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Paradigm shifting: centering Indigenous research methodologies, an Anishinaabe perspective

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ABSTRACT

This paper showcases the importance of Indigenous research paradigms and, by extension, Indigenous research methodologies for Indigenous peoples within sociology of sport. Indigenous research methodologies are explored to highlight their specific components, including the engagement of decolonization, privileging Indigenous voices, the utilisation of Indigenous worldviews, and relational accountability. Building upon an Indigenous research methodology as a foundation, the paper presents an Anishinaabeg research paradigm that is used to assist the author in connecting mindfully and spiritually to their role as a researcher with the field of sociology of sport. By applying an Anishinaabeg research paradigm, a tribal identity is privileged, which is an enactment of decolonization within the academy and disrupts settler normativity within academia.

List of Anishinaabeg words

Anishinaabe Words	English Translation
Aadizookaan	Traditional legends, ceremonies
Akii	Land
Anishinaabekweg	Woman: kwe, singular and kweg, plural
Anishinaabe-gikendaasowin	Knowledge
Anishinaabe-inaadiziwin	Way of being
Anishinaabemowin	Language
Aya'aawish	Animals
Biskaabiiyang	Returning to ourselves
Chiiskun	Shaking tent
Dibaajimowin	Teachings, personal stories, histories
Dibikgiizis	The moon
Gaa-izhi-zhawendaagoziyaag,	That which is given to us in a loving way by the spirits
Gakinagegoon	Everything
Izhitwaawin	Culture, teachings, customs, history
Manitous	Spirits
Mishomis	Grandfathers
Niizhwaaswi Kchtwaa Kinomaadiwinan	The seven grandfather teachings or the seven sacred gifts
Nbwaakaawin	Wisdom
Zaagidwin	Love
Mnaadendimowin	Respect
Aakwade'ewin	Bravery
Gwekwaadiziwin	Honesty
Dbaadendziwin	Humility

(*Continued*)

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Anishinaabe Words	English Translation
Debwewin	Truth
Wiisokotaatiwin	Gathering together for a purpose

Introduction

In the sociology of sport field, there has been little description and uptake of Indigenous[1] research paradigms and methodologies. Given the field of sociology of sport developed within a Western sport and sociology context, it is not surprising that the Indigenous research methodologies have not been used (Forsyth and Giles 2013). Fortunately, the sociology of sport field is adapting and growing as a result of critically informed scholarship (McGuire-Adams & Giles, 2018); Blodgett, Shinke, McGannon, & Fisher, 2015). With the recent Indigenous, anti-colonial, and other critical sport scholars turn towards decolonizing sociology of sport[2] there is an opportunity to make space for Indigenous research methodologies (herein referred to as IRM) and paradigms. Indeed, it is timely to do so.

Now more than ever, Indigenous scholarship clarifies the importance of Indigenous ways of thinking and ways of doing in research (McGregor, Restoule, Johnston, 2018; Windchief and San Pedro 2019). This is the result of leading Indigenous scholars, in North America and globally, who have challenged the dominant western ideologies of research (Kovach 2009; Rigney 1999; Smith, 2012). As Indigenous scholars, we can and should use our theories, languages, and worldviews to carve our unique research projects; to have the choice between seeking knowledge within our own worldviews, rather than being solely reliant on Western knowledge and processes. Thus, with these scholars making trails, emerging Indigenous scholars may now use our Indigenous knowledge(s) to advance Indigenous understandings of research, in particular in fields where Indigenous knowledge(s) have been scarce.

The articulation of IRM, which are Indigenous-informed processes of research, have resulted in a fundamental positional shift in research concerning Indigenous peoples, from Western frameworks to Indigenous paradigms. While this shift has occurred in the fields of education, nursing, and Indigenous studies, for example, this shift has yet to occur in the field of sociology of sport. While there are few sociology of sport scholars who utilise community-based participatory research or combined approaches such as Two-Eyed Seeing (Darroch and Giles 2014; McHugh et al. 2015; Martin 2012; Lavallée and Lévesque 2013), a concerted effort to articulate and demonstrate an Indigenous research paradigm in sociology of sport is needed. Thus, in this paper, I articulate the development of IRM and provide an example of an Anishinaabeg research paradigm in an effort to add to Indigenous presence within the sociology of sport field.

