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North American Indigenous Soccer:  
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A thesis submitted in satisfaction  
of the requirements for the degree Master of Arts  
in American Indian Studies

by

Temryss MacLean Lane

2016



## ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

North American Indigenous Soccer:  
Visibility, Intergenerational Healing & Schelangen in Global Football

by

Temryss MacLean Lane

Master of Arts in American Indian Studies

University of California, Los Angeles, 2016

Professor David Delgado Shorter, Chair

This study addresses the relationship between intergenerational trauma of ongoing United States and Canadian colonialism as it impacts Native American and Aboriginal First Nations Peoples and ways global football contributes practices of intergenerational healing. I argue that Indigenous soccer operates as a mechanism of decolonization and re-membering for Indigenous Peoples who inherit colonial traumas. Indigenous soccer directly challenges hegemonic sports culture as typically marked by Indian mascotry and Native invisibility. While cultural historians have shown how American sports are used as colonial technologies of assimilation, violent gendering, labor and militarism, the story of Indigenous soccer has not been studied. As a Lummi footballer, I utilize Native voices from Coast Salish Tribes of Washington State and British Columbia, Mohawk and Cree First Nations Canada, Southwest tribes from New Mexico Pueblos

and Navajo Nation, and Kiowa Territories in Oklahoma to illustrate Indigenous soccer identities and schelangen, or way of life in Lummi. As soccer in North America challenges hegemonic ideologies of nationalism, instrumental Indigenous footballers are demanding visibility, like the late Canadian Hall of Fame First Nations Aboriginal footballer Snuneymuxw Harry Xulsimalt Manson and U.S. World Cup participant Kiowa Native Chris Bau Daigh Wondolowski. Using the theoretical framework of Tulalip scholar Stephanie Fryberg's "theory of invisibility," I tell and analyze Indigenous soccer stories as evidence that Indigenous visibility, in soccer or otherwise, provides intergenerational healing. I begin to fill the gap in the sports culture and U.S.-Canada colonialism discourse, with the goal of making Indigenous soccer locally accessible as an instrument of decolonial healing for generations of Indigenous North American Peoples.

The thesis of Temryss MacLean Lane is approved.

Matt Hooley

Duane Champagne

Mishuana Goeman

David D. Shorter, Committee Chair

University California, Los Angeles

2016

## Introduction:

“What lessons would athletics or sport help me relate to more of a broader world; in so many ways, I won my gold medal simply trying to heal a broken soul. My dad told me I had a broken soul. It takes a dream to heal broken souls.” ~Oglala Lakota Gold Medal Olympian Billy Mills

In Lummi, we name our way of life, “schelangen.”<sup>1</sup> Our Lummi way of life is experienced through our stories and identity rooted in reciprocity, relationships and generations of sovereign sustainability. Schelangen means defending our land and water where are our ancient ones at Xwe'chieXen, Cherry Point, lived and will rest protected.<sup>2</sup> In honor of my Lummi ancestors I use the word “schelangen,” in place of “way of life” throughout this essay on North American Indigenous soccer in order to remember and make visible our ancestral language. I do not suggest the Lummi “term schelangen” is the same “way of life” for other Indigenous Peoples, rather as a Lummi scholar, I use this term with respect to signify how Indigenous practices represent forms of identity. The world’s game of football, or soccer, for many North American Indigenous communities is a way of life, or schelangen, that goes unrecognized and invisible. By organizing Native stories from the late nineteenth century into the twenty-first century, I examine how soccer provides intergenerational healing for North American Indigenous

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<sup>1</sup> *Schelangen* translates to “way of life” in my Native Lummi language, *Xwe'lemi Chosen*, a North Straits Salish dialect. *Schelangen* is everything we are as Lummi people in relationship to our ancestral land, sea, rivers and mountains. Lummi people are “salmon people” and fisher people. Our *schelangen* is central to the identity of *Laq'te'mish*, or “survivors of the great flood” and the original name for “Lummi.” I use “schelangen” in a good way, at times in place of “way of life.”

<sup>2</sup> While writing my thesis, Lummi Nation invoked our 1855 Point Elliott Treaty rights that ultimately denied the SSA Marine Coal Terminal proposal Read more here: <http://www.bellinghamherald.com/news/local/article76545117.html#storylink=cpy>, accessed June 1, 2016.

Peoples by re-membering communities and refiguring identity, while situating Native American and First Nations People in visibility on the global stage of football.<sup>3</sup> I borrow Kenyan poet and literary scholar Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o’s concept of “re-membering” in partnership with Lakota scholar Philip Deloria’s idea of cultural “refigurings” to demonstrate the power of storied memory, sense of collective identity through ceremonial gatherings of soccer.<sup>4</sup>

The stories we tell ourselves build upon the stories we inherit in order to process our experiences and make sense of life. Tonawanda Band of Seneca gender studies scholar Mishuana Goeman writes, “stories create the relationship that have made the communities strong even through numerous atrocities and injustices.”<sup>5</sup> Goeman uses (re)mapping, a method of decolonizing that centers Native women’s writing as evidence to (re)map space and place in Native realities. Similarly, I consider how the visibility of Native American women in sport can challenge, as Goeman writes, “the gendered colonial constructions of space and place in order to address regimes of power that have positioned Native women as insignificant.” If significance implies importance, then positioning Indigenous soccer stories of Native Peoples, both men and women, is crucial to breaking down the regimes of power and gendered colonial constructs.

Native women are the keepers of stories, teachers of ancestral wisdoms, the connection to land, and the bearers of shélangen. The lack of recognized Lummi female sports accomplishments is not because they do not exist but that they exist under the authority of

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<sup>3</sup> Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o, *Something Torn and New: African Renaissance* (New York: Basic Civitas Books, 2009), 5; Philip J. Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2004), 115.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> Mishuana Goeman, *Mark My Words: Native Women Mapping Our Nations* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013), 12.



patriarchal sport culture. American sports culture, at its core, assumes structures of hegemonic masculinity in order to prioritize white, middle-class, heterosexual superiority. The Native American and Native female athlete has become visibly insignificant and therefore invisible in American sports culture. (Re)mapping or refiguring the sports space by positioning Native Americans women and girls as relevant and important requires a position of visibility, also recognized as “mass media.”

Tulalip scholar Stephanie Fryberg et. al, contributes “the theory of invisibility” as method to understand the media’s role in constructions of identity through hegemonic culture. According to this theory, when a group is underrepresented in the media, members of that group are deprived of messages or strategies for how to be a person, or how to act and behave.<sup>6</sup> Refiguring visual real and accurate perceptions of Native American identity can contribute to the improvement of Native American lives. Ideologies of Native Americans in relationship to sport are disproportionately represented by Indian mascots, symbols of murdered and exterminated Indian bodies performed for entertainment. To dispel this violence, new perceptions of current American Indian identities, that tie people to place and combine regalia, round drums, and soccer as cultural practice, for example, desperately need to penetrate global visibilities in order to dispel stereotypes and generate more pathways to education, sports, and the wider world of human privilege. The American sports space is uniquely positioned to challenge the barriers of violence and Indigenous isolations through the power of global media. Sports carry a unique real-time power because of the tangibility of human potential as determined by the reward and

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<sup>6</sup> Peter A. Leavitt, Rebecca Covarrubias, Yvonne A. Perez, Stephanie A. Fryberg, “‘Frozen in Time’: The Impact of Native American Media Representations on Identity and Self-Understanding,” *Journal of Social Issues*, 71:1 (March 2015), 40.

the woes of unpredictable outcomes. Adoring sports fanatics tune-in and open their hearts and minds to a “seeing is believing” mentality that creates a portal for human connection and new information. For this reason seeing Native Americans and First Nations Peoples represented in sport is crucial to penetrate visible global realities and represent Indigenous Peoples in a good way. Elite soccer in particular, gains global viewership that sparks attention for off-the-field accolades that spark socio-political-economic conversations. Indigenous visibility in soccer draws attention to important issues of sovereignty and protection of schelangen. I embrace Indigenous soccer stories as a method of understanding Indigenous ways of life and tool of Indigenous navigation in colonial space. The goal of my thesis, is to understand how Indigenous soccer as a way of life challenges invisibility and battles intergenerational trauma by providing a healing, decolonial practice.

The love I hold for my Native family and community inspires the investigative pursuit of schelangen at the intersection of Native identity and the ceremony of soccer. For Native Peoples personal and community healing often happens in ceremony. I know soccer as a healing practice, a ceremony of healing, and a way of navigating life as a Lummi woman. By telling contemporary stories of North American Indigenous soccer, I challenge damaging racial and gendered conceptions of Native American and First Nations Peoples through the power and visibility of global soccer. Experiential visibilities, like Indigenous soccer, provides healing for survivors of genocide who continually defend schelangen and violent erasure. Native youth deserve opportunities to see, dream, and experience practices of wellness that open pathways to higher education. For me, the privilege of higher education includes Indigenous knowledge systems, academia, and world cultural exploration. North American Indigenous soccer

scholarship nears absence with minimal mentions of ancient football games. I begin to fill a scholarly lacuna surrounding North American Indigenous Peoples' real-time relationship with soccer and identity, asking the following questions: where are Native Americans and First Nations People visible in soccer culture? What relationships exist between Indigenous North Americans and global football? How does Indigenous soccer participation contribute to Native visibility and intergenerational healing?<sup>7</sup>

This paper serves as a nexus between Native Americans and First Nations Aboriginals and global football, or soccer. I intend to identify community remembrance within the healing practice of Indigenous soccer. Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o utilizes the term "re-membering" to demonstrate the power of memory identity and Native language in his masterful work, *Something Torn and New: An African Renaissance*. He describes the strategic colonial attack of Indigenous naming systems that carry "memories of clan, lineage and place," that creates the "inducement of amnesia among the colonized."<sup>8</sup> In his diligent attempt to decolonize modernity, Ngũgĩ writes, "no language has a monopoly as keeper of memory, and that all memories

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<sup>7</sup> "Indigenous Foundations," University of British Columbia, posted 2009, <http://indigenousfoundations.arts.ubc.ca/home/identity/terminology.html#indigenous>, accessed July 26, 2016. I utilize the terms "Native" and "Indigenous" interchangeably throughout this thesis to represent the Original Peoples of specific lands who carry ancestral origin stories of those lands that mark relationships since time immemorial that supersedes world-western histories. I focus on Aboriginal First Nations Peoples of Canada and Native Americans of the United States throughout this thesis, unifying both as Indigenous and/or Native North Americans. University of British Columbia's *Indigenous Foundations* writes, "in the UN, 'Indigenous' is used to refer broadly to peoples of long settlement and connection to specific lands who have been adversely affected by incursions by industrial economies, displacement, and settlement of their traditional territories by others." Similarly, "'Native' is a general term that refers to a person or thing that has originated from a particular place." I choose to capitalize "Peoples," "Native," "Indian," and "Indigenous" as a marker acknowledgement of Indigenous importance against colonial "white" domination.

<sup>8</sup> Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, *Something Torn and New*, 12.

contribute to the meeting point of human victory.”<sup>9</sup> Chickasaw Scholar Jodi Byrd adds to this victory in her book *Transit of the Empire: Indigenous Critiques on Colonialism*, “we are long-memoried peoples, and we remember what happened the last time the world was flat.”<sup>10</sup> Sharp colonial critique from both scholars suggests the importance of memory and re-membering that uphold Indigenous ways of life.

With this in mind, I use rhetoric to re-member and return “football” to its origin, reclaiming the name from the patriarchy of American football, a sport minimally centered around actually playing with your feet. I define Indigenous soccer and Indigenous football as a cultural adaptation of the modern game of global football or soccer. This means the game is structured with the same objectives as global football yet it evolves with time in respect to the diversity of geographic Indigenous spaces (soccer fields, pitches, streets) and cultures. “Rez ball,” is an adaptation of the modern American game of basketball that possesses the same rules and laws as basketball but takes place on Indian reservations and other Indigenous-colonial spaces across the U.S. and Canada. Rez ball, like Indigenous soccer, is rooted in family and clan rivalries, flexible to the confines of space and adaptable to equipment (or lack thereof). This interpretation of Indigenous soccer in North America recognizes the relationship between both Native American and First Nations People with soccer, and soccer’s relationship with the colonizer. Interchanging soccer with global football and referring to soccer players as “footballers” is important to situate Indigenous soccer in the global sports discourse. I will use “American football” to describe the

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<sup>9</sup> Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o, *Something Torn and New*, 132.

<sup>10</sup> Jodi A. Byrd, *The Transit of Empire: Indigenous Critiques of Colonialism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), xiv.

throwing version of the American game, otherwise “football” means global soccer throughout this paper.

My motivation to understand football’s healing potential for Native Peoples is inspired by personal and shared exhaustion from the grief of intergenerational trauma. Importantly, I do not claim that Indigenous football can cure intergenerational trauma of settler colonialism or otherwise; rather, I see soccer as an opportunity to find balance and wellness as a healing practice. Native stories and voices are muffled underneath the injustice of American virtues of greed built upon genocide and structured as a settler colonial project. Settler colonial projects are geared toward Native erasure and invisibility. Scholar Patrick Wolfe argues settler colonialism is a structure, not an event, motivated primarily by settler’s acquisitions of Indigenous land and resources.<sup>11</sup> This structure forms North American settler society, working diligently, consciously and ignorantly, to eliminate Native Peoples while dismembering Indigenous ways of life. I show how Indigenous soccer re-members schelangen by physically gathering people together, empowering Indigenous identities through visibility and reconnection of Native life to Indigenous land. I hold a sacred obligation to the next generations to tell Indigenous soccer stories that create visibility and form pathways to higher education. By addressing traumatic experiences of settler colonialism, via assimilation and invisibility, stories of resistance and resilience are revealed through Native sports identities. Importantly, I locate Indigenous football on the periphery of globalization by contributing non-Eurocentric Native voices to football’s

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<sup>11</sup> Patrick Wolfe, “Settler colonialism and the elimination of the native,” *Journal of Genocide Research*, 8:4 (December 2006), 401.

“global history.”<sup>12</sup> As rich contributions to the global game, these voices serve as direct counterpoints to colonial conceptions of “world history,” “American exceptionalism,” and settler nationalisms that excludes Indigenous Peoples.<sup>13</sup>

Integrating languages of connection and healthy practice for North American Indigenous Peoples begins to heal wounds of genocide and assimilation. In order to understand historical trauma as a result of genocide, I look to Historian Benjamin Madley. Madley identifies “the near-annihilation of North America’s Indigenous people” as the “North American population cataclysm.”<sup>14</sup> The church and state policies of tribal dis-memberment of North American Indigenous Peoples violently removed Native People from their ancestral homelands in order to access and claim the land. Madley recognizes the crucial need for tribally specific investigations of genocide but best summarizes colonial inflictions of U.S. historic trauma on Native Americans by explaining settler motivations to obtain land:

Along with wars, real estate transactions of often questionable validity, the making and breaking of treaties, forced removal, and confinement to reservation, and the 1887 Dawes Allotment Act, which reduced federally recognized Native American landholding by about 90,000,000 acres, the American Indian population cataclysm played a central role in the clearing of hundreds of millions of acres for colonization.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Roland Robertson and Richard Giulianotti, *Globalization and Football* (London: Sage Publications, 2009), 1.

<sup>13</sup> Robertson and Giulianotti, *Globalization and Football*, 1.; Andrei S. Markovits and Steven L. Hellerman, *Offsides: Soccer & American Exceptionalism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 6.

<sup>14</sup> Benjamin Madley, “Reexamining the American Genocide Debate: Meaning, Historiography, and New Methods,” *The American Historical Review*, 120:1 (February 2015), 99.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

The foundation of the United States is built on the genocide and removal of Native Peoples, hidden from Western consciousness underneath U.S. exceptionalist ideals of individuality and constitutional rights of freedom. Paradoxically, Indigenous world conceptions and ways of life recognize human existence rooted in reciprocity, relationality, and respect to the land and one-another. The historical and intergenerational trauma lives in the violence of separation from land and the dismemberment of Native People from tribal life ways.

Many Indigenous scholars cite the need for a deeper investigation and response into unresolved grief and trauma of Indigenous communities. Interventions by Native scholars like Eduardo Duran, Lakota Maria Brave Yellow Horse, Peter Menzies, and Gros Ventre Native Joe Gone work to reduce emotional suffering caused by historical, collective, intergenerational trauma where the authors provide assertions that unresolved grief is passed on from generation to generation.<sup>16</sup> Yellow Horse's definition of historical trauma is “cumulative emotional and psychological wounding across generations, including the lifespan, which emanates from massive group trauma.”<sup>17</sup> Intergenerational trauma then, is trauma that is passed down behaviorally to the next generation where angry, neglectful behavior becomes normalized and cycled through generations. We can think about this differently through Peter Menzies’

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<sup>16</sup> Eduardo Duran, *Healing the Soul Wound: Counseling with American Indians and other Native People* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2006); Maria Yellow Horse Brave Heart and Lemyra M. DeBruyn, “The American Indian Holocaust: Healing Historical Unresolved Grief,” *American Indian and Alaska Native Mental Health Research*, 8:2 (1998), 56-78; Peter Menzies, “Developing an Aboriginal Healing Model for Intergenerational Trauma,” *International Journal of Health Promotion and Education*, 46:2 (2008); Joe Gone, “A Community-Based Treatment for Native American Historical Trauma: Prospects for Evidence-Based Practice,” *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 77:4 (2009).

<sup>17</sup> Maria Yellow Horse Brave Heart, Josephine Chase, Jennifer Elkins, Deborah B. Altschul, “Historical Trauma Among Indigenous Peoples of the Americas,” *Journal of Psychoactive Drugs*, 43:4 (2011), 283.

articulation, “if we ignore each other and deprive each other of love and affection in our relationships, our kids see and feel that deprivation of love and might think it’s normal.”<sup>18</sup> I will speak further about the trauma and violence against Indigenous women in chapter one and as we meet Diné Felicia Chischilly in Chapter two and discuss self-worth and suicide as dangerous repercussions of violent invisibility in both Chapters two and three.

Apache-Tewa-Lakota-Italian Psychologist Eduardo Duran utilizes language from Native American elders to name the historical and intergenerational trauma of genocide and assimilationist wounds from boarding schools, “soul-wounds.”<sup>19</sup> Duran argues that this term provides a relatable way for Indigenous survivors to subjectively conceptualize consequences of genocidal assimilation and erasure.<sup>20</sup> In Duran’s commitment to healing practices he aims to “decolonize and liberate the Native life-world” by explaining how soul-wounding, intergenerational trauma, and historical trauma are interpreted as “violence that occurs in the soul or spirit that has to be dealt with in subsequent generations.”<sup>21</sup> This concept is supported by Oglala Lakota Olympic Champion Billy Mills father’s designation of what he calls a “broken soul.”<sup>22</sup> Mill’s father insisted on his “broken soul” inherently since childhood. Duran demands critical attention be given to the specific individuals and tribal histories in order to understand the lineage of soul-wounding. Simultaneously, Duran strategically decolonizes his methods of

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<sup>18</sup> Menzies, “Developing an Aboriginal Healing Model for Intergenerational Trauma,” 42.

<sup>19</sup> Duran, *Healing the Soul Wound*, 16.

<sup>20</sup> Madley, “Reexamining the American Genocide Debate,” 99; Eduardo Duran *Healing the Soul Wound*, 16.

<sup>21</sup> Duran, *Healing the Soul Wound*, 24 and 30.

<sup>22</sup> Billy Mills, Key Note Presentation, *Native Running Conference*, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA, April 15, 2016.



healing by engaging in what may appear to be “cultural or tribal glossing,” bridging and grouping Native Peoples together, to counter colonial strategies that condition United States ideologies of human difference and dismemberment.<sup>23</sup> I use similar tactics in this paper, acknowledging tribally specific individuals when appropriate but also grouping together North American Indigenous Peoples. The football pitch offers a place for gathering and ceremony that celebrates difference and re-members collective healing. By the nature of its ability to connect, spinning from one person to another, the foot-ball speaks the universally healing language of relationality and connection required for Indigenous wellness.

Gros Ventre Native scholar Joseph Gone identifies Indigenous healing as community healing but contests Duran's generalized method of “tribal glossing,” calling for the need to speak specifically to individual tribal nations and cultural practices. Gone works on specific evidence based approaches of healing that recognizes historical trauma as imperative to understand, improve, and practice methods of personal healing inextricably connected to community healing.<sup>24</sup> Gone deliberately challenges the over-usage and glossing of the term “genocide” in Indigenous scholarship, suggesting that although group-based murders are indeed part of North American Indigenous histories, specificity is required to maintain scholarly integrity and historical accuracy.<sup>25</sup> Gone demands we focus instead on contemporary structures

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<sup>23</sup> Glossing refers to assumptions that all tribes are the same culturally. Duran, *Healing the Soul Wound*, 21.

<sup>24</sup> Gone, “Community-Based Treatment for Native American Historical Trauma,” 751–762.

<sup>25</sup> Joe Gone, “Colonial genocide and historical trauma in Native North America: Complicating contemporary attributions,” in Andrew Woolford, Jeffrey Benvenuto, & Alexander Laban Hinton, eds., *Colonial Genocide in Indigenous North America* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014), 274.

of colonization, that acknowledge historical trauma and, like Benjamin Madley, specify cases of violent extermination. Gone establishes a contrast between Native concepts of self, rooted in relationality and kinship, versus Western concepts of self, grounded in foundational individualism as two contrasting approaches to healing intergenerational trauma.<sup>26</sup> The difference between Western and Indigenous conceptions of self is important to locate approaches to healing. Because the ceremony of soccer requires community gathering, playing, and working together towards a common goal, I suggest the re-membering of Indigenous soccer offers an intergenerational practice of wellness.

