SUMMARY FORM

For ITAL2P98

Data Collection on Ethnicity and Gender inequality in Sports in Canada

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| Information Collected by | Nathan Laird |

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| Questions | Interviewee 1 | Interviewee 2 | Interviewee 3 |
| Date of Interview | November 1st 2020 | November 1st 2020 | November 2nd 2020 |
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| Name of Interviewee(use initials if the person wants to remain anonymous; only person conducting interview knows the person’s identity) | Andrew Raponi | Brittany Cornacchia | Bryson Maclean |
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| 1. What age group/generation are you in?
 | * 23 years old
* Generation Z
 | * Generation Z
 | - 23 years old |
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| 1. Do you identify with a cultural background and heritage? (Describe your cultural heritage, traditions, etc.)
 | * Summers at grand-parents’ house
* Italians like disciplines… lots of rules/strict
* Family comes first as that is the expectation
 | * Dad’s side is Italian and is very proud to be
* Nonna lives with them at the house
* Always tells people that she is half Italian
 | - Family came to Nova Scotia in the 1800s ... was a big farming community- Still farming in Kentville (Grandpa still farming at 80 years old. Has no cell phone)- Very old school- Has other family in Ontario, Alberta, British Columbia, and Virginia- Christmas always doing video calls, Tight knit with his family - Travelled out east at least one time a year until 18 - 340-member reunion - Likes Thorold and St Catherine’s because it reminds him of the little but big town feel that Halifax gave him |
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| 1. Were you born in Canada or abroad? Did you or your parents or grandparents in any generation emigrate to Canada?
 | * Grandparents (no-no) came from the 50’s from brazil fighting the war
* 2 kids in Italy, 2 kids in Canada (including his dad)
* They spoke strictly Italian at home (#1 preference over English)
 | Her Nonna (Grandma) moved to Canada at 19 (met her Grandpa in Canada) | - Born in Canada, North York. Moved to Whitby at 2 (Talks how people don’t always believe him due to the color of his skin)- Great, great, great grandparents moved to Halifax in the 1860’s- Nobody in the family knows much more - Assumes that the came from the United States prior  |
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| 1. Did you grow up speaking a language or dialect other than English or French at home? How often was the language spoken or was it only spoken at holidays with extended family or grandparents?
 | * Hard to explain
* Dads two older siblings’ kids speak fluent Italian; Him and his brothers kids speak limited. English is the preferred language with them.
	+ Attributes this to the potential influence that stemmed from growing up around kids who didn’t share the same language
* Andrew only speaks little bits of Italian at his grandparents’ house at family gatherings but sticks to English around his immediate family