This paper has two main sections. In the first section of the paper, I explore the development and components of IRM, which include personal decolonization and relational accountability. I then provide an overview of qualitative research methods that best align with IRM. Next, consideration is given to how the use of IRM disrupts the contentious settler[3] normative space of academia. In the second section, I use Wilson's (2008) framework for creating an Indigenous research paradigm (including ontology, epistemology, axiology, methodology) as a guide to articulate an Anishinaabeg research paradigm based on four fundamental concepts within Anishinaabeg-gikendaasowin: Anishinaabe-inaadiziwin (Geniusz 2009); Biskaabiiyang (Geniusz 2009; Simpson 2011); Niizhwaaswi Kchtwaa Kinomaadiwinan (Benton-Banai 1988), and Wiisokotaatiwin ((McGuire-Adams, In Press). By applying an Anishinaabeg research paradigm, I privilege an Anishinaabeg way of being while also enacting an engagement in decolonization within the sociology of sport field, and more broadly to the academy as a whole. I begin with a brief personal decolonization narrative as positionality and mindful self-reflexivity are important elements when engaging in IRM.

Self-reflexivity

Within IRM self-reflexivity is a necessary component for researchers to interrogate systems of oppression and to identify the values and experiences that guide the researcher (Kovach 2009; McSweeney 2019; Guillemin and Gillam 2004). It is, therefore, vital that I position myself in such a way to better connect the reader to my personal experiences that continue to guide my research processes.

As a young woman, I embarked on a journey to understand my identity as an Anishinaabe. It involved learning to listen to what was inherent to me. I had to see how the effects of colonization had eroded my identity as an Anishinaabe. Becoming aware of the emptiness in my life began to draw me out of the lethargy of oppression. I remember the day as though it just happened: It was a beautiful sunny afternoon and I was at a park beside my high school, skipping my afternoon classes, as usual. I was questioning my life. What purpose did my life have? Why was I so angry and feeling so lost? I was not happy with myself for many reasons: I skipped class all the time and used drugs and alcohol in an attempt to escape the horrible feeling of emptiness and lack of self-respect, which explained why I paid no attention to my physical, emotional, mental, or spiritual health. I grew up in a Christian home, and for some time I had felt as though I was being lied to. Something inside of me was screaming at me to change my life, to reject Christianity and all its dichotomies, and to start believing in who I was as an Anishinaabe.

Although I was not aware of it at the time, I know my ancestors were guiding me towards self decolonization that day. They were there to catch me as I fell and raise me back up. On that day, I decided to reject colonial discourses in my life and began to critically think about who I was where I come from, and where I was going. After I had made this decision, I felt a foreign, yet compelling, urge to take action came over me. This urge was coupled with a feeling of exhilaration – a feeling still with me today. For the first time in my life, I felt freedom. After that day, every decision I made and every negative and positive experience I faced had a purpose. Although I did not realise it then, my ancestors had just directed me to the pathway of decolonization and regeneration. My personal decolonization process will not end; it is a lifelong journey, which forces me to see the 'colonial stains on my existence' (Alfred 2005, p.101), to then practice biskaabiiyang.

Before that fateful afternoon, I was on a path of self-destruction, a path on which many of our people find themselves. I was on this path because I did not know how to love myself as a result of intergenerational trauma from settler colonialism, including residential school. My ancestors helped me and I continue to be mindful of my deep connection to them. I am still on the path of self-realisation and I have to remember who I am and where I came from in order to remain true to myself. I have to be cognisant of the reality and lure of colonialism. In my experience, it can be easy to let go and forget about my responsibilities as an Anishinaabe in order to enjoy the passive, materialistic, and detached colonial lifestyle. When I have fallen prey to the unattached and self-absorbed lifestyle of materialism, my spirit and my ancestors have guided me back to my original responsibility. Those of us who commit ourselves to living a life our ancestors would be proud of know the everyday challenges and rewards. I continually acknowledge my name, my clan, and my ancestors to renew my commitment to living as an Anishinaabe. I seek out Anishinaabeg stories and ceremony to fulfil my connection to my Anishinaabeg ancestors as they continue to provide me with strength and guide my life, especially as I engage in an Anishinaabeg research paradigm for my research in the field of sociology of sport.

Academia can test your limits and make you question if you can endure, because as an Anishinaabe in a predominately non-Indigenous institution steeped in settler normativity, it can feel like an intellectual battleground. One of my Anishinaabeg teachers once stated, 'Education can be a violent process' (D. McPherson, personal communication). I now recognise this to be true. At the time, however, during my undergraduate education, I really did not understand what he meant. It was not until I continued on my academic journey to pursue my doctoral research that the teaching began to make sense. I have witnessed and struggled with how, as an Anishinaabe,

mainstream education can be a vicious process as it seeks to supress my values and identity and there are too many instances of silences and isolation within these academic halls

(McGuire-Adams, In Press) However, as an Anishinaabe, I persevere because I know that I am not on this academic journey for myself, but to help fight for the health and wellbeing of my Anishinaabeg community. I believe in education and see its benefits in helping our Anishinaabeg regeneration – especially when we use our own research paradigms (Absolon 2011). My doctoral research (McGuire-Adams, 2018) drew on an Anishinaabeg research paradigm to create, with Anishinaabeg and other Indigenous peoples, a novel pedagogical praxis through physical activity. As I conducted my research, I engaged in a personal decolonization process within academia; I am 'bending and swaying' (Alfred 2005, p. 29) in order to survive and thrive in academia, which may assist other Indigenous peoples as we combat the effects of colonialism in our everyday lives. I offer my self-reflexivity as an example of how my personal shifting occurred, and continues to occur. Personal decolonization and positionality are core components of the utilisation of IRM; it requires a fundamental positional shift in oneself, to sit with our stories (in critical reflection) to then choose to use them to propel our actions (to engage in praxis) in particular in research processes, which is where the discussion now turns.

