

**Changing on the Fly: Situating multiculturalism,
citizenship, and hockey through the voices of South
Asian Canadians**

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Abstract

Hockey and multiculturalism are often noted as defining features of Canadian culture; yet, rarely are we forced to question the relationship and tensions between these two social constructs. This project examines the growing significance of hockey in Canada's South Asian communities. It begins by discussing issues surrounding "race" and racism in Canadian sport, before moving to consider the popularity of the *Hockey Night Punjabi* broadcast and the value of ethnic (sports) media in challenging dominant discourses. This serves as an entry point for a broader consideration of South Asian experiences in hockey culture based on field work and interviews conducted with South Asian Canadian hockey players, parents, and coaches in the Lower Mainland of British Columbia. Drawing on the methodological frameworks of critical race theory, postcolonial feminism, and intersectionality, this project seeks to inject more "colour" into hockey's historically white dominated narratives and representations. My goal is to encourage alternative and multiple narratives about hockey and cultural citizenship by asking if, how, when, where, and which citizens are able to contribute to the webs of meaning that form the nation's cultural fabric. Some of the themes discussed in the study include: a tendency to dismiss on-ice racial slurs as gamesmanship; a reluctance to name any particular incident or instigator as racist; the perception of resentment from white hockey parents directed at upwardly mobile racialized citizens; and a consistent erasure from institutions of public memory. The research also considers whether generational change is enough to secure equal representation and access by examining how different forms of capital work to institutionalize racism.

Keywords: South Asian; ice hockey; multiculturalism; citizenship; Canada; racism

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to the late Patti Hillman, the first teacher who encouraged me to challenge my assumptions about the way the world works (by telling me, “I don’t care where you sit!”) and for letting the writer in me flourish.

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List of Acronyms

AHL	American Hockey League
ASHL	Adult Safe Hockey League
BCHL	British Columbia Hockey League
CBC	Canadian Broadcasting Corporation
CHL	Canadian Hockey League
CIS	Canadian Interuniversity Sport
CRTC	Canadian Radio-Television and Communications
CSSHL	Canadian Sport School Hockey League
DIY	Do-It-Yourself
EBM	Evidence based medicine
ECHL	East Coast Hockey League
ESPN	Entertainment and Sports Programming Network
FARE	Football Against Racism in Europe
HHOF	Hockey Hall of Fame
HIFE	Hockey is For Everyone
HNIC	Hockey Night in Canada
MLB	Major League Baseball
MVP	Most Valuable Player
NBA	National Basketball Association
NCAA	National Collegiate Athletic Association
NFL	National Football League
NHL	National Hockey League
NSPCC	National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children
NSWC	North Shore Winter Club

OHL	Ontario Hockey League
QMJHL	Quebec Major Junior Hockey League
Title IX	Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972
TSN	The Sports Network
UHL	United Hockey League
USHL	United States Hockey League
USTA	United States Tennis Association
WHL	Western Hockey League
WPHL	Western Professional Hockey League

Introduction

The first thing I wanted to be as a child was a National Hockey League (NHL) goaltender. It never occurred to me that none of the NHL players looked like me, either in “race” or gender. I am unsure as to whether naivety, precociousness, or poor observational skills made such a dream possible. Alternatively, my dream could have stemmed from a national mythology that told me I could be anything that I wanted to be and that hockey was a game for Canadians, the only identity I really knew at the time. It would take many years for me to really engage with the idea that hockey is not for everyone, despite the NHL’s attempt to literally sell the idea that “Hockey is for Everyone.”

This point was driven home by an incident that occurred years later while I was working as a part-time sales associate at Sportchek. I helped many Canadian children participate in the hallowed national tradition of ice hockey through the fundamental step of buying hockey equipment, but one particular customer’s experience made apparent the hidden ways that hockey is in fact *not* for everyone. One day a young Sikh boy entered the store with his mother looking to buy the appropriate gear to play ice hockey. We started with the skates and from there found him shin pads, pants, a chest protector and so on. At no time did cost seem an issue for the family. The mother stood quietly by in an engaged, yet passive manner. Once he was suited up from skates to neck guard it was time to fit him for a helmet. He wore a patka (a small turban worn by many young Sikh boys), which posed an uncommon problem. He took his patka down, releasing the braids from their cloth. Still, no helmet seemed to fit properly. I asked his mother if he could take his braids out in order to play hockey. She replied with a calm “No.” After trying all the helmets in the store and struggling with adjustments, unable to find a

helmet that would both fit and protect his head, the boy and his mother had a quiet conversation in Punjabi. The boy then placed all of the gear in a pile and left the store with his mother.

We were often told as sales associates that we were not selling equipment; we were selling a lifestyle. My own faded professional hockey dreams had led me to realize that the opportunities for people to consume certain lifestyles are not equal. But, the incident described above made the point in a different way. I do not know if that boy ever got the opportunity to play ice hockey, but what I do know is that the conversation he had with his mother is not one that most Canadian children have had in the sporting goods store: a conversation about how religion and ethnicity pose challenges to participation in one of the most iconic activities in the national culture.

In the last decade or so, there has been increasing scholarly interest in the lack of colour that exists in both Canada's sporting history and contemporary sporting landscape. Robert Pitter (2006) points out that "the larger story of hockey in Canada is told as if Aboriginal Canadians, black Canadians, and Asian Canadians were simply not here" (p.128), which gives the impression that either these people do not play hockey or they are not considered "Canadian." As a result, the few accounts of Indigenous (e.g., Robidoux, 2003; Tootoo, 2014; Valentine, 2012) and Black experiences (e.g., Carnegie, 1997; Fosty & Fosty, 2008; Harris, 2005) in hockey provide necessary counter-narratives to the dominant discourse of the sport's history. In concluding their book, *Black Ice: The Lost History of the Colored Hockey League of the Maritimes, 1895 – 1925*, Fosty and Fosty (2008) offer the following reflection:

Today there are no monuments to the Colored Hockey League of the Maritimes and few hockey books even recognize the league There is no mention in the Hockey Hall of Fame of the impact that Blacks had in the development of the modern game of hockey It is as if the league had never existed In Canadian history, as it is in winter, the landscape is

that of bleached white. It is a white world of seeming beauty, yet one without color. It is a sterile landscape, deadened by cold and time, blinding to all who are lost within its blanketed form. (pp.221 – 222)

Thus, historical accounts that fail to acknowledge various experiences, such as the Canadian Library and Archives' "Backcheck: A hockey retrospective," offer Canadians an incomplete narrative by erasing influential contributions that came from racialized Canadians and Indigenous Peoples. By exposing these erasures, we gain a better understanding of the inequities and complexities that have long been part of Canada's history and culture. Fosty and Fosty's (2008) description of a white-blanketed conventional view of Canadian history is largely correct. But, Canada itself is more complex. Canada *is* a northern white settler nation with an oppressive colonial past, but it is also an immense, geographically, culturally, and racially varied country, with significant Indigenous and immigrant histories that differ from province to province.

In this project, I seek to recover some of this diversity by analyzing South Asian experiences in and around the game. The creation of the *Hockey Night in Canada Punjabi* broadcast (herein referred to as *Hockey Night Punjabi*) in 2008 and the 2011 hockey film *Breakaway*, about a young Sikh-Canadian man's navigation of family, religion, and hockey in Canada, point to growing interest in voices that have been missing from the hockey landscape; voices that are proudly Canadian, yet are often faced with questions of belonging and value. It is with these voices in mind that this project examines the growth of both South Asian hockey fandom and community hockey participation in Canada as a form of cultural citizenship. More specifically, I explore the intriguing relationship to hockey that has developed in South Asian communities in Canada, and particularly on Canada's west coast, since the 1960s. I shall also discuss challenges that South Asian Canadians face in hockey and how these challenges may be connected to broader racial discrimination in early 21st century Canada.

In 1993, Gruneau and Whitson published *Hockey Night in Canada: Sport Identities and Cultural Politics*, a book now widely regarded as a seminal work in Canadian cultural studies (e.g. see Mookerjea, Szeman, & Faurschou, 2009). Issues such as national identity, power, commercialism, class, gender, and masculinity that Gruneau and Whitson brought to the fore still resonate more than 20 years later. However, while acknowledging the enduring strength of hockey's powerful grip on imaginations and collective memories, Gruneau and Whitson conclude:

Since the 1960s, a significant fracturing of older hierarchies of identity and the proliferation of new points of cultural attachment have opened up spaces for re-imagining the role that hockey might play in Canadian life . . . [including] a re-imagining of our own Canadian self-understanding. (p. 279)

These tendencies have arguably been exacerbated in recent years by a continued influx of immigrants from countries whose majority populations are not secular, Christian, or white. Significant tensions and debates around citizenship, multiculturalism, and the tolerance of difference have accompanied this influx, often influenced by significant fears of international terrorism and a resurgence of nativist/nationalist discourses in many parts of the world.

In this regard, I hope to expand and update Gruneau and Whitson's (1993) work on the cultural politics of hockey, with specific reference to issues of "race," ethnicity, and citizenship that were not developed systematically in their analysis. More than ever, in my view, questions of *who is Canadian*, *who is present or under-represented*, and *who is enabled or discouraged* in Canadian culture are negotiated on the ice, within the confines of Canada's national pastime. I contend popular cultural practices, such as hockey, are sites where personal and group identities as well as claims to equality of citizenship can be exercised and contested. Hockey has particular relevance because of the widely acknowledged iconic place it occupies in Canada's national culture.

Culture and citizenship can be positioned as both synonymous and incompatible. In its broadest sense, the word “culture” simply refers to “a whole way of life” (Williams, 1958/2011). From this perspective, to speak of hockey as an iconic aspect of Canadian culture is simply to reference the game’s longstanding importance in the everyday worlds of Canadian players, fans, businesses, community centres, and volunteers. In this usage, the concepts of culture and citizenship tend to implicitly align. Yet, the word culture can also be made plural to reference a diversity of sensibilities, identities, and opportunities—*cultures*, differing ways of living, rather than a single national culture.

As Renato Rosaldo (1993) explains, in North American society the analysis of culture requires that we “seek out its differences” (p.198); in other words, to reference “culture” has become synonymous with difference itself. For example, the City of Surrey, British Columbia hosts annual “Culture Days” and the list of performances for the 2017 event are limited to: “The Wild Moccasins Dancers,” “African Stages,” “Immigrant Lessons” (which includes elements of Afro, House, and Hip Hop), and “The Re-Enactors” (City of Surrey, n.d.). These performances help to conflate popular conceptions about diversity and “cultural” experiences as stemming from immigrants and racialized bodies. For Rosaldo, “full citizenship and cultural visibility” are often “inversely related.” In his words: “full citizens” can appear to “lack culture, and those most culturally endowed” can “lack full citizenship” (p.198). He is not arguing that a dominant population of “full citizens” has no culture; rather, he means to say that a dominant culture has a taken-for-granted character, something that seems neutral or universal. In this regard, to speak of “Canadian Culture” can too easily submerge recognition of the constituent cultural differences within that culture in favour of imagined cultural singularity of homogeneity.

If we look at the history of writing about our national (winter) pastime we can observe numerous examples of this confusion. When Canadian journalist, Peter Gzowski (2014) referred to hockey as “The Game of Our Lives,” or the poet Al Purdy identified hockey as “The Canadian Specific” (as cited in Gruneau & Whitson, 1993, p. 3), they were tacitly equating Canadian culture with the experiences of primarily white, heterosexual, cis-gendered males. Consequently, the dominant culture has tended to recognize, confirm, and naturalize some identities over others in the national narrative. In contrast, I will argue that the end goal of full cultural citizenship requires a national narrative that is not based on naturalized and misleading abstractions constructed from an imagined singular history. In this respect, I am particularly interested in the ways that hockey can facilitate, inhibit, and complicate the ability of some racialized groups and individuals more than others to contribute to the national culture. My research project prioritizes the ability to create and produce spaces of meaning, instead of the ability to participate in predetermined opportunities.

Citizenship and “race” in Canada have complicated histories. Notably, along with other intersections such as gender, “race” has traditionally been used as a factor in determining who is considered worthy of full rights of citizenship. Discussions about “race” have become increasingly pertinent in the 21st century and have perhaps, been exacerbated by Canada’s self-proclaimed identity as a multicultural nation. Black residents in colonial Canada were largely enslaved from the 1600s through to the late 18th century and were often subjected to continued discrimination in electoral politics, even after the abolition of slavery in Canada in 1834. Women in Canada were not given the right to vote in federal elections until 1918, and in Quebec elections until 1940. Indigenous Canadians did not achieve full political rights of citizenship until 1960 (Chunn, Menzies, & Adamoski, 2002). Growing numbers of non-White immigrants from

Caribbean, African, Middle Eastern, South and East Asian countries since the 1960s have posed newer challenges for Canadian culture, especially for Canada's self-proclaimed late 20th century identity as a multicultural nation.

Sunera Thobani (2007) claims that "race" poses a significant challenge to Canada's self-identification as a multicultural society because "the racialized marking of the body cannot be overcome, no matter the sophistication of one's deportment, the undetectability of one's accent, the depth of one's longing to belong" (p.172). In this context, even in an environment featuring public political commitments to recognize equality and to value difference, racism and racist struggles are largely experienced informally in everyday life. Knowles (2010) suggests it is not in the extreme cases of hatred where we learn about racism, but in the routine interactions of both public and private life. In any case, in Thobani's view, there is little public space available for the discussion and debate over the changing contours of racism in the Canadian ethnoscape.

Nowhere is this more evident than in mainstream discussions of Canadian sport. As Joseph, Darnell, and Nakamura (2012) argue, Canadian sport has tended to be treated as "race-less" further "[perpetuating] myths [about] Canada's egalitarian racial past and present" (p. 3). Hockey does not escape this general critique. "Race" and ethnicity have always been at play in hockey; yet, their meanings and significance have shifted depending on the historical conjuncture. Abdel-Shehid (2000) points to the lack of hockey narratives that speak to black, First Nations, and other non-Whites, accordingly marking the need to "[write] hockey thru race" an urgent matter (p. 76).

The exploration of South Asian voices presented in this work can also help expand our understanding of hockey both as a vehicle for cultural assimilation and for

ethnic self-expression and emancipation (Robidoux, 2012). The intersection of South Asians and hockey presents a uniquely Canadian conundrum because, even though only three players of South Asian heritage have skated in the NHL, South Asians have recently taken up hockey, both as players and fans, in a remarkable fashion.¹ The Vancouver Canucks 2011 Stanley Cup run has been credited for much of the South Asian fervour around the game. This excitement was expressed through “bhangra tributes posted on YouTube, mass prayer vigils for the team’s success and spontaneous parades in the heavily Punjabi suburb Surrey” (Sax, 2013, para. 50). However, South Asian fandom is, perhaps, best exemplified by the *Hockey Night Punjabi* broadcast, which was created in 2008 by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) but found a more legitimate home in 2014 with the multicultural channel Omni Television. Thanks to the popularity and marketability of *Hockey Night Punjabi* broadcasts, for South Asian Canadians, “Mahriaa shot, keeta goal” has replaced the patented “he shoots, he scores” call from the broadcast booth. David Sax (2013), of *The New York Times*, explains that the Punjabi broadcast “marries Canada’s national pastime with the sounds of the Indian subcontinent, providing a glimpse of the changing face of ice hockey” (para. 5). In areas with a large South Asian presence, some hockey leagues, such as in Brampton, Ontario, have reported a 20% increase in South Asian participation between 2011 and 2013, with many participants citing *Hockey Night Punjabi* as an encouraging factor. In 2014, the Calgary Flames became the first NHL team to offer Punjabi coverage of the team (Sportak, 2014), and, between 2012 – 2014, the Abbotsford Heat of the American Hockey League instituted annual Punjabi Night celebrations (Sidhu, 2012). Indigenous hockey leagues and the Coloured League of the Maritimes remain important parts of

¹ The Punjabi Sikh demographic represents the starting point for analysis because of Breakaway and HNIC Punjabi; however, given the heterogeneity and fluidity of ethnicity, race, and the geographical region of South Asia, this project is not limited to analysis of the Punjabi Sikh voices or experiences.

hockey's history in Canada, but neither of these stories has received the same kind of "mainstream" attention and market space that South Asian fandom has created.

Despite Canada's identity as a multicultural country, the intersection of sport and South Asian communities takes place against a backdrop of tumultuous post-9/11 racism. For example, since September 11, 2001, media constructions of the turban have often been conflated with Muslims, terrorism, and Osama Bin Laden (Ahluwalia & Pelletiere, 2010). Consequently, in both the United States and Canada, Punjabi Sikhs received significant backlash after the 9/11 attacks, with record rates of hate crimes, and religious profiling (Ahluwalia & Zama, 2009; United Sikhs, n.d.). Ahmad (2011) explains racial hierarchy as a "citizenship exchange market in which the relative belonging of any one racial or ethnic community fluctuates in accordance with prevailing social and political pressures" (p. 342). After 9/11, the notion of "Muslim-looking" became a racial category transcending all racial configurations as the global Other (Ahmad, 2011). Indians, Pakistanis, Sikhs, Hindus, Arabs, Christians, and even Latinos have been categorized as "Muslim-looking" or "Middle-Eastern looking," but Sikh men have borne a disproportionate amount of racial profiling based on racial misidentification.

To illustrate, when television anchors Gurdeep Ahluwalia and Nabil Karim of The Sports Network's (TSN) main show, *SportsCentre*, hosted together for the first time, they received comments such as, "When did TSN move to the middle east? #WTF" and "Couple of terrorists working the night shift on #TSN #Sportscentre #lolol" via the social media platform Twitter (CBC, 2013). Additionally, a view of *Hockey Night Punjabi* as emblematic of Canadian multiculturalism is challenged by online comments such as "punjabi people dont [sic] even know hockey" (Szto, 2016, p. 214). Such reactions reflect a view where hockey's "white as ice" reality conflicts with Canada's equally problematic mythology of multiculturalism.

Unfortunately, much of the academic literature on South Asian immigrant experiences comes from American and British scholars, with little Canadian contribution despite the long history of Punjabi Sikhs in this nation. South Asians in Britain have described their existence as “a community apart” or living “parallel lives” (Fletcher, 2014) in relation to their English counterparts. Fletcher (2014) elaborates that being “in” a space but not “of” a space needs to be further contextualized to understand how inclusion and exclusion may be normalized, especially through sports, in white dominated cultures. More broadly, stories about “race” can sometimes parallel stories about ethnicity and religion in different societies, with the experiences of exclusion and oppression of Jews being an obvious example. The ethnic tensions that were more prevalent in the postwar period between Anglo-Canadians and Irish Catholics (Andrew-Gee, 2015) or Russian Doukhobors in western Canada (Friesen, 1995) have lessened somewhat with white passing ethnicities merging to become the dominant vision of “Canada” (although not necessarily in equal measure). Still, visible markers of racial difference are more easily recognized and, historically, have provided greater opportunities for marginalized white ethnic groups to accrue advantages by leveraging “whiteness” in ways that are not available to groups whose non-white status is more visibly obvious.

South Asian hockey players are not typically seen as black, white, Asian, or Middle Eastern. In later chapters, I note that the adjective some use to describe themselves is “brown” (more often used by the younger demographic), and their cultural connections typically lie in countries that have an English-speaking colonial experience. This can lend considerable fluidity to their status as immigrant “Others.” On the one hand, South Asians can be stigmatized and discriminated against for their non-White ethnicity, customs, and religious beliefs, or sometimes simply erased from public

consciousness. But, on the other hand, they can sometimes be viewed as less alien than darker immigrants from African countries or recent immigrants from predominantly Muslim countries. I believe this complexity makes the *Hockey Night Punjabi* broadcast a particularly valuable entry point into discussions about “race,” visibility, value, and Canadian citizenship.

The data that inform this study are the result of a review of literature conducted in combination with participant observation and qualitative interviews, undertaken over a period of 15 months from January 2016 – April 2017. This included three visits to the Omni studio where I observed rehearsals and taped pieces for the *Hockey Night Punjabi* broadcast. I also took notes at 10 local hockey games and 4 hockey events held in the Vancouver area. A total of 26 semi-structured interviews (6 women, 20 men) were conducted with South Asian hockey players (current and former), parents, coaches, and *Hockey Night Punjabi* representatives. Research participants ranged in age from 16 years old to their mid-50s, and their level of hockey participation spanned recreational house league hockey to the elite levels (i.e., university, semi-pro, professional). Pseudonyms have been provided for everyone except *Hockey Night Punjabi* representatives; however, if representatives were speaking more generally about their experiences and not directly about the show, they have been given a collective identification to provide some confidentiality. Recruitment was limited to the Lower Mainland of British Columbia, a culturally defined area that comes with a variety of constitutions because there is no defined geographical boundary for the “Lower Mainland.” For the purposes of this study, the Lower Mainland includes Metro Vancouver and the surrounding suburbs, the Fraser Valley, and as far north as the municipality of Squamish. More detailed discussion of the research methods used in this study is outlined in Appendix A.

Readers should also be aware that I use “race” in quotation marks to signify its existence as a flexible social construct. Other language choices that need to be clarified before moving forward include:

Racialized

The term denotes the act of being “raced.” It is an active descriptor that implies a relation of power between those who are marked as “people of colour” by those who are privileged enough to remain “colourless.” Largely attributed to Nobel Prize winning author Toni Morrison (1993), she wrote, “My work requires me to think about how free I can be as an African-American woman writer in my genderized, sexualized, wholly racialized world” (p. 4). Accordingly, the term attempts to highlight the social construction of “race” by expressing it as an act that is imposed upon people.

Marginalized

Marginalization usually connotes a spatial relationship where people, concepts, and/or places are forced to the periphery of what is socially normal/significant. These groups are excluded from decision-making processes and oftentimes their own representation. As Pitts and Smith (2007) point out, “marginalization is not necessarily an objective fact but a relation of power in particular circumstances”; these are imaginative zones (Abraham & Shryock, 2000). Spivak (1988) further elucidates that the “margins” are not so much about difference as they are about a silence at the centre that governs “who can speak, how, when, and where, and, just as importantly, who listens and how. It does not mean there are no utterances” (Hurley, 2007, p.182). Moreover, we must recognize the possibility and potential that exists in marginality.

Still, who we label as “marginalized” as academics does not necessarily reflect who *feels* marginalized in real life. For example, the participants in this study rarely

spoke of anything that equated to marginalization. On a sports team, even though many of these participants felt alone because of their racialized difference, or underrepresented, they did not articulate marginality in relation to their teams or the broader hockey community.

Minoritized

Minoritized is used to replace the term “visible minorities” because, much like the term racialized, it highlights the power relations involved—what happens through the act of marking certain groups as “minorities”? To speak of “visible minorities” connotes a “minority/majority” dichotomy “reducing the problem of power relations to one of numbers” (Brah, 1996, p. 187). The term “minorities” does a disservice to immigrant groups by giving the illusion that their lack of social, political, and economic power is associated with their lack of population size.

The narrative arc that follows is, in a general sense, a sequence of understanding “who” we are talking about, why this group’s experiences are important and unique, how racism may manifest in hockey culture, what the implications are of its existence, and how do we begin to reconcile this inequality. Chapter One lays the groundwork for this intersectional analysis by unpacking the complicated relationships between “race,” ethnicity, citizenship, gender, and class in “multicultural” Canada. It also frames this project as a call for intersectional justice as a way forward.

Chapter Two uses media narratives and interview data conducted with members of the *Hockey Night Punjabi* broadcast to discuss cultural citizenship as the main theoretical framework. I use a specific understanding of cultural citizenship that moves beyond looking at opportunities for participation and instead privileges co-authorship as a way to assess one’s value as a citizen. *Hockey Night Punjabi* offers an important

alternative interpretation of Canada's storied pastime. It creates space for additional narratives and encourages us to ask what co-authored citizenship might look like for racialized Canadians if viewed through the lens of Canadian hockey.

Chapter Three marks the beginning of analyses focused on interview data gathered from South Asian hockey players, parents, and coaches. I explore how the hockey rink polices membership in the hockey community and is symbolic of broader issues related to citizenship and national belonging. Because racialized bodies are constantly being policed, both externally and internally, I contend that racialized participants are forced into a state of perpetual unease or lack of certainty about their claims to space in hockey culture. Additionally, research participants unpack their own self-identifications, which also contributes to the articulation of difference and what it is like being the only South Asian in a hockey space.

Chapter Four focuses on the discursive (re)production of racism and its dismissals. Participants reflect on some of the hateful comments that they received on the ice and I identify a conflation between racism and gamesmanship. I argue that the dismissal of racism and the reluctance to refer to these instances as racism helps propagate the idea that hockey is an equitable and meritocratic space. This reluctance is also indicative of a system that offers little recourse for racist behaviour and may mark those who complain about racism as troublemakers. The chapter concludes with a theoretical reflection on the concept of evidence. What is the point of providing evidence of racism if those who provide it are dismissed as unreliable witnesses? What counts as evidence and who gets to determine these terms? And what do we do when no one cares how much evidence has been gathered? The ease with which evidence of racism can be dismissed and/or ignored is, arguably, indicative of second-class citizenship.

Chapter Five considers the institutional nature of discrimination by using Pierre Bourdieu's forms of capital to explain how racialized players have been historically disadvantaged in a supposedly meritocratic system. Economic capital is often marked as the most consequential factor for access and opportunity in hockey, but I assert that cultural and social capital are equally as important, if not more important, for gaining a foothold into the higher (and more exclusive) levels of the game. Furthermore, because racialized hockey players face racism and seem resigned to that fact, they are forced to become resilient citizens; yet, this resilience is also what sustains an inequitable institution. I offer a theoretical critique of resilience as a concept built on and as a manifestation of neoliberal injustice.

Building on the ideas of capital and all its facets, Chapter Six focuses on class mobility as one cause of racial tension in hockey culture. Because many South Asian hockey families have economic capital but lack the cultural and social capital required to truly impact their children's hockey careers, some South Asians are starting to create South Asian-only hockey spaces. From the outside, these programs look like self-segregation; however, they are the result of persistent discrimination. White fragility is used to theorize the perceived resentment that some South Asians have faced as a result of their ability to "throw money" at the game. This is the only chapter where research participants describe an active and collective response to racism and discrimination.

Chapter Seven returns to the mythological belief that hockey is a common denominator and tool for inclusion by re-evaluating *who* is actually changed by increasing diversity in hockey. I also examine the role that institutions of public memory, such as the Hockey Hall of Fame, play in the erasure of racialized contributions and experiences from the larger story of hockey in Canada. I call for a more inclusive and

collective re-telling of the history of hockey and Canada as one method to exercise cultural citizenship and achieve intersectional justice.

This project represents a culmination of life experience and media developments that have occurred in a Canada full of contradictions. As a Canadian-born, middle-class Chinese woman who grew up in a suburb of Vancouver with very few East Asian classmates but many South Asian and white classmates, the narratives that follow are not about my life, but they are about the community that I call home and its tensions. I should also note that this study, while critical of hockey and Canada, is a project of love. Often the voices critical of sport are labelled as those attempting to destroy or eliminate the game, when the reality is that those who rail against the very foundations of the game are usually those who love it the most, understand its value, and know that we can (and must) do better. Likewise, patriotism should not be defined by unconditional loyalty but instead by holding one's country accountable for its espoused values.

Chapter 1. Setting the Stage: Hockey, South Asians, and Canada

I don't choose to address racism, but racism exists so I have no choice. ~ Walter Beach, 1964 Cleveland Browns

This chapter explores the tensions and implications associated with some of the mythologies that have been built around Canadian multiculturalism and hockey. For example, the experience of being Canadian in birth, loyalty, sport, and home, but still never being Canadian enough—the sense of being *in* a place but not *of* a place, are anxieties that every racialized Canadian is made to feel at one point or another. W.E.B. Du Bois famously claimed in *The Souls of Black Folk* (2007) that the key problem of the 20th century would be “the problem of the color-line” (p. 51). The poignancy of this prediction, unfortunately, was not that it was true of the 20th century but that it has continued to be a pivotal issue well into the 21st century. Consequently, this project examines the state of the colour line in one of the most hallowed, lucrative, and conservative Canadian spaces: the ice rink. But, first, it is important to consider the issue of Canadian multiculturalism in more detail through the intersections of “race,” citizenship, gender, and class for South Asian Canadians.

South Asians in Canada

The Canadian government identifies South Asians as a racialized group inclusive of people from (or with heritage from) India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Nepal (Statistics Canada, 2016). They represent the largest demographic of “visible minorities” in Canada.² Academically, the term South Asian comes with various interpretations,

² South Asians and West Asians (Iranian, Armenian, Afghans, and Turkish) are grouped geographically by Statistics Canada, whereas Filipinos, Chinese, Japanese, and Koreans are delineated as individual groups.

usually with India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh as main actors, whereas “Afghanistan, Nepal, Bhutan and Myanmar are arbitrarily included and excluded” (Ghosh, 2013, p. 36) from this group depending on who has the power to write in and write out. Other scholars include British India in its entirety, meaning that the West Indies, Fiji, and East Africa are added into the South Asian population (Ghosh, 2013). As Ghosh (2013) asserts, “‘South Asia’ as a region is in fact a political project of others – to map, categorize and denote ex-colonial non-white bodies” (p. 39).

This project casts a wide net including those who identify under the Statistics Canada definition as well as those who identify with British Indian heritage. Therefore, it is imperative to acknowledge outright that this geographically determined group boasts a wealth of diversity with regard to culture, history, language, religion, and customs; in fact, “it is a myth that there is a ‘South Asian’ culture” (Ghosh, 2013, p. 38). To lump these nationalized groups together also erases conflicts that exist between them. This heterogeneity means the term South Asian has very little meaning to individuals (Ghosh, 2013) but will be used in this study to refer to the entire group of participants, including multiple communities. In other words, when the term is used hereafter it should be read as “South Asian.” Conversely, individuals will be referenced by their chosen self-identification (see Appendix A, Table 1) and hopefully the diversity of experiences and voices present will demonstrate the imagined nature of any sense of “South Asianness.”

The first South Asians who migrated to Canada were Sikhs from the Punjab province of India travelling with the British army during the late 1800s and early 1900s. Punjab is a small area in the north-western region of India that borders Pakistan. Upon Indian independence in 1947, the Punjab region was divided, with the majority of Hindus and Sikhs moving inside the Indian border and Muslims leaving India to reside within Pakistan’s newly formed border (Nayar, 2012). Due to the level of military,

communications, and economic infrastructure in the region, Punjab has been referred to as the “heartland” or “breadbasket” of India (Helweg, 1987). Its geopolitical location has made those living in the Punjab region necessarily resilient and self-reliant under the constant threat of warfare and invasion (Nayar, 2012). The British referred to Sikhs as a martial race, and Punjabi soldiers made up the core of the Indian army (Basran & Bolaria, 2003). Despite its significance and location, Punjab is a small region and Punjabi Sikhs are a minority population in India. While 60% of those in the Punjab practice the Sikh religion, Sikhism is practiced by only 2% of all Indians.

The first Sikhs who settled in Canada were met with discrimination on multiple levels. In 1908, British Columbia took away their right to vote; this move followed the disenfranchisement of the Chinese in 1874 and the Japanese in 1895 (Nayar, 2012). They were forced into dangerous and exploitative labour positions and prohibited from employment in fields such as law and pharmacy (Basran & Bolaria, 2003). The notorious Continuous Passage Act was legislated in 1908 barring any immigrants who were unable to arrive on Canadian soil via a direct route from their homeland. At the time, travel from India to British Columbia was impossible without stopping on the way; hence, the Continuous Passage Act stemmed fears of a “Hindu Invasion” without overtly discriminating against any particular group. There was an accepted North American sentiment at the time that “the Indian” was “the most undesirable immigrant in the state. His lack of personal cleanliness, his low morals and his blind adherence to theories and teachings, so entirely repugnant to American principles, make him unfit for association with American people” (Prashad, 2000, pp. 42 – 43). This construction of racialized difference made policies such as the Continuous Passage Act (enacted from 1908 – 1947) possible. Since the late 1990s, approximately 25,000 – 30,000 Indians have immigrated to Canada each year, making India the second-largest source country after

China (Agrawal & Lovell, 2010). Estimates predict the South Asian population in Canada will reach approximately 2.1 million around 2031 (Gee, 2011). Sikhs make up 80% of the South Asians in Vancouver (40% in Toronto), but there is increasing South Asian diversity as more immigrants arrive from Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, and Pakistan (Gee, 2011). In order to set the stage for this study, it is important that South Asians are situated within concurrent intersections of “race,” citizenship, gender, and class as they pertain to sports and the Canadian context.

“Race”

In fact, any honest assessment of race in the early twenty-first century should make us remark that “these are strange days indeed.” (Perry, 2011, p.2)

“Race” and racism are tricky topics to research. In her most recent book, Sara Ahmed (2017b) articulates “race” as “a complicated address” (p.118). I interpret this statement to mean that we *live* “race” in our bodies as strangers, as residents, as citizens; as people who can be dislodged from our place of residence; that we can be made to feel uncomfortable in our “homes”; that the space we inhabit or reside in can be either forever questioned or never questioned. Moreover, class position is often marked by one’s address further complicating the perceived social location of “race.” “Race” is a complicated location to inhabit because it so often requires explanation. It is a location not easily found because it is never a permanent address—it is complicated in its fluidity. To speak of “race” unfortunately reifies a social construction but we must still acknowledge that this imagined difference has very real consequences; hence, “we find ourselves in a classic Nietzschean double bind: ‘race’ has been the history of an untruth, or an untruth that is unfortunately our history” (Radhadkrishnan as cited in Gunaratnam, 2003, p. 31). “Strange days” of trying to assess “race” and racism continue.

Racial inequality has manifested across the globe and throughout history in a multitude of ways. Categorizing people by “race” has been used to solidify class distinctions (e.g., American slavery [Hall, 1996], South African apartheid [Wolpe, 1972] India’s caste system [Dumont, 1980]), for religious persecution (e.g., the Holocaust, Irish Catholic oppression, ethnic cleansing of Myanmar’s Rohingya Muslims), and to rationalize colonial expansion (e.g., the dispossession of Indigenous Peoples in the Americas). In each of these examples, “race” became a distinctive feature for the purpose of imposing hierarchies; yet, *how* “race” is/was manipulated and animated is key to understanding how groups of people become racialized into a “complicated” existence. In this way, “race” shifts when necessary and lines of difference are limited only by the historical period in which they exist.

For the purposes of this study, “race” is defined as a relation of power that is anchored to a historical period, political context, or group(s) of people, and broadly encompasses notions of ethnicity, skin colour, religion, language, customs, indigeneity, and cultural habits (Joseph et al., 2012). For example, in the U.S. Census, Indian migrants were labelled as “Hindus” between 1930 and 1940 despite the majority of migrants identifying as Sikhs (Koshy, 1998). Because the term “Indian” had already been assigned to “Native Americans,” a new category had to be created for people from India. From 1950 – 1970, Indian migrants were categorized as “Other”/ “White” based on the belief that Indians were descendants of Aryans; however, this interpretation has since been widely discredited (Koshy, 1998). In 1980, in an attempt to benefit from affirmative action programming, Indian migrants lobbied to be included in the “Asian American” category (Koshy, 1998). Somewhat similarly, Canada’s *Indian Act* legally determines one’s Indigenous “status” based on marriage and birth, further demonstrating the fluidity of racial constructions as they are used to serve those in power (Thompson, 2009).

On the one hand, racialized groups are generally conceptualized as fitting in a vertical hierarchy that positions whites at the top and blacks at bottom with every other group falling somewhere in between (e.g., Matsuda, 1993; Okihiro, 1994). On the other hand, C.J. Kim (1999) suggests that we consider “race” as a field of positions in which each “race” is relational to the others because each group has “been racialized relative to and through interaction with whites and blacks” (p.105). Specifically referencing the racial positioning of South Asians in Britain during the 1990s, Carrington (2010) observed:

While South Asians may have had the wrong religion, being seen largely as Sikh, Hindu, or Muslim, they at least had, so the argument went, a strong value system and a set of traditional beliefs that was helping to integrate South Asians into ‘mainstream’ British society, in contrast to the inherently dysfunctional black families and their lawless black youth. (p.149)

As a result, the privileging of South Asians in this particular political climate assisted in the oppression of Blacks in Britain. South Asians are often represented as “model minorities,” a group that has been constructed as capable of picking themselves up by the proverbial bootstraps to establish themselves in their new homeland (to be discussed further in Chapter Six). However, scholars such as Prashad (2000) are quick to point out that this positive stereotype of hard work and academic intelligence is born out of the subjugation and disposability of groups such as African Americans, Latinx, and Indigenous Peoples.³

Racialized brown skin (to be further unpacked in Chapter Three) must also be understood in relation to the newly formed “Muslim-looking” group that was mentioned in my introduction. Some scholars argue that “Muslim-looking” people have become the primary Other in contemporary Western society with a debatable reduction and/or

³ Latinx is increasingly being used in academic literature as the gender inclusive term (Monzó, 2016).

reconfiguration in the differences between blacks and whites (Ahmad, 2011). The development of “Muslim-looking” as a new racial category illuminates the fluid and contested nature of “race.” Due to the fact that the Sikh turban and beard have been confused with images of Muslim terrorists, Sikh men have reported record high rates of discrimination and hate crimes since 9/11 in the United States and Canada (Ahluwalia & Pelletiere, 2010; Bahdi, 2003). We must then juxtapose the fear-inducing and suspicious “Muslim-looking” group against Bollywood festivals and South Asian cultural nights characterized by colour and fun, further proving the constructed existence that South Asians must learn to navigate (Ghosh, 2013). The precarious social position of South Asian communities signals an important shift in the racialized exclusion of the “racial middle” (O’Brien, 2008) and bolsters the need for further scholarly examination. As Edward Said has observed, “Each age and society re-creates its ‘others’” (as cited in Ghosh, 2013, p. 42).

Furthermore, we should think of “race” and ethnicity (defined here as the shared social aspects of life such as culture, language, and religion) as provisional identities that are strategically necessary to locate individuals in a world in constant flux. For Hall (1996), identities mark *difference and exclusion* more than they do a traditional notion of an “identity,” and, even though there may be very distinct and historically defined “South Asian experiences,” just as there are for other racialized groups, it is “the diversity, not the homogeneity, of [South Asian] experience” that demands and deserves our attention” (as cited in St. Louis, 2011, p. 110). Therefore, the purpose of this project attempts to inject multiplicity into our understandings of “South Asian.”

Bramadat and Seljak (2009) posit that ethnicity and religion are inextricably connected in many of today’s current events and Canada’s history of citizenship. After World War II, the notion of Canadian citizenship was used to help manage the existing

ethnic tensions between majority and minority groups, and dissipate individual attachment to racial, religious, linguistic and/or other cultural identifiers (Bohaker & Iacovetta, 2009). Christianity has historically played an integral role in the disempowerment of many living within Canadian borders and, even with Islamophobia on the rise, the most reported hate crime today continues to be anti-Semitic in nature (Minsky, 2017). Still, it would be misleading to think that racialized differences usurp ethnic tensions in contemporary Canada because, as examples, there is friction between Chinese Canadians from Hong Kong and Chinese Canadians from Mainland China (Todd, 2014) as well as between first and second generation South Asians (Bramadat & Seljak, 2009). Nayar (2012) elucidates that there is even a complicated relationship between the Punjabi culture, which has been in existence for over two millennia, and the Sikh religion that developed in the 16th century to contrast pan-Indian and Punjabi cultural values and practices that promoted the subjugation of women and the caste system.

Whiteness in Canadian Hockey

Although this project attempts to centralize South Asian voices and experiences, it is equally an examination of whiteness in Canada. Whiteness can be understood as an unearned package of privileges (Long & Hylton, 2002), but it is not necessarily directly connected with white skin (O'Connell, 2010). Its position is fundamentally dominant, and therefore the normalized reference point for all (Frankenburg, 1993). White people and white culture are (re)produced as race-less, and by extension everyone else becomes raced (Dyer, 1997). Whiteness supports white supremacy by situating white experiences and interests as normative. Conversely, issues of racism become discursively reproduced as "special interests." Still, even in its dominance, whiteness is not static and is also hierarchical in structure. It has the ability to include and exclude groups,

communities, and ethnicities depending on the political, geographical, cultural, and historical context. Crucially, one does not need to be white to receive some of the privileges associated with whiteness. For example, despite the presence of indelible markers of difference, an advantaged class position, speaking without an accent, and having an Anglicized name are privileges from which racialized Canadians can benefit. Moreover, racialized Canadians can (and do) help reproduce whiteness by privileging “white” culture and/or norms. To illustrate, in the next chapter, some research participants will discursively reproduce *Hockey Night in Canada* as the standard for hockey broadcasting but, at the same time, that cultural norm has never been challenged in any meaningful way until the *Hockey Night Punjabi* broadcast came along.

For this project, whiteness and the notion of “white norms” must be understood within very specific confines. For one thing, it is hard to separate the intersections of “race,” class, and masculinity in Canada from the role that sport plays as a national identifier; therefore, to speak of whiteness in the context of hockey refers to a privileging of middle and working class, Christian (Protestant), heterosexual, Anglo Canadian, male heritage. According to Robidoux (2002), this Canadian interpretation of masculinity is an amalgamation of European sensibilities (Victorian and French) with the First Nations’ “alternative model of masculinity . . . one where physicality, stoicism, and bravado were valued and celebrated, not repressed” (p. 214). It is through the national pastimes of lacrosse (originally known as baggataway) and hockey that Canadian nationalism has fostered a white identity separate from British authority. Arguably, these cultural influences explain how Canadians are able to present themselves as polite and peace-loving people but also physically capable and potentially violent when “necessary.” The developments of lacrosse and hockey enabled a specific ensemble of constitutive elements of whiteness to emerge as uniquely “Canadian.”

Don Cherry, host of *Hockey Night in Canada's Coach's Corner*, is a prime arbiter of this specific construction of white masculinity. Kristi Allain's (2015) analysis of *Coach's Corner* observed that Cherry's weekly rhetoric produces a consistent suspicion of academics, reporters, and other intellectuals who, Cherry positions as "disconnected from the 'real' concerns and passions associated with the everyday lives of hardworking men, particularly those from small-town Canada" (p. 126). Small-town Canada is also presented as the heart of "authentic" Canada because, "regardless of where hockey is actually played, mythologically, it is located in small-town Canada" (p.124). Cherry refers to men who are able to balance roughneck ruggedness with a gentleman's aptitude for respectful deference and duty as "good ol' Canadian boys" (Allain, 2015); it is this imagined group of white men that I refer to when I write about the construct of whiteness and/or white norms.

Claude Denis (1997) refers to the intersection of whiteness, masculinity, and the liberal-capitalist ethos privileged by the Canadian nation-state as the "Whitestream." The analogy of movement proposes that even those marked as Other can be swept up by this normative force, in turn contributing to the dominance of the Whitestream. Speaking about hockey specifically, Krebs (2012) posits that because normative Canadian masculinity is intimately constructed through white male hockey players, racialized Canadians "emulate [white bodies] as we swim with the current of the Whitestream" (p. 86). In other words, there is little attempt to subvert, challenge, or offer alternative interpretations of racialized masculinities because racialized citizens are so often absorbed into a Whitestream that capitalizes on racialized desires to "integrate" into Canada. The power of the Whitestream masks the concept of integration as a fundamentally colonial project.

Consequently, ethnic/masculine hierarchy remains central to the maintenance of hockey as a “white man’s sport” (Poniatowski & Whiteside, 2012). For example, Russian superstar, Alex Ovechkin is discursively produced as a “dirty” player who supposedly lacks the civility found in “Canadian” players (Allain, 2016). Cherry has referred to Europeans as “goofy” (Allain, 2015, p. 120) and generally creates distance by framing them as effeminate men who threaten to feminize the game of hockey. Even Canadian icon Sidney Crosby has been pejoratively called “Cindy Crosby” (ecozens, 2013) or a “whiner” because his playing style contradicts “the requisite masculine character required by those men and boys who play the game” (Allain, 2010, p. 4). Even Crosby’s outstanding skill, skin colour, and citizenship cannot fully absolve him of his “effeminate” playing style; this is the narrow field upon which the dominant form of Canadian white masculinity exists. Gender will be further unpacked in a following section; however, the significance here is to historicize the intertwined development of “race” and masculinity in Canada that forms a particular understanding of whiteness.⁴

By pointing out this particular set of privileges, I do not propose that we should retract the privileges that exist for those who benefit from whiteness rather our intention should be to extend such normative privileges to everyone. For example, one of the arguments I develop in this dissertation is that white hockey players never have to question their racial belonging in the game, whereas the “belonging” of racialized Canadians remains a constant negotiation, both inside and outside the rink. In practice,

⁴ Canadian women are also ensconced in this imagined way of life because the achievements of women hockey players are constantly compared to those of the men (HappyCaraT, 2016); and, despite the two-decade dominance of the Canadian Women’s Olympic team, the NHL remains the benchmark of success. There is no equivalent concept of “good ol’ Canadian girls,” except to adhere to the values established for men.

a multicultural Canada would be one where all citizens have the privilege of moving through spaces without their racialized appearance preceding them.

