# THE GREAT WHITE NORTH ON THE WORLD STAGE: CANADIAN SPORTING CULTURE AND NATIONAL IDENTITY AT THE WINTER OLYMPICS, 1980-2010

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## Abstract

This dissertation examines how federal involvement in Canada's fitness and sport system, and, most notably, in high-performance winter ice sports, represented an agenda of public diplomacy. It focuses on how the federal government used fitness and sport as tools to unify the country. By the end of the twentieth century, however, sport policies had become more results-focused, distinctly separating Canadian sport from recreation. Canada used the Winter Olympics between 1980 and 2010 to showcase its unique cultural identity to the world by hosting and participating in the international spectacle. Canadian politicians and sport officials saw the Winter Games as a way to harvest a sense of unity by establishing a tradition of excellence, particularly in ice sports. Canadian federal interests also included promoting nationwide fitness campaigns by funding the popular, arm's-length agency, ParticipACTION. Instead of a national fitness and sport system that was inclusive of all Canadians, however, only particular versions of the nation were celebrated, while privileged groups earned the honour of representing Canada on the world stage.

**Acknowledgements**

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# Introduction

During the second half of the twentieth and into the twenty-first centuries, sport and physical activity in Canada became a cultural touchstone linking generations of people from different socioeconomic and ethnic backgrounds. Whether supporting their elite Olympians or participating in local physical activities, such as backyard games, fundraising events, or competitive tournaments, Canadians came together through shared sporting experiences. Fitness and sport activities have influenced national culture, as more Canadians adopted popular leisure activities such as skiing and skating to help alleviate Canada's harsh winter climate. Canadians also became involved in sports as competitors for comradery, competition, and physical exercise. As fans, Canadians followed sports because of the uncertain outcomes of competitive games and the very human, sometimes uniquely Canadian stories of athletes who strove to be their very best. The federal government worked to present its definition of a Canadian culture to the world and to showcase the best Canada had to offer through fitness and sporting achievements.

This dissertation examines the federal government's deliberate use of Canadian successes in ice sports at the Olympic Winter Games, as well as improvements in national fitness standards, to unify the nation. It argues that the Canadian federal government attempted to use high-performance sport, as well as broad-based physical fitness, towards this end. In an increasingly divisive period in Canada, hosting the Winter Olympic Games and sending medal-winning teams abroad were viewed by politicians as significant occasions for Canadians to come together in celebration. In addition, policymakers used fitness promotion across Canada as a strategy to create a healthy nation. Achievements in these areas justified enhancements to a Canadian national fitness and sport system administered by the country's federal bureaucracy, with the hope of generating even greater national unity.

The central thesis of this dissertation is that the formation of a national fitness and sport system to encourage Canadians to be physically active and to support Canadian high-performance successes in ice sports at the Winter Olympics served as tools of cultural diplomacy by federal politicians to bring the country together and to express a distinct identity abroad. Amid a strained Canadian national identity caused by economic recessions, east-west regional discontent, confrontations between Indigenous peoples and the Canadian state, and Québec sovereignty campaigns, federal politicians saw hosting and sending medal-winning teams to the Olympic Games abroad between 1980 and 2010 as a way to garner support from the Canadian public. As hosts of the Winter Olympics in 1988 in Calgary and 2010 in Vancouver, officials showcased a unique national identity to Canadians and the world. By mobilizing the population and encouraging Canadians to serve as coaches, athletes, officials, volunteers, spectators, and consumers, the federal government sought to foster a unified national identity by supporting Team Canada. However, as will be demonstrated, people celebrated only certain versions of the nation because they perceived specific standards of athletes' ability, age, ethnicity, gender, and sexuality as representing the best of Canada.

The focus of this dissertation begins a generation after the centralization of Canada's national fitness and sport system. In 1961, the passage of the *Fitness and Amateur Sport Act* marked the commencement of formal reforms as the federal government assumed greater influence over a national system. The state began transforming the once voluntary, self-regulatory sports-governing bodies into government-directed, professionally administered non-profit corporations with national development and training programs.[1] By the 1980s, the federal

[1] Bruce Kidd, "The Elite Athlete," in *Not Just a Game: Essays in Canadian Sport Sociology*, eds., Harvey, and Cantelon (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1988), 294.

government worked to create a national fitness and sport system in the shape of a pyramid, with a wide base encouraging mass participation among the populace and advancement to high-performance athletes at the Olympic level. However, the nature of the Canadian nationalism that emerged from these efforts reflected only a privileged segment of the country's diverse population.