Description and features of Indigenous research methodologies

The inclusion of IRM in colonial academic institutions has been well addressed in the literature (Windchief and San Pedro 2019). Absolon (2011), Chilisa (2012), Kirkness and Barnhardt (1991), Kovach (2009), Lavallée (2009), Martin (2002), Rigney (1999), Smith (2012), Smith (2008, 2012), Steinhauer (2002), Thomas (2005), and Wilson (2008) are leading scholars who ushered IRM to the fore. While positioning the strengths and value of IRM, they also provided important critiques of the colonial academic institutions, which they sought to transform. Certainly, given the context that produces colonial discourses as 'true' knowledge, challenging colonialism in academia necessitates the use of Indigenous knowledge, values, and language.

Indigenous scholars began to challenge the colonial distrust and prejudice of Indigenous knowledge in academia by developing approaches to research that honour Indigenous knowledge and ways of being (Smith 2012). Their efforts resulted in a fundamental positional shift whereby Indigenous researchers began leading Indigenous research, rather than being passive objects and victims of colonial research agendas (Kovach 2009; Smith 2008, 2012) This positional shift is substantial, as it creates a space where Indigenous peoples can use their specific knowledge in furthering their own Indigenous research, and are no longer forced to use only Western research frameworks within academia. As, historically, the academy was created specifically for non-Indigenous people, it is oblivious to Indigenous ways of conducting research. In order to address this epistemic absence, it is not enough to just include Indigenous peoples within the academy; rather, Indigenous ways of being must assist in transforming the research academy as a whole (Mihesuah & Wilson 2004; Rigney 1999). In the following discussion, I present the primary features of IRM that both challenge colonialism in research and present Indigenous perspectives within research, including Rigney's (1999) principles, decolonization, and relational accountability.

Rigney (1999), was amongst the first scholars to describe key features of IRM that are central to challenging colonialism operating within academia. He expressed three fundamental principles of IRM: 'resistance, political integrity, and privileging Indigenous voice' (p. 116). He explained resistance as the struggle to personally decolonize in order to foster self-determination by using our cultural knowledge to engage in research. Political integrity is enacted by Indigenous peoples conducting research by and for themselves, which directly benefits their peoples and ensures accountability to their communities. Finally, to privilege Indigenous voices in research, both of researchers and of participants, is to focus on the research objectives and ambitions that are relevant and important for Indigenous peoples. Reflecting on Rigney's three principles of IRM within my own research, I *resist* colonialism by engaging in my personal decolonization process of

using Anishinaabeg-gikendaasowin to guide my research. I show *political integrity* by being accountable to my communities, our ancestral knowledge, and to other Indigenous peoples as we collectively strive for decolonization. And I *privilege Indigenous voice* by using Anishinaabemowin by making space for the Anishinaabeg research paradigm, and by using my decolonial voice.

Other IRM scholars have echoed similar features of Indigenous research methodologies such as the recognition of our worldviews, which are vital to our identities and survival; honouring our unique values, which guide how we live and learn on our respective territories; acknowledging the unique, but similar, historical and political contexts that informs intellectual self-determination; and privileging Indigenous peoples' knowledges and narratives, both traditional and contemporary (Martin 2002; McGregor, Restoule & Johnston, 2018).

Decolonization is an essential feature of IRM. Several scholars have situated and in turn defined the concept of decolonization in a variety of ways (Alfred 2005; Memmi 2006; Mohanty 2003; Smith 2012). However, for the purposes of this article, I draw on the following descriptions of decolonization: '[decolonization is] the meaningful and active resistance to the forces of colonialism that perpetuate the subjugation and/or exploitation of our minds, bodies, and lands' (Wilson & Yellowbird, 2012, p. 3). Further, for Wilson (2004), decolonization requires 'a belief that situations can be transformed, a belief and trust in our own peoples' values and abilities, and a willingness to make change' (p. 71). Within IRM, decolonization involves one actively choosing different ways of thinking and doing in research that resist continuation of colonialism in research (McGregor, Restoule & Johnston, 2018). It also involves a critical awareness of our personal narratives of colonization and our commitment to regeneration from effects of colonialism. To this pedagogical and institutional end, I heed Cavender Wilson's (2004) call for Indigenous scholars "to utilize our research, analytic, writing, and teachings skills to facilitate [the decolonization] process in whatever way we can" (p. 84). My epistemological engagement with decolonization directly informs how I use Anishinaabeg-gikendaasowin. For instance, my personal narrative, presented at the outset and woven throughout this paper, is an example of enacting IRM as it privileges my Anishinaabeg worldview, and focuses on decolonization and regeneration. The influence of the ancestors, ceremony, and culture are all essential elements of my decolonization and regeneration against the effects of colonialism.