Citizenship

*For white man's land we fight.
To Oriental grasp and greed
We'll surrender, no, never.
Our watchword be "God Save the King"
White Canada Forever*

(Popular Canadian Song cited in Grace, Strong-Boag, Anderson & Eisenberg, 1998, p. 9)

Indigenous communities, other racialized Canadians, and women have always experienced contingent citizenship in Canada. (White) women were first allowed to vote nationwide in 1918 (except in Quebec); this was 30 years before Asian Canadians could vote (Elections Canada, 2014) and 42 years before Indigenous people received the franchise (Boyer, Cardinal, & Headon, 2004). These facts provide some insight into the kind of equality, or lack thereof, afforded to racialized Canadians compared to the privileges received by settlers. Simms (1993) asserts, "Citizenship is not only a legal definition; it is a testimony to how one is treated in a given society. When the concept of racism clashes with that of citizenship, racism, not citizenship emerges victorious" (as cited in Kaplan 1993, p. 339). Ukrainian internment during WWI and Japanese internment during WWII serve as more dishonourable examples of the precariousness of Canadian citizenship.

Thobani (2007) argues in settler nations, such as Canada, the state and its natural born citizens exist as "exalted subjects" against immigrants and Indigenous peoples. Canadian citizenship has been made possible through the dispossession of Indigenous communities and the reproduction of White supremacy. Therefore, despite

Canada's projected image as a haven for immigrants and refugees, "citizenship emerged as integral to the very processes that transformed insiders (Aboriginal peoples) into aliens in their own territories, while simultaneously transforming outsiders (colonizers, settlers, migrants) into exalted insiders (Canadian citizens)" (Thobani, 2007, p. 74). Moreover, through Canada's official policy of multiculturalism, "race became configured as culture and cultural identity became crystallized as political identity, with the core of the nation continuing to be defined as bilingual and bicultural (that is white)" (Thobani, 2007, p. 145). In this dialectical relationship of multiculturalism and citizenship, each group is forced to define themselves in relation to an opposing group; as immigrants fight for their own inclusion in their adopted homeland, they inherently contribute to the ongoing oppression of Indigenous communities.

It is also central to note, to this day, that naturalized Canadians are liable to face deportation if deemed appropriate by the government, a loophole that was emboldened with the passing of Bill C-24 in 2014, the *Strengthening Canadian Citizenship Act*. Bill C-24 wrote a two-tiered citizenry into law stating that any citizen—naturalized or native born—"who had been convicted in any country of a terrorist offence and sentenced to at least five years in jail" could have their citizenship unilaterally stripped (Walkom, 2014). Up until this point native-born Canadians could not have their citizenship revoked. Bill C-24 suddenly created a much larger pool of dual citizens without these individuals necessarily knowing that they could legally be seen as having dual citizenship. When the Liberal government took office in 2016, it promised to repeal Bill C-24; yet, not only has the bill not been repealed, the government reportedly pursues up to 60 citizenship revocations each month (Kwan, 2016).

Moreover, when the citizenship and immigration guide was revamped from the long-running *A Look at Canada to Discover Canada* in 2009, the guide became

significantly longer, included noticeable imagery of war and Canadian sports triumphs (both of which were absent from *A Look at Canada*), and had eliminated any mention of unionized labour, universal health care, environmentalism, and human rights (some of which now exists briefly in the current version, last updated in 2011). *Discover Canada* also reduced the number of practice test questions from 113 – 197 in *A Look at Canada* to just 50. All of these changes resulted in increased citizenship test failures in the following years, particularly from those applying in the family class to join other landed members (Beeby, 2010; McKie, 2013).

Hockey plays a prominent role in *Discover Canada*. The guide includes colour images of Wayne Gretzky hoisting the Stanley Cup overhead, Paul Henderson celebrating his winning goal against the Soviets in the 1972 Summit Series, two boys (who appear white) playing street hockey, some of the 1978 Montreal Canadiens with Stanley Cup in hand, and one of the last images in the guide is a half-page image of the 2010 Men's Olympic hockey team celebrating with their gold medals. The guide informs potential new Canadians about the NHL, the Clarkson Cup for women's hockey, and our penchant for collecting hockey cards (Citizenship & Immigration Canada, 2011). This seems a drastic departure from *A Look at Canada* that had no mentions of hockey or competitive sports and only briefly mentioned recreation. Additionally, in 2016, over 100 new Canadians, including NHL veteran Daniel Alfredsson, participated in a citizenship ceremony held in conjunction with the World Cup of Hockey (Garrioch, 2016). It would seem that as diversity increases in Canada, the role of hockey as a cultural artifact becomes more central and entwined with notions of citizenship.

Then Minister for Immigration and Multiculturalism, the conservative politician Jason Kenney, explained that *Discover Canada* was a response to a “growing demand for a deeper sense of citizenship” (Friesen & Curry, 2009, para. 8) and that he hoped it

would be “a useful resource for all Canadians, particularly young Canadians to better know their country. I’m frankly more concerned about historical amnesia and civic literacy amongst native-born young Canadians than I am about immigrants who become Canadians” (para. 9). Still, it is imperative that we acknowledge that certain forms of literacy are more “dominant, visible and influential than others” (Barton, Hamilton, & Ivanic, 2005, p. 12), with reading and writing in English versus French in Canada serving as a prime example of how literacies can exist in conflict. Reid and Nash (2004) argue that because forms of literacy come into conflict with each other, literacy represents a discursive struggle of regulation, containment, and coherence:

Literacies change; they evolve and reconfigure themselves. The stakes are high in this contest given that the capacity to contain and to fix individual literacy practices coincides with the capacity to establish and maintain social identities, not to mention the power and privilege that such identities entail. (pp. 36 – 37)

Understanding this more nuanced interpretation to literacy, civic literacy then extends far beyond knowledge *about* Canadian politics to understanding what is involved in the social practices of *being* Canadian.

With the volatility of Canadian citizenship under the microscope and the role that hockey plays as a form of literacy, or cultural capital (see Chapter Five), in Canada, the study that follows highlights the very tensions that Reid and Nash (2004) describe as struggles over identity, power, privilege, and stability as they exist around hockey rinks for some South Asian Canadians. Based on the understanding that citizenship in Canada is conditional for many, relies on displacement, and because of these facts is constantly under contestation, we must question what role hockey plays in complicating the relationship between culture and citizenship.

Gender

Similar to how “race” can be conceptualized as a playing field or hierarchy, its intersection with gender adds subtleties necessary for understanding masculinity and femininity not as singular identities but as pluralities of existence: masculinities and femininities. White men have been traditionally privileged with normative masculinity, a balance between brains and physicality, whereas black men are overwhelmingly portrayed as a body without a brain (Prashad, 2000). Again, occupying the “racial middle,” South Asian men are relationally constructed as a brain without a body, “devoid of a body (phallus), [South Asians] are arguably unable to perform normative masculinity and fail to penetrate American-ness. South Asian bodies then stand as queer bodies in relation to white masculinity” (Thangaraj, 2013, p. 248).

It is important to note that this particular construction exists alongside the popular belief that South Asian communities are also “violently patriarchal,” with young men often growing up in “testosterone-fuelled [environments]” (Bakshi as cited in Walton-Roberts & Pratt, 2005, p. 174). Thus, in the white imagination, brown bodies are both insufficiently and excessively masculine. The paradox of the South Asian body will be a recurring theme throughout this study, but for the purposes of discussing sport and masculinity, because the male South Asian body is (re)produced as queer, the persistent stereotype remains that this group of men is academically inclined but athletically inept (with cricket and field hockey remaining cultural exceptions). Fleming (1995) lists some of these generalizations about South Asian bodies:

Asian children have low ball skills, low coordination and are weak.
Asian and West Indian children dislike the cold.
Where stamina is required, Asian girls are often at a disadvantage as they are usually small and quite frail.
Asians are too frail for contact sports. (p. 38)

While biological, cultural, and psychological explanations for athletic prowess have become accepted folklore, questions of access, opportunity, and discrimination continue to struggle in mainstream discussions. As a result, for many, these stereotypes become self-fulfilling prophecies where South Asians internalize these ideas and “[swallow] the myth themselves” (Fleming, 1995, p. 40.). To illustrate, Greg, a hockey dad, explained to me that “Caucasians get into their adult bodies quicker than East Asians and South Asians. Because they get into their bodies quicker . . . they actually perform better at an early age, whereas with East Asians and South Asians, they develop later. It’s hereditary” (personal communication, November 21, 2016). Greg’s explanation is disappointingly common discourse with respect to sports where the legacy of eugenics and biological determinism continue to frame “race” as either a competitive advantage (e.g., Kenyan long-distance runners) or a hindrance (e.g., lack of black swimmers). These are additional myths that require untangling.

In Canada and the U.S., prejudiced assumptions about Asian physicality and athleticism have only recently been challenged, which is curious given that during British colonization, Punjabi Sikhs were known as a “martial race” and vital to the success of the Indian army (Basran & Bolaria, 2003). Thangaraj (2015) reveals in his research on South Asian basketball players that “queer” bodies are able to invert emasculating constructions by demonstrating athletic prowess where little is generally expected of them. Still, there is a tendency in South Asian basketball spaces to reproduce hegemonic ideas about class, “race,” and gender by excluding black bodies and denouncing homosexuality. “Asianness” is still largely acceptable grounds for ridicule in Canada and the United States and is dialectically necessary to uphold the hegemonic notions of black and white masculinities (King, 2006). To say that Asian athletes are openly accepted as equals in most sports would be a stretch, but other than sports with

a strong presence in their home countries, the mere presence of Asian athletes in Canadian and American sports forces us to ask, “what are the terms of coexistence” for those marked as out of place? (Puwar, 2004, p. 1).

Similarly, South Asian women are often marginalized from discussions about sport and physical activity. Broadly speaking, the assumption that Asian women embody tradition through normative gender roles often results in a representation of physically weak and passive women (especially in comparison to white women). Walton-Roberts and Pratt (2005) note that transnational movement into “Western society” can in fact embolden patriarchal power, rather than dilute it, because immigration exists through a patriarchal lens. Referring to Canadian immigration policies specifically, Thobani contends that “immigration policy reinforces and produces patriarchy because it casts immigrant women in a literal state of dependency on male household heads (as cited in Walton-Roberts & Pratt, 2005, p. 175). With respect to physical activity, Thangaraj’s (2015) work on South Asian basketball leagues observed that South Asian “women are not seen as having the bodily or cultural toolkit to navigate the competitive realm of the basketball court” (p. 191). In fact, some of the women in his study viewed participation in basketball as a marker of being a “bad” Indian because it went against traditional gender norms. It is frequently assumed that any lack of participation in physical activity among South Asian women and girls stems from cultural and family restrictions, with the family representing the main barrier; however, we must appreciate that research on South Asian female sporting experiences remains one of the least explored areas for social enquiry (Nanayakkara, 2012).

Nanayakkara (2012) historicizes the relationship between sport and South Asian women explaining, “Sport has been accepted as an integral part of the Indian culture for both men and women since ancient times” (p. 1889). The relationship dates back to

3250 – 600 BC with evidence of participation in dancing and swimming. Military training during the Vedic period also emphasized female strength and self-defence. River games, archery, and ball games were some of the many activities that South Asian women participated in until European colonization altered the social, economic, and political status of South Asian women. Once Western education was instituted in the colonies, sport participation was mostly limited to Western sports that had international competitions. “Unfortunately, urban non-missionary school girls and rural girls who were unfamiliar with western sports were not capable of taking part in any international competition and were underrepresented in global sport competitions” (p. 1892); hence, it is imperative to situate South Asian female sports participation in a broader discussion about the long-term implications of British colonization on South Asian women and girls.

Class

Last, an examination of class offers some insight as to why South Asians have been able to make their presence in hockey more noticeable than many other racialized groups. Walton-Roberts and Pratt (2005) write, “The stereotypical idea of the Indian immigrant is often predicated on that of absence – absence of wealth, opportunity and quality of life – but for middle- and upper-class Indians their lifestyle is often marked by incredible luxury and wealth” (p. 177). The image of the impoverished South Asian immigrant continues today, generally fueled by a representation void of history and with the role of colonization as that which is absent.

Two distinct South Asian groups are represented in this study. The first group are descendants of some of the first Sikh sojourners to arrive on Canadian soil; hence, the longevity of Punjabi Sikhs in Canada provides generational histories that some racialized groups do not have. In the early 1900s, South Asian men (along with other Asians and

Indigenous Peoples) embodied cheap labour for British Columbia's growing forestry, agricultural, and fishing industries (Nayar, 2012). Soon after their arrival, Punjabi men would often form cooperative sawmills. The presence of Punjabi-run mills facilitated increased employment for other Punjabi men as well as slightly higher wages and the ability to advance beyond manual labour (Nayar, 2012). In the 1940s and 1950s, Punjabi-operated sawmills were at their peak in British Columbia, and despite technological changes in the 1950s that decreased the need for human labour, "the success of these industrialists reflected the Punjabi entrepreneurship in an environment where skilled and managerial positions were given primarily to Anglo-Canadians" (Nayar, 2012, p. 30). Therefore, the interconnected histories of British Columbia's resource industries and the need for manual labour offer some insight into the complex socioeconomic position of many Punjabi Canadians today. On the one hand, Punjabi men and women continue to be found as low-paid seasonal workers in agriculture (overrepresented at 21% of British Columbia's immigrant farm population in 2006, compared to 11% Indian representation in the province generally [Statistics Canada, 2006]) (Weiler, Dennis, & Wittman, 2014). However, on the other hand, the ability to accumulate wealth and property, and become self-enterprising families, all while undergoing the assimilation process means that a significant number of South Asian families have moved into the suburban middle-class and, as a result, are able to participate in hockey culture in a way that other racialized families are unable to do.

The second group tend to represent the influx of family class and skilled labour immigration during the late 1960s and early 1970s, which was conversely framed as a "brain drain" upon the Indian state (Ghosh, 2014). The economic cycles and needs of the host countries "determine immigration policies, thereby dictating who from the periphery gets in, where and when" (Ghosh, 2014, p. 218); in Canada's case, the state

suddenly saw a people-to-people relationship with India as extremely beneficial, a drastic change from when the Continuous Passage Act was created (Walton-Roberts, 2003). In this way, the demographics of Canada at any given time are a manifestation of what the Canadian government deems beneficial to the national economy.

Few scholars have studied South Asian Canadians as high-income earners; in turn “the stories of successful Canadian immigrants are seldom acknowledged and often unexplored” (Agrawal & Lovell, 2010, p. 144). With this said, we cannot ignore the fact that Indian-born families are disproportionately represented below the poverty line at 19% compared to 9% of all Canadian families, and also experience higher rates of unemployment (Agrawal & Lovell, 2010). In this study, however, the South Asian participants included predominantly represent the postwar need for skilled labour. And, while this group may have had less assimilation time and a steeper learning curve with respect to hockey culture, higher levels of education in the 1960 – 70s immigration wave may have helped accelerate social mobility. Class analysis becomes particularly salient in Chapter Six where an intersectional examination of multiculturalism in Canada reveals unique implications for middle- and upper-class South Asian hockey participants.

“New” Racism and Canadian Multiculturalism

In the era of “new racism,” it is no longer socially acceptable to talk about “race” as a potentially limiting factor. To recognize “race” is often deemed racist in societies that have declared themselves colour-blind. The assumption of colour-blind rhetoric holds that if we treat everyone as equals, regardless of their racialized appearance, these actions will be enough to create an equitable society. Unfortunately, treating a systemic issue such as racism on an individual basis does little to alter white supremacy at an institutional level. Eduardo Bonilla-Silva (2017) argues that colour-blind racism

exemplifies the ability of racism to adapt with cultural changes. In a self-identified multicultural nation, to speak of racial discrimination becomes an act of treason enabling racist acts to be dismissed as aberrations and/or isolated incidents. But S. Johal (2002) contends, when everyday experiences are aggregated into a “substantial body of isolated bits of evidence” (p. 231) the issue grows from one of individual concern into one that should be highlighted as a problem of society.

Racism is predominantly assumed to be an issue of the past, with “culture” representing the new dividing line. Some contend that multicultural policies premised upon adding people of colour and “stirring” have officially failed because it conceives of culture as “ethnic property to be owned and held under copyright” (Gilroy, 2006, p. 43); that is, cultures can be combined only because they are presumed to be static entities. It is a “colonial arrangement” that does not require a reconstituted identity based in equality (Gilroy, 2006). Gilroy’s (2006) suggested way forward is for an “open-source” co-production of multiple cultures, a perspective that will be extended through the framework of cultural citizenship in Chapter Two.

This “new” kind of racism is (re)produced as a fear of cultural difference instead of skin colour (Goldberg, 2009). Whether it is a fear of terrorists living next door or wealthy Asians “taking over” Canadian cities, each stereotype constructs the “white nation” as something that must be protected from racialized Others (Grace et al., 1998, p.10). Cultural uniformity has usurped the need for racial supremacy by “parading under the politics of nationalism and patriotism” (Hill Collins & Solomos, 2010, p. 7). By extension, cultural arenas such as hockey become vital sites of exploration because they are supposed to represent a point of connection yet too often become an additional space for exclusion.

It is imperative that studies of “new racism” in Canada are differentiated from the British and American contexts precisely because of Canada’s official privileging of multiculturalism juxtaposed to a history of subjugating people of colour and Indigenous communities (Mackey, 2002). The hyphen, as an example, becomes an identity unto itself for many Canadian citizens because, where some Canadians have their ethnicity recognized (e.g., Indo-Canadian), “others have the privilege of being simply ‘Canadian’” (Mackey, 2002, p. 33). Although elements of “new racism” have always existed, what is pivotal for current discussions is how it relates to citizenship, and the resulting restrictions on the economic and social rights of racialized groups that are symptomatic of systemic discrimination (Hill Collins & Solomos, 2010).

Hall (2000) has posed the multi-cultural question to the British state asking if and how we can create a more inclusive and egalitarian society that respects difference rather than trying to obliterate it. Canada has quietly grappled with this same conundrum. We must question how all cultures can be equally valued while operating under a bilingual framework that privileges the history of French and English settlers while ignoring the Indigenous presence. Stein (2007) argues that Canada tends to celebrate a “shallow multiculturalism” (p. 19) that publicly celebrates difference, usually through festivals and food, but simultaneously protects white supremacy. Bissoondath (1994) believes that Canadian multiculturalism emphasizes difference by making racialized Canadians “museums of exoticism...[because] multiculturalism as we know it indulges in stereotype, depends on it for a dash of colour and a flash of dance” (p. 111). In other words, difference is allowed in the public sphere primarily when it is officially sanctioned or can be commodified, otherwise it should remain hidden in private spheres (Boyer et al., 2004). Connecting this problematic form of multiculturalism back to the reification of certain predetermined groups, Ghosh (2013) contends these festivals

generally trade pluralistic societies for “Disneyfied” and de-historicized stereotypes that help reproduce the notion of a homogenous community.

Designating a special month where *Hockey is for Everyone* (HIFE) or organizing multicultural nights at sporting events epitomizes well-meaning but shallow multiculturalism. For example, HIFE month seeks to foster inclusion for all types of marginalized groups stating:

We believe all hockey programs—from professionals to youth organizations—should provide a safe, positive and inclusive environment for players and families regardless of race, color, religion, national origin, gender, disability, sexual orientation and socio-economic status. Simply put, Hockey is for Everyone. (NHL, 2017)

HIFE coincides with Black History Month, and, much like black history, is necessary because every other month inherently leaves white supremacy unmarked. It is the one month where pointing out difference is acceptable, so long as there is a positive story attached. At a time when competition is fierce for fan support and spending, many sports teams attempt to reach new markets by hosting theme nights to demonstrate a welcoming atmosphere. The former Abbotsford Heat (Sidhu, 2012) of the American Hockey League, the Brampton Beast (Khalil, 2014) of the East Coast Hockey League, and the Calgary Hitmen (2016) of the Western Hockey League are a few examples of teams that have hosted either multicultural nights or events specifically directed at South Asian communities. What is often lost in these displays of shallow multiculturalism is that the celebration of culture and difference simultaneously protects the white privilege that takes place on the ice. Because, even though Canadians of all colours connect through “ethnic” food and music, more often than not, there are only white male faces participating in the actual hockey game—the centrepiece around which a celebration of multiculturalism is made possible. Such multicultural events confirm Anglo Canadian culture as normative.

In order to develop what Stein (2007) refers to as “deep multiculturalism” we need to be able to discuss inequality and difference in an open environment and avoid supporting the development of ethnic silos. To pull at the threads that hang from the “Canadian mosaic” is a risky proposition because it seeks to unravel a colonized perspective. And, to resituate what is claimed to be settled ground is to pose a threat to our collective well-being. While acknowledging the mythological power of both Canadian multiculturalism and hockey culture, in this project I attempt to highlight South Asian voices in order to gain insight into a specific sliver of how things *are* in Canada, rather than how we *expect* them to be. Moreover, Hall (1998) encourages scholars to explore whether a marginalized community has “any currency [or] visibility in the culture of sport where the nation’s myths and meaning are fabricated” (p. 43). Consequently, it is noteworthy to remember the formal state policy of multiculturalism proposes a different set of expectations for Canadian citizens—the bar is set higher. The challenge then becomes not simply writing “the margins into the centre” (Hall as cited in Jaggi, 2000, para. 3) but to understand that doing so should create an entirely new scripture. To decentralize “the centre” from its insulated existence is to produce a collective re-telling.

Re-Tell and Re-Do: Intersectional Justice

In a recent call for intersectional justice while speaking at the University of Toronto, author and activist Naomi Klein argued that we must “collectively re-tell” the story of Canada so that it includes our colonial history, a “crime that is still in progress” (reported in Chowdhury, 2016, para. 8). From a collective re-telling, the ultimate goal is to foster a collective re-doing that integrates marginalized voices and gives them ownership over these representations. Despite the fact that the environmental degradation aspect of intersectional justice does not directly affect this particular study, I answer Klein’s call for a more intersectional re-telling in respect to the necessary act of

reconceptualizing inclusion and citizenship in Canada. This new mode of authorship aligns well with the framework of cultural citizenship to be discussed in the next chapter, where I argue for a co-authored national narrative as a way forward.

The following words from Thobani (2007) provide us with a thread that can be found throughout the narrative that follows: “The racialized marking of the body cannot be overcome, no matter the sophistication of one’s deportment, the undetectability of one’s accent, the depth of one’s longing to belong” (p. 172). Attempts by organizations as varied as Tim Hortons, Molson Canadian, Scotiabank, Hockey Canada, and the Canadian government to promote hockey as Canada’s magical unifier have fallen short of the promise offered. Indeed, I shall argue here that hockey divides the nation as much as it brings it together. The power in the mythologies of hockey and Canadian multiculturalism is not that they are outright lies, but that they are partial truths: segments of truth that serve to represent the whole. As a result, this is a call to action to provide a more nuanced, honest, and historical account of Canada’s multicultural rhetoric and ideals.

Chapter 2. Narratives from the Screen: Media and Cultural Citizenship

Cinematic depictions are often graphic indicators of changing cultural trends. In this regard, consider the movie, *Breakaway* (Lieberman, 2011), the first major cinematic treatment of South Asian Canadians in hockey. The film tells the story of Rajveer (Raj) Singh (played by Vinay Virmani), a Brampton born and raised Punjabi Sikh Canadian, who wants nothing more than to reach his hockey potential. His father, however, wants him to forget about hockey and learn how to earn a living by working for his uncle's trucking company, Speedy Singh. *Breakaway* is the Canadian version of *Bend It Like Beckham*, a story about the conflicts and victories that can be found in multiculturalism and sport. As Abdel-Shehid and Kalman-Lamb (2015) synopsise, *Bend It Like Beckham* is a film about transcendence, whereby institutional oppression can be outworked and out-willed, and it reproduces the notion of "culture [clashes]" (p. 143) between traditions that have immigrated versus inherited national norms. In each film, the host nation is written as the hero and sport serves as the vehicle to achieve this national truth.

Akin to *Bend It Like Beckham's* storyline, Raj struggles to balance his Canadian and Sikh identities. The hockey rink represents escape, potentiality, and difference. It is an escape from his stereotypically overbearing father. It represents his potential as a hockey player when he demonstrates that he is able to play with the local semi-pro team, the Hammerheads. Raj assumes that once the coach sees his skills he will invite him to play with the Hammerheads; unfortunately, after his impromptu "try-out" where Raj demonstrates that he is capable of competing with the Hammerheads, the coach responds, "I'll make sure there's a ticket for you when we play in the finals [Skating away from Raj]. Don't feel bad kid; you weren't going to make the team anyway." Raj's difference is situated as fodder for humiliation and discrimination. Field (2014) critiques

the film, stating, “in a post-multicultural Canada, such lines are meant to draw the audience to the side of the underdog, while collectively shouting ‘no, that’s not our Canada.’”

For the remainder of the film, hockey and Canada become integral—and innocent—actors. Difference is overcome at the rink just as easily as it is made visible. Raj’s coach, Dan Winters (played by Rob Lowe), gives a pep talk to the team where he explains that a win will help erase their racialized difference. This speech cements hockey’s innocence, because, as many sports films have taught us previously, winning is the definitive response to racism. At one point, the Canadian *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* is trotted out to deflect any criticisms of systemic racism. Raj’s love interest in the film, Melissa Winters (played by Camilla Belle), a law student and the sister of Coach Dan, describes what happened at the try-out as “a human rights case. The Canadian Charter of Human Rights clearly speaks against this kind of organized harassment.” The Charter is used both as an apparent buttress and national alibi against racial oppression that renders discussions about racism unnecessary because everyone is assumed protected by the law.

Narratives that exist on the screen, whether big or small, offer an important entry point into this study. *Breakaway* attempts to depict certain tensions that exist in Canadian society (white vs. “brown,” tradition vs. modernity, religious identity vs. national identity), yet also reproduces the common belief that respect for difference (and a love of hockey) ultimately prevails. In this chapter, I argue that the *Hockey Night Punjabi* broadcast offers us a real-life example to further explore such tensions and points of friction as they occur in the landscape of ethnic sports media. An examination of narratives in *Hockey Night Punjabi* enables an exploration of what separates South Asian participation in hockey from that of any other racialized group.

Hockey Night Punjabi

In 2008, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) experimented with multicultural broadcasting during the NHL playoffs by offering hockey commentary in Mandarin, Cantonese, Italian, Inuktitut (an Inuit language), and Punjabi. Only the Punjabi version was successful enough during the trial run to garner weekly broadcasts the following NHL regular season. It would play concurrently with Canada's longest running broadcast and CBC's most lucrative program, *Hockey Night in Canada (HNIC)* (Shoalts, 2014), on digital channels and streaming online. After spending 4 years in a small room being filmed on a hand-held camcorder in Toronto, the Punjabi broadcast briefly moved to Calgary and has been in Vancouver since 2014 (personal communication, April 18, 2016). When Rogers Communications bought the rights to *HNIC* in 2013 (Canadian Press, 2013a), Omni television (a Rogers subsidiary) made a pitch to move the Punjabi edition to Vancouver and adopt the old Sportsnet set.

The current broadcast team consists of Harnarayan Singh, Bhupinder Hundal, Randip Janda, Harpeet Pandher, Gurb Sian, and Taqdeer Thindal, with Amrit Gill as the social media host. It is a privately funded program with Chevrolet as the title sponsor. Considering that hockey is nationally broadcast in only English and Punjabi,⁵ *Hockey Night Punjabi* truly is symbolic of hockey culture changing on the fly.

Hockey Night Punjabi has built the program around play-by-play commentator Harnarayan Singh. A native of Brooks, Alberta, Singh, was groomed for the broadcasting industry from a young age. He and his older sisters grew up during the 1980s when the Edmonton Oilers dominated the NHL, winning five Stanley Cups between 1983 and

⁵ La Soiree du Hockey, the French sister broadcast to HNIC ran from 1937 – 2004.

1990. His sisters passed their hockey fanaticism to him, and Singh turned that fandom into a love of broadcasting:

My sisters tell me that I was running around the living room all the time re-enacting the players but also commentating at the same time...I wanted to be Ron MacLean and I pretended to host hockey awards shows and I had my own hockey radio show. So, they got me a little Radio Shack kids microphone stand and stuff so that I could do that. I guess no one realized it at the time but they were nurturing that whole thing and encouraging my interest in hockey and the broadcast side. (Personal communication, April 18, 2016)

Singh has publically recounted on numerous occasions that hockey became a vital connection point with other children growing up in Brooks (Sax, 2013). Wearing hockey shirts deflected some of the attention away from his turban and the questions that accompanied being the only Punjabi family in the area. Even though he shares good memories from his time in Brooks, his difference was always apparent. When I asked if he ever noticed that he looked different from all the people he admired in hockey culture, Singh answered:

Yeah, it did resonate with me because of the fact that people pointed it out to me at a very young age. I remember going to our family doctor and he asked my dad what does he want to do when he grows up and my dad said "Oh, he wants to go into tv/radio, he wants to be a broadcaster." The doctor goes, "You have to be realistic! The chances of that happening are so slim. Have you looked at what people look like on tv? They don't look like you." (Personal communication, April 18, 2016)

Singh described the doctor's reality check as "devastating." He further reflected that teachers and professors along the way would try to dissuade him from sports commentary in particular and instead encourage him to try the news side of broadcasting (seemingly to protect him from disappointment). While Canadian media has its own diversity issues, Singh's personal history suggests there is a broader recognition that sports media sets even narrower confines. Singh continues his reflection:

I had this postcard of every announcer; every commentator at the time that was working for *Hockey Night in Canada* and it was on our fridge. So, you know, whenever I'm going to get a carton of milk for my cereal I would look at it and

yeah, it wasn't the most diverse group to say the least. So, all the heads were put together on this postcard and I would wonder, "Do I fit in there?" (Personal communication, April 18, 2016)

Singh's particular narrative is important because it exposes conflicting realities.

On the one hand, it highlights a specific set of hurdles that exist for racialized Canadians with regard to self-doubt and the power that a homogenous media presence has on public perception. On the other, it represents an important story of hope and potential; it means that the next generation of Sikh Canadians, or South Asians more broadly, will not have to *wonder* if they fit into hockey broadcasting—they can simply focus on making it happen. This immediate effect was demonstrated during the 2016 Stanley Cup playoffs when a young man tweeted that *Hockey Night Punjabi* "may have altered [his] dream [from becoming] a sports journalist to becoming a Punjabi sports journalist" (Singh, 2016). Even social media host, Amrit Gill, explains that it is rare for a South Asian person to be involved in broadcasting:

There's no one in our culture that does anything like this so my extended family and my friends are always saying, "You're doing something different. We like talking about it." One of my aunties, she's always telling me that we always talk about what our kids are doing and it's always the same thing, nursing blah blah blah but then I bring you up and they're very interested because it's so different. (Personal communication, February 25, 2016)

In 2004, it was observed that the percentage of racialized Canadians working for daily papers is six times lower than their demographic presence and that there is no real urgency from media agencies to diversify their staff (Miller, 2005). Amira Elghawaby (2014), a journalist and Communications Director at the National Council of Canadian Muslims, argues that part of the lack of representation may stem from an inability of racialized Canadians to envision a career in the media, coupled with the traditional devaluation of media jobs in certain families. Thus, the presence of people like Singh and Gill on national television arguably helps embolden the contributions of minoritized communities and their value as citizens.

I conducted a social media analysis during the 2013 – 2014 regular season and observed that, at the time, the broadcast was met with equal parts support and resistance (Szto, 2016). The most unsettling pattern that developed through Twitter comments about the show was laughter at both the concept of the show and its commentators. Half of the tweets coded as resistant to the show included overt expressions of ridicule such as, “LMFAO [laugh my fucking ass off] HOCKEY NIGHT IN PUNJABI!!!!!!,” “Hockey Night in Canada Punjabi is arguably the funniest thing in professional sports [attached photo of commentators],” and “Hahaha! Hockey Night in Canada Punjabi. #lololololol [attached photo of commentators]” (p. 214). As the show has grown in popularity and reach, the support on social media now seems to overwhelm the few racist comments that trickle in; still, the fact that the sight of men with turbans on sports media can elicit a pattern of laughter from Canadian citizens illustrates the harm in reproducing a racially and ethnically homogenous media. A few years ago, *Hockey Night Punjabi* existed outside the realm of possibility to more Canadians than we would probably like to admit, but, oddly enough, the Rogers buy-out of Sportsnet turned out to be extremely beneficial for *Hockey Night Punjabi*.

When the broadcast moved to Vancouver, the new physical resources enabled it to expand its capabilities by adding pre- and postgame segments and live social media. It is also offered in high definition (a key feature for any legitimate sports production) and aired on a publically available channel. In addition to the logistical changes, personnel additions enhanced the potential for depth of programming. Bhupinder Hundal, on-air host and occasional producer, explains that previously the show did not fully embrace the uniqueness of its position, “There wasn’t a manager working on it looking at it from a business perspective. There wasn’t the tools or the resources that could really lift the show” (Personal communication, April 28, 2016). For Hundal, a veteran of the

broadcasting and media community, it was crucial that the broadcast move away from looking like a “side project” and more towards a legitimate hockey broadcast:

I think that was kind of important for the evolution of, not only just that broadcast, but the connection the community is going to have with it. This is not just a novelty. This is a real, live, robust hockey broadcast for us that’s at the same level as what you would get elsewhere and that was kind of a goal. (Personal communication, April 28, 2016)

Now in its 10th broadcast season, *Hockey Night Punjabi* has become the leading edge of ethnic sports media. In the National Football League (NFL), the Carolina Panthers have hosted Spanish commentary for the last 7 years, with the commentators becoming “cult heroes among English-speaking Panthers fans, and rock stars to Spanish speakers” (Jones, 2015). *Hockey Night Punjabi* has garnered similar cult fandom, largely developed during the 2016 Stanley Cup Playoffs when Singh’s goal call, “Bonino Bonino Bonino!” became a social media sensation drawing the attention of non-Punjabi fans and the entire Pittsburgh Penguins hockey organization (CBS Pittsburgh, 2016; C. Johnston, 2016a). Teams such as the Chicago Blackhawks (2016) and Florida Panthers (C. Johnston, 2016b) have added Spanish commentary for their games, demonstrating the growing prevalence of not only racialized fans but also the (economic) value of minoritized (fan) communities.

Ethnic (Sports) Media

The phrase “ethnic media” refers to media created for or by immigrants, minoritized groups (whether ethnic, racial, or linguistic), and/or Indigenous populations (Matsaganis, Katz, & Ball-Rokeach, 2011). Ethnic media serve as one metric of globalization by highlighting human movement and settlement. In 2007, Matsaganis et al. (2011) reported that Canada hosted over 250 ethnic newspapers and 40 ethnic television channels, making Canada (along with Australia) the most hospitable nation(s) for ethnic media to establish a presence and potentially flourish. Yu (2016) points out

that the growth of ethnic media is also a reaction to the consistent misrepresentation and under-representation of racialized people in mainstream media. In fact, ethnic print media is the “only print media sector that is growing in the United States” (Pew Research Centre, 2006 as cited in Yu, 2016, p. 344).

Vancouver is an important contextual component in the ongoing success and progression of *Hockey Night Punjabi* because, as of 2008, the city boasted over 100 ethnic media outlets serving “nearly twenty-three language groups, other than English and French” (Yu & Murray, 2007, p. 100). Studies conducted in the mid-1990s and mid-2000s observed a larger total circulation of ethnic newspapers in Vancouver than the city’s two largest English-language papers (Grescoe, 1994/1995; Murray, Yu, & Ahadi, 2007). Thus, the geographic location of where ethnic media are produced is a key to their success, along with *how* such media are produced. To understand ethnic media is to deal with the reality that there is no single model that can be transplanted from one location to another or from one group to another.

Aside from the few other analyses of *Hockey Night Punjabi* (see Stewart, 2012; Szto, 2016; Szto & Gruneau, forthcoming), the only other (English-language) academic work on ethnic sports media focuses on Spanish commentary of the Los Angeles Dodgers Major League Baseball Team (MLB). When the Dodgers moved from Brooklyn to Los Angeles in the late 1950s, they became the first team to offer radio broadcasting in both English and Spanish for every game. This decision, in part, reflected a growing interest in Fernando Valenzuela, a rookie pitcher from Mexico, who helped symbolize “a period of arrival for Latinos in the United States” (Regalado, 1995, p. 281). Similar to multi-language broadcasting for *HNIC*, Spanish baseball commentary started out as a cautious project with limited funding, which meant the Spanish commentators did not travel for games with the team and instead provided studio recreations. By the mid-

1960s, the Spanish broadcast team of Jaime Jarrín and René Cárdenas were able to cover all Dodgers games live.

Jarrín, the so-called “Latino Vin Scully,” has been calling Dodgers games in Spanish since 1958. In 2016, the Dodgers’ iconic English commentator, Vin Scully, embarked on a year-long farewell tour and *The Guardian* aptly attempted to shine part of that light on Jarrín (Carpenter, 2016):

Lost behind the year-long farewell to Scully is a remarkable story. It’s a story many baseball fans don’t know because when they think of the Dodgers they think only of Scully. . . . Even as they mourn Scully’s October retirement, they have barely heard of the regal 80-year-old legend in Scully’s shadow. Nor do they realize that for 58 years, millions of southern California Latinos have had a Vin Scully of their own. And that without him the Dodgers might not be the \$2 [billion] franchise they’ve become. (para. 3)

Jarrín and Cárdenas were pioneers in ethnic sports media, and their legacy has opened doors for a generation of Spanish (radio) broadcasters who express their gratitude any time they meet Jarrín. This legacy is one that is central to *Hockey Night Punjabi’s* goals: Does this program open doors for future generations, and does the broadcast give young South Asian broadcasters the ability to hone their skills for opportunities in mainstream media?

Regalado (1995) stresses that Spanish broadcasting “brought a new element to baseball in the United States and expanded the game’s horizons well beyond its borders” (p. 289), but perhaps more significantly, ethnic sports media helped solidify the value of Latino players and the existence of the broader Hispanic community. These examples of ethnic sports media offer one avenue for historically marginalized communities to write onto the national narrative and contribute alternative visions of what is possible for both media and citizens. Ethnic sports media can help bring

citizenship into new areas of concern (Vega & Boele van Hensbroek, 2012), such as the intersections of culture and media.

Breaking Barriers

One significant difference between *Hockey Night Punjabi* and the Dodgers' Spanish commentary is that Jarrín would translate Scully's commentary; thus, the dominant English commentary carried through to the Spanish-speaking community. In contrast, *Hockey Night Punjabi* commentators have free rein to call games as they see fit and, arguably, it is this freedom that has made mainstream broadcasting take note.

Hockey Night Punjabi commentary is loud, boisterous, comedic, musical, and informational. The broadcast team will draw equally from Bollywood and Indian food references as they casually slip in popular culture references to wrestling or the television show, "The Simpsons." This variety helps them speak to multiple generations in one family, since it is a common occurrence for South Asian families to have extended family living under the same roof. It is an effect of their broadcast that the team never saw coming. Singh explains:

You have this dynamic where there is such a cultural divide within one household, and it's not only language but it's technology, it's the customs of the country, and the cultural norms are so different. So, there's nothing to really bring everyone together because the differences are so vast where I've had grandparents come tell me that our grandkids don't even talk to us. They don't want to sit with us, they think we are so old or we don't know how to work iPhones. I've had teary-eyed grandmothers tell me that because of the show now it is a Saturday night tradition and their grandkids are sitting with them thinking that it's so cool that my grandma is watching hockey and she knows who the Leafs are, the Canucks. She's become a fan. (Personal communication, April 18, 2016)

Other research participants often echoed similar sentiments that their grandparents or aunts and uncles, who were newer arrivals to Canada, really enjoy the broadcast. Prav, 20, grew up playing minor hockey and explained that his grandfather used to watch

hockey but he never understood the game. Now his grandfather is able to discuss the game and provide Prav with game updates (Personal communication, September 1, 2016). Sonia, 26, spoke of the excitement from her extended family when they discovered the broadcast:

That group of people who don't speak English that much and are working these jobs, when that Hockey Night in Canada Punjabi broadcast came out it was the talk of the town. It was so exciting because it's like we can follow along and not just listen to this thing and watch the tv. It's a big deal, I feel especially for, when I think of my uncles or my aunts, they can follow along in a more meaningful way. (Personal communication, December 1, 2016)

Ethnic sports media represents a complicated convergence of the desire and/or necessity to assimilate into the dominant (white) culture, while also retaining cultural difference. As Justin Trudeau, then Liberal Party leader and current Prime Minister, once tweeted about the show, it is “multiculturalism at its finest.” Whether or not *Hockey Night Punjabi* symbolizes the full potential of multicultural policy or its intentions is debatable, but it does foster cultural citizenship where it did not previously exist.

Co-Authoring One's Existence: Cultural Citizenship

Cultural citizenship, as defined by Boele van Hensbroek (2012), privileges meaning-making. It does not attempt to replace fundamental rights as core to notions of citizenship but it does want to layer the need for meaning on top of access to decision-making. For Boele van Hensbroek (2012), “the essence of the idea of cultural citizenship is then: *to be co-producer, or co-author, of the cultural context (webs of meaning) in which one participates*” (p. 78). This perspective is useful for framing issues of exclusion and representation. The initial stages of this particular framework involve freedom to participate in cultural practices as the first stage, but co-authorship is not merely content with participation:

The idea of the whole exercise is to provide reinterpretations of history, to challenge or enrich existing views, in short, to have an impact on the

cultural consensus. This deeper aspect of participation is captured well in the idea of co-authorship, for if deviant historical interpretations remain in a cultural niche and the ruling images are not challenged, then there may be cultural freedom but no co-authorship. Without some impact on the construction process of the cultural consensus there would still be deficient cultural citizenship. (Boele van Hensbroek, 2012, p. 82)

The conscious desire for *Hockey Night Punjabi* to co-author the Canadian hockey narrative is central to its potential for breaking down barriers and creating a new space for South Asians in Canadian media and sports.

Drawing from the work of Hall (2005), culture is viewed as a production that enables citizens to “produce ourselves anew, as new kinds of subjects” (p. 556); consequently, culture both writes on itself and writes itself into being. This notion of writing onto an existing narrative that has generally only allowed limited authorship is evident in Hundal’s dream for the broadcast:

What I would like to see is that there [are] a few South Asian players who are in the NHL and are having success in the NHL. And, their parents put them into the game because they were able to understand the game better because of the broadcast. I think ultimately that’s kind of what we want to see. I think if that were to happen [it] would let me know that we have achieved the legacy that we wanted to with the broadcast. The whole idea is to break down barriers right? If we’re able to break down the barrier and warm up the game of hockey to parents who typically might not be hockey moms and hockey dads, and their kids are able to achieve the highest pinnacle of success, even just making the NHL or playing regularly in the NHL would really put a stamp on what this broadcast has meant. (Personal communication, April 28, 2016)

In this sense, authorship comes in the form of attempting to have Canada’s people represented in the nation’s game—writing through physical inclusion. Understanding the game is a necessary first step to ensure participation, and the hope is that participation at multiple levels will add nuance and counter-narratives to a mythology that has remained insulated.

The broadcasters talked about how each of them would play NHL video games as children and commentate the play in Punjabi for fun. At no point did it ever occur to

them that this opportunity might exist for them as adults. They also discussed the end goal of having a Punjabi broadcaster(s) on the English broadcast. Hundal again emphasizes, “I think the goal as broadcasters is how do we get good enough that we're *Hockey Night in Canada*, as opposed to just *Hockey Night Punjabi*...can this be a stepping stone...” (Personal communication, April 28, 2016). Consequently, English media maintains its dominance as the reference point for legitimate media, and ethnic media is reproduced as abnormal. With that said, during this study, Singh made three appearances on Sportsnet's Wednesday night national hockey broadcast. This was the first time that a Sikh Canadian had been included in mainstream hockey broadcasting (Dormer, 2016). Additionally, Randip Janda also secured a “mainstream” broadcasting position on Sportsnet 650's newly formed sports talk radio program (P. Johnston, 2017). Hundal noted that while it is possible for those working in ethnic media to transition into mainstream media, the opportunity exists only for those who lack any discernible accent (Personal communication, February 10, 2016). It is essential to note here, however, that accents are cultural dimensions of speech and live “largely in the realm of the imaginary” (Hill, 1998, p. 682). Moreover, a racialized person such as Global BC News Anchor, Sonia Deol speaks with a British accent; therefore, the question of *which* accents are marked as unacceptable to the national ear needs to be questioned. Drawing from the work of Frantz Fanon, Puwar (2004) argues:

When established institutions open their doors to postcolonial bodies, they have a strong preference for those who have assimilated the “mother country's” legitimate language. Proficiency in the legitimate national language plays a decisive role in the selection of [racialized bodies] for professional spaces. (pp.112 – 113)

Consequently, it is not merely the competency of a person that is up for judgement; *how* this competency is conveyed is equally important—the hegemonic national language represents the “voice of reason” (Puwar, 2004, p. 111) and accents are a distinction that helps separate racialized bodies from one another.

To continue privileging English media in a multicultural nation as the marker of achievement remains problematic, but the potential for ethnic sports media to help increase diversity in mainstream media is a tangible benefit. For example, Singh, Janda, and Hundal attended the 2017 NHL All-Star game where they broadcast in both English and Punjabi and were able to interview players alongside mainstream media. And, on February 18, 2016, National Hockey Day in Canada, the English broadcast threw it to Singh, Janda, Pandher, and Hundal in studio who did a short feature (in English) purely about hockey. Is this an example of the mainstream simply co-opting the alternative or are the margins writing themselves into the centre? Perhaps it is a bit of both, but at this point *Hockey Night Punjabi* has situated itself in a position where it is able to expand the conversation as to who can and cannot contribute to sports media and Canada's pastime.