This dissertation's chapters explore the multiple ways that fitness and sport defined Canadian cultural identity between 1980 and 2010. The federal government pursued a public diplomacy strategy through sport legislation and policies. Lawmakers in Ottawa sought to build a healthy and unified nation composed of physically fit individuals. Canada's sport ministers expected that the popularity of ParticipACTION, the government-funded fitness promotion organization, along with the success of Canada's high-performance athletes, would achieve the national goal of a healthy populace and a world-renowned sport system. Starting in 1971, ParticipACTION became an arm's-length organization supported by federal funds to encourage Canadians to have healthy, active lifestyles. Canadian politicians and ParticipACTION's leadership shared the same hope – that having a healthy population participating in physical fitness and recreational sport would create an identity which would then contribute to a more united Canadian nation.

This study builds on the work of previous scholars, such as sport sociologists, to take a historical approach to explore how the Canadian government leveraged fitness and sports between 1980 and 2010 as a form of diplomacy that brought Canadians together and reinforced Canada's presence on the world stage. Twenty years after introducing formal federal intervention in fitness and amateur sport with the passage of the *Fitness and Amateur Sport Act*, this period saw a concerted effort by the federal government to host two Winter Olympic Games

in 1988 and 2010 and to improve medal results, all to bring Canadians together. Measured success began to grow for Canadians at the Winter Olympics as a new generation of athletes progressed through the national fitness and sport system. Since 1980 in Lake Placid, Canadian athletes have won an increasing number of medals. At the 2010 Games in Vancouver, Canadian Olympians made history by winning the most gold medals of any Winter Olympic host nation.

On the other end of the spectrum from the elite athletes, Canadian federal politicians and policymakers worked to promote a unified national image through a strong centralized national fitness and sport system. Community-focused fitness programs such as ParticipACTION emphasized the role of a healthy active lifestyle in building a larger athlete base. From this foundation, Canadian athletes entered more competitive programs to advance through successive tiers of the system, culminating in regional, provincial, and eventually national high-performance competitions. Canadians became increasingly aware of the need to be fit and physically active themselves. They were encouraged to take pride in the accomplishments of their fellow Canadian world-class athletes who were training, competing and, eventually, defeating the world's best athletes on the biggest sporting stage, the Olympic Games.

The country had a long history of participating in the Summer Olympics, but Canadian officials relied on the country's cultural heritage as a winter sporting nation, particularly in ice sports, to bring the Canadian population together during the Winter Games. The northern climate and the ability to adapt to icy conditions intertwined with and helped shape Canadian identity. While Canadian athletes competed in a variety of sports, a common cultural experience of ice sports during the cold winter months has connected the country for generations. Accordingly, this study focuses on Canadians competing in bobsleigh, curling, ice hockey, luge, figure skating, ice dancing, skeleton, and speed skating at the Olympics between 1980 and 2010.

After decades of struggling at the Winter Olympic Games, the federal government strove to ensure that Team Canada would find sustained success into the twenty-first century, culminating in the 2010 Vancouver Winter Olympics. Policymakers intended Canadian sporting achievements on the world stage to generate international prestige by cementing Canada's reputation as a global leader and bringing together an increasingly diverse domestic population. However, with greater success came greater pressure on Canadian high-performance athletes to achieve ever-greater results.

## Historiography

Academic studies of the Winter Olympics have either focused on a specific event, for instance, the Vancouver 2010 Games, or the evolution of a specific sport, such as hockey, into the national consciousness. This study examines Canadian identity expressed in eight ice sports across nine Olympic Games over three decades. National sport histories typically cast a wide net when they approach Canada's participation at various Olympic Games. There are usually brief references to how the Olympics aided Canada's image on the world stage, followed by a limited analysis. These studies tend to summarize athletic achievements and medal totals as popular history texts.