In sum, in order to engage with IRM, it is necessary to understand how colonization has personally affected oneself to then resist ongoing colonization and foster decolonization. As an Anishinaabe researcher, I also have the responsibility to engage in relational accountability, which is another fundamental aspect of Indigenous research methodologies.

Relational accountability

Relational accountability is an integral component of IRM. For example, as Indigenous peoples, we seek out ancestral stories to provide us with guidance (Thomas 2005), but to also assist in our decolonization and regeneration processes. My journey to regenerate from the effects of colonialism creates an immense thirst for my Anishinaabeg stories. As a result of my reading on IRM, I understand that this yearning, this thirst, directly correlates with my relational accountability to my Anishinaabeg ancestors, my community, and all of my relations. Steinhauer (2002) explained, 'as Indigenous people we are dependent on everyone and everything around us – all our relations, be it the air, water, rocks, trees, animals, insects, humans and so forth' (p. 72). She then connected this accountability to Indigenous researchers: 'Because of this relationality, as Indigenous researchers we must realize that we are accountable to all our relations when doing research' (p. 72). By taking up IRM, one is able to connect to the world around oneself as an Indigenous researcher with 'respect, relationship, reciprocity, and responsibility' (Bell 2013, p. 89)

For example, I have been taught through Anishinaabeg-gikendaasowin that everything has a spirit. Animate and inanimate items have energy, which fosters their existence. This explains why

in our chiiskun ceremony, ancient spirits speak to us. It also explains why we consider the rocks in the sweat lodge our Mishomis. We carry relationships between each other, but also between Akii, aya'aawish, and dibikgiizis; this relationship exists between gakinagegoon. This relational understanding connects me in an important way to the responsibility I carry to my ancestors and future generations. Anishinaabe author and Elder Basil Johnston (1976) explained,

> It was from their ancestors that the Anishinaabeg inherited their understandings of life and being, all that they were and ought to be. What the grandfathers left as a legacy was the product of their minds, hearts and hands. The living were to accept the gift, enlarge it, and then pass it on to the young and the unborn. (p. 27)

This teaching directly relates to the ethic of reciprocity. As I receive guidance and purpose from my Anishinaabe identity, I have a reciprocal obligation to do something for the people (Johnston 1995). Thus, IRM require that a researcher must be accountable to the people and community involved in research and must engage in reciprocity. Likewise, to engage in Indigenous research, one must emanate a 'strong connection between self, community, memory, reciprocity, and research, [which] makes the research strong from day one' (Kovach 2009, p. 115).

Research methods within Indigenous research methodologies

Importantly, using IRM requires mindfully thinking about methods of data collection, which are procedures of how research questions are addressed (Smith 2012). Lavallée (2009) brought attention to the methods of data collection that match IRM by explaining her use of two qualitative methods of data collection: sharing circles and Anishinaabe symbol-based reflection, which is a qualitative, arts-based approach to research. She recognised that while 'Indigenous research is not qualitative inquiry the methods used [within Indigenous research] may be qualitative' (p. 36). Lavallée focused on Indigenising two approaches of data collection that best resonated with her use of Indigenous methodologies. Thus, common qualitative research methods such as arts-based methods and sharing circles, may be indigenised when used in conjunction with IRM.

Similarly, stories and narratives are further examples of useful methods of data collection that may align with IRM. Kovach (2009) recommended research methods such as stories or narratives, research/sharing circles, interviews, and even dreaming. She explained that for Indigenous peoples, stories are strong reminders of who Indigenous peoples are and our belonging. Within the Indigenous research paradigm there is an 'inseparable relationship between stories and knowing, and the interrelationship between narrative and research' (p. 94). I see the relevance in using stories as a research method, as Indigenous researchers are taught that storytelling is the way our people transmit teachings. Smith (2012) explained that the stories and perspectives of our community members are a vital part of Indigenous research, where both researcher and research participant connect to the generations past and future through story. By using IRM, Indigenous researchers seek to engage in a reciprocal relationship with the stories and narratives shared by our research participants. The engagement with the stories and narratives of the research participants is a ceremony where we are able to gain a raised level of consciousness and insight (Wilson, 2008) into how the participants' stories inform research.