Hundal has also reflected on the importance of being able to act in the role of a co-author with one's identity intact. The ability to appear in hockey culture as a baptized Sikh sends an important message that aspiring broadcasters should not need to feel torn between their heritage and mainstream society. This tension was illustrated in the movie *Breakaway*, specifically with the issue of wearing a turban while playing ice hockey. The few research participants who had seen *Breakaway* tended to argue that the film exacerbated the issue of the turban and the assumption that baptized Sikhs have to choose between honouring their faith and fitting into hockey culture. Likewise, my own experience recounted in the introduction was unpacked with participants as less of an issue for those who choose to wear turbans than it is for those looking from the outside in. Singh stressed, "to an actual turban wearer it's a non-issue because there's ways around it . . . there's a bazillion styles of turbans out there so it can be very much adjusted to be worn under a helmet for safety reasons in a sport like ice hockey or

football” (Personal communication, April 18, 2016). In addition, a visit to the North Surrey Recreation Centre also challenges this presumed conflict between turbans and hockey because, in many of the team photos, young boys can be seen wearing turbans or patkas.

Personally, for Hundal, maintaining his chosen identity is what makes the journey worth travelling:

I think you'd be more proud if you stayed true to your identity and achieved that success as opposed to trying to compromise your identity to try and achieve that success It's going to be a much more difficult road—no doubt—but you'll overcome so much and your journey is going to be more rewarding, the end result is going to be more rewarding. And, it's going to be more inspiring to another generation of youth. I think that lasting impact is something that drives me. (Personal communication, April 28, 2016)

In these examples, the mere participation of certain citizens helps provide alternative narratives to commonly held assumptions. The presence of people like Singh and Hundal helps to write other Sikh Canadians into popular existence.

What is more, the fact *Hockey Night Punjabi* is essentially accountable only to itself means it can decide which narratives to amplify. In 2016, when Prime Minister Trudeau issued an official apology for the Komagata Maru incident, *Hockey Night Punjabi* was able to speak about this tragic event with its viewers in a way that would surely seem out of place on a mainstream sportscast. Likewise, the broadcast provides a space to highlight the voices and experiences of South Asian players such as Robin Bawa, the first NHL player of Indian ancestry. Bawa, a native of Duncan, British Columbia, is noted as a pioneer for South Asian hockey players. In their interview, the second question posed to Bawa was about his experiences with racism in hockey, to which he responded:

I think racism is always there. When I was younger you could see it more, maybe now it's a little more hidden. I remember when my grandpa came over in 1906 they couldn't go to get a haircut—whites only. Then you go

into grade one, grade two, grade three, the way I started to play hockey was one of the kids goes “Your kind doesn’t play.” I went home to my dad and I said, “Hey dad, is that true?” He goes, “No, not at all.” So, the next day we bought a pair of skates and away we went. (Hockey Night Punjabi, 2016b)

The interview, which was conducted in English and posted in full on social media, enabled a discussion about racism in hockey that is often omitted or used only to bolster narratives of meritocracy and determination. In addition, during the winter of 2016 – 2017, the broadcast helped promote a stem cell drive for two young Sikh boys diagnosed with leukemia. Registration events seeking possible bone marrow donors were held at various gurdwaras (temples) in the Lower Mainland and in Ontario (Hockey Night Punjabi, 2016a). For *Hockey Night Punjabi*, “race” cannot be ignored.

As noted in the previous chapter, the question of *which* men are able to contribute and benefit from hockey culture is fundamental to this analysis. Hundal states, “we have to break down the barrier of hockey being an all-boys club, number one. And being an all-boys white men club” (Personal communication, April 28, 2016). What is reported, downplayed, replayed, and eliminated from the media “is always the result of a complex process of selection” that tends to reproduce dominant ideologies (Gruneau, 1989, p. 134), which is why it is imperative that traditionally marginalized communities be able to control their own narratives.

Last, *Hockey Night Punjabi* offers a new linguistic development for Punjabi Canadians. It is often forgotten that English is the first language of the broadcast team. Even though they are all comfortable and fluent Punjabi speakers, the speed and spontaneity of calling a live sporting event comes with certain pressures, especially when it is not one’s first language. In order to prepare, Janda explains they hold their meetings in Punjabi to help them “start thinking hockey in Punjabi” (Personal communication, May 3, 2016). In the beginning, the team was assisted by people who

used to work on Omni's newscast, a sort of "language committee," to help with the nuances and depth of the Punjabi language (Personal communication, May 3, 2016). They also use vocabulary lists to avoid excessive repetition and to quell any desire to substitute English. Janda states, the "preparation is vital otherwise we'd be speaking English every second word" (Personal communication, May 3, 2016). When Janda and Singh attempted to commentate in English for fun once, Janda described the experience as "weird," because at this point Punjabi has become his first broadcasting language: "It wasn't natural at all and the assumption is I speak English all the time, this should be easy, and it wasn't" (Personal communication, May 3, 2016). Pandher asserts that *Hockey Night Punjabi* may speak the most Punjabi of any programming including many of the news reports from India (Personal communication, April 14, 2016). In this way, the Punjabi broadcast makes a conscious effort to make language central to the experience. Likewise, the boisterous and humorous commentary purposely draws from Punjabi culture, forming a convergence point for language and culture to coalesce into something uniquely designed for its target audience. It is not simply hockey commentary in Punjabi, and this may explain why the other experimental language broadcasts mounted by CBC did not resonate as well with their respective communities.

The development of this particular dialect and communication technique, specific to hockey broadcasting, connects back to the fact that multiple generations of Punjabi viewers watch the show. Janda explained to me that the Punjabi he learned growing up in Canada is different from the Punjabi that people learned growing up in India, and that the richness of Punjabi means there are various levels of the language (Personal communication, May 3, 2016). As a result, the broadcast mixes Punjabi for the young and old, those Canadian born and those naturalized. The creation of a new dialect unique for those watching hockey is another example of constituting a group's

citizenship through language, communication, and media. *Hockey Night Punjabi* facilitates citizenship beyond participation in hockey; it produces meaning where none previously existed, all while writing itself and its fans into the cultural consensus.

Limits of Ethnic Media

The positive contributions of *Hockey Night Punjabi* that have been outlined so far need to be balanced with some of the limitations that face both ethnic media more broadly and this particular broadcast. First, as was alluded to earlier, the separate but equal format, in many ways, reifies racialized difference as abnormal in Canadian society. To offer a privately funded, minoritized language broadcast on a multicultural channel does little to challenge the conservative nature of hockey culture. Its existence could be eliminated at any given time and mainstream hockey culture would not need to acknowledge this fact.

Additionally, working on a niche program such as *Hockey Night Punjabi* tends to draw attention for being different rather than for its commonalities with *HNIC*. For example, when I asked Singh if he ever gets tired of being asked to talk about diversity in hockey instead of just hockey (an offence of which I was equally guilty), he agreed that he would like to talk more about the sport and less about his personal journey but that he recognizes his personal story is an integral piece of the puzzle that cannot be forgotten (Personal communication, April 18, 2016). A coach voiced similar concerns to me whereby he noticed that he was only ever invited to speak about diversity in hockey instead of coaching strategy (Personal communication, April 3, 2016). The separate but equal format reproduces the idea that difference should be segregated from so-called mainstream culture and that certain bodies remain out of place. Puwar (2004) notes that racialized bodies have little choice in the matter; they have special interests “‘foisted’

upon them” (p. 67). These observations reiterate Gayatri Spivak’s (1996) claim, “I am invited to speak today for the precise reason I wasn’t in the past” (p. 194). We must learn to question: Which bodies speak about which subjects? What is this body expected to speak about? What is this body not expected to speak of? On whose behalf are they asked to speak? And, if they speak “out of turn” will they be heard? (Puwar, 2006). Singh acknowledges that having someone like him on the English broadcasts is a powerful move towards social harmony in a nation that has experienced increasing backlash against equal rights, especially when the opportunities are not limited to speaking about his experience on the margins.

A second limitation is one that exists for ethnic media more generally, that is the assumption that an expiration date exists for non-English media. Most ethnic media are relatively small-scale operations and regional in nature, making sustainability and monitoring and evaluation difficult tasks (Matsaganis et al., 2011). Presumably, as generations become more hybrid, the hypothesis is that English media will be sufficient and we will see a decrease in ethnic media outlets. Harry, a long-time hockey coach and administrator echoes this perception “I think as time goes on it might not be as successful because gradually everybody will have English as their first language . . . you require an audience and right now there’s an audience for this, maybe in 15 years there won’t be one” (Personal communication, April 3, 2016). Kevin, who referred to the broadcast as a “gimmick,” offers a comparable critique on the perceived limits of the show’s growth potential:

CBC and Rogers Sportsnet can say whatever they want but it's done for a purpose, to draw more viewers, to draw more revenue. That's fine, nothing wrong with that but is it going to replace anything? No. The South Asian population is limited. There's only X [amount] you are going to reach because it's here. Are you going to get more viewers in India? No. They're not. (Personal communication, November 21, 2016)

It is important to note, however, that these remain assumptions because ethnic media of this particular iteration, is really only a generation old. The Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) did not announce an explicit ethnic media broadcasting policy until 1999 (Matsaganis et al., 2011), and legislation for increased diversity in media was instituted in 1991. These comments also seem to ignore the fact that new immigrants continue to arrive and, even without new arrivals, ethnic media helps keep languages alive, which is vital for the survival of many communities, such as Indigenous groups. Conceivably, this assumption is based on the increased saturation of the English language globally; still the expiration date hypothesis has yet to be confirmed.

Furthermore, without accurate ratings available for most ethnic programming, it is virtually impossible to secure long-term investment and conduct strategic planning. *Hockey Night Punjabi's* year-to-year contract with Chevrolet is illustrative of this limitation. And even though we know that the broadcast has a growing social media presence and more visibility with mainstream broadcasters, the show has no firm ratings that measure its reach.⁶ Yu (2016) emphasizes that in Canada “there is no accurate national count of the sector” (p. 344).

Third, despite the broadcast's attempts to create a well-respected sports production, there is a definite feeling from the younger generation that it is a “side show.” For example, Dev, 25, expresses appreciation for the Punjabi broadcast but maintains that *HNIC* offers more to its viewers:

I'm all for it, if they want to watch it in their native language that's totally cool, but there's just that history behind all the sportscasters on Hockey Night in Canada that you kind of have to watch it, right, to get that full experience. Bob Cole for one, he's a national treasure. Don Cherry. I mean

⁶ As of December 2017, estimated viewership for the broadcast is an average of 209,000 viewers per game (Personal communication, November 21, 2017).

yeah, it's just those elements of Hockey Night in Canada with different language broadcasts. (Personal communication, August 12, 2016)

That “full experience” seemingly points to the history that comes with *HNIC* and its recognizable figures. The power of whiteness is evident in this statement because we could just as easily state that viewers of *HNIC* are the ones who do not receive the full experience—there are stories that they are missing, current events they may not be privy to, and calls that they would be lucky to catch on social media after-the-fact. Even conservative American news outlet, *Fox News*, wrote, “The most exciting goal calls of the Stanley Cup playoffs aren’t in English or French” (Bathe, 2016) in reference to the Punjabi broadcast. This sense of loss or missing out extends only in one direction.

Moreover, the fact that none of the broadcasters have playing experience creates challenges for some viewers, such as Kevin:

I'm jaded in the sense that being a hockey dad, the analytical side of it, I'd rather listen to Jim Hughson, Craig Simpson because I'll get the more analytical side because Craig Simpson has played hockey. The other two guys, they're very good Punjabi communicators, they're very entertaining. It is fun, here and there to flip it back and forth just to hear descriptors but that's it. Are they giving me an in depth analytical description of the game? They are giving me entertainment value but are they are giving me a true hockey perspective? No. (Personal communication, November 21, 2016)

Kevin’s feelings are common in sports discourse where playing experience is conflated with the ability to provide thoughtful game analysis. This critique is commonly waged against female commentators (Franks, 2016; Glass, 2017) and broadcasters of colour (Dowbiggin, 2013); it polices who is able to speak in sports media, further marginalizing groups that were often not privileged with the ability to participate. But who is and is not “qualified” to commentate on sports is very much socially constructed, because Jim Hughson has explained that he, unlike Singh who grew up with the dream of commentating and graduated with a degree in broadcasting, “went to university, didn’t finish a degree, [and] went back to work in the radio business” (Fox, 2015, para. 7). It

also appears that Hughson never competed in organized hockey; therefore, what makes Hughson's analysis more qualified than someone like Singh, other than the fact that he was given the opportunity to call Vancouver Canucks games and allowed to hone his skills over the past four decades? Through Dev, and Kevin's comments, we can observe the normative power of white Canadian culture at work by positioning the English broadcast as the "true hockey perspective."

Moreover, the humour that the Punjabi broadcasters inject into their commentary seems to paradoxically solidify the "side show" nature of the broadcast for hockey aficionados, even though it is presumed welcoming for those learning about the game. Gary, 38, grew up playing hockey and articulates this cognitive dissonance created by humour where a stone-faced professionalism has come to be expected, "They're pretty funny. I can't watch it because I'm laughing half the time. Not because of the quality, I just love what they're saying" (Personal communication, April 15, 2016). Notice how quality and entertainment are explained as mutually exclusive. Randy, 43, offers a similar take on the broadcast:

CS: Do you ever watch the Punjabi broadcast?

Randy: I'll watch it from time to time. It's one of those things, I won't watch a game. I'll tune in for comedy's sake, to see the quotes they come up with.

CS: You won't consistently tune in?

Randy: No, never. (Personal communication, November 15, 2016)

Interestingly, *Hockey Night Punjabi* seems to draw laughter from its detractors and its supporters. They are laughing for different reasons, yet both forms reproduce the show's marginality.

The informational and laid-back nature of the show that is supposed to invite new viewers appears to be off-putting for seasoned hockey fans. This paradigm again

normalizes the English commentary and reproduces ethnic sports media as something that someone advances beyond, both as a viewer and broadcaster. How then does *Hockey Night Punjabi* attract a sufficient number of viewers to provide a sense of longevity for the program since it is discursively produced as training wheels for new hockey fans? Furthermore, having two separate broadcasts limits the shared meaning that hockey is supposed to represent: one broadcast, one experience, one conversation. Logistically, it does not make sense to merge the Punjabi and English broadcasts, but there does need to be an equal sense of value placed on both outlets and crossover segments where appropriate. While “water cooler” talk may prove to be more difficult with multiple interpretations of hockey, in order for us to make claims about the power of sport to build bridges and provide common ground, citizens must feel like their experiences are recognized and valued by the wider populace.

In asking how culture affects citizenship, we can see patterns whereby the dominant culture reproduces its citizens by confirming or denying one’s visibility and their value to the national narrative. The end goal, then, of cultural citizenship is a national narrative that is no longer based on a single linear history. And, as Hall (2005) argues:

It is therefore not a question of what our traditions make of us so much as what we make of our traditions. Paradoxically, our cultural identities, in any finished form, lie ahead of us. We are always in the process of cultural formation. Culture is not a matter of ontology, of being, but of becoming. (p. 556)

Media narratives offer an entry point to explore the lived experiences that follow this chapter with a particular set of questions in mind regarding the relationship between citizenship and hockey, the inclusiveness of the sport, and what possibilities exist for co-authoring a collective re-telling of hockey in Canada.

Sara Ahmed (2012) asserts that the politics of diversity use people of colour as tools to provide a façade of happiness and camaraderie. She states, “If your arrival is a sign of diversity, then your arrival can be incorporated as good practice. Bodies of colour provide organizations with tools, ways of turning action points into outcomes We are ticks in the boxes” (p. 153). Using this logic, *Hockey Night Punjabi* and the rising stardom of Singh could be read as tools to deflect accusations of institutional racism, but it seems the way to make sure that these developments do not remain “ticks in the boxes” is to not rest. We cannot assume that this is a sign of things to come. If Singh remains the only Sikh to appear on Canadian hockey media in 10 years’ time, then Ahmed would be proven right. The influential presence of *Hockey Night Punjabi* stands as a symbol of potentiality because the lives, politics and work of Canadian “others” hold the prospect of helping us understand “both the refined and crude constructions of ‘White power’ behind ‘Canada’s’ national imaginary. They serve to remind us of the Canada that *could exist*” (Bannerji, 1997, p. 37). This is not where our work ends—it is where it begins. In the next chapter, we begin to undertake some of this work by understanding how the space of the hockey rink polices racialized difference and, in turn, often putting South Asian citizenship and belonging into question.

Chapter 3. White Spaces, Different Faces: Policing membership at the rink and in the nation

Field Notes: Vancouver Giants versus Tri-City Americans, October 23, 2016

My friend and I have seats right behind the bench. We have never sat this close at a hockey game before. I sit down next to an older white gentleman, maybe in his 60s, who starts to chat me up when he sees my camera. He asked if I was with the press. I inform him it is just for my own use. He tells me that he and his friend travelled from Vancouver to Langley for the game via public transit. He said it was his first time in this stadium (he used to watch the Giants all the time when they played at the Pacific Coliseum). I commented that I had played in this arena (Langley Events Centre) once but that I had never watched anything in here. He asked if I was a figure skater. I said, "No, I play hockey." He paused for a second then said, "Oh yeah, that university in China is trying to get a hockey team going." I humour him and we briefly discuss the Chinese women's team that happens to be doing a mini tour in Vancouver at the time.

Of all the people to have this conversation with in the stadium, this person happened to be seated next to someone there to observe how "race" and citizenship intersect in the space of the arena. His conversation and assumptions were clearly influenced by the fact that I was one of the few racialized faces in the arena. I later reflected that, while not maliciously intended, his unintentionally prejudiced assumptions were arguably illustrative of the shallow well from which many draw conversational material when confronted with racialized and/or gendered difference at the rink. This is simply one of many moments that demonstrate how non-white Canadian women are regularly reminded of "difference" and even "otherness."

It is especially telling that the conversation noted above happened at a sporting event. Sport is often cited as a powerful tool for integration and bridge building. Whether it is current Canadian Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau, explaining that the Stanley Cup “has a weight of symbolism and strength of binding our country together that very few material symbols do” (Canadian Press, 2017a, para. 7), former Prime Minister Stephen Harper telling *Sports Illustrated* that hockey acts as a “common denominator” for Canadians (Farber, 2010), the Institute for Canadian Citizenship (2014) arguing that sports helps new Canadians feel included, or former United Nations Secretary General, Kofi Annan, pronouncing sport as a universal language (United Nations, 2004), the fundamental message, from a functionalist perspective, is that sport is capable of overcoming any kind of difference. In other words, sport is a tool to be used or a vehicle to be driven towards a more equitable society.

In my view, the “integrative power of sport” is one of those partial truths that, again, stands in for the whole. It is not so much that sport is always a vehicle for the expression and transmission of sexist or racist ideology. Rather, sport is better viewed as a contested terrain where power and difference are constantly under negotiation. Sport can still be seen as an ideological tool, but with the realization that there may be multiple hands attempting to use the same tool for very different projects. The sporting field is a space where people can be united as easily as they can be divided; it is where meaning is made, but not necessarily with equal input. This chapter focuses on the space of the hockey rink and how, as the above field note observes, it can police difference in seemingly innocuous ways, making racialized membership in both hockey culture and the nation an uneasy, unsettled, and conditional experience.

Who Belongs in a Space? Who is Out of Place?

The Tebbit Test is an example of how sport has long functioned as one arbiter of citizenship and belonging. Norman Tebbit was a conservative British politician who served under Margaret Thatcher's reign. The Tebbit Test, also commonly referred to as the "Cricket Test," created a simple imagined line between insiders and outsiders: Do you cheer for Britain's cricket team or the team of your ancestral heritage? Those who choose to support any team other than Britain are marked as not *really* British (regardless of their citizenship status or birth place) and therefore do not fully belong (Yuval-Davis, 2011). As a result, the sports stadium, sports bar, and field/arena have been implicated in establishing and maintaining a particular boundary of belonging. The *politics of belonging*, extend beyond individual feelings to involve "not only constructions of boundaries but also the inclusion or exclusion of particular people, social categories and groupings within these boundaries by those who have the power to do this" (Yuval-Davis, 2011, p. 18). In other words, what makes belonging possible for some and ostensibly impossible for others? Furthermore, Puwar (2006) emphasizes, "an altered inhabitation of space does not automatically translate into straightforward belonging. Residency and arrival can be a tenuous and precarious place, even if one takes up the most consecrated of spaces" (pp.81 – 82). In Canada, the rink has traditionally represented one of those sacred spaces.

One hockey dad shared an experience with me that drew on a version of the Tebbit Test when explaining that he is no longer Indian but a Canadian citizen, so Canadian, as he pointed out, that he requires a visa to visit his birthplace. Kulbir, a self-employed father of four in his 50's, recounted a trip to Winnipeg with his daughter's hockey team where an elderly First Nations woman asked him where he was from. He told her they were from the Lower Mainland of British Columbia and were in town for a

hockey tournament. He thanked the woman for letting “us come to this country” and she asked him how Canadian his heart was:

Kulbir: I’m 100% Canadian heart.

Woman: What would happen tomorrow if there was a world war, you are fighting for the Canadian army and you have to shoot Indian soldiers? Are you going to do it?

Kulbir: Yes, I will shoot him.

Woman: Come on, give me a good hug. (Personal communication, June 15, 2016)

Presumably, this exchange occurred because of Kulbir’s racialized difference.

Rarely, with a few temporary exceptions such as the cases of Italian (Sarti, 2012) and German Canadians (Library and Archives Canada, 2014) during the Second World War, has the loyalty of white settlers been questioned in the same way. Pierre Bourdieu (1992) states that in postcolonial contexts, not only do people speak to each other but they are also spoken through – “the colonial history in its entirety, or the whole history for the economic, political and cultural subjugation” exists in language and communication (as cited in Puwar, 2004, p. 112). Thus, through war and its civilian surrogate, sports, each individual citizen can become a citizenship officer by policing those who belong and those who do not through impromptu tests of loyalty. Sports may provide passports to inclusion (Back, Crabbe, & Solomos, 2001), but as Carrington (2010) highlights, these passports have the right to be “revoked and downgraded from citizenship to merely permanent residency at a moment’s choice” (p. 158). The point here is that there are correct and incorrect answers to be found/elicited from certain citizens. Would Kulbir have received a hug had he responded with either loyalty to his Indian heritage or general indifference? It seems safe to assume, through the eyes of this woman, that his citizenship would have been downgraded through a “test” designed to informally mark the Others living within our borders.

Trespassers Will Be Prosecuted

For many Canadians, it is still inconceivable that South Asians can play or have an interest in hockey. Puwar (2004) suggests “new” bodies that seem conceptually “out of place” (p. 8) are often forced to “endure a burden of doubt, a burden of representation, infantilization and super-surveillance” (p. 11). To understand the experience of these so-called “space invaders” (Puwar, 2004) is to expose the faults in traditional approaches to multiculturalism and diversity because every *body* that is different from the somatic norm becomes a trespasser. To Puwar’s argument, some of my participants shared experiences of having people assume they knew nothing about the game, or that when they referenced “hockey” they must have been talking about field hockey. For instance, Gary, 39, who grew up in northern British Columbia, told of an incident that took place after he had already been playing ice hockey for a number of years:

Actually, best story is I was going to play hockey, a floor hockey league with my elementary school and, I had been playing hockey for a little while, and when I went to go sign up the coach of the team stopped, put his pen down, and goes, “So do you actually even understand the basics of hockey?” I said, “What do you mean? I’ve been playing hockey for years now.” “Okay, are you sure?” I was like “Yeah!” (Personal communication, April 15, 2016)

This “double take” on bodies out of place is an example of the burden of doubt that Puwar (2004) references. Similarly, Kiran, 22, grew up in predominantly white neighbourhoods of the Lower Mainland and often had to explain her hockey participation:

Well, usually when I tell people I play hockey they’re like “Oh yeah? Field hockey?” I’m like, “No, I actually play ice hockey.” They’re like, “Ice hockey?” I’m like, “Yeah, you know the sport that everyone in Canada loves—I play that one.” (Personal communication, April 28, 2016)

Therefore, despite the notion that hockey is available to everyone, certain bodies are met with resistance from the very beginning—they are forced into verifying their existence, which results in a state of conditional acceptance. The assumptions that

South Asian Canadians do not understand the game or would prefer playing field hockey may be interpreted as a play on cultural stereotypes, but on a deeper level it challenges the citizenship of certain Canadians based on their physical appearance, a challenge that is not equally presented to all Canadian bodies. Comparable to my opening field note, when it comes to hockey, racialized Canadians are often required to (repeatedly) create a space for themselves, whereas most white Canadian men (or those able to pass as white) have a symbolic space reserved for them.

None of the participants interviewed for this study regretted getting involved in hockey, but it was also clear, despite being a member of a unified group, that there were moments where their racialized difference became undeniable. Kiran re-tells a rookie-hazing story from when she was approximately 12 or 13 years old when the seniors on her team dressed up the rookies in assigned “costumes”:

They dressed everyone up, my friend was [cartoon character] ... and then they got to me, “[Kiran], we're going to make you white today!” So, they painted my face white and they're like “You're not brown today, you're white today!” (Personal communication, April 28, 2016)

The fact that “race” can be interpreted as a costume to be worn speaks to the challenge of anti-racist work. Immaturity may be implicated in this particular incident, but to think of skin colour as something that can be adorned and/or left behind is true only for those who are able to move about without ever realizing that they too wear a “costume.”

Kiran also shared a more recent incident where her current team went to a Tim Hortons coffee shop in another province and the employee who took her order automatically assumed Kiran was not Canadian-born because of her racialized appearance. This employee had been asking all of Kiran’s white teammates where they were from, referring to the city, and asking why they were in town. When it was Kiran’s turn the woman asked her where she was from and when Kiran answered “Vancouver”

with some other information, the woman responded, “Oh, congratulations! Perfect English!” The whole team laughed aloud, as did Kiran who replied with a confused, “Thank you?” (Personal communication, April 28, 2016). Even though this specific experience was told as a humorous memory it exemplifies how visible markers of difference are produced, maintained, and/or resisted in everyday interactions that, on the surface, offer no malice but are effective at reproducing the sense that some bodies are out of place in certain situations. These microaggressions discursively create an environment where racialized citizens are never fully allowed to feel comfortable in their legal citizenship.

Being “out of place” often leads to the policing of one’s own behaviour, something that has been commonly documented and discussed amongst African-Americans (Gandhir & Foster, 2015; Lee, 1997), and more recently within Muslim groups (Shireen Ahmed, 2017), regarding interactions with law enforcement. Self-policing results from being concurrently invisible and hypervisible: invisible in the sense that certain bodies do not count as much as others and hypervisible because racialized bodies operate under “super-surveillance” when they are seen as trespassing (Puwar, 2006). There is an expectation that in order to avoid further discrimination one has to behave in accordance with conventional or mainstream white norms because any transgressions can be used to generalize the entire community or to limit future opportunities. Gary provides an example illustrating how some racialized individuals internalize difference, resulting in policing the group’s collective behaviour. During a recreational hockey game Gary had an altercation with a South Asian player on the opposing team. He details their interaction in the postgame handshake lineup:

He actually comes up to me and goes “Hey, my teammates later on told me that it was actually my fault,” and I said “Yeah.” I said, “You know we have to be really careful when we’re playing out here because people only see the colour of our skin. This is unfortunate but that’s what they see and

we gotta, you gotta, always be aware when you're playing hockey that other people are watching everything you do, especially when you're a minority. You are already separated from everyone else and when you do something wrong it's amplified." He's like, "Yeah, you're right." People already notice us because we're different and anything we do is going to get amplified by two. I go, "Is it fair? Nope. Is it reality? Yes." (Personal communication, April 15, 2016)

Puwar (2004) asserts, the "movements, postures and gestures [of racialized bodies] are closely watched for any untoward behaviour. Racialized optics remain suspicious of these bodies out of place" (p. 51). For these reasons, Gary felt compelled to police his opponent's "untoward" behaviour because (a) not only could it create racist assumptions about this player, but more importantly, (b) his behaviour could inadvertently cast doubt and suspicion on all other South Asian players by association through appearance. Gary's intervention was equally about self-preservation as it was about protecting South Asian respectability. This is another example of inhabiting an unsettled experience by being marked as a permanent trespasser.

The marking of certain acts as inappropriate in accordance to the body that performs the act is perhaps best exemplified by the scrutiny that surrounds professional tennis player, Serena Williams (e.g., Douglas, 2005; Schultz, 2005). When Serena Williams verbally attacked a linesperson at the 2009 U.S. Open, her outburst reproduced the angry black woman discourse, an image that the United States Tennis Association (USTA) felt was "bad for the image of the sport." Her "tirade" resulted in a \$82,500 fine, a two-year probation, and the USTA has since "put a ban on the use of this footage" (Baird & Major, 2013). Conversely, similar outbursts by white, male players such as Jimmy Connors, John McEnroe, and Andy Roddick have generally been discursively produced as shows of determination, commitment, and entertainment worthy of being replayed time and again.

Moreover, individual racialized bodies tend to be used as proof of a larger cultural problem. This is similar to how all Muslims and the religion of Islam are conflated with terrorism, yet a white terrorist is typically labelled a “lone wolf,” signaling his/her aberration from other white people. Gary protested:

I'm tired of hearing guys saying, “Oh we played a team of East Indian guys or brown guys or whatever and they're just a bunch of jerks.” . . . they probably were jerks but I know other teams filled with Caucasians or other ethnicities and they're just as big jerks. So why is it that it's that team of brown or East Indian guys that are the bunch of jerks. It's no, that team was just a bunch of jerks. (Personal communication, April 15, 2016)

In the same vein, Gary reflects on the weight of having to represent his entire racial group in a positive light by explaining that he is prepared to educate his daughters about the expectations that come with their racialized difference. For Gary, being a racialized Canadian means being an ambassador for Indian culture, because he understands that the actions of one will stand in for the actions of all, a correlation that white privilege manages to deflect. He describes this imposed ambassadorship as “a bit of a burden” but not one that he would trade for anything (Personal communication, April 15, 2016).

As an elite level player, the burden of representation for Billy, 20, is even greater. After some injuries and not performing to expectations, he would occasionally visit hockey forums and notice people comment, “You’re a disgrace to our culture” (Personal communication, July 20, 2016). Upon reading those kinds of comments the weight of representing a culture and community of people became tangible for him:

I remember reading that and I think that’s when I really realized, as much as I'm just playing for myself and my family, you’re playing for a lot of other people as well. You represent a lot of other people so it comes with a lot of pressure and you learn how to mature quicker because you got to understand there are other people who are looking up to you and watching you. (Personal communication, July 20, 2016)

Thus, regardless of whether one is playing recreational or elite level hockey, to “invade” this space means accepting a litany of responsibilities for the opportunity.

Brian, 25, who originally identified as a “hockey player” more than being East-Indian because he never grew up around other East Indian families, retold a story of exclusion that concretized his difference on the team:

It was provincials in Bantam and we were playing in [small town in British Columbia] and we played a game in the morning and we lost. I was really upset about it. I think I actually had a chance to either win the game or tie the game and I missed the net. I remember breaking my stick over the post and then feeling terrible because it was a \$300 stick my mom just bought [laughs] . . . I came back and my mom right away had a meal for me . . . and she told me you need to have a nap and be ready for the game. While I did that apparently the coach went and knocked on everyone's door and [the team] went to the [local brewery], which was a little trip. I woke up and the first thing I do is get my sticks ready. So, I start taping my sticks and I go to the room because everyone plays Xbox or Play Station—nobody is around. And I remember a huge argument my mom had with my coach in the parking lot of the hotel [about] why everyone was going [without me]. And, this was the third time this happened that year. (Personal communication, September 11, 2016)

I asked Brian if an experience like that made him feel like an outsider on the team:

Yeah, I think it does. And that was one of the times where I felt maybe I should play basketball because I was very athletic, I could jump very high and everyone at that time was doing the whole stereotype: “Oh, you can jump high because you got pigment in your skin type of thing.” And you start to identify with minority things . . . I still listen to country music and stuff like that but there was a big time in my life when everybody was doing that and then me and my brother and my two cousins that grew up in that town went into gangsta rap music because it was all very aggressive and it was about being a minority so you start to get pumped up about being an outsider. You honestly start to feel that way after a while but I think once you learn how to own it, it's a lot more powerful to you. You start going to tournaments in Vancouver and you look around and my parents go, “You're the only East Indian kid playing here, you should be proud of that,” instead of being like I got no chance because of it. You should be proud that you are even here and you're at this level and there's so much more potential for you to keep going on. (Personal communication, September 11, 2016)

Brian's turn to gangsta rap is noteworthy because it speaks to marginalized experiences and is an important cultural outlet for citizenship where racialized difference is celebrated instead of downplayed. Hip-hop culture, which encompasses graffiti, rap music, DJ-ing, and break dancing, is a valuable outlet for negotiating racialized identity (Forman, 2000; Jeffries 2011; Kubrin, 2005). Rap music represents a voice for

blackness, marginality, poverty, and social struggle (Jeffries, 2011). More specifically, gangsta rap “is considered a product of the gang culture and street wars of South Central Los Angeles, Compton, and Long Beach, and the retromack culture (pimp attitude and style) of East Oakland” (Kubrin, 2005, pp. 360 - 361). This was a distinct departure from earlier forms of rap that were more inclined to give voice to the “black” experience; gansta rap is a declaration for the “black underclass in the ghetto” (Kubrin, 2005, p. 361). But what does an East Indian boy from northern British Columbia have in common with black youth living in the “ghettos” of California? Brian needed to find a different space where his racialized identity could be empowered by and through his difference, which is something that rap music (as a form of politicized art) makes far more accessible than sport.

According to Sharma (2010), the connection between second-generation immigrants in North America and the impact of “black” culture has been underanalyzed. Despite Prashad’s (2000) argument that brown bodies are used as a tool to oppress black bodies, “Blacks continue to represent the most visible example of a minority identity for South Asians of all generations” (Sharma, 2010, p. 16). Admittedly, this embrace of “blackness” can also be understood as the commodification and co-optation of alternative culture, but Sharma, asserts that through hip-hop music, Desi (a term often used for South Asians in America) artists use music to reconcile their difference, “They engage in *making race*: changing the nature and meaning of existing racial categories by producing their own versions” (p. 89). This connects to Brian’s reflection about suddenly accepting his difference and finding power in his existence along the margins. Music, like sport, is an integral practice for cultural citizenship because it elucidates the struggles around who is counted as a citizen and in which ways (Avelar & Dunn, 2011). In Brian’s case, music offered a form of resistance neither easily found nor generally accepted in

hockey. Because Brian's membership in hockey was, at times, an uneasy one, music allowed him to settle some of the feelings caused by being marked as a trespasser.

Bodies out of place are often recognized as trespassers not only on the ice but also in the stands. A number of players discussed incidents that made them feel protective of their parents' right to inclusive public space. For instance, Gary described how he could hear rude comments being made from the stands about his skating skills while he was on the ice:

Then my parents would go watch hockey and then they'd feel uncomfortable too right. They're already having a tough time fitting into Canadian culture and now they're hearing things said about their son and they're like we don't even know what to say. (Personal communication, April 15, 2016)

Sonia, 26, described similar protective instincts with her mother:

I remember that part, that she was connecting with mainly Asian folks who, I don't know what their experiences were, but I remember almost feeling protective over the way some people spoke to my mom over certain things Then when I heard some white kid make a comment about my parents it would hurt so bad. I remember crying a few times. "What the fuck is your problem?" at that age when you're starting to become aware of those dynamics but you're not quite sure how to articulate those thoughts you kind of internalize them. (Personal communication, December 1, 2017)

To this day, Sonia associates condescending comments towards her parents with hockey. Growing up, this internalized difference made Sonia want to disassociate herself from her Punjabi identity by not speaking Punjabi at the rink or voluntarily pointing out her racialized difference. One year, when another Punjabi girl joined Sonia's team, she remembered this player saying something to the effect of "my kind," in reference to Punjabi people:

I remember being like, "I don't want to engage in this conversation." I remember that moment. That's weird but it totally happened. I would never speak Punjabi with her. Now, if I ever see a Punjabi person we're like [talk talk talk] because I don't care but before, no way, I would never have brought it up. (Personal communication, December 1, 2016)

The desire to minimize her difference is indicative of feeling like someone perpetually trespassing on private property where the space is never wholly yours. This difference is also reproduced by never having the ability to name one's self.

Self-Identification

Before moving any further, it is important to revisit the term South Asian. When I asked each of the participants how they racially or ethnically identified the majority immediately answered "Canadian." Twenty-two out of 26 interviewees were born in Canada, and those who were born elsewhere now hold Canadian citizenship. Unfortunately, racialized Canadians learn at a young age that answering "Canadian" usually signals the start of a much longer conversation instead of the end of it. The constant need to qualify one's existence is part of how an uneasy and conditional membership is created by the nation. As a result, when probed further on the common question posed to all racialized Canadians, "Where are you *really* from?" most participants offered a term relating to their South Asian heritage. Gary describes this liminal space where Canadians of colour are forced to redefine themselves for the benefit of other Canadians:

When people ask me where I'm from, I'm from [Northern BC] and I'm Canadian. But I don't even say Indo-Canadian anymore. I just say I'm Canadian. My culture, well my background is Indian—where I'm from, where my parents are from, what I'm teaching my kids too [is] that we are Indian as well. We gotta embrace that but I look at myself as Canadian more than anything else. It's tough though because not everyone looks at you as Canadian. (Personal communication, April 15, 2016)

Kevin, 46, expresses similar identification patterns:

It's funny. I always say, nowadays, I always say originally, I'm from Vancouver and now I live in [local suburb]. And they go, "No, no. Back!" Okay, if people pry then you tell them where in the Punjab you're from and the city you were from, and where your family is from. Or people shift and they'll go "Where are your parents from?" But I identify myself as Canadian, which I am. (Personal communication, November 21, 2016)

The implications of racialized citizens never being allowed to define themselves has been discussed at length elsewhere (e.g., Canessa, 2007; Ghee, 1990; Ghosh, 2013); however, it is important to recognize that participating in hockey is not enough to verify the citizenship of certain Canadians. Hockey may be common, but it does not denominate us equally.

The chosen self-identifications of my research participants ranged from Indo-Canadian, Indian, East Indian, Punjabi, and/or brown. Parents like Randy, 43, almost have to confirm Canadian-ness for their children: “I teach my kids, you know you're East Indian. You have to be proud of where you're from and where your grandparents came from but you're Canadian” (Personal communication, November 15, 2016). For those with a variety of ethnic heritages, it can be difficult to explain in passing conversation, so some people, such as Amit, 24, truncates her identity for the sake of time and effort:

Amit: When somebody asks me what nationality I am, I say mainly Fijian.

CS: Mainly?

Amit: Haha, yeah. We are a mix of stuff but I am mainly Fijian though. (Personal communication, May 16, 2016)

Amit was the only person who strayed from the dominant (and mostly imposed) terms of Indian, East Indian and so on.

For others, it was clearly an uncomfortable task when asked to label themselves:

Well, I guess the best answer if someone asks you what you are is I'm a human being right? I just, it just keeps going, you can go nationality, your race, your origin. So, I mean, here in Canada, we're Indo-Canadian but I don't like that term personally.

CS: How come?

I feel like . . . well, here's the thing, if somebody comes from Europe and they're from Scandinavia we're not calling them Scandinavian-Canadian—they're just Canadian right? So, if somebody is Canadian they're Canadian. You can say that, yeah, he's a Canadian of such and such descent, I think

that makes sense . . . if you're going to say it for one ethnic group then you should be saying it for all. Like he's such and such Canadian. But here, because I feel we're visibly a minority, you know we're kind of labelled into this group. Sometimes you hear South Asian. I don't know if that's the proper one either but I guess it is.

CS: Does it have any meaning for you? Like would you ever say I'm a South Asian guy?

No. I think the best way to put it for me is I am a Punjabi Canadian and you don't hear that one because literally that is my culture, that is my language, that is the origin where I'm from. (Hockey Night Punjabi representative, 2016)

I had a similar exchange with Greg, a 47-year-old hockey dad who moved to Canada from the United Kingdom in his early 20s:

Umm, I really don't give a shit. I don't care. I don't care one bit. Call me a Hindu, call me whatever. I don't care one bit. I just see myself as a human being—that's #1. If anyone sees me as anything different than that, then I don't really care. If somebody comes up to me and says yeah, you're South Asian or whatever, listen I'm a human being we don't need to get into those details. (Personal communication, November 21, 2016)

The problem with labelling individuals into any category, whether related to “race,” ethnicity, gender, or sexuality, is that it reifies boxed identities and reproduces a singular experience. Yet, for Roland Barthes (1972), it is precisely in the details, the processes, and the repetition of everyday experiences where myths and our common “human-ness” starts to unravel:

Doubtless the child is always born, but in the general volume of the human problem, what does the “essence” of that action mean to us compared to the child's modes of being, which indeed are perfectly historical? Whether the child is born with ease or difficulty, whether or not he causes his mother suffering at birth, whether the child lives or dies, and, if he lives, whether he accedes to some sort of future – this, and not the eternal lyric of birth, should be the subject of our Exhibitions. (p. 198)

Therefore, even though the colour-blind version of self-identification may seem to equalize citizens, it is far from equitable. Just as the Black Lives Matter movement gave rise to the discourse of All Lives Matter, the “whitelash” movement fails to recognize that Black Lives Matter is about focus, not exclusion. Likewise, in an attempt to offer some

semblance of “South Asian” identities for the purpose of social justice requires concentrated attention on specific citizens that have historically not been seen as equal to others. Drawing from Barthes (1972), to refer to oneself as human *first* performs an inadvertent erasure of the context necessary to advocate for equality.

Sonia demonstrated “situational ethnicity” (Stayman & Deshpande, 1989), whereby racialized people often draw on multiple presentations of their self-identity depending on the context. This is also known as “code switching” (Oswald, 1999), where minoritized people, in particular, learn to quickly navigate through the multiplicity of their existences for the sake of appropriateness, belonging, and/or safety. It can be read as an act of agency for racialized people to emphasize or downplay certain aspects of their identity (Georgiou, 2006):

CS: You've used the term Indian. Is that how you racially or ethnically identify?

Sonia: It depends who I'm talking to. If I'm talking about broad sense community to somebody, I don't know how to say this, but I'll usually say Indian if I think you're not aware of South Asian people, so I'll say Indian. If I'm talking about my culture, my home life, I'll always say I'm Punjabi because that's the main thing I identify with is language and culture but then when I'm writing myself into my work I usually refer to being South Asian or being Canadian with South Asian identity/heritage. (Personal communication, December 1, 2016)

De Fina (2007) explains, “participants in social activities ‘do’ identity work and align with or distance themselves from social categories of belonging depending on the local context of interaction and its insertion in the wider social world” (p. 372). Drawing from sociolinguistics, ethnic identities are negotiated and “indexed in subtle ways rather than openly declared, and that they often contradict expectations and stereotypes about received ethnic boundaries” (p. 374). Citizens are able to connect with certain values and ideologies through communicative acts, such as their choice in language (Brown, 2002). Sonia expressed a similar debate when asked if she uses the term brown:

Sonia: Depends. I feel like we use it internally, when I talk to other Indian kids, “brown kids,” whatever we say it to each other but I heard a white person call me a brown person, I don’t know. I would be like “What do you mean?” That can mean so many things, like the colour of your skin? I don’t really get it, but I think, also in the Lower Mainland, it has a very specific connotation and usually refers to Punjabi people. You think like Surrey, Abbotsford, that sort of thing.

CS: Would that be a negative connotation?

Sonia: Sometimes. Yeah, I think so. (Personal communication, December 1, 2016)

In this way, the conscious choice not to self-identify as brown serves as a way to downplay some of the negative associations tied to the label. This demonstrates some of the work that racialized Canadians are forced to do when living in a “multicultural” white settler nation where racialized membership is always contingent.

“Brown”

One way that South Asian Canadians have dealt with the unease of being racialized Canadians is to create a new identification—one not defined by the Government of Canada. Brown comes with a litany of geographically delineated interpretations. Studies in “brownness” have tended to centre Latinx experiences in the United States (e.g., Aldama, 2005; Milian, 2013; Muñoz, 2007; Rana, 2015). Muñoz (2007) likens “brownness” to “blackness” whereby both groups are positioned as social problems. “Feeling like a problem, in commonality, is what I am attempting to get to when I cite and exercise the notion of feeling Brown . . . Feeling Brown is feeling together in difference. Feeling Brown is an ‘apartness together’ through sharing the status of being a problem” (pp. 443 – 444). However, as was briefly discussed in Chapter One, brown people around the world, inclusive of those from Southeast Asia, South Asia, Hispanic nations, the Middle East, and Indigenous communities, are not universally marked as “problems.” Al-Solaylee (2016) writes that brown people “are not

as privileged as whites but not as criminalized as blacks” (p. 7), which is a debatable statement when applied to the current political climate of the United States where President Trump has literally labelled Latino immigrants as rapists and drug dealers. Nonetheless Al-Solaylee describes racialized brown skin as “possibly the biggest prison of them all” (p. 8). What is shared between studies of brownness is “a political awakening from the outside in” (Al-Solaylee, 2016, p. 9). He contends that for too long “brown” people have been identified externally, particularly by their music and foods—falafel, curry, tacos—and it is now time to both self-identify and self-authorize one’s existence.