Many scholars have interpreted nationalism within Canada as an amalgamation of various regionalisms – a land of "limited identities". Unlike the United States, Canada had not undergone a cohesive project of nation-building. Canadian historian J.M.S. Careless wrote that the Fathers of Confederation amalgamated a population of immigrants from different parts of the globe, living in regions with various geographies and divergent economic structures, into a single federal state with two official languages. While the United States stressed equality within

American national identity, Canada respected differences among people. People have often illustrated these differences by describing the United States as a melting pot and Canada as a mosaic.[2] Careless concluded his article by declaring that Canadians viewed the country through the lens of their class, ethnicity, and region.[3] In his book *The Canadians*, Canadian scholar George Woodcock identified six separate provincial regions with varied histories and identities. He suggested that scholars might have more easily identified unique attributes among people with roots in Newfoundland, the Maritimes, Québec, Ontario, the Prairies, and British Columbia, while geographic, political, linguistic, and religious lines regularly divided national identity and memory.[4] At the turn of the twentieth century, Canadians typically overcame perceived differences by emphasizing their differences from the United States. Therefore, one of the few ways in which Canadians minimized their regional and language differences was to regard a perceived threat from another country as affecting everyone, such as American economic, cultural, or political expansion. Accordingly, a popular way for Canadians to come together was to face a common enemy that threatened their supposed superiority in winter sporting competitions. Sport thereby connected a diverse population and imbued it with a national Canadian culture and identity.

Historical scholarship on English Canadian identity helps to ground this project. It brings José Igartua's work, *The Other Quiet Revolution*, into the turn of the twenty-first century. Igartua recognized the significant transformation in Québec, while also being aware that the rest of Canada did not remain stagnant. Igartua analyzed the transformations in English Canada,

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[2] J. M. S. Careless, "'Limited Identities' in Canada," *Canadian Historical Review* 50, no. 1 (1969): 4-5.
[3] *Ibid*., 9.
[4] George Woodcock, *The Canadians* (Don Mills: Fitzhenry and Whiteside Limited, 1979), 8.

which asserted a distinct identity by shedding its "Britishness" during Québec's Quiet Revolution.[5] This study will use a similar lens to analyze the development of high-performance sport in English Canada. Former Olympian Bruce Kidd argued that Ontario took a leadership role in developing the Canadian sport system. He recognized the significance of Montreal's role as "the cradle of Canadian sport," but noted that it was Ontario's sport bureaucrats, journalists, and athletes who influenced the development of a national sport identity. Kidd suggested that the enthusiastic support for Olympic athletes was an important nation-building tool.[6] Canadians became aware of an absence of national symbols, namely a flag and an anthem, that would be important for the Olympic Games.

For generations, social commentators such as Robert Grant Haliburton, asserted that Canadians embodied the northern character and muscular Christianity inherited from Great Britain, and they expressed this identity through winter sports competitions in Canada. Haliburton's *The Men of the North and Their Place in History*, published in 1869, discussed the influence that a northern climate had on its "northern" population. The populace supposedly benefited from the moral, mental, and physical strength of that climate which was instrumental in shaping a bright future for their nation. This was evident among Canadians who successfully adapted to harsh winters.[7] Evidence of such hardiness was to be found in a multitude of winter leisure activities, such as tobogganing, snowshoeing, and sports like skating and skiing, enjoyed

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[5] José E. Igartua, *The Other Quiet Revolution: National Identities in English Canada, 1945-71* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2006), 165.

[6] Colin Howell, *Blood, Sweat, and Cheers: Sport and the Making of Modern Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), 144.

[7] Dave Brown, "The Northern Character Theme and Sport in Nineteenth-Century Canada," *Canadian Journal of History of Sport*, 20, no. 1 (1989): 47.

by Canadians. Politicians and social commentators believed that the earliest forms of sport were supposed to instill lessons of morality, leadership, and cooperation in young Canadians.