American Indian Health scholar Felicia Hodge says, “wellness means living in balance: physically, spiritually, emotionally, mentally.”<sup>27</sup> Dr. Lawyer Erminskin Cree Chief Willie Littlechild, elder athlete and residential school survivor echo’s Dr. Hodge’s sentiment in his description of sports and wellness in chapter two. Hodge emphasizes the importance of community and “cultural connection” in order to move toward healing. Hodge describes “cultural connection” as one of the strongest variables to health.<sup>28</sup> The importance cultural connections becomes evident in my findings and conversations with Native athletes, particularly as they endure the residue of intergenerational trauma. The language of soccer requires human connection with every touch, pass, tackle and shot on goal. Without words, we are connected through the universality of the global game.

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<sup>26</sup> Lisa Wexler and Joseph P. Gone, “Exploring possibilities for Indigenous suicide prevention: Responding to cultural understandings and practices,” 2; Jennifer White, Ian Marsh, Michael J. Kral, & Jonathan. Morris, eds., *Critical Suicidology: Transforming suicide research and prevention for the 21st century* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2016), 56-70.

<sup>27</sup> Felicia Hodge, UCLA Lecture, November 13, 2015.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

Indigenous North Americans carry rich sports-gaming cultures through the stories of inheritance into the present moment. Examples of traditional sport range from Indian football and Lacrosse in the Northeast, running in the Southwest, horse racing on the Plains, to canoe racing in the Northwest to mention few of ancestral sports traditions. In “Raven Plays Ball: Situating ‘Indian Sports Days’ within Indigenous and Colonial Spaces,” Nak’azdli First Nations scholar Allan Dawney and Historian Susan Neyyland tell a trickster tale of Coast Salish Peoples and sport. The authors demonstrate how sport, like soccer, defy colonial intrusion while expressing Indigenous cultural persistence.<sup>29</sup> The authors remember early twentieth century “Indian sports days” of Coast Salish Nations as a trickster tale. Despite colonial intentions of civilizing Indigenous ways of life that promote ideologies of “muscular Christianity,” sport simultaneously empowered Indigenous resistance that reclaimed space and displaced colonial agendas.<sup>30</sup> In chapter 3, I organize what Dawney and Neyyland describe as Coast Salish “trickster practices” with Xulsimalt’s soccer legacy. For Native Peoples, team sports empower Indigenous identities and reclaim space for demonstrations of schelangen.

Lakota Scholar Philip Deloria’s remembering of Indigenous athletic identities are featured in, *Indian’s in Unexpected Places*, where he recalls traditional games like Lacrosse, stick games, horse racing, and running.<sup>31</sup> Deloria also tells stories of Indian identities in American football, baseball, and even recalls colonial memories of “Indian football,” a

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<sup>29</sup> Allan Downey and Susan Neyyland, “Raven Plays Ball: Situating ‘Indian Sports Days’ within Indigenous and Colonial Spaces in Twentieth-Century Coat British Columbia,” *Canadian Journal of History*, 50:3 (Winter 2015), 443.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid*, 443.

<sup>31</sup> Deloria, *Indians In Unexpected Places*, 115.

game that involved kicking and pitching a stuffed-ball.<sup>32</sup> One of the few “Indian football” stories shared in soccer scholarship, as written by a seventeenth century immigrant-settler, or “Pilgrim,” is of the Wampanoag People playing football on the Massachusetts shores in 1621.<sup>33</sup> A descendant of Norman knight Sir John de Willoughby of England wrote:

Usually, the Indians played football during the summer months with a varying number of players involved, depending upon the circumstances. Village played against village and a large amount of property changed hands, depending on the outcome of the game. Surprisingly, there was little quarreling.<sup>34</sup>

The immigrant-settlers observed village-to-village participation in a game called “Pasuckquakkohowog,” translated as “they gather to play football.”<sup>35</sup> Pasuckquakkohowog, required kicking and passing an inflated deer bladder between goal posts at both ends of the beach surface, tactics familiar to modern football.<sup>36</sup> The seventeenth century memory of

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<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.* The construction of the “Indian” is a colonial construction used in federal law and often reclaimed by Native American and First Nations Peoples to express belonging. I deliberately use the term “Indian” infrequently throughout this paper and when I do it is in relation to other people’s choice of usage or to imply an generally accepted usage of the term.

<sup>33</sup> This citation by Don Risolo incorrectly identifies the author of this excerpt as Pilgrim Charles C. Willoughby, born in 1847 in Massachusetts, in the 1634 *Commonwealth History of Massachusetts* written two centuries prior. Whereas his father, Charlestown Governor Deputy Francis Willoughby was the first generation American immigrant who lived during the time of the cited seventeenth century excerpt. Francis Willoughby was most likely the author of this “Indian football” insertion not Charles C. Willoughby. Donn Risolo, *Soccer Stories: Anecdotes, Oddities, Lore, and Amazing Feats* (New Bakersfield: University of Nebraska Press, 2010), 21; Earnest A. Hooton, “Charles Clark Willoughby, 1857-1943,” *American Antiquity*, 9:2 (October 1943), 235; Editor William Richard Cutter, A.M., *New England Families, Genealogical and Memorial: A Record of the Achievements of Her People in the Making of Commonwealths and the Founding of a Nation*, vol. 3 (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Company, 1914), 1256.

<sup>34</sup> Risolo, *Soccer Stories*, 21.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

Pasukquakohowaag, is not unlike the game of soccer as we understand it with goals teams and tactics. This game required membership, teamwork, competition, cross-cultural coo, and conflict resolution. Next to Pasukquakohowaag, centuries of Indigenous football are absent in literature, contributing to Native invisibility in the settler colonial discourse.

Interestingly, football sociologist David Goldblatt highlights the cross-cultural connection between “Indian football” and British “folk football.” Folk football was banned from Boston in 1657, cited for its rough nature and large attraction.<sup>37</sup> The Massachusetts banning of folk football took place during John Eliot’s mid-seventeenth century Puritan Missionization program that banned “Indian” ways of life.<sup>38</sup> I speculate that the banning of “folk football” was a deliberate gesture by Euro-Americans to eliminate gathering of Indigenous Peoples and cultural practice of Pasukquakohowaag, by deeming the practice non-puritan or a heathen practice due to the games physical nature. Re-membering Indigenous identity through soccer is a return to culturally relevant ways of life by means of footballing games, athletics, and a gathering ceremony for Native People.<sup>39</sup>

Rich sporting cultures prove to maintain footholds in Indigenous athletic identities yet ideologies of Native Americans in relationship to sport are disproportionately represented by ugliness of Indian mascots. Like the NFL’s infamous Washington Redsk\*ns, these caricatures are symbols of genocide, murdered, and exterminated Indian bodies performed for entertainment.

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<sup>37</sup> David Goldblatt, *The Ball is Round: A Global History of Soccer*, (New York: Riverhead Books, 2006), 96.

<sup>38</sup> Neal Salisbury, “Red Puritans: The ‘praying Indians’ of Massachusetts Bay and John Eliot,” *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 31:1 (January 1974), 28.

<sup>39</sup> Goldblatt, *Ball is Round*, 96.

Indian mascotry represents the colonial “damaged-body” narrative that violently misrepresents Native Peoples contributing to Indigenous invisibility, low self-esteem, and misunderstandings of Native identities; even suicide rate that more-than doubles the national average. These unnecessary deaths devastate families, shock the community, and re-traumatize wellness within tribes of already healing Peoples. In connection, Indian mascots perpetuate invisibility and intergenerational violence. This derogatory narrative must change to contribute to a healthier way of life for Native People.

Countering these narratives of invisibility, I gather Indigenous soccer stories from Coast Salish Nations of the Northwest United States into Canada, to the Kiowa territory of Oklahoma, down to the Southwest Pueblos of New Mexico, Navajo and Hopi tribes of the four corners, into South America for the World Indigenous Games in Palmas, Brazil, and North again into Haudenosaunee territories. I collect conversational interviews, Indigenous soccer articles, and scholarship to create Indigenous visibility in the soccer-academic space. By telling these stories across geographic colonial borders of North and South America, I honor my Coast Salish relatives to the North, and the hundreds or thousands of other tribes that freely migrated the expanse of the North American continent prior to the imposition of settler colonial borders. Critics Eve Tuck and Wayne Yang argue that practicing decolonization requires an integral move towards returning land and life to Indigenous Peoples; a goal of settler colonial resistance that borders on impossibility yet remains the goal.<sup>40</sup> I assert the culture of Indigenous soccer practices decolonization by returning Indigenous Peoples and schelangen to Indigenous land.

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<sup>40</sup> Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang “Decolonization is not a metaphor,” *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society*, 1:1 (June 2012), 1, 5.

I weave together North American Indigenous football stories to show soccer's relationship to Native communities. In chapter one, I introduce my relationship with soccer and my Lummi understanding of its contributions to my Native footballer identity. I evaluate the complexities of soccer in America, critiquing North American exceptionalist values in the gendered structures of patriarchy. Of utmost importance, I discuss manifestations of violence in the alarming rates of missing and murdered Indigenous woman and catastrophic rates of suicide and soccer's potential impact. In chapter 2, I share the story of the "Sacred Medicine Arrow" as an introduction to Indigenous sports humanitarian, Dr. Lawyer Ermineskin Cree Chief Willie Littlechild and his participation in the creation of the World Indigenous Games (WIG), driven by soccer. As a survivor of residential school, I share Chief Littlechild's personal stories of survival and healing through sport along with other boarding school sports stories like that of Dené runner Felicia Chischilly. This chapter also addresses intergenerational traumas experienced as violence against women. In chapter 3, I will tell the 100 year old story of Harry Xulsimalt Manson, Snuneymuxw First Nations Canadian Soccer Hall of Fame legend and his connection to the success of WIG Women's Soccer Champions, First Nations Aboriginal Team Indigenous Canada. You will hear from some of these champions as they relate to the world's game. In the final chapter, I end with the Kiowa story of Chris Bau Daigh Wondolowski, the U.S. Soccer 2014 World Cup Brazil footballer. I discuss *Bau Daigh Warrior*, the film as an activation and creation of Indigenous visibility that embraces the power of digital media to empower Indigenous voices in a global landscape. These stories transcend generations of trauma of colonial assimilation through sport and soccer.

## **Chapter I: Xeli'tia, Returning to the Roots of Healing**

Xeli'tia, in Lummi means “to return to the beginning, to the roots of Mother Earth, to our inherent right to provide healing.”<sup>41</sup> This chapter is dedicated to my understanding and analysis of my Lummi identity through my life in soccer. I reflect back on experience of gender, race, class, trauma and ceremony through my life as a Lummi Native, navigating the colonial world with a ball at my feet. While addressing settler colonial structures, I tackle the structures of invisibility with the defensive and attacking practices of soccer. I utilize Stephanie Fryberg and company's theory of invisibility, that shows how media representations of race, class, gender, and culture, or lack thereof, impact conceptions of self and self-worth.<sup>42</sup> Invisibility, ultimately damages Native conceptions of belonging and distorts dreams and visions of life purpose. I look at ways soccer participation provides visibility for Indigenous North Americans while remembering communities in a practice of wellness that offers tools to navigate colonial-Indigenous spaces.

Soccer in America faces unique discriminations as a result of nationalist sentiment rooted in the U.S. imperialist agenda that rejects un-American innovations and steals land and culture to perform patriarchal authority as exemplified through hegemonic American sports culture. Take “football” for example, the international sport with European origins was rejected in America, renamed to “soccer”, and reassigned to “American football”: a game of violence that resembles the warring frontier of destruction, embodied by white masculine entitlements to advancement and land. Since European contact, the agenda predicated on whiteness, to acquire Indigenous

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<sup>41</sup> Xeli'tia, was translated by my auntie Sharon Kinley a tribal genealogist, linguist, and director at Northwest Indian college.

<sup>42</sup> Leavitt, Covarrubias, Perez, and Fryberg, “‘Frozen in Time’,” 40.



land and promote the myth of “The American Dream,” threatens Indigenous ways of life through continued efforts of erasure, theft, assimilation, and invisibility. I address the need for Indigenous soccer visibility as a method to comprehend and cope with experiences of oppressions that create barriers to wellness. In relationship to concepts of masculinity, I situate soccer in North America through individualistic ideals of American exceptionalism. By virtue of my presence in the American soccer space and in sports media, I, Xeli’tia, defend attacks of settler colonialism, decolonize Native Americans stereotypes, and shine light on ways of life unseen.

As a starting point, I begin with the story of my experience with Lummi identity and tribal ceremonies and practices of healing. I will bridge the gap between Lummi culture and soccer interwoven with a discussion of identity that expands beyond the soccer pitch. Importantly, I locate soccer in America as defined by American exceptionalist values and distinction from the global sports space. I imagine Indigenous soccer as a megaphone for Native voices to be heard, on a tall platform of global visibility, and as a community resistance to the violence targeting Native women. In a good way and with the intention to initiate healing, I will address this unspeakable violence because it needs to be spoken.

### **Lummi Schelangen & Soccer as a Way of Life**

Growing up a Lummi footballer, outside of my immediate family, Native American soccer players were invisible. With a deeply rooted passion for playing soccer, I came to know myself through a lifetime relationship with the game. As a dedicated footballer, soccer granted me an understanding of my Lummi schelangen that empowered Indigenous ways of life in between and around structures of colonialism. My self-understanding was formulated in the

practice of soccer that, for me, is a healing ceremony. In soccer, we follow protocol and offer exchange for the land we play on, whether it be laughter and joy or material. Through focused collaboration, leadership and accountability to team-community, we achieve a sense of belonging and dutiful membership. In the ceremonies I experience with Indigenous practitioners of wellness, we address opposition and celebrations to share and receive healing. I was raised up in a family and tribe who gather together regularly in hard work, celebration, and in mourning to give gratitude to life, death, and life again. Soccer, unknowingly as a child, fulfilled an innate need to achieve goals as part of a group, gathering together to fulfill roles and accomplish objectives through strategy, failure, success, and play. Come rain or shine, your team of football warriors showed up to simultaneously play and battle to connect life lessons with every human touch of the ball. Remembering Oglala Lakota Billy Mills' words, the global game of football helps me "relate to a broader world," opening pathways for travel, cross-cultural connection, and higher education.

During my childhood years, my home was geographically located on a metaphoric bridge, a few short miles between Lummi Indian Reservation and the Washington State border town of Bellingham. I lived uniquely positioned on Coast Salish land to simultaneously access White and Native cultures. My mother, Lydia Bennett, an empowered American woman of English, Irish, Scottish, Ukrainian descent, married my father, Galen Lane, her high school sweetheart and hardworking Lummi fisherman and cedar wood carver. Importantly, my mother always encouraged me to embrace my Native American heritage, checking the "American Indian" identification box whenever the opportunity presented itself. My mixed heritage and access to white-privilege impacted the circumstances of my education, health, and soccer

experiences. The opportunities made available for an educated white woman and her children, undoubtedly came with privileges traditionally restricted to the dominant, middle to upper class. Private healthcare, private school education, ballet classes, piano lessons, and other extra curricular activities are examples of my experience in this privilege.<sup>43</sup> My very hardworking mother, with an expertise in financial management and commercial real estate, chose to, and could afford to, spend her leisure time accommodating her children's needs and dreams. My father, stepparents, and grandparents work hard in support of our educational aspirations with my mom leading the charge. My dad and Lummi relatives guided my siblings and I on land and sea, navigating through the Coast Salish ways of life reciprocity and teachings of protected ceremony. Sometimes my dad gets his ancestral intuition confused with fisherman's superstition but my family learns to laugh off the difference and always respect his ancestral wisdom. Soccer helps me bridge my Native and white identity passing between Indigenous and colonial cultures structured to be divided. My life exists between the expanse of both cultures, breaking down barriers of isolation so much so that I actually identify as a bridge, or cultural connector, overlapping and between colonial-Indigenous space. This bridged identity helps me relate Euro-American concepts of soccer to Indigenous practices of wellness, ceremony, and community healing.

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<sup>43</sup> I utilize Cheryl Harris's capitalization logic from "Whiteness as Property," and apply it to "Indigenous," "Native," "Indian," and "white". Harris write, "the use of upper case and lower case in reference to racial identity has a particular political history. Although 'white' and Black have been defined oppositionally, they are not functional opposites. 'White' has incorporated Black subordination; 'Black' is not based on domination... 'Black' is naming that is part of counterhegemonic practice Cheryl Harris, "Whiteness as Property," *Harvard Law Review*, 106:8 (June 1993), 1710 footnote 3.

My Indigenous heritage grew with my love for self through my love of soccer. I grew from a four-year-old player, to traveling football club defender, referee, collegiate student-athlete, professional player in Sweden, coach, TV broadcaster and color analyst, international soccer traveler, to Native youth advocate, soccer storyteller, filmmaker, and now to soccer scholar. Despite heart wrenching injuries and repeated breakups from soccer, the global game persists in finding its way back into my life. Each time football and I reconnect, I re-figure a different dimension of my Native footballer schelangen, my way of life. Eduardo Duran suggests that once an understanding of how colonial attack on Native identity impacts trauma and internal oppression is reached, a new narrative of healing will emerge and empower Natives to understand they are not “defective human beings,” rather they carry ancestral soul-wounds that create a disconnection from schelangen.<sup>44</sup> Creating narratives of healing through the remembering practices of Indigenous football empowers individuals and communities.

Loving the beautiful game, a shared soccer phrase connected to football’s legendary Pelé, became my practice of play and discipline. By the age of twelve, I quit dancing my beloved ballet to commit fully to soccer. Soccer drove me, motivated me, and served a part of me that I otherwise would not know. Inspired by my brother, cousins, and their male counterparts, who treated me as equal, I fought to survive in backyard games that required dexterity, agility, anticipation, strength, and teamwork. I excelled in the local club, Bellingham’s F.C. Rangers, playing beyond my years as a fourteen-year-old on U-19 (under 19-years-old) team. My mom recognized my dedicated passion to soccer and drove me at least three times a week, two hours south to Seattle, to play on a premier-select pay-to-play team, Emerald City FC (ECFC). My

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<sup>44</sup> Duran, *Healing the Soul Wound*, 40.

dreams of playing at a division I college kept me disciplined, helped me make sacrifices, and opened pathways to domestic travel across the fifty states. Arizona State University was one of many colleges to recruit me because I had the visibility of playing for Seattle's top premier club, ECFC. Looking back, the team was comprised of mostly White players and generous families that ranged from mid-to-upper class. I was the only Native American on all of my teams, ever, including my season playing professionally in Sweden. Despite this isolation, one thing was clear: my identity as a footballer took over my life. I knew I belonged on the soccer field and I believed soccer was my ticket to education, career, and the world.

### **Empowered by my Ancestors' Ceremony**

On May 5, 2014, I flew like my ancestor Golden Eagle over Lummi Rez, a peninsula located in Coast Salish waters of Washington State. As I looked down from the plane I contemplated the importance of ceremony and the family work we completed for our collective healing from unresolved grief and the death of my beloved grandparents. In our ways, we allow ourselves to mourn loved ones for four years after their death, putting away pictures and memorabilia in order to let go. In four years time, we stop mourning symbolized by an enormous potlach and salmon feast, centered around letting go and giving gifts. I returned home for this reason: for the Memorial of my late grandparents, Swe'lus and Seni ne. I also returned home to the honor of receiving my Lummi name.

Fittingly, on May 1, 2014, as a descendent of Swe'lus and Seni ne from the Golden Eagle Clan of Lummi Nation, and a long lineage of fisher people, I received my Lummi name, Xeli'tia, in a intimate ceremony in my late grandfather's boat shed. I was surrounded by loved ones,

relatives, friends, Coast Salish elders, medicine people, and witnesses. The name, Xeli'tia, belongs to my late great grand-auntie, seven generation ahead on my grandfather, Swe'lus' side. Protocol requires I borrow the name from the next generations yet to come. Our hereditary Chief Tsi'lixw uncle Bill James, who honored me as a witness, instructed me that "things would get better now" and that I would "start to see and feel things differently."<sup>45</sup> He was right: my ancestors guided me closer to my purpose as a Lummi footballer and practitioner of healing.

On May 3, 2014, days after receiving my Lummi name, the bigger work took place at our Frog House, or Wex'li'um, our longhouse and community center where we gather regularly for celebrations, deaths, and other ceremonies as a tribe. We held a memorial for my late grandparents Seni ne and Swe'lus, Vernon and Nancy Lane who walked on three and four years prior. Our teachings tell us to close the door on death after a four year mourning period but because Grandma and Grandpa Lane share spirits, we honor their spirit journeys together. The preparation took years and the ceremony took place over a series of days. The memorial consisted of songs, dance, prayer, tears, burnings, rosaries, laughter, meals, giveaways, and remembering that required a gathering of community members and guests. Everybody that came to show support and bear witness to our families work left with giveaways, or offerings, as a practice of letting go and healing gratitude of potlatch culture.