Even though no one originally introduced or identified themselves as brown, in every interview the term brown was used, usually once a certain level of comfort was established. When participants were asked to explain the meaning and use of the term, it raised a feeling of self-consciousness for some:

Well, when I use it, I use it in a jokingly manner, probably with my friends. "That's such a brown thing to do," kind of like stereotyping ourselves but just within our circle. That's really it, like I, sometimes to point out a brown person for lack of better words. This is a really embarrassing question. (Hockey Night Punjabi, 2016)

Another participant followed up with me once I stopped recording our interview, worried about his answer to my question of “brown.” I interpreted this concern as stemming from the local (negative) connotations that Sonia raised earlier and how “brown” in the Lower Mainland of British Columbia may have more unwritten rules attached to it than geographically determined or state imposed labels. Conversely, Gurb, 25, who grew up playing minor hockey, asked me before our interview began what I meant by “South Asian” because it did not resonate with his own identity:

Like I said, I don’t use South Asian. Brown is the best term I can come up with because that’s what is most commonly used and to me that’s everyone from Indians to Pakistanis to Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Middle East, basically that entire South part of Asia. (Personal communication, May 10, 2016)

This was the broadest interpretation of the term provided, with most other participants correlating brown with their own ethnic group. In other words, if one identified as Punjabi then “brown” referred to other Punjabi people, if one identified as Indian then “brown” referred to other Indian people, and if one identified beyond the nation-state borders of India, the term “brown” expanded to include the group with which they identified.

For some, brown is a positive identification and it can be used freely within the broader South Asian community or among teammates:

My hockey team, now they call me the brown girl on the team and I'm fine with that. I know their intention isn't to insult me. It's just a play on words. That's fine. That doesn't bother me. (Suki, personal communication, June 15, 2016)

Similarly, Sunny, 20, used the term brown with his teammates to help make *them* feel more comfortable, which opened the door for jocular humour (Personal communication, July 21, 2016). This self-identification signalled to his non-South Asian teammates that he was comfortable with his difference and, in turn, gave them permission to also acknowledge his difference.

For others, being reduced to a colour conjured discomfort and emphasized difference that was beyond their control:

You know we shouldn't be classifying ourselves as a colour. I mean . . . you know I'm proud of who I am, my nationality, my culture, my background but I don't know about being proud of your colour. Because I just, honestly, I think of myself as an equal. (Hockey Night Punjabi representative, personal communication, 2016)

Like as much as we say white, black, or brown, yeah, I guess technically I'm brown. That's correct [laughs]. I get it's an easier way of people identifying who's who . . . yeah, good for you . . . The shade of colour [I am] is not even really brown. It's not even really the colour brown, which is a very deep and dark colour. (Kiran, personal communication, April 28, 2016)

To understand shades of brown is an important aspect in theorizing brownness. Those with darker shades of brown skin tend to be further racialized within brown communities.

The spectrum of brown skin mirrors the white – black hierarchy with darker brown skin connoting lower class labour (Al-Solaylee, 2016). For many brown communities, to marry a white person is seen as the highest aspiration because they are literally altering the colour code and setting their children up for enhanced social mobility. Al-Solaylee (2016) writes of a similar perspective to Kiran with regard to shades of brown where, as an Egyptian, he was once referred to as a “Paki”:

It had never occurred to me that I would be lumped with South Asians on the racial-slur spectrum, because I had thought of myself as lighter-skinned than most of them. They were dark brown; I was light brown. Couldn't these racists tell the difference? (p. 6)

Consequently, it can be jarring to find out that one's light skin can still be marked *dark enough* to warrant the gamut of racial slurs. These narratives highlight that racialized bodies cannot escape racism based on a “technicality,” because to be brown is to exist in a hierarchy of brownness (Al-Solaylee, 2016) ensconced within a hierarchy of white to black (both of which privilege light skin and oppress darker skin colours).

As with any word, *who* uses it is always an important factor. Kiran explained how her teammates refer to her, which has been neither approved nor denounced by her:

No one refers to me as Indian—it would definitely be brown. I don't ever hear anyone ever say “Oh, we have an Indian girl on our team.” Instead it's “Oh, we have a brown girl on our team.” (Personal communication, April 28, 2016)

When others have not been given permission to identify someone as brown, it is hard to know the impact that this simple term can have on an individual. For example, Kiran remembers joining a new team and walking into the locker room as a rookie and having the first statement be, “Perfect, we're so excited that we finally get to play with the brown girl” (Personal communication, April 28, 2016). It is common for hockey teams to refer to teammates by surnames only or a team designated nickname, but for Kiran throughout the year some of her teammates continued to refer to her as “the brown girl” without ever

asking if this name was acceptable to her. This external identification can be read comparably to Frantz Fanon's (1986) experience of being pointed out by a little girl on the street as, "Look, a Negro!" (p.109). In that moment, the look "imprisoned" Fanon and he became an object; the look placed a weight on his shoulders and "challenged [his] claims on the world: on where he could be and what he could be" (as cited in Puwar, 2004, p. 41). Kiran's story resonates with a comparable embodied experience whereby the words from one body imprint on the Other.

She further explained that because she grew up in predominantly white areas of the Lower Mainland, aside from interacting with her family, she does not feel a particularly strong connection to other brown people:

By saying brown, you are kind of throwing in all the stereotypes of that and I don't think that is really fair. That is saying that this person is like this person and this person is like this person. That's not really fair for me at this point. I have more similarities with people who aren't brown. So how is that fair for me? You are throwing me in a category that I don't even belong in. So, what does that do for my sense of belonging? Where do I belong? . . . I really don't have very many brown or Indian friends who do both sports and grow up where I live. So, for me, I really hate that term because that puts me in a spot where I'm alone. (Personal communication, April 28, 2016)

We will revisit this sense of being alone in the next section but here it is reproduced by her teammates through language, in addition to a lack of physical representation in hockey. Brown represents a paradoxical existence for many—to be simultaneously seen and invisible (Al-Solaylee, 2016). It is the racial category that is able to expand and contract most easily depending on the ideological or political context at play, relegating the people who occupy the space of brownness to live in constant instability. Most importantly, we must recognize that brown is a heterogeneous term in itself and continues to be negotiated on a daily basis.

Being the Only One

Unlike conditions identified in the research conducted by Daniel Burdsey (2007) and Thangaraj (2015) on South Asian experiences in British soccer and American basketball respectively, the current make-up of hockey necessitates “alone-ness” for many South Asian Canadians. Noticeably different from Burdsey’s (2007) and Thangaraj’s (2015) studies was the fact that most of my research participants experienced much of hockey culture as “the only one”:

When I used to go to my brother's practices when I was younger, I did feel like my family in the crowd was very different from everybody else. So, it did feel like, oh . . . maybe the colour of my skin did isolate me from everybody else. (Hockey Night Punjabi representative, personal communication, 2016)

I was the only Indian person around and I was very aware of that at a very young age. (Sonia, personal communication, December 1, 2016)

All through my years of playing I was the only one. When I would go away for tournaments in Saskatchewan, Calgary, Winnipeg, anywhere, I was the only one coloured. Everyone else was just white . . . or Asian. (Suki, personal communication, June 15, 2016)

These narratives echo what Val James, the first African-American to play in the NHL, experienced during his hockey career, and most notably in Canada. He wrote in his autobiography, *Black Ice: The Val James Story* (V. James & Gallagher, 2015):

Of course, when I was subjected to racial abuse on road trips, I could count on the support of my teammates. They always said the right things but, try as they may, they couldn't really sympathize with what I was going through. An old Midland teammate recently brought up an incident when opposing fans threw bananas at me. What the hell could my fellow teenagers on the Flyers ever say to make that better? They would be offended on my behalf but, not being black themselves, they just could not relate to the pain and humiliation and anger that I was experiencing. In that sense, I was very much alone. (p. 49)

It is important that we not confuse these narratives with loneliness because no one used the term “lonely” to describe their experiences, even when I explicitly used the term. As a number of them explained, to be part of a team means rarely being lonely. To be lonely

by definition is to lack friends or company; yet, an isolation that exists within a team dynamic, surrounded by people, is, as James describes, something completely different. It describes a lack of *shared* experiences, despite sharing *similar* experiences. As Suki further clarified, especially when she was younger, “I felt kind of left out and kind of uncomfortable, and then I was kind of self-conscious” (Personal communication, June 15, 2016). In addition, Brian recounted a story once where he and the opposing team’s captain were both South Asian and that, despite the competition at hand, he felt like his “best friend on the ice was the other Indian guy on the other team” (Personal communication, September 11, 2016). There is an emotional component in recognizing one’s “alone-ness.” In this way, it is vital to understand that the journey for many South Asian hockey players is one that they undertake as an isolated entity. This aloneness helps contribute to the overall sense of unease and being a trespasser.

Bourdieu and Wacquant (2002) believe that to be *of* a space feels like being a “fish in water” (p. 127) because one is a product of his/her environment; “they merely need to be what they are in order to be what they have to be” (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 11). Conversely, that same space can make racialized people “feel the weight of the water” (Puwar, 2004, p. 131). The politics of belonging and the policing of space are integral for understanding how citizens and national subjects are constituted and/or rejected. For white, cis-male, able-bodied citizens, their bodies are irrelevant—a non-issue—but for racialized citizens their body precedes their being. Racialized appearance is the first impression, and it means that these bodies are required to constantly reclaim space and membership for themselves. Perhaps the best way to synopsise South Asian experiences as space invaders in hockey is through this off-the-record statement from a South Asian coach: “It’s fucking hard.”

Conclusion

Near the end of my field research I experienced a similar interaction as the one that leads this chapter. Here is an excerpt from my January 15th, 2017 field notes from the Hometown Hockey Event in downtown Vancouver:

While I'm sitting and semi-watching the circus act waiting for the Hockey Night Punjabi crew to arrive, a middle-aged white gentleman sits down next to me and asks if I am a professional photographer. I answer "No." He then asks me if I am a big hockey fan. I reply, "Yes, are you?" even though I'm really not in the mood for chatting. He says, "Of course, I grew up with hockey. But I guess you did not grow up with it." I give him a wry smile and say, "Actually, I'm from here." He replies, "Oh, well then I guess you did."

Once again, it would seem as though my body (and camera) were out of place. It should be noted that this man spoke with what I discerned in the moment as a heavy Slavic accent. Thus, I found it even more significant that he was questioning my hockey fandom and belonging given that, through my ears, I sound pretty "Canadian," am at the same hockey event as him, and am wearing my Vancouver Canucks toque. Clearly the "Canadian costume" that I have been curating for the past 30-plus years is not enough to distract from the Asian-ness of my body—I was regarded as a trespasser. The work that is done in and around hockey culture and at the rink to confirm, deny, and/or question Canadian membership is made possible by the very notion that there can be bodies out of place. We must ask, if "hockey is for everyone" and Canada is a country that values diversity then how can anyone be out of place?

Kiran's narrative has featured heavily in this chapter; ergo, it seems fitting to give her the last word in this chapter. Our interview happened to be the longest interview that I conducted. This is not to say that the length of one's narrative should be correlated with its substance; still, it was clearly momentous for her to be able to express and share these experiences that had, in a sense, been held captive:

It's something I've never been asked about and, when you asked me if I would do this interview I looked at my mom and I was like, "Wow, no one has ever asked me about this." I guess it kinda is something that is hard to do, hard to survive in a sport world where you are kinda on your own I was just really surprised that no one's ever asked me about it. No one ever asked me if it was okay. No one really approached me and [was] like, "Hey are these people bugging you?", "Are you okay?" just because I have such a happy, passive personality, people just assume that I'm okay. (Personal communication, April 28, 2016)

We have assumed for far too long that sporting experiences are uniformly positive, but the narratives in this chapter offer some insight into why that assumption is problematic and potentially harmful. It seems that we have been filling in answers for questions that have never been asked.

Chapter 4. Racist Taunts or Just “Chirping”?

I am not obliged to keep hitting that wall . . . But not to speak anger because it is pointless is not the answer. After all, even if we use softer language, we are already a sore point. We might as well do things with these points. To speak about racism is to labour over sore points. (Sara Ahmed, 2012, p. 171)

It is not uncommon to hear of racist tirades at European soccer matches. For example, in February 2017, Serbian soccer fans spent the entire game making monkey-screaming noises every time black Brazilian midfielder, Everton Luiz, touched the ball; as a result, Luiz left the field in tears (Kerr-Dineen, 2017). Hockey fans have also been known to throw bananas on the ice at black players (NHL, 2011), and once fans dumped alcohol on Indigenous children at a game in South Dakota (Griffith, 2015). However, these incidents are consistently treated as abnormal events in hockey culture and blamed on a few unruly fans, instead of as a problem that extends far beyond any athletic arena. The soccer community, in contrast, has created a number of anti-racism campaigns/organizations such as Say No to Racism, FARE (Football Against Racism in Europe), and Kick It Out, and regularly fines teams even if their fans use racial/ethnic slurs.⁷ Conversely, hockey leagues have never openly admitted to having a problem with racism. It may be fair to critique soccer’s various anti-racism initiatives as window-dressing, but at least there is something to critique, something to improve upon, or somewhere to direct one’s energy. Hockey, on the other hand, provides no such space or direction; there is no place to resist that which is (supposedly) not a problem. At the end of 2015, the NHL partnered with the Ross Initiative in Sports for Equality (RISE) “to raise awareness and combat racism” (para. 1) and created a public service

⁷ As an example, the Malaysian soccer team was recently fined \$30,000 USD by the Asian Football Confederation when Malaysian fans chanted “Brunei dogs should just be killed” at the Singapore/Brunei team (Nair, 2017).

announcement against discrimination that was shown at the annual outdoor Winter Classic that year (NHL, 2015). Still, nothing has happened since, and even this “partnership” is a suspiciously quiet arrangement. It is also important to note that even though “race” is *part* of the focus during *Hockey is for Everyone* month and the overall campaign, the word racism is never explicitly used.

Daigle (2016) contends that in Canada there is a tendency to “Canadiansplain” racist incidents away. “-Splaining” is described as a manner of explaining or commenting in a “condescending, overconfident, and often inaccurate or oversimplified manner, from the perspective of the group one identifies with” [derived from the original term “mansplain”] (Daigle, 2016, para. 1). Ergo, to Canadiansplain involves a concession that racism (and in specific anti-black racism) exists in Canada but never to the extent that it does in the United States (Daigle, 2016). There is a measure of truth to this, in that slavery was abolished in Canada nearly 30 years before it was abolished in the United States (Everett-Green, 2014), with the result that Canada became a “home” to many escaping slaves (to whom Fosty and Fosty (2008) attribute a significant portion of the development of Canadian hockey). But, too often this question of historical difference is muddied with an exaggerated sense of moral superiority. Our proximity to America means that much of our national identity is premised upon differentiating ourselves from our American neighbours. While the racial histories of Canada and America are both different and similar, to Canadiansplain implies that multicultural policies will ultimately prevail. Therefore, any concerns about racism are often dismissed as frivolous, unfounded, and/or offensive. This patterned behaviour has also been referred to as the “angel complex” (Colour Code Episode 4, 2016).

This inclination to point out more egregious wrongdoers in order to deflect attention away from racism within our borders would be slightly less problematic if the

statistics did not prove otherwise. According to *The Globe and Mail*, there were more recorded hate crimes in Canada (per capita) against Indigenous people in 2014 (3.7 per 100,000 people) than in the United States against black Americans (1.85 per 100,000) (Grant, 2016, para. 32). And yet, as Takeuchi (2014) argues, hate crimes against black Canadians accounted for 42% of all racially/ethnically motivated crimes in 2014 (para. 8). Hate crimes against Muslims doubled between 2012 and 2014 nationwide (Paperny, 2016), with the Toronto Police Hate Crime Unit reporting an increase in Muslim-directed hate crimes following the resettlement of 25,000 Canadian refugees as Canada's response to the Syrian crisis (Toronto Police Service, 2015). Amidst these reports, it is common to find someone such as Amira Elghawaby, spokesperson for The National Council for Canadian Muslims, express the need for more anti-racism education and then quickly follow up this call with a hedged statement such as, "Canadians are overwhelmingly warm, generous, compassionate people who respect diversity" (Paperny, 2016, para. 23).

Even though the United States, and increasingly the United Kingdom, have long been icons of disdain for racialized difference, several writers have claimed that both of these regions have conducted more research on the experiences of racialized people in white dominated settings than Canada (see Lewis, 2001; Ramsey, 1991; Varma-Joshi, Baker, & Tanaka, 2004), arguably because "race" is seen as a viable discussion topic. The comparative lack of race-related research in Canada gives the illusion that racism is a non-issue, which results in a general lack of urgency to discuss racism in any productive manner. To illustrate, when *The Globe and Mail* created a podcast about "race" in Canada called "Colour Code," the hosts prefaced this podcast by explaining that the word "Code" in the title alluded to the Canadian "code of conduct" whereby "we don't talk about race, and that should change" (Colour Code Episode 4, 2016).

Moreover, the popular representations of cities such as Toronto and Vancouver as utopias of diversity give the impression that all of Canada is diverse, when the reality is that the majority of Canada (while not necessarily still homogenous) is far from being the multicultural mosaic we promote (Varma-Joshi et al., 2004). To illustrate, the *Vancouver Sun* reports, “only one in 40 immigrants live in small town or rural Canada, compared to one in five who are born in the country” (para. 4) and almost 75 per cent of new immigrants move to Toronto, Montreal, and/or Vancouver (Todd, 2017). Even though the racial divide may not be as stark as it once was, it is important to recognize that all spaces (urban, suburban, rural) come with unique challenges to racial inclusion, equality, and justice. Therefore, by limiting research on “race” in Canada to the more diverse metropolitan cities, we do not present an accurate depiction of discrimination. Despite the fact that the research conducted for this study took place in Vancouver, the space of hockey remains a white-dominated one and becomes useful in expanding our understanding of racial acceptance, or lack thereof, in contemporary Canada. As Chapter Three highlighted, many of my research participants had to endure racism by themselves, which parallels (although not exactly) the little research that has been conducted in less diverse regions of Canada. When research on racism is conducted in predominantly white spaces there is a noted resistance to acknowledge the presence of it (Varma-Joshi et al., 2004). The intersections of discourse, racialization, and citizenship undergird the remainder of this chapter.

Racial Taunts or Just “Chirping”?

On-ice racial taunting was a common theme among my research participants. Unsurprisingly, the longer one was involved in hockey, the more instances one usually experienced; however, participants were typically reluctant to name more than one incident:

I remember the only fight I got into on the ice was because of a girl calling me a Paki and I just lost my shit. That was one of my breaking points of probably being in grade 10—it was pretty intense. When you're trying to run from [your difference] and not acknowledge it and then an opponent is like "You're a Paki!" or "You brown this" . . . That is a thing that came up, people would say that on the ice, "You brown this", "You brown that", "brown bitch," you'd hear that stuff. (Sonia, personal communication, December 1, 2016)

I got called butter chicken once. That was one time in my career and I ended up getting to know that kid . . . he ended up apologizing and he ended up being a guy that is super nice to me all the time, like once he played on my team. (Billy, personal communication, July 20, 2016)

I've heard this one, "Get back on your rug" or something like that. (Sunny, personal communication, July 21, 2016)

I remember it because it was the funniest one I've ever heard. One guy, we were playing in [American city], and he had bleach blonde hair and he said, "Why don't you go back and play soccer with your elephants." I was like, that has nothing to do with me, that's maybe Africa, but that's not where I'm from. (Shane, personal communication, September 1, 2016)

These slurs range from the derogatory to the humorously inane, but the pattern of interest, for me, is not so much the slur itself; alternatively, it was how participants tended to downplay these instances as merely trash talk, known in hockey nomenclature as “chirping.” For example, Prav, 20, explained to me that chirping is merely gamesmanship occasionally verbalized as racism:

With the chirping, it's just that they want to get in your head and if you're more focused on your game, and when they see you actually perform and do good in the sport then they might think to themselves, even if they don't say it to you, they might think I shouldn't have said that to this person because their skills are showing that they can actually play the sport. (Personal communication, September 1, 2016)

In explaining how racist taunting is *just* used to get a player off of their game, Prav rationalizes skill as a potential defence against racism. However, the fact that the elite level players in this study often had more to say about racist experiences on the ice seems to counter Prav's assumption (or hope).

In a tongue-in-cheek hockey article titled, "The Art of Chirping," the author describes chirping as "so deeply rooted in the essence of competition that it becomes its own game . . . like any skill, it takes years and years of practice to achieve perfection" (McKinven, 2015, para. 1). For example, NHL player and notorious chirper, Alex Burrows was involved in an infamous chirping incident when he made a comment to Aaron Downey of the Detroit Red Wings about Downey's potato farm and told him "he must like the French fries the best because he was looking a little chubby" (Brough, 2008, para. 1). Downey took exception to this comment and speared Burrows with his stick during the pregame warmup. Notwithstanding the fact that these incidents commonly end up in physical altercations, the general consensus is that to be the target of chirping is a compliment because you have been deemed worthy of such attention, and, on the whole, these interactions are "relatively harmless" (McKinven, 2015, para. 11). This assertion also counters Prav's above assumption that chirping, or at least the racist version of it, is reserved only for lower skilled players. Chirping supposedly fosters camaraderie with one's teammates and serves as a way to galvanize "Us" versus "Them," but when does chirping cross the line into hate speech? A quick search of "Chirping 101" guides on the Internet reveals a variety of tips including attacking someone's looks, skills, age, and equipment, but none appear to champion racist slurs as part of the overall strategy. Thus, if there is an unwritten rule that chirping stops short of racism, why did the players in this study willingly give the benefit of the doubt when it came to racist comments on the ice? Or as Dixon (2007) points out, why is trash talking accepted when the same comments made off the playing field would certainly be deemed unacceptable?

Suki, 21, an elite level female player, detailed a racist and homophobic incident that ultimately led to a fight on the ice. In my view, her narrative downplays any intended malice while also attempting to reconcile the incident in her own mind:

We were just about to play our final championship game for [a major tournament] and one of my teammates, who is white, she loved Indian music and . . . my dad made her a CD disc with a bunch of music and she loved it. For that game, she really wanted to play it during the warm up, no one cared, they said go for it. So, she played it and the other team who was all white, thought it was my tape and they targeted me during the whole game . . . "Nice music faggot Indian," they would make all these different comments to me. I would be skating by, they would say something to me. You know *it didn't bother me* [emphasis added], I was like *they are just trying to get in my head* [emphasis added], we're the better team and it didn't get to me. *It actually fired me up* [emphasis added] more because I started scoring goals and then that pissed them off, whereas the comments got worse throughout the game . . . one of them actually fought me. She tripped me over the blue line and I fell, she jumped on top of me, started punching me while I'm on the ground . . . *It didn't really bother me* [emphasis added] because they were trying to *get into my head* [emphasis added] and the fact that I was scoring. I just kept my head up high. *It didn't bother me* [emphasis added], *I mean it did bother me* [emphasis added] but you know I fought through it. I think that was probably my worst experience with racism. (Personal communication, June 15, 2016)

Suki repeatedly assured me that the verbal taunting and the fight did not bother her until ultimately she had to admit to herself (and to me) that it did bother her but she made a conscious decision to persevere. Suki's story also contradicts Prav's earlier assertion that once someone's skill is established, the taunting should subside because one has "earned" their place. It is unfortunately true that (physical) intimidation is regarded as a fair hockey tactic, especially against skilled players; however, racial taunting is an additional barrier placed in front of racialized players.

It should be noted that racial taunts or slurs are expressly prohibited in the official rules of the NHL (NHL, 2014), major junior leagues such as the Western Hockey League (WHL, 2015), and the recreational Canada-wide Adult Safe Hockey League (ASHL, 2016). The NHL, for instance, states in Section 4 under Types of Penalties, "racial taunts or slurs" (p. 35) can result in a game misconduct penalty. Players explained that at the

higher levels of hockey it became much harder to get away with racist comments on the ice, which may also facilitate the illusion that racism is not a problem for the league, especially compared to the days when Val James played during the 1970s and the entire stadium would shout racial epithets at him (V. James & Gallagher, 2015).

Research conducted outside the realm of sports on racist name-calling observes that victims “overwhelmingly felt that name-calling was a particularly insidious form of violence, specifically because of its harmless reputation” (Varma-Joshi et al., 2004, p.178). In this way, there is something unique to the context of hockey (and sports more broadly) where racial taunting is less deplorable. I suppose, if fist fighting results in only 5 minutes in the penalty box, perhaps the dismissal of racial taunting represents an accurate (yet problematic) response. In Varma-Joshi et al.’s (2004) study of racist name-calling in New Brunswick schools, white teachers were observed discounting racist slurs and taunting as a form of violence. Comments made by teachers such as “it’s just names,” and the misguided “sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me” adage were used to minimize the significance and consistency of racism in schools. The York Region District School Board in Ontario is under similar scrutiny, with a recognized pattern of staff dismissing complaints about racism (Javed & Rushowy, 2017). Pointing out the fact that racialized communities are responsible for population growth in the area, the school boards must be accordingly proactive in addressing the needs of these communities. Deracializing racist comments insinuates that both parties are equally guilty of making trouble (Essed, 1991). Varma-Joshi et al. (2004) contend, “when victims refuse to turn the other cheek, their reaction is framed as the actual problem, rather than the supposed childish name-calling” (p. 189), and thus there is an overall reluctance to speak up about these incidents because they can result in a second victimization.

When I first asked Amit if she had ever experienced any discrimination in hockey, she answered confidently that she had not. Towards the end of our interview I wanted to confirm her answer and, even though she repeated her initial answer, the probe ended up revealing an important aspect of Amit's hockey experience:

CS: You said going through the hockey system you never experienced any discrimination, nothing negative directed at you?

Amit: No, never.

CS: That's very good.

Amit: Yeah, yeah. Trying to think, I feel like there was a situation but I just can't recall it right now. Okay well just playing other teams, and you know how you get girls, girls are very verbal whereas boys are very like, they'll just body check you or something. I definitely, on the ice, have been called names. So yeah, but that's like the only type of racial slurs or bullying I've ever received was usually from an opponent. Well it's only been from an opponent, never from a coach or anything just from the players when you're on ice. Usually it's like a cheap shot and they'll say something or they'll just try to get you riled up and they'll start saying stuff. Just being darker and stuff a lot of people think I am half black or I am of that descent so I've totally been called the "N" word before on ice.

CS: Really?

Amit: Like a lot actually, so has my sister. My sister is darker than I am and she gets called that a lot. My hair is very curly too, like [an] afro, so when my hair is down, when I play hockey I tend to leave it wild, so a lot of people would definitely assume I am African American and they would be calling the "N" word on the ice . . . that definitely was the only racial anything that I received was on the ice and it was used, it was another player like of an opposing team and they just try to get to you, the verbal the names. (Personal communication, May 16, 2016)

Again, there is this notion that racism spawning from the opposing team is somehow acceptable because they are the "enemy" and, therefore, expected to hold contempt for you. Crucially, if racism is conceptualized by some participants as relational and a label placed only upon those assumed to be part of one's in-group, we must consider how this definition greatly alters the "presence" of racism in hockey.

One would also think that being called the “N” word throughout one’s hockey career would be a significant memory, but clearly it took some probing to summon these memories for Amit. This “forgetfulness” could stem from the fact that these instances were quite hurtful and Amit chose to bury them, or they were so common that, unfortunately, no one instance stood out. When I asked Amit how these racial misidentifications made her feel she explained, “I take offence to it not because I’m being misidentified but I take offence to it because [even if I were black] why does that make it okay for you to call anyone that?” She ultimately stated that these comments were not only meant to “get under [her] skin but there’s usually some sort of internalization of that culture . . . that causes you to say it.” The guise of chirping slowly unravels.

Even though Amit played junior hockey in the Lower Mainland and Brian played in northern British Columbia, he also experienced similar racial misidentification before 9/11:

A lot of the racial slurs I got before were African-American racial slurs because people just didn't understand the difference and that's a lot easier for me to go to my mom and dad and be like, "Oh why did you cross-check that guy in the face?" Well, he said this to me, and my dad goes “That doesn’t even make sense. You understand why he’s saying it right, because he’s mad.” (Personal communication, September 11, 2016)

In these instances of misidentification, the ignorance of the offender seemingly blunts their words because he “doesn’t know what he’s talking about.” Brian noted that after 9/11, the misidentifications pivoted from being black to being Muslim: “When 9/11 happened that’s when it really took off because those phrases like terrorist and stuff were never anything linked to us at that time.” The ease with which Brian was able to transition from “black” to “Muslim” is evidence of how quickly brownness can be manipulated to fit the political environment. Moreover, Brian mentioned an instance where he got into a fight at school and he claimed that the other boy “called him a

terrorist,” which was a lie, but teachers came to his defence. This was an interesting act of agency for a young Brian, who recognized that his racialization, at times, could be used to his benefit. This was, however, an anomaly among my research participants.

Trash talking in sports, at one point, was considered a “moral panic” because this lack of sportsmanship was interpreted as “the decline of civilization” (Bruning, 1994 as cited in Eveslage & Delaney, 1998, p. 239). In Eveslage and Delaney’s (1998) study of trash talk amongst a high school basketball in Philadelphia, they observed that “insult talk” frequently stressed and confirmed team hierarchies, included personal insults “often as calls to defend masculinity and honor,” and objectified “objects defined as ‘feminine’” (p. 241). Moreover, the authors argue, within teams, there are clear boundaries of trash talking with sensitive issues being off limits as a demonstration of empathy for one another. Opponents, though, are not as deserving of empathy. Accordingly, “in all-male highly competitive settings with high insecurity levels, insult talk dominates” (Eveslage & Delaney, 1998, p. 248; Bissinger, 1990; Raphael, 1988) but, as Amit and Suki’s statements above demonstrate, insult talk has also found a place in women’s sports. Dixon (2007) contends that players take pride not only in their ability to dish out trash talk but also their ability to tune it out. Suki’s narrative above confirms this perspective, when she stated that as the racial comments intensified, the more “they fired [her] up” and ultimately served as badges of honour along with the goals she scored.

Still, even if players interpret (or rationalize) on-ice racial slurs as gamesmanship, sociologically speaking, trash talk/chirping is a discursive practice of power in which dominance can be asserted, resisted, and/or negotiated. Previous research has noticed that some people are marked as more deserving of trash talk than others. Eveslage and Delaney (1998) observed from their research, “the boys no doubt were choosing what they perceived as ‘easy targets’ garnered from larger cultural messages and were

attempting to buttress their masculinity” (p. 248). Additionally, it is hard to brush off trash talking as lacking malice when the act itself is premised on disrupting an opponent’s mental state; in other words, the need to “block something/someone out” implies the existence of an unwanted presence (Dixon, 2007, p. 99). As a result, even if “victims” of racism acquiesce to racist acts, this does not make racism appropriate.

Was It Really Racist?

Racial prejudice is both hard to prove and relatively easy to deny. Some participants felt that racism was a strong word with a narrow definition. For example, when I asked one of the *Hockey Night Punjabi* commentators whether they had experienced any racism as part of the broadcast they responded, “No. I don't, racism is a strong word” (Personal communication, 2016). This interpretation of racism would become a theme among the majority of interview participants, that the label of racism should be reserved for only the most egregious and unequivocal acts of hate. But one has to wonder, after racial slurs and physical violence, what is left to call racism? Hockey dad, Kulbir, similarly hedged his answer when talking about a lack of playing time for his daughter, “I’m not saying it is racism, but still something there” (Personal communication, June 15, 2016). Conversely, others were simply never sure what they had experienced:

Like again, everything in my career, nothing has been like no that's bad, that's racist. Everything is kind of underlying, you can assume, you can make assumptions and stuff like that but there's nothing really like - that's bad. So, it's hard. It's hard to see and decide and what's good and what's not . . . There's always that hesitation. Was that a moment of an underlying prejudice? (Kiran, personal communication, April 28, 2016)

Just as sexism teaches women that “they are not reliable witnesses to their own lives” (Solnit, 2014, p. 8), so too does racism teach self-doubt to racialized citizens. Part of the

work performed by institutionalized racism is to make those on the receiving end unsure of its existence.

Goldberg (2015) describes this inability to pinpoint racism as part of racial dismissal in a postracial world. Postraciality does not mean that “race” no longer matters or that we are beyond caring about racial difference; indeed it is the exact opposite, that “race” matters more than it ever has but in new articulations (Goldberg, 2015). He states, “race (as we have known it) may be over. But racism lives on unmarked, even unrecognized, potentially for ever” (Goldberg, 2015, p. 6). According to Goldberg, the dismissal of “race” or racism makes it exceptionally difficult to expose because postraciality renders the structures responsible for oppression and privilege opaque. Hence, when Canada reiterates the fact that we actually thrive off of the difference that exists within our borders, it makes it exceptionally hard to be confident in claims against racism because there is no foundation for belief. To speak of racism is to inhabit the space of *being the problem* (Sara Ahmed, 2012; Du Bois, 1996).

Ahmed (2016) claims that in anti-racist work “you are not allowed to be sure” (para. 69). In her ethnographic research on diversity work she reflected on how the word racism rarely emerged and that she had not explicitly used the word. Similarly, I do not use the word racism in my interview script (see Appendix B; although I did end up using it when following up). My intention was to avoid leading my participants down any specific path and instead, referred to it as “discrimination,” a “lack of diversity,” or the sense of being “unwelcome.” The problem, however, with not saying the word racism is that we become complicit in its erasure. To suggest that diversity work is needed inherently means that racism is present (Sara Ahmed, 2012).

Furthermore, even when participant experiences were filed away as racist there was a general reluctance to talk about them. Sonia reflects on not wanting to exacerbate her racialized difference:

I think I probably didn't share it or explicitly explain how it made me feel because I didn't want to bring attention to the fact that I was brown. Because . . . you would see on the boy's team, there would be select Indian guys and stuff like that but for the most part, when I was growing up, it was mainly white girls. If that difference is pointed out to me I would feel shitty about it. (Personal communication, December 1, 2016)

Sonia continued to reflect that her parents were also unwilling to talk about racism:

But it also is what my family associates with being Canadian. Because I think a lot of the time, especially in my family, stories about exclusion or stories about experiences of racism in the early days are never really talked about because it's kind of a deep dark twisted memory and it doesn't feel very good. I notice that [my parents] would never want to talk about it because they never wanted to expose us to [it]. "No, we went through that so you guys can do shit like this, play hockey." That was a key thing that, that's a key piece of hockey culture. We made it, we can play now. My dad always said, "I always wanted to play hockey but we had no money, I couldn't get skates, I didn't want to show up wearing someone else's skates that were too big for me." . . . Especially for him, me playing hockey was "We made it!" But those stories of why it's meaningful are sometimes just pushed aside or kind of covered up because you don't have to deal with it anymore. (Personal communication, December 1, 2016)

Sonia's story is significant in two ways. First, she observes that her reluctance to speak out about discrimination is rooted in the fact that to do so would further amplify her difference. Therefore, in an institution such as hockey where difference is not only discouraged but also generally maligned, pointing out one's racial difference by calling out racism amplifies a possible reason for exclusion. Second, she recognizes that her participation in hockey was key for her father's sense of citizenship; having his child participate in hockey meant that he had finally secured his own "Canadian-ness." It meant that he was financially able to participate in the national culture and that he had successfully integrated his family. Sonia surmised that her parents' reluctance to talk about negative experiences from hockey somehow diminished the dream of being "Canadian". In other words, to give weight to racism—to give it voice and life—denies

the Canadian mythology of multiculturalism and challenges one's citizenship. Kari, Sonia's mother, echoed this reluctance in a separate interview: "I've felt it sometimes but I don't want to think about it. . . . If you keep thinking and keep bringing it up then sometimes [sic] get bigger than it is. Just go with the flow" (Personal communication, January 16, 2017). Happiness and national repair are possible only if "immigrants" let themselves be included and they can do this by "playing the game" (Sara Ahmed, 2012, p. 166) or as Kari says, "Go with the flow." The "game" here is understood as both the national sport but equally as the "national field" (Sara Ahmed, 2012, p. 166). If those wearing the label of "immigrant" remain attached to the injury of racism, they facilitate their exclusion; "to show our gratitude, we must put racism behind us" (Sara Ahmed, 2012, p. 168). Consequently, the unwillingness of hockey culture to admit that hockey is not for everyone (or at least is not *always* for everyone) denies its participants a space to be honest about their experiences. Their experiences seemingly do not count, especially if they are negative.

Brian shared a comparable story about his father's silence surrounding racism at the rink. He told me that he would see his father physically fighting in the stands with other parents (Personal communication, September 11, 2016). At the time, Brian's father tried to shield him from what other parents would yell at him while he was playing, but as Brian matured and asked his father about those incidents he eventually shared the details as a lesson to be learned. Brian did not share the details of what was said with me. Parents were identified by every player as critical in learning about how to deal with racism. Parental advice ranged from ignoring offensive comments or players to confronting the offender. But the overarching instructions were the same: Do not pay too much attention to it, but if you have to, leave it on the ice. In this way, racialized children

are taught to avoid naming racism, which also alters our perception of the presence of racism in hockey culture. They are taught to be docile citizens.

In addition to narratives about avoiding any talk of racism, Brian shared a story about consciously trying to divert his personal narrative away from one that centred on racism to a more positive discussion that would hopefully encourage more South Asian participation. A local media outlet interviewed him and another South Asian player, and Brian disliked that the interviews were being framed around “race”/racism:

I almost felt bad after because I talked to [player] too and I know they almost, the questions they asked prompted him to make it seem like it was very racist for him. And we kind of went in the same boat, the kid played in [junior league] for five years and now he's going to [an elite league], those things might have existed but it didn't stop him from being successful so why focus on the negative? Talk about your positives about being Indian...I came in and basically said I don't like the race card...you need to get over the fact that your kid is probably not making the team because he's just not good enough. Whether that's the reason or not, that's what the kid needs to believe. . . .

They were, again, they were like well this situation happened - what do you think about it? And I just kept siding with the other side, whether I believed in it or not I didn't want them to market it like that and especially put it on tv . . . They're going to air it like that and I didn't want these parents to sit there and have someone feed them all these things that they already thought or they already know and that's their first introduction to hockey. They knew it, that's why you didn't make that team. Watch this! (Personal communication, September 11, 2016)

Brian's determination to control the narrative about South Asian experiences in hockey is revealing for a number of reasons. First, he reproduces liberal rhetoric about succeeding in the face of adversity, which presents adversity as inconsequential and fails to acknowledge that this adversity is not distributed equally. Second, he talks about the “race card” as a maneuver used to gain sympathy. “Race card” rhetoric, akin to playing the victim, stems from the bandage solution of affirmative action programming whereby quotas for minoritized citizens were instituted for university admissions, hiring, and other opportunities under the assumption that these individuals lacked the credentials to be

included and were handed opportunities over more deserving applicants. To speak of the “race card” conjures assumptions about differential treatment, because to bring attention to one’s “race” in a negative manner seems like an unnecessary attempt to dredge up the past—a past that is, supposedly, no longer relevant. However, it also ignores the fact that everyone has a “race card” to play and whites have been found to increasingly use their “race card” as a countermove against attempts to foster equality (Hammon, 2013). Third, Brian contends that even if racism is at play, South Asian children must believe that they are being judged solely on their merits. While this is a patterned coping mechanism, it again denies a space for players to talk about their personal experiences with racism. Fourth, he admits that he may have been dishonest in this interview in order to maintain the innocence of hockey. Brian referred to hockey as a “culture and a religion” in his interview (Personal communication, September 11, 2016). He also spoke of “karma,” explaining that players have to trust that things will eventually work out. Brian’s trust in the church of (Canadian) hockey speaks to the mythological power of both the sport and multicultural discourse; to criticize discrimination is unpatriotic *and* sacrilegious. The discursive (re)production of hockey as a religion in Canada is telling because it speaks to its power, meaning, and the purpose that the sport provides individuals, while also explaining the reluctance to speak truth to power. Hockey “becomes the subject of feeling, as the one who must be protected, as the one who is easily bruised or hurt. When racism becomes an institutional injury, it is imagined as an injury to whiteness” (Sara Ahmed, 2012, p. 147). Thus, we need to ask what implications manifest when individuals feel the need to protect the sanctity of the game, when that protection is not reciprocated? Last, Brian did not want South Asian children to be dissuaded from participating in hockey with the proof of racism serving as the deciding factor. Brian’s actions may have been well intentioned, but avoiding racism does not make it go away; and, arguably, it is better to prepare racialized children with

an honest account of what can happen and impress that others share their experiences, instead of letting them be shocked when the racial taunts begin.

At first, I assumed that the reluctance to share experiences must have stemmed from these memories being too traumatic to discuss; hence, the generalizations, pivoted discussions, and the desire to avoid re-traumatization. However, we must also acknowledge that silence represents an act of agency. Tapias (2016) elucidates:

Silence provides a subtle cultural mechanism through which relations of power and intimacy are contested, subverted and/or negotiated. When narrativity is self-censored and strategically silenced, what are the reasons for doing so? . . . As a meaningful speech act, silence reveals as much as it conceals. (p. 174)

In Tapias's (2016) research with Bolivian migrants, she contends that silence becomes a preventative health measure whereby the refusal to not disclose trauma, stress, and/or discrimination serves to "protect the self from the ill wishes of others" or to "prevent distress and possible illness in those one loves" (p. 175). We can certainly see evidence of this agency through the acknowledgement that parents often hid racist incidents at the rink from their children, and the reluctance to divulge any specific incidents may function as a form of self-care.

Unfortunately, what can be expressed as an individual act of agency also serves to suppress the collection of narratives limiting the potential for broad-scale change. For example, Kiran described her hockey career as a constant battle that others never really understood: "it's a topic that you don't really want to bring up. . . . It's something that I've always thought about but never really truly expressed my feelings about because no one's asked me" (Personal communication, April 28, 2016). Ahmed (2016) muses, "What is phantom for some for others is real. What is hardest for some does not appear to others" (paras. 18 – 19). This is the difficulty in attempting to advance discourses of racism as institutional oppression because the proverbial wall that one bangs their head

against is not an actual wall. For the majority of Kiran's teammates, the wall that she has battled her entire career remains an invisible hindrance felt only by Kiran; and it should be acknowledged that the locker room is a difficult space to begin describing this "wall," especially as the only one who recognizes its existence.

There was a small, but noticeable pattern in my interviews whereby women participants were more willing to share specific experiences of racism in detail with me. The men, on the other hand, often replaced the opportunity to talk about their experiences with a declaration that, even though racism was present, it could be subdued (even if only in their own minds) by physically enhancing one's muscularity and/or other assertions of physical dominance. This gendered difference may stem from ingrained gender roles whereby women are socialized to embrace their feelings in ways that men and boys are generally discouraged from doing; but, perhaps more importantly, it points to a form of empowerment that is available to men through the body that is not as easily accessible or as valuable for women.

Physicality/Masculinity: Trauma and the body?

Racism and masculinity are closely intertwined. As discussed in Chapter One, the intersection between "race" and gender for South Asian men is based on the historical connotation that Asian men are effeminate and weak. Goff, Di Leone, and Kahn (2012) contend that because masculinity is premised on "control over one's outcomes" (p. 1111), challenges to one's racialized identity are equally challenges to one's manliness. Men of various ages and playing abilities generalized marginalization (note the use of "it" and "that" when talking about racism) and then quickly proclaimed their physical development/competence as an act of agency.

Dev cited his physical size as a deterrent for racism, “I’m a big guy so they don’t really tend to say anything too bad. But I’m sure if I was smaller they would probably. I don’t know” (Personal communication, August 12, 2016). Raj also recounted how as his body changed, so too did his response to racism. As a young player and a goal scorer, he was unable to fight other players because that would have been a waste of his skill, but as he matured and his uncle taught him how to fight he realized he did not have to stay silent any longer:

I had enough. Then no one said nothing because they knew I was going to fight them or beat them up. So, it's different. That was my way of releasing my anger or my vengeance towards that because it really bothered me when I was a kid. It did. But what was I going to do about it. You can't really do something about it, you had to take it. But boy when I played against some of those kids [at a higher level] that I played in [lower levels] I got paybacks. Paybacks from hell—it felt good. (Personal communication, July 21, 2016)

Fighting became catharsis for Raj who described his physical transformation as connected with his racialized liberation: “When I started working out and got tougher and stronger then I was at peace with myself.”

Hockey dads, Kulbir and Greg, talked less about their physical size but certainly referenced their ability to physically impose themselves in an assertive/aggressive manner. Kulbir stated, “I don't take any crap from anybody. I always go after—you have a problem? Then nobody says anything.” He told me that because of his personality “parents are always nice to me”; however, when I tried to clarify if parents actually made him feel welcome, he replied, “Well, not really. Especially when you go to Toronto to play, Winnipeg, Calgary, they always look around. . . . but I don't think I have any problem because I am very nice with them too” (Personal communication, June 15, 2016). Here again, it is important to note the difference between being welcomed and merely having the ability to deter overt racism. Greg expressed a similar method of avoiding confrontations about “race” at the rink by being frank with other parents:

CS: Have you ever been made to feel unwelcome in the hockey community?