Additionally, physical exercise in the "frozen frontier" benefited Canada's northern character. In 1873, the Governor General of Canada, Lord Dufferin, emphasized that winter sports aided "in a great measure to the vitality of a nation's temper and independence of the national spirit." Montrealer William George Beers wrote about the connection between sport and Canadian culture. He concluded his article on "Canadian Sports" by declaring, "Nothing has perhaps helped more to form the physique of the people than the instinctive love for outdoor life and exercise in the bracing spring, winter and fall of the year."[8] A tradition of outdoor physical exercise in a colder climate, producing "robust" Canadians who were supposedly unlike their southern neighbours, took hold with "the hardier character and habit of the people, as displayed by their love of outdoor diversions."[9] Early colonial settlers adopted and altered Indigenous games to form the modern equivalents of lacrosse and hockey which eventually gained recognition as Canada's premier summer and winter sports.

The construction of a Canadian national identity as a northern nation was not a new phenomenon. In her book *Becoming Native in a Foreign Land*, Canadian historian Gillian Poulter described how mid-nineteenth-century English-speaking colonists in Montreal appropriated Indigenous and French cultural practices for their own ends. Colonists used northern sports such as hunting, tobogganing, snowshoeing, and lacrosse to demonstrate their distinct position from Great Britain and the United States. By formalizing these sports with clubs and rationalizing them with rules, they also separated themselves from Indigenous peoples

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[8] Dave Brown, "The Northern Character Theme and Sport in Nineteenth-Century Canada," *Canadian Journal of History of Sport*, 20, no. 1 (1989): 48.
[9] *Ibid*., 49.

and French Canadians.[10] In the 1880s, Canadian "northerness" was disseminated through national and international advertisements for the Montreal Winter Carnival.[11] Poulter's monograph traces one of the earliest movements to deploy a one-sided national identity in Canada, characterized by outdoor activities in ice and snow during the harsh northern winters. This study will focus on how ice sports within the Winter Olympics were used as a tool to advance a perception of Canadian identity.

In Canada, winter ice sports were perceived as an important feature of national identity. The climate was one factor that accelerated the adoption of certain sports. For generations, skating across frozen lakes became an integral means of transportation and communication. Eventually, skating evolved into a recreational activity and later became codified into sports more recognizable to the modern fan, such as hockey, speed skating, and figure skating.[12] Jean-Marie Leduc, who has held one of the most comprehensive collections of ice skates in the world, spent thirty years collecting a piece of Canada's story to safeguard relics from a national pastime. He explained that they were connected to the country's development and its citizens. Even for individuals like himself, who did not skate as a child growing up in Ottawa, Leduc stated that everyone had some connection to ice sports.[13] Canada became an early participant in the revival of an ancient sporting spectacle to showcase itself as a winter sporting nation.

Beginning in the late nineteenth century, National Sport Organizations [NSOs] embraced the amateur ideal and formalized leagues to compete across the country and continent. Amateurs

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[10] Gillian Poulter, *Becoming Native in a Foreign Land: Sport, Visual Culture, and Identity in Montreal, 1840-85* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2009), 11.
[11] *Ibid*., 166.
[12] Jean-Marie Leduc, Sean Graham, and Julie Léger, *Lace Up: A History of Skates in Canada* (Victoria: Heritage House Publishing Company, 2017), 48.
[13] Leduc, Graham, and Léger, *Lace Up: A History of Skates in Canada*, 17.

were praised for their commitment to honouring the principles of fair play and competing for the love of sport. In 1884, the Amateur Athletic Association of Canada defined an amateur as an individual who never competed to earn a livelihood. In a matter of decades, however, the amateur ideal came into conflict with the reality of young men who were being paid to compete professionally in baseball, football, lacrosse, or hockey. As professionals, they devoted more time to improving their athletic skills since it was considered a job. Middle- and upper-class women formed their own clubs in tennis, golf, horse riding, rowing, and skating to stay physically and socially active.[14] The twentieth century was marked by the growing distinction between amateur and professional athletes, while sport as a leisure activity remained widely popular. As Canada generated support for its winter athletes, they drew upon this belief and discourse about the nation's identity being defined by a tradition of outdoor sporting experiences, ignoring who was being excluded.