Challenging settler normativity

The inclusion of IRM in academia offers a counter-narrative to colonial, settler normative thinking. Kirkness and Barnhardt (1991) clarified the troubling colonial space that Indigenous students encounter in university, where 'their survival [in academia] often requires the acquisition and acceptance of a new form of consciousness that not only displaces, but often devalues their Indigenous consciousness' (p. 8). Simpson (2014) illuminated how the devaluing of Indigenous consciousness takes place in education:

> My experience of education, from kindergarten to graduate school, was one of coping with someone else's agenda, curriculum, and pedagogy, someone who was neither interested in my well-being as a kwezens [a young woman], nor interested in my connection to my homeland, my language or history, nor my Nishinaabeg intelligence. No one ever asked me what I was interested in nor did they ask for my consent to participate in their system. My experience of education was one of continually being measured against a set of principles that required surrender to an assimilative colonial agenda in order to fulfill those principles. (p. 6)

Simpson (2014) makes clear that as Anishinaabeg attend school, we become trained in settler colonial pedagogy, as there is an inherent violence that takes place within neoliberal capitalistic education systems. We become very efficient in the coloniser's epistemology and worldview, to the point where some of us become experts in Western fields (Western medicine, law, engineering etc.). Yet, as Little Bear (2000) explained there are vast differences in Indigenous thinking and Eurocentric thinking, which manifest in our respective worldviews. Academia remains steeped in settler normativity, where linearity, objectivity, and an Indigenous non-presence permeate most, but not all, disciplines[4]. Settler normativity in academia silences different culturally-based ways of seeing the world (Little Bear 2000), which is a form of epistemic violence (Marker 2006). Bang et al. (2014) explained, 'while the denial or erasure of Indigenous points of reference may not be intentional, educational environments that uncritically mobilize them and leave settler-colonial interpretations silenced are complicit in this erasure [of Indigenous presence]' (p. 40). In consideration of settler normativity in academia, Simpson (2014) challenged us to also become trained in Anishinaabeg ways of being. As I reflect upon her challenge, I ask: Where in academia might I look to become trained in Anishinaabeg epistemology? I have learned the answer to my question is, sadly, nowhere. Yet, I am choosing to be in academia as an Anishinaabe researcher and professor, which requires a dual responsibility: a responsibility to be Anishinaabe in my work/research, and a greater responsibility to continue learning from the land, my Elders, and through ceremony. Thus, I have an obligation to use my tribal identity in everything I do. Whether I am learning Anishinaabemowin, going out on the land, participating in ceremony, or pursuing a research project or teaching a class, I must be guided by Anishinaabeg ways of being as there is a very real threat that it will be lost due to the ongoing effects of settler colonialism in our communities. In the next section, I present an Anishinaabeg research paradigm that weaves together the tenets of IRM from an Anishinaabe perspective.

Anishinaabeg research paradigm

An Indigenous research paradigm utilises Indigenous knowledges to engage story research. It establishes (or draws on traditional) morals and beliefs that directly inform our actions. For Indigenous researchers, like Wilson (2008), 'these beliefs include the way we view reality (ontology), how we think about or know this reality (epistemology), our ethics and morals (axiology), and how we go about gaining more knowledge about reality (methodologies)' (p. 13) Similarly, Absolon (2011) explained that to fully acknowledge the importance of IRM, scholars must first recognise the worldviews, principles, and paradigms they are informed by. Certainly, there are shared aspects of Indigenous philosophical traits, such as the importance of our connections to land, and shared values like respect, reciprocity, relevance, and responsibility (Kirkness and Barnhardt 1991). These similarities offer us a network of people, ideas, and mentorship, in turn affording us pedagogical opportunities to use our respective tribal knowledges to construct our specific research paradigms, especially in academia (Absolon 2011; Kovach 2009). Thus, in this section, I draw on Anishinaabeg knowledge to apply an Anishinaabeg research paradigm. Using the Anishinaabeg research paradigm assisted me in thinking through my research purpose, while also disrupting settler normativity within academia.

When Indigenous peoples engage in research that privileges our Indigenous research paradigms (ontology, epistemology, axiology, and methodologies), it enacts a deeply spiritual journey. Wilson (2008) described Indigenous research as an engagement with ceremony, which connects

Indigenous researchers to our spiritual ways of being and provides new insights into our experiences. Similarly, Bell (2013) and McGregor (2018) both advance an iteration of the Anishinaabeg paradigm in research that acknowledges the spiritual aspects and ethical responsibility of research. For example, Bell highlights that for Anishinaabeg, our spirituality relates to a holistic and respectful worldview that is brought forth in research. Similarly, McGregor explained that for Anishinaabeg conducting research it is more than the process of research itself, but an opportunity to engage in an ethic of responsibility through sharing, enacting respectful relationships with all of creation, and using Anishinaabeg traditional knowledge in the academy.