Greg: Yeah but I'm not the kind of guy that will take it. I'll honestly and come out and tell ya, "Do you have a problem?" Right from the get-go: do you have an issue? Right from the get-go guards go down, wording is changed and it's different. (Personal communication, November 21, 2016)

In these narratives, it is evident that marginalization exists but there is a refusal to give racism attention or any real acknowledgement and a show of physical strength/imposition is usually enough to deter any real incidents. Notably, physical dominance/muscularity does not eliminate racism; rather there is a sense that it can, at the very least, provide relief (or a semblance of safety) for individuals. This is problematic in the way that teaching women self-defence to avoid sexual assault is problematic—it does not address the underlying cause. In the case of sexual assault, the underlying cause is male entitlement to the female body, and in the case of racism it is that certain bodies are socially devalued. This method of physically deterring or silencing racism also contributes to the skewed “presence” of racism in hockey.

These accounts of physicality support existing research connecting racism with performances of masculinity. Cheng, McDermott, Wong, and La (2016) were the first to examine the relationship between racial discrimination and the drive for muscularity among Asian American men (defined in their study as inclusive of Chinese, Vietnamese, Indian, Korean, Bangladeshi, Cambodian, Filipino, Hmong, Japanese, Malaysian, and Pakistani). Asian men have been observed to have a “higher drive for muscularity and lower body satisfaction than [do] Whites and Blacks” (p. 216; see also Barnett, Keel & Conoscenti, 2001; Grammas & Schwartz, 2009; Kelly, Cotter, Tanofsky-Kraff & Mazzeo, 2015; Keum, Wong, DeBlaere & Brewster, 2015) suggesting that this desire for muscularity is connected to racial positioning. Cheng et al. (2016) concluded that “Asian American men who experienced greater perpetual foreigner racism reported higher

levels of attitude toward achieving muscularity” (p. 221). Perpetual foreigner racism is the assumption that any Asian person must be foreign born and therefore remain forever foreign in the white imagination. The ability and opportunity to enhance one’s muscularity becomes a way to cope with racism because participating in Canada’s game is, by itself, not enough to erase racial difference. Additionally, in Varma-Joshi et al. (2004), they observed that for some victims of racism the only defence available was “proactive violent behaviour” or the threat of physical violence (p. 196). Thus, in a world where social, economic, and cultural capital is contingent and only partially in one’s control, physical capital offers the most accessible route to (the illusion of) equality. Particularly when operating in a liberal ideological framework that stresses individual responsibility, fortitude, and innovation, developing one’s physical stature becomes one of the few individual solutions available to address systemic injustice.

Raj’s narrative above is illuminating because he states that enhancing his body put his mind “at peace.” This “peace” was unavailable to him as a younger player and apparently only through the body could racism be acknowledged and resisted. More research needs to be conducted to determine whether or not physical empowerment works in the same way for women, although a comment made by Kiran suggests it might:

Over the ice, there’s been moments where I have almost caught a few people almost going to say something but they stop themselves. There have been moments where I’m like, “Oh, you’re gonna say something.” But I don’t know, I get pretty intense on the ice so maybe they got scared of me [laughs]. (Personal communication, April 28, 2016)

It may be relevant, for example, that recent research on perceived racism among Asian American women observed a direct link with disordered eating as the common coping mechanism (Cheng, 2014). Future research needs to question what role the body and physicality may play in downplaying, avoiding, or coping with racism for female athletes.

This chapter has concentrated on offering narratives of lived racism and problematized the tensions around naming this specific oppression. My original hope was to use these stories as a way to move sport policy representatives to action by providing evidence of consistent racism in contemporary Canadian society; conversely, as this chapter came to life, I started to reflect on the evidence that I had gathered and wondered if it was enough to lodge a case of discrimination against the institution of hockey. And is it enough to advocate for more inclusive national narratives?

An Archive of Evidence

From a theoretical perspective, we need a broad critical reflection on the notion of “evidence.” Sara Ahmed (2016) postulates on her personal blog that evidence is what you accumulate when you are not given places to go:

Add it to the archive is an expression that allows us to think that an experience however difficult might have use value as evidence (we have somewhere to put it; we have a place for it to go). But of course when I say “add it to the archive” I say so with a degree of skepticism; if that archive is already stuffed, more evidence might be what we do not need. (para. 34)

This research project is a perfect example of having an abundance of evidence with no place to take it. Overwhelming evidence of oppression and discrimination is unfortunately useless when the system is built on devaluing the evidence available along with its witnesses. Ergo, while archives of struggle may be cathartic and create necessary support networks (e.g., collective storytelling projects such as the Everyday Sexism Project and the iHollaback initiative that expose general sexism and street harassment, respectively), what value does this body of evidence have when it comes to dismantling systems of oppression? And, what *counts* as evidence? As I moved through the interviewing process for this project, I wondered: For whom are we really gathering evidence? Could the supposed need to collect evidence be an activity that supports oppression through distraction?

Evidence-based medicine (EBM) has been identified as the inspiration behind the need for evidence-based policy making (Little, 2003; Oliver, Lorenc, & Innvær, 2014). The initial drive for more “evidence” stemmed from a desire to reduce ineffective and/or harmful clinical interventions, and so a movement towards systematic review, randomized trials, and meta-analyses developed. As a result, the discourse of evidence connotes objectivity and quantitative data become synonymous with “scientific proof” (Little, 2003). Even though there is little theorization on the concept of evidence itself, some in the health and medical fields have pointed out fundamental flaws with this new “applied research” field. Oliver et al. (2014) point out that this trend has failed to provide clarity regarding “what constitutes and defines ‘evidence’ and ‘policy’” and “how evidence is supposed to improve decision-making” (p. 35). In addition, there is a mismatch between what policymakers define as “evidence” and what academics define as “evidence.” Perhaps most pertinent to the discussion of racism is the fact that evidence is supposed to produce instability but, as Little (2003) protests, “this may not be a problem if it can be accepted and accommodated but it is wrong to create the impression that today’s truth will be the same as tomorrow’s” (p. 180). Western society has positioned evidence as something we are supposed to react to, so what then happens when we present evidence that counters the desired outcome? What do we do with *unwanted* evidence? In Little’s (2003) view, evidence is always supposed to be under review and, as such, a society that privileges evidence must also be one that accepts conflict over certainty.

Furthermore, Nolan (2015) contends the shift towards more evidence reproduces neoliberalism and discourses of positivism. She challenges that, because randomized trials have become the “gold standard” for evidenced-based research, quantitative analyses (in particular) provide a sense of colour-blindness that suits neoliberal

discourses of postraciality. Quantitative data, then, become the most objective, because identity is made invisible. Accordingly, “policy-makers tend to dismiss ‘activist’ scholars . . . particularly those engaged in critical qualitative inquiries” (Nolan, 2015, p. 899). Qualitative researchers are then left with a lot of data that has little perceived social value.

How useful is evidence of systemic oppression or patterned discrimination if the system does not allow you to do anything with it? The politics of evidence itself must be questioned because traditionally oppressed groups have been providing evidence of marginalization for decades only to be met with scoffs of derision and advice to “lean in” (i.e., Sandberg, 2013). It is too easy for evidence to be deemed the wrong *kind* of evidence, and unfortunately “evidence of walls does not bring the walls down” (Sara Ahmed, 2016, para. 41). Subsequently, if racism works by disregarding evidence of racism, as Ahmed proposes, what good are testimonies of racism?

The “answer” may reside in cultural citizenship, in the need to know that you belong even if you are not counted. “Doubts about evidence become doubts about persons who are providing evidence,” (Sara Ahmed, 2016, para. 5) which is precisely why dismissing evidence of racism concurrently dismisses the citizens, and citizenship, of those who present it; to make evidence of struggle disappear is to make those who struggle disappear. The ability to feel like one’s experiences are of equal value to the opportunities provided and that one’s words are heard with equal attention to anyone else are central to *feeling* like a citizen. Proponents of cultural citizenship argue that affective components of citizenship have been downplayed because, as a legacy of white, male domination, citizenship sees rationality and feeling as opposing traits (Cho, 2011). But, *feelings* of exclusion are required to truly understand the power of racism and its limitations on access to full citizenship.

It becomes even more important that we learn to speak of racism when we perceive it to be present and that we use the word itself—racism—because to avoid this word means that we are complicit in the disappearance of our fellow citizens and the injustice that makes it possible. This is not to say that labelling racism is sufficient in overcoming it, but this label makes resistance possible; it means there is something tangible *to resist*. If evidence cannot be used to prove injustice, then we will use it to prove existence: “Our archive is an archive of rebellion. It testifies to a struggle” (Sara Ahmed, 2016, para. 31). Evidence, then, should be conceptualized not as a way to dismantle the walls but as essential in “rallying the troops,” to develop solidarity for the movement that lies ahead. It is through collective resistance that we are able to make discredited, dismissed, and disappeared evidence matter.

Conclusion

If speaking “about racism is to labour over sore points” (Sara Ahmed, 2012, p. 171), then this chapter makes it clear that many hockey participants prefer to avoid this type of labour. The implication of this, unfortunately, is that nothing really changes. It is difficult to hear racialized citizens express the need to brush off these sore points as inconsequential—this is a learned behaviour. Young athletes *learn* that accepting “chirping” on the field of play is simply part of the game. They *learn* that physical dominance is more valuable than verbally challenging racism. They *learn* that pointing out racism simply highlights your presence as the problem. It is time our athletes learn that anger aimed at injustice and discrimination is not only warranted but is a necessary part of being an active and equal citizen. It is a right that too few racialized Canadians choose to exercise—the right to express anger and the right to speak honestly about one’s experiences. To demonstrate anger, especially in public spaces, is a (racial)

privilege. In the next chapter, I will demonstrate how remaining silent yet quietly optimistic aids in reproducing a system of inequality.

Chapter 5. Hockey Hurdles and Resilient Subjects: Unpacking forms of capital

How much does the economic cost of hockey limit opportunities for South Asian players? In what ways might patterns of recruitment in youth hockey be influenced by cultural preferences and choices? There are some intriguing hints at answers to these questions in the literatures that focus on factors that limit or encourage participation, such as gender (e.g., Coakley & White, 1992; Cooky, 2009), class (e.g., Gruneau, 1983; Hasbrook, 1986), and “race” (e.g., Carrington, 2010; Smith, 2007). It is notable, however, that research on such factors is far more limited when looking at access to hockey. The hockey scholarship that does examine these factors is either dated or heavily swayed towards gender discrimination (e.g., C. Adams, 2014; M. L. Adams, 2006; DiCarlo, 2016; Eaton, 2012; Pelak, 2002; Slade, 2002; Stevens & Adams, 2013; M. Williams, 1995). More recently, *The First Shift*, an initiative sponsored by Bauer Hockey and Canadian Tire, surveyed 875 Canadians in Ontario and Nova Scotia targeting parents of children aged between 4 and 16 and reported that 90% of Canadian children do not participate in hockey (*The First Shift*, n.d.). The results identified four *perceived* barriers to participation: Hockey is expensive, time intensive, dangerous, and overly competitive.

Understanding the structural factors that limit participation are important; still, what deters people from joining and what restricts equality once inside the game are intertwined but unique discussions. If we conflate access with equality (or justice), we mask the conditions that help maintain the status quo of a social institution. Pierre Bourdieu’s work on the forms of capital is useful for adding nuance to issues of access; he believed that there were “hidden entry requirements” (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 217) such

as family lineage, early socialization, and one's dress and conduct that generally helped reproduce existing hurdles.

Navigating Forms of Capital

The participants in my study identified four “hurdles” that make it difficult for South Asians to get into hockey and stay involved long term: cost, language barriers, lack of hockey knowledge (e.g., time commitment, equipment needs, where to register), and gatekeepers (e.g., coaches and scouts). These hurdles loosely coincide with Bourdieu's classification of forms of capital: economic, cultural, and social. Bourdieu (1986) describes capital as something that is accumulated and has the ability to reproduce or expand itself. He contends, “It is in fact impossible to account for the structure and functioning of the social world unless one reintroduces capital in all its forms” (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 83). Economic capital is simply money or access to it. Cultural capital lives in three forms: the embodied state, such as genetics or comportment; the objectified state, which exists as physical cultural goods, such as works of art; and the institutionalized state, referencing certain socially valuable qualifications. Social capital is the sum of one's group memberships that enable access to specific members and/or credentials. For Bourdieu, class struggle exists at the very heart of culture because it symbolizes the fight over representation, self-definition, and boundaries of membership. The following sections unpack the challenges of access to hockey for South Asians as outlined by the hockey players, parents, and coaches I interviewed, with respect to economic, cultural, and social capital.

Cost, Time, and Interconnections with Other Forms of Capital

Cost represents a challenge at multiple levels. Ice rentals, equipment, skate sharpening, additional lessons, conditioning, and tournament travel are some of the regular costs that occur throughout a season. Additionally, unlike most sports, the registration fees for hockey are not a set amount. Parents have to pay registration and tryout fees at the start of the season, but other “fees” (such as extra ice times or tournament registrations) have to be covered at the end of the season.⁸ For example, one of my respondents, Greg, a hockey dad, explained for Rep hockey teams (short for Representative—the highest level in minor hockey), it was not uncommon to pay \$800 registration and then another \$800 or \$900 at the end of the season (Personal communication, November 21, 2016). Even Richmond Minor Hockey Association’s (n.d.) website warns parents that the demands of rep hockey often bring more “expense, travel and time commitment,” for which many parents are unprepared. As such, all hockey families need to have a large amount of disposable income to cover unforeseen costs. Every interview participant in my study felt that cost presented the most noteworthy hurdle to participation, a consideration that must be weighed against other opportunity costs. For example, former elite player Raj described a personal debate between investing in hockey versus investing in a private school education:

Raj: You can pay \$15,000 or \$20,000 to go into a [hockey] academy or am I going to send my kid to [Vancouver private school] and go there for \$20,000 a year? . . . If my kid goes to [private school] for four years/five years, he is guaranteed to go to a good school somewhere and he’s going to [get] his doctor’s degree or he’s going to be making a couple hundred thousand dollars a year. Now if I go spend \$20,000 on hockey . . .

CS: It’s still a crapshoot.

Raj: Yeah! (Personal communication, June 21, 2016)

⁸ As an example, the 2017 tryout fee for the Langley Rivermen, a Junior A team in the BCHL, was \$175 per player.

Raj raises an important point because too often hockey is promoted as an opportunity that opens additional doors, such as athletic scholarships, but less often do we question the educational or work opportunities lost along the way in the pursuit of an elite career. Programs such as *The First Shift* attempt to address the inaccessible costs attached to hockey, which may partly explain a noticeable influx of racialized hockey participants at the grassroots level. However, beyond entry levels, hockey makes drastic class exclusions.

Hockey player, Gary, referred to hockey as a “rich man’s sport” and suggested looking into subsidized programs through the schools as one alternative:

Hockey needs to take a page out of the American system in terms of basketball, football, you’ve got to make it part of your high school curriculum . . . Minnesota has better programs than some of the ones in Canada. (Personal communication, April 15, 2016)

Considering that hockey is Canada’s national winter pastime, the fact that it is largely unavailable through the Canadian school system challenges the notion that hockey is Canada’s game. But as Gruneau (2016) notes, “there has never been much political will to even begin to consider how the challenges of class inequality affecting access to sports might be met” (p. 242). Accordingly, we are left with a sporting system that has yet to consider class discrimination, let alone how class connects to and is influenced by, “race” and gender-based discrimination.

In addition to access to capital, the culture of the game also requires a certain kind of middle-class/upper-class lifestyle and sensibility. Sonia, 26, a former player, explained how her experience as a racialized hockey player was influenced by a confluence of economic and cultural factors:

I also didn’t understand why I didn’t go snowboarding on Sundays . . . [Teammates] would be like, “What do you mean you don’t go snowboarding on Sundays?” I was like “Uh, I don’t know, I have to go to my family shop? I have to go to temple? What do you want me to say?” I think that whole

weekend culture thing that is based around a very specific job identity or working identity, I didn't have that even though my parents did everything they could to make sure I was good. (Personal communication, December 1, 2016)

In other words, even though a self-enterprising “model minority” has worked themselves into an economic position to participate in hockey, there are other challenges associated with class, “race,” and gender. For example, *when* parents work, and what their expectations are for their gendered children, including such things as the perceived cultural appropriateness of participating in hockey for girls or boys, and if children are expected to contribute labour to the family business, all impact one's opportunities to participate. Sonia noted how her experiences were strongly shaped by the family's changing economic conditions, explaining that as her family became more economically stable her hockey career directly benefited because she “could go to those extra tournaments” and participate in additional training opportunities (Personal communication, December 1, 2016). Sonia's experience helps add nuance to the assumption that registration and equipment fees are the main hurdles to participation. As her family's class position ascended, so too did her hockey potential. Here, we are able to draw a visible line between opportunity and class—one where merit does not enter the conversation.

Time, which is in many ways a commodity unto itself, is another factor that affects participation in hockey among Vancouver's South Asian communities. Similar to the cost of playing, time is closely intertwined with class position: the privilege of “free time.” The extra “opportunities” that Sonia spoke of are not as optional as they may seem. Randy, a 43-year-old hockey dad, in my study, explained:

My kid plays Atom hockey, he's in the average mix of Atom . . . Monday he's powerskating, Tuesday he has practice, Thursday he has a home game, Friday he powerskates, Saturday he has development, Sunday he has practice. So, it's a lot. One of the powerskating sessions is optional but everybody does it . . . if you want your kid to excel, there's not a kid in the

association that doesn't do some form of powerskating. (Personal communication, November 15, 2016)

The fact that Randy's child is on the ice six times a week and competes at an "average" level provides some insight into how those requirements might intensify as players advance through the system. Another hockey parent, Sara, also referenced needing to "have your weekends open . . . because you don't know what's going to happen" (Personal communication, October 20, 2016) as vital to surviving hockey parenthood.

Parents are expected to volunteer their time to help with team operations. This not only means having the time and energy outside of work to volunteer, but the types of volunteer jobs assumed are themselves influenced by class position. For example, Gruneau (2016) points out how the increasing professionalization of community sports clubs and associations has created demand for accounting, administrative, managerial, and business expertise that can lie outside the skill sets of many working class Canadians, even when they are able to find the time to volunteer. A number of my respondents also referenced the need for jobs such as safety manager, off-ice conditioning coaches, cooking, and chaperoning. One mom, Kari, explained she was uncomfortable doing administrative tasks for the team but volunteered to wash the team jerseys, a task that required arriving at the rink approximately 90 minutes early and waiting to collect everyone's jerseys after games (Personal communication, January 16, 2017). Life as a hockey parent can easily become an all-encompassing lifestyle. Time has been observed to be a major factor for rates of attrition in hockey irrespective of "race" (The First Shift, n.d.; Knapp, 1999); still, with racialized families, time demands compound the influences of other factors such as occupation, economic condition, and cultural capital.

Language and Other Aspects of Cultural Capital

Language as a barrier to physical activity is the most obvious example of a lack in cultural capital. This particular barrier has been detailed at length by many other scholars (e.g., Conn, Chan, Banks, Ruppert, & Scharff, 2014; Doherty & Taylor, 2007; Frisby, 2011; Netto, Bhopal, Lederle, Khatoon, & Jackson, 2010). I will not rehash the arguments except to say that the inability to communicate in English greatly hinders the ability of parents to integrate into the hockey community and makes the registration process more difficult (if advertisements exist only in English media). But, there are other, subtler cultural barriers to hockey, not the least of which is the culturally specific nature of “hockey knowledge.”

Part of what makes hockey culture distinct is that Canada’s game manages to retain an air of exclusion and intimidation. Some of this can be attributed to the notorious (although not inaccurate) stereotype of overly invested hockey parents. Hockey parent, Sara, indicated that this stereotype frightened her when she first enrolled her son in hockey:

I was, to be honest, quite scared at first because a lot of my friends, a lot of my colleagues have their kids in hockey and I heard a lot of horror stories . . . I went in there thinking I have to be mindful of what’s going on there and still make this fun for him. (Personal communication, October 20, 2016)

But the physical space of the rink itself can be intimidating too: cold, drafty, loud, and far outside the cultural experience of many racialized immigrants. Harry, a coach and parent, noted:

I hear where folks say “I didn’t know I had to spend this much money each month on my kid. I didn’t know there was a five o’clock in the morning practices . . . I didn’t know it was so cold in the rink.” (Personal communication, April 3, 2016)

Roland Barthes (2007) asked: “What is a national sport? It is a sport that rises out of the substance of a nation, out of its soil and climate” (pp. 46 – 47). The Canadian

climate is represented as an unforgiving one, and so too is the sport of hockey. The layout of many rinks, especially those separate from community centres, lack any kind of front desk or welcome area (or they are often unattended); therefore, new visitors are forced to wander through this space without much direction. It is important to acknowledge that “just going to the rink and being comfortable” (Hockey Night Punjabi representative, personal communication, 2016) is a very real barrier for new hockey families. The space of the rink prefaces a culture of intimidation, where one must learn to claim space but where little is simply given. This is where we can extend M.L. Adams’s (2006) critique of male entitlement to space in hockey culture by contextualizing the fact that not all men feel entitled to the space of the rink. As Ronald Sundstrom (2003) argues, “when we sort people by categories, we do so spatially. Our system of race carries with it a spatial extension” (p. 93); hence certain Canadians are more likely to feel uncomfortable in hockey spaces, partly because new spaces tend to induce anxiety in everyone, but also because there is no cultural tie to that particular space.

I asked another parent, Randy, what the learning curve was like for him as a hockey parent, and he impressed the need to learn on the fly:

It was so hard! Like I was scared. I didn’t think I could properly tie his skates. I actually remember on his skate I wrote with a Sharpie “L” and “R” . . . now you know the logo is on the outside, you learn stuff like that but . . . it is really tough. For the first month or so I always made sure my wife went so he was in the right gear, but now it’s like second nature. (Personal communication, November 15, 2016)

Now he is comfortable in the space of the rink, but he recognizes that other new parents have to go through the same learning process. He talked about a Chinese mother who had no idea that her son’s skates needed to be sharpened regularly, something that could easily be explained at an introductory meeting. Growing up with hockey equipment around the house or having siblings who participated is a form of objectified capital in that equipment is “transmissible in its materiality” (Bourdieu, 1986) but is most valuable

when it is integrated with embodied capital through a family member who has the knowledge of how everything works in concert.

Sara was born in Canada and grew up a hockey fan but she pointed out she was still reluctant to ask other hockey parents for help because it seemed like everyone just seemed to “know” what to do without being taught:

I think a lot of people . . . they’ve got maybe older kids who are in it. They know so much about it when you go in it, you’re just like of like, “Oh, am I going to look stupid asking them now? . . . Are they just going to look at me thinking ‘You’re putting your kid in hockey and you don’t know what he needs?’” (Personal communication, October 20, 2016)

This distinction between those who “just know” and those who must learn is an aspect of any sporting subculture, but here it can surely be read as the dominant hockey culture imposing its very existence on newcomers. Bourdieu (1984) explains that what appears *natural* is based on the power to define “excellence which, being nothing other than their own way of existing, is bound to appear simultaneously as distinctive and different” (p. 255). The fact that Sara is Canadian born (and grew up a hockey fan) does not appear to have given her any advantage when actually entering hockey culture, which again speaks to a lack of embodied capital in certain Canadian families.

Brian, 25, a former elite player and current coach, recognized that the rink exacerbated his family’s racialized difference:

that’s where it became apparent that we were a minority because at school you never see it . . . We didn’t have accents or anything like that, no one ever treated us any differently. It’s when it came to parent meetings where my parents didn’t understand, they needed someone to tie our skates, they needed someone to tell us what stick to use. (Brian, personal communication, September 11, 2016)

He continued: “Going to my brother’s first practice with his elbow pads on the outside of his jersey. Photos like that, you chalk up to having foreign parents.” Such experiences demonstrate the need for a more conscious and coordinated effort to offer informational

meetings that go beyond administrative details to truly welcome and educate new hockey parents about how to put on equipment, the time commitment, and other cultural norms. This also requires an acknowledgement from the sport that it is not naturally welcoming.

For the past 2 years, the Calgary Flames Foundation has offered orientations and educational opportunities as part of *Hockey is For Everyone* month (Vickers, 2017). These free events were open to anyone interested in learning about organized hockey and taught participants about equipment, allowed them to watch a Calgary Flames practice, and provided free meals. *Canadian Immigrant* and *Hockey Now* magazines have also facilitated similar events in Vancouver, Burnaby, Richmond, the Tri-Cities and Surrey/Delta (Canadian Immigrant, n.d.). The events were well received, but my research indicates a clear need for such events to be implemented more broadly, at the minor hockey level.

In addition to knowing how hockey works, hockey parents are expected to be uniquely invested in their child's career. Unlike dropping a child off at tennis lessons or soccer practice, hockey parents are expected to spectate practices in addition to games. For example, Sonia points out:

I remember hearing people and parents have a certain type of culture, like a "hockey culture" and my family zero per cent fit into that. I remember kids comment that, "Why do your parents drop you off and pick you up? Why don't they stay the whole time?" Shit like that. That, I remember was really hard. And being aware of it a young age obviously I didn't think about it until I'm an adult and I reflect on that time, but that was a big thing. (Personal communication, December 1, 2016)

Hockey dads, Harry and Kevin, expressed similar sentiments about the inability to "just drop them off and leave" (Harry, personal communication, April 3, 2016). Kevin recounted a story about a family friend who played hockey and, because his father worked at a mill, was unable to integrate with the other hockey parents (Personal

communication, November 21, 2016). His father was always on the way either to or from work. Thus, it is not necessarily a language or cultural barrier keeping some parents from the rink; rather it is a class position that dictates the (in)flexibility of work conditions. This expectation also relates to that particular class privilege that Sonia spoke about that enables a parent to dedicate numerous hours each week to being present at the rink. Still, even if parents such as Sonia's move up in class position and are able to increase their child's access and opportunities to excel, gatekeepers continue to play an integral role in determining what the future of hockey looks like. Unfortunately, these gatekeepers often manage to escape criticism as players in an influential web of social capital.

The Gatekeepers

Coaches and scouts wield a lot of power in hockey. Coaches dictate playing time, line assignments, and which players get the opportunities to shine. Coaches are also the direct line to scouts, suggesting which players should be considered to advance through the system. The vast majority of coaches and scouts are former players, meaning that the role of gatekeeping is noticeably more racially homogeneous than the player pool. There are currently five racialized coaches out of 315 positions in the NHL, and of the 524 NHL scouts working at the end of the 2016 – 2017 season, only three could be identified as racialized.⁹ Each NHL club will staff anywhere from 13 to 32 scouts, all working at various levels to identify talent. In the field notes I took during a Vancouver Giants WHL game, I commented on this lack of representation among scouts:

⁹ Demarcated as anyone listed with “coach” in their official title including strength and conditioning coaches.

Bunch of NHL scouts sitting around us—five or so. I see Edmonton Oilers' sheets but not sure if they are all from Edmonton. They all look alike: older, white-haired, white men. [My friend] also recognizes the similarity: "What's up with them all looking alike?" (Field notes, January 30, 2016)

In addition, of the 700 or so NHL players (a number that is in constant flux with players moving in and out of rosters), I counted 23 racialized and Indigenous players at the time of this study (approximately 3% of the League).¹⁰ Similar racial homogeneity can be found at the feeder levels as well. The WHL and BCHL (Junior A) each list two South Asian coaches among their 39 teams and four racialized scouts in the WHL but none noted on BCHL team websites.¹¹

Former elite player, Raj, very bluntly explained that the lack of diversity in hockey can be attributed to gatekeepers, such as general managers, presidents, and owners, having an "old school" mentality that results in a regurgitation of "all the old coaches" and a lack of interest in "[trying] to bring up anybody new or any minorities" (Personal communication, June 21, 2016). As Raj points out, there must be a concerted effort to include those who have been previously marginalized; otherwise the system reproduces itself. Raj was one of the few research participants who spoke about this structural discrimination.

For players trying to reach their full potential, these gatekeepers play a crucial role in determining what the future of hockey will look like. Both Raj and female elite player Suki recounted instances where they expected to be named the Most Valuable Player (MVP) at a tournament but were passed over. Here is Raj's experience:

I was supposed to be MVP and something happened in [city] and I didn't get it because I was Indian. I was easily the hands-down best player in the tournament. . . . It's just a part of life. I think it made me stronger, made my

¹⁰ Racialization of gatekeepers determined by surnames, team photos, and publically available self-identification information.

¹¹ Determined from the public information made available by each 2016-2017 team.

skin a little thicker. But it's sad, as a parent it is hard to see your kid going through that. I'm sure it was tough for my parents to see, to tolerate that. (Personal communication June 21, 2016)

It is noteworthy that Raj brushes off the impact of the incident for himself but recognizes that it must have been difficult for his parents. This further amplifies the need for scholars to reach out to parents of athletes to better understand how discrimination and racism affects them, separate from their children. Especially since parents are supposed to protect their children from the injustices of the world, how do parents make sense of their agency in a system where they have little control?

Coach Brian shared a similar story of being passed over for team selections:

I had parents from other teams, when they did the selection process, would come up to me and say, "Oh you're going down to play [tournament]" and I would say, "No I didn't get selected." And they would look at me and be like, "What do you mean you didn't get selected? You're leading the league in points!" . . . You've got parents coming up to me when I'm 11 or 12 years old and essentially telling me that's bullshit. (Personal communication, September 11, 2016)

As noted in Chapter Four, the presence of racism in any selection process is never directly evident. Unless a coach or scout states outright that a player was not chosen because of his or her "race," there is little that a player or parent can do. The subjectivity of scouting and identifying talent contributes to maintaining a racially homogeneous sport. With respect to capital, denying certain players credentials that could help them advance their hockey careers arguably represents the policing of social capital. Bourdieu (1986) explains that credentials entitle group members to a credit and potential access to new networks. Those privileged with membership are responsible for reproducing the limits of the group: "Because the definition of the criteria of entry is at stake in each new entry, he can modify the group by modifying the limits of legitimate exchange through some form of misalliance" (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 89).

In 2016, I attended The Hockey Conference, a biannual conference that brings together practitioners and academics from the hockey world. Luc Gauthier, a scout for the Pittsburgh Penguins, was one of the keynote speakers. He described the talent rubric that scouts use, which boils down to the following areas (in order of importance): hockey sense (i.e., decision making with and without the puck, anticipation, positioning, etc.), skating, skill, compete level, and “character.” Gauthier admitted that scouting is not an exact science and that hockey sense is the easiest area where a player can be knocked out of contention. The fact that technical skills such as skating and stickhandling are often seen to be secondary to one’s “hockey sense” leaves the door open for scouts to dismiss players that they may not like, for a variety of reasons.

Furthermore, Gauthier stated that 60% of the evaluation takes place off the ice, with scouts talking to coaches, parents, billet families, and teachers to learn about a player’s character and to determine whether or not a player fits into the team’s culture. As such, the subjective nature of talent identification tends to privilege those with a lineage in the game. Coach Brian refers to these players as “purebreds”:

That’s why Max Domi, [Matthew] Tkachuk, all these guys that have NHL dads get drafted to the NHL because they have a guy that has been through it and understands it and the kid is just very well coached at home and away . . . you’re going to take him knowing that this kid knows how to handle himself before a game, after a game, if we cut him we’re not going to have to deal with anything because the dad has been cut, the dad understands a lot of that stuff. (Personal communication, September 11, 2016)

The “bloodline” argument is commonly used to explain the prevalence of athletic families in every sport but as Norman (2014) highlights, what these explanations elide is the role that cultural and social capital play in providing enhanced “access to resources and connections to help [athletes] reach the top levels of the sport” (para. 4; see also Agergaard & Sørensen, 2009). Scouting represents the intersection of embodied and

social capital, with players carrying the embodied capital needed to reaffirm group membership and scouts providing and denying access to limited social capital.

According to Bourdieu (1984), “embodied cultural capital of the previous generations functions as a sort of advance (both a head-start and a credit)” (p. 70). Where we talk about “purebreds” and “bloodlines” in hockey, Bourdieu refers to “eternal life” (p. 72) as one of the most invaluable social privileges. By “eternal life” he means the way that accrued forms of capital become “eternal” when passed on to future generations. It is a symbolic form of capital because this advantage is not easily recognized as capital; instead it is perceived “as legitimate competence” (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 86). Similar to Bourdieu’s (1986) analysis of the education system as a conveyor of privilege, we can interpret hockey scouting as a social structure that sanctions “the hereditary transmission of cultural capital” (p. 85). Maxi Domi and Matthew Tkachuk, both sons of former NHL players, possess sought-after names that carry inherent social capital. These specific credentials are privileges disguised as inherited skill (or act in combination with the necessary skill). Bourdieu (1986) claims these “credentials” have the ability to morph “circumstantial relationships into lasting connections” (p. 90). As a result, ability and talent are the products of investing in time and cultural capital for the purpose of access to social capital.

In Kiran’s experience, as an elite level player, one coach became a barrier to her success merely because he assumed that she did not want to further her hockey career. Kiran’s mother became fed up with the lack of opportunities provided for her daughter to excel and eventually confronted the coach. Kiran later learned that the coach assumed her hockey career was ending. She then informed him that she was committed to play with another team the following year (Personal communication, April 28, 2016). The coach had predetermined Kiran’s hockey future without consulting her. This could be

chalked up as poor coaching but could also reflect the assumption that South Asians have no place in hockey; that their presence, while allowed, is somehow fleeting or still out of place. Another player, Suki, also encountered coaches who stood in the way of her progress:

I still had one more chance, which was [school], one of the Assistant Coaches came to watch me for one of the [tournament] games and . . . a lot of family came to watch me and a lot of my past coaches . . . which was a huge thing for me seeing as all these adversities were here and now I'm able to show you where I got even when you guys were pushing me down kind of thing. He sat me the whole game. . . . I lost a scholarship, I lost MVP . . . we also lost that game. . . . So I lost a lot that game. I didn't get to play and show off . . . which was humiliating for me. (Personal communication, June 15, 2016)

These narratives about gatekeeping point to a larger issue of justice and who gets to count in a society or culture. Nancy Fraser (2009a) contends that in a world of global movement and interaction we must pivot discussions of justice away from “*What* counts as a bonafide matter of justice” to ask, “*Who* counts as a bonafide subject of justice?” (p. 5). She advocates for a three-dimensional theory of justice that addresses inequalities of distribution (economic), recognition (cultural), and representation (political). Citizens can lack the economic resources to participate with their peers, which Fraser labels a form of distributive injustice or maldistribution, or citizens can be excluded for their lack of cultural value and “requisite standing” needed to make a claim of inequality, this is referred to as misrecognition.

From a hockey standpoint, the narratives above articulate N. Fraser's principle of misrecognition in that not every player is seen to have equal cultural value. By concentrating on the political dimension of representation N. Fraser (2009a) asserts, “it tells us not only who can make claims for redistribution and recognition, but also how such claims are to be mooted and adjudicated” (p. 17). Misrepresentation functions by denying “some people the possibility of participating on par with others in social

interactions” (p. 18). The absence of official racial segregation in hockey gives the illusion that participation is equal, but what happens in the game forces us to question *who* is equal because “we cannot assume that we already know who counts” (N. Fraser, 2009b, p. 283). Simply being on the ice with one’s peers does not mean that all experiences are equal or that each body is equally valued, as the previous chapters have demonstrated. As a result, the assumption that Kiran would not continue her hockey career past a certain point or the inability for Suki, Brian, or Raj to make a claim of racism (because there is no space to assert such an injustice) facilitates the erasure of their experiences. In essence, they are made to not count and have no recourse for such injustices.

It would be easy to dismiss these examples of gatekeeping as part of the subjective nature of hockey: Players get cut all the time, maybe these South Asian players are just legends in their own minds. What makes the racialized character of these experiences more difficult to reject is how they are situated in broader accounts of racial slurs and challenges to their “belonging” noted by nearly all the players interviewed in this study. The injustice lies in the inability to speak openly about one’s perceptions for fear of still not being heard or simply dismissed. Still, despite the numerous hurdles that make participation in hockey for racialized Canadians difficult, the vast majority of my participants were confident or hopeful that change was inevitable; all that is required is hard work and patience.

Assumptions About Diversity: Flaws in logic

When I asked participants to offer recommendations for making hockey more diverse and representative of broader Canadian society, the dominant answer was “time.” There was an assumption that as time passed, and racialized immigrants

became more assimilated, those children would rise up through the system. Hockey dad, Kevin, explained:

I think it's a generational thing. In all walks of life, every example, every industry some of the smartest brightest people in the world aren't "white" or Caucasian or the elitist. They are from all over the world and I think it's a matter of time somebody does dominate that isn't white in the NHL. You know this doesn't bode well for your study but why should it be a question? Nowadays do we sit there and go wonder when the next really good South Asian heart surgeon is coming or when is the next great fighter pilot is coming? The Minister of Defence in this country is a Sikh. . . . so does it matter? No. It is coming? Absolutely. (Personal communication, November 21, 2016)

When I asked Dev, a recreational player, his thoughts about future diversity his answer echoed responses similar to Kevin's, suggesting that we are already witnessing the leading edge of tomorrow; however, when pressed to offer examples of this upcoming diversity he was barely able to name one player:

Dev: I think it's really starting to . . . Before it seemed like it was very much a political process, like you kind of had to know people in order to advance but now it seems like everyone is getting their fair shot. You're seeing it in the NHL. You're seeing it in the Minor leagues as well too.

CS: Who are those people you are seeing?

Dev: There's minor leaguers in Edmonton that are of Indian descent.

CS: Jujhar [Khaira]?

Dev: Yeah. You start seeing them. You start hearing names. It's getting there. I'm sure. (Personal communication, August 12, 2016)

I am still unsure as to which other South Asian prospects Dev was thinking of, but he seemed very certain that change was on the way. There were similar assumptions when Tiger Woods and the Williams sisters dominated their respective sports in that we would see a large influx of racialized participants in golf and tennis, although this has yet to come to fruition. Unfortunately, Dev's assurance comes with little precedent.

In sports, there is one prime example that debunks the myth that diversity evolves with generational change: the institution of Title IX in the United States. In 1972,

the Education Amendments Act (Title IX), made it law that no person could be discriminated against on the basis of their sex “under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance” (NCAA, 2014). This significantly opened up athletic opportunities for women in U.S. colleges. The logical assumption was that the next generation of women athletes would end up being future coaches, athletic administrators, and so on; the future would filter up and equality would be established forever. Yet, the Tucker Center for Research on Girls & Women in Sport reported a dramatic decline in women coaches in the 40 years following Title IX, despite women’s sports participation being at an all-time high (Lavoi, 2013). In 1974, more than 90% of “college female athletes were coached by women, but today the number is around 43%” (Acosta & Carpenter, 2012 as cited in Lavoi, 2013, p. 1). Lavoi (2013) explains that even though Title IX opened up participation for women, the accompanying employment opportunities were available to anyone and the majority of those jobs went to men. Consequently, we need to question not only what opportunities are available but *which* people are deemed ideal for those positions. The case of Title IX and U.S. college athletics demonstrates that increasing opportunities for women to participate did not alter the socialized preference to place men in those gatekeeping roles.

Likewise, almost 70% of the players in the National Football League (NFL) are black, but those responsible for the league remain older white men. Recognizing the lack of diversity in the NFL’s back offices and coaching ranks, the league instituted the Rooney Rule in 2003 (requiring teams to interview “minority” candidates for upper level positions) as a form of affirmative action to stimulate more diversity amongst coaches (Sando, 2016). ESPN reported in 2016 that the Rooney Rule has been wholly ineffective, with little changing in hiring practices since 1997 (Sando, 2016). The path to becoming a head coach often starts through the NFL coordinator position, but because

the Rooney Rule does not apply to coordinator positions, “minorities are at an inherent disadvantage for head coaching positions” (Sando, 2016) and upward mobility. This is not to say that there is an orchestrated effort to keep racialized people out of gatekeeper positions, but when teams look for the “best people,” whether as players or in administrative roles, “those best people are all suspiciously similar” (Carleton & Morrison, 2016, para. 7). Thus, while the white dominated governance of professional sports may not be intentional, the existing structures work to reproduce yesterday’s discrimination in tomorrow’s game.

The other problem with this sort of assumption is that most national sporting systems no longer work as a pyramid where the grassroots levels feed the high performance system. Donnelly and Kidd (2015) pinpoint the move away from a pyramid sporting model to the Cold War when the Soviet system of early talent identification demonstrated tangible results, most notably at the 1972 Summit Series when the Soviet hockey team shocked the Canadians in a too-close-for-comfort battle. The draw of the problematic, yet effective Soviet sporting system meant that resources would no longer

be “squandered” on a broad base of athletes in the hope that some of them would eventually become successful. Instead . . . there were two systems: a poorly funded grass-roots system; and a relatively well-funded high-performance system that drew young athletes at a very early age from the grass-roots system and exposed them to intensive training and competition, employing the best available resources. (p. 61)

Since 2002, *Canadian Sport Policy* has discursively reproduced the distinction between sport “participation” and sport “excellence,” with international success in ice hockey as a driving motivation for this delineation (Donnelly & Kidd, 2015, p. 62). It has become common practice for NHL agents to recruit players as young as 13 – 14 years old (Campbell, 2017). The effects of this bifurcated sporting system will be further discussed in the following chapter, but here it is important to recognize that South Asian presence in the minor hockey system does not necessarily represent the future of hockey.

Hope and even rule changes have proven unsuccessful in equalizing gatekeeping positions in sports. Initiatives such as *Hockey is for Everyone* month and the Rooney Rule are all attempts to acknowledge and address a problem; regrettably, they treat inequality as a numbers issue instead of as issues of power, representation, and justice. Time certainly plays a role, but we must be careful not to become complacent when seeing increased diversity at the grassroots levels because what happens on the ice, the field, or the court does not dictate the future of the game; the future of the game is, in large part, decided in board rooms and in offices. Unfortunately, too many people ignore this fact because it taints the alleged meritocracy of the sporting system and hockey's role in gendering and racializing citizenship as white and male (Travers, 2008).

Angela Davis reminds us that we should not accept "diversity as a synonym for justice. Diversity is a corporate strategy. It's a strategy designed to ensure that the institution functions in the same way, except now that you have some brown and black faces" (Eckert, 2015, para. 12). Meritocratic assumptions have been disproven on numerous occasions, yet many appear to cling to this particular expression of hope. I believe that much of the lack of reflexivity and passivity around this issue has to do with a tacit acceptance that these hurdles have become permanent fixtures; in turn, racialized players resign themselves to a life of working harder than everyone else for the same opportunities.

Meritocratic and Resilient Subjects

Along with the assumption that the passing of time facilitates equality and diversity, working harder than everyone else was also cited as a way to address discrimination. Elite players have suggested that if a South Asian player and a white

player of equal ability were up for the same spot, the edge would often be given to the white player. On this point, elite player, Billy, claimed:

They're not going to take the minority over the other kid because it's just the way it is with anything. I believe that and, not in a bad way, but I think that's just how it is. I think that's why it's difficult for some of us to get to the next point but that just means we have to work twice as hard and that's up to us to do that. (Personal communication, July 20, 2016)

Previous research has documented the desire for racialized people to work harder for the same opportunities as a response to discrimination (Lamont, Welburn, & Fleming, 2013). Work ethic, then, is not so much a cultural trait as it is a means of survival. Still, if resilience requires hardship as an instigator, we need to ask ourselves *which groups get* to be resilient? Or perhaps more accurately: *which groups have* to be resilient in order to be equal?

The concept of resilience originates from physical sciences and is used to describe a material that has the ability to bend or bounce back when stressed (Norris, Stevens, Pfefferbaum, Wyche, & Pfefferbaum, 2008). Beyond fields such as mathematics and physics, the concept of resilience “is fundamentally a metaphor” when applied to social systems (Norris et al., 2008). It has become a popular research area and buzz term in the fields of psychology, education, economics, and disaster communications, so widely used that Thomella contended in 2003, “the definition of resilience has become so broad as to render it almost meaningless . . . resilience has become an umbrella concept for a range of system attributes that are deemed desirable” (as cited in Tierney, 2015, p. 1331). With regard to sport, resilience appears in sport psychology literature as a way to understand and/or enhance performance (e.g., Galli & Gonzalez, 2015; Morgan, Fletcher, & Sarkar, 2013; Sarkar & Fletcher, 2014).

The fundamental problem with the concept of resilience when used to explain or theorize *social* systems is that it “presupposes a social order that is continually at risk of

disruption” (Tierney, 2015, p. 1332). Julien Reid (2012) articulates this specific implication through his deconstruction of the global transition from a discourse of security to one of sustainable development. Reid explains that post-Cold War international relations were heavily premised upon the notion of security, which informed how subjects were governed and how the accompanying policies and practices were implemented. As neoliberalism gained prominence, strategies of governmentality changed accordingly; no longer would the state be responsible for the security of its citizens; instead citizens would be encouraged to be resilient in the face of danger, disruption, and uncertainty:

The account of the world envisaged and constituted by development agencies concerned with building resilient subjects is one which presupposes the disastrousness of the world, and likewise one which interpellates a subject that is permanently called upon to bear the disaster – a subject for whom bearing disaster is a required practice without which he or she cannot grow and prosper in the world. This may be what is politically most at stake in the discourse of resilience. *The resilient subject is a subject which must permanently struggle to accommodate itself to the world* [emphasis added]. (Reid, 2013, p. 355).