The revitalization of the Olympic Games provided the vehicle for Canada's participation in international sport. At the end of the nineteenth century, Pierre de Coubertin was the leading force in reviving the ancient Greek tradition of the Olympic Games. He organized the first modern Games in 1896 in Athens, Greece, with a small contingent of participating countries.[15] While host countries of nineteenth-century expositions sought to display their cultural and scientific accomplishments to the rest of the world, a similar trend took shape with the twentieth-century Olympics. Coubertin infused turn-of-the-century ideas of honour, morality, and peace into international sports competitions.[16] The Olympic Games showcased physical and moral

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[14] Peter L. Lindsay, and J. Thomas West, "Canadian Sports History," *The Canadian Encyclopedia*. February 4, 2010.
[15] Don Morrow, and Kevin B. Wamsley, *Sport in Canada: A History*, Vol. 2 (Don Mills, Ontario: Oxford University Press, 2010), 240.
[16] Morrow, and Wamsley, *Sport in Canada: A History*, 242.

excellence inspiring younger generations to become athletes. Coubertin wanted to cultivate mutual respect and international peace through sport.[17] However, commentators soon began to view the Olympics through the lens of nationalistic competition.[18] Canada's first Olympic appearance, distinct from the British Empire, was in 1908 for the Summer Games in London, England. It would not be until 1924 in Chamonix, France, that the Winter Games were organized. For the remainder of the twentieth century and into the twenty-first, Canada participated in all Olympic Games except the 1980 Summer Games in Moscow, and even hosted the 1976 Summer Games in Montreal, the 1988 Winter Games in Calgary, and the 2010 Winter Games in Vancouver.[19] The latter two Winter Games will be treated more closely in this study.

Concepts and Definitions

This dissertation uses the lens of public diplomacy to examine Canada's expressions of national identity through sport policies and by hosting the Olympics. As sports diplomacy scholar Michał Marcin Kobierecki argues, public diplomacy shares both domestic and foreign policy objectives. Sport – as a form of cultural diplomacy, a subset of public diplomacy – could build trust and shape a state's external perceptions.[20] Internationally, sport played a role in cultural diplomacy, which involved deploying cultural assets to build mutual respect between two countries.[21] Governments could directly employ sport as an instrument of cultural diplomacy and this strategy was particularly utilized by countries that hosted the Olympic Games

[17] John A. Daly, "Introduction," in *Encyclopedia of the Modern Olympic Movement*, eds. John E., Findling, and Kimberly D. Pelle, (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2004), xviii.
[18] Morrow, and Wamsley, *Sport in Canada: A History*, 242.
[19] *Ibid*., 216.
[20] Michał Marcin Kobierecki, "The Domestic Dimension of Sports Diplomacy" *Review of Nationalities* 9, no.1 (2019): 17-18.
[21] Eric S. Morse, "Sport and Canadian Foreign Policy," *Behind the Headlines* 45, no. 2 (December 1987): 4-5.

for many reasons. The international spotlight on athletic achievements could enhance a country's diplomatic position and even make it more appealing to invest in the country.[22] Unlike traditional forms of diplomacy, cultural diplomacy promoted the talents of a country's best cultural ambassadors to citizens in other countries, rather than to politicians or diplomats. Concurrently, public diplomacy could be a tool to raise domestic support for a government's policies[23] and to build national unity.[24] Finally, sport fostered a sense of togetherness through shared experiences at local, regional, and national levels. This could be achieved through the direct participation of the population as athletes, coaches, officials, and volunteers. Engagement in public diplomacy, therefore, attracted the attention of Canadian federal politicians because of its potential to enhance national unity and pride.

Public diplomacy exists as a form of soft power, a concept political scientist Joseph S. Nye devised to better understand the use of non-coercive power exercised by governments to influence populations and achieve outcomes politicians desired. Instead of providing enticements or threats, Nye identified the use of attraction to influence others' preferences. Nye called this soft power, and it could be directed towards a domestic population or other countries. Essentially, Nye states that soft power "co-opts people rather than coerces them". In international politics, cultural expressions, including through sport, were ways to attract the attention of foreign publics, not just governments. Cultural expressions took the form of arranging exchanges through sports competitions and broadcasting events.[25] Canada's

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[22] Donald Macintosh and Michael K. Hawes, *Sport and Canadian Diplomacy* (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 1994), 4.
[23] Kobierecki, "The Domestic Dimension of Sports Diplomacy," 18.
[24] *Ibid*., 25.
[25] Joseph S. Nye, "Public Diplomacy and Soft Power," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 616 (2008): 94-95.

diplomatic goals, abroad and domestically, depended on successful results at the Olympics, and on presenting a particularly harmonious version of Canada to the world.