Each Indigenous community has unique worldviews, theories, and epistemologies in relation to the places in which they live. Kovach (2009) explained that Indigenous peoples are aware of the pan-Indigenous approach that homogenises our knowledge. Yet, by exercising our tribal knowledges, which are connected to our respective territories, we challenge the generalisable concept of a pan-Indigenous way of thinking. Bell (2013) correspondingly emphasised that while she advanced an Anishinaabe perspective, it is important to not reproduce a pan-Indigenous way of knowing, which is avoided by acknowledging our commonalities and differences. Thus, by learning about the key features of IRM, I am now able to apply my Anishinaabe-gikendaasowin to construct a research paradigm that is reflective of my own tribal identity. As an Anishinaabekwe committed to Indigenous research, it is crucial for me to look at Anishinaabeg-gikendaasowin as a framework for understanding the world.

Anishinaabeg-gikendaasowin

There are many Anishinaabeg scholars who have introduced and used Anishinaabeg knowledge in the academy before me (Absolon 2011; Benton-Banai 1988; Geniusz 2009; Johnston, 1976; McGuire 2013; Simpson 2011), to name a few. There is a saying that we stand on the shoulders of those we came before us, and this is very applicable to Anishinaabeg knowledge in scholarship, for without these Anishinaabeg scholars, the Anishinaabeg research paradigm would not flourish. More specifically, the work of Benton-Banai (1988), Geniusz (2009), McGuire (2013), and Simpson (2011) have informed the critical aspects of Anishinaabeg-gikendaasowin that I use in the application of the Anishinaabeg research paradigm, as shown in detail below.

Anishinaabemowin provides a spiritual connection to our land, ancestors, culture, teachings, and fosters relationships. Wilson (2008) reminded scholars that 'our [Indigenous] language has words that contain huge amounts of information encoded like a ZIP file within them' (p. 13). When Indigenous people use their language in their research, it links their thoughts, actions, and writing to their tribal identities. As such, I use Anishinaabemowin within my research paradigm. As a result of colonialism, I am not fluent in Anishinaabemowin. Nonetheless, I am able to learn it from other Anishinaabeg (family/friends) in my life and through Anishinaabeg scholars such as, but not limited to, Benton-Banai (1988), Geniusz (2009), McGuire (2013), Simpson (2011), and even online Anishinaabemowin platforms (e.g. James Vukelich's weekly Facebook live videos titled 'Ojibwe word of the day'). While learning Anishinaabemowin, I remain humbled during my pedagogical, emotional, spiritual, intellectual growth. Therefore, I am required to both learn and then use Anishinaabemowin with a good heart.

To this end, Figure 1 represents a depiction of how I envision an Anishinaabeg research paradigm. Having a visual representation of the research paradigm assists in understanding how ontology, epistemology, axiology, and methodologies are intersecting elements (Wilson 2008). The three-dimensional circle does not have a starting point or end point, but the elements are simultaneously connected together, moving fluidly between each other.

Figure 1. Depiction of an Anishinaabeg research paradigm.

Gikendaasowin

Gikendaasowin is located in the centre of the figure, as it is the reinforcement of Anishinaabeg wisdom that is passed down from generation to generation. Without gikendaasowin, the other elements of the figure would be disconnected. Geniusz (2009) explained how Anishinaabeg research is derived from principles of Anishinaabe-inaadiziwin: 'These principles are gaa-izhi-zhawendaagoziyaag, that which is given to us in a loving way by the manitous' (p. 11). She further clarified the principles are given to the Anishinaabeg through our stories, including: dibaajimowin, aadizookaan, and izhitwaawin. Undergirding these principles is the process of personal decolonization; one has to engage in the hard work of decolonization in order to recover and learn from Anishinaabeg-gikendaasowin, which is demonstrated through stories or dibaajimowinan. Dibaajimowinan are an integral component used to advance Anishinaabeg ways of being in the academy (McGregor 2018; McGuire, 2013).

Inaadiziwin

I include Inaadiziwin, the Anishinaabeg way of being. It informs our beliefs about our existence (ontology). For instance, Indigenous researchers often pray for guidance while they engage in research processes, and is an enactment of Indigenous spirituality in research (Hart 2010). Praying or engaging in spiritual processes ensures that the research is guided by our ancestors, manitous, and worldviews regardless of the research topic (Absolon 2011; Kovach 2009; McGregor 2018). Kovach (2009) suggested that participating in cultural catalyst activities, such as dreams, ceremonies, and prayer, helps researchers prepare themselves to apply an Indigenous research paradigm. And McGregor (2018), an Anishinaabe scholar, shared that we are continuously guided by our ancestors, our spirituality, and the environment when using an Indigenous research paradigm. For example, my auntie shared a dibaajimowin with me about the role rocks have in teaching us: Rocks are a direct connection to our ancient ancestors as rocks were created with the Earth, and we, as Anishinaabeg, are only in human form for a short time (P. McGuire, personal communication). Similarly, Donald (2009) explained that rocks are spiritual entities, continuously emanating energy, which help to guide us. Correspondingly, when I need guidance, I hold onto one of my many rocks so that I may receive inspiration to write; although these teachings are relatable to other aspects of one's life, as well.