  | * Not much Italian spoken at home
* Dad and Nonna both speak fluent Italian and often use it to dialogue back and forth
	+ They also speak English and sometimes flip back and forth between the two languages throughout sentences
* Her mom has been with her dad for 25 years and is now to the point where she understands it but can’t speak it
* Brittany explains how she understand several words but not much overall
 | No different language but there is a Eastern slang- When he dialogues with his mom it feels normal however, talks about how when she calls friends from out East, she sounds much different (describes it as a tone, more energy)- He doesn’t think he is that way  |
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| 1. Did you grow up in or live currently within an ethnic community of your own heritage or of a different heritage? (Or do you not see your community identifying with an ethic community where everyone speaks English or French.)
 | * Didn’t grow up in a community of Italians but definitely subconsciously assimilated well with other Italians when meeting (Italians like Italians)
* His boss is Italian, first day on the job they bonded over their heritage and determined that their grandparents were from the same town
* There is an immediate bond between Italians
* Speaks to the expectation of him playing soccer because he is Italian
 | * Not much Italian heritage
* Her parents had lots of Italian Family friends
* Had Sunday dinners with aunts and uncle
	+ Explains that at first, she thought this was normal but has since realized that this is a habitual act that comes with being Italian
 | - Highschool of 3000 kids. Very Diverse. - Met a few people from the East Coast- No one from the family at his school  |
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| 1. Did your community have various sports offered for youth participation in a variety of team sports for recreation or competitive?
 | * Georgina was his hometown
* Small center which meant no travel team
* In order to get the proper level of competition he had to play against kids a couple years older (describes it as being slightly competitive)
	+ Team progressively improved into being competitive
 | * Grew up playing soccer, ringette, danced
* Her sister played hockey
* Lots of sports available to be played
 | Played both recreational and competitive- Baseball since 4Whitby always offered many sports programs both in and out of school- Loved sports- Loved the Exploration element - Even though he didn’t play on court with the volleyball team, he speaks to how it still gave him the opportunity to go to London and see things- Playing baseball in Tennessee allowed him to site- see- Swam his whole life and is a certified life guard. Got his bronze medallion at 13 (most get it much older)- Different from other people in his family including his mom and dad who prefer to avoid the water  |
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| 1. Did you or someone you know want to play sports? Were you able to join a team in your community?
 | * A lot of his good friends shared a passion for baseball which made it that much more appealing of a sport to play
* Grew their bond even further through playing on teams
* Talks about how he himself wanted to play baseball due to the fact that it taught him how to overcome adversity and get better as a person through the lessons of the game
	+ Having a bad season and knowing what that feels like made the good seasons later in life when he started winning that much more enjoyable
 | * Enjoyed going to sports camp to meet new people
* Was inspired to play uncommon sports through meeting people at sports camps and then going to watch them play which then inspired her to give it a try herself
* Her friend and her sister were big into dance which influenced her to try dance too
 | mom encouraged him and his brother to swim because she couldn’t and wanted them to know how - Mom always encouraged participation in sport- Wanted to play sports for the social element - Gave him a structured timeslot of enjoyment - Doesn’t know what he would do with his time without it  |
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| 1. Were young girls encouraged to play sports? Were they able to join a women’s team or join a co-ed team in your community?
 | * His friend’s girlfriend, was Italian and a big hockey player from his hometown
* Her dad was her biggest supported
* Summarizes that as a parent, you want the best for your kids
* Parents are the trailblazers for their children’s opportunities
 | * Dance consisted of all girls however boys were not excluded
* Ringette was strictly a girl sport
* However, the odd time there would be male goalies who were allowed to participate
* This upset certain coaches
* However, says other people including encourage men to play so that it can help grow the game on a global scale (potential Olympic sport)
* Expresses how if men begin to play, it will diminish the downplayed reputation that ringette receives as being a “girl oriented” game
* Soccer was an only girls’ team
 | Went to high school with some very talented female athletes- One girl went NCAA division one to play volleyball out of high school. Followed her college careers up and is now playing pro in Germany - A lot of others are still playing/coaching - She was intimidating to him. (speaks about how he was a co-winner of an award and felt she made his accomplishments look insignificant due to how athletic she was.)- Mom played sports, Uncle and Mom both played University basketball.- Uncle still coaches at St. Mary’s University. Has for twenty years- Both his uncle and his mom both began playing at six years old- Says his grandparents greatly encouraged sports- Mom got scouted for basketball out of high school. To get recruited there is no electronic element. Only chance to play at the next level was for a coach to be there live  |
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| 1. Were you, young girls, or the person discussed in this interview encouraged or discouraged by your family or community to participate in team sports?
 | **-** Uncle (2nd oldest brother) sons played baseball- Andrew was the youngest in his family of cousins- Dad played growing up and always enjoyed sports and enrolled him in baseball. Andrew loved it and the rest was history* - Dad coached the Georgina team to the highest level. Describes his dad not only as a great coach but the reason he got into and loves baseball
 | Parents enrolled her and her sister in sports camps- Parents prohibited certain sports such as skiing (wanted to prevent injury)- Parents encouraged trying new sports. Happiness was prioritized meaning changing sports was a non-issue | - Parents (mom influenced his decision to participate)- Became baseball fans together with his family- His great grandpa who played in the negro league in Nova Scotia was a big inspiration to Bryson and a big reason why he adopted baseball- Pitcher for Colored Wonders in the 1920’s - Didn’t know about his great grandpas’ involvement until he was older- Race didn’t impact his sporting opportunity however not many people were playing organized competitive baseball- Most team had a one or two people of colour- Made his friends with teammates regardless of colour. Still great friends today - One year when he made it and other black kids got cut, he got verbally attacked for not being “black” as being a reason that the coaches gave him preference - No men’s team for hockey and basketball. This is due to cultural and disciplinary issues. Fought, didn’t perform at school, didn’t show coach respect. |
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| 1. How often did you play? Were you on a recreational or competitive team? Were there competitive available for girls in the community?
 | Played competitive in Georgina on a recreational team- Toronto Mets throughout high school- Notre Dame College (NCAA DII) - Brock University | - Danced grade 1-4- Dance was recreational - 3-4 dances, one recital each year- Ringette was priority - Ringette grade 1-12- Practiced 2-3 times per week, 2 games a week, 4 tournaments per year- Played Teams from all over Canada (Kitchener, Niagara Falls, Nova Scotia, North Bay)- Fun Fact: Ringette originated in North Bay - When she was younger there was much more ringette players. Attributes this to the fact that as girls grow older, they care less about playing sports at the highest level - Ringette was Competitive. Three tiers of rep teams. Now there is four as a AAA team has been introduced - They have even started to create regional teams (Central Sharks consist of Whitby, Ajax, Oshawa) | * Played house league baseball from 4-13, competitive from then onward
* Played hockey
* Until grade 9 he played baseball 3-4 times a week
* Became competitive afterwards and he practiced everyday
* Talked about how having a goal to play south of the border at the university level required a high level of drive. Every pitcher in the province also wants to get the same opportunities. Not everyone does.
* Woman’s softball team was strong
* Knows several friends who play college ball
* Every high school team that the men had the woman also had
* Had woman’s basketball and woman’s hockey but not men’s
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Closing Remarks: Andrew Raponi

