Review spoke about sports-based activism. Sport has always been a site where power dynamics play out and therefore is a space where inequity is studied and fought for. How activism has traditionally unfolded in sport, as well as the factors that influence sport activism should be discussed using a critical intersectional lens, taking the dynamics of power and other social influences into account. First, I detailed how change is measured, recognizing that progress is not always straightforward and there are many ways to achieve the same goal. Next, belonging in sport was reviewed to explain that everyone wants to belong and that people do better when they find belonging. After, this section relayed the consequences for engaging in sports-based activism through an intersectional lens. This portion of the thesis ended talking about activism burnout, explaining how being an activist is hard, but is even harder for those who are racialized.

The Literature Review detailed literature surrounding inequities in sport as well as sports-based activism. Moreover, it looked at these concepts through an intersectional and critical framework to understand how one's overlapping identities can affect one's sporting and activist experiences. Inequities in sport were looked at through gender and queerness, as well as coaching and barriers, considering identity in these sections. The second half of the Literature Review honed in on sports-based activism, detailing how change is measured, belonging in sport, consequences for engaging in activism as well as activism burnout. To better represent a variety of knowledge, I incorporated nonacademic sources into the literature review to provide nuanced experiences and thoughts, recognizing that it is not just those embedded in Western education that have valuable points to make. Additionally, I have attempted to include pieces in the

literature review from diverse women and queer people to represent the individuals I interviewed better. There is ample room to research how marginalized people exist within activism, considering the outside forces that affect their ability to create social change.

Chapter 3. Methods

This section overviews the methods for this paper. First, I discuss the philosophical underpinnings that guided my research. This section provides transparency into my worldview when conducting and analyzing research. Next, I explain how I collected the data through a narrative approach using semi-structured interviews and photo elicitation. Following this, I detail the sampling framework including participants, inclusion criteria and the recruitment process. Then, I explain why narrative thematic analysis is the best choice to analyze the collected data. Lastly, I end this section by walking through the ethical considerations. Douglas and Jamieson (2006) noted that scholars have long advocated for the growth of empirical and theoretical frameworks when it comes to sport and gender, including seeking a wider variety of research participants. For example, race scholarship has in the past centered on Black men while gender and sexuality examines the experiences of white woman (Douglas & Jamieson, 2006). In my research, I utilize an intersectional lens to move beyond the limitations within literature that focuses purely on distinct social categories like race, gender, sexuality, ability and class, instead highlighting how identities overlap and are complex (Hill Collins & Bilge, 2020).

Philosophical Underpinnings

Acknowledging how a researcher views and experiences the world is important, as these assumptions and ways of knowing influence the final research product. Sparkes and Smith (2014) discussed the various viewpoints researchers might take to inform their research. Each researcher interprets data subjectively, relying on their own experiences, knowledge and worldviews to analyze the data (Sparkes & Smith, 2014). For my research, I adopt a critical approach. In this framework, the researcher shows how narratives are shaped by ideologies and power (Sparkes & Smith, 2014). Critical research also encompasses other discourses including

race, queer theory, feminism and more (Sparkes & Smith, 2014). Sparkes and Smith (2014) declared that critical research seeks to provide knowledge regarding prevailing social structures that are seen as oppressive. The ways in which society creates inequalities is connected to how power plays out within intersectionality, with those who hold more power having to tackle less oppressive circumstances in certain situations (Hill Collins & Bilge, 2020). Research that uses intersectional as well as critical frameworks has the potential to expose and challenge social inequalities (Calow; 2022; Silk, 2005). Specific to my research, inequities exist within sport and the greater society, and the activists I interviewed are the ones criticizing existing conditions to make sport and broader society more equitable. This research examines how interviewees narrate their experience in an inequitable sporting system, how their identity plays a role in their activism, and the perceived impact of their fight for social justice.

Breaking down my worldview further, ontology and epistemology are relevant. Philosophical positions are influenced by the underlying assumptions about how one views reality, a perspective referred to as ontology (Tamminen & Poucher, 2020). Additionally, ontology relates to one's beliefs about what exists and how it exists (Tamminen & Poucher, 2020). With this research, I take a skeptical relativist approach. A skeptical relativist believes that no one reality exists and that knowledge is ever changing and representative of presiding cultural norms (Tamminen & Poucher, 2020). In sport, the norm used to be that women were too fragile to participate (Gregg and Gregg, 2017). While these ideas still permeate sport culture, there is greater access for women within sport, showing that ideas shift over time. Epistemology is another component of a worldview. Epistemology is the assumptions one has about the underpinnings of knowledge and how it is produced (Tamminen & Poucher, 2020). Additionally, it refers to how knowledge is established and explains why we know what we know (Tamminen

& Poucher, 2020). Within epistemology, I take a critical subjectivist approach. This view asserts that knowledge and meaning are a product of social interactions that depend on the context (Tamminen & Poucher, 2020). A critical subjectivist view rejects the notion of one truth. Instead, they recognize that claims of knowledge and truth serve to maintain power and authority over certain marginalized groups (Tamminen & Poucher, 2020). Critical subjectivist epistemology is in line with a critical, skeptical relativist and intersectional position as they all relate to social structures, power and oppression.

Data Collection

This data collection section highlights how I conducted semi-structured interviews. Specifically, it outlines a narrative approach, semi-structured interviews and how I incorporated photo elicitation. These methods were purposefully chosen to inform my research question best and are in line with my philosophical worldviews as narrative interviews seek to understand individual experiences through the wider context of power and social norms.

Narrative Approach

I conducted two semi-structured interviews with three individuals using narrative methodology. Spector-Mersel (2010) spoke about how narrative methodologies focus on stories. Likewise, Connelly and Clandinin (2006) stated that most narrative study begins with the telling of a story to the researcher. Connelly and Clandinin (2006) further breakdown narrative inquiry, beginning with temporality, which refers to the idea that stories are a particular account in time, and do not denote the entire situation. Temporality ties in with my skeptical relativist view that rejects one truth (Tamminen & Poucher, 2020). Connelly and Clandinin (2006) also discussed the specific physical boundaries where the stories take place as significant. These factors of narrative inquiry show how stories are everchanging, especially over varying contexts and time.

Naturally, humans tell stories which are formed through social and cultural relationships (Sparkes & Smith, 2014). Smith and Sparkes (2012) revealed that we are inviting stories from participants when we are asking athletes about key moments in their athletic journey. Sporting environments can also allow participants to root their narratives within a space (Smith & Sparkes, 2012). For the three participants, many of their stories focused on a particular league or organization that they are involved in. Smith and Sparkes (2012) cited many reasons why a narrative methodology is gaining popularity among sport and physical culture researchers such as the ability to reveal complexities in one's subjective world or being able to address the experiential dynamics of sport involvement in ways that ask different questions and provides varying insights opposed to other approaches. Ortiz-Wythe, Warren and King (2022) explained how personal storytelling is vital, especially within activist identity formation. Moreover, stories allow people to create identities out of their various and changing roles, social statuses and life experiences, detailing narratives as a creative and not concrete process (Ortiz-Wythe et al., 2022). Sports media can alter athlete stories to suit their specific storyline, regardless of how the athlete perceives their own experiences (Darnell et al., 2021), which is why a narrative approach could allow an interviewee to share their stories the way they prefer. Sparkes and Smith (2014) relayed that the self is constructed through narratives and that our lives are a series of stories.

Within narrative interviews, the researcher plays an important role. Stories are created for the researcher and can be influenced by interviewees understanding of the research, their reasoning for participating and their interactions with the researcher (Sparkes & Smith, 2014; Spector Mersel, 2010). This means that a participant may tell a modified version of the story depending on the setting, who they are speaking to or a variety of other factors. As a reflexive piece, one of my participants was a past instructor of mine, which could have affected how much

they revealed to me. Smith and Sparkes (2016) disclosed that interviewing is not transparent, as conversations constitute experience rather than objectively showing the actual experience. This is an important reason in taking a critical approach, to take what the participant is saying and then review their comments, observations and experiences through dominant cultural norms and power structures.

Sparkes and Smith (2014) contended that a critical approach scrutinizes why society causes inequalities and oppression. Analyzing narratives can reveal to the researcher what is said, how it is said, why it is said, what is felt and what is experienced (Sparkes & Smith, 2014). Having this comprehensive picture gives the researcher much to consider when analyzing interviews. This methodology is beneficial in honouring the complexity of a life, explaining emotional, contextual and temporal quality of relationships and life, instigating social or personal change and recognizing the interviewee as a complex individual who has agency but is also a part of broader society (Sparkes & Smith, 2014). For example, Calow (2022) revealed that Black women in the US experience racism and sexism, however their individual and collective experiences are not the same. This is why the narrative method is so important to this research, to understand everyone's unique experiences. Calow (2022) identified that listening to individuals with multiple identities in sport is an integral step within sport sociological research for social justice. This is important as sport activism research can paint a more extensive and nuanced picture if people who have all kinds of lived experiences are meaningfully engaged in research. Grey (2022) talked about how narrative inquiry can align with social justice practices, including using direct quotes to strengthen a participant's voice or the ability of stories to mobilize change. The benefits of narrative inquiry align with my philosophical underpinnings of a critical approach and the purpose of the research in understanding how societal factors influence sport

activism. I use a narrative approach specifically to gain a better understanding of how activists navigate discriminatory sport systems, how intersecting identities influence activism and how activists perceive their impact on local and sporting communities.

To facilitate storytelling, I used several strategies. For two of my participants, I had prior connections and things in common. At the beginning of these interviews, I spoke about these pieces, reminiscing mainly about where I received my degree from, a connection between myself and two participants. In doing so, my hope was to re-establish rapport. For the third participant, I inquired about their involvement with their main sporting organization, allowing them to speak about something that they enjoy and have positive experiences with. I had an interview guide, but I attempted to actively listen to participants and ask questions based on interesting points they brought up. This minimal structure style is in line with a narrative approach of telling stories, where the researcher and the participant have conversations and participants share their experiences. Mills (2017) stated that the value of narrative inquiry is when the participant explores connections and interactions between their experience and organizations or cultures. Within my research, interviewees talked frequently about their activism in relation to their sporting organization and the overall sporting culture. I deliberately tried to let the interviewee guide the conversation and found I did this most successfully during the first round of interviews. In the first interview, I got through a few questions from my interview guide but mainly let the participant's responses guide my next question. During the second interview, while I still asked follow-up questions and gave them a space to elaborate on past stories, I felt myself gravitating more towards the interview guide as this was the last time I would speak to them and I wanted to ensure I got their thoughts pertaining to my main research questions. Mills (2017) spoke about how interviewing a small numbers of participants multiple times "allows stories to breathe" (p.

53). Interviewing three people twice allowed each of them time to reflect on their stories and determine what else they wanted to share.

Another way I focused on narrative inquiry was to introduce participants through their profiles. The intention of the profiles is to introduce participants using their own stories. I aimed to make sure each person was represented in isolation before moving into the results and discussion section where I jumped back and forth between participants. Grey (2022) employed the same structure, calling these sections participant stories and narrating portions of their journey. Grey (2022) spoke about this section as co-composed narratives regarding the participant's experiences. Clandinin, Murphy, Huber and Orr (2010) talked about interim research texts which have parallel concepts to the participant profiles I created. These interim texts are used within narrative inquiry to engage in relational work that compares initial participant stories with the final critically analyzed findings (Clandinin et al. 2010). Interim texts are the starting point in developing narrative threads and patterns (Clandinin et al. 2010). The participant profiles in my paper are intentionally situated before the results section to preliminarily dive into their stories before they are later analyzed in the results and discussion section. Clandinin et al. (2010) explained that interim research texts were made so participants could recognize who they were and to adequately portray each participants' complexities. In the same way, I wrote the participant profiles to overview each participant's narrative and the intricacies within them. All my participants wanted to use their name, as opposed to pseudonyms, in the study. To me, this shows that the participants wanted to share their stories, thoughts and opinions, wanting these to be tracked back to them and that they were proud that they contributed to a study rooted in sports-based activism.

Semi-Structured Interviews

For this project, I conducted semi-structured interviews through UBC's secure online video platform Zoom. Semi-structured interviews are where the researcher prepares open-ended interview questions about a relatively focused point while allowing for flexibility (Smith & Sparkes, 2016). In this interview structure, I asked probing questions outside of the interview guide regarding particularly rich or surprising points. Due to this, each interview looked different as the participant guided the discussion. For me, it was important to capture the specific and individualized stories of the participants and to work towards a better understanding of everyone's perspective. Interviewing participants one-on-one provided them with an added assurance of anonymity (Currie & Kelly, 2012). In one-on-one interviews, participants may be more likely to reveal intimate details of their life in a setting where only they and the researcher are present. Appendix A details the interview guide. These questions are rooted in literature surrounding sport activism and take into consideration a critical intersectional approach to better understand how women and nonbinary people negotiate inequitable systems, how activists see their identities relating to their activism and their perceived impact on sporting and local communities.

To allow participants and myself to reflect on the first interview and to delve deeper into their stories, I interviewed each participant twice. The first round of interviews focused on what the participants wanted to say regarding their sport activism, leaving ample space for storytelling. During the second interview, I focused my questions on the dynamics of sport activism including the broader context of social justice in the current sport climate, their experiences while being a sports activist, their successes and their challenges. The questions in the second interview were informed by what I heard in the first interview and in some cases I created additional questions related to their experiences. Participants told me that they reflected

on the first interview and thought of new information they wanted to add. A second interview also provided further opportunity for relationship and rapport building with the participants, allowing them to better open up after the shared experience of the first interview. Ensuring the participants are satisfied with their portrayal is an important part of narrative inquiry. Through the consent form, I inquired if the participants wanted to review transcript sections that may be used in the final paper, however none of the participants did this.

While online interviews may be more convenient, or logistically the only option if distance or pandemics are factors, this method does have limitations. Online spaces cannot capture subtle body language or other social cues noticeable in person (Smith & Sparkes, 2016). Likewise, Thorpe and Olive (2016) talked about being behind a screen, the positioning of the researcher and ethical concerns as limitations to online interviewing. In contrast, Smith and Sparkes (2016) noted that online spaces are good to utilize when dealing with personal narratives, as participants may be more open to revealing personal, emotional or sensitive information. Being in an online space might allow a participant to share more freely. There were a few times in the interviews where the interviewees were visibly frustrated or sad and the online space may have allowed for a bit more vulnerability. Despite a few limitations, there are many strengths to utilizing online methods of interviewing.

I, as the researcher, played a significant part in the study. Ellis and Berger (2003) articulated that the interview, once seen as a rigid separation of research and participant, is now viewed as an active relationship occurring within the confines of emotions, power and interpersonal relationships. Ellis and Berger (2003) emphasized that the collaborative actions of the interviewer and interviewee should therefore be examined and spoken about. A researcher plays a large role in the interview, and writing only about the participant's response may not

produce the entire picture. When writing my proposal, I had thought I would weave my research questions into the final paper to increase the transparency of the interview process for the reader, however oftentimes the participant provided their own context. To keep this a collaborative project, I have woven my reflections throughout this thesis and particularly within the reflexivity section to explain how I, as the researcher, affected the final paper.

Photo Elicitation

An additional way I worked to capture narratives was to use photos. Hurworth et al., (2005) described embedding photographs into interviews as photo elicitation. The purpose of photo elicitation is to use the tangible photograph to provoke a response from the participant (Hurworth et al., 2005). I asked participants to bring in a photograph representing their activism that they were subsequently asked about during the interviews. Participants were able to reminisce about the photos and it also acted as an open-ended exercise where the interviewees were free to provide whatever picture related to activism they wanted. In this way, the stories that participants provided came directly from something that felt relevant, not from my research questions. Like other research that used photo elicitation (see Allen, 2020; Caron, Schaefer, Andre-Morin, & Wilkonson; Mills, 2017), this approach allowed for a fuller and more complex engagement with participant narratives. In practice, two of the three participants brought up their picture without me prompting, engaging with the visual in a fluid manner as part of their interview answers. Additionally, one participant sent me four pictures that represented their sporting and activism journey. To me, this indicated that they were eager to share their story through their pictures. Mills and Hoerber (2013), after using photo-elicitation techniques, asserted that there are a multitude of benefits to photo elicitation including increased rapport, addressing power imbalances, increased comfort level of participants, allowing a more comprehensive

understanding of the given research topic and providing an alternative method for participants to express their thoughts. Furthermore, photographs can add richness and detail to conversations as participants tend to reveal stories surrounding the pictures that they choose (Mills & Hoerber, 2013). This visual component fits harmoniously with the semi-structured narrative method to further draw out participant stories.

Sampling Framework

This section is an overview of my sampling framework. First, I discuss the participants and how many people I interviewed. Second, I explain my inclusion criteria to reveal who was invited to participate. Lastly, this section concludes by detailing my recruitment process and how I found participants.

Participants

Sample sizes in research vary widely. In the qualitative field, sample sizes range depending on the purpose of the research and the orientation of the researchers (Bryman, 2015). Bryman (2015) explained that sample sizes could vary from 1 to 150 participants. In my study, since narrative methodology seeks in depth conversations, I interviewed three individuals, Nat, Dom and Rosalin.

Recruitment Process

To recruit diverse participants, I employed purposive criterion-based sampling (Bryman, 2015). Purposive sampling is not random; instead, it seeks to find people who have direct knowledge related to the research question (Bryman, 2015). Furthermore, this method targets specific individuals who meet the inclusion criteria. Since the selection process is not random, purposive sampling does not allow the researcher to generalize the findings to a wider population (Bryman, 2015). My study is not about generalization, it is about personal and specific stories of

women and nonbinary individuals, to understand their narratives and present possibilities for others to be more successful in their social justice pursuits as well as create more equitable sporting spaces. My recruitment began with searching for Canadian sport organizations that centered on diversity. I focused mainly on organizations surrounding race, ability, queerness, and gender. My thought process was that organizations focused on diversity likely had to advocate at some point and that recruiting participants in this way would lead to a variety of voices. I also reached out to a few people I knew who I felt could help me gather participants. Moreover, I sent the recruitment email to multiple people who I knew were sports-based activists in hopes they might be interested. A copy of the email I sent out to organizations can be found in Appendix B and a copy of the email I sent out to participants is in Appendix C. Six people reached out to express their interest and three people ended up participating. One participant had multiple connections and ended up helping me recruit a second participant. This is called snowball sampling and occurs when the researcher interviews a small group of people and then asks the interviewees to suggest other people to interview (Bryman, 2015). A copy of the recruitment poster can be found in Appendix D. These strategies allowed me to find three sports-based activists.