Equating natural disasters with racism as an obstacle to one’s hockey career would be a false equivalence, but the notion of a subject who has learned to “accommodate itself to the world” can be applied to many areas. Thus, when the media, as an example, offers stories of human resilience as fodder for inspiration, these narratives contribute to pacifying citizens into accepting misfortune as life’s guarantee while also conflating systemic inequality with bad luck. Perhaps this is why human-interest stories have become central to North American media discourses (e.g., Ellen Degeneres spotlighting underprivileged citizens who find the capacity to perform “good deeds”; adoration for competition show winners who “overcome” trauma and obstacles to achieve individual success; regular citizens who make tremendous sacrifices for strangers after terrorist attacks or natural disasters); not only do they make for feel-good stories, they also

reinforce resilience as a valued characteristic. Rarely, however, do we question why “bad luck,” trauma, and disaster seem so common.

Discourses of resilience are especially prevalent in the world of sports where assumed meritocracy is part of the draw. To illustrate, when *Hockey Night Punjabi* interviewed Suharshan Maharaj (the goaltending coach for the Anaheim Ducks and one of two South Asians in the NHL coaching system), the advice he provided for young South Asian hockey players was:

There are going to be obstacles. No question that there will be comments, there will be things that will work against you sometimes that you think are completely unfair, and in some cases, are, but the reality is if you love the game enough and you really are willing to put in the work . . . and if you put in the dedication of your parents, you’ll do fine. (*Hockey Night Punjabi*, 2017)

Maharaj concedes that racism exists but that hard work and dedication can help overcome this “obstacle,” an obstacle that is not present for all players.

Moreover, we must differentiate between hard work with the goal of excellence versus hard work to receive equal opportunities. The social and cultural capital of South Asian players, along with other “model minorities,” has little currency in hockey culture at this point; therefore, the only tangible agency that individuals are able to exercise comes in the form of work ethic. Hard work is essential for any player who wants to succeed in sport; yet, this is not hard work for the sake of excellence, but hard work with the intent of avoiding dismissal. Resilience, then, is not so much something that individuals or groups conjure as much as it is something externally imposed.

Players tend to internalize this discourse of resilience. Looking back at Raj’s narrative of not being named MVP, he shrugged off this instance as “part of life.” Billy also expressed a lack of options when facing a deck stacked against him:

It would be nice to maybe get some leeway once and awhile and get that break because I think a lot of it has to do with who you know and what you have. Like I say to myself all the time, that's the way it is and you've just got to push yourself that much harder. (Personal communication July 20, 2016)

Even one of the *Hockey Night Punjabi* commentators interviewed in this study asserted that, as racialized people, “we have to be good and we have to be better than good” (Personal communication, 2016) to receive opportunities that have traditionally been held by white Canadians.

There is nothing wrong with the desire to work hard; nonetheless, to privilege resilience simultaneously thwarts activism because “resilient subjects are those subjects that have accepted the imperative not to resist or secure themselves from the dangers they face, but instead adapt to their enabling conditions via the embrace of neoliberalism” (J. Reid, 2013, p. 355). As Lamont et al.’s (2013) research observed, there is a dominant belief that working *through* racism is the best response available for racialized people. This articulation of liberal ideology teaches marginalized populations “to give up on [institutions] as sources for the protection and improvement of their well-being, and instead learn to take responsibility for themselves” (J. Reid, 2013, p. 357). One of the implications of fostering self-reliant individuals is that there is no need to change an inequitable system because just as one’s successes can be attributed to effort, so too can one’s failures. Still, it leaves many players wondering what their hockey career could have been.

Hoping for generational change is also indicative of the discourse of resilience because there was, overall, little urgency to see any systemic changes in the game of hockey. The optimism that things will naturally evolve over time could be read as evidence of neoliberal pacification since these participants, or “subjects,” have been governed into a state of contentment. According to Tierney (2015), rather than

demanding systemic change through collective or radical action, “the resilient individual changes in ways that make it possible to bear that suffering” (p. 1333). Optimism for the future can, unfortunately, create grounds for inaction (Solnit, 2014).

Conclusion

Bourdieu contends that leisure, and by extension culture, continues to police its membership through forms of capital beyond economic barriers. Understanding intersections between economic and cultural capital is particularly helpful in understanding internal boundaries to citizenship because it highlights that not all forms of capital can be accumulated and that within multi-ethnic nation-states we must be cognizant of how different forms of capital and identities articulate with each other. Bourdieu (1984) notes that culture is purposefully inequitable so as to “separate the barbarians from the elect” (p. 250). This statement becomes even more salient with growing concerns over immigration, and in particular what kind of racialized people are allowed into *which* spaces; “who becomes the *right people* when diversity, culture, and commerce are linked together” (Teelucksingh, 2006, p. 2). Culture, being more than simple economic opportunity or leisure, as I have suggested in this chapter, is implicated in the structuring and reproduction of oppression.

Last, there is an insidious relationship between forms of capital and the notion of resilience. So long as individual will and choice are privileged over institutionalized forms of justice, resilience itself becomes a form of capital. It makes other forms of capital seem irrelevant because economic, cultural, and social capital could arguably all be overcome with enough resilience. This is how exceptions to the rule become alibis against institutional marginalization, because there is no need to ensure equal access to forms of capital if the most significant type of capital can be produced from within. We

are then left with a battle between those who advocate for a better system versus those who advocate for “better” people.

Chapter 6. Racialized Money and White Fragility: Class and resentment in hockey

Our national winter sport has become terrifyingly expensive, dangerously elitist, and is slowly but surely hacking away at the roots of what made the possibility of greatness accessible, albeit at greater or lesser odds, to any kid with talent and a dream.

Now it takes money and plenty of it. (C. Cole, 2015, para. 9)

Connections between class, “race,” gender and hockey participation among South Asian groups in Canada run far deeper than the “perceived” barriers to participation outlined in the previous chapter and require more detailed analysis. In 2016, *The Hamilton Spectator* published independent demographic research on Ontario Hockey League (OHL) players based on postal codes that revealed a significant portion of its players come from “a small and exclusive sliver of society where incomes, housing values and post-secondary education rates are abnormally high and poverty levels are extremely low” (Pecoskie, 2016, para. 10). The amount of criticism that hockey has received for being economically inaccessible continues to dominate discussions in the media and at the rink, and there are frequent stories in Canadian news media about dropping rates of participation in the game; however, this focus on the economics of participation misses part of the story. For example, in cities such as Vancouver and Toronto racialized Canadians are keeping minor hockey registration numbers consistent, which means that we cannot speak about racialized Canadians as a monolithic group that necessarily represents the lower socioeconomic strata of our society. As Stuart Hall (1996) observed more than two decades ago, “The problem here is not whether economic structures are relevant to racial divisions but how the two are theoretically connected” (p. 308).

“Model Minorities”

The term “model minority” was first introduced by sociologist William Petersen in 1966 when he wrote about the success of Japanese immigrants for *The New York Times* (Pettersen, 1966). Since then, the term has grown to include Asians of all ethnicities. Broadly speaking, “model minorities” are defined as a group of racialized people who have migrated to a new homeland and, through hard work, dedication, and education, have managed to secure a relative level of financial security and social mobility by stereotypically working in professional sectors such as finance and technology. Put more bluntly, to be a “model minority” involves “a capitulation to the ideology of white superiority, trepidation about forging alliances across class, ethnic, or religious boundaries, and a willingness to be used as a silent symbol in the rollback of social-justice initiatives like welfare and affirmative action” (Vaidhyanathan, 2000). As immigrants who are perceived to be different but valuable, “model minorities” have successfully complicated race relations in settler nations by widening the racial hierarchy between whites and Indigenous groups in Canada and whites and blacks in the United States. Thobani (2007) explains, in the Canadian context, that racialized Canadians contribute to the ongoing colonization of Indigenous groups because they exist in a liminal position between white settlers and Indigenous communities “marked for physical and/or cultural elimination,” which means “these migrants become implicated, whether wittingly or otherwise, in the dispossession of Aboriginal peoples” (p. 16). Nayar's (2012) study of Punjabis in northern British Columbia elucidates this tension between racialized immigrants and Indigenous communities when, during the 1960s – 1970s, Punjabi workers in the mills and canneries were socially constructed as reliable and hardworking employees in contrast to the discursively produced “lazy Natives” (p. 153).

In the American context, Prashad (2000) argues that the success of Asians has become a *weapon* in the war against black America. The position of “model minorities” is not one that is fully fluid; it is very much fixed because certain groups are never allowed to become “model” minorities (Chou & Feagin, 2008). Prashad illustrates this point by highlighting that African-born migrants had higher education rates than Asians, Central Americans, and the American-born population in the 1990 U.S. census: “46 per cent of the African-born migrants [came] to the United States with a B.A.” compared to only 20 per cent of U.S.-born citizens holding Bachelor’s degrees at the time (p. 171). Despite these statistics, black Americans were unable to alter their racialized construction as a group that is uneducated, unmotivated, and, in Dubois' (1996) words, a problem to be solved in the white imagination.

A Canadian example of using “model minorities” as a weapon was written by Jonathan Kay of *The National Post* in 2013 in an article titled, “Urban-bound Aboriginals pose Canada’s biggest integration challenge, not immigrants.” Kay starts his piece by highlighting *Hockey Night Punjabi* and its commentators as individuals who “perfectly symbolize Canada” calling our “diverse, tolerant, hockey-mad land of immigrants” a stereotype that is “perfectly accurate” (Kay, 2013, para. 3 – 4). The problem is not the promotion of *Hockey Night Punjabi*, but rather how he uses some Canadians as a viable reason to forcibly assimilate others. Kay explains:

Many of the immigrants coming to Canada, however, long after their voyage, are city-dwellers who already are familiar with retail capitalism, digital technology, the daily crush of strangers, and the frenzied pace of urban life. In cultural terms, Mumbai and Hong Kong are closer to Toronto than Attawapiskat or Yellow Quill [First Nations]. (para. 9)

Kay illustrates how Canadian Indigenous Peoples are forced to stay on the bottom rung of the racial hierarchy in Canada through the construction and privileging of “model minorities.”

The existence of the “model minority” construct also reproduces meritocratic ideals as proof that institutional racism is no match for hard work (read: resilience) because what differentiates a “model minority” from just a minority is that they never complain about the hurdles they may encounter; they become the “model” through docility. According to Al-Solaylee (2016) and Kymlicka (2013), the myth of the “model minority” was born out of a need to suppress the civil rights movement; that is to say, civil rights activists were told to look to Asian immigrants as proof that people of colour could exist and succeed in America without disturbing power relations. Notably, Al-Solaylee argues that the existence of a “buffer group” between whites and blacks and/or Indigenous Peoples is made possible by the inflections of neoliberalism on racial discrimination. In market-driven societies that privilege individual liberties and entrepreneurship, “the elevation of brown (and Chinese) people as full participants in the market economy is cited as evidence that the system is colour-blind, that racism no longer exists” (p. 47).

Aihwa Ong's (1999) work on transnational movement and “flexible citizenship” is useful for understanding the connection between immigration, “race”, and claims to belonging within capitalist frameworks. She encourages scholars to “consider the reciprocal construction of practice, gender, ethnicity, ‘race,’ class, and nation in processes of capital accumulation” (p. 5). In this way, transnationalism is conceived of as not only flows of movement but something that makes certain tensions and social orders possible.

Postwar Canadian immigration laws were written to attract a very specific type of foreign labourer and potential citizen (Abu-Laban, 1998). Especially noticeable during the immigration reforms of the 1960s, the connection between *which* immigrants were deemed “acceptable” by the Canadian government for the Canadian economy became

increasingly intertwined with Lester B. Pearson's 1966 White Paper on immigration that outlined, "immigration policy must be consistent with national economic policy in general" (as cited in Abu-Laban, 1998, p. 74). Similarly, Prashad (2000) articulates the reality of immigration controls as "state engineering" (p. vii). The Canadian Business Immigration Program officially began in 1978 with potential applicants categorized as either "entrepreneurs" or "self-employed," joined in 1986 by the "investor" category, requiring "the immigrant to own capital which would be invested in Canada" (Wong, 1993, p. 174). The investor immigrant quickly became one of the highest priorities for the Canadian government, facilitated by expedited processing.¹² *MacLean's* magazine sums up the Immigrant Investor Program as two decades of selling passports for the "cheap" price of \$800,000 (Gillis et al., 2016); therefore, when Canadians complain about the amount of real estate being bought by "foreign money" and the influx of racialized immigrants, it is integral to understand the legislation that has made such transnational movement (of both capital and people) possible, as well as the macroeconomic decisions that manifest as racialized tension in cities such as Vancouver (e.g., Gillis, Sorensen & Macdonald, 2016; McElroy, 2016). This anti-immigrant sentiment can be summarized as wanting racialized labour and capital but not the lives of racialized people (Prashad, 2000).

South Asians were fairly insignificant in the business class of immigrants during the 1970s because of the low value of the Indian rupee; however, around 1999 there was an increase in the number of Indian business class immigrants (Walton-Roberts, 2003). South Asians are not implicated in the foreign real estate discussion with the same vitriol that is often directed at Chinese immigrants/investors (although they are included in the "problem" of multi-generational "Monster homes" [G. S. Johal, 2007]), but

¹² The Immigrant Investor Program ended in 2014.

it is imperative to understand that the underlying mechanisms that make these tensions possible in the housing market parallel developments in the hockey landscape.

Ian Young, the Vancouver correspondent for the *South China Morning's Post*, has attempted to quell some of the racism that accompanies the foreign money injected into Vancouver's housing market by explaining, "What defines those people in terms of their behaviour here in Vancouver . . . is not their 'Chineseness,' it's their 'millionairehood'" (Gillis et al., 2016, para. 28). In other words, we should not confuse issues of "race" with those of class. Still, if Anderson (1983) was correct in his assertion that "the dreams of racism actually have their origin in ideologies of class, rather than those of the nation" (p. 149), the flexible attitude adopted by Canada and other nations towards citizenship and immigration based on the desire for economic growth has set the stage for ongoing, and perhaps escalating, racial tension for the foreseeable future.

Asian-American/Canadian advocacy groups and scholars caution against such generalized racial representations (Leung, 2013) because there is a great disparity of wealth that exists amongst Asian Americans:

Asian Americans are such an economically diverse group that wealth inequality is actually worse among Asian Americans than among white Americans Indian American households, for example, earn nearly twice the national average, while Bangladeshi and Cambodian Americans have lower-than-average household incomes. Asian Americans earn more than whites on average, but they also have higher rates of poverty...Such disparities are completely invisible according to the usual way we consider racial differences, which focuses on averages, not levels of inequality. (Guo, 2016, para. 3 – 4)

Similar patterns exist in Canada with South Asian Canadians more likely to be low-income (23% of South Asians compared to 16% of the general population), have lower overall incomes, and higher rates of unemployment when compared to the general populous (Statistics Canada, 2007). Therefore, even though a more nuanced discussion about access to hockey is needed, the middle and upper-class positions of the research

participants included in this study should not skew the broader reality of Canadian demographics. The “model minority” myth erases the heterogeneity of “Asians” and distracts us from more nuanced discussions about the implications of racialized class mobility.

Sport is not exempt from the “model minority” myth, with professional basketball player, Jeremy Lin, serving as a prime example. Lin is a California-born, Harvard educated, Taiwanese-American who was never drafted by the National Basketball Association (NBA) but instead paid his dues in the NBA’s development league. In 2012, the New York Knicks acquired Lin and a 3-week “Cinderella story” (Benjamin, 2015), better known as “Linsanity,” ensued. Lin’s rise to fame was notably

couched in the default language of the model minority: “He worked very hard to get to the top. He’s got intelligence – not just talent. If African American point guards are the norm in basketball, then Jeremy Lin is an anomaly whose existence almost demands explanation.” (Leung, 2013, p. 55)

In the documentary about his journey to the NBA, *Linsanity*, Lin himself muses that if he were a black athlete he would no doubt have received multiple scholarship offers considering he led his high school team to a state championship in his senior year (Leong, 2013).

Lin provides a current example of the unpreparedness of North American (sports) media (and fans) to discuss “race” outside of the black – white dichotomy. ESPN twice made the comment “Chink in the armor” after Linsanity started to subside and Madison Square Garden Photoshopped an image of Lin’s disembodied head floating above an open fortune cookie that read “The Knick’s Good Fortune” (Freeman, 2012). The “model minority” myth makes it difficult to grapple with racialized people in contexts that have not been (re)produced by the white imagination. The result of this confusion ranges from bullying to tasteless humour and hate-speech to resentment.

In *The Karma of Brown Folk*, Prashad (2000) explores the consciousness involved in being prescribed as a social solution to the “problem” of “blacks” in America, and observes that the “success” of South Asians (marked by capital accumulation) often ignores the fact that the state handpicked certain South Asians over others. South Asian “success” thus becomes a tool for white supremacy to be deployed in multiple fashions. As a result, racialized immigrants in settler societies often find themselves wanting to assimilate into white culture but are still met with discrimination and racism. We are long overdue in recognizing the “harmful invisibility” of Asian experiences in North America (Chou & Feagin, 2015, p. 4).

In my view, this is where hockey can help tell part of the untold story of racialized Canadians because, as Tim Hortons, Scotiabank, and Molson Canadian commercials tell us: To participate in hockey is to participate in Canada. Therefore, if racialized Canadians have chosen to integrate through hockey, why would they be met with anything but open arms? The remainder of this chapter focuses on who is allowed to buy and spend the symbolic capital that has traditionally been designated for white Canadians.

“Throwing Money” at Hockey

Eleven of the players, parents, and coaches interviewed in this study came from “hockey families”—families where more than one child (if not all children) participated in the sport and therefore embody a certain level of economic mobility. Of the parents interviewed, four were self-employed and the other two worked in professional occupations. The players cited similar employment circumstances, with six of them having self-employed parents. This resonates with Agrawal and Lovell's (2010)

observations that nearly 20% of affluent Canadians with Indian heritage are entrepreneurs.

According to *The Globe and Mail*, the average cost to enroll a child in hockey was \$3,000 in 2011 – 20112 (Mirtle, 2013). Approximately \$1,200 of that cost went to registration fees and ice time costs, \$900 for travel expenses, and upwards of \$600 for equipment. As children progress through the system, it is not uncommon for parents to pay almost \$4,000 per season/per child between the ages of 11 – 17.

For those able to choose the elite hockey academy route, the fees easily top \$10,000 per season. Hockey academies merge sport and scholarship into a singular program enabling aspiring athletes to focus equally on their athletic and academic skills. They also help groom hopeful youth into the lifestyle of a professional athlete. In the Lower Mainland of British Columbia there are four hockey academies that compete in the Canadian Sport School Hockey League (CSSHL): Yale, Delta, West Vancouver, and Burnaby Winter Club. Registration fees range from \$12,500 (for Yale's under-16 team), to a "projected" \$16,000 at Burnaby Winter Club, all the way up to \$28,000 – \$29,000 for the West Vancouver academy (depending on the payment option chosen). West Vancouver Hockey Academy also charges a \$125 try out fee and if players are billeted they must pay an additional \$700 directly to the billet family each month (Hockey Canada Sports School, 2016 – 2017). Delta Academy notes that out-of-province players must pay an additional \$8,000 for the "Out of Province Education Fee," payable to the school district (Delta Hockey Academy, 2016). The draw of these academies is famous alumni who have made it to the NHL or the WHL with Jonathan Toews and Sidney Crosby as prime examples of academy products. The Burnaby Winter Club Hockey Academy Information Package (Burnaby Winter Club, n.d.) states clearly on the second page: "8 of the top 10 BC players (99's) taken in the WHL draft chose to play at an

Academy in 2014-15,” and of the 10 Surrey/Delta selections for the 2015 WHL Bantam Draft, all but one was associated with an academy (Kupchuk, 2015). There are also other hockey programs, such as the North Shore Winter Club (NSWC), that are not officially academies but are “run like a hockey academy”; in other words, they train students around the clock, which explains why NSWC fondly refers to its own program as “The Factory” (Penton, 2015).

Accordingly, it is important to situate my participants as middle- and upper-class Canadians who, in many ways, help reproduce the “model minority” myth through the ability to enroll multiple children in the hockey system, academy or otherwise. In the last chapter, cost was cited as a barrier to participation; still, even though it was not necessarily a barrier to *their* participation, it was recognized as a potential barrier for others. Interestingly, the issue of class did not really come to the forefront in any meaningful way until I began speaking to parents who currently have children competing at the Atom and Pee Wee levels (ages 9 – 12).

Kevin, a 46-year-old father of three, emigrated from India to Vancouver at the age of 5. His father had emigrated to Canada a few years earlier than the family during the 1970s influx. Kevin’s son is his only child involved in hockey (his other children participate in another sport), and he served on the board of his son’s hockey association for 2 years. He never played ice hockey himself and spoke about how his parents were “too busy building a life in Canada as immigrants” (Personal communication, November 21, 2016) for him to receive enough exposure as a child to develop the desire to participate in hockey. He arrived for our interview wearing a three-piece-suit and carrying a business attaché case in hand. During our conversation, he mentioned being a long-time supporter of a local charity event that costs \$500 per plate to attend; yet, Kevin also detailed typical immigrant frugality when discussing the equipment-buying process.

I asked Kevin what his experience has been like as a South Asian hockey dad, to which he replied:

From my experience it's been great, I think the challenge you see sometimes is South Asians are well to do and giving people, generally speaking. I think for some families on your team the socio-economic gap is starting to be more prevalent because, this may be a generalization but it's an observation of mine, Indians will just throw money at it. "Oh, he needs this? Okay, we'll go get it." Then you see other people, "Oh, we have to pay how much in team fees? We'll have to do this and that?" So, it's a little tougher and I think you see some resentment that way. (Personal communication, November 21, 2016)

Kevin raises a vital point about (perceived) resentment, and this reiterates the importance of including parent voices in this project because, even though many players are beneficiaries of socioeconomic advantages, players did not necessarily recognize or acknowledge them.

Still, as Hall and his colleagues suggest, if "race is the modality through which class is lived" (Hall, 1996, p. 55), this is not necessarily surprising. Similarly, we should not be surprised by degrees of resentment and resistance from others that can echo "white fragility" (explained in the next section). In this regard, it is useful to consider Ong's (1999) attempt to understand how Marx's work on class struggle and Foucault's theory of governmentality can be combined in subject formation: How do strategies of capitalism intersect with modes of governmentality and culture? And, more specific to this project, how do strategies of capitalism intersect with the policing of cultural boundaries? The hockey rink in 21st century Canada becomes one of many transnational settings where we can explore hierarchies of cultural distinction and "assess the symbolic status of locals, and more critically, that of newcomers, no matter how cosmopolitan they are in practice" (Ong, 1999, p. 90). Arguably, white Canadians are just now learning how to make sense of racialized Canadians with not only disposable income but legitimate wealth and lives of luxury (Walton-Roberts & Pratt, 2005).

Subsequently, there is a “perceived mismatch between the distinction of their symbolic capital and their racial identity” (Ong, 1999, p. 91) which, for the most part, continues to be a representation of low-income South Asians grinding to establish themselves and master the English language.

When I asked Kevin about potential barriers to participation, like many other respondents, he mentioned language first. However, his answer quickly segued into another statement about class and resentment:

I think a lot of South Asians, I don't know if shy away is the right word, but they just don't come forward to be part of the social hockey circle. If you have fundraisers at pubs, they would rather say, “Okay, here's \$100, I don't want to go.” And other parents would go “What?” And that almost the other way turns to resentment from non-South Asians because, that example from earlier, just throw money at it. I would rather give \$100 because I won't be comfortable in this social setting, whether it's a pub, a restaurant, a fundraiser and you have to sell 50/50 tickets at the game or something. (Personal communication, November 21, 2016)

Interestingly, Kevin's response started off as a critique of South Asians being reluctant to integrate into hockey circles because of poor English rather than the English majority not wanting to include newcomers. But, as he points out, the ability to buy one's way out of an uncomfortable situation can create unintended consequences. It also illustrates Ong's (1999) claim that “it is primarily economic capital that is being converted into all other forms of capital, not the other way around” (p. 90). And, unless the host society decides that (a) racialized wealth is acceptable and (b) the demonstration of such wealth accumulation is an acceptable social practice, the reaction of resentment may be read as a symptom of white fragility.

White Fragility

Robin DiAngelo (2011) explains that white North Americans operate in an “insulated environment of racial protection” (p. 54) enabling them to move through space

and life without having to acknowledge whiteness as a privileged structure of racial hierarchy. Because of this insulation, many white people are unable to “tolerate racial stress,” a state that DiAngelo terms “white fragility”:

White Fragility is a state in which even a minimum amount of racial stress becomes intolerable, triggering a range of defensive moves. These moves include the outward display of emotions such as anger, fear, and guilt, and behaviors such as argumentation, silence, and leaving the stress-induced situation. These behaviors, in turn, function to reinstate white racial equilibrium. Racial stress results from an interruption to what is racially familiar. (p. 57)

Two interruptions that DiAngelo (2011) identifies as pertinent for this discussion of white racial insulation include challenges to white authority and white centrality. DiAngelo contends that when white people are faced with racialized people in leadership positions (i.e., as coaches or in administrative positions) or in non-stereotypical roles (i.e., as a wealthy hockey parent) many are “often at a loss to respond in constructive ways” because they have never been forced to develop the skills necessary for “engagement across racial divides” (p. 57).

An example of this inability to engage across racial divides comes from another hockey parent, Randy, who also held a position in his son’s association:

I’m on the board and there was an issue with a vote and one of the other board members said to the person affected by the decision, “Oh, well the brown guys stuck together.” I was like, “You don’t need to say that. It would be like me saying ‘All the white people voted this way.’” (Personal communication, November 15, 2016)

For DiAngelo (2011), white fragility is conceptualized as a product of Bourdieu’s habitus, “a response or ‘condition’ produced and reproduced by the continual social and material advantages of the white structural position” (p. 58). By extension, we can read the response “the brown guys stuck together” as an inability to engage with racialized people in a leadership and/or management setting where their opinions are, theoretically, weighted equally with their white counterparts. It is an interruption of what

has been racially familiar for generations of white Canadians. As Randy points out, the same assumption could be made of the white board members and the way they voted; however, it seems an unfair/illogical statement to make because the normativity of white supremacy enables white people to embody objective subjects that exist outside of culture—“white people are just people” (DiAngelo, 2011, p. 59); hence, their votes lack racial identity. Conversely, racialized people, within the confines of whiteness, are always subjects of their “race” and therefore can only speak about the racialized experience (Dyer, 1997); the speaker (the who) becomes central rather than the issue (the what) (Sara Ahmed, 2017b). This reaction can also be framed under the experience of amplification whereby one or two bodies “become amplified in imagination as four or five, especially if they work together” (Puwar, 2006, p. 79); therefore, solidarity amongst bodies out of place could be interpreted as a “potential troublemaking bloc” (p. 79). In this way, “a single body can be seen to be taking up more physical space than it actually occupies” (Puwar, 2004, p. 49), but more importantly, more space than it is assumed to deserve.

Gender further complicates the notion of racialized “bodies out of place” and entitled spaces. To illustrate, Sonia described how, when she played with boys, she felt “like the boys were just confused by [her] so they didn’t know how to even deal with [her]” (Personal communication, December 1, 2016). This “confusion” about a racialized female in a traditionally white, male-dominated space (similar to my field note narratives in Chapter Three), can be perceived equally as an affront to masculinity as it can to whiteness. Therefore, there can be multiple fragilities intersecting in these instances.

We must acknowledge that the hockey rink has historically been a racially and gender segregated space. A statement made about Herb Carnegie, arguably the best black player the NHL never let play, exemplifies this spatial exclusion. Conn Smythe,

then owner of the Toronto Maple Leafs during the 1940s and early '50s, reportedly said that he would sign Carnegie tomorrow for the Maple Leafs if someone could turn him white (Carnegie, 1997). Thus, the rink was first segregated through literal racial segregation and subsequently through class segregation. DiAngelo (2011) highlights that growing up in segregated environments creates an inability to understand the perspectives of racialized people:

White people are taught not to feel any loss over the absence of people of color in their lives and in fact, this absence is what defines their schools and neighborhoods as “good;” whites come to understand that a “good school” or “good neighborhood” is coded language for “white” (Johnson & Shapiro, 2003). The quality of white space being in large part measured via the absence of people of color (and Blacks in particular) is a profound message indeed . . . This dynamic of gain rather than loss via racial segregation may be the most powerful aspect of white racial socialization of all. (pp. 58 – 59)

Comparably, while I believe many parents of any “race” would comment that diverse environments are beneficial for their children, it would probably be rare that a team of all white players would articulate a sense of loss (read: something missing) by operating in the absence of racial diversity. In fact, when Venus and Serena Williams started having an impact on professional women’s tennis, questions of “Are they good for tennis?” and are “all Williams”” finals “good” for the women’s tour circulated as fair discussion topics. Venus Williams responded by pointing out that such a question had never been posed in the sport before (Douglas, 2005, p. 266); that is to say, while all-black finals are stressed as potentially *too* diverse, there is nothing missing from an all-white final. Knowles (2010) further emphasizes the power of segregated space: “You are not what you eat, but where you walk (or travel), the circumstances in which you walk and with whom you associate on the way” (p. 33). Therefore, “race” is constituted through corporeality and comportment, through movement and its connection with space.

This segregation essentially ensures that white interests and perspectives remain central, which means empathizing with different perspectives is rarely necessary. Randy's example of other board members assuming that "the brown people stuck together" illustrates a manifestation of this discomfort through what Omi and Winant (1986) term a racial disequilibrium, where such comments attempt to restore white privilege by, at the minimum, reproducing the Otherness of racialized people.

Furthermore, hockey academies add another wrinkle in the presumed meritocracy of hockey because, even if minor hockey numbers are starting to reflect the demographics of their areas, the questions of *who* is able to attend an academy and who makes it *out* of these academies represents a more accurate look at the future of hockey at the elite levels. The academy serves as another filter or hurdle that is becoming more popular/desired just as racialized Canadians have started to figure out the minor hockey landscape. The fact that academies are (a) considerably more expensive than minor hockey programs, (b) limited in number, and (c) more selective in nature, helps ensure that colour does not filter upwards, at least not easily. This development could be equated with the rise of gated communities as a response to increasing immigration and class mobility (Low, 2008; Vesselinov, 2008). Low (2008) observes that the symbolic power of gated communities "rests on its ability to order personal and social experience" (p. 45) but, as a result, intensifies social segregation, racism, and the politics of space. The movement towards private spaces over public ones symbolizes class segregation in transnational spaces (Arat-Koc, 2010). White-flight from urban areas to the suburbs exemplifies the racial privilege of being able to create spaces that are constructed as psychologically, emotionally, and physically safe. As DiAngelo (2016) highlights, "White flight is the primary reason that racial integration has not been achieved; the majority of whites, in both the expression of their beliefs and the practice of their lives, do not want

to integrate with [people of colour]" (p. 189).¹³ This is not to say that hockey academies premeditate segregation but rather that this new development has created (or perhaps reproduces) an additional hurdle that aids in either consciously or unconsciously filtering racialized Canadians out of the elite levels of the game—the level where public memory and the ability to represent the nation are at stake.

Correspondingly, Ong's (1999) work observes that affluent Asian immigrants who arrive to a new country with economic and social capital traditionally associated with white supremacy "confound the expectation of an orderly ethnic succession" (p. 100), calling into question the proper location or stratification of racialized citizens in the existing hierarchy. Kevin elucidated this fact in our interview:

I'll be frank with you, when we were growing up it was elitist white people [playing hockey] because we couldn't afford it and now the tables have turned. Because somebody has cheated, lied, or milked the system? No! It's because the South Asian community has worked their asses off for the last 30 – 40 years, 18 – 20 hours a day and built something and now they can throw money at it just like 20 years ago other aspects of society could do it, and still do it.

The ability to "throw money at problems" signifies, to many immigrants, arrival and a form of equality because they are performing wealth the way that it has been taught by white supremacy. In the previous chapter, I noted how Kevin talked about parents having to drop their kids off at the rink to go to their manual labour jobs, and here he describes the result of that generation's withdrawn participation from hockey culture. Still, social mobility represents a deviation from normalized race relations in which South Asians have long been associated with manual labour (Nayar, 2012). The ability to participate in whiteness through economic mobility represents a symbolic economy—an

¹³ In 2014, the *National Post* published a piece detailing how British Columbians have found race-based housing covenants from the 1940s that explicitly prohibited housing sales to "Asiatics" (the practice was ended in 1955; Hopper, 2014). Even as recent as the 1990s, there is evidence of rental agreements stating that no renters shall be of "negro or oriental blood or extraction" (Hopper, 2014, para. 10).

economy where “images of an affluent, Western consumer lifestyle” have become the benchmark of success (Bonnett, 2004, p. 34). There is arguably a disconnect between brown bodies usually marked as tools for capital accumulation versus brown bodies as symbolic of accumulated capital.

Class plays an important role in this discussion of barriers to participation because financial capital enables participation as well as the creation of new opportunities. A few of my research participants talked about a desire for South Asian-only training groups, which is the direct result of the ability to convert economic capital into other forms of capital.

“Brown Out” Hockey: Capitalism at its best?

There were mixed views on South Asian-only hockey programs such as powerskating camps and coaching sessions. Sara, a second-year hockey parent, voiced a preference for diverse teams, “I don’t see the purpose of having an all-Indian team. I don’t know, just because they are all Indian to be on one team, doesn’t make any sense to me” (Personal communication, October 10, 2016). Kari, 56, also preferred a “mixed group” of players (Personal communication, January 16, 2017). We can see that racialized people are able to articulate a sense of “loss” if there is a lack of racial diversity in certain spaces. Coach and former player, Brian, expressed a strong dislike for the trend towards ethnically segregated hockey groups:

I think it’s almost, the tables are almost turning and it’s one of the aspects I don’t want to be a part of where you are getting East Indian guys that are now, maybe they were first generation guys that dealt with [racism] and I went one with it and they went the other way with it and it still bothers them. Maybe I got to play a little better hockey than they did and now they are only selecting East Indian players. . . . It’s more so the Indian community creating that segregation. You see it in spring hockey now too, they’re making, I’ve had people approach me and my brother and go “You know a great way you guys can make tons of money? Open up an Indo-Canadian hockey school because without a doubt everybody would just go there.”

And I kind of looked at him and said if I'm starting a hockey academy I want to develop hockey players, not just one race of hockey players, right?

It's great to empower these kids but you're empowering them the wrong way, you're getting them all together and you're getting them to play hockey for the wrong motives. Not for the competition of it, not because we all wear the same jersey colour, where it's not a religion and a culture versus the other team and I don't think that's right. (Personal communication, September 11, 2016)

Discursively, Brian implies that there can be incorrect reasons to play hockey and incorrect methods for empowerment. There is a common saying in sports that "you play for the logo on the front of the jersey, not the name on the back of it," in essence privileging group success over individual rewards. Hence, by creating South Asian-only hockey groups, in Brian's eyes, South Asians are paying too much attention to interests that serve their racial identity as opposed to their hockey identity, assuming that these two can be disentangled.

Counter to these opinions, Thangaraj's (2015) study of South Asian basketball leagues in the United States highlights the agency that exists in creating ethnically segregated spaces. He describes South Asian-only sporting spaces as "browning out," whereby the sporting arena serves as a point of integration for heritage and citizenship:

The process of browning out involves weaving in South Asian American sporting histories alongside the already present athletic histories, awards, and celebrations at the gym. These historical markers do not erase other histories but effect an integration that makes South Asian American athletic identities a normal part of this urban American landscape. (p. 81)

According to Thangaraj, "brown out" spaces "offer respite from racialized marginalization in mainstream, multiracial basketball circuits" (p. 4). Specifically, with respect to masculinity and cultural citizenship, these ethnic spaces enable "players [to] inscribe meanings to their brown bodies that are not available in other realms of society" (p. 5). Players in the South Asian-only basketball leagues explained that participating in mainstream leagues meant that they would be subject to racial comments and

challenges to both their citizenship and masculinity. “Brown out” spaces represent “spatialized struggles between groups to *claim* space” (Teelucksingh, 2006, p. 8)

The South Asian American basketball players in Thangaraj’s (2015) study held Vancouver in high regard based on the assumption that the city represents a utopic space where basketball and culture have successfully been interwoven. For South Asian American basketball players, “Vancouver’s South Asian community is seen as a vision of what South Asian America can (and shall) be” (p. 209), but unfortunately elides the racism that exists within Vancouver. Vancouver, then, becomes an additional player in the intersection of “race,” sport, and identity because of its mythological position as a multicultural utopia contrasted against the reality of institutionalized racism and everyday racial tensions. Race riots in the early 1900s, appropriation of Asian-Canadian properties during World War II, and, more recently, white flight into areas such as Tsawwassen and South Surrey counter images of Vancouver as a multicultural mosaic.

Sonia, 26, reflected that when she was younger she would not have engaged with “brown out” spaces because she never wanted to be recognized as non-white; however, as she has matured and is now better able to articulate her struggles with racialization, she would be very interested in participating in South Asian-only hockey groups. For those who willingly identify as “different”, “the body, as emblematic of the state, presents an important gendered and sexualized forum in which to tease out the particularities of citizenship and national representations” (Thangaraj, 2015, p. 7). Therefore, brown-out spaces enable racialized bodies to not only challenge dominant discourses about their bodies but also share in a collective experience of difference.

Connecting “brown out” spaces back to class struggle, Kevin’s words again help to inform part of the desire to create these “brown out” hockey spaces:

I think it's coming because I don't think it's a racial thing, I think it's an economic thing. Personally, that's my opinion. If you have the resources to do something for your child and it's not available, you create your own opportunity . . . Does it look superficially [bad] on the surface? Yeah, it does, of course it does . . . But as far as practicing and creating your own academies, the resources aren't there then you have to go do something yourself. . . . We always find solutions. If the solution is we can't get our kid into this academy or that academy for whatever reason then we'll make our own and hire the best people. Is that any different than any other business anywhere else? Is that any different from Starbucks versus Tim Hortons? Is that any different from Rogers versus Telus? Those are big companies but point being if there's a need and you can't get an adequate solution you build your own solution. That's true entrepreneurial spirit if you think about it. That's capitalism at its best. (Personal communication, November 21, 2016)

It is curious that Kevin believes the motivation for creating “brown out” spaces is not based on racial similarity because the desire to create *more* opportunity is quite different from attempting to *claim space* in what is perceived as justice. He acknowledges that the perception of “brown out” hockey looks bad on the South Asian community, just as donating money to a team fundraiser elicits a different response compared to a donation of time and effort. His thoughts led us to discuss parallels between the Vancouver housing market and the accompanying racial tensions. Kevin's perspective is also reflective of the Punjabi-operated sawmills that were created during the early 1900s in British Columbia (Nayar, 2012). Discrimination and a lack of opportunities fostered a culture of “resilience” through innovation. According to Kymlicka (2013), the ideal neoliberal interpretation of multiculturalism is “not a tolerant national citizen who is concerned for the disadvantaged in her own society but a cosmopolitan actor who can compete effectively across state boundaries” (p. 111). The “model minority” is then proven to be self-reliant, and capitalism is positioned as an equalizer instead of a system of oppression.

Greg, a 47-year-old father of three, two of whom play hockey (a daughter and a son), also referenced conflicts that arise from changes in balances of power and a perceived mismatch between “race” and class:

That’s because the majority of individuals like status quo; they don’t like change. And, when they see minorities doing better that’s jealousy kicking in. Jealousy brings in racial tension and every other kind of tension you can imagine and that’s what it is. And in sports, I can honestly say, once other cultures start getting into sports in a big way you watch the changes . . . there will be more and more racial tension because of jealousy. Built in jealousy. “How did so and so make it? He’s brown! He should be a taxi driver or a have a pizza shop or whatever.” (Personal communication, November 21, 2016)

This feeling of jealousy or resentment may be perception more than reality (much like racism, resentment is difficult to prove); however, there is a history of white resentment and hostility towards South Asian claims to space and belonging in Vancouver, with the development of Sikh temples and the expansion of the City of Surrey as prominent examples (G.S. Johal, 2007; see Appendix A for more on the significance of Surrey).

When I asked Greg about hurdles specific to the participation of South Asians he answered:

Greg: Yeah, while Caucasians still run it there will be. Always. Until there is more of an even balance from the boards all the way through coaching, all the way down, you will see it. What’s happening now is South Asians and East Asians are doing their own thing. They’re doing their own organizations; they’re doing their own sports. They feel, the reason they’re doing that is because, they’re not given a fair chance at the other part. It’s the truth.

CS: Where do you see that divergence going? Will it feed back into the same system?

Greg: Nope. It’s going to turn into its own.

Of the 36 minor hockey associations in the Pacific Coast Amateur Hockey Association, South Asians hold 4.2% of executive positions despite South Asians representing 20% of the population demographics in the Fraser South area (e.g., Langley, Surrey, New Westminster), 6% in Fraser North (e.g., Coquitlam, Belcarra, Maple Ridge), almost 11%

in Fraser East (e.g., Chilliwack, Abbotsford, Mission), and 5.6% in the City of Vancouver (Foster, Keller, McKee, & Ostry, 2011). Bourdieu (1984) believed that markers of cultural capital, such as education, degrees, property, and citizenship, are more valued by the host society than wealth as forms of assimilation. Conversely, from a structural standpoint, the nation-state sees wealth as the most important factor in selecting its potential citizens/residents; as a result, we have a clash of interests and values in places where racialized Canadians are trying to *be* Canadian but still do not *look* Canadian. Both Kevin and Greg identified the effects of this breach of “spatial and symbolic borders that have disciplined” (Ong, 1999, p. 100) racialized Canadians, keeping them on the margins of Canadian society. Transnational movement has blurred what used to be distinct lines of division between rank and space.

The desire to create racially exclusive “brown out” spaces serves as a form of cultural citizenship because it enables South Asians to write onto the hockey landscape. Segregated environments (whether by gender, sexuality, or “race,” etc.) arguably provide safe spaces for free(er) expression, a common baseline experience for discussion, and a site for empowerment through difference (Aly, 2017). It can be exhausting to constantly navigate identities, exclusion, and expectations on a daily basis; therefore, minoritized spaces can offer a respite. Moreover, while the existence of one or two South Asians on the ice at any given time may not challenge the whiteness of hockey, seeing an entire group of South Asians training should start to raise questions about the future of hockey and why they are training in a racially exclusive group. As participants have identified, it will likely be perceived as self-segregation, and in a way, it is; however, what makes it possible is the confluence of inequality and the ability to do something about that inequality. Even though coach Brian expressed a dislike of “brown out” spaces, he did acknowledge, “If you see a team of all East Indian players I think you

should ask questions. If you have a team where there's no Indian players, you should also ask questions [especially in areas where there is a large South Asian population]" (Personal communication, September 11, 2016).

At this point, "brown out" hockey spaces are a new development and require more research into the motivations behind their creation and the implications of such spaces. Granted, those who resist the trend towards "brown out" spaces reproduce the "model minority" myth because participating in such a space highlights difference, and if there is one thing the "model" minority is expected to be it is "like everyone else." On the other hand, participating in ethnically segregated spaces may confirm suspicions from certain Canadians that *these* Canadians are not really Canadians after all because they have not properly assimilated into mainstream offerings. This seems like a lose – lose situation for racialized Canadians seeking any belonging through hockey, because marginalization may result in further exclusion. Again, we have to question *which* Canadians hockey brings together and under what circumstances.

Conclusion

C.L.R James (1969) wrote in *Beyond a Boundary*, his autobiographical discussion about cricket and class in the West Indies,

he [the West Indian cricket player] never forgets that his liberation exists only within the boundaries of the game, and then only for the gamers Sport is not sanctuary from the real world because sport is part of the real world, and the liberation and the oppression are inextricably bound" (p. xviii).

Through an examination of class and "race" at the rink, the myth of hockey's meritocratic nature is exposed while we simultaneously test the limits of Canadian acceptance.

Whether "brown out" hockey spaces are needed or simply wanted by some illustrates

how much work needs to be done with respect to understanding hockey's relationship with racialized participants and claims to spatial representation.

Moreover, "model minorities" exist in a paradox where they are expected to have sufficient wealth in order to avoid burdening the state but not be so wealthy that they are able to wield influence and power. Drawing parallels to Ong's work from the late 1990s, the pivotal issue underpinning the tensions that can be felt at the ice rink, and beyond, is that the presence of wealthy racialized Canadians and immigrants challenges white Canadians' "understanding of themselves as privileged [Canadian] natives who should take no back seat to foreigners, especially Asians" (p. 101). In connection to this perceived resentment, the key to understanding white fragility is not so much focusing on its existence but unpacking how it can derail opportunities for meaningful discussions about racism and racialized experiences. The fragility of white privilege works to silence claims about racism and thus emboldens the existence of it.

Last, it is important that we continue to explore how cost affects participation in hockey, but we must do so with a more detailed approach. *The Globe and Mail's* 2013 article that referenced the increasing costs of hockey participation was titled, "The Great Offside: How Canadian Hockey is Becoming a Game Strictly for the Rich" (Mirtle, 2013). Knowing that despite rising costs some racialized Canadians are still able to play and pay their way to the elite levels of the game, perhaps "The Great Offside" is not so much that hockey weeds out certain Canadians from participation (since it always has) but that it no longer weeds out the *correct* (read: appropriate) Canadians from participation. Mirtle (2013) writes in "The Great Offside," "a sport that was once a true meritocracy is increasingly one where money talks"; yet, hockey has never been a sport based solely on merit – access and opportunity have always trumped skill, especially for those marked as Other.

Chapter 7. Taking Stock: Re-telling the story of hockey in Canada

Canada has long perpetuated the idea that hockey is highly significant for the relevance and identification of the nation, but how do racialized Canadians interpret this mythology? Who really benefits from hockey as a tool of integration? Who is changed by these interactions, if anyone? Who learns from whom? How important is hockey mythology in an increasingly globalized world? And, does Pitter's (2006) argument that the dominant narrative of hockey has ignored the presence and contributions of racialized Canadians still hold true?