* Re- enforced the pride that Italians share culturally with other Italians
* Dad is always asking him “how many Italian’s are on his sports team

Closing Remarks: Brittany Cornacchia

* Other than the food… she says she loves how much Italians cherish family (family comes first)
* Whether it is birthdays or dinners, Italians tend to take these styles of events more seriously than others may
* She always has a rule growing up where she had to be home for dinner. Although annoying as a kid, taught her how to respect her family.

Closing Remarks: Bryson Maclean

* Feels fortunate to have had the opportunity to play the sports he has
* Doesn’t know where he would be without sports in his life

**Analysis**

 Brittany and Andrew both come from Italian descent and both highlight the importance of family. Andrew talks about the theme of discipline that the Italian side of his family enforced. He discusses how his grandparents and parents have always been very strict about putting family first. Brittany reinforced this concept when she discussed how there was a precedent in place that she was to be home in time for dinner. Bryson shares similar values in a very different way. Due to geographical factors, visiting family in person is difficult to achieve. However, he still discusses how for all major events such as Christmas, he makes sure to touch base through a phone call. I observed through talking to him that he appreciates the in-person element of family a lot more due to the restriction that prevents him from being in constant connection. I feel like that is why he looks so forward to going home each year. It could also be a reason why he enjoys the City of Thorold so much as it draws connection back to his heritage he cares so much about.

Additionally, in regards to the theme of discipline, both Andrew and Brittany also discuss the great sense of pride that Italians share with one another. Bryson echoed a similar sentiment about the pride he shares to be associated with family in eastern Canada. The methodology in which it is expressed is subjective between the subjects yet always noticeably present. Andrew expresses how although he wouldn’t say he grew up in an Italian rich community, when he crossed paths with other Italians, there was an immediate point of interest. His dad would always gravitate toward associating with parents who were also Italian and always questioned Andrew how many of his teammates shared their heritage. Bryson is also prideful of his Eastern roots as he talks about his 88 year old farming Grandpa and the hardworking mentality that he appreciates so much in him. Another thing I observed is that through both interviews Bryson was wearing an “East Coast Lifestyle” hat that showcases his culture. Brittany expressed how although she wouldn’t consider herself to be accustomed with traditional value’s, she still is quick to identify as an Italian.

With regards to vocabulary, I discovered that the connection to prioritizing native language gets distilled throughout the generations. Both Andrew and Brittany talk about how both of their grandparents have an ability to speak fluent Italian and still utilize it regularly. However, when asked whether or not they would be able to hold a conversation, both explained how they would likely only be able to make out certain years. To me, it appeared that the generations who physically resided in their homeland are the ones who make a greater effort to hold onto the language of origin. When you look at Andrew’s dad, him and his brother who were born in Canada speak little Italian where as his two older siblings speak it fluently. Bryson speaks to a similar phenomenon when he talks about the “East Coast slang” his mother mindlessly adopts when talking to other easterners. I think Andrew had an interesting perspective when he attributed it to growing up in an environment where it wasn’t prioritized and in turn was always around external English influences which took shape in him over time.

With regards to sports, all expressed how pivotal of a role their parents played in shaping their athletic opportunities. Having supportive parents sets the ground work for athletic aspirations and personal growth. All three parents pushed them to find their passion and run with it. As a result, none of the candidates interviewed felt discriminated against throughout their athletic youth. Additionally, all three athletes ended up having strong athletic careers that can be partly credited to their predecessors.

Brittany brought up a unique perspective about the gender specific perceptions that various sports got. I found it interesting how there are very few boys in both ringette and dance. When asked about her opinion on boys playing ringette, she expressed how she supports it as it helps break the stigma of ringette being classified as a “woman’s sport”. She furthered this by saying that if more boys start playing ringette, that maybe the world would take it more seriously and the game would grow in popularity. I think that statement alone says a lot about the significant abundance of influence that men have on popularizing sports over woman. I was also surprised at how much travelling is involved in Ringette comparatively to where I had to travel for hockey.

Furthermore, I found the point that Brittany made about woman often times quitting competitive sports as they get older. Looking at the business side of the sporting industry, I wonder if this decision to quit is associated with the truth that many female sport lacks logistical reasoning to pursue excellence. To Brittany’s point, there is no professional ringette league that gives woman a dream to strive towards.