Inclusion Criteria

The below criteria was used to determine who would be accepted into the study. All participants are at least 18 years of age, have demonstrated some form of activism related to inclusion, are a women or nonbinary person and are embedded within or surrounding sport. The study was open to anyone that resided in Canada, however in practice, the three people I interviewed all lived in the lower mainland. Wilson (2012) defined an activist as someone who takes political, social or environmental action to create a more just society. I intentionally left the

term activist broad when recruiting participants. Anyone who is actively seeking social change, involved in creating equity in sport or is a leader within an organization that fights for social justice was welcomed. People partaking in social justice work within sport may not identify as activists, which is why the scope of participant activism was left slightly ambiguous. One participant asked me what I meant by an activist and was satisfied that I left the definition broad. They explained that many people shy away from calling themselves activists even though they fight for social justice. Moreover, the participant said that activists work in many ways and was excited that this study did not put confines around the type of activism outside of inclusion. To add to current research focused mainly on athletes, anyone connected to the sporting world including managers, coaches, trainers and referees were invited to participate. To recruit individuals with varied identities to better represent the sports-based activism landscape, I reached out to organizations that fought for inclusion within sport including organizations focused on LGBTQ2IA+ people, gender, race and disability.

Data Analysis

I collected the data for this thesis over the course of two months. After the recruitment phase in August of 2023, interested individuals began reaching out and I scheduled my first interview for September. All the interviews took place between September and October of 2023. I interviewed each participant twice and each interview lasted approximately one hour. I used thematic narrative analysis to interpret the data collected during the semi-structured interviews (Ross & Green, 2011). Ross and Green (2011) stated that thematic narrative analysis allows words and phrases that express thoughts, emotions, ideas and experiences to arise. Within narrative research, the focus when analyzing data is on how the story is told, to whom and for what purpose rather than simply what is said (Riessman, 2008). Sparkes and Smith (2014)

echoed this definition, claiming that narrative analysis is looked at in terms of the broader environment that shapes the content and structure of the narrative. Within narrative inquiry, the way the researcher collects the data is also important. Spector-Mersel (2010) voiced that the researcher's presence influences the participant, since the story is told through an interaction between the two parties. In the interviews I worked on identifying points that sounded interesting to me to further inquire about. In this way, I affected the outcome as I asked each participant different interview questions, a component of narrative inquiry. Within my research, I responded to participants' responses, sometimes agreeing with what they had to say or offering my own similar experiences. Doing so allowed the interview to flow naturally, but myself contributing to the conversation also impacted the research. In narrative inquiry, the researcher gets to decide which points to include in the final paper, affecting the conclusions (Spector-Mersel, 2010). I went through the process of finding themes and quotes of relevance to the topic and interest to myself, meaning that I used the participant stories to curate a particular version of events. In this mode of analysis, readers learn about the interviewee's stories in relation to power and subordination (Riessman, 2008). Thematic narrative analysis is in line with the critical intersectional approach I took during the research process as both concepts look at intersecting identities and power structures.

Analyzing the data and producing a final output was a fluid process. To better illustrate the complexities of the interviews, I tried to incorporate longer quotes within the discussion so as not to alter the original meaning (Riessman, 2008). Narrative analysis attempts to keep each specific case as whole as possible (Riessman, 2008), which is why I created participant profiles that details the story of each participant. Moreover, within the Results and Discussion section, I tried to focus on one individual per paragraph, ensuring their ideas relating to the theme

remained as whole as possible. This approach is suitable for researchers who are working with narratives for their first time, which is relevant to my work and this project (Riessman, 2008). Mills (2017) revealed that narrative analysis involves reflections and review by the researcher during the process of moving from the interview sets to the final representation of data. By reflecting and rewriting drafts of this paper, I have changed and reworded the themes multiple times to curate categories I found to be important.

Smith and Sparkes (2012) contended that analyzing narrative data occurs through multiple steps when figuring out the ‘what’ of a narrative. Below, these steps are detailed along with how my research followed the process. Step one is immersion, where the researcher continually wades through the data looking for patterns. For the first interview I transcribed the data from the video recording. For subsequent interviews, I used Zoom transcription to create an initial transcription and then I watched each interview again and filled in the gaps to ensure the transcription was accurate. During the transcription period, I immersed myself in the data by reading it over multiple times. Step two in analyzing narrative data is to write initial thoughts including moments that stand out or contradictions that arise. After transcription was complete, I went through all the interviews and highlighted sections that spoke to me. While reading the transcripts and highlighting sections, I also came up with potential themes for the paper, in other words writing my initial thoughts (Smith & Sparkes, 2012). Step three is selecting a foci or specific themes that are woven throughout multiple stories. When reading the transcripts, I wrote a brief description of what the quote represented under each highlighted section. Once this was done for all three participants, I noticed similarities and started writing down common themes. This was my first attempt at developing various foci of the story (Smith & Sparkes, 2012). Once a theme was determined, I categorized quotes that fit within it. I developed themes that had

quotes to support each claim. Once I selected the themes, I went back to the quotes that I had not yet placed into a theme and found a spot for all of them. I modified the themes multiple times under the guidance of my supervisors until eventually placing three to four subthemes under each research question.

Step four in the process of analyzing narrative data is interpreting themes by thinking about what is going on, what are the assumptions, what are the implications and what conditions brought the theme to the forefront. To engage with the chosen themes, I pulled on literature to understand the culture and context of the participants' stories. Some of the participants' thoughts and understandings aligned with current literature, and some points contrasted. Step five of narrative data analysis is to track within a narrative, looking at crossover between themes, marginal themes and the first and last iteration of the theme. I planned out my own narrative of the data by developing an outline, sectioned into three categories that represented my research questions with three to four subsections of the coded themes beneath. Creating these sections allowed me to track where each theme was situated within the narrative (Smith & Sparkes, 2012). Moreover, creating participant profiles ensured that the narratives were highlighted before connecting participant stories to the greater themes and literature. Finally, step six is to continue writing, keeping in mind what is at stake for the participants, how they will be represented and what might be the ethical repercussions. I attempted to share the stories of the participants beyond their profiles, situating their narratives within research, sport culture as well as the perspective of other interviewees. These steps and all my examples highlight how I employed narrative data analysis.

In the Results and Discussion chapter, I review the themes I identified from the three narratives. This discussion is laid out by highlighting each research question and presenting

themes relating to them. A component of narrative analysis is that narratives are staged for the audience (Spector-Mersel, 2010) and I, as the researcher, chose what is noteworthy enough to include. Braun and Clarke (2019) relayed that themes do not passively emerge, but rather are interpretive stories about the findings. Furthermore, Braun and Clarke (2019) explained that themes are curated using a researcher's theoretical assumptions, the data, as well as the analytic skills and resources of the analyzer. If different people interpreted this data, different themes might be identified. Sparkes and Smith (2014) determined that a researcher relies on their worldview, experiences and past knowledge to subjectively analyze the data. In this way, I had a direct hand in influencing the direction of this paper including outlining how the stories were expressed.

Ethical Considerations

A big ethical concern I had was to minimize harm and protect the image of the participants (Mills, 2017). To reduce harm, I tried to be acutely aware of how I interviewed a diverse group of people while I have very few marginalized identities. I hold various forms of privilege including being a postsecondary educated, heterosexual, middle class, cisgender, able-bodied, white woman. I attempted to devise questions that were respectful and left them open-ended so participants could choose how much they wanted to share. Moreover, when participants shared experiences that were painful, I did my best to be empathetic while realizing that I may have not had these experiences myself. I recognize that I am interviewing participants for my own personal gain but also hope to balance this by valuing what the participants offered as well as providing tangible recommendations to organizations so that moving forward there are less stories of exclusion. Recruiting participants was also an ethical concern. I wanted to balance being welcoming of those who are interested while also recognizing that having only white, able-

bodied, cisgender, middle class, postsecondary educated, heterosexual women like me would not provide a nuanced description of activism in sport. In my recruitment posters, I included a line that encouraged racialized, disabled and LGBTQ2IA+ people to participate. In the end, I interviewed the three people who expressed interest in my study and they all came with unique identities. Each participant was given the opportunity to review transcript sections that may be used in the final paper. In the end, no participant reviewed their transcripts or their narratives included in this study.

Practically, De Andrade (2000) explained that ethics includes confidentiality, informed consent, privacy and monitoring the pros and cons of participation. Consent forms were signed prior to the online interviews and before each interview I verbally asked each participant if they were comfortable being recorded before proceeding. Within these consent forms, participants were given the option to provide a pseudonym, however all of them wanted to be identified. In the consent form and at the end of the interview, it was indicated that I am available should they want to omit anything at any time up until I submit the final paper. In addition, when I interviewed the participants online, I described my space, showed the notebook I used for note taking and I was the only one in the room at the time of the interview. A copy of the consent form can be reviewed in Appendix E.

Chapter 4. Participant Profiles

Within this section I introduce the three participants who I interviewed for this study. I focus on their story as they told it and wait to analyze their points further within the Results and Discussion section. Each interviewee brought unique and also shared experiences to the questions regarding sports-based activism. I knew that I wanted to weave their stories together, but I also wanted to acknowledge each individual and their story. This is where the participant profiles came in. Riessman (2008) explained that narrative analysis looks to portray complete stories whenever possible, which is why I dedicate a section to each individual. This way, their story gets told more thoroughly, in line with narrative inquiry.

Nat (they/he)

Nat is a spark. They ignite change wherever they go. He is a powerful voice within an activist organization that makes bold decisions for the betterment of its members. Nat explains that they experienced privilege living as a white woman, and now as a nonbinary, trans person is acutely aware of understanding everyone's perspectives and fighting against oppression. They are aware of the social spaces that they occupy, aware that groups are not homogenous and aware enough to check in about assumptions they may be making. Nat is unwavering in the hope that sport culture can and should be improved.

Nat spoke incredibly fondly of the Mabel League where he is a current participant and member of the executive board. The softball league was created in 1990 as a league exclusively for lesbians and is the largest single-sport queer league in Canada. Nat sees progress towards equity within the Mabel League and shares a responsibility with its members to continue to fight for social justice. Nat views the Mabel League as an activist league because he contended that anyone who "enters is subject to our desire for progress and our desire for and commitment to

anti oppression.” As part of the interview process, Nat sent me a picture of themselves and the executive team of Mabel at the past year’s final tournament. When Nat spoke about the photo, I could see a sense of pride in explaining the roots of an organization that had come to mean so much to them. The picture included a player from Mabel Leagues very first season. At the tournament, Nat explained that this member gave a speech on the realities of non-white queer people seeking a home within sport. The player spoke about their personal experience between the 70’s and 90’s and the challenges of being a racialized lesbian. Nat explained that having particular identities comes with “social consequences, [and] violence.” In the 90’s and earlier, Nat detailed that lesbians were meant to fit into a mold of being butch. To oppose this stereotype, the Mabel League was formed to create a place where that wasn't what they talked about, that wasn't why they were together. They were together to create their own society, their own place where they could have an identity that wasn't created by, or informed by heteronormativity, or what cis people, what gender conforming people, were placing on them (Nat).

Nat grew up as a high-level softball athlete, experiencing sport culture and living with a nagging fear that their sport participation could end if they no longer fit into the dominant sporting culture. Nat revealed they were

living, I think, in a bit of fear that if someone were to know who I knew myself to be, that I would lose a bit of that, or that I would no longer feel at home in the sport that meant so much to me. That I would have to find something else. When you spend a decade building that, it feels like a really daunting possibility to have to do it all again.

Nat explained that being a trans person, he did not have control over people’s thoughts and assumptions about their life. Experiencing differential treatment made him extra cautious to treat

everyone as unique, reconfiguring their communication style and being more mindful about respecting boundaries others set. Nat identified that this shift in awareness has led to creating dynamics that are safer for others.

Nat explained how their identity informed their sports activism. Nat explained that being a member of the queer community gets him involved in thinking about other's experiences. Nat was able to reflect on how they felt living as a woman and recognized how easy they had it and the privilege that white women carry. This reflective piece, along with Mabel League's activist underpinnings, has propelled Nat to influence those in the Mabel League to bring ideas of anti-oppression out into the world. Nat explains "it's not just a Mabel League thing, you don't just have to put on your Mabel League hat and say, okay, I'm responsible, for my actions and I'm here to support my peers." Nat hopes that Mabel league members take the same care and responsibility they have in the league out into the world. Nat's goal of activism and anti-oppression work being internalized and carried out by the league members shows their awareness to not only create inclusive environments where they are, but to expand this work farther out into the community.

Dom (she/her)

Dom is a whisperer. She does not like to be in the spotlight, but whenever she is afforded a seat at the table, she does not back down. She continuously and relentlessly brings up issues regarding equity in sport until change is made. Dom aims to be a voice that the community members will recognize, a voice that whispers "surely we can do better than that." Dom relayed that she "has the ability to spot inequities far faster than [she] has the ability to address them," which is a testament to her hyper-vigilance regarding equity, diversity and inclusion and the systems slow moving ways. Dom recognizes various forms of activism and she chooses to work

behind the scenes to make change at the organizational level because she feels that meaningful change can be made through influencing organizational culture and policy. She fears that if organizations face public backlash, then instead of making the appropriate changes, they will direct their attention to salvaging their public image. This suggestion relates to the various stages of progress within organizations. Very strategically, Dom uses her position within organizations to create change. Dom appreciates a broad definition of the term activists, contending that if it is defined too narrowly, then some people who want to help may be intimidated.

Much of Dom's activism takes place within soccer. Dom has always loved soccer, playing at high levels throughout her childhood and now into adulthood. Dom relayed an experience she had playing a soccer game where she had to drive about an hour to get to a field. She recalled carpooling with friends, grabbing dinner and having conversations about activism, politics and gossip. Dom cites this memory as a great space to spend time with friends or to network, arguing that they would not find this same community if they only participated in physical activity that is done in isolation. For years, she has incorporated her passion for social justice within the sport she loves. Dom is heavily involved in women's soccer in the lower mainland, connected to North Shore Girls Soccer Club (NSGSC) since 2010. NSGSC is a 'single gender' club, which Dom admits is problematic in its phrasing but was borne out of a legitimate reaction to youth soccer and sport organizations by the North Shore parenting community. Dom reveals that whenever organizations "are for 'everyone', they center boys' experiences. It is really boys and then we added girls." Dom has been involved in the organization for over 9 years, being on the board as well as coordinating programs.

As part of the interview process, to allow participants to speak outside of the confines of my interview questions and to share a story they wanted to share, I requested pictures from each

participant. Dom sent me a series of screenshots of forms and emails from their child's school. Dom mentioned that she frequently highlights exclusive messaging on these forms before sending them back to school, in hopes of making the documents more inclusive. Two of the three screenshots related to pronouns. The first screenshot showed a 'get to know you' page for their child and Dom noted that it did not ask what the child's pronouns were. The second screenshot, on that same form asked, 'when your child is upset, what do you do to calm him/her down.' Dom highlighted the phrase him/her and indicated that it should read as "their" to be more inclusive. These small changes indicate inclusivity, something that Dom pushes for. The third screenshot provided was a message indicating that 'the registration information will come to the mother's email address.'" Dom rightfully spoke about the sexism within this email, questioning why it would only go to the mother, negating fathers or anyone else in the child's life that this information might be helpful to. These examples fit within Dom's activism strategy of whispering. She doesn't get in front of crowds to talk about it, but in the little day to day events, she works to ensure everything is inclusive, teaching others how simple actions can make more people feel welcome. Doing this kind of work, being an unrelenting whisper in the ears of those who have power in an organization, leads to change, a change that brings us closer to a more equitable sport environment.

Rosalin (she/her)

Rosalin is a warrior. An Indigenous woman, who took her frustration in the coaching world and put that energy into a nonprofit organization that builds community. Rosalin is a sport administrator, volunteer, coordinator and coach who focuses on bringing people together. Someone who, despite having the qualifications, was not able to break into the highest level of sport conditioning. She is an Indigenous woman who left a thriving career to focus on her family,

exposing a lack of acceptance for mothers to be in coaching positions. Despite having “probably thousands of people that have hated” her, she fought her way into masculine dominated arenas and excelled as a strength and conditioning coach. Rosalin identified that she fights “for Indigenous communities. We don't have enough people fighting to make change, to improve access and increase capacity building across Canada. The poverty is real, you know and it's really hard to make change.” Rosalin further explained that,

breaking against conformity is where you have to be a warrior, there are systems put around you, or in place that [are] trying to make you not own your personality or own your spirit, and I think that's where it's really important to be connected to that warrior.

Rosalin faces racism and chauvinism often, but she never makes herself feel small. Instead, Rosalin stated that people making discriminatory remarks are narrow-minded.

Rosalin has a multifaceted and impressive career within sport. She played professional softball in Japan and competed in powerlifting in Canada. After these endeavors, Rosalin moved to Florida where she completed her doctorate and was a strength and conditioning coach at University of Central Florida as well as a football coach at another school. Rosalin shone as a strength and conditioning coach in British Columbia as the National Strength and Conditioning Association Director and in Florida as the State Director. Rosalin focused on empowering athletes to become champions. She revealed that,

when I walked on the field and commanded up to 110 football players my main message was "I am strength." I told players I don't care if you hate me for [being] a woman, First Nations, or Canadian. All I am on this field right now is strength. I really tapped my

warrior within and loved being a strength and conditioning coach and trained as an athlete so I could do my job effectively.