Government policies were required to communicate a government's goals. When considering federal policies, political scientist Leslie Alexander Pal defines policies as guides on a series of actions related to a particular field. She adds that policies represented a decision to commit public resources towards a project. More specific courses of action to satisfy broad policy goals were considered programs. Issuing government policy served to state an administration's intention to get involved in solving a public problem. Pal, conversely, stresses that a government's inaction was a choice not to involve itself and therefore should also be considered a policy.[26] Canada's sport policies were used as a public means to demonstrate that the federal government was taking steps to improve the nation's health. This dissertation addresses national trends in public policy; however, federalism is beyond the scope of this project. Deeper analysis of provincial and federal responsibilities regarding sport planning within Canada is a fruitful avenue of exploration for future analysis. This dissertation focuses on national identity expressed through sport in English Canada. Analyzing the nuances of Québec nationalism in relation to Canadian federalism through sport warrants treatment as a topic in its own right.

The terms sport, fitness, exercise, and culture are employed extensively in this dissertation. Defining them clarifies these concepts, as there are important distinctions between fitness and sport, especially when they have been conflated to mean the same thing. While sport, fitness, and exercise could be considered athletic activities, policymakers valued sport more highly. The

[26] Leslie A. Pal, *Beyond Policy Analysis: Public Issue Management in Turbulent Times*, 4th ed. (Nelson Education, 2010) 2.

pinnacle of sport for many athletes was the Olympic Games. It evolved from strictly a space for amateurs to eventually being taken over by professional high-performance athletes. Politicians theorized that the formalized, codified nature of sport could yield tangible results in terms of tourism revenue and intangible benefits, such as prestige for Canada on the world stage. Fitness had broader connotations, including moving one's body as physical exercise to improve one's general health, in both formal and informal settings. There were formal exercise regimens at home and in a gym that could build strength and flexibility, but more informal practices, such as gardening and climbing the stairs at work, were increasingly acknowledged in this era. Government agencies generally treated fitness and exercise as a newer priority of preventative healthcare. Over successive generations, "the way of doing things" formed into a culture that valued sporting success, sometimes with a residual effect of encouraging all Canadians to be active. This dissertation examines the relationship between high-performance fitness and sport in Canada.

Sport in the Canadian context can be interpreted in several ways and with many examples. The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines sport as: "An activity involving physical exertion and skill, esp. (particularly in modern use) one regulated by set rules or customs in which an individual or team competes against another or others."[27] In the modern sense, sport is typified by its level of organization, regulation, bureaucracy, and universal codification of rules, from community leagues to national associations. The community-based, unorganized, and periodic games played by earlier generations for pleasure eventually evolved into specialized

[27] *Oxford English Dictionary,* 3rd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), s.v. "Sport."

competitions scheduled locally, regionally, provincially, nationally, and internationally.[28] Such activities required strategy, physical strength, and mental acuity to achieve a victorious outcome through skill. On the one hand, sports were seen as a social opportunity to meet new people and build self-confidence. Conversely, sport was used as a political tool to instill a sense of competition with fame and fortune as external rewards.[29] As the level of competition within each sport increased, so, too, did the desire among participants to be the best in pursuit of a record.[30] Sport thereby shifted the athlete's focus to a clear outcome: victory or defeat.

Women's sport historian Ann Hall argues that institutions that regulate aspects of Canadian society – including education, mass media, big businesses, and the government – connected sport to broader social structures. Accordingly, she adds, sport touched most Canadians in varying degrees as participants or spectators,[31] and therefore served to bring together people from different heritages to a greater degree than many other cultural activities.[32] Ann Hall, sport management scholar Trevor Slack, sport sociologist Garry Smith, and political scientist David Whitson identify excitement, physicality, and community as reasons why so many people were attracted to sports in Canada. They were exciting for participants and spectators because sports combined mental, emotional, and physical skills. The physical aspects

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[28] Richard S. Gruneau, "Modernization or Hegemony – Two Views on Sport and Social Development," in *Not Just a Game: Essays in Canadian Sport Sociology*, eds., Jean Harvey, and Hart Cantelon (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1988), 13.