Two days following the memorial I left with my new name, a clear purpose, and deep sense of personal and family healing. Through the land and in these ceremonies, I learned that Grandma and Grandpa continue to guide me, even in their death. With an eagle's-eye-view, I

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<sup>45</sup> Lummi Chief Tsi'lixw Bill James, personal interview by author, Lummi reservation, May 1, 2014.

flew south over Lummi Rez to Los Angeles to begin my academic journey at UCLA when a purposed vision came over me: the first Native American, Kiowa Chris Wondolowski, would play in a World Cup. With exception to winning the World Cup, which was a far stretch for the USMNT in 2014, the pinnacle of all accomplishments for any footballer, is to play in a World Cup. Chris “Wondo” Wondolowski was already in the U.S. Soccer ranks, fighting his way onto the World Cup roster but his spot at the age of 31 was hardly guaranteed. On May 22, 2014, U.S. soccer announced the World Cup roster and Wondo filled one of the spots for strikers. In Chapter three, you will hear his story, a Native American soccer story of perseverance and intergenerational healing. I mention Bau Daigh’s story now because his story, combined with my passion for soccer, inspired me to tell Indigenous soccer stories empowered by visibility in media and sports. As we learned earlier, Indigenous invisibility is a direct result of heteropatriarchal constructs that also marginalize soccer in America.

### **American Exceptionalism & Indigenous Soccer**

American sports culture, at its core, assumes structures of hegemonic masculinity in order to prioritize white, middle-class, heterosexual superiority.<sup>46</sup> Scholar Charles Springwood defines “hegemony”:

Hegemony is that part of a dominant ideology that has been naturalized and, having contrived a tangible world in its image, does not appear to be ideological at all. This process of naturalization contextualizes certain practices and regimes of representation, rendering them absolutely normal, innocent, and even assuming... Hegemony, the consent and dissent surrounding it, are conveyed through narrative, myth, symbol, performance, popular media, and more, but

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<sup>46</sup> Markovits and Hellerman, *Offsides*, 48.

hegemony's effectiveness is always tied in some way to its ability to create space, structure opportunity, and materially reward consent.<sup>47</sup>

By nature, the American sports space is an expression of racialization and gendered discrimination that creates space for the privileged half of society. As a female pro-player, I earned a living wage but nothing equal to our male counterparts despite equal hours of labor.<sup>48</sup> In media however, respect for my knowledge of soccer as a journalist/analyst is often overshadowed by gendered expectations that marginalize and objectify women in a landscape intended to validate masculinity.<sup>49</sup> Fighting to assume an authoritative voice as a soccer expert is a constant battle both as a Native and as a woman. Refiguring the sports space by positioning Native American women as relevant, knowledgeable, and important requires positions of visibility and authority of voice in media and community.

Historically, soccer's marginalization in the United States is recognized as a global exception. In *Offsides: Soccer & American Exceptionalism*, Andrei S. Markovits and Steven L. Hellerman examine the U.S. sports space in context of American exceptionalism and its discriminations toward global football. As a dedicated footballer, I experience the power global football possess represented by its transnational popularity, political, and social connectivity. The

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<sup>47</sup> Charles Fruehling Springwood, "Playing Indian and Fighting (for) Mascots: Reading the Complications of Native American and EuroAmerican Alliances," in C. Richard King and Charles Fruehling Springwood, eds., *Team Spirits: Essays on the History and Significance of Native American Mascots*, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 2001), 316.

<sup>48</sup> In April, 2016 five USWNT players accused US Soccer of wage discrimination. "Women's National team files wage discrimination versus U.S. Soccer," published April 1, 2016, <http://espn.go.com/espnw/sports/article/15102506/women-national-team-files-wage-discrimination-action-vs-us-soccer-federation>, accessed April 11, 2016.

<sup>49</sup> Max V. Grubba and Theresa Billiot, "Women sportscasters: navigating a masculine domain," *Journal of Gender Studies*, 19:1 (March 2010), 87.



football phenomenon is demonstrated by Federation International Football Association (aka FIFA, the international governing body of football) international membership: In 2008, FIFA's membership outnumbered the United Nations members, 208 to 192.<sup>50</sup> Globalization and football scholars Richard Giulianotti and Roland Robertson call football's path in America "special," supporting Markovits and Hellerman's American exceptionalism thesis.<sup>51</sup> Fortunately, this special game found its way to Lummi land and other North American Indigenous territories despite its American discriminations. Giulianotti and Roberston remind us that the global game of 'soccer' connotes a 'non-American' pastime whereas American football and baseball are symbolic representations of twentieth century migrants abandoning the old Europe, and assimilating as a demonstration of patriotism.<sup>52</sup>

Markovits and Hellerman illustrate how soccer, the most celebrated and culturally connected sport in the world, represents a global outlier in the United States by outlining American exceptionalist values. In summary, the authors credit the enfranchisement of white American males, the "vast space" and "cheap land," combined with the myth and "embourgeoisement" of the "American Dream" predicated on unearned, white-male privileged individualism.<sup>53</sup> What the authors neglect to recognize is American exceptionalism's "vast and cheap land" is neither vast nor cheap but occupied and stolen from the original Indigenous Peoples of the land and claimed as white property. In her article, "Whiteness as Property," Cheryl

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<sup>50</sup> Richard Giulianotti and Roland Robertson, *Globalization & Football*, (London: Sage Publications, 2009), xii.

<sup>51</sup> Giulianotti and Robertson, *Globalization & Football*, 52.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>53</sup> Markovits and Hellerman, *Offsides*, 9.

Harris asserts that possessing “whiteness” is a form of property ownership. She writes, “the conquest, removal, and extermination of Native American life and culture were ratified by conferring and acknowledging the property rights of whites in Native American land.”<sup>54</sup> Arguing that American land is “cheap” and “vast” contributes to this racialized tension of whiteness as property. Despite Markovits and Hellerman’s denial of settler colonialism’s attempt to exterminate Native Peoples and steal Indigenous land, not uncommon in historical American literature, American exceptionalist values do apply to the American sports space, which perpetuate Indigenous invisibility and permeate isolations of soccer in America.

Nationalistic ideologies of masculinity rank soccer fifth in the “cult of manliness” only after the “Big Three and One-half:” football, baseball, basketball, and hockey.<sup>55</sup> The hegemonic, or culturally celebrated, sports space is designed for performances of masculine ideologies, reflective of the most dominant constructions of manhood. In American culture these constructions are responsible for supplying cultural icons or mythic images of masculinity, like Indian sports mascots, that privilege whiteness and the most powerful half of society.<sup>56</sup> Although American society favors white males and ideologies of masculinity, I acknowledge white women

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<sup>54</sup> Cheryl Harris, “Whiteness as Property,” *Harvard Law Review*, 106:8 (June 1993), 1716.

<sup>55</sup> Markovits and Hellerman, *Offsides*, 40.

<sup>56</sup> Shari Lee Dworkin and Faye Linda Wachs, “‘Disciplining the Body’: HIV-Positive Male Athletes, Media Surveillance, and the Policing of Sexuality,” in Susan Birrell and Mary G. McDonald, eds., *Reading Sport: Critical Essays on Power and Representation* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2000), 48.

also benefit from whiteness.<sup>57</sup> The “myth of the frontier,” compatible to Markovits and Hellerman’s “vast and cheap land” of American exceptionalism, transpired as a result of white American anxieties during modern industrialization and a fear of male identities being “over-civilized if not feminized.”<sup>58</sup> Historian David Wallace Adams contributes the birth of American football to these deep seeded anxieties. Masculinity manifested in the form of American football battles that advance an oval ball, claiming yardage (land) through violence and force. This simulation of colonial war is therefore perceived as more masculine and patriotic than soccer.<sup>59</sup>

American football is the anti-soccer like America is the anti-Indian. In both cases, culture is stolen (the name “football” and Native land and life), erased, and replaced to meet ideologies of white American exceptionalism. If American football is the anti-soccer, then the global success of the three-time World Cup Championship and four-time Olympic gold medalists the U.S. Women’s National Team (USWNT), only enhances soccer’s feminization in the United States.<sup>60</sup> Soccer’s feminization in sports culture that hegemonically prioritizes masculinity, isolates the game as less patriotic and important. Meanwhile, understanding American exceptionalist masculinity is important to locate barriers of assimilation that finds Indigenous

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<sup>57</sup> Margaret D. Jacobs, *White Mother to a Dark Race: Settler Colonialism, Maternalism, and the Removal of Indigenous Children in the American West and Australia 1880-1940* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009), 10. Margaret Jacobs demonstrates how white women historically played key roles in settler colonial assimilation that reinforced colonial logics of Indigenous removal and cultural erasure.

<sup>58</sup> David Wallace Adams, “More than a game: The Carlisle Indians take to the Gridiron, 1893-1917,” *Western Historical Quarterly*, 32:1 (Spring 2001), 29.

<sup>59</sup> Adams, “More than a game,” 30.

<sup>60</sup> FIFA, “World cup final smashes tv records,” <http://www.fifa.com/womensworldcup/news/y=2015/m=7/news=world-cup-final-smashes-tv-records-in-us-japan-2661775.html>, accessed December 15, 2015.

communities on the outside of the global game of football. Soccer's hegemonic American value denotes ideologies of masculinity that provide an access point for both women and marginalized Native populations. As a Lummi female footballer, this small soccer portal is one in which I travel to access higher education, belonging, and global connection. As evident by the success of our USWNT, young girls and women capitalize on soccer's opportunity in the U.S. but the access to the world's game for Indigenous Peoples proves to be limited.

### **Gender Violence and the Damage of Indian Mascots**

As a Native woman, I am acutely aware of the perpetual settler colonial violence Indigenous People face, particularly the sexual violence against Native women. In efforts to justify white claims to Indigenous land, Native bodies must be dehumanized, raped, and killed. This dehumanization fuels Indigenous invisibility, hiding real-living Native identities behind imagined representation of sexualized and violent Indian tropes. Sam McKegney argues that imaginings like the Indian princess, the savage, and the warrior "comprise an impossible masculine race."<sup>61</sup> Kahnawake First Nations scholar Taiaiake Alfred points out that "there is no living with it (violent Indian tropes) because it's not meant to be lived with; it's meant to be killed, every single time. They're images to be slain by the white conqueror."<sup>62</sup> Considering dominant Indian imagery and the realities of Indigenous genocide, suicide, and oppression, Alfred speaks truth.

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<sup>61</sup> Sam McKegney, *Masculindians: Conversations about Indigenous Manhood* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2014), 1.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*

Through soccer's intensity and physicality, I gained tools to navigate and heal from experienced sexual violence inspired by colonial rhetoric and derogatory Native imagery. This imagery, like "sexy native" halloween costumes designed for non-native consumption and Indian mascot heads used to promote savagery in American sport, directly translates to real bodily violence against Native Peoples as evident in the high rate of gender-based violence against Indigenous women. Gender-based violence, according to Elizabeth Povinelli's critique of liberal multiculturalism as a ideology of governance, "makes certain violence appears accidental to a social system as opposed to generating it (violence)."<sup>63</sup> This systemic violence can be understood statistically as one in three Native women will be sexually assaulted in her lifetime, and three out of five will be victims of domestic violence.<sup>64</sup> Muscogee legal scholar Sarah Deer's explains that "Native women 'talk to their daughters about what to do when they are sexually assaulted, not *if* they are sexually assaulted, but *when*."<sup>65</sup> This conversation was familiar in my household, in childhood discussions about personal boundaries of my body.

Frighteningly for Native women, the reality of "when one is raped" is a result of Imperialist notions of Native bodies as damaged and dehumanized bodies. Esselen-Chumash scholar Deborah Miranda further explains, "Indian bodies are inferior bodies. Indian women's bodies are rape-able bodies. Indian bodies do not belong to Indians, but to those who can lay

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<sup>63</sup> Elizabeth A. Povinelli, *The Cunning of Recognition: Indigenous Alterities and the Making of Australian Multiculturalism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002), 7.

<sup>64</sup> Sarah Deer, "Criminal Justice in Indian Country at the Berkeley Law Thelton E. Henderson Center for Social Justice Symposium, Heeding Frickey's Call: Doing Justice in Indian Country" (Berkeley, CA. Sept. 27-28, 2012) Conference Transcript, *American Indian Law Review* 37 (September 2013), 375.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid*, 376.

claim to them by violence.”<sup>66</sup> Healing of the mind, body, and spirit must ensue for Native women who experience intergenerational and existing trauma. Visibilities of empowered Native women as athletes significantly challenge colonial imaginings of Native women as inferior beings and targets of gender-based violence by escaping the victim narrative and demonstrating resilience through physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual strength. Andrea Smith in her book, *Conquest: Sexual Violence and American Indian Genocide* details how

“in the colonial imagination, Native bodies are also immanently polluted with sexual sin... Because Indian bodies are ‘polluted’ or dirty, they are considered sexually violable and ‘rapable,’ and the rape of bodies that are considered inherently impure or dirty does not count... Similarly, the history of mutilation of Indian bodies, both living and dead, makes it clear that Indian people are not entitled to bodily integrity.”<sup>67</sup>

The lack of Indigenous bodily integrity is culturally celebrated by the likes of the Washington Redsk\*ns and other Indian based mascots that fetishize Native Peoples.

Indian Mascot origins date back to the early nineteenth century along with boarding school and intercollegiate sports. C. Richard King explains how Indian mascots emerged during halftime performances of college American football games when “Playing Indian” traditionalized American culture as a display of Euro-American dominance.<sup>68</sup> The federal government has a history of programs that sought to discipline American Indian behavior and eliminate cultural

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<sup>66</sup> Deborah A. Miranda, “‘Saying Padre Had Grabbed Her’: Rape Is the Weapon, Story is the Cure,” in Laura Beard and Kathryn Shanley, eds., *Gender, Culture, and Literature in Indigenous North America, Intertexts*, 14:2 (Fall 2010), 96.

<sup>67</sup> Andrea Smith, *Conquest: Sexual Violence and American Indian Genocide* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), 9.

<sup>68</sup> C. Richard King, “Defensive Dialogues: Native American Mascots, Anti-Indianism, and Educational Institutions,” in C. Richard King, eds., *The Native American Mascot Controversy: A Handbook, Defensive Dialogues* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2010), 147.

forms of expression. According to anti-racism scholar C. Richard King, almost 4,500 schools refer to their teams as the Warriors, the Braves, the Indians, or the Redsk\*ns in the United States. The history of sports and mascots dates back to 1894 when Carlisle Indian School reportedly became the first school nicknamed “Indians” for the success of their football team. Constructed as a mechanism of Indian assimilation, tribal dismemberment, and institutionalized racism, Indian boarding schools, were built to civilize Native Peoples and erase Indigenous ways of life, not honor them. My late Lummi grandfather, Vernon Swe’lus Lane, attended Chemewa Indian School in Salem Oregon as a Chemewa “Brave”. The official Chemewa Indian School philosophy required Indian pupils be integrated into “general society” through education, and in my grandpa’s case and many others like him, through athletics.

Like David Wallace, C. Richard King attributes a rise of Indian mascots of over eighty colleges and universities, to “a crisis in white masculinity associated with the closing of the frontier, urbanization, industrialization, and the subjugation of Native America.”<sup>69</sup> The Redsk\*ns and all Indian mascots perpetuate oppressive violence to this nation’s First People. Indian mascots as social representations give unjust permission to students, parents, faculty and fans alike to mock and degrade Native Americans and blanket this mocking as “honor”. Respected friends, colleagues, and even teammates of mine participate in cultural appropriation. Buying into the rhetoric of “honor” and less-than-100-year-old “tradition”, they sing war chants at university sporting events and dawn beautiful headdress at summer music festivals. No honor exists in the broken pieces of Native pride and self-esteem celebrated as colonial symbols of genocide.

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<sup>69</sup> King, “Defensive Dialogues,” 147.

Considering the current state of Native invisibility, if Indian mascots are the only visible and inaccurate representation of Native culture in the American sports space, how does this perpetuate damaging concepts of self and belonging for Native youth? “Historical representations of American Indians are a type of invisibility because, in absence of a variety of contemporary representations, they communicate that American Indians do not exist in contemporary American society,” writes Stephanie Fryberg and Nicole Stephens.<sup>70</sup> In a study to determine how social representation, or the lack thereof (invisibility), of American Indians influence psychological well-being, Fryberg and Stephens found that Indian mascots, “depress feelings of self-worth (i.e., self-esteem), community efficacy (i.e., the confidence that one’s community can improve itself), and achievement-related possible selves (i.e., future achievement goals) for American Indians.” Indian mascots, despite arguments of honor, are indeed psychologically negative and impact Native American ideas of belonging. Visibility in soccer, the world’s game, not only tells Native youth they belong in sport but also they belong here in world.

The manifestations of trauma from histories of genocide, assimilation, and degradation take form in negative visibilities of addiction, and violence of physical, sexual, and mental abuse. Tragically, suicide is listed as the second leading cause of death for Indian youth between fifteen and twenty-four years of age, a rate two and a half times the 2012 national average.<sup>71</sup> The home of the Lakota Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota suffered 11 suicides and at least

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<sup>70</sup> Stephanie Fryberg and Nicole Stephens, “When the World Is Colorblind, American Indians Are Invisible: A Diversity Science Approach,” *Psychological Inquiry*, 21:2 (2010), 117.

<sup>71</sup> United States Congress, *Demanding Results to End Native Youth Suicides: Hearing before the Committee on Indian Affairs, United States Senate, One Hundred Fourteenth Congress, First Session*, June 24, 2015, <http://purl.fdlp.gov/GPO/gpo63317>, accessed June 2, 2016.



379 reported suicide attempts in a six-month period in 2015.<sup>72</sup> As recent as March, 2016, Pimicikamak Cree Nation in Manitoba, Canada declared a state of emergency over the suicide epidemic that saw six deaths in two months and 140 attempts in two weeks alone.<sup>73</sup> Lummi lost a cousin, a father, a son, brother, a youth leader, in winter 2015 to suicide. The pain we feel from helplessness of losing important community members to preventable deaths exacerbates and confuses our community. These unnecessary deaths shocked and devastate families and re-traumatize an already healing people. Native communities across North America are constantly battling internalized colonial violence perpetuated by invisibility and social representations like Indian mascots that disconnect us from one-another sending negative messages of not belonging. We must re-unite and re-member what tools we have like culture, sports, and Indigenous football, to prevent the tragic deaths that carry the intergenerational curse from boarding school trauma.

Joe Gone and Lisa Wexler challenge current suicide intervention tactics of medicine/science arguing prevention initiatives are culturally incongruent for Indigenous communities.<sup>74</sup> The authors determine the areas of suicide prevention approaches that are misaligned with western practice are the following:

- 1) that suicide indicates psychological issues as opposed to suicide as a reflection of historical, cultural, community, and family trauma.

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<sup>72</sup> Duran, *Healing the Soul Wound*, 17; United States Congress, *Demanding Results to End Native Youth Suicides*.

<sup>73</sup> Chinta Puxley, "Manitoba First Nation Declares State of Emergency Over Suicide Epidemic," *CTV News*, <http://www.ctvnews.ca/canada/manitoba-first-nation-declares-state-of-emergency-over-suicide-epidemic-1.2810573>, accessed March 11, 2016.

<sup>74</sup> Wexler and Gone, "Exploring possibilities for Indigenous suicide prevention," 56-70.

- 2) intervention is best achieved through mental health treatment vs. suicide is best prevented through interpersonal, social intervention.
- 3) suicide intervention need to involve rapid crisis response from mental health services rather than suicide should be undertaken through locally designed decolonization projects.<sup>75</sup>

Indigenous soccer is not a complete psychological remedy for suicide prevention. Based on Fryberg and Stephens findings, however, we can acknowledge the ways Indigenous participation in soccer and sport can serve self-worth and community efficacy while overcoming invisibility. Indigenous soccer, falls in line with Gone and Wexler's third point of the need for locally designed decolonization projects of wellness to contribute to suicide prevention. Their outline for suicide prevention focuses on the need for community and personal-based healing methods that address intergenerational trauma. Indigenous soccer programs, by definition, are adaptable to the participants and the space in which they are designed. My soccer participation at the Southwest Youth Services Indigenous Soccer Cup in Albuquerque, New Mexico and many other Native communities, show me the incredible adaptability of our youth, culture, and leadership. Gone and Wexler define culture as "the dynamic framework by which society makes meaning, constitutes ways of being, and reproduces itself as a recognizable community."<sup>76</sup> I, along with many other community leaders, recognize soccer's practice of community wellness. Indigenous soccer is reproducible in a capacity of recognition that constitutes a way of being that shares communal meaning.

In this chapter I shared my personal Indigenous soccer story that reveals how I practice my Lummi schelangen through soccer. Importantly, I gave context to how soccer represents a

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<sup>75</sup> *Ibid*, 56.

<sup>76</sup> Wexler and Gone, "Exploring possibilities for Indigenous suicide prevention," 57.

ceremonial re-figuring and practice of healing that negates invisibility. I acknowledge global football, or soccer, in the United States as an American exceptionalism that helps us understand and locate violent realities of invisibility and Indian mascotry. These realities include, but are not limited to, violence against Native women and preventably high rates of suicide. My hope is that Indigenous soccer visibilities will contribute to greater wellness for individuals and their communities. In the following chapters, we are privileged to hear from Native voices and their experiences with sports, soccer, and healing.