Despite proving her capabilities, ultimately, she hit a crossroads. Rosalin identified a glass ceiling within the NFL, not being able to get a coaching position and often being the only woman in high-level coaching spaces. Hitting a plateau, Rosalin began to identify that this role presented other challenges. Rosalin saw a direct correlation between how much time she spent with an athlete and their success, and putting in so many hours per week, she knew she would not have time to be a mother. Rosalin revealed that as “a First Nation woman I know that the Indian Residential school destroyed families and for me to be a loving and present mom and to break the cycle of broken families, I had to leave my career.” Moreover, Rosalin also recognized that being away on weekends would not be conducive to a healthy relationship or family. Rosalin believed that being a man in the coaching field was way easier and was at times envious of how society allowed fathers to make incredibly demanding positions work. After coming to the end of her coaching career, her priorities changed. Not only did Rosalin focus on her family, but she also founded the Indigenous Physical Activity and Cultural Circle (IPACC).

IPACC is a grassroots organization working to create a sense of belonging for those interested in sport and traditional activities. Founded in 2011, Rosalin stated that she wanted to create “a space for people to belong. I found that was really hard in Canada, when I came back, that there wasn't really a place for people to self-identify [as Indigenous] who were involved in sports, recreation, fitness, and traditional activities.” Originally, the organization was focused on sports, however during the conferences that IPACC hosted, Rosalin saw very competitive athletes demonstrating Indigenous cultural performances including powwow and hoop dancers. This made Rosalin realize that it was important to have ties to culture and tradition if they were

going to motivate people in the community. Rosalin worked to create a sense of belonging in her organization, a trait she adopted from her former sports coaches.

When asked to be sent a picture representing their sports-based activism, Rosalin sent four. First, Rosalin sent a black and white picture of a baseball team, explaining that she was a strength and conditioning coach at the University of Arizona. The second picture is of Rosalin and three American football players on the field, depicting her time coaching with the University of Central Florida. The third picture shows Rosalin's athleticism. It shows her and her softball teammates from Japan lined up bowing to their opponents on the softball diamond. The final picture shows Rosalin holding a barbell with green weights in a gym setting. Going above and beyond the one photo requested, Rosalin was able to share pivotal moments in her journey as an athlete, coach and activist. She was able to explain her story through pictures, using them to talk more about her life. Rosalin took inspiration from her coaches to ensure the athletes she worked with knew she believed in them. Rosalin said that because her coaches believed in her, she thrived, and in turn she made sure all the athletes she coached knew she believed in them. Rosalin revealed that "sports is a form of family and being active together brings awareness and wellness." Rosalin's sporting legacy lives on through her family, her organization, through the many barriers she broke for women and Indigenous people to thrive within sport settings and through her warrior spirit.

Chapter 5. Results and Discussion

In this section, I review the themes that I identified from the narratives based on my research questions. First, I focus on inequitable systems within sport. Included in this topic are the following themes, sport spaces are exclusive, critical perspectives around sport are lacking, and constraints in sport including finances and lack of consultation practices. Second, I look at how activists see identity related to activism using an intersectional lens. Relating to this research question, the participants spoke about wanting to break free of stereotypes and find a sense of belonging. Breaking free of stereotypes and belonging both connect with categorization. In one way, categorization can lead to stereotypes if people hold assumptions about a particular group. In contrast, categorization can be positive if a space is created for a particular group with the intention of building a welcoming community. Related to identity, two participants spoke about how just because people identify within the same group, that does not mean that they share the same values. Third, I wondered about the impact that activists think they make on their local and sporting community as well how activism plays out. The themes surrounding this research question included family dynamics and sport policy, how social change is facilitated either inside or outside of existing dominant structures, as well as the difficulties and enablers of social change.

Sport as an Inequitable Structure

Injustices, biases and discrimination happen at all levels of sport, within all sports and surrounding everyone involved. The first research question I looked at was how interviewees understand and navigate systems that are often inequitable and discriminatory. Through asking participants about these inequitable systems, I identified multiple themes. Sport spaces are exclusive in that they are made for particular groups. While sporting environments, including

people and culture, may superficially welcome everyone, they have been carefully curated for specific individuals. Moreover, sport is inequitable due to the many barriers that are put in front of certain people. Finances were discussed as a main hurdle in all the narratives, both in the total cost of participation but also in relation to the hidden fees associated with participation and how funds are divided within organizations. Participants not being meaningfully consulted, even when an organization or people in power are seeking to make the space more equitable, was also mentioned through the interviewee's narratives.

Sport Spaces as Exclusionary

The people, cultures and structures of sport may hinder meaningful and equitable access based on ability, gender, race, class, and other social categories. This paragraph is rooted in Dom's narrative that highlighted different ways that sport is built to be exclusive. Dom explained that "sport is for able body, peak, human specimens, and everybody else is an afterthought." Bokar-Lindell (2021) revealed that the Olympics prioritize able-bodied, white men, furthering Dom's point of exclusion. Dom suggested that those outside of the "ideal performer" are forced to carve out whatever spaces are left over, using significantly less resources. She detailed that "everyone else is an afterthought, like ohh, isn't it nice that they are here...rather than building the model that from the start includes these people." Not rebuilding a sporting model that focuses on inclusion is an example of structural power which dictates that social institutions reproduce subordination (Hill Collins, 1990) and these systems are slow to enact social change because the current structure benefits those in power (Allan, 2006). Kiuppis (2018) echoed that inclusion in sport must be greater than simply granting access. Kiuppis (2018) argued that in the context of disability, the goal should be to give people individual choice rather than forcing them to play a certain sport in a specific setting. In another instance, Dom spoke about the binary gender divide

within sports. She contended that technically those who are transgender, nonbinary, or cisgender not presenting in a stereotypically gendered way, are “permitted to play,” but that at every turn, these people are made to feel like “this place is not built for you.” Sport spaces are not designed for everyone and scholars have highlighted this important point by acknowledging that in academic, athletic, and everyday spaces, stories of queerness are often dismissed especially when queer people are racialized (Calow, 2022; McClearen & Fischer, 2021). At another point in the interview, Dom explained how when sports are labelled as for ‘everyone,’ they center boys’ experiences. Cooky (2017) highlighted that many people falsely believe that people have equal access to sport and the reason that girls do not participate is due to choice, which negates dominant norms such as sport being made for boys. Sport was not created with all in mind and has historically been used to affirm the dominance of men and the weakness of women (Cooky, 2017; Gentile et al., 2018). Additionally, Mann and Krane (2019) discussed how sport environments are exclusive by explaining that sport focuses on white, middle-class values including homonegativism and heterosexuality. The above examples that detail sport injustices for certain groups of people, for examples those who are disabled, queer or women, explain the importance of looking at this topic through an intersectional viewpoint while recognizing complexity and nuance. Sport catering to a very specific type of individual does not allow all people to thrive.

Rosalin recalled her own personal experiences when talking about inequities in sport. She spoke about her hopes of getting into the NFL and being stunted by the proverbial glass ceiling. This observation aligns with research that has shown that women in sport leadership are underrepresented (Burton, 2015; Spaaij et al., 2015; Melton & Bryant, 2017; Benzing, 2022; DuBose, 2022). Rosalin explained a story of attending the NFL combine as a coach for an

offensive lineman, an event where NFL scouts evaluate top draft-eligible players. Before entering the event, Rosalin was stopped at the door and told that she was in the wrong place. Rosalin getting stopped pertains to disciplinary power (Hill Collins & Bilge, 2022) since the rules at the gate were being more strictly enforced with her despite her having all the relevant entry documents, revealing how the organization of power was working to control people (Rosalin), relevant to difference (being a woman) (Hill Collins, 1990). That day, Rosalin broke barriers as the first woman coach at the combine. Once inside, the feelings of exclusivity continued, seeing approximately 60 men in a small lecture hall. Rosalin spoke about not feeling welcomed as a woman or as a racialized person. In this example, outwardly the NFL would not say they do not accept women, but by inviting 60 men and one woman, their statement is that their roles are for men. Given the underrepresentation of women within the space, the social context, a component of intersectionality (Hill Collins & Bilge, 2022), indicated that the space was not designed for her. Rosalin also revealed a time that her husband spoke about the challenges of being a white man. Rosalin expressed her frustration regarding her husband's comment, explaining that

if I was a white man, I would've been an NFL football coach. If I was a white man, I would be faculty. If I was a white man, I would have had this, that, and so on...It's a reality right, I've been limited because of my gender, and I've been limited because of my race, and not because of my hard work, not because of my intelligence.

Rosalin felt like her identity as an Indigenous woman hindered her ability to achieve her goals of both being in the NFL and being a faculty member. Rosalin's story is not surprising, as researchers have illustrated how Indigenous youth, athletes, and sport leaders have faced racism and discrimination in sport (Doyle et al. 2013; Hapeta et al., 2019; Mason et al., 2019; Nachman

et al., 2022; Whyman et al., 2021). Though it is not surprising, Rosalin's story is unfortunate, as research has advocated a need for Indigenous coaches that can model anti-bullying and anti-racism but can also provide an inclusive space for Indigenous youth and foster respectful interactions between Indigenous and non-Indigenous athletes (Mason et al., 2019).

Rosalin also experienced challenges navigating being a mother and her love of coaching. Schull and Kihl (2019) spoke about how mothers in coaching roles are not highly valued and that motherhood is not seen as advantageous to coaching whereas fatherhood is. This is an interesting point to examine sexist discrimination as the gendered expectations of mothers versus fathers within coaching are different. Rosalin revealed that it was more socially acceptable for men to be away on weekends coaching sports games, but this was less acceptable for a woman. DuBose (2022) supported Rosalin's claim, explaining that there is an inequitable acceptance regarding mothers versus fathers in balancing their sport career and family responsibilities. Rosalin spoke about how she envied how a coaching career was doable for fathers yet presented additional challenges for mothers. Clarkson et al. (2019) suggested that gender is used to hold high level women coaches to greater standards in comparison to men. Not only were higher expectations identified for women coaches, based on her lived experience, Rosalin saw how men were afforded the privilege of having a family whereas women were expected to hold a career that was more flexible to be home more with their children. Rosalin eventually decided to leave her coaching career to focus on her family. Leberman and LaVoi (2011) found that mother-coaches experienced satisfaction in this role as they could spend time with their children, instill life skills in their children and role model a woman in leadership. In contrast, Rosalin's ended her coaching position because she could not have the same connection to her child as those who coach their children within recreational sport. The literature shows that mother-coaches of recreational

teams are afforded extra time with their child (Leberman & LaVoi, 2011), whereas Rosalin's experience shows that coaching high level athletes takes away from family time. Balancing life and a career as a high-level coach can pose challenges for a woman who is also a mother. Keeping in mind intersectionality (Hill Collins & Bilge, 2020), it is important to look at coaching barriers not only for women, but also for women who are mothers to see how identities weave together within the sporting context.

Similar to Rosalin's coaching experiences, Nat talked about Kim Ng being stunted from an elite level sporting position they were highly qualified for. He told the story of Ng, the current GM of the Miami Marlins, a professional baseball team located in the United States of America. Nat identified that while women are getting into higher positions within baseball, Ng "should have been a GM 10 years ago." Chin (2020) echoed nearly these exact words, stating the Ng should have gotten the role 15 years ago but men took the positions instead. Nat expressed their frustration in the league denying Ng a position for so long. Although the discrimination against Ng is frustrating, it is not surprising, as systemic change occurs slowly (Gorski, 2019a), and structural understandings of power explain how racism and patriarchy maintain barriers to sport (Burton, 2015; Hapeta et al., 2019; Hill Collins, 1990). It is progress that a woman has a high-level career within baseball, however more women need to be in these roles and they should get the position when they deserve it, not years after they have proven themselves capable. Having an equitable number of women coaches may not make the sporting culture less dominated by hegemonic masculinity, but having more women coaches is still progress when historically these roles have been taken by men. Jolly et al. (2021) stated that actions, even when motivated by the need for social desirability, such as having more women coaches within sport, still have the potential for systemic change. In relation to Kim Ng's narrative, Nat went on to explain that he

thinks “the changes that we're seeing are incremental, probably for a reason, not because the reason is right or good, but they're incremental, because I think fundamentally, under capitalism, sport is a product.” The slowness of institutional change could lead to people creating their own alternative sporting leagues. In Nat’s case specifically, his frustration with the sporting system led him to become a board member of the Mabel League, a space where he can help enact and continuously audit the league’s own policies and rules to ensure inclusion is at the forefront. When a company or organization is interested in money, inclusive changes might happen slowly, as inclusivity may not result in added financial gain. The coaching examples of Rosalin and Kim Ng reiterate that women face additional challenges within sport leadership, whereas viewing sport as capitalistic in nature shows that profit may outweigh inclusion.

Under capitalism, sport can be exclusive if money becomes more important than inclusion. Nat relayed an example of this, detailing how money can become a barrier to participation for disabled people. Jaarsma, Dijkstra, Geertzen and Dekker (2014) suggested an intersectional approach to expressly welcome disabled people, as barriers vary with age, meaning sport participation efforts for disabled people should be tailor made. Nat recalled a debate within the Mabel League board about whether they should provide accommodations for a league member. A participant needed an American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter for an event the league was hosting, and not everyone on the board was enthusiastic about helping. Despite being an organization that promotes inclusion within the queer community, the opposing board members cited cost as well as it not being their responsibility as reasons to not fund the interpreter. Hill Collins and Bilge (2020) spoke about intersectionality as many axes of one’s social identity, including race, class and gender working in tandem and influencing each other. In the case of the Mabel League, they focus on sexuality to ensure that all queer people have

meaningful access to their league, however when one member held disability as an identity, there was a question about addressing this need. This point exemplifies that just because someone may be understanding of certain social categories, for example the Mabel League welcoming lesbians, bisexual women, queer and trans people, it does not mean that they are understanding of another social category, such as the disability community. In other words, the intersection of social categories does not happen equally and those who share identities do not always share values. Alternatively, the board members may have recognized that they should accommodate the disabled Mabel League member, instead discussing exclusion as an option due to financial constraints. While it may be impossible to determine their motives for not wanting to hire an interpreter, the intended denial of an interpreter is still exclusive.

In speaking about the accommodation, Nat explained that “we can't just absolve ourselves of this responsibility because the world at large isn't accommodating to people who require interpretation to understand... That's not an excuse to not act.” People with physical disabilities participate less than their able-bodied counterparts in sports (Jaarsma et al., 2014), and Nat did not want their league contributing to this exclusive statistic. Nat labelled the Mabel League as an activist league, yet in this instance, some were unwilling to provide accommodations for a participant who needed support, therefore making the space exclusive. Even though not hiring an interpreter would be exclusionary to this particular player, financial barriers exist within organizations who do not have an unlimited supply of money. The Mabel League having the power to decide whether they will accommodate a participant or not, speaks to structural power as the organization got to determine how they distribute their resources (Hill Collins and Bilge, 2020). Kiuppis (2018) suggested that disabled participants can meaningfully participate in sport when their choices, wishes and preferences are respected. This example

illustrates a conflict within Mabel League and a tension within their philosophy on inclusion, however it also provides an example of an organization outside of the dominant system that is willing to listen to its members and make appropriate changes. An issue was raised, the league had policies, practices, and cultural norms that ensured decision-makers engaged with the issue, and ultimately decided to ensure that one of their members was 'included'. As detailed later, particularly within Dom's narrative of inequitable policies in relation to soccer moms, not all types of sporting organizations are able to address equity issues in a timely and inclusive manner.

Lack of Critical Perspectives

The structure of sport may not allow for critical perspective to be heard, and even when they are heard, change does not necessarily occur. Layshia Claredon, a WNBA player, contended that society lacks critical reflection on how sexism, racism and the patriarchy interact and Benzing (2022) stated that one reason for the lack of women in coaching positions is due to a deficiency of critical perspectives related to intersectionality. This section discusses various examples where more thought could be put into dissecting sport norms and creating spaces where everyone is enthusiastically welcomed. Sport will remain exclusive when it is not critically analyzed. Dom suggested that sport is a status symbol. She explained that there is a common narrative that sport has ideological privilege in Western society. Dom explained that kids want to be placed in sport and adults are told they should put their children in sport. Seippel (2006) as well as Spaaji and Westerbeek (2010) agreed that sport contributes to social capital, working both to uplift the players and the greater society. Seippel (2006) attested that voluntary participation in sport contributes to social capital in that it focuses on respect for the rules and self-confidence, resulting in greater equity and tolerance. When sport is seen as inherently good, it becomes difficult to be critical of it. Nat echoed this sentiment by proclaiming that "it's hard to

think critically about something that gives you such positive feedback all the time.” The assumption of sport’s pureness creates narratives that remain uncritical (Coakley, 2011). When someone holds privileged statuses within the world of sport, they might not be aware that others have negative sport experiences. Alternatively, even if those in privileged positions can recognize that sport is flawed, they may not speak up or push for change since the status quo benefits them. People who are privileged in sport and people who face additional barriers in sport can both fight for sport equity, however the person who is privileged may have an easier time enacting change.

Each participant, in their own way, identified that sport spaces are not always positive. Despite the theme that talks about critical sport perspectives lacking, Dom, Nat and Rosalin are critical of sport. This is an important point to show that activists are needed to forward social change. Nat said he hopes to see a future where “a person who thrives under the sport culture conditions can recognize that they can continue to thrive and also help to facilitate change to have other people thrive as well.” Nat contended that “it might feel good, but no one thrives under white supremacy. No one thrives under ableist conditions. We just don’t realize it.” Although not contending that ableist conditions are just, Frank (2021) an equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) focused activist contended that she benefits from ableism as the world is designed for her. Frank (2021) talked about how she has held events without asking about accommodations or spoke about EDI without any mention of disabled people. Frank (2021) did not do these things as disability was not on her mind, something she compares to white people not understanding race because they do not have to contend with it on an everyday basis. Following this same argument, white people benefit from white supremacy because systems are

created for them and they are not forced to navigate race in a real and immediate way. Despite certain people benefiting from sport systems made to exclude, that does not make them just.