There is no doubt that hockey continues to provide an anchor point for a young white settler nation that has historically defined itself through negative associations—we are neither the United States nor Britain. Despite all of the racist comments, gatekeeping hurdles, marked difference, and resentment, my research participants spoke fondly about the game as well as the friends and memories that were made along the way. None of these participants regret getting involved in hockey, but their love of the game should not overshadow the fact that both the sport and the nation can and must be better. Furthermore, the mythological belief that participation in hockey signals (unconditional) entrance and acceptance into the broader Canadian polity remains a dubious propagation.

Mythology is intimately connected in the production of “national character” (Slotkin, 1973, p. 3). National myths provide direction and coherence to those who choose to believe in them (Slotkin, 1973). Myth, according to Barthes (1972) serves two communication functions: “It points out and it notifies, it makes us understand something, and it imposes it on us” (p. 226); it denotes something fictional while

referencing concepts that are positioned as timeless and universally accepted truths. According to Slotkin (1973), myths are exercises of the mind. Perhaps most importantly, myth impoverishes meaning, thus making it appear “neutral and innocent” (Barthes, 1972, p. 235). A significant part of Canada’s love of hockey stems from the mythological relationship between hockey and the physical environment in Canada. Barthes (2007) proclaimed, “To play hockey is constantly to repeat that men have transformed motionless winter, the hard earth, and suspended life and that precisely out of all this they have made a swift, vigorous, passionate sport” (p. 47). Here again, it is a particular kind of Canadian man who makes this myth possible.

Canadian mythology suggests it is in this relationship between sport and the physical elements that a national pastime was born. Certainly, many Canadians appear to be nostalgic for this seemingly natural memory; yet, the idea of Canadian children honing their hockey skills on frozen ponds, while picturesque, is a distant reality for urban/suburban Canadians. This is due, in part, to the effects of climate change (J. Johnson & Ali, 2016) but also a divide (whether psychological or geographical) between metropolitan centres such as Montreal, Toronto, and Vancouver and “the rest” of Canada. Case in point, one of my respondents, Sunny, 20, reflected on the importance of hockey and being “Canadian”:

Like the stereotypical Canadian kid, I think it’s, I don’t think it’s...in our area...so playing on the teams, we’re from the Vancouver area, I mean I don’t think it’s that big of a deal. I feel like there’s kids playing a lot more other sports but playing with guys from Alberta, Saskatchewan, further out east, I feel like that’s the way they grow up – it was just hockey. (Personal communication, July 21, 2016)

Sunny talked about backyard rinks being a different reality from how he grew up and participated in hockey culture. Another player, Raj, echoed a similar geographical separation, “I think it’s pretty . . . well it depends. If you go three hours North of Vancouver, or East of Vancouver four hours, you’re in cold weather and in the snow.

Only Vancouver gets [temperate] weather like this all year around, right” (Personal communication, June 21, 2016). The nostalgia for a time once lived by some Canadians perpetuates an idyllic game that emerged from the ice and snow of the Great White North. We often forget (or are made to forget) that hockey was not actually born out of nature but is a social and cultural production. Furthermore, as Canada continues to welcome immigrants into the country, the mythology of hockey finds itself constantly challenged by new and fluid interpretations of national identity.

These mythologies are also upheld by the belief that hockey is a defining feature of our Canadian-ness; it *makes* us Canadian. Yet, Kevin, a hockey parent, offered an interesting delineation about his identity. When I asked him how important he thought hockey is to *being* Canadian there was a long pause before he answered:

It’s a very good question. I’ll answer in two ways. As a hockey fan, as a Canadian who loves hockey and enjoys hockey I think it’s great. . . . As a son of immigrants, as an immigrant myself, in the scheme of things – no. . . . Hockey is, I think, a default because Canadians, generally speaking, are so good at it. We recognize that it’s Canada’s sport even though it’s not. I relate myself as Canadian differently. (Personal communication, November 21, 2016)

Kevin felt that hockey was very important as a school of life for his son, but as an immigrant he went on to describe the importance of hockey as “meh, it’s there.” He was the only participant to draw such a distinct line between hockey culture and his identity as a racialized Canadian. Kevin’s point about hockey being Canada’s “default” because we are good at it raises the question: Would hockey still be as important to our national identity if we were not as dominant on the international stage? Where then would we find our identity?

Some participants in this study, such as Suki and Billy, felt that Canada’s love of hockey is part of the national vocabulary. In other words, people may not have to play hockey themselves, but understanding the game opens up a multitude of other

opportunities for citizens. Conversely, Gulp, 25, a recreational player, felt the exact opposite:

I think we overplay it. I think we may overplay it a little too much, almost like we overplay Tim Hortons being part of being Canadian. I mean . . . I think hockey is a big part of being Canadian but there's so many people that are not fans of hockey that how can you say that really? . . . like I was friends with [people] in high school that were not fans of hockey at all, how can you say they're not Canadian? They're born here, they're raised here, they've lived their entire lives - they're not Canadian? (Personal communication, May 10, 2016)

Sara, a hockey parent, answered that the national narrative about hockey was “pretty accurate” until I asked her if she felt that her participation in the sport made her “feel any more Canadian,” to which she responded, “I don't think it makes me any more Canadian” (Personal communication, October 10, 2016). Amit explained that one does not necessarily need to be a hockey fan to be Canadian because “that's not going to make you less Canadian or less accepted in society” (Personal communication, May 16, 2016). Hockey dad, Greg, stated very bluntly, “I don't think it's got anything to do with being Canadian—Canadian is who you are. You live in Canada and that's the only Canadian we are” (Personal communication, November 21, 2016).

Therefore, as much as the myth wants us to believe that the motive for playing hockey is *to be* Canadian, the reality is that being Canadian precedes any participation in hockey. Slotkin (1973) asserts, “myths reach out of the past to cripple, incapacitate, or strike down the living” (p. 5); hence, the mythology of hockey blinds us to the consequences of a collective memory rooted in colonial, gender, “race,” and class exclusions. Inversely, the relationship between hockey and Canadians appears natural, symbiotic, and reinforcing. Tradition, in a similar vein, has also often served as an excuse for discrimination. Nonetheless, Slotkin contends that once a myth loses its religious devotion “[it] ceases to *function* as a myth” (p. 8). Could these interpretations of

hockey's mythology, as experienced by racialized Canadians, indicate deterioration of the myth? Would white Canadians necessarily answer this question any differently?

The Myth of Integration

In Ong's (1999) analysis of "flexible citizenship" she explained how wealthy Asian immigrants would often register for modelling classes to "learn how to dress, walk, and generally comport themselves in a way that would make them 'more acceptable to the Americans'" (p. 88). This notion of being "palatable" to the host society is precisely what is intended by promoting hockey as something that *integrates* new and racialized Canadians into mainstream culture. Hockey supposedly gives Canadians a universal talking point, educates racialized Canadians about national values, and generally helps folks blend in. But to what extent is this true? Is being a hockey player, coach, or parent enough to become "acceptable" and overcome one's Otherness?

Frisby, Thibault, and Cureton (2014) highlight that despite Canada's fascination with multiculturalism and its associated policies, "there are no policies tying it directly to sport at the federal level" (p. 106). Yet, organizations such as the Institute for Canadian Citizenship (2012) promote the notion that sports are a way to "build respect, tolerance and foster intercultural awareness and relationships, assist in the integration of newcomers, and provide opportunities for youth at risk" (p. 14). The assumption from this plural ideal is that a unity will be derived where "man is born, works, laughs, and dies in the same fashion everywhere" (Barthes, 1972, p. 196)—hockey supposedly performs an erasure of cross-cultural difference. Unfortunately, the previous chapters make it very clear that hockey is not that powerful. It is also relevant to note that in these discourses of integration, racialized Canadians are often lumped together with new

Canadians under the umbrella of “immigrants”; one can move from being “new” to an “immigrant,” but being simply “Canadian” seems off limits.

The majority of my research participants were born in Canada and by extension did not feel the need to be “integrated.” If anything, my participants gave examples of how their white teammates often had questions about South Asian culture and traditions:

CS: Do you find that kind of opens the door for some discussion? Do guys ask you questions about your culture?

Billy: Oh definitely. I've gotten asked tons of questions. I always get asked where are your parents from? Can you speak East Indian, Punjabi? They ask me if I speak Punjabi, lots of times they want me to teach them words. But yeah, they ask if I understand it. Food. A lot of them, actually when my mom comes down they are obsessed with her cooking so my mom will make some extra food and bring it down and the guys come over and eat butter chicken and stuff like that . . . I think if we didn't show, if I didn't show that it's okay to be comfortable around me about my culture and be respectful about it, I don't think some of these relationships would be there. (Personal communication, July 20, 2016)

Kiran, an elite player, found she would have to explain cultural, ethnic, and/or geographic differences to some of her teammates (“There's different types of Indians”) who perceived “Indian” as a uniform identity (Personal communication, April 28, 2016).

Likewise, Parm, a recreational player, would use these discussions as educational opportunities:

They'll know all about the food but then some will want to know in depth about the culture like where it started or our temples and stuff like that. Some people do take interest in that. I guess it gives us a platform, in a way, to educate people about who we are so they don't have that stereotype that we're all generalized as “brown people,” They can learn the variation between a Sikh, Hindu, and a Muslim. (Parm, personal communication, September 1, 2016)

When we speak of integration and assimilation we often envision the “margins” being folded/incorporated into the centre—that difference becomes diluted when added into the “core.” This relationship is Orientalist in nature in that the centre—the Occidental—may grow in size but remains largely static in nature, the rest of the world acquiescing to

its existence (Said, 1978). But I contend that the language of integration and assimilation hides the fact that change must also occur at the core/centre/mainstream of society.

Whether discursively (re)producing hockey as a “common denominator” (Dimanno, 2010), a cultural language, and/or as a tool of integration, these conceptions share the underlying presumption that hockey does not change. Former Prime Minister Stephen Harper told *Sports Illustrated*, “One of the first things you see [is] immigrants start to belong to Canadian society when their kids start to come to the hockey rink. Then the parents start to integrate with the other parents So it’s a great common denominator” (Farber, 2010). *They* integrate and so do *their* kids; in other words, Canada and its people may change, but hockey does not. Whether you are a new Canadian or an old one, Don Cherry and *Hockey Night in Canada* anchor the nation; hence, if the nation *must* change, the pastime cannot.

This, of course, is a myth that offers false comfort because the institution of hockey changes constantly. Rule changes, league expansions, new stadiums, and new global markets all exemplify a dynamic cultural artifact. The key to mythology, however, is the illusion of stability. Billy, Parm, and Kiran are all Canadian-born citizens, which means their integration into Canada (in a literal sense) is implicit. Their white teammates, on the other hand, are the ones who have something to learn about an ever-globalizing Canadian society and are the ones who, arguably, gain something from being in the locker room with racialized teammates. So, who in these interactions, are the ones being “integrated”?

Myths serve to naturalize discursive practices by distorting, rather than erasing, history (Barthes, 1972). The distortion here is the projection of integration as a unidirectional activity, whereas the participant narratives above elucidate how diversity in

hockey may alter the directionality by tinkering with the “centre.” By positioning racialized hockey players as abnormal in Canadian society they become “objects of our experience instead of . . . subjects of experience with whom we might identify” (Wendell, 1996, p. 60). For example, in Parm’s realization that hockey offers him a platform to educate his teammates about his heritage and culture, Parm is the one facilitating integration. Parm remains unchanged in this specific relationship, and it is his white teammates who are incorporated into a new normal—a “new” Canada. Likewise, another player, Shane explained, “Some players, they are from a different culture too, they’re not always Canadians, maybe from Europe. Those players tend to be more interested in learning about our culture” (Personal communication, September 1, 2016). Again, Shane’s experience and expertise serve as the “centre” in these interactions—he is integrating non-Canadians into Canadian society; yet, from a broad view—from the perspective of Canadian mythology—Shane would be the “non-Canadian,” the one who needs to be folded into the mix. The notion of integration mistakenly centralizes power, but here we witness some of the oscillations that take place between the “centre” and the “margins” (Hurley, 2007). These are some of the nuances that are overshadowed when we uphold whiteness as the default experience.

It is important to understand that even though these participants have been marginalized by Canadian hockey culture, they are not marginal. Metaphorically speaking, being marginalized symbolizes people who are outsiders or spectators to the main activity. Those who are marginalized are not viewed as central to the process at hand and, as a result, become excluded from decision-making processes and oftentimes their own representation—a fact that should be evident by the lack of racialized presence in the gatekeeping roles discussed in Chapter Five. However, this descriptive use of the term can make the process of marginalization appear static, and, as a result,

make it difficult to assess change. For my purposes though, I approach the concept of marginalization as a dynamic process that involves more than incorporating “outsiders” into the “mainstream.” The goal should not necessarily be to help groups join the mainstream; rather, we need to inquire about the ways in which certain groups talk about doing so, what they think the “mainstream” might be, how they feel they can (or cannot) belong to it, and how the so-called “margins” may already impact the “mainstream.” We also have to ask: At what point is a group no longer marginalized? Or will a group that has been labelled marginalized always remain in the “margins” in one way or another?

We can discursively challenge the assumption that hockey is used to “Canadianize” (P. Kim, 2014) racialized citizens by re-writing the “mainstream” into this equation: Hockey used to “Globalize” Canadians. Oftentimes we are so preoccupied with highlighting those who are marginalized that we forget another way to combat white supremacy is to *write in* the oppression—make the invisible, visible—by making the racism apparent. DiAngelo (2012) uses the example of headlines meant to celebrate baseball icon Jackie Robinson to illustrate how power can be made both visible and invisible:

Robinson is often celebrated as “the first African American to break the color line and play in major league baseball” . . . this story line depicts Robinson as racially special; a black man who finally had what it took to play with whites, as if no black athlete before him was qualified enough to compete with whites. Imagine if instead, the story went something like this: “Jackie Robinson, the first black man whites allowed to play major league baseball.” (p. 149)

Similarly, I believe that reproducing the idea that hockey serves as a common denominator and tool of integration performs an erasure of white supremacy and colonialism in Canada. White Canadians are written out of this equation because “white Canadian” has become synonymous with “hockey” and “Canada” (just as the term “African” has become synonymous with black people despite, as an example, the existence of white South Africans (Coombes, 2003)). Through the mythological

positioning of hockey and nation, white Canadians are made to appear “neutral and innocent” (Barthes, 1972, p. 235). Hockey is cleansed of any historical or political tensions, and the myth forces us to look backwards for exclusion, because as Whitson and Gruneau (2006) propose, “at the moment of its greatest strength a mythology thus insulates itself from criticism” (p.4). That is to say, if the institution of hockey is never the “bad guy,” then there is little impetus for systemic change.

Myths appear natural, not because they hide anything but because they are “deprived of memory” (Barthes, 1972, p. 232). If, according to French historian Ernest Renan (1992), nations are founded on rich memories, but forgetting is also an essential factor in nation building, *who* gets to decide *which* stories we collectively “forget” and which are canonized into the national story? Which Canadian memories have we been deprived of in the servicing of these particular mythologies?

Public Memory

History is about the past. Memory is about how we use the past for the present. (Rieff as cited in Lamar IV, 2016, para. 10)

At the end of our interview, I asked *Hockey Night Punjabi* broadcaster Harnarayan Singh if there was anything else that he would like to talk about. He mused:

It's funny, like my basement has become the Punjabi Hockey Hall of Fame because there was a weekend that I was away and my wife surprised me and made this whole, kind of the history of the show and all kinds of artifacts and put it all together on this wall . . . there's some really cool stuff in there. You know, it would be cool to eventually have some of our artifacts at the Hockey Hall of Fame. I think we're a part of the hockey family and I think, most of, especially in Canada, most of the hockey world knows who we are and what we're doing and things like that. So now the next step is kind of integrating ourselves amongst the normal hockey world right. (Personal communication, April 18, 2016)

Since our interview, one of Singh's “Bonino! Bonino! Bonino!” t-shirts was included in the Canadian History Museum's “Hockey” 2017 exhibit, which is a good start for recognizing

the significance of the broadcast. But, more importantly, Singh was referencing a desire to be included in the shared Canadian hockey memory and recognized as someone who helped shape and grow the game. Margalit (2002) distinguishes a “common memory” from a “shared memory” by emphasizing that where common memories are based on one unifying experience, shared memories are a form of communication—it is a calibrated and voluntary process. For Margalit, memory “travels from person to person through institutions, such as archives, and through communal mnemonic devices, such as monuments and the names of streets” (p. 54). In Canada, one major mnemonic device that contributes to the shared memory of hockey is the Hockey Hall of Fame (HHOF).

According to Geiger (2008), the concept of a “hall of fame” dates back to approximately 42 BCE when Augustus created the Gallery of Heroes in his Forum (*Forum Augustum*).¹⁴ Augustus was not the first person in antiquity to use statues and inscriptions to commemorate those deemed worthy of memory—the practice was common in other Mediterranean civilizations too; however, the assemblage of select individuals into a program, of sorts, was instrumental for future Western conceptions of public memory:

A group was conceived, closed in relation to the past and open-ended in the relation to the future: it had been decided once and for all who these *summi viri* [highest] were, no addition of past heroes was permitted and clear directives were given to the Princeps’ heirs concerning the inclusion of those who were to prove themselves worthy in the future.¹⁵ (p. 7)

¹⁴ For example, the Greeks had an affinity for creating inventories of the best in particular fields, including statues for Olympic victors in PanHellenic athletic contests (Gruneau, 2017). According to Geiger (2008), a major difference, however, was that the *Forum Augustum* was curated to guide spectators through in a particular path but also to encourage visitors “to arrive at specific conclusions” (p. 19).

¹⁵ Princeps is the head of state under the Roman Empire.

Augustus's selections for the Forum became "the official list of the state and the nation" (p. 7) and to be excluded from this selection process was, in many ways, more significant than being one of the chosen few. Geiger clarifies, "If non-inclusion in Anthologies, or Selected Works, often passes a death-sentence (even if unintentional) over works of literature, non-inclusion in a normative list of persons often amounts to almost instant oblivion" (p. 8). This inaugural hall of fame set a precedent whereby the heroes of a nation, state, or peoples would be "chosen for them albeit not chosen by them" (p. 8). Arguably, the main purpose of the Gallery of Heroes was to enhance the memory of the Roman people while also pre-determining what the future would look like. The comparison to Augustus's Gallery may seem distant, but I think it notable that Canada is currently home to 39 sport museums and/or halls of fame (Phillips, 2012).

The modern sports hall of fame and museum have carried on this tradition by immortalizing specific past accomplishments, while concurrently, as Geiger (2008) points out, relegating others to oblivion. Paralympic sporting heritage provides us with a useful example of the consequences of exclusion. Brittain, Ramshaw, and Gammon (2013) observe that, despite being the second largest multi-sporting event in the world (behind the Olympic Games), the Paralympic Games have been woefully underrepresented in both sporting and social heritage. The exclusion of Paralympic athletes from any organized form of collective memory has resulted in many athletes (and their families) throwing their physical artifacts (such as trophies, medals, and equipment) away because they are perceived as socially worthless. By extension, people with disabilities are then also reproduced as having little value and not worthy of remembrance. Hence, to commemorate this particular group of athletes would do more than historicize disability sport; it would serve as an act of advocacy and activism for people with disabilities more generally as recognition of their humanity.

The politics of recognition become salient far beyond access to and participation in sport because marginalization can carry on in the form of canonization or obscurity. Furthermore, when segregation and racial discrimination on the playing field are memorialized as “the way it was,” the act of exclusion fortuitously disappears. The history of racial exclusion becomes as obvious as the glass that encloses these historical exhibits but is equally as inconspicuous.

Hockey Hall of Fame

Singh’s narrative above discursively reproduced the HHOF as symbolic of the “normal hockey world.” It is there where hockey players, coaches, managers, and officials are gifted with “eternal life” and hence value to the nation and to the sport. The HHOF was born on September 19th, 1943 with its first class of members inducted two years later in 1945, and the original physical building (at the Canadian National Exhibition grounds) opened in Toronto on August 26, 1961 (Hockey Hall of Fame, 2017a). It was moved to its current location at Brookfield Place in downtown Toronto in 1993. The HHOF accepts inductees in three categories: players, builders (coaches, managers, or any other people who have had a “significant off-ice role” (Hockey Hall of Fame, 2017b), and referee/linesmen. A maximum of four male and two female inductees are allowed in the player category each year, and candidates must receive at least 75% of the votes from the 18-person Selection Committee. The HHOF outlines that the Selection Committee

be generally, but not necessarily exclusively, composed of former hockey players, former coaches of hockey teams, former referees or linesmen for hockey leagues or associations, current or former senior executives of hockey teams or hockey leagues or associations and present or former members of the media who cover or covered the game of hockey. (Hockey Hall of Fame, 2017a)

These criteria mean that, to date, women and racialized people have had limited representation on the Selection Committee, which helps explain why there have been

only four women inducted thus far and only three racialized players in total.¹⁶ Even pioneers such as Willie O'Ree, the first black NHL player, and the late Herb Carnegie remain excluded from the Hall. Carnegie's exclusion from the NHL carries over into his inability to "fulfil the conditions necessary to become a hockey legend—at least a hockey legend as adjudged by the dominant benchmarks of NHL success and/or Hall of Fame induction" (Norman, 2012). This is an example of how racism carries forward by denying one's existence in the past. Moreover, critics have pointed out that it is the *Hockey Hall of Fame* and not the NHL Hall of Fame (Nelson, 2017), meaning that pioneers and formidable contributors should (in theory) play more of a role in the public memory of the sport.

Bruce Kidd (1996) asserts halls of fame "play a strategic role in the public remembering and interpretation of sports" (p. 328), but the Hockey Hall "is a disappointing example of effective 'public history'" (p. 331). Ken Campbell pinpointed part of what Kidd was referring to in *The Hockey News* in 2012:

I think I've finally got this group figured out. It's made up of 18 NHL-establishment white guys, not a single one of whom is under the age of 50. And the ones who carry the most weight among them are the same people who had to be dragged into the 21st century to allow women to be inducted. Just listen to them when they call the inductees, basically congratulating them for becoming one of their little insular group.¹⁷ (para. 3)

As a result, gatekeeping in hockey (as in all sports), does not end when one decides to hang up the skates because selection committees curate social memory (J. E. Johnson, Giannoulakis, Tracy & Ridley, 2016; Parsons & Stern, 2012). To be memorialized is, no doubt, a great privilege; yet, the ability to decide who is and who is not immortalized is

¹⁶ Angela James, dubbed the "Wayne Gretzky" of women's hockey, is a bi-racial Canadian woman and was the first to be inducted into the HHOF in 2010, along with American Cammi Granato. Geraldine Heaney (CAN) was inducted in 2013 and Angela Ruggiero (USA) in 2015. Grant Fuhr (bi-racial) and Brian Trottier (Metis) are the only racialized men in the HHOF.

¹⁷ Luc Robitaille is currently the youngest member on the Selection Committee at 51 years old. James Gregory (81), Scotty Bowman (83), and Bill Torrey (82) make up the three oldest members.

seemingly the greater privilege. Similar to how Augustus's directives were meant to avoid re-interpretations of "greatness" by future generations (Geiger, 2008), so too are the choices made by sports hall of fame committees. Halls of fame solidify, regulate, and standardize the values and ambitions of that institution; and, because hockey is Canada's game, the HHOF subsequently does the same for the nation. These committees and their selections have the ability to challenge the history of racism in sports by offering a more inclusive re-telling but inclusion and equality are conscious efforts, rarely do they happen "naturally."

Phillips (2012) categorizes sports museums/halls of fame into four general groups: academic, corporate, community, and vernacular. The HHOF is delineated as a corporate museum for the following reasons: It employs more marketing and public relations type staff than museum professionals; public education is not a high priority; it uses its platform to influence public opinion, serving as a form of advertising; and it relies heavily on collective nostalgia as a way to deflect/minimize controversial, marginalized, and/or contested histories.

Nostalgia is key to the (re)production of sport as a cultural artifact. Nostalgia references "an emotional component"; it is "a preference (general liking, positive attitude, or favorable affect) towards objects (people, places, experiences or things) from when one was younger or from times about which one has learned vicariously, perhaps through socialization of the media" (Fairley as cited in J. E. Johnson et al., 2016, pp. 310 – 311). Thus, nostalgia is a social construct, and we learn what things, which people, and which spaces are deserving of emotional investment.

The Role of Media

Media are crucial in fostering nostalgia and the production of public memory (Jackson & Ponik, 2001). Due to Canada's struggle to cement a national identity unique from America and Britain, and establish political and cultural legitimacy as a white settler nation, the nexus between our hockey heroes and Canadian media has been integral in narrating and defining our past, present, and future (Jackson & Ponik, 2011). Joanne Garde-Hansen (2011) asserts that "our engagement with history has become almost entirely mediated" (p. 1) through its symbiotic relationship with the media. Her book, *Media and Memory*, develops the "idea that media compels an end to history and the beginning of memory" (p. 3). In other words, media frames our perceptions about certain events, people, and places by marking certain instances worthy of collective remembrance, but always in a mediated form. Similar to Jean Baudrillard's (1994) theory of hyperreality, collective memories (e.g., the death of Princess Diana) are, in a way, more real than the actual event because they have been repeatedly reconstructed for public consumption. Media, therefore, can foster a specific and unified memory that does not necessarily exist in reality.

Scholars such as Lee and Thomas (2012) and Reading (2011) approach public memory as a human right and a matter of justice that is inherent in the realization of other rights such as freedom of expression and access to education. Lee and Pradip Ninan refer to the "right to memory" as situated "with the purview of third-generation human rights" (p. 7) following civil and political rights (first generation), and social, economic, and cultural rights (second generation). The right to memory, along with communication rights, speaks to human dignity and identity as part of a functioning democratic society. The role of the media, then, is not only as a curator of history but also a defender of democratic accountability. Furthermore, with the development of

participatory media, Reading (2011) contends that digitalization and global movement force us to reinterpret traditional forms of memory practices.

Similar to Singh, Bhupinder Hundal also spoke about the potential legacy of the *Hockey Night Punjabi* broadcast as the true arbiter of the program's social impact; however, Hundal's reflection is not so much about physical artifacts as it is a hope that the show opens a door to Canadian media that cannot be shut:

So, while it may not be me, I think our responsibility is to use the opportunity that we have to educate so that a five-year-old kid maybe has that opportunity that perhaps we didn't have, and that's kind of the responsibility we all have moving forward. This is where I think the broadcast, talking about the legacy perspective, that's where it actually matters, is how we open the doors not only for future players but open the door for future broadcasters and how we help propel them in their career.¹⁸ (Personal communication, April 28, 2016)

He also expressed that the more the broadcast is able to tell "stories about South Asians in the game," the more impactful the broadcast can be through its parallel but alternative narrative. Arguably, one component of a free and credible press is the inclusion of diverse stories and opinions beyond dominant narratives. In this way, we may be able to read *Hockey Night Punjabi* as a defender of a more *inclusive* public memory and democratic accessibility, while *Hockey Night in Canada* serves as the curator of hockey history. The tension in their parallel movements symbolizes the struggle over public memory as a marker of legitimacy and citizenship.

The mythologies of hockey and the HHOF are powerful because they exist in plain sight—their obviousness, ubiquity, and proximity are precisely what deflect criticism. It does, however, make one wonder if hockey is as vital to national unity as the sport and its pundits purport. And is it possible to separate the myth from the actual

¹⁸ The broadcast hired Mantar Bhandal, a 21-year-old South Asian broadcasting graduate from the British Columbia Institute of Technology at the start of the 2017 – 2018 season. This hire was significantly dictated by the competitive advantage that *Hockey Night Punjabi* can provide to young South Asian broadcasters.

sport? Why write out the contributions of Indigenous, black, and Asian Canadians that would help strengthen the mythological relationship between hockey and multiculturalism? On the other hand, scholars who advocate that public memory is a right generally do so on behalf of war, genocide, and/or the overt destruction of communities. Thus, it seems almost trivial to write anyone out of a sporting history. That is, unless seemingly trivial “edits” to the national narrative open the door for larger or more egregious erasures such as Canada’s struggle to address Truth and Reconciliation with Indigenous communities in any meaningful way. These edits allow colonialism and institutionalized racism to live in perpetuity without ever being marked as such.

It is also critical to note that the privatized nature of *HNIC*, *Hockey Night Punjabi*, and the HHOF place limits on the right to campaign for a more inclusive re-writing of history. Once *HNIC* moved from the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC, a public broadcaster) to Rogers Communications, it no longer belonged “publically” to the citizens of Canada in the same way. This is not to say that things were all that different or more transparent (Worthington, 2011) when the program was broadcast on the CBC, but at least citizens could lodge a grievance on the basis of public broadcasting as a public good (Scherer & Whitson, 2009). In contrast, the HHOF belongs to a litany of corporate sponsors including the NHL, Imperial Oil Limited, PepsiCo Canada, Tim Hortons, Molson Coors Canada, and Reebok-CCM Hockey, to name a few. If public memory, in this instance, is written by corporations instead of citizens, how do we ensure that the people’s heroes and the people’s stories are not relegated to oblivion? How do we move towards a more democratic and inclusive form of public memory that includes as many citizens and versions of Canada as possible?

Writing In: DIY Citizenship

If there is no “will” to remember certain people, events, or artifacts (Parsons & Stern, 2012), it is difficult to challenge the dominant narrative. The obvious answer is to alter the institutional barriers by campaigning for more diverse selection committees and re-vamping selection criteria. However, because institutions such as the HHOF are private entities, public shaming and campaigning can be blunted by simple organizational stubbornness. The reluctance of Dan Snyder and Bruce Allen (owner and President, respectively, of the Washington NFL football team) to update the team name to something not racially offensive is a prime example of this intractability (Associated Press, 2015). Consequently, the development of do-it-yourself (DIY) heritage institutions offers one instructive solution to *accompany* institutional change.

The history of DIY culture stems from the transition from second-wave to third-wave feminism (Kempson, 2015). As feminism grew from a collective (albeit exclusive) movement into a more consumption-oriented, individualized, and fragmented movement, DIY culture developed within this chasm. Feminist “zines” (independently created, non-profit, amateur publications) are the most noticeable aspect of DIY subcultures (Chidgey, 2014; Kempson, 2015). Zines predominantly articulate marginalized stories, whether they are resistive in nature or simply an expression of the self (Kempson, 2015). The linchpin of DIY feminism is that it encourages active, politically engaged citizenship from everyone. Using this ethos of grassroots and community agency, DIY institutions seek to democratize the notion of heritage by creating institutions of memory that exist beyond national archives (Baker, 2016).

DIY institutions, a term coined by Baker (2016) in specific reference to popular music culture, identifies “a group of popular music archives, museums and halls of fame

that were founded by enthusiasts, run largely by volunteers and which exist outside the frame of authorized projects of national collecting and display” (p. 173). These repositories are created as a response to a community need, they “self-authorize” that which is worthy of commemoration. What Singh described as his personal basement hall of fame is how many DIY institutions begin as individual collections. Baker asserts that these repositories broaden our interpretation of history, offer sites for research, and are “important in epistemological terms because the parameters of the archival record are determined by the community of volunteers and enthusiasts . . . whereas national institutions tend to have selective collection practices which work to reinforce existing musical canons” (p. 183). They give specific communities control over how the past should be remembered; in this way, DIY citizens write in what has been written out. Memory, then, becomes a subversive act—an act of citizenship, reconciliation, and justice.

For example, in 2006, conversations about opening a Black Hockey Hall of Fame in Nova Scotia circulated, but it does not appear that there was ever a formal outcome (CBC News, 2006). Chidgey (2014) notes that one of the main challenges facing DIY institutions is a continual struggle for sustainable financial, spatial, and/or human resources. From the limited information available, it seems that the Black Hockey Hall of Fame was short lived, in part because there was never a proper physical location for citizens to engage with this specific history. As such, the viability of these institutions relies on more than finding a storage site (Chidgey, 2014); they require resources to give the narrative legitimacy and longevity. Writing people and events into history is more difficult than proving that something happened.

These DIY institutions reflect a broader ethos of DIY citizenship by “hacking” (i.e., providing a work around) traditional interpretations of citizenship (Ratto & Boler, 2014).

Self-organized activities that offer access to support, instruction, and information are political acts that challenge existing structures by inciting questions about ownership and accountability (Ratto & Boler, 2014). DIY citizens make “themselves as they go along” (Hartley, 1999 as cited in Ratto & Boler, 2014, p. 5). For Ratto and Boler (2014), DIY citizenship “sits at the intersection of a series of tensions: between consumers and citizens, between experts and novices, between individuals and communities, and between politics as performed by” (p. 5) traditional governments and those of grassroots democracies. The power and potential in DIY citizenship is in the invitation to question how things are now and if they ought to continue in the same fashion for the future. As a form of cultural activism, DIY citizenship can be seen as an outlet of cultural citizenship because culture and citizenship are seen as co-constitutive and part of larger political processes.

Just as cultural citizenship works outside of the boundaries of political citizenship, DIY activism/citizenship seeks to create alternatives for the here and now where buy-in from institutional powers is unnecessary (Chidgey, 2014). One of the benefits of social marginalization is that little can be taken away when there is nothing to lose. As Hurley (2007) points out, “marginality and power are *productive* and often require thinking in specific contexts rather than just generally. The marginal are not always powerless” (p. 179). Both interpretations of citizenship demand authorship along with the taking and making of space. Counter to the passive hope discussed in Chapter Five about waiting for generational change, DIY citizenship is inherently participatory and encourages the sharing of skills, knowledge, and resources to “create the things we want to see” (Chidgey, 2014, p. 104). In my opinion, DIY citizenship can be encompassed under the umbrella of cultural citizenship, with the main distinction being that DIY citizenship is

more overt about its activism; DIY citizenship offers a method to achieve and exercise cultural citizenship.

With this in mind, even if artifacts from Singh's personal hall of fame do not become memorialized in the hallowed HHOF, that does not mean that Singh, the *Hockey Night Punjabi* broadcast, and other South Asian pioneers should not be included in the public memory of Canadian hockey. In fact, it would then become even more important to ensure that a physical archive is created. Drawing this back to Fosty and Fosty's (2008) critique that because there are no monuments dedicated to the Coloured Hockey League of the Maritimes and racialized contributions have largely been excluded from the HHOF, the erasure of these contributions challenge the visibility and legitimacy of racialized citizens. It also means that we miss out on the opportunity to celebrate hockey's (and Canada's) racial heroes. This hack is not meant to absolve "mainstream" hockey institutions of their responsibility to include diverse narratives knowing that "those people" are featured elsewhere; instead, DIY citizenship must work in tandem with institutional resistance and reform to overcome racially homogeneous public memories.

What DIY citizenship offers is a way to galvanize communities in the face of feeling helpless and what may seem like something immutable (and hopefully spur them on to additional political acts). Collective hope exists in stark contrast to passive individual hope; it creates space and energy for possibilities and alternatives and is an impetus for social betterment. Admittedly, this interpretation of citizenship can also be mobilized for regressive policies, as was witnessed during the 2016 U.S. presidential election; however, it would be misguided to categorize all outlets for the disempowered or disaffected as equal. Promoting alternative, community, or DIY spaces for public memory enables traditionally marginalized groups to scribble onto the national narrative in search of inclusion, justice, and equality for all—not just some.

Chapter 8. Conclusion

Hope just means another world might be possible, not promised or guaranteed. Hope calls for action; action is impossible without hope To hope is to give yourself to the future, and that commitment to the future makes the present inhabitable. (Solnit, 2005)

Hockey may be the game of the Canadian state, but can it ever really be the game of the Canadian people? I contend that as long as racism in hockey lives only in the past tense and we continue to privilege stories of perseverance over those of exclusion, hockey will never truly be the game of Canada's people. Perhaps, *this* is Canada's way: a national habit of looking backwards for silver linings and exceptions to the rule. Two prime examples of this Canadian "habit" occurred while writing this study.

First, in February 2017, I attended a free screening of *Soul on Ice: Past, Present & Future* as part of the Vancouver International Film Festival and *Hockey is For Everyone* (HIFE) month. The film sought to highlight the contributions of black hockey players and add nuance to the history of Canada's game. The NHL supported screenings of the film during HIFE month, with the Vancouver Canucks specifically sponsoring the Vancouver screening. While *Soul on Ice* is certainly a necessary narrative for hockey fans and Canadians alike, the film told a story about black hockey players as if racism was a historical fact and not something for current concern. Wayne Simmonds was the only current NHL player featured in the film. During the question and answer period following the screening, the Director, Damon Kwame Mason, was asked how people could access the film for additional viewings. Mason explained that it was available on certain platforms but that no Canadian broadcaster had been willing to help distribute the film. He described their responses as "that's cute" but clearly not significant enough for any kind of support.

Second, the Hockey Hall of Fame's attempt to put diversity on display as part of the NHL's 100th anniversary highlights the general absence of diversity. The exhibit explains:

Many young hockey players, regardless of their ethnicity, gender or sexual orientation dream of someday playing professionally. However, due to the exclusion of many marginalized peoples from the NHL, this was not an option until four pioneers broke through the barriers that kept them from playing at hockey's highest level.

The description then goes on to highlight Larry Kwong, Fred Saskamoose, Willie O'Ree, and Manon Rheaume as pioneers for racial and gender progress (there is noticeably no "pioneer" to speak of with regard to LGBTQ equality in professional hockey). Similar to *Soul on Ice*, the Hall represents racism as a relic of the past stating "hurdles of race and ethnicity remained in place for decades" but that today players like "Carey Price and P.K. Subban continue to inspire the next generation of minority youth" . . . to realize that their success is "only dependent on their desire and their talent."

I believe these examples sum up the intersection of "race," citizenship, and hockey in Canada for two reasons: (a) Why, in a country that supposedly eats, sleeps, and breathes multiculturalism and hockey, would no national broadcaster want to encourage a popular discussion about "race" and hockey? and (b) how can we continue to section off displays of multiculturalism as an admirable and acceptable act? As a reaction to such shallow multiculturalism, my research suggests that hockey, Canada, and Canadians can and must do better. If Canada really wants to be the multicultural haven that we project to the world, then we must work to embrace multiculturalism on a daily basis and at all levels; it is an ongoing process, not an end point. And we must actively combat racism and the effects of colonization because our own national history has taught us simply declaring multiculturalism does not make racism disappear. As author Rebecca Solnit expresses in the lead in quote that opens this chapter, action is

impossible without the hope that a better tomorrow is possible (and/or necessary).

Hopefully the experiences and feelings voiced throughout this project convey an impetus for change. And while optimism and fairy tale endings have their place, it is those who find the present uninhabitable (not the ones who wait for better days) that are able to drive social change for the generations that follow; an uninhabitable present also makes reverting to the past an unacceptable option.

Significance

By giving voice to South Asian hockey players, parents, coaches, and broadcasters with regard to hockey in Canada, I have attempted to heed Abdel-Shehid's (2000) request to write "hockey thru race" (p. 76). By writing thru race we are able to think "beyond myth" and think about "race", and in this case "brown-ness," differently (Abdel-Shehid, 2000, p. 78). This study helps amplify the contributions of South Asian Canadians to the national culture and challenges the systemic dismissal of so-called "bodies out of place."

At this point, I would like to address the overarching questions that guided this project. First, I wanted to gain insight into the reason it seemed that South Asian communities have embraced hockey in a way that no other racialized settler group in Canada has been able to do. My research participants often cited a connection to field hockey in India as something that draws South Asians to the game, and while this might be partly true, I believe that there are other factors we must consider. A large part of this engagement needs to be attributed to the work of the *Hockey Night Punjabi* broadcast. Many racialized groups have and do participate in hockey culture; thus, my assessment is not so much that South Asians are drawn to hockey any more than other groups but that they have been provided a visible outlet to demonstrate their fandom. The ability for

this particular racialized group to write on to the Canadian narrative means that their contributions can no longer be ignored, downplayed, and/or erased the way Indigenous hockey communities have been, as an example. Furthermore, I propose that discrimination against brownness may foster a more urgent need to accrue cultural capital in the hopes of assimilation and acceptance. And since hockey is almost universally touted as the way into the nation's heart, it should not be surprising that hockey seems like an adequate way to overcome difference. However, because there is no existing literature to compare the experiences of the "racial middle" in Canadian hockey, this point is merely supposition.

The second overarching question for this project attempted to unpack the implications of the mythological privileging of hockey in respect to South Asian Canadians and their experiences of citizenship. I have argued that citizenship is a constant negotiation at the rink for racialized bodies, largely because this particular myth has historically excluded racialized Canadians. The implications are that these citizens must prove that they are in fact Canadian; they must prove that they belong on the ice; and they must prove that they can withstand discrimination in order to stay in the game. These are daily tests that help create "resilient" citizens—not because they choose to be but because there are limited options. And if a racialized citizen happens to persevere through all of these daily tests and succeed at an elite level of hockey, will he or she be remembered in the same way that his or her white counterparts are remembered?

The last research question I posed was: In what ways might hockey make "race" and citizenship more meaningful for Canadian society? I propose that by better understanding how "race" operates within our most consecrated cultural activity we unpack a more honest interpretation of discrimination in Canada. Even if the minority of Canadians still believe that "Asians don't know hockey," that "the brown guys stuck

together,” and that it is acceptable to “white face” a teammate, this minority must be addressed and these beliefs acknowledged. When racism is permitted to exist under the guise of “chirping” at the rink, it means that this kind of language and behaviour is appropriate Canadian decorum. And when we are able to make an “exhibit” out of diversity in hockey and not draw attention to the whiteness that exists in the permanent institution, we allow certain citizens to be edited out of the national narrative. Or, at best, we allow them to exist temporarily next to the dominant narrative as a historical sidebar or footnote but never as part of a unified and interconnected story where multiple storylines can and do co-exist.

I did, however, witness one noteworthy change over the 5 years of this project. When I first observed how people reacted to *Hockey Night Punjabi* via Twitter (Szto, 2016), approximately half of the reactions were negative in nature. But on June 4, 2017, Bhupinder Hundal highlighted a racist tweet about the show that stated, “Are you kidding me they [South Asians] don’t care about hockey” and 119 people responded in support of the show, 529 retweeted Hundal’s response, and 1,600 liked his response (Hundal, 2017). The support was overwhelmingly from non-South Asians expressing their appreciation for the show. This is not to say that I believe racism has declined in the past 5 years because of the broadcast but that the success of *Hockey Night Punjabi* has given Canadian hockey fans something they can speak up about and defend. In 5 years’ time, I witnessed laughter at the show and its commentators evolve into increasing mainstream attention, original programming, and crossover segments. *Hockey Night Punjabi* is evidence that multiple storylines can co-exist for the benefit of hockey and Canadian multiculturalism.

Multiculturalism and hockey have only begun to negotiate each other’s existence and discussions about “race” and diversity continue to be necessary *because* hockey is

not yet diverse. We must continue to tell “hockey history through its minoritarian elements” in order to expand “the cultural files of the game and the potential for new subject formations that are not limited by the standard account” (Genosko, 1999, p. 145). We must actively work to tell the stories and contributions of racialized hockey participants both as a form of resistance and as an act of citizenship.

Limitations and Future Research

The first notable limitation of this research is that it only amplifies the voices of those who have participated in hockey culture. We still need to hear from those who decided not to tolerate the discrimination or wanted to participate but never had the opportunity. In this way, my project partly reproduces the “perseverance” perspective by highlighting players who have had fairly accomplished and lengthy hockey careers.

This project is also skewed towards South Asians who are confident in their English communication skills. I had asked to interview the parents of some of the players in this study, but a number of participants explained to me that their parents would not be comfortable talking to me with their level of English; thus, conducting interviews in Punjabi, Hindi, Gujarati, and so on would likely offer different observations and insights about integration and the significance of hockey as a cultural unifier. In the same vein, the ardent fans of the *Hockey Night Punjabi* broadcast did not have a chance to voice the importance of the broadcast among these narratives. According to the broadcast team, there are some Punjabi Canadians, usually aged 40 and older, who watch only the Punjabi broadcast and would not be watching hockey otherwise, but again, due to language barriers, these voices could not be amplified in this space.

Additionally, more research needs to be conducted with the parents of sports participants because it became very apparent throughout my field research that player

and parent experiences were parallel but separate. Where players are generally absorbed into an automatic social group, parents are not forced to work together and create social bonds. Players often told stories about how their parents would interact with the coach only if/when discrimination reached a boiling point; none of those firsthand accounts are included in this project. The majority of sociological research in the world of sports centres the experiences of players and coaches. Where original research on parents does exist, it is heavily slanted towards psychological analyses of how parents socialize their children into sports participation (e.g., Averill & Power, 1995; Gould, Lauer, Rolo, Jannes & Pennisi, 2006; Knight, Neely, & Holt, 2011; Sánchez-Miguel, Leo, Sánchez-Oliva, Amado, & Garcia-Calvo, 2013) or discusses gender roles as enacted through fatherhood (e.g. Coakley, 2006) or motherhood (e.g., Chafetz & Kotarba, 1995) as part of parental performativity. The existing research does not ask questions about how sports may foster belonging or marginalization for parents; thus, parents are seen as tangential to the sporting culture—merely facilitators of success/failure or as personal chauffeurs.