## **CHAPTER II: The Sacred Medicine Arrow**

In the early morning hours of another hot day at the World Indigenous Games (WIG) in Palmas, Brazil, I stood on the sidelines of the stadium soccer field alongside my new friend, Dr. Lawyer Ermenskin Cree Chief Willie Littlechild, the Canadian delegate and co-visionary of WIG. Like Plains war chiefs earn their eagle feathers, Chief Littlechild, earned each respected title, Indigenous and academic. In 1977, Chief Littlechild presented the United Nations with what he calls the “Resolution”, or the U.N. Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), which initiated activism in the form of the Indigenous Peoples Games.<sup>77</sup> Here we stood, watching the women’s First Nations Team Indigenous Canada play Canela of Brazil in the inaugural 2015 WIG. Thirty-five mens tribal teams and thirty-two women’s teams participated in the Indigenous football tournament, what the organizers deemed the only “occidental game” celebrated. Chief Littlechild, a former professional hockey player and First Nations residential

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<sup>77</sup> Speak Truth to Power Canada: Defenders for Human Rights, <http://sttpcanada.ctf-fce.ca/lessons/wilton-littlechild/bio/>, accessed July 26, 2016.

school survivor, and I spoke in depth about sports, indigeneity, and healing. He shared with me a circular creation story of the World Indigenous Games: the story of the Sacred Medicine Arrow. Like the torch at the Olympic Games, the Arrow ignited the flame that unified Indigenous Peoples from around the world to gather in the heart of Brazil to celebrate Indigenous survivance, through sport, soccer, and thriving cultures. Sherene Razack writes, “To gather when one is dislocated, Goldberg reminds us, is to resist. Gathering is emplacement and survival, a refusal to budge.”<sup>78</sup> Razack’s recent work gathers stories of First Nations Peoples in order to restore human value despite a fraught damaged-body colonial narrative. The WIG, although tainted by political agendas, violence, and appropriation, is an Indigenous vision that opposes the damaged-body narrative with healthy, thriving Indigenous Peoples and cultures. This chapter is about Indigenous resurgence, gathering to re-member, healing through sport and soccer.

To begin, I will start with the story of “The Sacred Medicine Arrow,” as told to me at the WIG by Dr. Chief Littlechild. The WIG was strategically sandwiched between the 2014 World Cup and the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Olympics, two mega-sports events that put the Brazilian people in deep duress. Without diverting, I give brief context to the socio-political critiques of the Brazilian government’s WIG involvement as a cover-up for perpetual Indigenous genocide and violence over the land. I share the words and voices of Dr. Chief Littlechild as he tells stories about his identity in athletics as a residential school survivor. Connecting soccer to running as the Medicine Arrow does, I will follow with the voice of another boarding school athlete, Navajo

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<sup>78</sup> Sherene H. Razack, *Dying From Improvement: Inquest and Inquiries into Indigenous Deaths in Custody* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015), 178. “Goldberg” is in reference David Theo Goldberg’s book, *Racist Culture: Philosophy and the Politics of Meaning* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1993).

runner Felicia Chischilly, a WIG participant. Her story tells a different experience of boarding schools and connects soccer to family. The story of “The Medicine Arrow” is an Indigenous narrative of re-membering, the power of sports and Indigenous soccer as healing. Importantly, I gather scholarship on sports in Indian boarding schools to demonstrate acts of resistance, refusal, and to reveal the lack of soccer in Native sports literatures.

### **The Medicine Arrow**

Dr. Lawyer Ermenskin Chief Willie Littlechild understands the power of Indigenous sport and advocates for soccer in Native communities. Chief Littlechild’s story is extensive as an advocate at the international level as the first Treaty Indian to receive a law degree and a masters degree in physical education, he presented the Resolution to the U.N. for the North American Indigenous Games in 1990 as a way to restore culture through gathering, playing, and re-membering Indigenous Peoples and culture through sport. While watching the Indigenous soccer match between the Canadian delegation and the Brazilian tribal nation, Canela, he and I spoke in depth about Indigenous sports and soccer’s struggle in Canada. He joyfully remembers a time during World War II the Native’s were beating the British at their own game, when the army came to First Nation reserves for soccer competitions. He remembers, “the British Army Team came on the rez and they got beat. And they (the Aborigines) had played it for fun! And here these guys are very regimented, that’s their sport, nobody should beat them!”<sup>79</sup> For a sport that was just “played” for fun, suddenly the playing field was equalized between the colonizer and the Indigenous People who were playing and beating the colonizer at his own game.

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<sup>79</sup> Wilton Littlechild, personal Interview by author, Palmas, Brazil, October 23, 2015.

Chief Littlechild laughs and continues on, smiling, as he begins to tell me the story of the Sacred Medicine Arrow, what he knows as the reason we were presently celebrating Indigenous Peoples through sport and culture. Honoring my elder and his story, I will tell his story of the Sacred Medicine Arrow in full, using his words as a reference point for the rest of the chapter and entirety of this thesis. This story so happens to be the inspiration for the World Indigenous Games and soccer's major role in the Game's creation. Harmoniously, the storytelling took place while watching the Team Indigenous Canada play on a hot morning in a futebol or football stadium in Palmas, Brazil:

After that (the Native's beating the Army at their own game) like in the 50s, it kind of died down into the 60s. It (soccer) was almost gone, you know in our reserve teams, and then when we started our Indigenous games (North American Indigenous Games). I remember when I presented the Resolutions to have the World Games (in 1977), the first people that came to me- and this is what I'm so, I'm so amazed, I'm just so amazed- the first people to approach me after it was adopted unanimously, the Resolution, was a spiritual leader from Brazil. And he had an arrow that he gave me. He said it was a Medicine Arrow. He said, 'if you're gonna hang it, don't ever hang it unless the arrowhead is pointed down because it's a Medicine Arrow. And when you have anything negative around you, like negative attitudes or whatever, it draws them in and it'll shoot it down into the middle of the Earth.' And he said, 'it dissipates. It's always positive. Keep it positive,' he says.

The value of Chief Littlechild's story provides remarkable context for soccer's significance in ways of life and notions of Indigenous culture and relationships. The magnitude of his story, essentially a Brazilian-First Nations co-creation story of the WIG, connects unique and relatable Indigenous worldviews. The thought that a Medicine Arrow, intended to diffuse negativity and keep things positive, initiated the largest Indigenous global gathering in the twenty-first century is incomprehensible to those who are unfamiliar with Indigenous epistemologies and healing systems.

So anyway, when we started our North American games in 1990 there was a Sacred Run from a sacred site in Wyoming to Canada, to Edmonton where we had the first Games. And that Arrow was put in a bundle, there was a relay team, a sacred run all the way up into Canada and that's what we opened up the ceremonies with. To this day we still have that. And the thing was he (the Brazilian spiritual leader) said, 'we got to have soccer! we got to have soccer! we want you to play soccer!'

Chief Littlechild's joy in realization of the present moment is precisely the healing and decolonial change that returns life and land to Indigenous Peoples through Indigenous soccer.

His great big belly laugh, while we watched the Indigenous women's game between First Nations Canada and Canela of Brazil, was evidence of a shared wellness and practice of healing in relationship each other and the land we played on.

And here we are 38 years later but yes, we have soccer! And we have the World Games! And it came to Brazil. That's what's so amazing! So amazing! We've run with it ever since then, we run with it. I wanted to bring it back, to give it back to the sacred leaders here, but guess what? Air Canada broke it! They broke it. And so, I'm gonna get it fixed, put it in a ceremony and then bring it back or else, have it run at the next World Games (scheduled for Canada 2017). Cause it carries the journey from here (Brazil) to the next Games so we can run with it there. So that story of the Arrow will continue hopefully into the next games.

Be great to have it in North America, hold it in Canada. We have a new government in place. We have a new Prime Minister. We don't know who the new Minister of Sports will be but we do know that the new government is very supportive of First Nations. Previous one wasn't. In fact, I met with him so we tried to have it in Canada but they wouldn't support it at all. Manitobah offered 3.5 million to get it going on the condition that the federal government supports it. Of course they wouldn't.

I was an Ambassador for Winter Olympics, 2010. So we're having meetings in Vancouver during the 2010 Olympics. I met with different Olympic associations. But it was funny because Brazil came to me and said, 'look we're having the World Cup of Soccer and then we're having the Olympics in 2016, wouldn't it be great if the indigenous games were in the middle- were in between?!' (Laughter)

“So and they said, ‘and we’ll host it!’ and I said, ‘What?!’ Cause after all these, “no’s, no’s, no’s, no’s, no’s” right? and then Brazil, going back to the Arrow comes up and says, ‘we’ll do it.’ And I said, ‘holy moly!’ That’s right. So I said, ‘sure that’s why we’re here.’ With their initiatives, seemingly from day one: the idea was there but they put it into action all the way through.

I responded, “they put it into action with the Arrow?” Chief Littlechild smiled looking onto his Nation’s soccer match and replied a prideful, “Yup!” To which I replied, “and now it’s here.”

“It’s gonna return here and then continue the journey to the next one. Cause we have, a sort of sacred run every games that we have and they run with the sacred bundle and the Arrow’s in it. So, and they (Indigenous Brazilians) have a strong belief too. Sometimes in my language (Ermineskin Cree) ‘dance’ for example is ‘ng’bat’tow’in.’ It’s a thanksgiving, they’re thanking grace spirit for blessing you with a healthy body, and you know, then physically you want to be healthy. And it’s interesting that running is a part of that “ng’bat’tow’in” it’s like, you’re offering thanksgiving to creator when you run so it’s a physical and a spiritual exercise in a way. And soccer embodies that the concept of ‘game’ into it. So it’s a very spiritually connected activity and game really. And many of our people run for prayer. When they go for a run they’re praying or they’re meditating. You know what I mean. So we try to promote the concept of the Indigenous games being both physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. And those are the four main elements of our way of life. Which is what’s embodied in the Games.”<sup>80</sup>

Amazingly, as Chief Littlechild expressed, soccer for the Brazilian spiritual leader was a necessity in order for the Arrow to perform its potential healing and create positivity. The power of the Arrow combined with the value of soccer for Indigenous Peoples creates positive healing through the global game’s ability to connect and re-member Indigenous cultures, land, and schelangen.

Association football (soccer) and athletics were the only two sports categorized as adaptations of “western sports” competitions at the inaugural World Indigenous Games (WIG) in October of 2015.<sup>81</sup> As you heard from Chief Littlechild, government support to fund such an

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<sup>80</sup> Littlechild, October 23, 2015.

<sup>81</sup> World Indigenous Games, <http://en.jogosmundiaisindigenas.com/>, accessed May 26, 2016.



event was, and continues to be, necessary. Importantly however, the event was criticized as a media opportunity for the Brazilian government cover up of “PEC 215,” a bill if passed by Congress, that alters the Constitution by strategically blocking recognition, removing Indigenous rights to land, and continue the settler colonial project of genocide.<sup>82</sup> Protests happened daily; tribal boycotts contested government participation and mismanaged protocols. Without minimizing the importance of these protests, the controversial celebration united Indigenous Peoples from the Argentina, Boliva, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, USA, Ethiopia, Finland, French Guiana, Guatemala, Mexico, Mongolia, Nicaragua, Aotearoa New Zealand, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Russia, and Uruguay. As a recognized scholar-athlete, I was fortunate to participate and represent Lummi Nation for Team Turtle Island, or Team USA.<sup>83</sup> The thirteen day event featured ceremonial demonstrations, traditional games, storytelling, and sports competitions. Archery, swimming, canoe races, running, wrestling, log races, spear-throwing, and tug-of-strength were the featured traditional games. Western conceptions of football were acknowledged by the organizers as a purposeful way to celebrate Indigeneity and unify Indigenous Peoples. For some of the participating men’s and women’s teams, this was the first time they played soccer in cleats and uniforms in a stadium setting. The soccer matches were simultaneously a celebration of cultural unity and difference.

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<sup>82</sup> Julie Ruvolo, “Canada vs. Canela,” *Rio Chromoatic*, <http://riochromatic.com/2015/11/canada-vs-canela/>, accessed February, 27, 2016. Sandwiched between the 2014 World Cup and the 2016 Olympics, the *Jogos Indigenas* (WIG), hosted by the Brazilian Ministry of Sports with the UN Development Program (UNDP), came at a crucial time for Brazil’s socio-economic-political crisis and continued environmental and genocidal violence against Indigenous groups of Brazil.

<sup>83</sup> “Turtle Island” is a shared Indigenous name for North America.

The World Indigenous Games, as manifested through the power of the Sacred Medicine Arrow, were more than a celebration of Indigenous sports-culture for its visionaries, like Chief Littlechild, and its participants, like myself and First Nations footballers. The Games are a story of Indigenous continuance and what Gerald Vizenor calls “Native survivance.”<sup>84</sup> As Vizenor defines, “Native survivance is an active sense of presence over absence, deracination, and oblivion, survivance is the continuance of stories, not a mere reaction, however pertinent.”<sup>85</sup> The story of the Games reclaims Indigenous identities from colonial impositions across the great expanse of the globe. For North American Indigenous Peoples, survivors endure histories of assimilations that included sport. Chief Littlechild’s sports story, from his tellings, continues in First Nations United Nations leadership and begins in Canadian residential schools as commissioned by the government and run by the state.

Scholar John Bloome in, *To Show What an Indian Can do*, demonstrates through Indigenous narratives how sports created connectedness, agency and pride for Native boarding school athletes.<sup>86</sup> In North American Indian boarding schools in the United States and Canada, sports were implemented as militaristic attempts of assimilation. Yet, sport became an integral vehicle for a diversity of Indigenous Peoples to remember pride in evolving identities.<sup>87</sup> Bloome explores how sports constructed identities of Native American students during the militarized

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<sup>84</sup> Gerald Vizenor, ed., *Survivance: Narratives of Native Presence* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2008), 1.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>86</sup> John Bloom, *To Show What an Indian Can Do* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000).

<sup>87</sup> Bloom, *To Show What an Indian Can Do*, xii.

education reform of boarding schools from 1879 to 1960.<sup>88</sup> For likes of Richard Henry Pratt and the governmental authorities that ran the institutions, sports were intended to demonstrate obedience, civilizing, and “muscular christianity,” or what Bloome labels “Protestant discipline.”<sup>89</sup> Ultimately, Bloome identifies Native voices and experiences that show how sport built confidence for Native students that helped them navigate dominant society and colonial spaces.

Curious about how sports played a part of Chief Littlechild’s residential school experience, I inquired about his athletic memories. In Bloome’s retelling, along with other boarding school scholarship, I found no mentions of soccer as central to the boarding school sporting experience. Dr. Littlechild says with a smile, “soccer was a part of it, but not really in an organized way, as a team. We played it for fun.”<sup>90</sup> “Fun” is a key ingredient to what Chief Littlechild says is a right to life, his joy and laughter despite his own endurance of colonial abuse is a demonstration of this right. Interestingly, North American soccer is often criticized for its organizing the fun out of the game. I will explore this criticism more from the standpoint of American exceptionalism and inequality in the final chapter, but for now we can consider Chief Littlechild’s perspective about the lack of organization, randomness, or spontaneity as a core element to the beautiful game of soccer.

Soccer, in Chief Littlechild’s memory of of the three residential schools he attended, represented a freedom to play without rules of obedience. His description of soccer as “part of it,

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<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>89</sup> Bloom, *To Show What an Indian Can Do*, xiv.

<sup>90</sup> Littlechild, October 23, 2015.

but not really in an organized way,” shows the presence of the global game in boardings schools but only as a game of fun and freedom, not assimilation. He laughs about a story of an “mean English teacher” that showed up determined to coach soccer but instead found himself on the ice and playing goalie in full-protective hockey gear, where the students were able to “get back at him,” pelting him with puck after puck. Amazingly like the Arrow, Chief Littlechild dissipates negativity using his stories as grounding, finding the positivity in his memories about the struggles of residential school.

Native innovations came with the opportunity of sport. Chief Littlechild continues, “we even created our own games just to have fun, for the freedom of it. We had a game called ‘Indian football.’ Which was, actually, now that I see the comparisons, it’s rugby. Cause we played tackle but we had no equipment.”<sup>91</sup> Philip Deloria describes “Indian football” that involved “kicking and pitching a stuffed deerskin through enormous goals,” a description familiar to that of Chief Littlechild’s “rugby”.<sup>92</sup> Chief Littlechild’s rich memories of sports and toughness remind us of how Natives practiced active agency and resistance. In boarding schools, sports were avenues for fun, something that Dr. Chief Littlechild considers a “basic right of being human.”<sup>93</sup>

Then more seriously he remembers, “hockey saved me from all the abuse.”<sup>94</sup> I sat quietly with his words while we watched the soccer match. My grandfather and generations of elders that survived boarding school never talked about the abuses they experience and the hands of the

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<sup>91</sup> Littlechild, October 23, 2015.

<sup>92</sup> Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places*, 115.

<sup>93</sup> Littlechild, October 23, 2015.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*

education system. Chief Littlechild survived three residential schools, as a standout hockey competitor and accomplished student who later became a lawyer and earned his doctoral degree. At the time of our interview, I had no idea the magnitude of his accomplishments, including 30 years of working with the United Nations, a current position as a commissioner on the “Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada,” and a life dedicated to global Indigenous rights and healing.<sup>95</sup> Dr. Littlechild credits his experience with sports as what taught him endurance and survival. “If you were on a team, you tended to get better meals for example. Meals before everyone else. You were favored. But for me it was an escape from the abuse,” he remembers.<sup>96</sup> Dr. Chief Littlechild’s experience illustrates how sports provided improved social status, greater opportunity, and strategies for coping with experienced and inherited trauma. Despite intentions to colonize and civilize, sports contributed to success in survival, education, and identity for Dr. Chief Littlechild.

Acknowledging the vast experience of boarding school trauma is imperative to understanding intergenerational trauma and methods of healing. Since the seventeenth century and the John Eliot program of missionization to Carlisle’s beginning in the late nineteenth century, hundreds of thousands of Indigenous North Americans were sent to boarding and residential schools, often taken from their tribal homelands to attend distant schools, often far

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<sup>95</sup> The Alberta Order of Excellence, <https://www.lieutenantgovernor.ab.ca/aoe/athletics/willie-littlechild/index.html>, accessed May 31, 2016.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*

from their families and homes.<sup>97</sup> As K. Tsianina Lomawaima (Creek) and Teresa McCarty explain about the diversity of the Indian boarding school experience, “some struggled bitterly. Some suffered in silence. Some succumbed to tuberculosis or influenza and lost their lives. Others flourished and built a new sense of self within a wider world, while preserving Indianness in their hearts.”<sup>98</sup> The preservation of Indianness can be understood through sports identities like Dr. Chief Littlechild’s, the world’s greatest athlete Sac and Fox’s Jim Thorpe, and Dine Navajo runner Felicia Chischilly.<sup>99</sup>

Twenty-nine year-old mother, Diné Felicia Chischilly knows life “born and raised by the government.”<sup>100</sup> In her junior year at Navajo Technical College a dual major in Information Technology and Media and Native Environmental Science, Chischilly resilience is fueled by her motivation to run. Self-proclaimed “boarding school baby”, a three school boarding school alum, two generations after Dr. Chief Willie Littlechild, she offers intimate stories of her experience with trauma and finding healing through sport. I shared the honor of running the barefoot 100 meter race with Felicia Chischilly as a Team Turtle Island, USA teammate at the World Indigenous Games. We also competed together in the tug-of-strength (war) and Felicia also

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<sup>97</sup> Neal Salisbury, “Red Puritans: The ‘praying Indians’ of Massachusetts Bay and John Eliot,” *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 31:1 (January 1974), 28. K. Tsianina Lomawaima and Teresa L. McCarty, “*To remain an Indian: Lessons in Democracy from a Century of Native American Education* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2006), preface. Estimates of Indian Boarding school attendees ranges from tens of thousands to hundreds of thousands.

<sup>98</sup> Lomawaima and McCarty, “*To remain an Indian*,” preface.

<sup>99</sup> Doug Williams, “Jim Thorpe: ‘The Greatest Athlete’ A Century Later”, <http://www.teamusa.org/News/2012/June/11/Jim-Thorpe-The-Greatest-Athlete-A-Century-Later-June-11-2012.aspx>, accessed July 26, 2016.

<sup>100</sup> Felicia Chischilly, personal interview by author, Palmas, Brazil, October 26, 2015.

participated in 8,400 meter race placing sixth overall. Her story is a powerful one and supports Lomawaima and McCarty's statement about the vast array of boarding school experiences. I share her boarding school sports stories as an example of soccer's isolations from Native populations and as evidence for how sports save lives. With Chischilly's bravery and permission, I share our in-depth conversation about her survival in order that we might begin to comprehend the breadth of intergenerational trauma as a result of the settler colonial project on Native American families and women. After enduring a childhood of unconditional love and unfortunate betrayal, Chischilly tells how boarding schools provided a sense of family and comfort that she needed. She shares difficult stories of her mother's endurance as an orphan, young mother, and boarding school survivor. Chischilly told me, "my mom raised me the way she did because she always would tell me she never had a mom and would say, 'I would love to be in your shoes to have a mom.' It always brings tears and i'm grateful for that."<sup>101</sup> Chischilly, iterates a deep passion for running as a healing practice and a crucial part of her identity that saved her life. My conversation with Chischilly was an emotional one rooted in the bravery of her openness. Her vulnerability struck me as incredibly powerful, healing, and as an assertion of her resilience. When I ask, "what does it mean for you to be a runner?" She joyfully responds:

For me to be a runner, it's my life. It's everything. I was brought up with it. I can remember when I was small my mom and dad chasing us out the door to go run. You know, before this, before I actually went to this school I ran at Haskell Indian University and that was in Lawrence, Kansas. And that was in 2005 and 2006. And when I was out there, before I was out there, before I had kids, I was eighteen years old and actually got on their honors. I actually qualified for top fourteen runners, I came in twelfth and I had the time of eighteen-something for three miles. And it's hard stuff to do, you know? And coming from that after having my kids (eight and four years old) and thinking, "I'm never going to run

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<sup>101</sup> Felicia Chischilly, email Interview by author, June 16, 2016.

again for a university.”<sup>102</sup>

But she did run again just like her late uncle predicted. “One day you’re going to be Team USA,” she remembers him saying to which she would respond “no way.”<sup>103</sup> Realizing how his vision of her running success was unfolding as truth, she spoke of him with endearment and pride.