Andrew discussed how coming from a small town ended up playing pivotal to developing his love for the game, as well as drive to always get better. Coming from a smaller center, there was limited opportunity to play top level competition as limited numbers often means a less stocked talent pool. Although solutions were found for Andrew, I wonder how much of a barrier growing up in a small town is to finding the proper league to play in.

Bryson talks about how his great grandpa played in the Halifax Negro League back in the day. This was a league devoted to giving black men the ability to play baseball when they were discriminated against when attempting to play in leagues with white men. Although he explains that the scope of the game has changed and personally had never experienced any form of racism; I still find it interesting that there were so few other black men on his teams. I wonder what the reason is. I was also surprised to be saddened by the fact that his race was downplayed when other black members got released from his team. Falsely neglecting race is no different that purposely insulting someone based on it. Both acts are wrong.

Overall, I think that each of these individuals’ cultural roots played a pivotal role in shaping who they are as people. Heritage gives people a prideful identity to chronically hold to.

**Reflection**

Taking part in this assignment was an enlightening experience. As an individual who is about as Canadian as they come, it was a great opportunity to explore and learn about the different perspectives that these individuals possessed.

My role was to interview the subjects on their ethnicity, gender, and sporting background. The goal was to be able to be able to use their answers and formulate observations on why they may have expressed the experiences they did.

At first, I was a little bit concerned that I wouldn’t be able to get the content I wanted as I felt like I knew a lot about these people as they are all friendly companions. However, I was shocked on how much I didn’t know about their background and upbringing once I got through the surface level. Many of the answers left me feeling surprised and wanting to know more. I felt it was like I was on my own podcast having a conversation rather than completing an assignment.

I learned that although all of the subjects were generations separated from their heritage, it is less about the actions that show cultural pride and more about being proud to be affiliated. I learned that although various traditions were not carried through generations, the respect toward culture remains imperative.

This experience was important as it allowed to me understand the motivations of these individuals better than I did prior. When you don’t take the time to discover an individual’s story, it leaves gaps where assumptions have to be made on my part. I found it fascinating how the accomplishments of these individuals were often inspired by an influential piece of their culture. Bryson gravitated to baseball not only because he enjoyed the sport, but likely because there was a rich piece of family history that he could be prideful of. Brittany was introduced to the prospect of various sports through watching family friends which sparked a personal interest. Andrew speaks to the substantial influence his dad had in shaping his passion for baseball.

Although for the most part the experiences shared were positive, several subliminal themes arose in my analysis. The fact that Brittany looked at her activities as being “ladies” sports opposed to being gender neutral is concerning. The fact that she wanted men to begin to adopt these sports to give them a better chance to gain recognition speaks to the existing phenomenon that sports that are classified as being geared to woman are of less significance in comparison to men.

Another trend that stood out to me was the fact that girls tend to give up sports as they grow older to pursue other passions. This hit me hard as I currently play baseball and am attempting to go professional. I am now twenty-three years old. I can honestly say that I got told tomorrow that professional baseball would no longer be considered a professional sport, I would give it up. It’s too bad that girls are forced to abandon their potential for the reason that there is not enough opportunity to justify continuing.

Additionally, I find the interactions between different cultures of a team dynamic interesting. In a positive light, I think it is special that Andrew can create an immediate bond with Italian teammates based upon background alone. In a negative light, the fact that Bryson was consistently the only person of colour makes me question if there is a barrier that prevents people of similar race to participate. After hearing about the immense struggles’ black baseball players historically endured, I hope the lack of African-American Baseball players has more to do with a lack of interest rather than being a response to hardship experienced from the game in past.

This leaves me in a much more humbled state. As a man that came from privilege that always had opportunities to pursue that sporting avenues I wanted, I now am left with a deeper appreciation for both my fortunes. I can’t help but wonder how different things would be if roles were reversed and I was the only white male on a team. I would be crushed If I was forced to give up my passions out of spite that the end goal, I was pursuing didn’t provide enough value to warrant continuing on. It often times angers me when people call baseball a game for non-athletes just because there is more standing around in comparison to other sports. I can only imagine this is how Brittany feels when she is told that ringette is a woman’s sport.

Now that I have been given a greater sense of awareness, this will allow me to better interact with people of culture moving forward. It will incentivize me to take the time to really go beneath the surface to find out why individuals are the way they are. This assignment I interviewed three decently close companions and am completing this project feeling like I know them twice as well. The better you understand a person; the easier it is to interact.

**Pictures:**

1. **Andrew Raponi**

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1. **Brittany Cornacchia**

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1. **Bryson Maclean**

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