Calow (2022) reiterated that to study sport critically, one must examine the inequities that dominant sport models create by its formation by and for white men. Looking past sporting norms that value white men is an important reminder to examine the overlapping identities that people in sport hold (Hill Collins & Bilge, 2020). It is not that one's experience of dominant sporting culture must become negative, however it is important that all people playing sport feel responsible for creating a more inviting system. Nat declared that to bring activism and change into sport, it must come from a worldview rooted in anti-oppression. He said that in a sporting context, one should consider experiences outside of their own and have empathy for sporting experiences that are negative. In the narratives, taking a critical look at who sport benefits versus who sport disadvantages was seen as an important step to take in the future. Particularly, we should be looking at who sport was made for and then look at how it can be made better for all. Nat, Dom and Rosalin work within their specific organizations that cater to identity groups that sport was not made for, based on sexuality (queerness), gender (girls and women) and race (Indigenous people).

Since sports are so popular, it is hard to determine the actual scope of the problem. Dom pointed out that sport organizations can put up barriers and be unwelcoming to certain individuals, but because we live in a culture that views sport as positive and perpetuates the belief that sport confers goodness and positive benefits (Coakley, 2011), people will continue to play. Dom identified that sport is a space where people are convinced they must be and therefore the magnitude of the issues is never fully fleshed out. Importantly, Dom has been involved in sport her whole life, which could influence her thinking about the value and importance people

place on sport. Rosalin also talked about not being able to determine the problems within sport, not because society is so pro sport like Dom identified, but instead due to a lack of data. Rosalin explained that it is hard to fully articulate how many Indigenous people are involved in sport. Rosalin spoke about not knowing where youth, two spirit people or Indigenous woman are at within sport due to a lack of analysis. She went on to wonder about women athletes, coaches and officials. Touching on intersectionality, Rosalin's comments suggest that the important point is to find out how people's intersecting identities might influence their involvement in sport. Moreover, a component of intersectionality is social justice (Hill Collins & Bilge, 2020), which can only be tackled if the problem has been identified. If there was more data available regarding which people do not engage meaningfully in sport, it would provide a starting point for activists to engage in social justice to help these groups participate. It is important, however, to consider how and why data needs to be collected. Dom asserted that sometimes the desire for data can be used by organizations as an excuse to not engage in action. Dom spoke about how organizations will sometimes tell individuals to collect data regarding an equity issue before they would act, which lies in opposition to inclusion. In this way, circumstances may dictate the need for data. If an individual brings up an exclusion problem, it should be acted upon by the sporting organization. Organizations, however, should be consistently analyzing their procedures and larger structures such as the government should be doing regular studies to ensure that sport spaces are inclusive.

Without proper analysis, social justice action within sport may be put on the individual. Cooky (2017) touched on this topic when citing that people still believe that the inequity in participation based on gender falls to individual choice. If people believe that equity in gendered sport participation is found within individual choice, then it is up to individuals to choose sport

and not the organizations to break down systemic barriers that prevent girls and women from sport. Dom explained that since sport is seen as bringing people together, solving problems and being positive, society does not have important conversations on the more negative sides of sport. Although this may have historically been the case, we seem to be living in a time where sporting organizations, and society as whole, is having to answer questions relating to the negative side of sport. For example, Hockey Canada is being criticized for their handling of Canadian Hockey League players raping a woman and a system that glorifies sexual exploitation of young women (Burke, 2022). Other athletes from sports such as gymnastics, figure skating, and women's soccer have also been pushing their national organizations and the Canadian government to investigate issues of safety and abuse within their sports (Ewing, 2022). Kaepernick, former NFL quarterback, who took a knee for Black rights, and Megan Rapinoe, a professional soccer player who kneeled in solidarity (Schmidt et al., 2019) were talked about internationally. These are, however, examples that are widely known as they relate to professional and elite athletes. Whether or not this activism and calls for accountability trickle down to recreational sport is yet to be seen. Dom contended that the current way of sport is to "let the individual navigate the system rather than blow it up and build it in a way where it can live up to those kind of goals and aspirations." Letting someone navigate the system alone does not consider the complexities of intersectionality, and the many reasons that someone might be having challenges within sport structures (Hill Collins & Bilge, 2020). The above examples show that ideologies within sport can serve to uphold the status quo and make change difficult, a facet of structural and cultural power that ultimately produces injustices (Hill Collins, 1990). By not analyzing who sport was curated for, as well as the current goals of sport, it will remain an exclusive space since sport was not founded using an intersectional framework that allows all

people to thrive. As mentioned, to fix a problem, the problem first needs to be identified and then people and organizations can begin facilitating change.

Constraints to Change in Sport

In this section, examples of finances, capitalism and the failure of consultation processes illustrate how inequitable sports systems persist. Largely, structural power dictates many constraints within sport, in that sporting organizations determine their inner workings and policies based on the current conditions that hold them in power (Hill Collins, 1990). When systems are created and maintained to favour a certain few, it creates multiple barriers for everyone else. The first barrier identified was finances. The activists within this study fight for inclusion within sport, and if finances are a barrier, then the spaces are not inclusive. All three activists brought up finances to explain how sport is inequitable. Finances were explained both in the inherent cost of sport, but also in hidden fees, allocation of resources and class struggle. Nat spoke about the cost of participating in sport being beyond what is needed, but there are also many covert ways that a sport organization might push someone financially out of sport, even if they can pay the registration fees. Dom pointed to developmental programs, off season training, track suits, equipment and tournament fees as examples of hidden costs. Moreover, she discussed how practice times might change, meaning a caregiver must find a way to get their child to practice and may have to miss work. This could also mean that a youth may not be able to commit to a job that they might need to help support themselves or their family. Furthermore, games could be quite far meaning a caregiver must dedicate their time to driving the youth to games and paying for gas money or spending a significantly longer time busing to the events. Dom suggested that nowhere in a policy will it state that families need to collectively make \$90,000- \$100,000 to participate, however in reality this is how it plays out. Dom explained that

this financial barrier is tracked back to social class inequity. Nobis and El-Kayed (2019) argued that parents education level, financial resources of the family and the youths schooling were shown to correlate to sports club participation when looked at together. This is a reminder of the importance of intersectionality as the above finding touches on education level and financial security. Hill Collins and Bilge (2020) argued that the accrual of money is embedded within the gendered and racialized structures that enhance wealth. Financial constraints relates to activism as activists look to alleviate constraints within sport. Despite Dom attesting that financial constraints are prohibitive to sport participation, Dom did not share with me during the interview that she is directly involved in activism relating to financial barriers or class-based discrimination.

Within the realm of finances, Rosalin spoke about how funds are allocated. Instead of providing funding to provincial sport organizations, she suggested that the government should instead fund local recreation workers so that the money goes directly to the community to create a welcoming space for youth. Dom reiterated this point, explaining that since reserves are often remote, in nation programming would have the most value. Although the topic of funding is complex and will not be teased out in this paper, Hanna (2009) contended that band funding and government grants to pay for full-time recreation workers in British Columbia is minimal. Moreover, Hanna (2009) revealed that there is a disparity between Native and municipal funding allocation, evidenced by comparisons of the recreation facilities. Bringing in intersectionality, the allocation of funds relates to structural power in which power, in this case finances, are distributed differently between First Nations and municipal settings (Hill Collins & Bilge, 2020). Rosalin revealed that politics get in the way of making sport accessible. She believes that if youth could be trained as coaches or officials, then it would benefit the community incredibly.

Rosalin discussed how “from an Indigenous community perspective, we have so many children in care, we have such high instances of poverty, single parents, and so on. And so we really need more sport leadership in our community support resources.” This narrative can also be looked at through intersectionality as the discussion relates to Indigenous people but also social class. Rosalin shared that she puts on an annual conference within IPACC and she does not turn anyone away due to finances. Rather, she gives them an opportunity to volunteer. Rosalin, as the founder of her own organization, can make decisions rooted in inclusivity to ensure that all people are able to attend her event. In this way, Rosalin holds the structural power (Hill Collins & Bilge, 2020) to tangibly create an environment where all Indigenous people, regardless of their social class, can attend the event should they want. Both Dom and Rosalin believe that funding for Indigenous sport and activity would be better suited going directly to the community, however, when looking at power relations, there is no guarantee that finances given directly to the Nation would be equitably allocated either. It should be noted, however, that mismanagement of funds could occur within any organization.

When speaking to Rosalin, she explained financial issues in an Indigenous context. Rosalin identified that in Indigenous communities, not enough people are fighting to improve access to sport. She spoke about Carey Price, an Indigenous hockey player in the National Hockey League. Watchman (2018) explained that the nearest hockey rink for Price was miles away and Price’s dad bought a plane and learned to fly so his son could play hockey. Unprompted, Dom also brought up Carey Price. She explained how Price is celebrated as a successful Indigenous role model, however she relates it back to intersectionality, identifying social class to say that he became successful as his dad was wealthy enough to buy a plane. Had Price’s dad not been able to afford a plane for transporting their son to practice, Price may not

have seen the same success within mainstream sport. Rosalin, in her narrative, discussed how people get excited about famous Indigenous athletes, but not enough finances are put into supporting Indigenous youth in the developmental stages. She went on to say that in Canada, there is no money for First Nations on reserves to compete in sports, either in health plans or band funding. This lack of money within Indigenous communities translates all the way to the highest level of sports. Rosalin revealed that competitive Olympic athletes who are Indigenous sometimes go without food for days, highlighting an example of intersectionality that weaves Indigeneity with social class (Hill Collins & Bilge, 2020). When someone does not have their basic needs met, it is hard to thrive in sport. Both Rosalin and Dom identified that more thoughtfully distributed funding would lead to more successful Indigenous athletes.

Nat exclaimed that capitalism is the problem, a sentiment he first brought up when referencing Kim Ng's story of slow, incremental change. When sport is seen as a business, making money becomes a priority and the potential for exploiting athletes and deemphasizing their humanity becomes a concern (Gomez et al., 2008; Kaufman & Wolff, 2010; Pirgmaier, 2020). Nat said that as organizations grow, it becomes harder for them to commit to social change because they are so concerned about their revenue. Even if the sporting organization is not massive, the same financial concerns arise. Highlighting again the example that Nat gave regarding debating getting an interpreter for a participant, Nat shared how a league built on inclusivity and one that calls itself progressive, still had half of their board proclaim they would "rather save those five hundred bucks than pay for access." The interpreter example is in line with cultural power which suggests the playing field is not equal (Hill Collins & Bilge, 2020). Specifically, all the able-bodied members were able to participate in the Mabel League event seamlessly, whereas the disabled person needed to be granted additional access that they almost

did not get. For the big corporation it is all about making money, and yet for the small organization, it is all about saving money. In the end, both practices lead to financial barriers within sport and push people out of participating.

Similar to finances being a barrier to inclusion, people not purposefully consulting sport groups can also lead to harmful and inequitable spaces. Sport is inclusive when people feel welcomed into the space (Spaaji et al., 2015), however, when decisions are happening without consulting the affected group, it can cause feelings of exclusion (Walseth, 2006). Sometimes people intend to make sport more inclusive, but they either go about it in a misguided way or do not care enough to seek advice from the people their decision will affect. Two interviewees specifically identified the topic of uniforms as examples of organizations not listening to their players. Dom talked about playing within Metro Women's Soccer League and her experience of wearing the uniforms that were ordered. Dom explained that uniforms were ordered for the entire club, from children to adults, without consulting the adult program. By ordering the same uniforms for everyone, the league failed to acknowledge the complexities of identities that might be present (Hill Collins & Bilge, 2020) such as age when looking at girls versus women or varying body types. Dom recalled the V-neck design of the shirt and the tight, small shorts as feeling "sexy." She argued that the league assumed women wanted tight fitting clothing and wondered what would be different if the league had thought about women's bodies in a general and not stereotypical way. When Dom and other adults expressed their concerns regarding the sexualization of their uniforms, the league got defensive. Dom talked about reminding those who purchased the uniforms

that we are children of the 80's and 90's, where we had to fight to be taken seriously and we don't want a jersey that looks like we are not athletes, like we are here to look good, [the uniforms are] more aesthetic than functional.

By providing uniforms that are meant to highlight someone's body, as opposed to serve performance requirements, it sends the message that women's bodies are being displayed during sport and discredits their athleticism (DuBose, 2022). Not thoughtfully consulting the women's teams before ordering uniforms led to a space where the athletes did not feel respected or meaningfully included.

Nat also spoke about uniforms as an example of exclusion within sport. The Mabel League has brand merchandise, and before Nat's time, they got feedback saying it was not size inclusive. Through the league's ignorance of inclusive merchandise sizing, they failed to recognize overlapping identities in their participants (Hill Collins & Bilge, 2020). Nat shared that there is a team in the Mabel League called the Heavy Hitters and everyone on this team self identifies as fat. After hearing feedback regarding size exclusivity, Nat said the league moved quickly to order more size inclusive merchandise, but when it arrived there was not enough inventory. Nat revealed that there was a boycott of the finals over this incident and that members felt like the league agreed to provide size-inclusive merchandise but ultimately fell short on their promise. Nat explained that,

it was a real turning point for that executive group to realize, when you do something, when you are called to do something, and you do it, but you don't consult that group in a way that's meaningful, and you execute the change, but not to the extent that is necessary, that's a lapse in judgment and a lapse in leadership.

Nat's example shows that even with the best intentions, the impact can still be harmful if not executed purposefully. Within both uniform examples, by not considering the actual needs of the players, it created negative experiences and did not make participants feel welcomed.

This section of the Results and Discussion rooted in sport as an equitable structure examined sport spaces as exclusionary, detailed the lack of critical perspectives within sport and touched on constraints to change within sport. Even though many people derive joy and positivity from sport, it does not mean that sport provides joy and positivity to all. For some, sport remains a space where they do not feel welcome. The benefits of sport overlook or discount the experiences of diverse people and fail to acknowledge the intersecting identities of its athletes. When critically analyzed, barriers to sport arise. While there are many barriers, finances were identified as one of the biggest constraints to sport participation, affecting those particularly in a lower socio-economic class. Moreover, financial issues relate to how funds get distributed and the capitalistic perspective of concern over money rather than inclusion. All three participants discussed finances as a barrier to inclusion, however none of them focused specifically on class-based discrimination within their activism. The other barrier participants spoke about was organizations not actively listening to what sport participants had to say. When an athlete does not feel heard, they do not feel welcomed in sport. All these reasons relate to how sport is discriminatory and inequitable for many in its current state.

How Identity Relates to Social Justice

Everyone is made up of intersecting identities. Intersectionality is a way of understanding and analyzing how the various social categories that make up an individual work together to privilege or disadvantage that individual in particular contexts (Hill Collins & Bilge, 2020). The second research question I looked at is how participants viewed identity in relation to social

justice. Some identities may provide one with privilege, some identities might come with more oppression, the environment one is in might change their power or privilege and these aspects can change over time. Calow (2022) explained that “no one is ever just privileged or oppressed and identities are inherently complicated and multifaceted” (p.3). In whatever space one is in, their identities follow, including within sport. Mann and Krane (2019) looked at lesbian identities in terms of unpacking generalizations, acknowledging diverse narratives and exploring complicated and at times even contradictory sporting experiences. People can wrongfully assign stereotypes and assume someone’s identity. In this section, I highlight how categorization in sport can be problematic in some ways and how in other ways categorization may make participants feel like they belong to a community. The section ends by examining how people who find communities focused on identity do not always share the same beliefs.

Categorization

In many ways, sport is based on forms of categorization, from women’s only leagues, to separating teams based on age, to leagues centered on identity such as the Mabel League or Indigenous sport organizations. Although in some cases these identity categories can provide a safer space for participation, people do not want their identity framed in a way that limits their participation in sport or other spheres of life. For example, Rosalin felt that being a woman was limiting to her sporting career and it eventually became a barrier to supporting her family. Spaaij et al. (2015) contended that sports can facilitate social division, or it can be a site of inclusion when it allows people to feel welcomed into a space. The categorization of sport shows how social division or inclusion can occur depending on the environment or circumstances. This section delves into why categorization or stereotyping can be negative, while the next section on belonging details how grouping people together can provide community and support.

Coaching was identified by participants as a place where stereotypes can arise. Literature identified that coaching is a site where gender stereotypes cause disadvantages to women who aspire to be in sport leadership. (Benzing, 2022; Burton, 2015; DuBose, 2022; Kluch, Y., 2023; McGannon et al., 2018; Melton & Bryant, 2017; Nguyen et al., 2017; Schull & Kihl, 2019).

Rosalin shared a story of when she worked as a special teams coach for a high school football team. She recalled a young girl at the school helping her set up the field for drills. The young person told Rosalin that she wanted to be a football coach but never thought it was possible. Rosalin explained that she was only the “second ever female football coach in Florida.” Rosalin thought it was empowering that the young girl was able to see being a sports coach as an achievable task. In this way, Rosalin’s presence on the field was resisting, or offering a counternarrative about the lack of women being promoted in sport leadership (DuBose, 2022).

Rosalin’s coaching accomplishments tie back to the many ways progress occurs. Simply being a high-level woman coach provided the young girl with the optimism that one day they could coach too. Even if Rosalin never fought for inclusive change, which she did, being a woman coach at a high level still denotes change. The lack of women coaches in sport perpetuates a stereotype that the job is for men and having more women in sport leadership may not go far enough if sport culture is still rooted in hegemonic masculinity, privileging cisheteronormativity and whiteness (Cooky 2017; Harvey et al. 2013). As mentioned, progress occurs in many ways; in one way, getting more diverse coaches would denote change, just as shifting sport culture to be more inclusive would signify improvement.