Holding back tears, she honors her uncle with her arrival and participation on Team Turtle Island, USA at the World Indigenous Games:

My uncle passed away when I was a freshman in high school and that was hard. He was the one that helped me run, helped me play basketball, like encouraged me a lot. His name is Larry Curly and he was really an inspiration on me. But on the reservation he didn’t go to school. He didn’t have a degree or anything. He was just my uncle. He didn’t drink or anything, he was just there. And then one day he took his own life. And that was the hardest part. And I was in a boarding school. I was raised in CCS, Calpoint Community school, Fort Wingate High School; that’s a boarding school too. And Haskell Indian Nation University, that’s also a boarding school. Born and raised by the government.<sup>104</sup>

The story of her uncle, his sobriety, and the importance of his presence in Felicia’s life, reminds me of losing the Lummi canoe family leader, my cousin, to suicide. Both men inspired younger generations of Native youth through sport. These incomprehensible and shocking tragedies remind us of the complexities of Native American intergenerational trauma as a result of long histories of oppression.

In considering suicide prevention, Lisa Wexler and Joseph Gone explain the difference between western and Indigenous conceptions of self and personhood. They suggest, “many tribal people define selfhood relationally rather than in terms of individual characteristics. This means

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<sup>102</sup> Chischilly, October 27, 2015.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>104</sup> Chischilly, October 27, 2015.



that they often describe themselves through their kin.”<sup>105</sup> Similar to the identity of a sports team, one cannot distinguish the health of the tribe or community (i.e. team/tribe success and failure, team/tribe physical and mental wellness) as separate from herself. The authors contrast western conceptions of suicide, primarily understood as an individual response to personal struggles, against Native realities of the suicide, “often conceived as the terminal outcome of historic oppression, current injustice, and ongoing social suffering.”<sup>106</sup> I ask Chischilly about her understanding of suicide as intergenerational trauma and the ways sports contribute to her coping. Her response affirms Wexler and Gone’s articulation of self conceptions through kinship relationships via the ability to transfer historical and experienced trauma between generations:

Sports really did help because, actually, I was a victim of suicidal thoughts myself. And I actually attempted. And I actually have the scar right there (pointing to her lower forearm). When I was in high school... and Just like every child, woman, goes through emotional or sexual harassment that we go through. And that was one thing that really scarred my life and I got out of it. You know there’s ways for a woman to outgrow that pain within herself. You either go the bad path, becoming a drunk and an alcoholic, or you continue going and striving and just pushing yourself to keep going. And that’s what I did.

Running helped me in that sense; sports. And through that, it (running) got me through all of that. And just talking. And like the boarding school system, you know. Cause I had my parents who were alcoholics. And my mom wasn’t there to support my feelings. My dad didn’t understand me. I didn’t have a relationship and I have a big family and so my main goal was just, you know, hanging on to those that said they loved me but hurt me in return... That was the way I was raised, until I had to see. If it wasn’t for my sister, who is one year older than me, who actually helped me to get out of that situation, I probably would have went the wrong way. But because we decided to go to boarding school and to never

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<sup>105</sup> Lisa M. Wexler and Joseph P. Gone, “Culturally Responsive Suicide Prevention in Indigenous Communities: Unexamined Assumptions and New Possibilities,” *American Journal of Public Health*, 102:5 (May 2012), 800-806.

<sup>106</sup> Wexler and Gone, “Culturally Responsive Suicide Prevention in Indigenous Communities,” 801.

return... The ladies who were there, and the men who were there- though I was afraid of a lot of men there; I kept my distance- I stayed going to school, I stayed in sports, and it really helped me a whole lot.<sup>107</sup>

Felicia Chischilly's scars of survival are layered symptoms of oppression that result from boarding school isolations, sexual abuse, addictions, and kinship neglect. Her words the one-in-three statistics and confirm sexual violence: "just like *every* child, woman, goes through emotional or sexual harassment that we go through" (emphasis my own). The weight of her perspective strikes a personal cord of frustration of the normalcy around sexual violence against Native women and children.

Later, Felicia shares with me that her trusted and beloved relative, a paraplegic uncle, took advantage of her compassion and repeatedly violated her. She says, "I spent most of my childhood with him, he was like a dad every little girl dreamed of... He taught me all the little things and how to laugh. As a little girl I knew him as my favorite uncle because he paid attention to me... I guess at the age of six or seven, I can't remember, he had gotten too close." She carried this dark secret in fear her uncle would kill her older sister. His threat coupled with confusion and shame stopped Felicia from telling her parents. Eventually the secret was released by the bravery of her own sister to speak out against her uncle was later convicted. She perceives her parents' guilt, manifest into alcoholism, as a result of subjecting their daughters to abuse saying, "I blame the times that they (parents) slipped away for alcohol from me being assaulted. This is because they would leave me with my uncle."

Remembering Sarah Deer's shocking perspective of Native women's experience with rape, "not if they are sexually assaulted, but when," I respond to Chischilly with empathy. Lifted

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<sup>107</sup> Chischilly, October 26, 2015.

up by my WIG teammate's vulnerability and visibility I reply with gratitude, "thank you for sharing that with me, that was really personal. I relate in different ways, in terms of being a woman. Having to go through rape and violence and sexual abuse and having to acknowledge it in order to heal it." Sexual abuse for Chischilly caused a lack in self-worth and forced her to question her relationships belonging, requires continued acknowledgement of her scars by speaking openly and helping others in order to practice forgiveness for herself and others.

Mentoring other Native girls that endure sexual assault is a duty for Felicia Chischilly:

Well you gotta tell somebody. 'If you don't tell, I will tell.' I was like, 'I'm not afraid to tell no more. Because I lived that life for about six years. Being quiet and staying to myself and it's not a good life.' I was like, 'if you don't tell, if you don't say something about it, you're going to try and kill yourself like I did.' There's better ways and with that, finding how to believe in God. I always say that, 'we all believe in the same God. Despite how we pray to God, name it, we always pray to the same One. And don't let no one ever put down how you believe or how you think that He exists because it's not up to them. It's up to you and your being.' And finding Him, finding God, and asking for forgiveness- even though the person did that to me- I ask for forgiveness within myself.

Chischilly's compassion and forgiveness are a result of her determination to live a better life, free of shame and guilt. Mothering, running, sports, education, and faith are her practices of survivance and schelangen. Openly, she expresses human unity in prayer regardless of religious affiliation, advocating for a personal understanding and relationship with God, no matter how or in what language you pray. Chischilly says, "every time I tell my my story I feel empowered and thankful for life."<sup>108</sup>

Prayerful gratitude for Felicia Chischilly comes in the form of running as an offering to God or Creator. Chief Littlechild agrees saying running is a "prayer of thanksgiving," for the

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<sup>108</sup> Chischilly, June 16, 2016.

physical, mental, emotional and spiritual elements of wellness.<sup>109</sup> Running is an essential part of the beautiful game of football and one of the reasons Chief Littlechild describes soccer as culturally relevant. “Soccer embodies the concept of ‘game’ into it. So it’s a very spiritually connected activity and game really. And many of our People run for prayer,” explains Chief Littlechild.<sup>110</sup> Indigenous soccer embodies spiritual connection that remembers prayer and gratitude.

Felicia Chischilly expresses the lack of opportunity to play soccer, supporting the idea that soccer’s contained from Native American populations in the United States, particularly in Navajo territory. Felicia says how soccer is not accessible on the Navajo reservation where basketball dominates the sports landscape. “There are some soccer teams but where I went to high school there actually was a soccer team there but that’s closer to the city (Gallup).”<sup>111</sup> From her experience, playing organized soccer requires access to metropolitan-city culture that strategically isolates Native People to the rez, with social and geographic limits of access.

I am impressed to hear, despite its containment, that she has a relationship with soccer, grounded in kinship, and family gatherings. “When we have our big dinners with my family, and to get all the kids involved and to experience, you know the rush? We play soccer.” I nod my head knowingly, thinking about the adrenaline competition and soccer creates. She smiles back at me and says, “so we actually have all my nieces and nephews together, we make the little things,” she motions with her hands. “Goals,” I remind her. She nods and continues, “I don’t

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<sup>109</sup> Littlechild, October 23, 2015.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>111</sup> Chischilly, October 26, 2015.

really know how to play soccer but we know the goals and we know it gets rough. And we sometimes harm each other but you know? Rez life! It's rez life. It's rez ball!"<sup>112</sup> We end our conversation with laughter, understanding precisely the potential of "rez ball" means.

Navajo-Santa Clara Pueblo journalist Kim Baca says, "soccer is becoming the new rez ball" in her article about Indigenous soccer in San Felipe Pueblo, New Mexico. Indigenous soccer has taken off in New Mexico Pueblos and extended Native communities over the past decade after Navajo-San Felipe-Isleta PGA Golf Pro, Notah Begay III saw the game's potential after spending time in Europe. Begay's NB3 foundation, whose mission is to reduce Native American childhood obesity and type-2 diabetes, build a soccer field and community center in San Felipe. Since the fields arrival, a culture of Indigenous soccer is nurtured and celebrated in New Mexico Native gatherings. Southwest Youth Services in Albuquerque, New Mexico run a soccer project with a mission "to partner with American Indian communities and organization to grow youth soccer programs, promoting health and wellness, youth leadership and life skills."<sup>113</sup> Kim Baca gives voice to San Felipe Pueblo volunteer coach Mike Ansera who explains, "in the village growing up, it's always been about baseball, basketball or softball. Now it's soccer and it's become second nature." "Rez ball" is a term generally assigned to basketball but like Felicia Chischilly's experiences in the joy of family togetherness, and even roughness, soccer's remembering makes it, "the new rez ball" according to Kim Baca. Baca explains how soccer's "rez

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<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>113</sup> Southwest Youth Services, "Soccer Project," <http://www.sysnm.org/soccerproject9660.html>, accessed June 2, 2016.

ball” brought the 3,000-member Pueblo closer together despite generations of colonial attempts of village dismemberment.<sup>114</sup>

Prayer running and the kinship connection of Indigenous soccer exemplifies Native understandings of balanced wellness. As an organizer of the WIG, Chief Littlechild explains, “we try to promote the concept of the Indigenous games being physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. Those are the four main elements of our way of life.” The elements of schelangen, according to Chief Littlechild, are a basic human right. He advocates for “the right to play” and “the right to have fun!” Or, he says, humanness inherently means, “the right to be happy.’ Cause that’s what you’re doing. You’re playing and you’re happy. That should be a right for every child, you know what I mean? For every person!” For boarding school survivors, Felicia Chischilly and Dr. Lawyer Chief Willie Littlechild, access to sport created an understanding of wellness, identity, and way of life. Both enthusiastically agree the way soccer opens up opportunities of balanced wellness for our Native Peoples.

The language of soccer can be experienced as a tool of resurgence and knowledge transmission. My sentiment of soccer as a way of understanding, can best be expressed by scholar Tamir Bar-on:

Soccer is a pedagogical tool that can teach us about life and death, as well as the world, irrespective of one’s nationality, culture, faith, age, gender, or sexual orientation. Soccer is a mirror of our world and an expression of our greatest tragedies and hopes. Soccer can open our eyes and hearts to new ways of seeing and being, perhaps toward greater knowledge and

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<sup>114</sup> Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o describes African tribal dismemberment as a divisive tool of colonialism, aimed at destroying Indigenous cultures by dividing families, clans, tribes and villages, in order to erase memories and language systems of identity. Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o, *Something Torn and New: African Renaissance* (New York: BasicCivitas Books, 2009), 28.

even wisdom. If we examine the world through soccer we learn lessons about human nature, leadership, discipline and hard work, talent, luck, time, rules, values, ethics, passion and reason, individuality and teamwork, winning and losing, friendship, childhood, love, culture, politics, business and marketing, violence, spirituality, life meaning, joy, philosophy, art and literature, and social struggle.<sup>115</sup>

Bar-on and Dr. Chief Littlechild express the sentiment of *schelangen*, or way of life, in their descriptions of soccer's understanding. Bar-on, for example, explains soccer as "ways of seeing and being, perhaps toward greater knowledge and even wisdom."<sup>116</sup> Dr. Chief Littlechild reflects this understanding through his descriptions of the Indigenous games. He describes the inseparability of sports and culture reflective of the "four main elements" (physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual) as a practice of *schelangen*. Ameliorating barriers to the world's game so more Native Americans have access to sport, creates more visibility that supports the "right to play, the right to have fun and the right to be happy." Making sense of football as a language of wisdom that Native youth re-member to make sense of life as a healing journey, will empower the "right to happiness." Playing soccer then, is an educational practice of wellness that adapts to and aligns with cultural memories that transcend time and space.

This understanding returns us to the roots of football and what should be low cost accessibility. "It could be zero actually," says Dr. Chief Littlechild, "because you can play barefooted, you can make your own ball, you can make your own net, and that's it! And you're out there on the field, anywhere. Kids find spaces out in the jungles and the streets, you know

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<sup>115</sup> Tamir Bar-On, *The World Through Soccer: The Cultural Impact of a Global Sport* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014), xv.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*

what I mean?!"<sup>117</sup> From the reservations of North America, to the jungles of America to the south, to the streets of the world, football's healing properties can be found everywhere across the globe in every environment, bridging Indigenous ways of life into colonized space. Football's access and integration into tribal communities re-members ways of life, refiguring fun and play because all you need is a ball. Low cost innovations of foot-balls come from the most humble of resources like woven flora, plastic bags, or worn socks. Football engineering requires imaginative minds, resourcefulness, and the determination to play; perfect for young, artistic Indigenous minds.

The Medicine Arrow and its grounding properties as it travels across hemispheres. The beautiful game travels with the Arrow, creating playing fields for Indigenous footballers from North and South America. The Medicine Arrow, a gift from Brazilian elder to Chief Willie Littlechild, connects Indigenous identities through sport and soccer. The Arrow reminds us to defend Indigenous ways of life and land, Brazilian and North American. The Medicine Arrow re-members generations of boarding schools survivors in North American dissipating the negativity of abuse and intergenerational trauma into the positivity of hockey, running, basketball, soccer, and rez ball. Because the Arrow broke and now must be fixed, seemingly, the work of the Medicine Arrow is not complete and is not ready to return to Brazil. The Arrow returns to North America to be repaired in ceremony, in order that it continues to offer its Indigenous medicine through sport. Canada, will host the next World Indigenous Games, where runners will carry the Arrow in another sacred run. Runner boarding school scholar Felicia Chischilly so bravely granted me permission to share her story of survivance. The visibility of Felicia's story grants

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<sup>117</sup> Bar-On, *The world through soccer*, xv.



survivors of suicide and sexual violence permission to speak openly to seek forgiveness and healing. Similar to the healing properties of the Medicine Arrow that transfer negativity into positive life experiences, sharing stories are offerings of forgiveness that release pain from trauma through words and actions of acknowledgement. These actions look like healing practices of hockey, running, soccer and higher education for Chief Littlechild, Felicia Chischilly and family. As an advocate for healing through sport, I take Chief Littlechild's encouragement to create low cost Indigenous soccer to heart, a creation of existence in First Nations Canada. We will see in the next chapter how the First Nations investment into Indigenous soccer as a way of life for their Indigenous youth, manifests into community healing and global visibility.

### CHAPTER III: Xulsimalt, The One Who Leaves a Mark

The First Nations Indigenous soccer culture spans across seven generations of athletes moving through segregated spaces of colonial control into Indigenous spaces of resilience and resurrection. The resurrection of the story about Snuneymuxw soccer legend Xulsimalt Harry Manson exemplifies the importance of visibility for Indigenous North Americans in order to heal. Moving from invisibility to visibility activates memory of life's ceremony of belonging for Indigenous Peoples and in this case, on the soccer pitch. Twenty-first century First Nations footballers continue the legacy of Xulsimalt's heroics as World Indigenous Games women's champions. Inspired by their achievement, I listen to the stories of young footballers, their elders, and family members of the First Nations hero that paved the way, leaving his mark to renew and reconnect Native life to land through Indigenous soccer.

This chapter is inspired by my First Nations relatives to the north and our shared Coast Salish identities, connected by canoe and football. In order to situate colonial-Indigenous relations in British Columbia and the ways sport built complex social spaces of engagement and resistance, I will review a key text by Dakelh Nak'azdli First Nation scholar Allan Downey and Historian Susan Neylan on twentieth-century "Indian Sports Days" in Coast Salish territory, British Columbia.<sup>118</sup> Next, I introduce you to Native Football Indian Association (NIFA) visionary and coach Cowichan Kwaliquinum Dano Thorne. Coach Thorne talks about the importance of connection and reconnection for Native Peoples after generations of

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<sup>118</sup> Downey and Neylan, "'Raven Plays Ball,'" *Canadian Journal of History*, 50:3 (Winter 2015), 442-468.

westernization. 'Namgis Alert Bay elder Bill Wasden and Coach Thorne work hard to build soccer programs to maintain their Indigenous culture of soccer. Bill Wasden shares Alert Bay's soccer story, its arrival by British military ships, and "the challenge of walking in both worlds," colonial and Indigenous. Next, I speak with some of the World Indigenous Games Champions, listening to how soccer engages their way of life and motivates positivity and health. These First Nations footballers follow the trailblazing footsteps of Xulsimalt, the one who leaves his mark. Uncovering Xulsimalt's mark required decolonial imagining from B.C. soccer scholar Robert Jannings who experienced his own healing while uncovering Xulsimalt's soccer accolades and community contributions. Through the following stories we observe the ways Indigenous soccer creates ceremonial healing and opportunities to world discovery and higher education.

Dakelh Nak'azdli First Nation scholar Allan Downey and Historian Susan Neylan write an enticing trickster story that includes Lummi participation in 1919 titled, "Raven Plays Ball: Situating 'Indian Sports Days' within Indigenous and Colonial Spaces in the Twentieth-Century Coast British Columbia."<sup>119</sup> Notably, this article is one of the few pieces of scholarship where the authors acknowledge soccer in relationship to Native Americans and First Nations Aboriginal communities in a contemporary understanding of the world's game. The authors argue that sports generated opportunities of cross-cultural connection and colonial-Indigenous engagement that served both colonial agendas of Indigenous surveillance and Native agendas of cultural promotion and resistance to assimilation.<sup>120</sup> For colonial authority, sports were viewed as tools

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<sup>119</sup> Downey and Neylan, "Raven Plays Ball," 456. I was thrilled to read of Lummi's participation in these games that included soccer. My tribe's inclusion supports my method of decolonizing the colonial border in the context of North American Indigenous soccer framework.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid*, 444.

of assimilation that enforced tactics of civilizing while simultaneously fetishizing Indigenous Peoples and performance of culture. The competitions included canoeing, lacrosse, baseball, soccer and other sporting practices and importantly for the Native communities provide a space for reconnecting and resurgence.<sup>121</sup> The Indigenous sports story, a “Raven” trickster tale as told by Downey and Neylan, situates “Indian Sports Days” as a racialized space that created visibility for Coast Salish Native assertions of identity despite the explicit colonial intention to civilize Native Peoples. In alignment with Chief Willie Littlechild’s understanding of sport as a balanced culture of wellness the authors suggest, “when we see ‘traditional’ games are manifestations of *culture* rather than merely as forms of leisure entertainment, the reorientation of western-style sports such as soccer or basketball to Indigenous cultural norms certainly fit within the holistic understanding of physical culture.”<sup>122</sup> Indigenous soccer along with other western sports adaptations are re-orientations, re-memberings, or re-figurings of ways of life that inherently align with Indigenous communities daily practices and ways of life.

Amendments to the Indian Act of 1876, enforced banning Indian ways of life like Indigenous sport, song, dance, and potlatch ceremonies.<sup>123</sup> “Non-Indigenous physical practices have been naturalized as the standard of “civility,” whereas Indigenous activities have been re-defined as “savage” and “exotic” and subsequently banned or deemed to be entertainment,” explain Downey and Neyland in their retelling of the Indian Sports Days. The authors center Raven, a trickster character, who is a symbolic to their analysis of Natives Peoples during Indian

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<sup>121</sup> Downey and Neylan, “Raven Plays Ball,” 443.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, 447.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*

Sports Days because the trickster character, like Raven or Coyote, delivers moral lessons and demonstrate consequences of breaking boundaries.<sup>124</sup> Tricksters, who at times are humorous trouble makers, also play protagonists with spiritual esteem, doing good for others while overcoming “human” lessons like greed, jealousy, envy, and selfish individualism.<sup>125</sup> These trickster tales are often told to young children to demonstrate ways to behave, or not to behave, and act. Raven, in the case of “Indian Sports Days”, represents the Native protagonist that subverts the colonial agenda while “playing along,” and reconnecting ways of life and cultural practices. Downey and Neyland show how Native People were able to make visible and remember their songs and dances during “Indian Sports Days” cultural showcases. Squamish elder and “Indian Sports Days” participant, Paits’mauk Dave Jacobs identifies how this sports space was crucial to continuing their way of life saying, “it was a way that our people could communicate with each other on different things (like language and songs) because you couldn’t be jailed for gathering at a sport event but you could be jailed for gathering at a potlatch.”<sup>126</sup> Jacob’s brilliance, like that of Ravens and other “Indian Sports Days” participants, saw the opportunity to stand firmly in Indigenous identity, negotiating colonial spaces while remembering Indigenous schelangen to survive. The renewal and return to ceremonial practices that negated colonial punishment rejuvenated Indigenous identities in colonial-Indigenous sports spaces of the twentieth century.