Biskaabiiyang

The Anishinaabeg concept Biskaabiiyang, which means returning to ourselves (Geniusz 2009; Simpson 2011), or how we come to have knowledge (epistemology), is integral to the research paradigm. Biskaabiiyang, by definition, requires an Anishinaabe researcher to personally decolonize in order to use/return to our ancestral dibajimowinan. Through decolonization, one must rely on her/his/their Indigenous identity, culture, ancestral dibajimowinan and ontology in order to rebuild her/his/their identity, which is a process of regeneration against the effects of colonialism. For instance, the decolonization dibaajimowin I shared at the outset of this paper is an engagement of Biskaabiiyang. Furthermore, as Indigenous researchers decolonize they become 'conscious Indigenous scholars … who are on a path of intentionally learning, recovering and reclaiming their indigeneity' (Absolon 2011, p. 22) within their research.

Niizhwaaswi kchtwaa kinomaadiwinan

The Niizhwaaswi Kchtwaa Kinomaadiwinan, also referred to as the seven grandfather teachings or the seven sacred gifts, are a sacred teaching among the Anishinaabeg and encompasses our izhitwaawin. The Niizhwaasi Kchitwaa Kinomaadiwinan are principles, ethics, and morals (axiology) that guide the Anishinaabeg to live in balance, especially as we seek gikendaasowin. They include the following: To cherish knowledge is to know Nbwaakaawin (wisdom), to know Zaagidwin (love) is to know peace, to honour all of the Creation is to have Mnaadendimowin (respect), Aakwade'ewin (bravery) is to face the foe with integrity, Gwekwaadiziwin (honesty) in facing a situation is to be brave, Dbaadendziwin (humility) is to know yourself as a sacred part of Creation, and Debwewin (truth) is to know all of these things (Benton-Banai 1988). I strive to live according to the Niizhwaaswi Kchtwaa Kinomaadiwinan as I continue upon my decolonizing journey. These principles provide a framework so that I may continually assess my actions and my words. As such, they provide me with ethical guidance as I seek gikendaasowin and determine in what ways, for what purposes, and to what ends the knowledge gained through research will be used.

Wiisokotaatiwin

Wiisokotaatiwin, means gathering together for a purpose, may be used as both a methodological framework (i.e., as an approach) and as a research method (i.e., a way to collect data). Using Wiisokotaatiwin throughout my research is significant as it directly connects to the fundamental aspects of IRM, which are to engage in decolonization, privilege Indigenous voices, and use Indigenous worldviews (Rigney 1999). I began to articulate Wiisokotaatiwin while completing my Master of Arts thesis. Having a relationship with Anishinaabemowin knowledge holders in the community of Naicatchewenin First Nation, I first learned from them the word Wiisokotaatiwin to help me in thinking through an Anishinaabe concept for consciousness raising groups. Then, I looked to feminism (specifically, bell hooks) and critical theory (specifically, Paulo Freire) for support, 'not for external validation [but] rather as complementary frameworks' (Wilson 2008, p. 16), as their work resonated with my Indigenous methodology. As such, I built upon what hooks (2000) described as consciousness-raising groups. She highlighted how consciousness-raising groups offered a space to grow the revolutionary potential of feminism where women fostered their personal transformations. Informing this practice, was the belief that to make changes in their communities, women must first see the change in themselves. Correspondingly, Alfred and Corntassel (2005) acknowledged, 'the movement toward decolonization and regeneration will emanate from transformations achieved by direct-guided experience in small, personal groups and one on one mentoring towards a new path' (p. 613). Thus, I apply the term Wiisokotaatiwin to promote an Anishinaabeg consciousness-raising, which gathers people together for a purpose, to engage in decolonization processes, to usher in critical consciousness with the intent to create a pathway to Biskaabiiyang. An essential tool to achieve the purpose of Wiisokotaatiwin is dialogue.

Critical theorist Paulo Freire (2000) explained that dialogue is key to transformation through praxis, which necessitates critical thinking about our realities with the goal of ultimately transforming them. Hence, Wiisokotaatiwin, which is based on our Inaadiziwin, can provide a pathway to Biskaabiiyang; in supporting each other's consciousness-raising, we also engage in decolonization and regeneration against the effects of colonialism. Engaging in Wiisokotaatiwin as a research methodology entails an engagement in decolonization that has implications for at least three proponents: for myself, as I continually reassess and develop my journey with decolonization practices; for the participants, who may for the first time engage in their own process of decolonization; and for academia, where an Anishinaabeg research methodology is used with the expressed intent to foster decolonization, thereby disrupting settler normative thinking concerning research.