Sport can negatively categorize people into groups. Nat talked about the culture of sport not allowing for individual expression. They identified a “heteronormative, ableist, fat phobic culture that silos you as a person and limits your acceptance in that group based on those aspects

of identity, visible or not.” Mann and Krane (2019) and Spaaij et al. (2015) agreed that sport is grounded in heteronormativity and organized through hierarchies. Personally, Nat shared their story of being trans. They spoke about “the desire to mitigate some of the stereotypes that come with playing softball.” Nat explained that there is a cultural misconception that lesbians play softball. When Nat was 16, he saw his teammates working hard to demonstrate their heteronormativity. This left Nat feeling like he needed to also showcase his heteronormativity which created an internal struggle knowing they were queer, but also wanting to fit in with the softball team as it was their primary social outlet. Mann and Krane, (2019) echoed this in the literature, highlighting that “when women’s sport is situated within an overarching masculine hegemony, heteronormativity and homonegativism prevail” (p. 71). In this case, the norm of heterosexuality is representative of cultural power (Hill Collins & Bilge, 2020) as heterosexual people are encouraged to amplify their sexuality, whereas gender nonconforming people are forced to hide their sexuality or face discrimination. Heterosexuality being dominant within sport can also be tied to structural power in that this norm relies on segregating and ‘othering’ queer groups (Hill Collins, 1990). Spaaij et al. (2105) explained that sport reproduces heteronormativity and the patriarchy by valuing heterosexual and hypermasculine men, in turn marginalizing women and men who do not fit this stereotypical role. This discussion relates back to intersectionality and the organization of power (Hill Collins & Bilge, 2020). Since the culture of sport expects people to amplify their heterosexuality, those who are heterosexual, or those who display their heterosexuality, may hold a form of privilege relating to sexual orientation. If one is more focused on navigating the culture of sport, they may be less likely to enthusiastically participate. By creating false narratives like all softball players are lesbians, it creates an

environment that is not welcoming nor inviting. These stereotypical views that put players in a specific box work in opposition to inclusion.

Outside of Nat's personal example of navigating stereotypes, he also talked about the history of the Mabel League and the history of discrimination towards queer athletes. He revealed that in the 90's and earlier, the world had a very narrow view of what it meant to be a lesbian, and falsely believed that all lesbians must look butch. Nat spoke about how a former player described the Mabel league during a speech at an event. Nat shared their interpretation of the speech as follows:

[The Mabel League] is together to create their own society, their own place where they could have an identity that wasn't created by, or formed or informed by heteronormativity, or what cis people, what gender conforming people, were sort of placing on them.

The Mabel league arose as a space where lesbians were welcomed, but where the players were able to show up without the stereotypes that larger society was placing on them. In this way, the Mabel league created counter-culture knowledge that fended off ideas from the dominant culture of how cisgender, heterosexual and gender confirming people wanted them to be, a component of the cultural domain of power (Hill Collins, 1990). Moving past how society was telling queer people to act, the Mabel League was born to give people a sense of belonging.

People Seek Belonging

In contrast to categorization leading to negative perceptions or stereotypes, people also seek out sport leagues or organizations rooted in a particular identity to feel greater connection. People find these spaces as they are looking to find people with similar identities to them. Shared identity or belonging to similar social groups can bond people. For example, the Mabel League is

a space for queer people and is an inclusive space. Spaaji (2015) explained that belonging is a process that is dynamic, situational and shifts over time. A theme that I saw in the narratives was that people are looking for a community to call their own. Nat identifies the Mabel League as an open door for people who have never experienced a positive sporting environment before. You know someone who comes into the league, having never played softball, but seeking community, they can come in and be surrounded by people who are just like them, and who are like truly invested in bolstering them up...they don't have to hide any part of themselves.

Nat said they are proud to be part of this system where everyone is welcomed to express themselves.

Spaaij et al. (2015) revealed that sport can facilitate inclusion when people feel part of the larger collective. Gómez et al. (2008) spoke specifically about sport organizations that exist outside of the mainstream, such as the Mabel League, that work to create community in and outside of their sport. Playing within a sport organization such as the Mabel League can be seen as a larger collective when people come together to engage in sport as well as community. I went to a Mabel League recruitment event and got to witness firsthand the comradery, open-mindedness and welcoming spirit of everyone in the league. In contrast to the Mabel League, which operates outside of mainstream sport, meaning they can largely create their own norms, Nat relayed that traditional sporting structures grew out of heteronormativity and white supremacy and that it takes time to dismantle this. Spaaij et al. (2015) stated that sport is meant to perpetuate the norms of wealth and whiteness and detailed that while there is a belief that sport can provide an even playing ground for social mobility or success through sport, middle-class white men are most likely to reap these benefits. Hill Collins and Bilge (2020) suggested

that the facade of an equal playing ground is upheld by forms of cultural power that promote the idea that anyone can succeed, but as Nat's stories demonstrate, sport is not set up as an equal playing ground. Nat explained that they appreciate being in a league that recognizes the exclusive origins of sport while also offering a comfortable space for all. Calow (2022) suggested that people can use what marginalizes them, for example sport, as a platform for affirming their identities. For example, seeing openly gay athletes within high level sports can allow another athlete to live out their identity (Calow, 2022). The Mabel League is built on this exact premise, a space to affirm queer people's identities. By providing a comfortable space, like minded individuals can find solace in a league designed specifically for them.

Nat talked about their personal journey and how they were hungry for queer sports. Nat discussed that when they arrived in Vancouver, they had never experienced queer sports before and was excited to hear they existed. Once Nat got into the queer softball league, they explained how having a community with other queer athletes was so unique and something they had been seeking all along. Spaaij (2015) revealed from their research that people seek 'home' within a sports club to seek belonging in the greater community. Nat highlighted creating a space that feels safe as especially important since people of colour or queer people are the first to drop out of sport in adolescence. Nat explained that some people who enter the Mabel League had not touched a sport since they were 13, because they did not feel like sport was a space for them. Nat exclaimed that "the driving force behind my role in the league, it's to try to dismantle those things and work to create a sporting culture that is outside of what we think is normative sporting culture." Spaaij (2015) reported that people have strong emotional connections to others that are like them. In Nat's example, new people entering the league after many years of not playing sport may have felt less intimidated and more comfortable since they all share a queer identity.

Walseth (2006) found that when people feel included within sport, it can be an integral part of identity formation, social support and refuge. Leagues like the Mabel league, or other sport spaces categorized by race or gender, may be more inclusive of groups of people than the current norms of sport. By committing to deconstructing sporting culture, including who it is for, who it benefits and who it excludes, strides can be made to make sport more inclusive. This inclusion can be two-fold, firstly by supporting these alternative leagues that offer comfort, familiarity and shared experiences to their participants and secondly by shifting sporting culture to be less informed by views rooted in hegemonic masculinity. Providing more equitable spaces can allow people like Nat to find their home within sport.

Nat explained his personal journey and hunger for belonging, a sentiment that Rosalin echoed. Rosalin founded IPACC as a space for Indigenous people to recreate, play sports and participate in traditional activities. Stronach and Maxwell (2020) relayed that sports provides Indigenous women a platform to take on leadership roles and develop strength through sporting accomplishments. Indigenous people participating in sport provides a multitude of benefits such as a sense of belonging, connection and reconnection to their community, improving life and maintaining culture (Doyle et al., 2013; Mason et al., 2021; Stronach & Maxwell, 2020). Rosalin talked about sharing space with other Indigenous activists and noticing discussions of similar topics, language, and a place where Indigenous warriors can thrive. Rosalin described a warrior as being resilient, saying that they are not actually fighting anyone, but that “we want to create an army of people that are healthy and well, and believe in themselves.” By offering spaces for likeminded Indigenous people who play sports, it might offer more Indigenous people a space to comfortably play. Additionally, Indigenous spaces that exist outside of mainstream structures can create community both inside and outside of sport (Gómez et al., 2008).

Overall, everyone wants to authentically belong. As shown by the many examples from the participants, people do not want to be categorized into stereotypical boxes, but rather they want to feel appreciated and included. Both stereotypes and belonging can arise from categorization, making it important to determine the type of categorization present. Finding individuals who share identities is important, but that does not always translate into a positive and uplifting experience.

Groups that Share Identities Do Not Necessarily Share Values

Just because groups share similar identities, it does not mean they think the same, or share the same goals. Even members of the same marginalized groups may perpetuate discrimination or exclusivity. Calow (2022) suggested that systems of power rely on the negative associations people have with difference and once people find difference, they lump everyone into the same category and assume shared experiences. Calow (2022) also revealed that grouping people only by their social identities can ignore differences within like groups. Hill Collins and Bilge (2020) stated that intersectionality is the weaving of different identities, so it would be unfair to group people together based on one shared characteristic when everyone holds multiple identities. Despite this, society tends to separate people. Nat recalled, before his time, when the Mabel League was looking to include a policy on accepting trans people into the league, a policy that many members were averse to. Nat revealed this was relevant especially with

trans men, you know trans masculine people, because there was a segment of the league who thought that [it] went against what Mabel was about. [A] contingent of women who are like this is a women's league [and] these people aren't women, and so I don't think this is the place for them.

In Nat's explanation, it seemed as if the members opposed to trans people joining the league did not want trans masculine people to play since they were traditionally deemed a women's league and masculine players did not fit this category. Alternatively, Barras (2021) explained that some people view transgender people as a threat to fairness and their teammates safety. Kavoura et al., (2021) determined that trans players simply playing sport is activism in that they exist within a space that was not designed for them. In this same way, Nat's participation in the Mabel League can be seen as activism. Discussions around transgender exclusion within a queer league exemplifies intergroup conflict. Tran et al. (2022) relayed that within the queer community, microaggressions against transgender or non-gender conforming people exist. Even though all league members broadly fall on the queer spectrum, that does not automatically mean they are all accepting of transgender individuals. This example shows how people with similar identities do not automatically have the same ideas, as both lesbians and trans people fall under the same general category and yet lesbians can discriminate against transgender people.

Even within a group of people who identify broadly in the same way, one can still experience alienation. Nat expressed a particular story of when they were made to feel like an outsider of the group. He talked about being with his softball teammates drinking beer while the other teammates were putting makeup on. One of his teammates was rousing the more feminine members putting on makeup, saying that they are taking too long to put on their makeup. Nat saw a distinction between the masculine and feminine players, explaining how the more masculine players were looking down on the more feminine players. Through another lens, past simply looking down at their teammates, the masculine players were reproducing patriarchal gender norms by making fun of their counterparts. Mann and Krane (2019) talked about identity as complex, explaining that lesbians can have contradictory experiences, or in the case of Nat's

teammates, contradictory views. Responding to their teammates comment, Nat said “that's fucked up actually,” not wanting to bypass misogynistic commentary regarding women. Nat was policing the actions and beliefs of fellow Mabel League members based on the underlying beliefs of the Mabel League relating to inclusion and respect. Nat did not want to treat the women putting on makeup “as though they were objects in our life to comment on and critique, as though their place in our society is for our entertainment or our criticism.” It did not sit well with Nat as he reflected that the more masculine people drinking beer in the living room were razzing the more feminine presenting individuals. Interpersonal power is relevant to this situation as in the example, the more feminine players were razzed for caring about their appearance (Hill Collins & Bilge, 2020), showing how power can play out in everyday interactions (Allan, 2006). Tran et al. (2022) found that in-group microaggressions from the LGBTQ2IA+ community were even more painful due to feelings of betrayal and the expectation that this particular group would understand them better. Just because people share identities, in this case many of them being queer women, there was still conflicts regarding each person’s values. Nat talked about how they belonged to the queer softball culture overall but recognized that they did not belong to a subculture that would talk about others like that. Seeing this conflict play out before their eyes made them less shy about speaking up, less afraid to lose friendships and more likely to verbalize their discomfort. For Nat, this experience reminded them that just because they largely share a queer identity with their teammates, it does not mean they will automatically be comfortable in all queer settings.

Similar to Nat witnessing in-group conflict, Rosalin shared many instances of lateral violence towards her within the Indigenous community, a phenomenon that other researchers have noted can be normalized and common within Indigenous groups (Whyman et al., 2021).

Lateral violence can be defined as members of a minoritized group either covertly or overtly perpetuating violence or discrimination towards members of that same group (Tran et al. 2022).

Rosalin told a story of when she interviewed 350 Indigenous youth and created the youth declaration on the right to access sport. This declaration was placed on a drum and used at an Indigenous Sport, Physical Activity and Recreation Council (ISPARC) event without Rosalin's consent. Instead of involving Rosalin, she was told by a member of ISPARC that she did not need to attend the event. Rosalin continued by saying that this person,

took credit for the declaration, and I didn't even get a drum, and I said, well, I could pay for my own travel to go, and he's like no, people who worked on it behind the scenes aren't invited, and I was... it broke my heart.

Rosalin's work was stolen from her. Even when she said she could pay for her travel, she was still not welcome. This experience prompted Rosalin to start IPACC, so that she could do the work she loves without having to answer to anyone else. After sharing this example, Rosalin suggested that there is also a group of people in her Nation who are hostile. Rosalin revealed that she never did anything wrong, and yet from that point on she was blacklisted. Allan (2006) suggested that within interpersonal power, individuals that face oppression can turn this into their master status and the oppressed can become an oppressor. In this case, there were some Indigenous men that sought out to oppress Rosalin within Indigenous sporting communities. These contradictions appear because the dynamics of power are complex, with people often falling into a victim or oppressor category depending on the circumstances (Allan, 2006). This mistreatment towards Rosalin could also be a result of structural power that reproduces ideas of sexism that Indigenous men adhere to, ultimately segregating men and women within Indigenous

sport leadership (Hill Collins, 1990). Again, it is important to recognize that just because there is a group of Indigenous people focused on sport, it does not mean that they will be harmonious.

Rosalin also expressed that there are a lot of politics within sport. The literature affirms Rosalin's point about the interconnectedness of sport and politics, revealing that "sport has never been not political" (Calow, 2022. p.7). Calow (2022) stated that systems of change-making and the configurations of power within people's lives will always be intertwined with sport. Rosalin spoke particularly about how Indigenous sport circles can be very chauvinistic and not inclusive of female leadership. These understandings relate to structural power (Hill Collins, 1990) as Rosalin talks about the internal politics of organizations and the ways that organizations might be reflective of a broader patriarchal structure. Langton (2008) detailed how women in Indigenous communities explained that real political power in the world is centered on something called the 'big man syndrome' which is used against women and children to increase one's power and wealth. Rosalin identified that exclusion of women was a challenge for IPACC as there are people who do not want to see her organization succeed. Rosalin reminisced about the bittersweet beginning of her nonprofit organization, which was on one hand born out of a heartfelt desire to create a space where Indigenous people could thrive, and on the other hand was an attempt to draw her own path that was denied in other Indigenous spaces. Rosalin revealed that "there's a good old boys club in Indigenous sports in Canada, and it's really hard to break that glass ceiling." She spoke about inviting some of the men to present at her IPACC conference, but they never responded. Rosalin shared that at her first IPACC conference she invited a friend to be "the keynote address speaker, and she worked for ISPARC, and she said she wasn't allowed to present or attend the conference." These interpersonal interactions left Rosalin feeling disadvantaged in relation to the success of her organization (Hill Collins & Bilge,

2020), showing an example of how everyday interactions can lead to power imbalances (Allan, 2006). Rosalin's example suggested that members of other Indigenous organizations are actively working to exclude her and her organization, an example of structural power that dictates subordination of particular groups which leads to segregation (Hill Collins, 1990). Rosalin is an Indigenous woman, but that does not mean she is automatically accepted into Indigenous sport circles.

This section of the Results and Discussion looked at how identity relates to social justice, detailing categorization, how people seek belonging, and how groups that share identities do not necessarily share values. People do not want to be seen through stereotypes. People have identities and share identities, but it is unjust to group people into boxes and make assumptions on how they think or act. Individuals seek out places that make them feel comfortable, which may mean they look for leagues that represent their identities. However, even if they find these spaces, not all people will be accepting, even if identities are shared. Tensions amongst queer groups and lateral violence were two key themes which spoke to how similar groups do not hold the same values. Intersectionality has a large focus on complexity, understanding that two people who share particular identities are by no means the same (Hill Collins & Bilge, 2020). Overall, participants shared their unique and varying experiences regarding stereotypes and categorization, how they all sought out belonging within their sport and want to foster belonging through sport and how intergroup conflict or lateral violence can be present even if people share identities.

The Impact of Activism

When seeking inclusion, it is important to identify inequity, but it is also important to enact change through multiple avenues already mentioned including protests, visibility, boycotts,

privately pointing out inequities or using finances to better accommodate athletes. Hill Collins and Bilge (2020) recognized fighting for social justice as a component of intersectionality. The final research question I looked to answer was how the interviewees perceived their impact on the local and sporting community. This section goes over the main themes related to perceived impact. First, activists often lobby for change, however that does not mean people in the positions to make these changes will respond. Family was a reoccurring topic for participants, both personally and how family dynamics affect sport policy thus shaping community. Since sport policy can work to create change, looking at social change and how activists understand social change is important. Lastly, this section delves deeper into social change to understand what the activists identified as difficulties and enablers.

Family Dynamics and Sport Policy

This section introduces family dynamics, sport policy and examples of when these two are combined. The way that sport policy and culture are currently organized, being a mother and being involved in sport is challenging. Having a family is not inherently an obstacle, but the way sport systems are structured may cause it to be. This section speaks to the obstacles that mothers endure within sport. The narratives show that the structure of sport can act as a barrier that needs to be worked around or overcome. This section begins by discussing how difficult it is to equitably facilitate change and then discusses how, when changes do not occur, mothers are the ones who suffer.

Even when people are confronted with evidence in support of family policies, it does not mean that change will occur. Sometimes the systemic structural organization of sport causes sport to not change. Gómez et al. (2008) defined the structure of an organization as the connection between actors which is rooted in control and coordination, as well as the structural

design of the association. This definition parallels power within intersectionality, which defines structural power as institutions reproducing discrimination to produce exclusion. Dom spoke a lot about the flaws within sport systems, as the burden for change is often placed on the individual to make the situation better. Placing the onus on a singular person negates the complexities within specific social contexts (Hill Collins & Bilge, 2022). Dom explained that people in positions of power often tell individuals to sort out their own problems or prove the scope of their problem, rather than investigating issues that are brought to their attention. Dom saw making an individual fight for change as problematic because she said that means the individual must have the

confidence, social capital, cultural capital, resources [and] literacy to be able to push [their criticism] forward and solve the problem... Just because you are marginalized, doesn't mean you have confidence, often, it results in low confidence because of constant marginalization.