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<sup>124</sup> Downey and Neylan, “Raven Plays Ball,” 443, footnote 2.

<sup>125</sup> *I*Downey and Neylan, “Raven Plays Ball,” 443, footnote 2.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid*, 457.

By the end of the twentieth century, First Nation Cowichan footballer-coach Dano Thorne formed the Native Indian Football Association (NIFA), based out of Vancouver, B.C. Coming from a lineage of soccer players, brother, sister-in-laws, nieces, and nephews, Coach Thorne was bothered by the lack of opportunities in soccer for Aboriginal players so he decided to do something about it and created NIFA. Thorne deals with regular racism in the world of soccer acknowledging the colonial barriers to the game that were as deliberate as Indigenous players being dis-allowed to participate in non-Native leagues. “Things are starting to open up; the barriers,” Coach Thorne says encouragingly. “That’s why our Native tournaments exist because we weren’t allowed to play in the mainstream leagues. We weren’t allowed to play against the non-Natives. That’s why.”<sup>127</sup> The same decade as NIFA’s creation, in 1996, the Canadian government closed that last Indian residential school.<sup>128</sup> A number of residential school survivors and their descendants, who inherit the intergenerational trauma from the residential school abuses, now participate in NIFA. Unifying with other Indigenous Peoples and participants in the world’s game of soccer, Coach Thorne reflects on the importance of finding identity again through the injustices of settler colonialism:

Boarding schools in the U.S., residential schools in Canada, likewise in Australia, New Zealand and Brazil, we all share the same story of having our culture taken away from us. And when our families are broken because our kids have been shipped away to school to become more westernized, colonized... So when all those dreams stopped because we were told not to be Indian or First Nations, a Brazilian Indigenous person all those things, were blinded. Because we’re not allowed to speak our language, practice our songs, our dances, and our dreams stopped. And that was one of the things that I think is very important of multi-sport games for our people, is reconciliation with ourselves, and finding our

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<sup>127</sup> Dano Thorne, phone interview by author, December 19, 2015.

<sup>128</sup> Cindy Blackstock, “Residential Schools: Did they Really Close or Just Morph Into Child Welfare?” *Indigenous Law Journal*, 6:1 (January 2007), 72.

identity again. Like our Indian Names, you know? Kwa'liquinum is my name, my great uncle's name, 150 years ago, and before him. So it's important to be connected, or reconnected, that's what's important."<sup>129</sup>

Cultural connectivity and remembering our names and language is of top priority to Coach Kwa'liquinum Dano Thorne who's name means "to record our memory." Coach Thorne says he has a good memory, a trait of high value as a storyteller, keeper and practitioner of ancestral knowledge. Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o demands, "no language has a monopoly as keeper of memory, and that all memories contribute to the meeting point of human victory."<sup>130</sup> The biggest victory for Coach Kwa'liquinum, would come twenty-five years after his determination to create Indigenous space in the game of soccer. I will tell the stories of the victory after first remembering the legacies they follow.

First Nations Alert Bay elder and NIFA coach and contributor, Bill Wasden, born in 1944, explains the culture of soccer as a way of life for his Native community. According to Wasden, football arrived in Alert Bay, British Columbia, his ancestral village, in 1914, with the British Navy.<sup>131</sup> The navy requested the local Aboriginals assemble a team for a match. The game engaged and intrigued First Nations villages throughout B.C. and spread through the tribal villages as a re-remembering of cross-cultural engagement. Wasden explains, "the government didn't like tribal warfare so, this became our tribal warfare. And the greatest soccer players were the greatest warriors. It's beyond competition!"<sup>132</sup> Soccer is a cultural expression and way of life

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<sup>129</sup> Thorne, Lummi Nation, July 2015.

<sup>130</sup> Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, *Something Torn and New*, 151.

<sup>131</sup> Bill Wasden, personal interview by author. Palmas, Brazil, October 24, 2015.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*

for Alert Bay and First Nations competitors. Lost warfare is an aspect of cultural oppression for Wasden. Soccer for Wasden, re-members the exhilaration of “warfare” and provides a field for intertribal conflict-resolution. Indigenous soccer continues a legacy and reorientation of schlenagen for First Nations Peoples of Alert Bay and beyond.

The pride Wasden carries of his late son beams from his heart, speaking from endearment, heartache, and fatherly love. His son excelled in soccer, beyond the Alert Bay village to play in Scotland with the infamous F.C. Glasgow Rangers and Motherwell F.C. Reflecting on losing his son too early through his young successful football career he explains, “it’s really hard to walk in both cultures. Our ancestors, our elders tell us, ‘you forget about the dancing and the singing and you get to the university and you learn about them so that when the fight starts you’ll be able to fight it.’”<sup>133</sup> Prioritizing western education over the Indigenous ceremonial practice of song and dance is a strategy of survival as experienced by his elders. For Wasden, prioritizing education means prioritizing soccer. Walking in both Native culture and colonial culture is a constant negotiation and a sacrifice and refiguring of identity for Native Peoples.

Ancestral-elder knowledge is held in the highest value in Indigenous knowledge systems. Wasden’s elder knowledge to “forget about the dancing and the singing,” demonstrates the negotiation of sacrificing culture in place of survival. Sacrificing one’s language, ceremonial practices, and ways of healing causes misunderstandings of identity and ways of being that result in trauma. Wasden remembers the trauma of Indian institutionalized education saying, “we’re the last generation of residential school. We weren’t allowed to sing dance or do any of those things.

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<sup>133</sup> Wasden, October 24, 2015.



Language was beaten out of us even in the public schools.” His accounts of abuse are common in Native retellings of the residential school experience.

Like the Raven trickster tale of “Indian Sports Days,” Wasden recalls Raven-like game-strategies grounded in the re-membering of his Native language on football pitch. Wasden remembers, “we could speak our language on the field though. Of course it threw off the next tribe.”<sup>134</sup> Whereas speaking his Native language off-the-field was subject to colonial regulation, speaking his language on the pitch was permitted. This language re-membering not only gave Wasden’s side an advantage over their tribal opponents, but also rebuilt pride in Alert Bay identity. Restoring Native language to gathering spaces of colonial jurisdiction, like soccer fields, reclaims the land in the Indigenous way of relationality, like a familiar relative who generously provides the opportunity to play. Inter-tribal Indigenous soccer competition is acknowledged as an intergenerational heritage and inherent part of the First Nations culture of re-membering. In Wasden’s soccer story, the soccer field is a space of resurgence to re-figure culture, speak ancestral language, decolonize, and re-member tribal identities.

In 2014 and 2015, after 110 years of invisibility, the late Snuneymuxw Harry Xulsimalt Manson accomplished what no one before him has: he entered the Canadian Soccer Hall of Fame and Canadian Sports Hall of Fame as the first Indigenous footballer ever.<sup>135</sup> The visibility of his heroics inspired a family and Nation’s healing, even in his death. Ancestral wisdom continues to remind us that the lessons live in the land and ways of life that we recraft to make sense of belonging. In the case of this ancestor, Xulsimalt, whose name translates to the “one who leaves

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<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>135</sup> Canadian Sports Hall of Fame, “Honored Members,” <http://www.sportshall.ca/stories.html?proID=570&catID=all>, accessed May 31, 2016.

his mark,” refigures generations of Indigenous identity leaving his legendary mark with a soccer ball in the early 1900’s. The Indigenous mark went invisible after being killed by a train on his way to town from his tribal village to get medicine for his newborn son. The racialized colonial damaged body narrative influenced the coroner inquest by writing him off as a “drunken Indian” and referred to Xulsimalt as “it”.<sup>136</sup> Prior to awareness of his footballing legacy in 2014, as uncovered by soccer historian Robert Janning, this derogatory colonial commentary re-traumatized his descendants, like his grandson Gary Xulsimalt Manson, who would later search for ancestral understandings of identity and ways of life. Once revealed, the truth about his footballing heroics initiated intergenerational healing for his family and community.

In a colorful podcast called, “Harry Manson: The Story of a Nation,” BBC journalist Sarah Murkerrins visits Snuneymuxw, the tribal homeland of Xulsimalt to investigate his soccer legacy.<sup>137</sup> In 1901, Xulsimalt, along with another Aboriginal player became the first Aboriginal players to compete in a Euro-Canadian soccer league. Having scored the game winning goal to win the “Grand Challenge Cup,” Xulsimalt etched his name into Canadian sports history.<sup>138</sup> Against racialized tension, Xulsimalt’s heroics imprinted Indigenous soccer identity in Coast Salish First Nations. In Murkerrin’s podcast on Xulsimalt’s legacy, she shows how stories and cultural re-figurings are “part of the healing process for past indignities” of cultural genocide that

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<sup>136</sup> Robert Janning, *Westcoast Reign: The British Columbia Soccer Championships, 1892-1905* (Vancouver: BallBoy Press, 2012); Julie Chadwick, “‘Xulsimalt’ broke racial barriers playing soccer,” published July 6, 2015, <http://www.nanaimodailynews.com/news/321777271.html?mobile=true>, accessed, July 26, 2016.

<sup>137</sup> Sarah Murkerrins, “Harry Manson: The Story of a Nation,” <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p02vn5fq>, accessed December, 2014.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*

“cut very deep.”<sup>139</sup> Through the heroic story of Harry Xulsimalt Manson, a Nation re-members pride and practices intergenerational healing in a visible reassertion of Native identity.

Gary Xulsimalt Manson, the grandson of the late Harry Xulsimalt Manson, also a residential school survivor, practices soccer as his life refuge. Gary himself survived physical, emotional, and sexual abuse in residential school that he says affected his life negatively, through self-hatred and low self-esteem, anger and addiction. Manson describes his understanding of intergenerational trauma saying, “suppression, creates a history of not liking yourself. You question why did it happen? When you take a People’s children away, it’s hard to stand up and be proud.”<sup>140</sup> Lost children, pride, and dignity generate sentiments of failure and questions of belonging. Directly resulting from his grandfather’s early death, Manson’s father, uncles and aunties were forced into residential school where his uncle was killed from physical punishment. To find his healing Gary turns back to his culture in order to serve his children.

Gary Xulsimalt Manson lives at home in the Snuneymuxw Village and coaches Snuneymuxw Sniper Soccer Team that competes in the all-Native tournament league. As a deliberate form of resurgence and ancestral remembering, Gary composed a traditional hand-drum song in his language, translated to “Excitement,” strategically for Indigenous youth soccer games. Gary claims this cultural re-figuring was a way “to bring culture toward my children because they wouldn’t really come towards the culture but they played soccer.”<sup>141</sup> Indigenous

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<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>140</sup> Gary Xulsimalt Manson, “Harry Manson: The Story of a Nation,” Interview with Sarah Murkerrins. *BBC World*, publish July 2, 25, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p02vn5fq>, accessed December, 2015.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*

songs are stories that transmit knowledge and confirm understandings of identity. Gary utilizes soccer space to transmit cultural knowledge through song and ceremony.

Re-envisioning everyday acts and Indigenous practices, like singing hand drum songs at soccer games, is what Cherokee scholar Jeff Corntassel explains creates pathways of reconnection for Indigenous ways of life as deliberate acts of resurgence and decolonization.<sup>142</sup> In Corntassel's powerful essay, "Re-envisioning resurgence: Indigenous pathways to decolonization and sustainable self-determination," he writes:

the daily acts of renewal, whether through prayer, speaking your language, honoring your ancestors, etc., are the foundations of resurgence. It is through this renewal process that commitments are made to reclaim and restore cultural practice that have been neglected and/or disrupted.<sup>143</sup>

Where Bill Wasden was forced to sacrifice identity, Gary Xulsimant Manson returns honor to his ancestors through the renewal of song, language, and ceremonial practice on the soccer pitch. Indigenous soccer provides visibility, reconnection, and space for remembering to generate wellness through "stories that sustain us and ensure our continuity as peoples."<sup>144</sup>

Importantly, Gary Xulsimant Manson recognized soccer as a space to integrate ancestral culture and teachings and ground for Native innovations and memory. "Excitement," the Snuneymuxw soccer victory song re-members culture through Indigenous soccer and inevitably heals generations of soul-wounds. Ceremonial healing happens in gatherings, song, dance, and now soccer. Re-implementing song into the Indigenous soccer culture provides a level of healing

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<sup>142</sup> Jeff Corntassel, "Re-envisioning resurgence: Indigenous pathways to decolonization and sustainable self-determination," *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society*, 1:1 (2012), 88.

<sup>143</sup> Corntassel, "Re-envisioning resurgence," 89.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*

and Indigenous pride that reaches the youth at a intergenerational level of memory. Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o reminds us that, “a people without memory are in danger of losing their soul.”<sup>145</sup> Reinstating memory of song and ceremony subvert additional soul-wounding, returns pride, and instills a sense of belonging. “The pride!” Gary Xulsimalt’s sister Loretta Manson exclaims. She continues, “...something to be proud of! We didn’t know we had this hero in our family!”<sup>146</sup> Making Xulsimalt’s soccer story visible, was medicine that initiated a century of healing, renewal, and victory for his First Nations community.

Victory transcends generations of First Nations footballers from the legendary “mark” in the Canadian Sport Hall of Fame, through the on-the-pitch tactics of Alert Bay’s language strategy, to the fields of the World Indigenous Games where Coach Dano Thorne and Elder Bill Wasden led their team to a victory of culture. Coach Dano Thorne explains, “we use all of our cultural beliefs to empower us to transition to new levels.”<sup>147</sup> Re-membering cultural beliefs of balanced wellness, being spiritual, mental, emotional and physical, through soccer encourages the “transition,” to new experiences of accomplishment. Traveling to new places, exchanging identity practices with other Indigenous cultures, and playing your favorite game across colonial barriers, are the “new levels” of success Thorne is referring to for NIFA’s Team Indigenous Canada.

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<sup>145</sup> Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o, *Something Torn and New*, 151.

<sup>146</sup> Loretta Manson, “Harry Manson: The Story of a Nation,” Interview with Sarah Murkerrins. *BBC World*, publish July 2, 25, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p02vn5fq>, accessed December, 2015.

<sup>147</sup> Dano Thorne, phone interview by author, December 15, 2015.

On a list of thirty-two women's teams, the U.S.A. was absent but because of NIFA, Team Indigenous Canada represented First Nations Aboriginals and Indigenous North Americans.<sup>148</sup> Team Indigenous Canada comprised of Mohawk players from Kahnawake, Akwesasne, and Kanesatake Nations in Ontario and Kwakwaka'wakw Nation in British Columbia. A number of the players met for the first time this trip but most had played with a handful of NIFA participants from their tribal nation or region. Their team reminded me of my experiences in the Olympic Development Program (ODP), where talent, attitude, and access helped achieve selection to an elite roster of players, most of whom had not played together prior to a number of tournament games.

Watching the women's games in Brazil a few things stuck out: first, Team Indigenous Canada clearly had the advantage in the organizational aspect of football tactics under FIFA's laws of the game. Second, many of their tribal opponents, lived the game of football, but in a much different context. For example, the first time many teams wore proper soccer uniforms and soccer cleats was in the WIG competitions. Many of Team Indigenous Canada's opponents were extremely skilled but lacked the team tactics seen in FIFA style football, like how to advance the ball up the field and team defensive strategies. I imagined many of the women played soccer in their perspective villages but rarely, if ever, on regulation pitches with regulations goals, or rules of time, etc. I experienced the difference between soccer's western regulations and Indigenous remembering of futebol during the World Cup Brazil with the Tatuyo Tribe in their home village (a boat ride down the Rio Negro from Manaus in Amazonia rainforest). The tribe absolutely

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<sup>148</sup> The Canadian men's Indigenous Team also registered a team but asked Team Turtle Island, Team USA men (who had never played soccer in their lives) to help field a team to meet the requirement of eleven players.

loved the game, gathering to play on cleared out terrain with handmade goals from small tree logs where they played barefoot. The skill level varied with some remarkable talent. The WIG competitions were less about winning and more about participation, cross-cultural engagement, and of course playing football with Indigenous Peoples from all over the world.

The sense of humility of the Indigenous football participants was refreshing in an unAmerican way that focused less on winning and more on the pleasure and gratitude of playing together. In speaking with some players from Team Indigenous Canada about their life and love of soccer, sentiments of soccer as a healthy space for playing and connecting are evident. Cutting straight to why she chooses soccer as her outlet one of the players offers, “where I live it’s pretty bad, drinking and driving.”<sup>149</sup> The Akwesasne Indigenous footballer I call “Striker” continues, “I just really like playing. It’s a good outcome even if it’s a loss.”<sup>150</sup> Winning is not everything, playing is. Striker’s statement speaks to the power of playing through trauma of alcohol related addictions rife with devastations of drinking and driving, all of which are symptoms of historical trauma. Regardless of victory or defeat, her description shows how being part of a collective group or team guarantees a good outcome. “You still get to say you played your favorite sport,” she explains with an endearing smile.<sup>151</sup> Participation in soccer is of high value for Striker because it provides an outlet of optimism with positive outcomes intuitively designed to help overcome barriers of historical trauma by elevating self-esteem and building a sense of belonging.

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<sup>149</sup> Striker, group Interview by author. Palmas, Brazil, October 25, 2015.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>151</sup> Striker, October 25, 2015.

In addition to the rewards of winning, learning to lose is an important piece of resilience for Indigenous footballers. In a troubled environment, football provides a safe and healthy outlet for physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual balance. The Kahnawake player, I call “Lefty,” explains that soccer is “the only thing I look forward to doing. When I was younger I use to get into a lot of trouble. Soccer kept me busy and stuff. It kept me out of trouble.” Lefty makes it clear that soccer keeps her accountable to herself and to her team. Belonging to a soccer team empowers her to avoid trouble. Accountability to teammates and guidance from coaches boost her self-esteem when facing life’s inevitable mistakes. She says “if you mess up, someone’s always there to tell you what to do next and how to change and stuff like that. It stopped me from doing (trails off)... being committed to a team and going to all the practice and games, it’ll stop you from doing other things.”<sup>152</sup> Although Lefty does not define “other things,” she implies that soccer keeps her on a valuable path of positive choices. Accountability to someone other than ourselves, gives us reason to do better for a collective body. Being part of a team means one fulfills an important role for a greater body people. This purpose fuels drive to make good choices for the betterment of the community.

The healthy influence of the game is also understood through the captain Lacey’s experience. She is a Kwakwaka’wakw First Nations, mother and wife, who explains how soccer provides balance and understanding in her life. Her words show how the game transcends the pitch into the happiness of her work and home. Lacey’s contribution translates to a greater sense of belonging:

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<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*



Soccer provides teamwork, family, valuing one another, sense of belonging. Like I said I have a family on the field, I have a family to go home to at night. And then I have a work family. Soccer is a balance. It grounds me sometimes. Especially when I've lost that balance it's hard on my family. My husband said, "you have to drop back on something. You gonna stop playing soccer?" Do you want me to come home and rip your head off or do you want me to take it out on the girl on the soccer field?! (Laughs) After I played, I was like night and day. It's different working out in gym and on the field. You're going to find another outlet and it might not be a healthy one.<sup>153</sup>

Soccer provides a grounding element, Lacey refers to as "balance." We can think about balance through Dr. Chief Littlechild's description of the four elements of wellness: physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual. Lacey credits soccer for re-membering a restorative balance and a healing practice. In her conversation with her husband, she implies how soccer contributes to healthier relationships in the home. The soccer pitch offers an appropriate place to safely unload aggression and release anxieties. As Dr. Chief Littlechild describes in his memory of hockey, "it's essentially sanctioned violence."<sup>154</sup> Very different from the settler colonial violence seen in boarding schools or against Native women, hockey, soccer, and a list of other sports create controlled safe-spaces to release necessary and often accumulated aggression. This release is important for individuals who need a practice to heal from abuse, intergenerational trauma, and soul-wounds. I imagine sports like soccer as a healing pathway that, like the Medicine Arrow, takes negativity and transforms it into positivity.

As made evident by the generations of players and coaches on Team Indigenous Canada, Indigenous soccer is invaluable to the communities where soccer is culture. Captain Lacey expresses loyalty and immense pride in playing football for her tribal Kwakwaka'wakw Nation:

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<sup>153</sup> Lacey, personal interview by author. Palmas, Brazil. October 26, 2015.

<sup>154</sup> Littlechild, October 23, 2015.