I also encountered some reluctance from hockey parents who indicated that “no one wants to talk about that,” referring to racism in hockey. This reaction could be the result of a relatively small hockey community and a fear that others could take retribution against those who speak out. It could be because such experiences are traumatic and do not want to be relived. Or it might feel like showing a lack of gratitude to a nation that apparently does not suffer from widespread racism. The fact is we do not know the reason, but there are clearly more stories out there. I suggest that future research should include a nationwide online survey available in at least Punjabi and Hindi that will provide anonymity for participants. This survey should also target players, parents, and coaches in order to provide the most comprehensive picture. An online survey would

also help overcome geographical barriers and encourage the inclusion of rural Canadian voices.

Moreover, we need to further explore the desire for and implications of ethnically segregated hockey spaces. Is there talk of South Asian-only programming in other Canadian cities as well?¹⁹ How are these groups operating, and how do non-South Asians make sense of these groups? Will these groups merge into the same elite hockey system or, as Greg suggested, will they morph into their own ethnic leagues and competitions? What do these programs say about our (in)ability to live in social harmony and the future of sports in Canada?

Recommendations

In addition to the suggested directions for future research, I would like to propose some practical recommendations for moving forward. First, Hockey Canada and local associations need to start collecting demographic data. To not account for demographic differences assumes that inequality does not exist or suggests that local associations do not view class or racial disparities as worthy of investments of time or money. Also, if “Hockey is For Everyone,” then there should be no fear in gathering this type of data. This is not to say that statistics on racialized participation need to be actively tracked but, at minimum, asking the question of self-identification on a registration form means that the data can be tabulated if/when requested.

¹⁹ APNA Hockey School in Edmonton, Alberta is an example of a newly formed South Asian focused hockey school. The founder, Lali Toor, explains on its website, “I decided to create an ice hockey program directed at developing talent in the South Asian community. APNA Hockey is focused on identifying and growing the number of South Asian hockey players across the country . . . Multiculturalism is a beautiful aspect of our country, and I envision APNA Hockey to bring out players of all ethnicities and backgrounds” (Apna Sports International, 2017).

Second, there needs to be more respect for ethnic sports media. One way to demonstrate this respect would be to elevate the need for proper viewing metrics for ethnic programming. Ethnic sports media plays a vital role in fostering cultural citizenship and, in the case of *Hockey Night Punjabi*, has helped grow a game that has been experiencing stagnant and declining membership. Additionally, ethnic sports media producers must be wary of reproducing male dominated broadcasting spaces.

Third, I propose implementing educational workshops to facilitate discussions about racism in the locker room. Some sports teams already teach gender equality-type workshops to address rape culture in sports, and Cheryl MacDonald's (2016) recent research on heterosexism in hockey locker rooms has resulted in workshops, delivered through the You Can Play project (an LGBTQ advocacy organization), as a way to address masculinities in a space where it is rarely spoken about openly or in any constructive manner. Likewise, I believe that creating safe spaces to discuss racist chirping offers an entry point to explore what it means to be a citizen in a multicultural Canada. These workshops can be led by independent bodies and targeted at coaches who feel they are able to facilitate the material, or workshops can be organized for teams with the coaches, learning alongside their players. This recommendation also supports the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to Action, specifically advising that anti-racism training programs be instituted in sports (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015). This call to action is meant to decolonize the sports system but also opens the door for more detailed discussions about racism in sports to take place.

Fourth, there needs to be a designated pipeline for grievances of racism, sexism, heterosexism and other human rights issues. This move would signal two things: (a) acknowledge that institutional oppression exists and is not a compilation of random,

isolated, and individual behaviours, and (b) demonstrate a willingness to validate marginalized voices and experiences. A recent example from the world of soccer helps illustrate the need for somewhere to go with one's evidence of discrimination/oppression.

In late 2016, Andy Woodward, a former professional English soccer player, told *The Guardian* in an interview about the sexual abuse he had experienced as a child at the hands of gatekeepers in the sport (Taylor, 2016). After his interview was published, 20 other former professionals quickly came forward with their own stories. The National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) then set up a helpline specifically dedicated to abuse stemming from the world of soccer, and the helpline received 860 calls in its first week (Holden, 2016). As of late May 2017, *Think Progress* reported that the British soccer sexual abuse scandal had grown to include 560 victims, 252 suspects, and 311 football clubs (ranging from amateur soccer through to the premier league) with claims covering over three decades (Gibbs, 2017). This example is not meant to make the world of soccer seem any more egregious than any other institution, but it does exemplify the problem of having nowhere to go and no one to speak to when one has been victimized. The faux apolitical nature of sports results in a lack of channels to seek recourse for wrongdoings. And, as the soccer sexual abuse scandal demonstrates, victims were forced to hold on to their "evidence" for three decades, not knowing what to do with it.²⁰

Moreover, as with increased reporting of sexual assault/abuse, reporting of racism and other forms of discrimination/oppression does not mean that more racism occurs, rather that people are willing to put their trust in a system that has consistently dismissed such claims. To illustrate, Laura Robinson's book, *Crossing the Line: Sexual*

²⁰ USA Gymnastics has been embroiled in a similar situation with its team doctor Larry Nassar being sued by more than 125 women and girls alleging abuse (Schilken, 2017).

assault in Canada's national sport, was published in 1998 and exposed the dark side of a sporting system built on silence and a lack of outlets to externally support participants. Yet, little has changed for athletes over the years. Offering an outlet for grievances gives hope that there can be change and justice. Hockey associations could voluntarily create such a pipeline or administrative positions; however, given that minor hockey associations operate on volunteer power and most leagues are not equipped to deal with such issues, the most feasible option would be to create an external organization/association solely for the purpose of hearing, recording, and investigating issues of racism, sexism, heterosexism, et cetera. The Canadian Minister of Education, Mitzie Hunter, recently made such a recommendation to the Ontario School Board to create a human rights office so that complaints of racism had a home from which to be investigated (L. Fraser, 2017). This office would ideally be independent from any sporting associations to ensure third-party objectivity.

Fifth, I recommend that the Hockey Hall of Fame start a section dedicated to minoritized contributions as a permanent fixture in the Hall ensuring that racialized, Indigenous, gendered, and para-athlete presence is incorporated into the overall hockey narrative. Additionally, an exhibit designated for the *Hockey Night Punjabi* broadcast would be extremely meaningful. When the Baseball Hall of Fame decided to include an exhibit for women's baseball and the All American Girls Professional Baseball League, a short-lived (and whites only) but meaningful league, then Chief Curator, Ted Spencer, described the exhibit as something that "finally gave women a piece of ownership of the game" (Carr, n.d.). Barring this option, a DIY institution dedicated to racialized contributions to hockey in Canada is vital to bolstering the representation and legitimacy of Canadians of colour. Following the advice of Shirley Chisholm, former U.S. congresswoman and the first (black) woman to run for the Democratic Party's

presidential nomination, “If they don’t give you a seat at the table, bring a folding chair” (Vaidyanathan, 2016).

Writing the Wrong

Writing thru race stages the eruption of cultural difference, or “other” scenes within the liberal nation, without claiming the privilege to alone represent that scene. Writing thru race haunts the nation with its other which it cannot possess. Instead, the nation is possessed; history calls forth its debts otherwise. (Abdel-Shehid, 2000, p. 76)

Hockey is the only sport where players “change on the fly,” which means that players can be substituted without a stoppage in play. This is one of the aspects of the game that makes hockey extremely dynamic because players must constantly adjust to new teammates, opponents, and conditions. Ironically, even though the game expects adaptability from its players, the institution seems to have a hard time adjusting to all the new players entering the game and letting go of the previous generations. History does not stop time for us to gather ourselves and re-assess; consequently, this work must be done “on the fly.”

It has been 17 years since Abdel-Shehid (2000) implored Canadians to write in all the Canadians who speak and live a different Canada, to counter the dominant narrative of “what this land is like, and who [lives] here” (p. 82); yet, both hockey and the academy have done very little to address this “debt.” Another way to understand writing thru race is through the words of Nigerian-American author, Teju Cole (2014): “Writing as writing. Writing as rioting. Writing as righting. On the best day, all three.” We have been called on as Canadians to write the wrong, and our response has been far too slow. This project is a small contribution towards a more inclusive national narrative; a

narrative that welcomes multiple authors to the writing desk. It is an attempt to add some grit to the glossy veneer of Canadian multiculturalism.

In September 2017, the *Globe and Mail* published a photo essay on the women and girls who play hockey in Canada stating, “The story of women’s hockey is a complicated tale of great progress and inarguable disparity” (para. 1) and that women’s hockey has “only scratched the surface of how far there is to go” (Paterson, 2017, para. 8). These words are not only accurate for women’s hockey in Canada but also synopsise the struggle for racial equality and representation in “Canada’s game.” No longer should marginalized citizens be content with the “freedom” to participate; it is time we demand space on the ice, behind the bench, in the board rooms, and in the broadcasting booths so that we can change the story of a nation from below. Racism does not have to be part of the future narrative of hockey but, as I quoted Walter Beach in Chapter One, until racism is no longer accepted as a normal and expected experience for those marked as different, we have no choice but to draw attention to these practices of inequality.

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Appendix A: Qualitative Methodology

Researching “Race”

This project draws from the methodological frameworks of postcolonial feminism, critical race theory, and intersectionality to make sense of contemporary racism in Canada. A postcolonial perspective is necessary for Canadian scholarship because the nation was founded on colonization and the dispossession/exploitation of racialized persons. As Sara Ahmed (2000) explains in *Strange Encounters*, postcolonialism is

about the complexity of the relationship between the past and the present, between the histories of European colonization and contemporary forms of globalization. That complexity cannot be reduced by either a notion that the present has broken from the past . . . or that the present is simply continuous with the past . . . To this extent, post-coloniality allows us to investigate how colonial encounters are both determining, and yet not fully determining, of social and material existence. (p. 11)

A postcolonial lens highlights the fact that nations such as Canada are not so much *post-colonial* as they are struggling to reach de-colonization. At the heart of postcolonial analyses are questions about power, voice, and agency: Who gets to speak? Who listens? When do they listen? What makes this possible?

For Canada specifically, postcolonial analyses that “interrogate, decolonize, and [re-route]/[root] – the founding assumptions and practice of universal citizenship” helps to “[unsettle]” the story that we tell ourselves about our Canadian selves (Fleischmann, Van Styvendale, & McCarroll, 2011, p. xiv). Citizenship and postcolonialism are closely connected projects that work to alienate or assimilate, ostracize or equalize. As Canada currently celebrates its sesquicentennial birthday, many Canadians, led by Indigenous groups, wonder why we are celebrating “the beginning of an abusive relationship” (Canadian Press, 2017)—a relationship that continues to this day. This study operates

on the premise that Canada continues to feel the effects of colonization and that racialized Canadians are very much part of this ongoing history and relationship.

Critical race theory (CRT), as an ontological standpoint and a movement, foregrounds racism as an institutional system that is built into society and is intimately intertwined with other social relations; it normalizes racial hierarchy (Crenshaw, 2011). As such, CRT overtly challenges neoliberal beliefs such as individualism, meritocracy, and colour-blindness (Gardiner & Welch, 2001; Nebeker, 1998). Evolving out of legal studies, it attempts to offer counter-narratives by racialized people as a form of resistance (and social justice) but also to re-centre the logic of “race” and the processes of racialization as integral to how we govern and experience the cultures we inhabit (Hylton, 2009). Moving us away from ideas of incrementalism and linear progress, CRT challenges the foundations of liberalism (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). Dr. Cornel West describes CRT as such:

But like all bold attempts to reinterpret and remake the world to reveal silenced suffering and to relieve social misery, Critical Race Theorists, put forward novel readings of a hidden past that disclose the flagrant shortcomings of the treacherous present in the light of unrealized – though not unrealizable – possibilities for human freedom and equality. (as cited in Crenshaw, Gotanda, Peller, & Kendall, 1995, pp. xi – xii)

CRT, then, works to expose erasures and through this process provides an analysis of possibilities.

The downside to amplifying racialized voices, however, is that these “highly valued” (Hylton, 2009, p. 33) voices can become essentialized voices used to represent a universal experience. Or, as bell hooks (1990) warns, “voice” can be appropriated so that the original author is no longer needed to tell the story. With this in mind, Hylton (2009) writes, specifically regarding sport, that we should not view racialized voices as items to be collected in order to address a “deficit”; rather “voice” becomes an “asset, a

form of community memory and a source of empowerment and strength” (p. 5). The work of amplifying voices is not the end goal—it becomes the starting point of our work.

Similarly, intersectionality is also recognized as a starting point, “the point from which we must proceed if we are to offer an account of how power works” (Sara Ahmed, 2017, p. 5). McClintock (1995) argues that in order for one to understand colonialism and postcolonialism, one must acknowledge that issues of “race,” gender, and class are not experienced within distinct silos; they are, instead, constituted through tension and conflict with each other. Introduced in the late 1980s (Crenshaw, 1989), intersectionality focuses “attention on the vexed dynamics of difference and the solidarities of sameness in the context of antidiscrimination and social movement politics” (S. Cho, Crenshaw, & McCall, 2013, p. 787). Adopting an intersectional stance enabled me to question (quite specifically) *which* men and *which* women are privileged and/or oppressed through Canadian hockey culture and under what circumstances certain identities come to the forefront. For example, notions of masculinities were important in Chapter Four as gender was observed to work in tandem with “race” when dealing with racism. And Chapter Six emphasized the intersection of class and “race” with respect to the acceptance of demonstrable wealth by racialized Canadians.

Drawing back to the notion of intersectional justice introduced in Chapter One, praxis is key to intersectionality (S. Cho et al., 2013). Notions of citizenship, inclusion, and authorship are central to intersectional justice; hence, where intersectional analysis enables scholars to stress injustice in its various forms, with praxis always on the table, the academy is constantly encouraged to move beyond critique to look for solutions, recommendations, and avenues for activism.

Ultimately, this project was one of sense-making. It sought to make sense of the paradoxical relationship between South Asian interest/participation in hockey and the broader tensions directed towards racialized citizens in contemporary Canada; to make sense of the role that hockey may play in one's national belonging; and, to make sense of the ways in which certain peoples come to be memorialized and represented in the national narrative while others are simply forgotten.

Participant Observation

Developed in the 19th century, ethnography involved long-term, time-consuming, intensive participation and observation of select people. The interpretive practice of ethnography represents part of the epistemological transition away from the empiricist tradition towards interpretive approaches that privilege the realm of the subject. Scholars such as Clifford (1988) and Geertz (1988) have adopted the interpretive turn with the epistemology that cultures are unique and each creates its own perspectives, morals, and values. Since the 1980s, however, ethnographic practices have changed from the interpretivist approach in a number of ways. First, rather than understanding cultures as monolithic and existing in silos, the interpretation of culture has become more contextual but still situated within a world nexus. Second, ethnographies tend to be more topic or issue centred instead of focusing on a group of people (Sands, 2002). Third, globalization has become a critical factor for ethnographers in the way that it has dissolved boundaries, transformed the movement of capital and people, contested national sovereignty, and renegotiated social structures. Thus, as Norman Denzin (1997) posits, the practice of ethnography has had to change because the world it intends to study has changed:

We do not own the field notes we make about those we study. We do not have an undisputed warrant to study anyone or anything . . . The writer can no longer presume to be able to present an objective, noncontested

account of the other's experiences . . . ethnography is a moral, allegorical, and therapeutic project. Ethnography is more than a record of human experience. The ethnography writes tiny moral tales. (pp. xii – xiv)

Ethnography has adopted a critical turn by incorporating postcolonial approaches in an attempt to restructure the balance of power. Clifford (1988) suggests that even though the “new” ethnographic turn cannot fully escape the inherent dichotomy involved in writing about Others, ethnographers “can at least struggle self-consciously to avoid portraying abstract, ahistorical ‘others’” (p. 23). In this way, ethnography represents a work of struggle—a struggle with authority, of plurality, and of de-colonization.

Clifford (1988) encourages ethnographic researchers to “quote regularly and at length from informants” as a way to “break up monophonic authority” (p. 50). With this in mind, I attempted to include narratives at length where pertinent and to let the participants' words carry the discussion as much as possible, but even trying to amplify voices with as much context and original text still faces the problem that “quotations are always staged by the quoter and tend to serve merely as examples or confirming testimonies” (Clifford, 1988, p. 50). In turn, it is always important to read participant data as partial and contextual.

“Ethnography is separated from other qualitative social science research methods by its emphasis on intensive, focused, and time-consuming participation and observation of the life of the people being studied” (Sands, 2002, p. 21); yet, sport has long been ignored as a viable means for exploring human behaviour. The “ethnographic” portion of this study was used to complement interview data and media analyses. I use scare quotes around ethnographic because many factors limited the ability for this study to be a “true” ethnography. The nature of hockey and hockey teams makes it difficult to study any group as a collective. As Robidoux (2001) observed in his ethnographic research of an American Hockey League team, his presence in the locker room (even as

a white male) was interpreted as espionage. Thus, for me to observe an entire hockey team but only amplify the experiences of one or two players would have made for an extremely unnatural environment. If “brown out” hockey spaces continue to grow, ethnographic studies of these groups could result in observations akin to Stanley Thangaraj’s work on South Asian basketball leagues; however, these ethnically segregated spaces do not enable researchers to observe interactions with and among non-South Asian Canadians, which was really the purpose of this study—how does Canada interact with, respond to, and receive South Asians in hockey spaces?

As a result, my participant observations were fragmented in nature. I attended 10 local hockey games and four events where the *Hockey Night Punjabi* team publicly advertised their attendance. The hockey games I attended ranged from Atom to Junior B and University level with South Asian players on the roster. Counter to popular claims, I failed to witness any significant diversity at the minor hockey level.

The notion of a “participant-observer” carries with it a number of assumptions: (a) that cultural truths exist and are privileged through experience and participation, (b) these “truths” are discernible, (c) that the “Other” exists within clear boundaries (Alexander, 2004). Still, it is important to acknowledge that while I was observing those marked as “Other” at hockey rinks, I was simultaneously marked as “Other,” illustrated by my field observation notes in Chapter Three. Johal (2002) posits that when everyday experiences are aggregated into a “substantial body of isolated bits of evidence” (p. 231) the issue grows from one of individual concern into one that should be highlighted as a problem of society. In this way, ethnographic work is ideally suited for researching the “everyday-ness” of citizenship struggles. By using participant observation, I was able to provide a small glimpse into the interactions and experiences that occur around the nexus of “race” and Canadian hockey culture and unpack daily claims made by

racialized bodies regarding citizenship and belonging. Scholars of “race” have been encouraged to adopt the perspective of the daily struggle, arguing that it is not in the extreme cases of hatred where we learn about racism because both “race” and racism are produced and reproduced in the routine everyday workings of life (Knowles, 2010). Citizenship becomes something that racialized citizens need to reclaim in daily interactions.

I attended four events where *Hockey Night Punjabi* publically advertised their presence: Hometown Hockey – New Westminster 2016, Hometown Hockey – Vancouver January 2017 (2 days), the 2017 Vancouver Vaisakhi celebration—an annual event commemorating the New Year and the harvest season, especially significant to those who identify as Punjabi (Kang, 2002), and Hometown Hockey – Surrey December 2017 (2 days). At the Hometown Hockey event in 2016, the broadcast team was featured on television with Ron MacLean but had no designated autograph booth. I observed from afar watching South Asian families approach some of the commentators, shake hands, and engage in a casual conversation. I did not witness any non-South Asians approach the broadcast team. It was at this event that I first met the team, introduced myself, and informed them about my research. Even though it was raining, there were a number of South Asian families in attendance, with children running around in their New Westminster minor hockey association jerseys.

At the 2017 Hometown Hockey – Vancouver event, the broadcast team was invited to a private event in the Vancouver CBC building with Ron MacLean, but they had no formal role or station at the Hometown Hockey event. The *Hockey Night Punjabi* team was scheduled for Sunday, but I also attended Hometown Hockey on Saturday as a sort of “control” to see if there would be noticeably more South Asians in attendance on Sunday. I was surprised that there was no observable difference in demographics

between Saturday and Sunday. The most significant racialized group in attendance were East Asians. On Sunday, I explored the event with the broadcast team, gathering free merchandise and chatting about the progress of my project. I had expected more people to recognize the team in 2017 after the social media popularity that they experienced during the 2016 playoffs, but very few people recognized them. Again, there was no physical space for the broadcast team to station themselves.

At the Vancouver Vaisakhi festival the team had a station set up for fans to come find them and take photos. The Omni television booth was handing out popcorn and corporate head scarves. The Vancouver Canucks had a booth set up next to the Omni booth, but no players were sent to represent the organization. I watched as South Asian children took photos with the Canucks photo props and collected hockey cards. Many Sikh families came over to have their photos taken with the *Hockey Night Punjabi* team and have a brief chat.²¹

I witnessed the greatest integration of the *Hockey Night Punjabi* crew with “mainstream” hockey culture at the Hometown Hockey - Surrey event in December 2017. The Punjabi broadcast team was included on the official schedule with an autograph session and their presence and work were heavily promoted by the Hometown Hockey social media accounts. They did not receive an official autograph booth and were somewhat hidden away in an indoor space but they shot intermission segments with Randip Janda and Bhupinder Hundal on location during their own Saturday night broadcast, Hundal hosted the “hot stove” interview with Vancouver

²¹ I was not at the Surrey Vaisakhi festival the following weekend, but I was told by the broadcast team that so many South Asian fans wanted to take photos with the Canucks’ mascot, Fin, that they had to hide him for a break and provide him with some food and water. It was supposedly the first time that there seemed like no end in sight of fans wanting to meet the mascot. This is an example of the South Asian hockey fandom that exists in the Lower Mainland.

Canucks alumni Dave Babych and Kirk McLean (a job that has been reserved for Hometown hockey host, Tara Slone), and Singh, Hundal, and Janda were featured with Ron MacLean during the Sunday evening primetime broadcast. What was noticeably different from previous Hometown Hockey events was the diversity of fans who approached the broadcast team. Fans of every age, “race”, and gender approached the crew to take photos and ask them for autographs. They were recognized as local celebrities in their own right. Surrey easily drew the most diverse fan base of any Hometown Hockey event that I attended.

Unlike Burdsey's (2007) and Thangaraj's (2015) studies where they were able to complement their in-depth interviews with participant observations and “enjoy stories” through interaction (Burdsey, 2007, p. 6), my observations were strictly that—observational. Whenever I attended a hockey game or event I carried with me an uneasy feeling of not belonging. Despite the fact that I eat, sleep, and breathe the game, these environments, while not overtly unwelcoming to an Asian woman in her 30s without a child in tow, are not exactly welcoming either. I kept my hockey blogging credential in my figurative back pocket just in case anyone asked what I was doing there, because explaining my research about racism in hockey felt wrong. Wrong in the sense that it would likely add to my outsider status or be outright dismissed as an attempt to stir up trouble.

My own apprehension around discussing the topic of my research and moving about in these spaces further animates the power of “Canadiansplaining” as a tool of dismissal and abjection. “We learn about materiality from such dismissals” (Sara Ahmed, 2017b, p. 6) and these experiences generate “sweaty concepts” (p. 12). Sweaty concepts can be explained as, “one that comes out of a description of a body that is not at home in the world . . . Sweat is bodily; we might sweat more during more strenuous

and muscular activity. A sweaty concept might come out of a bodily experience that is trying” (Sara Ahmed, 2017b, p. 13). Therefore, we sweat because we are uncomfortable and/or because we are putting effort into something that resists us. Hence, the struggle to name racism that developed during interviews was also evident in the participant observation portion. I also reflected that if I were a single male, without a child, carrying a camera, attending some of these events, I would probably draw a different kind of (suspicious) attention; however, white men can generally move in and out of hockey spaces largely without question and unnoticed.

Positionality and Reflexivity

Understanding positionality and reflexivity during the research process is vital because all scholarship is partial. My positioning in this study was interesting at times because of the racial mismatch with my participants. As a Chinese woman, the obvious question should be: Why not study Chinese/East Asian experiences in hockey? (One participant did ask me this question before our interview.) The practical answer is that the *Hockey Night Punjabi* broadcast offers a unique entry point to examine issues of citizenship, “race,” multiculturalism, and mythology—an entry point that does not exist for Chinese Canadians at this point in time. However, religion did play an important role in the imagination of this project because, in the Lower Mainland especially, the Sikh religion creates an additional point of tension that does not exist with Chinese Canadians because many have adopted Christianity, are atheist, or their beliefs are not as visibly identifiable in public spaces. Ultimately, this specific tension was observed to be less crucial than imagined; it is a tension that is essentially externally imposed and (re)produced.

I do believe that a study of East Asian experiences is necessary and would likely result in different data; but, on a more personal level, growing up in North Delta, I had more South Asian friends through grade school than I did Chinese/East Asian friends. My “Asian-ness” never really resonated with me until my undergraduate studies at the University of British Columbia, pejoratively referred to as “UBC: University of a Billion Chinese.” And, as the introduction alludes to, working at Sportchek in Strawberry Hill meant I had many interactions with South Asian customers centred around hockey participation (more on the geographic significance of Surrey and Strawberry Hill in the following section). Therefore, even though I am not a *member* of the South Asian community, I have been *part* of the South Asian community for my entire life.

There is an assumption that ethnic matching encourages a richer understanding of the research data along with an assumed interest in the welfare of the community (Ashworth as cited in Gunaratnam, 2003), but this assumption presumes that empathy across racial lines is somehow incompatible or disingenuous, or that sameness is required for understanding. And, as Bhavnani (1993) suggests, ethnic matching fails to account for relations such as class, ethnicity, and religion. For example, the limitation of conducting interviews only in English would not have been overcome had I chosen to research East Asian participants. The “distance and estrangement between the researcher and the research participant” (Gunaratnam, 2003, p. 80), often anticipated as a barrier to be overcome, can exist just as readily for racially similar researchers and participants.

Carrington (2008) notes that, generally, literature has focused on dilemmas that exist for *white* social scientists in researching so-called non-white cultures, groups and communities, thus presuming “race” to be a defining marker of difference instead of class, gender, and/or region. Carrington contends that racialized researchers may, in

fact, be able to produce “more complex accounts of how racism intersects with class, gender, and sexuality” (p. 428). I found that during interviews, participants and I often bonded over similar experiences such as challenges to our belonging, lamenting over having not learned our “mother tongue” better as children, the inability of white Canadians to pronounce our names, or discussing immigrant frugality and the emphasis on education. Hence, even though our experiences as racialized Canadians were not identical, they were similar enough to situate a common understanding of hockey and Canada. I found that the racial mismatching created opportunities for nuance that may not have been afforded to a South Asian “insider” because participants were willing to explain certain experiences/histories to me in detail and there was less of a fear that we had common personal connections.

I did, however, perceive that my unknown place in hockey culture created a (small) barrier for many participants. Almost everyone asked at some point during our interview if I play, or have ever played, hockey. Alternatively, if I mentioned in passing where I play women’s hockey they would often respond with, “Oh, so you know.” This was a telling statement because it signaled an additional level of comfort and honesty in our discussions. Participants would suddenly use more hockey lingo and get into the specifics of the game knowing that they did not have to explain these things to me. There was, ironically, an underlying assumption that an Asian woman would not have participated in ice hockey. Consequently, we must acknowledge that in this context, the identity of “hockey player” counts for a lot in the web of intersectionality. As a unique subculture, the norms set by hockey culture work to police who can and cannot access insider knowledge, and if I were marked as an outsider with nothing but inquisitiveness about racism in hockey, there may have been suspicions about the intent behind my

research. Yet, as a fellow hockey player, tensions seemed to have been eased with an assumption that there is a shared understanding of the value that the game offers.

Recruitment

I started by going through local rosters for various hockey teams to identify potential participants. I put out an open call to local associations through Twitter and, if potential participants had a public Twitter account, I invited them to participate and contact me via email. Six participants were recruited via Twitter. The majority of participants were contacted through mutual contacts (16) or coaches/associations (3). I also posted an open call for participants on The Hockey Community discussion boards and sent out an e-blast to the Burnaby 8 Rinks Adult Safe Hockey League (ASHL), all of which resulted in only one interview. I had originally envisioned the recruitment process to be a snowball sampling, with one participant offering the name of another potential participant. This happened on six occasions where I was successfully referred to another participant; however, because most of the participants never played with other South Asians, my sampling resulted in a very fragmented recruiting process. In total, 26 interviews were conducted between February 2016 and January 2017: five with members from the *Hockey Night Punjabi* broadcast, eight with hockey parents, and 14 with players, almost half of whom also have coached or currently coach (there was an overlap between hockey players and parents). Twenty-six interviews were deemed “sufficient” for this project because there were decreasing amounts of “new data” and individual narratives demonstrated repeated patterns of experience.

The participants in this study fit the broadest interpretation of “South Asian,” which ranges from ties with continental India to the British West Indies. Admittedly, the attempt to be inclusive has its drawbacks. In Brettell and Reed-Danahay's (2011)

research with Indian American immigrants, the term South Asian was explained to be “a meaningless term used only by geographers. There is no unification in South Asia that we can relate to” (p. 61). Therefore, even though the group is collectively referred to as “South Asian,” participants were asked to self-identify in racial and ethnic terms.

All of the participants were given pseudonyms to protect their confidentiality. *Hockey Night Punjabi* representatives were not given pseudonyms if they were quoted in direct reference to the show; however, if they were quoted in a context outside the broadcast, they have been identified simply as a show representative to provide some confidentiality to their remarks.

Geographic Upbringing and Self-Identification

Pseudonym	Age	Gender	Grew Up	Self-Identification
Ryan	16	M	Lower Mainland	Canadian; Indian
Prav	20	M	Lower Mainland	Canadian; Indian
Shane	20	M	Lower Mainland	Canadian; Indian
Sunny	20	M	Lower Mainland	East Indian
Billy	20	M	Lower Mainland	East Indian
Suki	21	W	Lower Mainland	Canadian; Indian
Kiran	22	W	Lower Mainland	Canadian; Punjabi; Sikh
Amit	24	W	Lower Mainland	Mainly Fijian
Gurp	25	M	Lower Mainland	Brown
Brian	25	M	British Columbia	Hockey player; East Indian
Sonia	26	W	Lower Mainland	Indian; South Asian; Punjabi
Dev	31	M	Lower Mainland	East Indian
Gary	39	M	British Columbia	Canadian; East Indian
Sara	Early 40s	W	British Columbia	Canadian; South Asian; Indo-Canadian
Randy	43	M	Lower Mainland	East Indian
Kevin	46	M	Lower Mainland	Canadian; Sikh; Punjabi
Greg	47	M	United Kingdom	Human being
Raj	50	M	British Columbia	East Indian; Indian
Harry	52	M	Lower Mainland	N/A
Kari	56	W	India	
Kulbir	50s	M	India	Canadian; Punjabi; Indo-Canadian

There was no discernible “South Asian hockey community” observed during this project. Creese and Frisby (2011) point out, “Racialized notions of community can only be sustained from outside” (p. 94); therefore, even though it may appear that there is a collective identity/experience to non-South Asians, the participants in this study did not make such claims. Some participants expressed a respect or assumed level of camaraderie with other South Asian players on the ice, but these connections did not

necessarily result in meaningful relationships. It is also vital to unpack the role that the city of Surrey plays in the perception of a South Asian community in the Lower Mainland and why associations such as Surrey Minor Hockey give the illusion of a diversity in hockey that does not necessarily scale upwards.

The Space of Surrey

The location of this study is significant in the interpretation of the data for two reasons. First, the demographics of the Lower Mainland of British Columbia offer access to a large South Asian population. To illustrate, as of 2013, the City of Surrey was home to over 70,000 self-identified Indian households (Statistics Canada, 2013) and almost 94,000 Punjabi speakers (Statistics Canada, 2012). Second, the racialization of Surrey as a space within the Lower Mainland, contributes to a specific perception about South Asians. As the fastest growing city in the Lower Mainland, the development of Surrey “has fueled intense resentment and hostility among those white residents who claim that the landscape belongs to them” (G.S. Johal, 2007, p. 179). Johal (2007) explains:

The symbolic and material borders that map the landscapes of Surrey into zones of respectability and degeneracy are constantly being negotiated, adhered to, and contested by those who live in Surrey. Residents of Surrey who have immigrated from, or who are descendants of those who have immigrated from regions outside Europe are constantly faced with the hegemony of a “bourgeois subjectivity” as a mechanism for gaining respectability. They also face the challenge of claiming space for their own purposes. (p. 182)

The Sikh community in the Lower Mainland is the largest non-Christian religious group (Nayar, 2012), and Surrey/North Delta was home to the first Sikh temple (gurdwara) in the area. With approximately 200 Sikh families living in the Surrey-Delta area during the 1970s, an old house was converted into a gurdwara in 1975. Two years later a fire demolished the temple in North Delta and local residents forced the temple to be rebuilt in what was then an undeveloped part of Surrey known as Strawberry Hill (Nayar, 2012).

Thus, the perceived ethnic enclave in the current Strawberry Hill and Newton areas of Surrey “was not voluntary but was rather a result of societal pressures to live apart from the mainstream” (Nayar, 2012, p .224). Surrey has been produced in Vancouver’s white imagination as a working-class suburb; hence, the fight over how Surrey develops offers a microcosm of broader racial tensions.

The way that both North Delta and Surrey relegated the gurdwara to a space deemed undesirable is telling:

The space of the Gurdwara was often depicted as a congregation point for bodies that were incapable of the self-discipline necessary to gain the respect of Canadians. Whether the vision was of parading crowds or of a vice den, the space was deemed incompatible with the normal functions of the city. (G.S. Johal, 2007, p. 200)

The area of Strawberry Hill used to be home to early Japanese settlers who used the land to farm fruit and raise poultry. They chose to live on the outskirts of Vancouver where they could avoid discrimination and establish their own farms. This land was seized from these Japanese families during the Second World War. Consequently, when we look at the history of racial discrimination in Surrey/Vancouver, we witness a pattern of dismissal that results in entrepreneurial endeavours and what appear to be self-segregated spaces.

Moreover, as Thobani (2007) impresses upon on us the role that racialized Canadians play in the subjugation of the Indigenous peoples, the area of Surrey sits on Indigenous land belonging to the Kwantlen and Semiahmoo First Nations. As a result, the fight to create a “respectable” Surrey devoid of colour ignores “the fact that bodies of colour existed when the history of Surrey began,” which “helps disrupt the myth that the migration of bodies of colour to Surrey is something new” (G.S. Johal, 2007, p. 186). The utopic vision of Vancouver as “multiculturalism done right” is perhaps most useful in

elucidating what multiculturalism actually hides, which is a rich history of racialized contributions that have been erased to form a sense of unity under British colonization.

Surrey became a recurring theme throughout the qualitative interviews. Participants would reflect on what it was like to play sports against Surrey teams and be judged or taunted by other South Asians. They would refer to Surrey as an example of the diversity to come or reference “Surrey” as a main source of racism against the South Asian community because of the class stigma and crime associated with the area. Therefore, in order to understand discrimination in Vancouver as it relates to South Asians, it is imperative to understand the centrality of Surrey as both a physical and imagined space.

The Interview Schedule and Data Analysis

Semi-structured interviews were arranged for public locations and at the participants' convenience. They lasted anywhere from 30 – 90 minutes, largely dependent on how much detail each participant was willing to provide about their experiences and how many experiences they wanted to share. Each interview began by going over the consent form and asking if the participant(s) had any questions before we began. I then started by asking participants to introduce themselves and we would have a general discussion about their interest in hockey to ease the participant into more specific questions. Interviews were tape recorded and later transcribed. Participants had the option to review their transcripts but none obliged. They were also informed that they could skip questions, return to questions, and/or retract statements/comments at any time during or after the interview.

All but five of the interviews were conducted one on one. Suki and Kulbir chose to be interviewed together as father and daughter, and Shane, Prav, and Ryan also

chose to be interviewed as a small group. It was definitely more difficult to elicit individualized responses in a group setting; however, this is how these participants felt most comfortable discussing the subject matter. This group dynamic was also factored into the weight that I gave some of the responses, for example, if a participant merely stated that they agreed with a previous person's answer.

I transcribed all of the interviews using Google's Transcribe application. I then used Nvivo to help organize my inductive coding into nine emergent themes: difference, gatekeeping, hate speech/chirping, *Hockey Night in Canada/Punjabi*, hockey as a unifier, hurdles, joking about race, reluctance to name racism, and self-identification. The categories of "difference" and "hurdles" provided the largest data sets with 113 and 106 references from 20 and 21 different participants respectively. I used the interview guide in Appendix B and added follow-up/probe questions where appropriate or altered the questions where appropriate for hockey parents and broadcasters.

Appendix B: Sample Interview Guide

1. Tell me a bit about yourself.
2. Do you have a favourite hockey team/player?
3. How did you get involved in hockey?
4. Tell me about your family's relationship with hockey.
5. What does hockey mean to you?
6. How do you ethnically/racially identify?
7. What is it like to be a [South Asian] person in hockey?
8. Why do you think South Asians have been drawn to hockey?
9. Have you ever felt unwelcome while participating in hockey? Have you experienced any discrimination?
10. Have you ever felt like parts of hockey culture conflict with your [South Asian] identity?
11. What hurdles do you think exist for South Asians to get involved in hockey and stay in it long term?
12. Would you say there is a sense of community among South Asian players?
13. How important do you think hockey is to being Canadian?
14. Do you feel like hockey has helped you integrate into Canadian society? In what ways?
15. Would you say that hockey reflects Canada's multicultural identity? Explain.
16. Are you familiar with the Hockey Night Punjabi broadcast? What are your thoughts about the show?

Appendix C: Participant Background

Pseudonym	Age	Level	Player	Coach	Hockey Parent	Years Involved
Ryan	16	Competitive	X			7
Shane	20	Competitive	X			8
Sunny	20	Elite	X	X		15
Billy	20	Elite	X	X		16
Suki	21	Elite	X	X		16
Kiran	22	Elite	X	X		13
Amit	24	Recreational	X	X		10+
Gurp	25	Recreational	X			10
Brian	25	Elite	X	X		20
Sonia	26	Elite	X			9
Dev	31	Recreational	X			6
Gary	39	Recreational	X			21
Sara	40s	Recreational			X	1
Randy	43	Competitive			X	4

Pseudonym	Age	Level	Player	Coach	Hockey Parent	Years Involved
Kevin	46	Competitive			X	7
Greg	47	Competitive	X		X	9
Raj	50	Elite	X	X	X	Undisclosed
Harry	52	N/A	X	X	X	Undisclosed
Kari	56	Competitive			X	9
Kulbir	50's	Elite		X	X	17

Elite designation includes: professional, semi-professional, minor pro (AHL, Europe, ECHL, UHL, CHL, WPHL), NCAA Division 1, Major Junior (QMJHL, OHL, WHL, USHL); Women's (or Girls) AAA, AA, CIS, NCAA.

Competitive designation includes: Rep AAA, AA, or A.

Recreational designation includes: House leagues or introductory organized hockey.

Appendix D: British Columbia Competitive Hockey Structure

Category	Age	Alternative Name	Notes
Hockey 1 & 2	5-6	Initiation/Mini Mite	
Hockey 3 & 4	7-8	Novice/Mite	
Atom	9-10	Squirt	Start of rep system for top players AAA, AA, A, or B rep teams
Peewee	11-12		
Bantam	13-14		Second year bantam players are eligible for Major Junior drafts.
Midget	15-17	Minor Midget	
Major Midget	15-17	Midget AAA	
Juvenile	18-20		
Junior B	16-20	Junior AA/Tier III	Considered feeder system for Junior A and sometimes for Major Junior Leagues (WHL, OHL, QMJHL).
Junior A	16-20	Junior AAA/Tier II	One level below CHL. Also feeds American and Canadian university systems.
Major Junior	N/A	Tier I	Highest level of junior hockey: WHL, OHL, QMJHL. Most popular route for those attempting to make the NHL.

Appendix E: Ethics Approval



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Annual Renewal Approval Study Title: Changing on the Fly: Situating multiculturalism, citizenship, and hockey through the voices of

Study Number: 2015s0609 South Asian Canadians

Annual Renewal Date: 2017 Feb. 08 **Principal Investigator:** Courtney Szto **SFU Position:** Graduate Student

SFU Collaborator: n/a **External Collaborator:** n/a **Research Personnel:** n/a **Project Leader:** n/a

Funding Source: SSHRC **Grant Title:** Graduate student scholarship

Expiry Date: 2018 Feb. 08 **Supervisor:** Rick Gruneau **Faculty/Department:** Communication

Funding Source: Sport Canada Sport Participation Research Initiative **Grant Title:** n/a

Funding Source: Dr. Hari Sharma Foundation for South Asian Advancement **Grant Title:** Graduate Student Scholarship

Funding Source: Simons Foundation **Grant Title:** Graduate Student Scholarship

Document(s) Approved in this Application:

Annual Renewal Report

The approval for this study expires on the **Expiry Date**. **Failure to submit an annual renewal form will lead to your study being suspended and potentially terminated.** If you intend to continue to collect data past the term of approval, you must submit an annual renewal form at least 4 weeks before the expiry date.

This letter is your official Annual Renewal Approval documentation for this project. Please keep this document for reference purposes.

The annual renewal for this study been approved by an authorized delegated reviewer.

Appendix F: Information Letter

Information Letter

My name is Courtney Szto and I am a PhD student in the School of Communication at Simon Fraser University. I am conducting a research study on South Asian experiences in ice hockey and would appreciate your participation in this ground breaking study. The purpose of this study is to (1) amplify a group of voices that are growing in the hockey community, and (2) inform future sport policy decisions on issues of access, inclusion, and diversity.

This is an opportunity for you to share your stories and thoughts about:

- What it is like to be a “visible minority” in Canada’s game?
- What does hockey mean to you?
- How important is hockey is to being “Canadian”?

Participation in this study is completely voluntary and you may refuse participation or withdraw from the study at any time without any consequences. Interviews will be tape-recorded and should last between 60-90 minutes. All interview answers will stay confidential.

Those who decide to participate in an interview will receive a \$25 gift card to either Sportchek or The Hockey Shop (depending on your preference).

The risks associated with this particular study are minimal. If, at any time, you are made to feel uncomfortable the interview can be stopped and/or questions can be skipped.

A summary of the findings will be provided to you once this study is completed.

You will find a consent form attached with more details about this study and your role as a participant.

If you would like to participate in this study please contact me at XXXX or (XXX) XXX-XXXX to set up an interview time and date. Please feel free to contact me, or my supervisor, Dr. Richard Gruneau (XXXX), (XXX) XXX-XXXX, with any questions or concerns you may have about participating in this study.

Thank you very much for your consideration. I look forward to your reply.

Courtney Szto

Appendix G: General Consent Form

Title of Study: Changing on the Fly: Situating multiculturalism, citizenship, and hockey through the voices of South Asian Canadians

Principal Investigator: Courtney Szto, PhD Candidate, School of Communication, Simon Fraser University (XXXX), (XXX) XXX-XXXX.

Supervisor: Dr. Richard Gruneau, School of Communication, Simon Fraser University. (XXXX), (XXX) XXX-XXXX.

Purpose of Study: I am doing a research study about South Asian experiences in Canadian ice hockey. The purpose of this study is to better understand issues of race, multiculturalism, citizenship, and sport.

Invitation: You are being invited to take part in this research study because of your hockey background. Your participation is by choice. You have the right to refuse participation in this study at any time.

Yes, I want to participate: An interview date, time, and place will be arranged that is convenient to you. The interview will take approximately 60-90 minutes. You will be asked about your experiences in and around the sport of hockey. The interview will be tape-recorded. You can read your interview answers whenever you like. If you choose to participate, you will receive a \$25 gift card to either Sportchek or The Hockey Shop (based on your preference) as a “thank you” for your time.

If you decide to withdraw from the study at any time, you may do so without any negative consequences.

No, I don't want to participate: You may choose not to participate in this study at any time without giving any reasons. Any information collected during partial participation will be destroyed.

Potential Risks: The risks associated with this study are minimal; still, there are always risks associated with any research study. If, at any time, you feel uncomfortable the interview can be stopped or questions can be skipped.

Potential Benefits: There are no immediate benefits to you for your participation. But, this is a chance to have your story included in Canada's hockey history. Your experiences and ideas may be used to help more people play hockey or change the way that hockey works.

Privacy: Your participation in this study will be kept secret. I will not release any information that identifies your participation without your consent unless required by law. All documents will be identified only by code number and kept in a locked filing cabinet. Participants will not be identified by name in any reports or the completed study. Tape recordings will be deleted once they have been typed on a computer.

Study Results: A graduate thesis will be written at the end of this study. The information you share may also be published in books, academic journals, newspapers, blogs, and/or presented at conferences. You will receive a short report at the end of this study. You may also request a full copy of the thesis.

Who is funding this study? This study is being funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC), Sport Canada, the Dr. Hari Sharma Foundation for South Asian Advancement, and the Simons Foundation.

Have a question or concern? If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant and/or your experiences while participating in this study, you may contact Dr. Jeffrey Toward, Director, Office of Research Ethics (XXXX) or XXX-XXX-XXXX.

Consent and Signature: You are in control of your participation in this study. You have the right to not participate. If you decide to participate, you can pull out of the study at any time without giving a reason and without any negative consequences.

Signing below means that you have received a copy of this consent form to keep for yourself, and that you consent to participate in this study.

I consent to an interview.

I consent to having my interview tape-recorded.

Name

Participant Signature

Date