Dom went on to say that this also assumes the individual has the resources and the time to prove their point. Dom's example relates to the structural domain of power (Hill Collins & Bilge, 2020) in that organizations get to decide where they want to put their resources and who they want to help. If the governance of an organization is set up in such a way to disempower individuals, then structural power is present (Hill Collins & Bilge, 2020). Furthermore, cultural power is relevant because it reproduces the status quo (Hill Collins & Bilge, 2020), in this case the organization functions as normal and puts the burden of change on the individual because they are resistant to change. This example shows that singular voices are taken less seriously within sporting structures. Organizations have the power to determine which problems they address and it is important to be critical of which problems they do and do not focus on.

Dom told a story of trying to make a reasonable accommodation for mothers within a sports league focused on girls and women that got denied. Dom spoke about how she approached Metro Women's Soccer League (MWSL), a league she is a part of, regarding their 'no child on the sideline' policy. This policy stated that a child would not be allowed to sit on the sideline while their mother plays soccer. Dom, through her association with North Shore Girls Soccer Club, saw a significant number of women dropping out each year because they could not risk bringing their children to a soccer game and not having them be able to sit on the sidelines. Instead of MWSL listening to Dom's concerns and acting, they instead told her to prove the scope of the issue. Dom has been working on providing evidence of the magnitude of the issue for two years now. Within the concept of interpersonal power, Allan (2006) described insider resistance as someone working within bureaucracy who finds cracks within the system to chip away at to foster positive change. Dom's participation within MWSL while also working to tackle the league's policies that are oppressive to mothers is insider resistance. While Dom has been working to prove scope, she said that

a lot of those moms [have] quit in the last two years, so there aren't nearly as many kids on the sideline...which is devastating because we just can't work fast enough when we're told to prove scope.

When a league that is specifically tailored to women is not actively working to provide greater access for mothers in sport, then mothers are less likely to participate and might drop out.

McGannon et al. (2018) revealed that juggling motherhood and sport was a major theme in their research as mothers worked to balance being an athlete and a 'good' mother. Furthermore, McGannon et al. (2018) found that mothers struggled to maintain their athletics while also holding parental responsibilities. Nowhere is there a policy that says mothers cannot participate

in sport, but in practice, if a mother is responsible for taking care of their child, the rule of not having children on the sideline will force some mothers to quit. Not allowing children on the sidelines is an act of disciplinary power (Hill Collins & Bilge, 2020) that ultimately forces mothers who need to take their children to their games out of sport. This realm of power uses the guise of equal treatment, for example by stating that only players are allowed on the sidelines, to manage human behaviour and perpetuate oppression (Allan, 2006). This situation also details structural power because the organization has policies where in this case mothers are discriminated against and eventually lead to exclusion when some are forced to drop out of sport (Hill Collins, 1990).

Even when one takes the time to prove the scope of their issue, it is not guaranteed an organization will listen. In many cases, sport organizations hold more power than the players, a testament to Dom's views that within sport activism, the people within the organization have the most capacity to foster inclusive change. When organizations do not listen, activists must continue to persist, something Dom is very familiar with. Dom explained how she identified a problem within MWSL, they told her to prove her point, and when she backed up her claim with evidence from the players themselves stating that they would like or do not mind children on the sidelines, MWSL still did not change their rule. Bloyce and Smith (2009) indicated how creating policy is one avenue to foster change within sport, which MWSL could have done but chose not to. Not allowing children on the sidelines, Dom contended, is a rule derived from the "professionalization" of amateur sport. Dom explained that professionalization within recreational sport leads to creating permanent benches, or when not available, having referees put cones around an area their team should use as a bench. Referees are instructed to tell children they cannot sit on the bench under the guise of professionalism. Dom wonders if

professionalization has gone too far, particularly in youth and recreational leagues. Seeing this injustice, Dom wrote a letter to BC Soccer asking about the ‘no child on the sideline’ policy. When BC Soccer never adequately responded and the board would not take it up, Dom approached BC Soccer with a formal written report. Dom pointed out that the organization had just released their diversity and inclusion policy and noted that this was a case where mothers were not being treated equitably within a women’s league. Thimsen (2022) would refer to this as performative activism, recognizing a distinction between what is said and what is done. Despite the organizations claiming they were inclusive, within this instance, they maintained the status quo because it is easier to do than enact real change, a component of cultural power (Hill Collins, 1990). BC Soccer replied to Dom by saying that people are aware they cannot have their children on the sideline with them when they sign up, and that this is not their problem. Dom explained this response as “individualization, neoliberal bullshit.” MWSL has the power to make a change that allows mothers to participate in sport while their children are nearby, but instead they use their structural power to maintain their policies that work against mothers (Hill Collins, 1990). After the response from the league, Dom applied for a research grant and began collecting data, looking at case law and case studies to prove it was an equity issue. Before MWSL shut down Dom’s survey, in 24 hours she had gotten 200 replies from individuals saying that overwhelmingly people had no problem with children on the sidelines. Ironically, MWSL asked Dom to prove scope, but then shut down the survey that was meant to prove scope.

After collecting and presenting the data, Dom said that BC soccer hired an equity, diversity and inclusion person to address the issue. A year later Dom proclaimed that nothing had happened. Gorski (2019a) contended that activists face the unfortunate norm that systemic change moves incredibly slowly. Dom, and a student who worked on the project with her, were

asked to be on an expert panel to investigate BC Soccer policies and she said that they have done literally nothing. Dom was obviously frustrated as she explained that MWSL “doubled down, and now they *officially* changed the rule to say *no kids allowed* on the sideline. I was like *what*, so they went in the opposite direction, and this is a women's league.” The irony that a league for women will not reconsider a policy that excludes women from playing is not lost on Dom. McGannon et al. (2018) identified that mothers who played sports would sometimes need to incorporate their children into their training, which MWSL could have assisted with. Dom proclaimed that MWSL is creating barriers, “not because they don't have time and are not aware, [but] acknowledging and then saying no.” This official rule change fueled Dom and she plans to collect data in a more formal way moving forward, but the organization has not made it easy. Dom stated that in an ideal world, the league would have worked with her and used her resources as an educator, her ability to get research students and her research funding to create inclusive change that helps mothers feel meaningfully welcomed. Dom’s narrative that centers on a mainstream organization not facilitating change or inclusion is in stark contrast to the Mabel League that has the capability and the want to create inclusive change. Specifically, Nat’s earlier example regarding hiring an ASL interpreter in the Mabel League, an alternative sporting organization, showed how this league was able to swiftly address the equity issue. MWSL is a dominant organization and its policies reproduced structural power (Hill Collins, 1990) by maintaining the rule that no child should be on the sideline.

How Social Change is Facilitated

This section investigates how activists push for social change. Moreover, it speaks about how activists approach the world they want to see and how they go about changing it. Dom works within the system, being a part of existing sporting structures and looking to change them

from within. Gómez et al., (2008) identified this structure as governing bodies that regulate and administer sport focusing on development, rules, administration, regular competition and regulations. Alternatively, Nat and Rosalin, with their associations to the Mabel League and IPACC respectively, are part of organizations that created their own systems outside of mainstream sport in a way that reflects their understandings of what sport should be. Gómez et al. (2008) described these spaces as entities working to fulfill a community's need to achieve physical activity and maintain social ties through sport. Mainstream sports look to govern sport disciplines whereas sport outside of dominant structures work to deliver sporting programs focused on community and connection. How change is understood between participants could be vastly different based on whether one is fighting within or outside of mainstream structures.

While awareness of sport inequities is important, change is what affects individual and group experiences. Dom works within dominant sporting systems to enact change and faults these organizations for talking about equity, diversity and inclusion instead of acting. In the example above regarding the 'no child on the sideline' policy, Dom explained that BC Soccer released a diversity and inclusion policy, but failed to act on an inclusion concern, otherwise known as performative activism (Thimsen, 2022). Dom contended that organizations will often offer workshops related to equity, diversity and inclusion such as 'how to get more girls into baseball' but believes that organizations should "just tell us that you're doing this and that you're going to set some policy, or some procedures to make baseball a safe space for girls and women, that's it, take it from the top." She says this way people cannot get lazy and view this kind of work as optional. Organizations have the structural power (Hill Collins & Bilge, 2020) to make changes that increase inclusion, and yet in many cases they do not because it is easier to maintain current practices. Cultural power talks about how the status quo gets reproduced (Hill Collins,

1990) and in this case the current norms center on hegemonic masculinity and the dominance of masculinity (Grindstaff & West, 2011). It is important to have policies, but as Thimsen (2022) explained, action is more important than talk.

Dom advocates for organizations to do better. She suggested that organizations talk about “financial responsibility, fiscal conservatism, fiduciary responsibilities to the board, efficiency, all these business terms for streamlining and making things as direct as possible,” that “almost always run in opposition to inclusion.” Dom contended that inclusion brings people with varying needs together so the focus should not be on efficiency but rather identifying and accommodating individual needs. This thinking aligns with intersectionality which recognizes how one’s overlapping identities may contribute to their exclusion (Hill Collins & Bilge, 2020). Kiuppis (2016) reiterated that inclusion is ensuring a minimum standard that everyone can participate in sport should they choose. Inclusion centers on meaningful belonging. Dom brought up auditing registration systems to be more inclusive, in particular Team Snap’s use of the gender binary. For people to sign up onto this app, a platform that allows athletes to chat with one another, view their schedule and indicate their availability, they must identify as either a male or female. When Dom told the league this was exclusive, the league said that they do not control the registration system. Gómez et al. (2018) spoke about how the process of organizational change is a shift in the normative logic that has traditionally determined operations. This organizational change happens through processes of bureaucratization, rationalization or professionalization, relating to a process that moves away from amateur logic and towards formalization (Gómez et al. (2018). This organizational change is slow moving and disrupts current norms, reasons why organizations may shy away from change. Structural power allows organizations like MWSL to maintain discriminatory practices that exclude people, in this

example people who do not fit the gender binary (Hill Collins, 1990). MWSL did not enact organizational change, instead sticking with their existing operations and standing alongside Team Snap. Cultural power legitimizes oppression by maintaining the status quo, in this case not changing its operations. Dom suggested that if the binary gender options cannot be changed, then the league should stop using Team Snap and provide a statement that they “don’t work with vendors that can’t... provide gender inclusive services.” To move away from Team Snap may cause more work for the organization to source a new app or it could cause confusion for the players, but it is palpable action, even in the face of hardship, that truly makes an organization inclusive.

Defining how an activist understands their success is important. Nat contended that their role is to dismantle systems such as ableism, racism, transphobia and fat phobia that are ingrained into society. Looking at social context, or the political, historical and intellectual landscape of each country is an important link to intersectionality (Hill Collins & Bilge, 2020). For example, the Mabel League exists within Vancouver, a city that includes Davie Village, the heart of the gay community covered in rainbow flags (Gay Vancouver, Canada, n.d.), whereas multiple countries sentence people to death for being part of the LGBTQ2IA+ community (Abdi & Van Gilder, 2016). The fact that the Mabel League exists points to underlying problems in that queer people do not always feel included within mainstream sport, however, the Mabel League being able to exist denotes progress compared to other countries, exemplifying that progress is not always linear and is needed from many angles. While Vancouver is by no means free of homophobia, the Mabel League members can freely play and promote their queer league. The Mabel Leagues existence is advancement as the league flourishes within a sporting culture that is not built for queer people and does not want them to succeed. Nat is adamant that inclusion

works by not only pointing to the problem but coming up with a solution. In other words, they feel that inclusion must be put into practice. Calow (2022) explained that using intersectionality as a critical framework can lead to solutions as it allows for exploration into how power and change operate and what categories are unmarked or unaccounted for. All the activists in this study identified problems that were not being addressed and were working to address them. Nat by creating belonging in the Mabel League, Rosalin by facilitating inclusion within IPACC and Dom by furthering equitable sporting practices within girls and women's soccer. By identifying what is unmarked or unaccounted, activists can look to address these absences and further inclusion.

The way that sporting organizations are built, either within or outside of mainstream sports, can affect one's activism. The Mabel League is a league built on inclusivity and a space where queer people can set their own guidelines. Rosalin founded IPACC to fight for change and improve access for Indigenous people. Looking at both the Mabel League and IPACC, both organizations were created as entities outside of mainstream organizations to fulfil a need rooted in community and physical activity (Gómez et al., 2008). Dom, in line with improving sporting culture, spoke about activism as butting up against an established norm. She contended that the root of activism is wanting to change something and that there are many ways that this change can happen, hence the varying forms of activism. Calow (2022) agreed that there is a myriad of ways to do activism within sport including peaceful yet public protests, visibility as activism, or an action that challenges the status quo, such as Naomi Osaka refusing to speak to the press due to mental health reasons, sparking conversations regarding sport pressures and mental health. Engaging with how each interviewee perceives their activism is important to understanding their successes.

Nat spoke incredibly fondly of the Mabel League, calling it an activist league based on the decisions they made at critical points. Agyemang et al. (2020) pointed to organizations like the Negro Leagues that pushed for legitimacy and recognition during an openly racist time. The Negro Leagues were created for Black people to participate within sport when they would normally be excluded (Agyemang et al., 2020), just as the Mabel League was born to include queer people in sport spaces that do not automatically accept them. Although these leagues have similarities, it is important to note that power plays out differently. The Negro Leagues occurred in defiance of laws that kept Black Americans segregated, exemplifying structural power that legitimizes oppression and injustice (Hill Collins, 1990). Outside of some legislation working to exclude trans people from sport, queer people can play sport and yet they still felt the need to create a league exclusive to themselves, likely because within sport, the status quo of heteronormativity is reinforced, relating to cultural power (Hill Collins, 1990). Both leagues are examples of activism as they existed or exist within environments that are not accepting of particular people (Kavoura et al., 2021).

Nat contended that the ultimate indicator of achieving their goal as an activist league “is whether we're committing to making those decisions in a socially responsible manner.” Nat identified a situation showing that the Mabel League makes important and difficult decisions. Already mentioned was the story of a Mabel League team called the Heavy Hitters that had people who identified as fat on their team. The league worked on getting the correct amount of inclusive sizing after they had not consulted the players and did not buy enough merchandise. Unfortunately, Nat explained that due to the COVID-19 pandemic supply chain issues, they once again could not order enough inclusive size options. He detailed that the league had merchandise in traditional sizes, but they chose to only sell items that everyone could purchase, significantly

reducing the amount of merchandise they could sell and frustrating traditionally sized participants that could no longer purchase specific merchandise. Nat explained that,

the major consideration here is who's experiencing more harm in this situation? The people who don't have the opportunity to purchase the merchandise at all based on the shape of their body, or the people who want to purchase merchandise and can purchase any number of things but can't... So that's been really eye opening from a leadership perspective about having to make those choices and say, okay, we're going to disappoint a bunch of people, but this is our position, and this is how we're going to reduce the amount of harm to our community, to a particularly marginalized group amongst a larger marginalized group.

In this example, Nat demonstrated the need for their organization to ensure that no more harm was perpetuated. Moreover, Nat speaks to intersectionality when referring to a marginalized group within a marginalized group, pointing to the multilayered understanding of identities. This decision made people angry, but it showed the values of the league. By acting on a problem, they demonstrated their activism rooted in inclusivity.

Nat brought up another story focused on trans inclusivity which occurred before they were a member. Nat described how the Mabel League was forced to take a stance on trans players. Nat explained that the league decided that they are,

not in the business of excluding people based on their gender identity, nor are we a league that would exclude someone based on the colour of their skin. Nor are we a league that would exclude someone based on their ability.

Nat points to the inclusion of trans people as purposeful action and further proof of the Mabel League being an activist league. Furthermore, Nat also recognized intersectionality, highlighting

that their league is inclusive of all genders, races and abilities. Nat pointed to specific stories of what activism in their league looks like, but they also identified the Mabel League as a training ground to practice inclusivity, with the broader goal of Mabel League members standing up for equity in their everyday lives. This type of thought process speaks to sport entities outside of mainstream organizations that have an ideology of creating community, both inside and outside of sport (Gómez et al., 2008). The stories given show that in the face of hardship, or the face of loss, choosing to act is what defines an activist. Including trans people in the Mabel League showed their commitment to inclusion and shows their commitment to activism.

The member backlash that Nat and their league received for deciding to protect a marginalized group related to equitable merchandise purchase proves that activism is not always easy. This raises questions about who has the time to be an activist, who gets to be an activist, who has enough resources to be successful and what does successful activism look like? Fighting for sport inclusion, especially surrounded by people who do not accept what you are doing or actively get in your way, is difficult.

Difficulties in Relation to Social Change

Activism, for many, is a job outside of their regular job and requires a lot of work. There are many considerations for being an activist including one's career, needing support from multiple people to be successful and burnout. One's career may be taken into account when determining how aggressively they fight for an issue. Dom spoke about the added consideration she takes when identifying social justice issues in her career as a college instructor. Dom recognized that this job pays her bills so she is hesitant about hurting someone's feelings or getting in trouble with the Dean. The fear of disciplinary power (Hill Collins & Bilge, 2020) is relevant when Dom decides how outspoken she can be about inclusion within her career. Nguyen

et al. (2017), although discussing athlete activism, echoed a similar sentiment that speaking up against dominant culture poses risks for one's career. Dom juxtaposed this with her personal life and how she can be much more pronounced with her activism. Depending on the space someone is in, one has to take careful consideration on how they proceed. Being considerate of the environment and making adjustments for one's own job security was spoken about by Melton and Bryant (2017) in regard to women in high level or long term roles adjusting their communication styles in the workplace. Having to adjust one's style of communication to fit in relates to cultural power (Hill Collins & Bilge, 2020) in that women are implicitly encouraged to change their way of speaking to abide by the dominant norms. Cultural power may also dictate which communication style should be used by within work spaces which is reinforced within media, community, school, religion and family history (Allan, 2006; Hill Collins, 1990). The workplace, depending on the cultural norms, may hinder the full extent of one's activism work.