I have such great pride playing with my Nation. To me it's not just representing, it's my family. They're all my sisters on that field. Someone scores a goal it's like I just scored a goal. We're a family off the field as we are on the field. I literally work with like three of my teammates. A couple of them are my best friends. The relationship goes beyond what happens on the field. If we win, we win as a team. If we lose, we lose as a team. Sometimes I just feel like I'm more passionate with my Nation. The difference is creating these relationship, building these relationship. At home in league someone gives you that shoulder. You get into Rez tournaments it's total whole full on! Everyone digs deep and goes hard. Especially when you're representing your nations. It's just that kind of sense of pride that takes over as well. So the intensity is a lot harder a lot stronger.<sup>155</sup>

Lacey's description of pride and passion portray the importance of belonging in her role as a teammate and community member. Her explanation of the relationships that go beyond the field describe a sense of Indigenous belonging that cannot be replaced by playing for a team not tribally centered. In re-membering her tribal Nation's soccer team, Lacey expresses a greater connection to her Kwakwaka'wakw identity that practices decolonization in the teams essence of unification. Furthermore, in the creation of champions, the coming together of strong resilient Indigenous women from across Canada to form First Nations Team Indigenous Canada, decolonizes gender and racial isolations that break down barriers to the world's game.

These Indigenous soccer stories express pride of nation, community and cultural identity. A history that spans a over 100 years made visible through storytelling, reclaims space, practices resilience, connects culture, and heals intergenerational traumas through wellness and balance. The testament of Raven's "Indian Sports Days", the memories of names and language that create pathways to visibility on soccer pitches from Canada to Brazil across racialized spaces, proves how Indigenous soccer practices schelangen, ways of life, that return Indigenous life to

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<sup>155</sup> Lacey, October 26, 2015.

Indigenous land. The sense of re-membering and belonging, winning and losing together, is key to Indigenous soccer practices of healing and happiness.

## Chapter IV: Bau Daigh, Warrior Coming over the Hill

In twenty-first century America and global arena of digital media Indigenous People, equipped with smart phones, drums, and flying drones, battle the violence of invisibility. Invisibilities of thriving global Native populations meet modern day warriors equipped with lenses and microphones of personal technologies that deliver in-your-hand, on-your-person media stories that penetrate mainstream media culture. As seen in previous chapters, Fryberg and company's research on Native invisibilities shows how representation in the media is important to the mental health of marginalized Indigenous populations and of particular importance to Native youth.<sup>156</sup> The absence of visible representations of Native Peoples in mainstream culture sends messages that marginalized populations do not belong. Maureen Trudelle Schwartz asserts that "cultural hegemony is understood to support colonialism by oppressing the colonized both internally and externally."<sup>157</sup> Violent culturally hegemonic American Indian stereotypes, like sports mascots, persists in harming external and internal perceptions of Native Americans and First Nations Aborigines. Global Native perspectives are emerging more frequently demanding acknowledgement of schelangen, or ways of life, that tell accurate, visible stories of perseverance and contemporary life. The following North American Indigenous stories are Indigenous soccer stories of perseverance that re-figuring schelangen to inspire joy and healing through the visibility of soccer and media.

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<sup>156</sup> Leavitt, Covarrubias, Perez, and Fryberg, "Frozen in Time."

<sup>157</sup> Maureen Trudelle Schwarz, *Fighting Colonialism with Hegemonic Culture* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2013), 1-2.

In this chapter I will share stories of journalists who recognize soccer's importance to North American Indigenous populations situated next to authors who acknowledge soccer's struggle and inequality in the United States. These stories highlight soccer's influence as a remedy for wellness in North American Indigenous communities in addition to exposing Native invisibilities within the game. Next, I briefly share my pathway from playing to sports broadcasting and soccer storytelling that inspired my academic career and influenced the creation of "Bau Daigh Warrior," the digital documentary about Kiowa footballer Chris Wondolowski. The digital-doc, published on Major League Soccer's website, is dedicated to the creating visibility for Native Americans the world's game of soccer.<sup>158</sup> The visual Indigenous soccer story is a counter-narrative to negative sports mascot images of Native Peoples, giving Native youth permission to see themselves as belonging in their communities, in education, and in the world of soccer. Bau Daigh's story breaks down barriers to America's soccer for Native Peoples. I will tell the story of Bau Daigh as a modern day Native warrior whose perseverance and embrace of his community fuels him to beat the odds in order to represent the Kiowa Tribe, Native Americans and the United States of America. Throughout these tellings, I address issues of soccer's inequality and isolation from Native Peoples in North America.

An array of international football journalists are interested in Native American and First Nations relationship to the global sport of soccer. These journalists are interested in looking through the lens of soccer to gain a better understanding of North American Indigenous communities. British Journalist like Benjamin Zand and Sarah Murrekins from British

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<sup>158</sup> Temryss Lane and Juice Groove Films, "Bau Daigh Warrior," Filmed May-December 2014, Major League Soccer videos, Posted June 2014, <http://www.mlssoccer.com/videos/wondo-bau-daigh>.

Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) are creating audio-visual digital content to tell North American Indigenous soccer stories that create visibility of Native populations.<sup>159</sup> Murrekins conducts interviews with Xulsimult's Snuneymuxw community that coincides with the 2015 Women's World Cup in Canada. The same year, Zand visits Lakota reservations in South Dakota to see if soccer exists on Indian reservations. Both journalists use either audio or digital-video content to visibly connect the past atrocities of colonial injustices and assimilation policies to present day stories of survivance through the lens of soccer.<sup>160</sup> As good journalists do, they engage with a variety of voices from the communities they are interested in understanding. Powerfully, they gather stories and share Indigenous worldviews with the expansive reach of the BBC audience. U.S. journalists seem less interested than international journalists in Native American soccer culture despite the growth of soccer in America. The lack of interest furthermore supports soccer's American exceptionalism.

For Sarah Murrekins, her intimate conversations with the descendants of the late Canadian Soccer Hall of Famer, Xulsimult Harry Manson, evoke emotion of survival that spans generations. She connects Xulsimult's new visibility and 1900's soccer heroics with the present day healing of an entire community that breaks down barriers of race, class and gender.

Murrekins interviews a female footballer from NIFA who speaks about Xulsimult's 2015 induction into the Canadian Sports Hall of Fame and how his visible accomplishments inspire

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<sup>159</sup> Benjamin Zand, "Searching for soccer on an Indian reservation." *BBC Pop Up's*, January 9, 2015, <http://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-30737593>, accessed May 5, 2016.; Sarah Murkerrins, "The Story of a Nation." *BBC World*, July 2, 2015, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p02vn5fq>, accessed December, 2014; Temryss Lane and Juice Groove Films, "Bau Daigh Warrior," documentary unreleased, published July 11, 2015, <https://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2015/07/11/video-chris-wondolowski-bau-daigh-featured-three-part-series-161040>.

<sup>160</sup> Vizenor, *Survivance*. 1.

her dream to play on the Canadian Women's National Team.<sup>161</sup> Murrekins visits a First Nations community with a long history of Indigenous soccer whereas Benjamin Zand visits Native American tribal communities looking to develop Indigenous soccer. In his search for soccer on Indian reservations, Zand travels to both Pine Ridge and Rosebud Sioux Reservations in South Dakota. Importantly, Zand acknowledges but does not glorify the extreme poverty that these Lakota tribes face on the isolations of these reservations. Instead, he empowers a variety of Native voices that speak proudly about their basketball culture, or rez ball, and their lack of experience with soccer. Many Lakota people Zand interviews, old and young, express the desire to learn and play the world's game. Zand even takes a number of Native youth out in the snow to demonstrate the simplicity of the game, using his shoes as goals. As a viewer, you can hear the laughter and see the joy in the kids playing soccer.

Other journalists are writing about North American Indigenous soccer as a way of life that creates opportunities of the well being for Indigenous youth. New York Times journalist Jeré Longman traveled to the Canadian Arctic in Iqaluit, Nunavut to observe the indoor Nunavut territorial tournament in what he calls, "one of the world's coldest and most remote soccer hotbeds."<sup>162</sup> Longman spends time with 33 year-old Clyde River Inuit soccer coach Martin Iqaqrialu, who overcame his own traumas of intense depression and addiction as a result of losing two brothers to suicide. According to teacher Kim Walton and coach for the under 16-girls' 2016 Arctic Winter Games Team says soccer for Clyde River youth is "more than a sport. It

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<sup>161</sup> Murkerrins, "The Story of a Nation," July 2, 2015,

<sup>162</sup> Jeré Longman, "Thriving in a Barren Land," *New York Times*, July 2, 2015, [http://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/05/sports/soccer/blooming-in-a-barren-land.html?smid=nytcore-ipad-share&smprod=nytcore-ipad&\\_r=3#](http://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/05/sports/soccer/blooming-in-a-barren-land.html?smid=nytcore-ipad-share&smprod=nytcore-ipad&_r=3#), accessed May 14, 2016.

can be a lifesaver for some of these kids,”.<sup>163</sup> As we read in chapter one, Walton is not using hyperbole but means that soccer can save lives by preventing suicide and providing other measure of healing for coping with trauma. Native communities across North America are constantly battling internalized colonial violence that disconnect us from one-another. We must re-member the strength we possess together, like Indigenous soccer, to prevent the tragic deaths that carry the intergenerational curse from boarding school trauma and genocide. Martin Iquaqrialu says, “I’m trying to show the community that you can turn your life around. I’m proud of my team. I’m proud of myself.” Like Martin our kids deserve to be proud of themselves, their tribe, and their identity.<sup>164</sup>

In order to understand how Indigenous visibility in North American soccer culture contributes to healing, we must take a look at the growth in the soccer space in America and Native invisibility within it. Since Brazilian Legend Pelé’s playing days at the New York Cosmo’s in the 1970s, U.S. soccer has experienced significant growth and gained international clout.<sup>165</sup> Despite the game’s gender and racial inequality, U.S. Soccer’s international acclaim is generated primarily from the success of the U.S. Women’s National Team (USWNT), who defeating Japan 5-2 in an exhilarating 2015 World Cup Final to become three-time World Cup Champions. The Women’s World Cup Final was watched by an average U.S. television audience of over 25.4 million, demolishing the prior ratings of every soccer match (men or women)

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<sup>163</sup> Longman, May 14, 2016.

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>165</sup> Thom Satterlee, “Making Soccer a ‘Kick in the Grass’: The Media’s Role in Promoting a Marginal Sport, 1975-1977,” *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 36:3 (September, 2001), 305-317. Pelé played for the New York Cosmo’s from 1975-1977 attracting new fans to the sport of soccer much like his successor, David Beckham’s arrival MLS’ LA Galaxy in 2007.



broadcasted in U.S.<sup>166</sup> Viewership surpassed ratings for the history of every NBA Finals' broadcast; a feat shocking to North America's hegemonic sports space typically reserved for men's football, baseball, basketball, and hockey.<sup>167</sup> The men's domestic soccer league is also experiencing significant growth and international appeal.<sup>168</sup> Major League Soccer (MLS), that began with ten teams in 1996, will expand to twenty-four teams by 2020.<sup>169</sup> The United States youth soccer participation features high levels of recreational soccer player registration, growing from 103,432 in 1974 to 3,055,148.<sup>170</sup> The U.S.'s pay-to-play structure however, is not working for everyone.

U.S. Sports writer for the Guardian Les Carpenter says, "it's only working for the white kids," in an article that critiques the diversity of "world's great democratic game" in the United States. Carpenter highlights soccer's American exceptionalist inversion that opens up the game only to those who can afford paying thousands of dollars to play, limiting the talent pool of young perspective players, invisible to diversity. Carpenter openly critiques the "whiteness" of the 2015 Women's World Cup Championship team, contrasting America's broken structure to the rest of the world where soccer's "best stars have come from the world's slums, ghettos and

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<sup>166</sup> Satterlee, "Making Soccer a 'Kick in the Grass'," 305-317.

<sup>167</sup> Markovits and Hellerman, *Offsides*, 69.

<sup>168</sup> On issues of gender in sports, in alignment with common use of terms, I concede to usage of the term, "U.S. soccer market," referring primarily to men's professional sports.

<sup>169</sup> MLS Soccer Staff, "MLS announces possible plans to expand league to 28 teams, 2016 scheduling updates," December 6, 2015. <http://www.mlssoccer.com/post/2015/12/05/mls-announces-possible-plans-expand-league-28-teams-scheduling-updates>, accessed June 1, 2016.

<sup>170</sup> "Membership Statistics: US Youth Annual Registration of Players," *US Youth Soccer*, [http://www.usyouthsoccer.org/media\\_kit/keystatistics/](http://www.usyouthsoccer.org/media_kit/keystatistics/), accessed June 1, 2016.

favelas” and other underserved populations.<sup>171</sup> Carpenter describes U.S.’s underserved populations as immigrant populations, lower income neighborhoods, and inner city youth who are seeing limited opportunities to participate in American soccer.

Les Carpenter writes a well sourced article citing U.S. president Sunil Gulati, 1999 Women’s World Cup Champion and African American goalkeeper Brianna Scurry, and Doug Andreassen head of US Soccer’s diversity committee, and their efforts to change the pay-to-play landscape of American soccer to be more inclusive of African American and Latino communities. By only mentioning African American and Latino or Hispanic communities as being underserved, the author and his sources contribute to the invisibility of the Native American population, confirming the lack of acknowledgement of Native Americans who participate in soccer. Despicably, Indigenous populations are invisible even amongst the invisible. Carpenter quotes Nick Lusson, the director of NorCal Premier Soccer Foundation whose mission is to grow the game in underserved communities, saying, “I don’t think it’s systematic racism. It’s just a system that has been built with blinders to equality.”<sup>172</sup> The problem reflective of this statement is the denial of racial inequality that keeps Native peoples invisible in America. “Blinders to equality” are convenient for those who can afford them and only build on the foundation of systematic racism designed to keep Native People and other underserved populations out. “It (soccer) continues to be seen as a white, suburban sport,” says a frustrated

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<sup>171</sup> Les Carpenter, “It’s only working for the white kids’,” *The Guardian*. June 1, 2016, [https://www.theguardian.com/football/blog/2016/jun/01/us-soccer-diversity-problem-world-football?CMP=share\\_btn\\_tw](https://www.theguardian.com/football/blog/2016/jun/01/us-soccer-diversity-problem-world-football?CMP=share_btn_tw), accessed June 1, 2016.

<sup>172</sup> Carpenter, “It’s only working for the white kids’,” June 1, 2016.

Scurry.<sup>173</sup> Until our country's soccer leadership is prepared to acknowledge and act-to-change the systemic racial and gender inequality that is predicated on whiteness, the pay-to-play structure will keep underserved talent of all races, especially Native Americans, out of the "world's democratic game".

### **Native Soccer Visibilities and Validation**

The structure of soccer in America is one I know as a player, coach, and media personality. Reflecting on Carpenter's important, but limited, article. I now reflect on my journey as Native soccer aficionado. Against the odds, my passion for soccer grew strong in the vibrant soccer culture of northwest Washington State and Southwest British Columbia. As a child of the 1980's, I was groomed into and by the pay-to-play system made economically challenging for participation. My brother and cousins made me a better soccer player in back yard, unsupervised kick-arounds, while my mom helped me create opportunities to higher education. Because of my mother dedication to embrace my talent and her determination to afford team fees, gas, and countless driving hours around Washington State and Canada, I excelled, playing on the most elite teams. My family chose to afford the investment into my passion to play soccer that allowed me young travel opportunities around the U.S., Canada, and Europe, and created educational opportunities beyond the pitch and into the classroom. The choice to afford my soccer career was influenced by my mom's hard work, college degree, and her privileged whiteness. With access to soccer, hard work, sacrifice, time and money, I earned a full-ride soccer scholarship to play for Arizona State University (ASU). By the time I reached college, I set my sights on playing for the

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<sup>173</sup> *Ibid.*

USWNT. The dream was not that far from reach when I was named co-captain to the U-23 National team in the summer of my sophomore year. The idea that I was one of few Native American's I ever saw on the soccer pitch did not seem to occur to me. I simply wanted to be the best player I could be, with dreams of playing at the highest level for club, college, and country. As close as I was to represent my country, my dreams were cut short my sophomore season at ASU. While playing against University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), my cleat stuck in the grass on a tackle and my knee exploded. The devastating injury ended my playing career as the confident, fearless defender I was and minimized opportunities for advancement in U.S. Soccer.

Though not ever playing for the full National team, my Native soccer dreams manifested differently. After two knee reconstructions by 2008, I earned a position on the U.S. reserve team during pre-Olympic international matches and the was recruited to play professionally overseas for Balinge, IF in Sweden. I returned to the U.S. in 2009, continued to play semi-professionally, had my third knee reconstruction, and eventually retired to start my career in television on Fox Soccer Channel. Co-hosting a show called "Fox Football Fone-In" with two men, eventually lead me to the sidelines of Major League Soccer (MLS) as a broadcast reporter and TV analyst. Suddenly, as Native American woman I sat in a position of visibility. Contemplations of how to harness the power of media to generate healing were still unclear.

While working as a broadcast reporter for Fox Soccer Channel at Major League Soccer's (MLS) All-Star Awards 2011, MLS star striker Chris "Wondo" Wondolowski proudly revealed his identity as Kiowa Native with a surprising elbow nudge. He said, "us Native's have to stick together," and then proceeded to share with me his Kiowa name, Bau Daigh. This recognition

was key to my existence in the phenomenal world of soccer. Without realizing it Wondo, familiar to many not for his Native heritage but for his U.S. Soccer-MLS accolades and prolific goal scoring ability, validated my identity as a Native footballer in a soccer space designed for non-Natives. A conscious pact formed during Bau Daigh's "elbow nudge" at the All-Star event, a silent agreement to be more active in our Native communities using soccer as a our language to connect with our youth.

Opportunities to engage with Native youth through soccer started to open up as our visibility as Native footballers on TV and on the field became acknowledged. In 2012, we both became Nike N7 Soccer Ambassadors, Nike's Native initiative dedicated to creating access to sport for Native youth in the United States and Canada.<sup>174</sup> The N7 Ambassador role requires visibility and leadership within Indigenous communities. Indigenous soccer programs like the Native American Coaches Membership Group of NSCAA, the Notah Begay III Foundation in San Felipe Pueblo, Southwest Youth Services "Indigenous Soccer Cup" in New Mexico, Intertribal Sports of California, Oklahoma's intertribal soccer efforts, Muckleshoot High School soccer program, Lakota's "Tapa Yuha Wacipi" of "Dancing With A Ball" project in South Dakota, and White Mt. Apache Tribe's Diabetes and Wellness sports camps in White River, Arizona, are all programs actively engaging with soccer. Primarily, these programs are creating opportunities for Native youth to play a game that only requires a ball and builds a sense of belonging. Many of the young players I coached are new to the game, many have years of experience, but mostly they all love to play soccer.

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<sup>174</sup> Nike N7 Ambassadors, <http://n7fund.com/ambassadors/>, accessed June 6, 2016.

“Bau Daigh Warrior,” the digital documentary was envisioned as an accessible pedagogical tool to promote Indigenous soccer that creates awareness. In a fated moment working on finding my way to the World Cup Brazil, I embrace the Native tradition of storytelling as the method in the form of a film, in order that the story lives on, passed down through the generations in culturally relevant way. Additionally, this is a story for non-Natives to open their eyes to Indigenous worldviews through the lens of soccer. If Bau Daigh’s visibility and success in soccer validated my identity as a Native footballer, then how does his soccer story empower identities of Native youth in North America and around the globe? The pedagogy of football, fútbol, futebol, fuball, il calcio, or soccer (in respect to common global names) creates a sense of collective identity, builds team reliance, and ignites pride and confidence larger than oneself.

### **A Warrior’s Success is the Success of his People’s**

In order to understand the power of Indigenous visibility in soccer, we must consider the story of Bau Daigh. If you watched the World Cup Brazil 2014 you may be familiar with Wondo for his devastating “miss” in the nail-biting match against Belgium in the round of sixteen. His failure to score the go-ahead-goal in the final minutes of the match became the symbolic death of U.S.A.’s hopeful first-time advancement into the quarterfinals. The heart wrench in the stadium penetrated compassionate football fans worldwide as the U.S. Men’s National Team failed yet again at the World Cup. Many blamed Wondo for the teams failure but more importantly his success generates more success and intergenerational healing in his Native community. His Indigenous soccer story is important to know in order grasp how Native footballer visibility in

both media and community generates healing. Bau Daigh's story begins long before World Cup Brazil or his MLS accolades of goal-scoring success.

When the Kiowa elders gathered together to decide what Kiowa name to bestow upon a young twelve-year-old Wondo, they took into consideration Chris' blood lineage of Kiowa warriors. Amongst these elders was Kiowa Grandma Dorothy Whitehorse, a Kiowa elder storyteller, language teacher, and relative of Kiowa Janis Elliott, Wondo's mother. Grandma Dorothy was born in 1933 in a teepee west of where she lives now in Carnegie, Oklahoma, where she said she was taken by the nuns and forcibly put into boarding school. Grandma Dorothy explains how Wondo's Kiowa name "Bau Daigh," or "warrior coming over a hill," remembers the returning of Kiowa warriors from battle to their families and villages, their return visible at the hill's crest. "You were named 20 years ago, the elders were still here," Grandma Dorothy explains with a deep longing. "They named you cause they seen something in you that was gonna be good."<sup>175</sup> Naming ceremonies are important for Native People, to re-member ancestral names, language and stories that restore and connect the present generations to those that come before them. The name "Bau Daigh" represents a warrior identity from a lineage of great Kiowa warriors, the son of a great Kiowa warrior Chief, Dohasan. "There's a lot to be said about your name," his Kiowa mother Janis Elliott says with pride; the honor of being named after a warrior and warrior Chief's son carries ancestral obligation that transcends generations, remembers identity, and protects schelangen.<sup>176</sup>

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<sup>175</sup> Grandma Dorothy Whitehorse, interviewed by author for "Bau Daigh Warrior", documentary film, December 5, 2014.