Discussion

Wilson's (2008) framework for creating an Indigenous research paradigm including ontology, epistemology, axiology, and methodology, was instructive as I pieced together what an Anishinaabeg research paradigm would encompass. In taking up Wilson's framework, Hart (2010) brought attention to the colonial strain the terms ontology, epistemology, axiology and methodology may wield upon Indigenous researchers, adding that Indigenous concepts would more accurately describe and represent Indigenous research processes. I agree. The Anishinaabeg research paradigm is my contribution to creating an Anishinaabe conceptual tool that guides my research processes. I believe Wilson's intent was to mentor other Indigenous researchers through his own narrative of coming to know Indigenous 'research is a ceremony.' Much like the role of dibaajimowinan, as listeners, we are meant to mindfully think about what the narrative is attempting to teach us and upon our own realisations, apply this new knowledge to our own lives, in ways that represent our unique tribal identities with respect, truth, and with guidance from community.

Seeking guidance from our Indigenous knowledge systems enacts a responsibility to ensure that, as Indigenous researchers, we are continually connecting with our respective communities, ceremonies, and culture. Yet, we have a dual responsibility to be mindful of what knowledge(s) we choose to bring into the academy as some of our teachings are meant to stay within our communities and ceremonies (Ermine, Sinclair, and Jeffery 2004). Using an Indigenous research paradigm provides such ethical guidance; however, as Indigenous researchers we are never alone in our research journeys. We maintain our connections to Elders and other community helpers who provide us with significant direction as we navigate our research projects.

I am privileged and grateful to use my Anishinaabe intelligence (Simpson 2014) in my research processes. The Anishinaabeg research paradigm, while instrumental to fostering a deeply meaningful research journey, also opens space for me in academia to connect to my Anishinaabe identity and knowledge. It also continually reminds me of my greater purpose in life, which is to regenerate from colonialism. Using an Anishinaabe research paradigm help me enact a continual reciprocity to my Anishinaabeg communities, my research participants and co-researchers, and it builds an Indigenous presence in the sociology of sport field. Creating space to use Indigenous knowledge in the sociology of sport field flourishes Indigenous ways of being and knowing in research. In doing so, Indigenous researchers create new opportunities to engage in research that is driven by and meaningful for our respective Indigenous communities.

Conclusion

In this paper, I have shown that Indigenous research paradigms and IRM are incredibly significant for Indigenous peoples within the academy. Methodology is one of four component parts of an Indigenous research paradigm that also includes ontology, epistemology, and axiology. When taken together, the four components foster an engagement in ceremony (Wilson 2008). IRM includes decolonization, the privileging Indigenous voices, the utilisation of Indigenous worldviews, and relational accountability – all of which serve to challenge colonialism in some form.

An Indigenous research paradigm permits me to blend my personal narrative with my academic voice (Wilson 2008). This in turn, fosters my personal decolonization in relation to the accountability I have to my community, my ancestors, and to my research. An Anishinaabeg research paradigm grounded in Anishinaabeg-gikendaasowin includes Inaadiziwin, Biskaabiiyang, Niizhwaaswi kchitwaa kinomaadiwinan, and Wiisokotaatiwin. Further, by grounding the paradigm in my Anishinaabeg-gikendaasowin, I connect with and build upon Anishinaabeg presence in the field of sociology of sport, which creates meaningful spaces to connect to Indigenous-led research and ultimately disrupts settler normativity within such spaces. Finally, an Anishinaabeg research paradigm is valid, legitimate, rigorous, and immensely ethical, as I am accountable not only to an academic institution, but also to my communities, family, ancestors, manitous, and to the Creator.

Notes

1. In Canada, the term Indigenous peoples broadly refers to First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples. For the purposes of this article, I use the term Indigenous peoples to specifically refer to First Nations peoples. I do this to not conflate the unique identities and traditions of the Métis peoples and Inuit peoples with the tribal perspective I am using.
2. The 2019 North American Sociology of Sport Conference theme is *Sport Sociology and the Responsibility for Decolonial Praxis: Decolonizing Minds, Indigenising Hearts*. It is this recent theme, coupled with the draft programme that features many panels on decolonization, that shows the desire of the sociology of sport field to address such issues.
3. Settler is defined by Barker (2009), a settler colonial theorist, as 'people who occupy lands previously stolen … from their Indigenous inhabitants or who are otherwise members of the "Settler society", which is founded on co-opted lands and resources' (p. 328).
4. Some education and feminist disciplines have disrupted settler normativity by including land-based pedagogies, anti-colonial, anti-racist, and intersectional analyses.

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