Money is another reason that activists may not be able to create as much change as they desire. One reason that someone might be hesitant to fight too loudly within their career is because with a career comes money. Individual activists might not fully fight for inclusion within their profession if they fear losing their livelihood. This is like how organizations might struggle to decide on what is just when money gets involved. Money, as shown in previous examples, can act as an excuse not to be inclusive. Nonprofit organizations will almost always struggle to balance their funds. Nat talked about money being an issue in the Mabel League. For example, Nat spoke of the high costs associated with bringing in a professional to do educational seminars on equity, diversity and inclusion. Nat identified that this decision was not taken lightly, but that the league felt it paramount to demonstrate both that this work is important and to provide resources for other members of the league to put into action. When working with

small amounts of money, organizations must thoroughly consider what they find important and use their money thoughtfully.

Being an activist is incredibly hard to do alone. Gorski (2019b) spoke about the term ‘activism-related stress’ which is a chronic condition where stress becomes so overwhelming it debilitates an activist from continuing. These stressful moments were echoed by the participants. Nat revealed that activism takes a lot of work and energy and sometimes they do not have the capacity for it. In a perfect world, Nat hoped that in the moments where they cannot help, that someone else will have the bandwidth to step in. Dom also talked about the strength in multiple people working together. She said that being an activist on your own is difficult in that people who can create change are able to conveniently say that there is no scope to the issue if only one person is bringing it to their attention. She suggested that “when you individualize activism, it's a great response by those in the seats of power, or bystanders who are complicit, to deflect the scale of the issue.” Dom suggested that these people wrongly think the issue is individual and feel less inclined to investigate it further. Having multiple people voicing the need for change may better convince companies and organizations to act.

Not having the time for activism or burning out also came up as a theme for the interviewees. Dom said that some people don't have the time or energy and “being told no, too many times, they go fuck it, I tried, honestly, I tried. And then they just continue to do whatever they do, or quit, or leave.” Creating a space where positive change is so difficult forces people to eventually stop trying. Rosalin spoke about wanting to create a women's advisory council within IPACC for likeminded people to come together, but when this idea did not come to fruition, recognized that sometimes people are too extended. Dom agreed with this, mentioning that the

people who do this kind of work are often the people who have a lot going on. All the of these narratives provide examples of the difficulties in enacting social change.

Enabling Social Change

This section speaks to what helps enable social change. Broadly, resources, whether that be finances, education or one's career, as well as community are highlighted as components that assist social change. Wilson et al. (2015) detailed that having greater access to resources can provide greater success within activism. A resource that came up multiple times was money. Rosalin revealed that it cost \$18,000 to put on her yearly IPACC conference and \$40,000 to start up her nonprofit organization. After experiencing lateral violence from other Indigenous organizations, Rosalin's husband wondered why she did not start her own company, so Rosalin did. Unfortunately, not everyone has the time, resources and support to create such important networks in the face of adversity, relating to social class within intersectionality (Hill Collins & Bilge, 2020). If one is in a lower social class, they would not have the resources, specifically the money, needed to create an organization in the face of inequity. In this case, the individual is forced to stay in an unjust situation, find another organization that is more inclusive, or drop out of sport.

Relating to sports-based activism, resources can exist physically or within an individual. Yan et al. (2018) spoke about the concept of resource mobilization, a notion rooted in the idea that the strengths of a movement are determined by material and immaterial nature, for example communication, time, labour, money and solidarity. Wilson et al. (2015) echoed this sentiment, identifying that expertise in advertising, funding and connections with journalists are all factors that could influence success. Even though Rosalin created an organization and not a social movement, the importance of resources is still relevant. Rosalin was able to use her academic

background, applying for research grants and tapping into available resources in her community to help. Dom also spoke about her career as a post-secondary instructor as being highly beneficial to her activism. Dom admitted she is in a privileged position, where if she is told by an organization to prove scope, she can easily access research money and find keen students to work on these projects, privileges that are not readily available to others. Again, it is important to think about social class in relation to who is privy to resources that might enable social change. Dom talked about herself being a resource and how sports clubs normally do not have someone in academia at their disposal. Despite Dom's resources, the Metro Women's Soccer League still did not utilize her to solve an equity issue that Dom identified.

A large theme that came up within the narratives was an idea that activism takes multiple community members to be successful. Nat spoke about the Mabel League's inclusion of trans people and how they bring important perspectives that would not exist in a room of cisgender people. He suggested that having more voices in the room is always better. This idea of multiple voices in the room as beneficial relates to how intersectionality highlights the complexities of one's identity (Hill Collins & Bilge, 2020), with each person providing a unique perspective. Dom talked about how sometimes she does not "want to have to put my Dom the pit bull hat on, I just want to play," referring to her want to be an athlete without the extra burden of activism. This sentiment articulates the need for multiple people to be involved because one person cannot take it all on. Hill Collins (1990), when discussing interpersonal power, talked about the many ways that people from all sorts of identities practice social justice in small yet powerful ways. Dom went on to talk about the multiple forms of activism, citing that,

you need someone who shines the light on something, and then maybe they pass the torch to another person who then is in a position where they are the people who write the

policy, or they work in the media, or they love going to marches, or they love knocking on politicians' doors.

By relying on each person's strengths and opportunities afforded, collectively there is a better chance of creating inclusive sporting environments.

The final section of the Results and Discussion section focused on activism impact, outlining family dynamics and sport policy, how social change is facilitated as well as the difficulties and enablers related to social change. First, I looked at family dynamics and sport policy, looking specifically looking at how Dom attempted to fight against a policy that excluded mothers in an organization made for girls and women, and how even in the face of evidence, change does not always occur. Next, I spoke about how social change is facilitated, either within mainstream structures like Dom within MSWL and NSGSC or outside of dominant sport organizations like Nat within the Mabel League and Rosalin within IPACC. After, difficulties in relation to social change were discussed including a fear of losing one's career and activism related stress. Lastly, social change enablers were touched upon, with participants citing resources as being beneficial to activism. Moreover, interviewees recognized that multiple activists working towards a mutual goal are necessary to see true change. All these topics relate to the extent of one's impact within their activism.

Chapter 6. Conclusions and Recommendations

This concluding section is written in multiple segments. First, I overview the main themes that arose when speaking to the interviewees. Second, I outline the contributions my research adds to the field. Third, I explain my reflexive journey and the learnings I developed throughout writing this piece. Fourth, I share recommendations the participants and myself gave related to activism within sport and how to ensure sport spaces are more equitable. Lastly, I end this thesis by talking about why I wrote this document and what I hope to come of it.

Overview of Findings

The purpose of this research was to employ narrative methodology to engage with the activist experiences of Canadian women and nonbinary sports-based individuals. Particularly, my research aimed to look at the inequitable and discriminatory practices within sport, how identity is related to activism, and the perceived impact activists felt they had on local and sporting communities. I utilized narrative inquiry to prioritize the stories of the participants, leaning on photo elicitation to further the goal of storytelling. I interviewed three exceptionally talented and determined people and identified multiple themes related to the research questions.

I first looked at sport as an inequitable system, and how individuals navigate sports' often unjust and discriminatory culture. The interviewees confirmed that sport is exclusionary, citing that sport is made for a specific group of privileged folks and the other people that get to play are meant to be happy about it. They recognized that girls, women, queer people, those with disabilities and racialized individuals have added barriers within sport as the system is not created with them in mind. These social categories are relevant to intersectionality, which explains that everyone has multiple identities that cannot be separated (Hill Collins & Bilge,

2020). Family was identified in explaining that societal norms dictate the seemingly unsuitable marriage of motherhood and high-level sport. Rather than forcing a choice between motherhood and sport, sporting organizations should put more thought into how they can meaningfully engage mothers. People may experience added barriers if they hold multiple identities that the sporting system was not built for. Many researchers have argued that the current norm of hegemonic masculinity within sport, a concept that centers on masculine dominance, makes it challenging for those who are not white, masculine men to meaningfully be included within sport (Cooky, 2017; Grindstaff & West, 2011; Harvey et al., 2013; Mann & Krane, 2019). This standard of exclusion stands in opposition to reworking the system to have sport meaningfully benefit all. Since sport is seen as inherently positive and a symbol of status, it does not receive the scrutiny that is needed to improve. Dom, Rosalin and Nat all identified that for sport to be more inclusive, everyone, including those who love and appreciate sport, must be critical of sport structures, processes and norms, particularly within recreational sports that are often highlighted as positive. Next, barriers were discussed in terms of inequity. All three participants identified multiple barriers to sport including finances, lack of transportation, accessibility and not adequately engaging stakeholders, however intersectionality explains that not all people experience barriers in the same way. Social class (Nobis & El-Kayed., 2019), gender (DuBose, 2022), disability (Kiuppis, 2018) and race (Mason et al., 2019) were identified as factors that influenced how likely a person is to engage with sport.

Secondly, I explored questions of identity to learn more about the participants' identities in relation to their activism. Categorization came up, with participants identifying that sport can facilitate stereotypes and discrimination when the complexities of intersecting identities are overlooked. The hardships faced in sport coaching from women was brought up by Rosalin and

is echoed by multiple scholars (Benzing, 2022; Burton, 2015; DuBose, 2022; Kluch, Y., 2023; McGannon et al., 2018; Melton & Bryant, 2017; Nguyen et al., 2017; Schull & Kihl, 2019).

Despite categorization at times facilitating stereotypes, categorization of sport can also encourage belonging. Spaaij et al. (2015), Spaaij (2015) and Mason et al. (2021) contended that people seek out belonging, a sentiment that holds true within sport. Dom advocates for sport and social justice mainly within women only sporting environments, Nat within the Mabel League champions queer spaces and Rosalin in IPACC supports sport and physical activity curated specifically for Indigenous people. All three participants sought out or created very specific sporting organizations that allowed them to feel better represented. These organizations promote belonging for people with certain identities. The excitement, acceptance, understanding and pride I heard from each narrative surrounding their league or organization was palpable and a sign of how important it is for athletes to find spaces that include them. When people can find belonging in a group it is often special, however, groups that share identities do not always share beliefs. Multiple scholars identified that discrimination amongst likeminded groups is prevalent (Kavoura et al., 2021; Tran et al., 2022; Gunn et al., 2010; Whyman et al., 2021). It was explained how people who have the same identity as them can still perpetuate hate and harm towards them or the group they are a part of. These experiences highlight the need for intersectionality that recognizes each person as unique and the overlapping identities that they carry (Allan, 2006; Hill Collins, 1990; Hill Collins & Bilge, 2020).

Lastly, and possibly most relevant to activism, I asked about impact. I wondered what the activists thought they were achieving in the community. Dom's narrative about her fight against a women's sporting system that neglected to support mothers shows how sport policy can be exclusive towards mothers. Literature has aligned with this finding, explaining that at the

intersection of being a woman and a mother, more barriers arise that deter mothers from sport and coaching (Benzing, 2022; DuBose, 2022; Kluch, 2023; McGannon et al., 2018; Melton & Bryant, 2017; Nguyen et al., 2017; Schull & Kihl, 2019). Regarding how sport is organized, Gómez et al., (2008) explained how multiple sporting bodies exist, including mainstream sporting culture and other external leagues or organizations created out of a need that could not be fulfilled by conventional avenues. Regardless of how an organization is situated, the activists agreed that organizations should create policies that foster inclusivity and more importantly they should ensure these policies are being followed to facilitate social change actively and purposefully. All three participants identified the need for multiple activists working in tandem, in different ways, using their varied resources, as the only way to successfully further the goal of sport inclusion. Simply stated, activism is difficult and no one person can create the change that is required to overcome a sporting culture rooted in hegemonic masculinity (Cooky, 2017; Grindstaff & West, 2011; Mann & Krane, 2019; Harvey et al., 2013), just as no one activist wants to take on the stressful burden (Gorski, 2019b) of navigating inequitable sport spaces alone.

Within the interviews, each participant was asked to bring a picture of their activism which aided in rapport building but more importantly allowed each participant to express their activism in a meaningful way that was not confined by my interview questions, adding to the narrative methodology. The participants shared meaningful moments related to coaching, their sporting journeys and the small injustices they face daily. Many of the activists' narratives relating to uniforms, disability, finances and motherhood relate to how sporting organizations make decisions and enforce policy. Broadly speaking, structural power interlaces within these themes as these issues seem to be symptoms of how organizations are structured to reproduce the

oppression of one group, perpetuating segregation and oppression (Hill Collins, 1990). Moreover, cultural power dictates that the status quo continues to be reproduced, linking other facets of power together (Hill Collins, 1990). The narratives reveal that the structure of an organization can dictate its power. Dom is involved with a dominant sporting structure where things are slow to change and the system produces barriers whereas Nat's stories within the Mabel League show that alternative organizations can deemphasize their oppression by lessening structural power and changing cultural norms. Furthermore, Rosalin, having created her own organization, has the freedom to create the rules that their organization abides by. This research explores the dynamics of power and change within activism efforts.

Intersectionality was explored within the narratives to show different axes such as race, gender, sexuality, disability and social class (Hill Collins & Bilge, 2020), and how these factors interact within sport landscapes. A critical approach, which was also used to analyze the data, mirrors an intersectional framework in that it examines identities in how they contribute to advantages and disadvantages in society (Sparkes & Smith, 2014). When understanding power dynamics and who is oppressed in each situation, it is important to consider the full range of identities of an individual, as identities cannot be separated from each other and are ever present as people move through life and sport. When using intersectionality as a tool to critically analyze literature and narratives, categories such as relationality, inequality, social justice, complexity, social context and power became relevant (Hill Collins & Bilge, 2020). Within sport inequity, it is integral to consider how each problem can be related to one another, how problems are often connected by power relations, how inequality persists and how social justice is needed to change. Furthermore, the narratives spoke to how exclusion, activism and power are complex and dependent on the context. The dynamics of power, including interpersonal, cultural,

structural and disciplinary can be seen throughout the stories and were used to analyze the narratives (Hill Collins & Bilge, 2020). Participant narratives have detailed the ways in which powerful people, organizations and norms can stand in the way of inclusion. Particularly, many of the activist stories were rooted within an organization, some being dominant structures where structural power played out to segregate groups and others where alternative leagues used their power to address instances of inequity (Hill Collins, 1990). By looking at activism through an intersectional lens, one can see how gender, race, social class, disability and sexuality interweave and present various circumstances in which power and oppression occur. Overall, an intersectional and critical approach is necessary when examining issues such as sport inequity, and solutions such as activism, as situations are riddled with complexities and interlocking power dynamics that cannot be explained by a single and standalone identity. In relation to sports-based activism, one person will not change the sporting culture, but multiple people working in multiple different ways to dismantle a system made for certain members of society will slowly and eventually make a difference.

Contributions

My study contributed to the field of sport sociology by offering three nuanced experiences of sports-based activism, to encourage further activism to create more equitable sport environments, and provide ideas for organizations to be more inclusive. Within academia, this research offers a starting point to further explore intersectional stories of women and nonbinary sports-based activists. The participants were not only athletes, but also held multiple roles in sport as coaches, board members, volunteers, and leaders. This study added more voices to the field of sports activism, recognizing that everyone has a unique story. By interviewing sports-based activists, it might encourage more activist research to be done on people beyond the

athlete, especially since people who are embedded within sport organizations arguably have the most sway in altering policy and creating tangible change. By highlighting instances of activism, as well as the many ways it can be done, the hope would be that more people would feel comfortable stepping up to ensure equity in their sport, however stepping up means to them. The recommendations section later on details how the three participants believe that sport can be made more equitable, citing tangible ways to foster social justice, a component of using intersectionality as an analytical tool (Hill Collins & Bilge, 2020)

Reflexivity

Throughout the entire process, I engaged in reflexivity. Berger (2015) defined reflexivity as a continual dialogue with oneself to critically evaluate one's own positionality, while acknowledging that the researcher's position may affect the outcomes. In other words, it is an active and ongoing process of examining one's own beliefs and judgements, taking a critical approach to understand why the researcher might be thinking the way they are. I was mindful about reflexivity throughout the entire process, but I think being able to look back on the final product and analyze my own thought processes has produced the richest reflexivity.

A reflexive moment for myself was when I discovered that a lot of the work I was referencing was written by white people. That did not sit well with me, as the point of my research is to broaden the academic field of athlete activism to include diverse perspectives. To counteract this in my paper, a peer encouraged me to seek out nonacademic sources to represent the topic more thoroughly. Including nonacademic sources such as online articles and podcasts acknowledges that these pieces have relevant and important ideas. Furthermore, it recognizes the barriers that marginalized people may face in getting to the level of academia where one can publish a journal article or enter sport studies. Hapeta et al. (2019) noted a limitation of their

study on sport, inclusion and ethnicity within the Māori culture was that they only included peer-reviewed articles and did not review dissertations. When Hapeta et al. (2019) listed this limitation, they questioned whether all voices were being heard and who was silenced. Including sources outside of academia in my thesis strives to include a multitude of opinions and perspectives, better representing the field of sport activism.

A big learning I had throughout this process and continue to think about is intersectionality. At the beginning of writing about intersectionality, I was using the term interchangeably with marginalization, falsely stating that if one had interconnecting identities then they would be marginalized. What I now understand is that everyone has intersecting identities that shape how we walk through life. I was always taught that through an intersectional lens, there were certain identities that hold more power and certain identities that hold more oppression. Furthermore, I was taught that the more oppressive identities a person holds, the harder society makes their life, whereas the more privileged identities one has translates to more power in their life. While I do still think these thoughts have merit, I acknowledge that it is more complicated than saying certain identities will marginalize someone. It is more likely that people hold a range of identities, some that might be dominant or normalized in society and some that might cause certain people to discriminate against them. Moreover, one's environments can shift the narrative of power or oppression even when one's identities remain the same. I hope to continue to ponder the complexities and nuances embedded within intersectionality.

Another concept that I have been mulling over and learning about is categorization. I almost always had a negative connotation related to the categorization of people. This thought was rooted in my perception that categorization silos people, decides that groups are homogenous and makes stereotypical assumptions from there. I wrote a draft section within this

thesis on the negative aspects of categorization, and then my supervisor posed the question ‘doesn’t the Mabel League categorize people?’ The Mabel League absolutely categorizes people who identify as queer or allies. When posed this question, I thought about how much passion Nat felt for the league and I thought about all the stories of activism, belonging and community he had shared with me. This shifted my interpretation. Instead of viewing categorization as always negative, now I can view categorization through the lens of intention. If the intention is to group people together to stereotype them then it is negative, however, if the intention is to create a space outside of the dominant sporting culture to allow groups to express themselves more freely, then this form of categorization is beneficial.