<sup>176</sup> Janis Elliott, personal interview by author, Natal, Brazil, "Bau Daigh Warrior," documentary film. June

Wondo grew up in the California Bay Area after his grandparents relocated to an Indian college in the 1970's, the government encouraged Native relocation to access Indigenous land. His Grandmother Joycetta Bear Elliott, Mother Janis, Aunties and other family kept him connected to his Kiowa community through stories, his athletic identity, and his returns to Kiowa territory in Oklahoma. In an interview with Bau Daigh in Tulsa, Oklahoma, we discussed his warrior identity on the soccer pitch. He explains to me the values his Native grandparents instilled in him directly reflect his work ethic and his ability read and predict the game. His athletic talent and work ethic combined with goal scoring intuition finds Wondo on the top of the list as one of the United States' best strikers. "Being a striker is like being a warrior," Bau Daigh tells me.<sup>177</sup> A striker's duty is to score goals by executing a team "strike," "striking" the ball on goal. Soccer is a physical battle of talent, tactics, and togetherness<sup>178</sup> in attempt to over-connect and out-play your opponent. Bau Daigh's inherited warrior intuition helps him know his opponent and expose weaknesses by scoring goals. "He was truly an exceptional athlete," his Mom reminisces of his adolescence. "He actually won many, many championships as a runner. He has endurance and that is something I attribute to his Native American culture because long distance runners actually run on my side of the family." With inherited endurance and the blood of a warrior, Bau Daigh fell in love with a game that he refigures as his warrior identity.

After a division two career at Chico State, Bau Daigh fought his way onto an MLS' San Jose Earthquakes roster as the forty-first pick in the 2005 draft playing for the reserve team.

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<sup>177</sup> Chris Wondolowski, personal interview by author, *Bau Daigh Warrior*, documentary film. December 5, 2014.

<sup>178</sup> Janis Elliott, personal interview by author, *Bau Daigh Warrior*, documentary film. December 5, 2014.



According to his brother Stephen Wondolowski, they called him “King of the Reserves,” before he played his way onto the Houston Dynamo roster before being traded back to his hometown team of the SJ Earthquakes with undeniable goal poaching talent.<sup>179</sup> By 2010, Wondo scored more goals than any other player in the country, claiming the MLS Golden Boot and demanding the attention of U.S. soccer and the media.<sup>180</sup> One of North America’s top soccer journalists, Ives Galarcep during an interview at a 2014 World Cup send-off match says, “he’s someone that American soccer should look to as a poster boy: making it from the very bottom all the way to the top.” I look to him and so does Indian Country.

Between 2010 and 2014 Bau Daigh scored 86 goals and a spot on Jurgen Klinsmann’s U.S. World Cup roster. “A home town kid, doing it for his home town team, you just felt it breath soccer life back into the Bay Area,” his brother says with a proud smile. The heroic breath extends beyond soccer in Bay and into the pride of his Native community, encouraging dreams of young Native footballers in North America. I heard those dreams from many Indigenous Soccer participants who told me of their aspirations to play professional soccer.<sup>181</sup> When asked how it feels to be at the World Cup to support her son, his mom Janis responds, “it’s just so special I can’t even describe it because you’re seeing your child live their dream. Representing your country. Doing it in a way in which you’ve worked hard. It’s wonderful to be on a stage that’s so international about people from their countries, coming together to play the most

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<sup>179</sup> Stephen Wondolowski, personal interview by author, *Bau Daigh Warrior*, documentary film. December 5, 2014.

<sup>180</sup> Major League Soccer, “Chris Wondolowski, San Jose Earthquakes” <http://www.mlssoccer.com/players/chris-wondolowski>

<sup>181</sup> Indigenous Soccer Cup youth, group workshops, Albuquerque, New Mexico. July 22, 2016.

popular sport in the world.”<sup>182</sup> Like Oglala Lakota Billy Mills says, “sport help me relate to more of a broader world; in so many ways, I won my gold medal simply trying to heal a broken soul. My dad told me I had a broken soul. It takes a dream to heal broken souls.” Although Wondo never spoke personally about a broken soul, he talks about his resilience after the devastation of his miss, taking full ownership and responsibility for that moment while holding his head high with the support of his teammates and family and Native community. In turn, Wondo uses his gift of soccer as a way connect with his People and and improve the health of his Native community that battles oppressive rates of diabetes and suicide.<sup>183</sup>

After the World Cup, like a true warrior, Bau Daigh lifted himself up and returned home to his Kiowa People who celebrated his return with an honor pow wow and a youth soccer clinic. He returned to Riverside Indian School (RIS), established in 1871, one of the remaining five off-reservation boarding schools still running in the U.S., where his late Kiowa grandmother was forced to attend. The principle of Riverside,, says “with Chris coming back it shows our kids that anything is possible, because a lot of them, they need good positive role models.” Positive role models are especially important in order to dispel negative oppression and imagery of the past like the Medicine Arrow. Although the mission of RIS has evolved, its original mission was founded on the settler colonial logics of Indigenous cultural erasure, designed as a institution to assimilate Native children. RIS remains an Indian mascot school, “home of the Braves.” The mission is: “Riverside Indian School will create and maintain a safe, positive learning

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<sup>182</sup> Elliott, December 5, 2014.

<sup>183</sup> Wondolowski, “Bau Daigh Warrior” (the digital-doc film), November 2014.

environment.”<sup>184</sup> This means, like the Washington Redsk\*ns, the Indian mascot needs to be changed. As we learned, race-based Indian mascots perpetuate traumas of genocide and decrease ideas of self-worth for Native youth. Remember, the “Brave” warrior is meant to be killed every single time.<sup>185</sup> Strong Native leaders and educators work hard to include culturally relevant curriculum for the nearly 800 students from over seventy-five different tribes. For this reason, seeing a real modern day Kiowa warrior in Bau Daigh ignites youthful imaginations of potential in life paths forward, instead of seeing warriors as slain relics of the past.

Chris came to RIS as a returning warrior and hero dedicated to the perseverance of his People. After Bau Daigh spoke to the youth one of his relatives cried:

The ultimate was watching Christopher in there speaking to the Native American youth. When he said that his Grandmother attended school here (RIS), you could hear a gasp and it made me cry. That hope, that curse, that generational curse (intergenerational trauma) was broken! And these kids can be achievers these children can become what Christopher has worked so hard for. What an achievement! What a story! I know his grandmother is looking down on him, proud of him. We are all very proud of him!<sup>186</sup>

Bau Daigh’s story of success (and failure) on the global stage ignited generational healing, his visibility as a Kiowa footballer ultimately giving permission to reconceptualize Native identity beyond the boarding school. Bau Daigh encouraged the Riverside Native students, “you definitely have your bad days where you get frustrated, and you want to do better. Something I love about soccer is you can still affect other things. Even though if you’re not playing your best,

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<sup>184</sup> River Indian School, <http://www.ris.bie.edu/>, accessed July 29, 2016.

<sup>185</sup> Mckegney, *Masculindians*, 1.

<sup>186</sup> Kiowa relative, in group interview by author, *Bau Daigh Warrior* (the digital-doc film), November 2014.

you're not scoring the goal, or making every pass, you can still hustle you can still work hard you can still affect many different things, by just your work ethic alone.”

His soccer story shows the next generations that even if you fail, you get back up and work harder to affect change around you with a warrior mentality of perseverance, fighting for schelangen, your family, your community, and your happiness. Janis explains kinship, “for the Kiowa tribe there’s more kids that have signed up for soccer and they look at Chris as their very close relative. For them to participate in his success, it’s just, really important.” His brother Stephen explains the commitment to healing, “every single generations for Native Americans we want to better ourselves, we want to get out of that victim mentality, showing ourselves to the world. Representing Kiowa, representing American Indians, and representing the United States.”

In many ways, this Kiowa soccer story responds to directly to Joe Gone and Lisa’s Wexler’s call for locally designed decolonization projects of wellness as methods of healing for intergenerational trauma. Bau Daigh’s Indigenous soccer story returns healing to generations of his Kiowa People from the ancestors before him to the next generations yet to come. Kiowa Tribe is part of Wondo’s healing, like they are part of his success. His Kiowa soccer story creates an intergenerational project of healing through the healing practice of Indigenous soccer. Like the Sacred Medicine Arrow, the positivity of Indigenous soccer continues outward to the next generations of Kiowa and other Native North American youth. In a strong, endearing voice layered with generations of emotions Grandma Dorothy finishes telling the story of “A great Kiowa warrior Chief’s son,” reminding us to always re-member: “Bau Daigh. Never forget that.”

In this chapter I told you about the how Kiowa Bau Daigh Chris Wondolowski’s accomplishments and visibility in Major League Soccer and on the world’s largest stage not only

validated my identity as a Native footballer but also encouraged Native youth from his Kiowa community to persevere and dream beyond boarding schools and the limitations of what the media shows them. In Les Carpenters important article about soccer discriminations in the United States, I point out how Native Americans are even invisible amongst the underserved populations of the United States and often ignored by journalist and soccer researchers. This fits within the perpetual violence of American exceptionalist values that blind public perceptions of inequality and settler colonialism that aims to eliminate the Native. As a segue to both the lack of access to soccer and the lack of media's acknowledgement of North American Indigenous soccer, I outlined a few international journalists who work outside the space of American exceptionalism and therefore recognize the way of life that soccer provides for Indigenous communities. Lakota reservation communities of South Dakota, Iqualit Nanvut communities in Artic Canada, First Nations communities in British Columbia along with a list of Native soccer programs in the U.S., embrace soccer as a way of life and practice that saves lives. These Indigenous soccer stories of schelangen contribute to the reciprocal success of Kiowa Bau Daigh Chris Wondolowski, to my success as a Lummi footballer and soccer scholar, and to the success of future generations that deserve the right to play, and participate in the visibility of the world's game.

## **Conclusion**

Football taught me accountability to my teammates, to my coaches, and to my classroom education. I learned about the body's potential and limitations. Team accomplishment, work ethic, competition, failure, success, forgiveness, sacrifice, are just a few of the life lessons that continue teaching me through soccer today. As a soccer referee, I practiced balance and decisiveness. I studied the rules of FIFA football and exerted my assigned authority as mediator and soccer expert. Along with the authority of the whistle, I also learned to be despised as a game official. Coaching soccer taught me new patience, communication and leadership. The cultural-crafting and refiguring of my Lummi schelangen involves telling soccer stories through the embodiment of a player, authority of a referee, responsibility of a coach and teammate, in a the visible profession in media broadcasting, and as a Lummi female footballer obligated to protect our way of life and re-member our culture.

The process of uncovering these Indigenous soccer stories in order to understand soccer's contributions to intergenerational healing of Indigenous North Americans, survivors and navigators of settler colonialism, reveals my own experience with intergenerational trauma and allows me to recognize the scope of community healing. Importantly, we are able to see how Native sports representations perpetuate the myth of masculinity that damage Indigenous perceptions of self, self-worth, and our sense of belonging. Negative imagery contributes to the violence of internalized colonization and Native invisibilities that dangerously result in low self esteem. Indigenous voices I share, tell stories of ways soccer and sports saves lives in Native communities. This soccer scholarship holds high value to Native Studies, gender studies, social

studies, and history demanding visibility in the world's game of soccer. Indigenous soccer creates pathways to health and higher education. Soccer itself is a pedagogical tool, a universal language, that teaches life wisdoms, and re-members and refigures the importance of roles within tribal communities.

Areas of limitation in this research are extensive. This thesis is intended to initiate contemporary understanding of Native Americans and First Nations Aboriginal ways of life through the lens of global football with intention to provide visible emic and etic perspectives of relationality through soccer. More cross-cultural comparisons of global Indigenous soccer experiences can be utilized to gain transnational perspectives of socio-political-economic Indigenous realities in global football. More work can be done to acknowledge how football and globalization participate in colonization and decolonization projects in relationship to Indigenous cultures.

Learning and listening to stories from Dr. Lawyer Erminskin Cree Chief Littlechild, opens up possibilities of humanitarianism through Indigenous soccer and sport. As an advocate for human rights, Indigenous rights, and sports activism, I am deeply honored to include Chief Littlechild's wisdoms, experience, and insight. I do not take lightly his expectation that soccer "could cost zero" to play. His suggestion challenges my way of thinking and my upbringing in a system designed for those of higher economic status. My soccer training in the United States limits my conceptions of training standards. However, I know Chief Littlechild is right because I experience zero cost, barefoot football, on my travels to Africa and South America. I realize that if we are indeed going to open up the game of soccer to the isolations of Indigenous communities

with limited resources and space, then we must rethink our approach to Indigenous soccer in order that we create and adapt soccer accessibility to those in the community who want to play.

Listening to the stories of Felicia Chischilly, Bill Wasden, Dano Thorne, First Nations World Indigenous Game Champions, and Xulsimalt's descendants inspire me to keep looking and listening stories of navigating colonial-Indigenous spaces in order to understand practices of healing. More importantly their stories reinforce the notion that Indigenous soccer is a schelangen, or way of life. These Indigenous soccer stories add to a culture of Native sports scholarship and practice that engage with methods learning, coping, and healing from lineages of intergenerational trauma. Each Native voice I borrow, every Indigenous story I share comes from a particular land, a specific People and tribe. I gather specific tribal examples of Native footballers and athletes that to contribute to a larger body of Native sports stories as told by Native women, men, children and the land. The Indigenous identities decolonize borders and connect across time and space in the name of Indigenous football.

Extensive physiological research can be done on soccer specific training and participation as it affects the brain, healing intergenerational trauma and symptoms of post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). I am particularly interested in psychiatrist Norman Doige's study on neuroplasticity and healing as it relates to Native American historical trauma.<sup>187</sup> My expertise in health comes from the perspective as a high level performance athlete. Therefore, my understanding of the precise scientific benefits soccer offers health is limited to my experience in wellness. I expect that with an increasing interest in the science of women's soccer, particularly

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<sup>187</sup> Norman Doige, *The Brain's Way of Healing: Remarkable Discoveries and Recoveries from the Frontiers of Neuroplasticity* (New York: Penguin, 2015).



regarding brain related injuries, there will be an increase in health related consequences to long term participation in soccer. My hope is that this research will inspire a more dedicated focus on culturally relevant medical practices that consider Native knowledge systems and practices of healing. I dream of a time when my Native relatives can access the help they need to rid themselves of oppressive addictions that rethink drug “rehabilitation” the way Gone and Wexler rethink suicide prevention. In science, I hope Indigenous soccer inspires more Native Peoples to learn medicine and, like my older brother Dr. Dakotah Lane, return to the rez to share in community healing. A young female footballer at the Indigenous Soccer Cup, is exhausted from teen suicide in her New Mexico tribal community. She dreams of becoming a neuroscientist and pharmacist because she disagrees with overmedicalized treatments of mental health, knowing there is a better way for her People to heal. Indigenous soccer in its practice is a different kind of medicine.

The World Indigenous Games re-membered Indigenous Peoples from across the globe and celebrated Indigenous football. Team Indigenous Canada, WIG Champions, honor the footballing legacy of their ancestor Xulsimalt by practicing and playing football. Re-membering these practices are decolonizing by nature. The resurrection and visibility of Xulsimalt’s soccer story restored a sense of pride to his community. His grandson, Gary Xulsimalt Manson, carries Xulsimalt’s name as a reminder of his ancestral footballer identity, linked to resilience and healing. The story of Xulsimalt, once invisible to his Snuneymuxw People, re-members over 100 years of visible Indigenous soccer identity.

Situating North American Indigenous soccer via First Nations Team Indigenous Canada and Team Turtle Island, Team USA at the inaugural World Indigenous Games expands

Indigenous relations to the larger Indigenous global community that engage in the world's game of soccer. Looking deeper into the expansive relationships of Indigeneity and soccer, its benefits and barriers will contribute the wellness of Indigenous communities in North America and beyond. Acknowledgment of current Indigenous issues of sovereignty, land protection, ways of life, can be strengthened through soccer's visibilities. My goal is to identify and assemble a Team USA Indigenous soccer team by next WIG's 2017. The experience of standing amongst our Indigenous brothers, sisters, and survivors of the world was one of the most important moments of belonging I experienced. We belong in the beautiful game of football on a global stage of visibility.

Bau Daigh's story is and Indigenous activation of visible pedagogy. The story needs to be completed and finished as a full-feature documentary as it was intended. I experienced the violence of erasure in working with MLS during the production of the three-part digital series that lives on their website. The story, although still important, lost its integrity as a Native soccer story of resurgence and decolonization and instead became a story about a MLS soccer player who happens to be Kiowa. The instructions of the corporate authority at MLS demanded that my physical presence be edited out during interviews and moments of connection. Literally, they erased my image as a Native women from the story. In the end, the MLS producers attempted to only credit me as narrator, assigning full production credit to my non-Native male partners. I had to fight to receive proper acknowledgement as visionary and co-producer. I will finish the film as I envisioned in order to share the film with Native youth across Indian country so they can see healthy positive representations of strong Native People in colonial-Indigenous spaces.

Considering the documentary film title, “Bau Daigh Warrior,” I must think through constructions of Indianness and Indigenous masculinities in a colonial context; specifically the title including the word, “warrior”. We choose to honor this title as his literal translation of the name means warrior. This evaluation of Indian tropes and gender constructions deserves more evaluation and analysis through the understandings of Indigeneity and soccer in North America. Maori scholar Brendan Hokowhitu tackles Indigeneity, sport, and masculinity by focusing on the genealogical constructions of Maori men as inherently physical and athletic. He argues how these masculine constructions that are “based on noble, physically tough, staunch, and emotionless Maori men,” are “normalized.”<sup>188</sup> Furthermore, he shows how sports act as a site of “positive” racism, engendering “hegemonic consent” of certain forms of masculinity for Maori People. More can be done to consider the normalized masculinities of the North American sports space concerning Native bodies.<sup>189</sup> In a similar vein, we can consider how soccer’s feminization in North America creates an access point of participation for Native People, particularly for girls and women.

The relationship between Native American and First Nations communities and football can contribute stories of resurgence, visibility, and make important contributions to American and global histories. The intersection of Indigenous North Americans and soccer requires continued investigation that acknowledges specific community activations and protocols of soccer. More attention can be paid to space, land, and the body as both barriers and limitations to Indigenous soccer participation. Cross-cultural comparisons to other Indigenous Peoples

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<sup>188</sup> Brendan Hokowhitu, “Tackling Maori Masculinity: A Colonial Genealogy of Savagery and Sport,” *The Contemporary Pacific*, 16:2 (Fall 2004), 261.

<sup>189</sup> *Ibid*, 263.

relationship to football globally would greatly serve the understanding of football as language, knowledge transmission, and pedagogy. Literature of sports and Native Americans is loaded with important research on Indian mascots and the negative impacts Indian mascots have on Native youth and self-esteem. More in depth evaluations of Native visibilities in sports and soccer are needed to determine how football visibility impacts identity and self-worth. Understanding intergenerational trauma, historical trauma, and soul-wounds, as concepts of health is imperative for Native Americans and First Nations communities and individuals to initiate healing be it through sports, Indigenous football, or an array of other re-membered Indigenous healing practices.

This paper simply serves as a starting point and an expression of my own healing through football, my *schelangen*. Like my Native footballer identity being validated and empowered by the visibility of Chris Bau Daigh Wondolowski, more Native youth deserve visible, empowered validations of their identities. More visibility for Natives in global football can empower education, re-member culture, and Indigenous ways of life. Importantly, the Native voices here contribute to the larger global history by challenging barriers of marginalization and U.S. exceptionalism. Uncovering stories of “Indian football” show that Indigenous football is both culturally and historically rooted in Native identities. Once banned from Indigenous ways of life, football continues to keep Indigenous Peoples connected.

North American Indigenous soccer creates visibility and teaches a healing practice that “play’s through” the trauma of genocide and the scars of assimilation that Native youth must negotiate. The right to play, the right to have fun, and the right to be happy is the “right for every child,” Dr. Chief Littlechild demands. Re-membering Indigenous football is *schelangen*, a right

to be happy as a way of life. I ask that Native community leaders rethink the overdeveloped pay-to-play game of soccer and return to its roots. And of great importance I ask that we invest in Indigenous soccer, as a proactive health measure that brings people together to work toward a common goal. We heard voices and stories from Ermineskin Cree, Diné, Cowichan, ‘Namgis, Kwakwaka’wakw, Kahnawake, Akwesasne, Kanasatake, Mohawk, Canela, Tatuyo, Kiowa, and Laq’te’mish lands and seas. With this research I call on more Native People to share their stories of soccer and lend their voices to healing.

The voices of our Native elders, the stories of Xulsimalt, First Nations World Indigenous Game champions, and Bau Daigh transcend colonial space through generations of the past and present into visibility, re-membering identity and creating pathways from marginalized space into spaces of opportunity and identity validation. Indigenous football at its core is centered in wellness, balance, education, and cultural engagement where soccer is a healing practice of schelangen. One of the young World Indigenous Champions, tattoo’d a soccer ball along with the words, “Wherever, Whenever, Forever” on her leg to represent her commitment, her identity and her love for the beautiful game. These tattoo’d words think beyond football into a way of life and Indigenous permanents: Yes, we are here. We have been here. And we will remain here. Our experiences and stories tell us so.

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