The title of my project has also caused me to reflect. When I was deciding on my topic, I knew I wanted to focus on women. I have seen firsthand as well as through my academic studies how unjust sporting environments are for girls and women. When I talked to someone who was initially going to help with recruitment, they asked if nonbinary people could participate and I knew I wanted to meaningfully include them in the study. I initially settled on the term nonbinary as I was more familiar with this word and had used it in my everyday vocabulary. In speaking to an individual who is involved in research surrounding LGBTQ2IA+ individuals, I was told that queer would be an accurate and encompassing term, although the definition has room to be even more representative. I stuck with the term queer all throughout my proposal writing but was having a hard time as men can be queer people too, however my intention was never to interview men and I did not. Finally, I came back to the term nonbinary and settled on that for my title. The title including the word nonbinary is meant to foster inclusion, not to be the focus, as the emphasis is intended to be on intersectionality. Despite my intentions, nearly everyone I speak to assumes that the focus of my thesis is queer people. I submitted my abstract

to a conference and their comments spoke about trans people, even though the word trans is never mentioned. Moreover, I went to another conference to speak about my paper, and everyone encouraged me to go to the session rooted in queerness. These reactions made me pause as I was interested in gathering stories from a variety of diverse sports-based activists who are women or nonbinary. For this thesis, I wanted to hone in on intersectionality and diversity, not queerness as so many others believe. Despite this, the word nonbinary becomes a key focus for nearly everyone who reads it. These reactions are interesting to me as I have not gotten the same reaction to the word women. People have not hyper focused on the gender aspects of the thesis in the same way they have fixated on the queerness. Getting these reactions have been an interesting insight into the thought processes of others, however, I stand by my title and I stand by the inclusion it represents.

In a few settings where I have discussed this thesis, I have been asked about my own activism. Frankly, I am confused because I do not know if I can call myself one. I shy away from the term activist for two reasons, the first being my skin colour. Being white, I constantly battle within myself about the spaces in which I should speak and the spaces in which I should stay silent. Daily, I participate in the process of racialization and I have experience being racist as I uphold racist structures, so I work to intentionally take space only when it is necessary and needed. The second reason I am hesitant to call myself an activist is because I could do so much more. This also relates to me holding many privileged identities as I have the privilege of deciding when I want to promote or stand up for inclusion and the privilege of deciding when I want to take a break. These scrambled thoughts likely came out in my decision to write about this topic, in the participants I chose, the questions I asked, the way that I interpreted the narratives and I am sure in ways that I cannot even identify. When speaking to Dom, she said

that being a white, straight activist gives her the privilege of being able to continue to speak out regarding inequities, and still being invited back to the table, a fate that not all others have.

Keeping this in mind, I hope to use my own privileges to continue to fight for social justice.

The more that I developed this project and the deeper I went into it, I realized how much I curated this thesis. Initially I spoke about emerging themes, but it was pointed out to me that the themes did not emerge, I chose them. I also chose the topic, had a big hand in selecting participants through purposive criterion based sampling, decided on narrative inquiry and narrative analysis through an intersectional and critical framework, chose the interview questions, undoubtedly asked variations of each question to participants, added my own thoughts into the interview, decided on the themes, put participant quotes under the sections I wanted to and wrote the discussion incorporating my thoughts, experiences and biases. The learning from this is that had any one of these variables changed, this thesis might look completely different. The learning is that I asked for stories, participants decided what they wanted to tell me, and I interpreted the narratives. This is to say that this paper is a product of social interactions dependent on context, in line with my critical subjectivist approach (Tamminen & Poucher, 2020). This paper and the narratives throughout are not representative of the truth (Tamminen & Poucher, 2020), but instead represent the stories that were told to me and how I interpreted them. This is a beautiful aspect of narrative inquiry in that storytelling will always be necessary. I could get three different people and the themes could completely change. I could get the same three participants I spoke to, ask them different questions and the paper might completely change. Or, I could speak to the same three people ten years from now using the same questions and the paper might completely change. Narratives will always have a place within research as stories and experiences constantly shift for multiple reasons. As I move through life, I hope to be

intentionally reflective, to continue to take a stand personally and publicly for social justice and to never let past thoughts or ideas hinder my growth.

Recommendations

In this section, I review what the interviewees identified as key components to making an organization more equitable. I asked each participant what they would include on a checklist for an organization to be more inclusive. Dom recognized that organizations need to act when members come forward with needs and that putting the burden on the individual to change their circumstances is unjust. Moreover, Dom believes that organizations should be at the forefront of equitable change through their actions, not simply offering equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) workshops that people can opt out of. Rosalin identified that it is integrally important that organizations represent the community they work, live and play in. This means that people in all levels of companies should share identities with members of the community they serve. Nat believes it is important to mandate EDI workshops and that organizations should financially back this education to show its importance. Nat also recognized the power of being very clear in the code of conduct and explicitly stating expectations. Lastly, Nat brought the conversation to a personal level, indicating that it is important that when we see something we say something. He spoke about formal grievances being a good part of an organization, but a very key piece is to stand up for social justice inside and outside of sport, to stand up for what one believes in, and to stand up for those that are tired of standing up for themselves.

Personally, I think inclusion should be focused on before it becomes a problem. In many of the examples, an injustice was identified and the activists were working on change, however if facets of inclusion were woven into the framework of the sporting organizations, then many of these problems would not arise. Examples of embedding inclusivity into the framework of an

organization include incorporating codes of conduct in relation to discrimination in the waivers one signs to play, detailing consequences for bigoted language, preemptively brainstorming problems and solving them beforehand (i.e., creating policy that allows and encourages mothers to bring their children to the field in a women's soccer league), actively recruiting diverse members to their organization and having diverse leaders in the organization. I would also recommend that organizations listen to and seek out the opinions of those within their organization. Throughout this study, I listened to many stories from participants regarding how their voices were not heard, or how other's voices were not heard, which ultimately led to exclusion. I think organizations should be seeking feedback from their participants about how inclusive their practices are and what they can do to improve.

These recommendations from the participants and myself provide sport organizations with a few ways that they can support their participants. Some of the actions listed can be done immediately and some are long term strategies that require restructuring of entire systems. If anything was apparent within these interviews, it was that activism is difficult. In many instances, people, or organizations, must be willing to risk something to make all people feel meaningfully welcomed into their space.

Closing

Sport is a wonderful space for many and has almost always been a wonderful space for me. I love getting into a flow state nestled between optimal challenge and high skill where nothing else matters. I love the fresh air against my face, the team camaraderie, the sweat and the rosy cheeks. What I have never loved is how I was made to feel when I played sports with boys and now how I feel playing with men. I was always and still am, forced to prove that I can compete. Forced to prove that I can catch a disc before they throw me one. Forced to prove that I

can score before they pass me the soccer ball. This assumption of weakness based on my gender has bothered me my entire life and this injustice brought me to this master's thesis.

Even though I derive so much positivity from sport, I know that sport is not just. I can see sexism, homophobia, racism, ableism and more all around me and throughout all levels of sport. To understand that sport is inequitable is the first step in changing. After awareness, the second step is people facilitating change. These trailblazers are activists. The activists I interviewed are everyday people with impressive accolades and a love of sport. While they all go about it differently, they share a desire to improve sporting culture. They all share a want to help others belong within this world. They, despite being critical of sport like me, also derive joy, community and a sense of belonging from sporting spaces. I wanted to know why people ventured into activism and I wanted to know what they are doing to make sport more equitable. I wanted to hear stories and real-world experiences from people who fight for sport inclusion. I hope that the message of sports activism continues and leads to more equity within sport. I hope that young girls, women, nonbinary people, people who do not stereotypically present as their gender, racialized folks, disabled people and anyone who holds an identity that makes them feel excluded one day will not have to prove anything. I hope that people might exist joyfully within sport and I hope that one day people might be free to exuberantly exist in this world.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Interview Guide

Women and Nonbinary People Understandings of their Sports-based Activism

Interview #1

1. Icebreaker Question

- a. How did you get involved with (their specific organization)
 - i. How long have you been working/playing/volunteering etc. with them for?

2. Overall Sport Experience

- a. How did you get involved in sport?
- b. Why do you continue your involvement with sport?
- c. How has your involvement or perception of sport changed over time?
- d. What do you think it means to be inclusive within sport?

3. Activism Photo

- a. Can you tell me about the photo you brought with you today?
 - i. Why did you choose this photo?
 - ii. How do you see your activism portrayed throughout this photo?
 - iii. What does activism in sport mean to you?

4. Sports-Based Activism

- a. Tell me about an experience you have had advocating for social justice within sport.
 - i. How did you find yourself advocating for this issue?

5. Identity

- a. For this research project, my hope was to get a wide range of participants to better represent the field of sports-based activism including those who are racialized, uniquely abled, lgbtq2ia+ and more
 - i. Do any of these, or any other social categories, apply to you?
 - ii. Do you see these social factors playing a part in your activism?

Interview #2

6. Follow Up

- a. After the last interview, was there anything you wanted to add or elaborate on in regards to your sporting experience and/or activism?

7. Sport Culture

- a. What inequities do you see within sport?
- b. What do you think are the norms of your specific sporting environment?
 - i. How do the norms of your sport affect your activism?
- c. In what ways is sport important to your activism?
 - i. Why did you chose sport as a platform for activism?
- d. Since becoming a sports-based activist, what have reactions been like from your peers, coaches, the media etc.?

8. Activism Reflection

- a. What is the most rewarding part of your sport-based activism?
- b. What is the most challenging part of your sport-based activism?

9. Impacts

- a. What impact has your activism made on the sporting/local community?
- b. Is your activism successful? Why or why not?
 - i. How are you defining success?
 - ii. What resources did you have that made you successful in your activism?
(Money, support, website designers, journal connections, etc.)

10. Closing

- a. Are there any stories or experiences related to sport or activism that you would like to share?
- b. Is there anything related to the photo you spoke about last time that you would like to expand upon or add?

Appendix B

Letter of Initial Contact to Sport Organizations Women and Nonbinary People Understandings of their Sports based Activism

Dear [insert appropriate name of organization],

I hope this email finds you well.

My name is Hannah Sanvido and I am currently conducting my Master of Arts in Health, Outdoor, and Physical Education at the University of British Columbia. As part of the requirement for my master's degree, I am conducting a qualitative study that involves interviewing women and nonbinary people involved in sports-based activism centred on inclusion.

You are receiving this email in the hopes that you will be able to circulate the attached recruitment poster within your organization. This poster will help in allowing me to find research participants for my study. I am seeking women and nonbinary people who are 18 years of age or older involved in sports-based activism relating to inclusion. Participants should reside within Canada. The purpose of our study is to create a better understanding of sports-based activism surrounding inclusion in order to raise awareness regarding sports-based activism in hopes that sport spaces will be safer for all.

If you have any questions please reach out. If you are able to share this poster, we would sincerely appreciate your support.

Sincerely,

Hannah Sanvido (she/her)

BA Physical Education and Coaching | M.A. Health, Outdoor, and Physical Education
Graduate Student

Department of Curriculum & Pedagogy, The University of British Columbia | Working on the traditional, ancestral, unceded land of the Musqueam people.

Principal Investigator of the study:

LeAnne Petherick, Faculty of Education, Department of Curriculum and Pedagogy, University of British Columbia

Appendix C

Letter of Initial Contact to Participants Women and Nonbinary People Understandings of their Sports-based Activism

Dear [insert name of participant interested],

Thank you for expressing interest in my study. I am seeking women or nonbinary people who are 18 years of age or older and involved in activism surrounding sport and inclusion. If you meet these criteria and are still interested in the study, here are the next steps:

1. Please read, sign, and send back the consent form (attached to this email - Word and PDF, depending on your preference).
2. After receiving the signed consent form we will contact you to set up an initial interview

Please note that your participation is entirely voluntary, and you will be able to withdraw from the study at any time. There will be no adverse consequences if you decide not to participate. If you choose, your identity will be kept confidential.

Do not hesitate to write to me if you have any questions before signing the consent form. If you could let us know within 10 days, whether you decide to take part in the study, or not, this would be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Hannah Sanvido (she/her)

BA Physical Education and Coaching | M.A. Health, Outdoor, and Physical Education
Department of Curriculum & Pedagogy, The University of British Columbia
Working on the traditional, ancestral, unceded land of the Musqueam people.

Principal Investigator of the study:

LeAnne Petherick, Faculty of Education, Department of Curriculum and Pedagogy, University of British Columbia.

Recruiting Women and Nonbinary Folks involved in Sports-based Activism to Participate in a Research Interview



Who Can Participate?

- Those 18 years of age or older
- People involved in sport-based activism focused on inclusion
- Coaches, athletes, managers, referees, volunteers, etc.
- Racialized, LGBTQ2IA+, (dis)abled women and nonbinary folks are encouraged to apply



You will be asked to participate in two 30 to 60 minute interviews over zoom. If you are interested in participating or would like more information please contact Hannah Sanvido



This project is supported by funding from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

Ethics: H22-01951

Appendix E

Consent Form for Participants Women and Nonbinary People Understandings of their Sports-based Activism

Principal Investigator: Dr. LeAnne Petherick, Faculty of Education, Department of Curriculum and Pedagogy, University of British Columbia

Primary Contact and Co-Investigator: Hannah Sanvido, Faculty of Education, Department of Curriculum and Pedagogy, University of British Columbia

Co-Investigator: Dr. Shawn Forde, Faculty of Education, Department of Curriculum and Pedagogy, University of British Columbia

Sponsor:

This is a Social Science and Humanities Research (SSHRC) funded Master's project.

Why are we doing this study?

This project aims to create a better understanding of sports-based activism surrounding inclusion in order to create safer sporting spaces. With more activists in the sport sector, the goal would be to create a more inclusive and equitable sporting community.

What happens if you agree to participate in the study?

You will be contacted to schedule two 30-60-minute interviews with the co-investigator Hannah Sanvido at a time that is convenient for you. Before the first interview, you will be asked to send a picture representing your sports-based activism to Hannah. The second interview will be approximately 1 month after the initial interview. The interviews will be conducted through UBC's subscription to Zoom. I (Hannah) will ask you questions about:

1. Your sport journey and how you first got involved in sport
2. The sports-based activism picture you send to the research team
3. How your personal life experiences have shaped your activism
4. The inequities you see in sport
5. The impact of your activism
6. The most rewarding and most challenging parts of your sports-based activism

With your permission, I will record and then transcribe your interview. If you do not wish to be recorded, the interview will be documented with notes only. The transcription or notes from your interview will be sent to you for your approval, should you wish. You can withdraw from the study at any point and any data collected prior to your withdrawal will be removed. The total time required for the interview and follow-up communication will be less than two hours.

Project outcomes

We will share study results with all participants. Please include your contact information at the bottom of this form. We will be in touch at the end of the project to provide a copy of the report and information on when we will be presenting the results.

Risks

The risks are minimal, but topics discussed may raise issues or feelings that you would prefer not to speak about. You can leave the interview at any time, and you do not have to answer any questions that make you feel uncomfortable.

Benefits

There are no explicit benefits to you by taking part in this study. However, the interview will provide you with the opportunity to voice your opinions and experiences and will raise awareness regarding sports-based activism in hopes that sport spaces will become safer for all.

Measures to Maintain Confidentiality

All recordings related to the interviews and details of the project will be identified by a code number and will only be kept on the password-protected computers of the research team, in One Drive, UBC's approved secure storage space. When conducting the interview, you do not need to turn on your video camera, or you may choose to turn it on and have a team member delete the video recording directly after the interview. If you choose, you will be asked to select a pseudonym when beginning the interview and you will not be identified by name during the recording or within the interview transcript. A document connecting your real name with your corresponding pseudonym will be kept separate from other information about the study and encrypted. Data will be kept for five years at which point LeAnne will be responsible for destroying any electronic or hard copy data. If you desire, your identity will be kept confidential in any reports of the completed study, unless required by law.

Open access

The findings gathered from this research will be a part of a master's thesis, which is a publicly accessible document, and some findings may be published in an academic journal, or at conference presentations. The findings may also be shared in a community report or conference presentations. To protect confidentiality, any information you share will be de-identified in the publicly available document. It is important to note that once the information from this study is made publicly available, you will no longer be able to withdraw your input. Given the nature of the research and interview questions, there is no greater risk associated with your input being made public.

Contact for Information About the Study

If you have any questions or concerns about what we are asking of you, please contact Hannah Sanvido, or Dr. LeAnne Petherick. The names and telephone numbers are listed at the top of the first page of this form.

Contact for Concerns or Complaints About the Study

If you have any concerns or complaints about your rights as a research participant and/or your experiences while participating in this study, contact the Research Participant Complaint Line in the UBC Office of Research Ethics at 604-822-8598 or if long distance e-mail RSIL@ors.ubc.ca or call toll free 1-877-822-8598.

Consent and Signature

Taking part in this study is entirely up to you. You have the right to refuse to participate in this study. If you decide to take part, you may choose to withdraw from the study at any time, without giving a reason and without any negative impact. Should you decide that you would like no further contact after submitting this form, you may contact any of the research team members to inform them of this decision. Email addresses and phone numbers of the study team members are provided at the top of this form.

Your signature below indicates that you have received a copy of this consent form for your own records.

Your signature indicates that you consent to participate in this study.

Participant Signature Date

Print Name

Please indicate how you would like to receive a copy of the research report below:

- Email:
- Home or Work Address:

Do you wish for your identity to remain confidential?

- Yes. Please indicate the pseudonym you would like:
- No

Do you wish to receive transcript sections that may be used during the final paper?

- Yes. Please indicate email you would like us to use:
- No

Which club/association/organization are you a part of? _____

This study includes participants surrounding sport including coaches, managers, referees, volunteers and more. Can you indicate which group(s) you are a part of?