[29] Donald Macintosh, Tom Bedecki, and C. E.S. Franks, *Sport and Politics in Canada: Federal Government Involvement Since 1961* (Kingston: McGill-Queens University Press, 1987), 5.

[30] Gruneau, "Modernization or Hegemony," in *Not Just a Game*, eds., Harvey, and Cantelon (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1988), 13.

[31] Alan Bairner, *Sport, Nationalism, and Globalization – European and North American Perspectives* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001), 116.

[32] Ann Hall, Trevor Slack, Garry Smith, and David Whitson, *Sport in Canadian Society* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1991), 39.

of sport, such as dexterity, agility, balance, and endurance, were appreciated by amateurs because they could relate to the difficulty of competing at a high level. Finally, sport fostered a sense of community through civic nationalism, enabling members of the nation to identify with athletes representing their country. Therefore, the federal government invested in high-performance sport with the expectation that athlete success would strengthen national bonds.[33]

Canada's national expression had been characterized as a combination of civic and cultural nationalisms. Political philosopher Kai Nielson defines civic nationalism as a method to organize nations based on citizens' equal access to political freedoms and cultural capital. In a multicultural nation like Canada, a shared public culture united members with historic myths, memories, traditions, and celebrations.[34] Unlike ethnic nationalism, which traced one's family ancestry back to the nation's origin, civic nationalism included all citizens of a particular state and their connection to its political freedoms. Whereas ethnic nationalism identified stark contrasts between "insiders" and "outsiders" based on ancestral ties to a homeland, civic nationalism was shaped by the state's immigration policies.[35] In 1971, Canada was the first country in the world to adopt an official policy of multiculturalism. It projected an image to the world that Canada was tolerant of different cultures and welcomed newcomers. While there have been political conceptions of nationalism, this study will argue that a shared culture of spending leisure time outdoors in the winter made Canada unique among other liberal democratic countries beyond Scandinavia. Although Scandinavian countries also promoted themselves as winter nations, Canada's multicultural population provided another dimension to

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[33] Hall, Slack, Smith, and Whitson, *Sport in Canadian Society*, 33-37.
[34] Kai Nielsen, "Cultural Nationalism, Neither Ethnic nor Civic," in Ronald Beiner (ed.), *Theorizing Nationalism* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999): 122-124.
[35] Bairner, *Sport, Nationalism, and Globalization*, 3.

the nation's identity. Canadians also took it one step further, striving to be recognized as an international leader in multiple ice sports, including curling, ice hockey, figure skating, ice dancing, and speed skating. With varying success, the Canadian government tried to use the Winter Olympic Games as an occasion for national cohesion.

Fitness exercises should not be understood as oppositional to sports. Rather, such exercises presented another way for individuals to improve their health without the pressure of competition. This dissertation will analyze the national discourse on fitness and the federal government's efforts to promote an active lifestyle. The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines fitness as: "The quality or state of being fit or suitable; the quality of being fitted, qualified, or competent. spec. the quality or state of being physically fit."[36] Additionally, the term exercise complements the previous definition as an "Exertion of the muscles, limbs, and bodily powers, regarded with reference to its effect on the subject; esp. such exertion undertaken with a view to the maintenance or improvement of health."[37] In their 1969 *Report on Physical Recreation, Fitness and Amateur Sport in Canada*, management consultants, P.S. Ross & Partners, described what one could expect from maintaining a proper level of physical fitness. Rather than focusing on specific activities that could be grouped under one umbrella, they defined fitness as the ability to complete daily tasks with an appropriate level of focus to counteract a sedentary lifestyle while still maintaining muscular energy to enjoy leisure interests.[38] Whereas sport participation may have been driven by external factors such as the desire to win a competition, fitness was typically viewed primarily as a means to achieve a healthy lifestyle.

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[36] *Oxford English Dictionary,* 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), s.v. "Fitness."
[37] *Oxford English Dictionary,* 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), s.v. "Exercise."
[38] P.S. Ross & Partners, *A Report on Physical Recreation, Fitness and Amateur Sport in Canada* (Ottawa: Fitness and Amateur Sport Directorate, 1969), 319.

In the late twentieth century, fitness and sport became increasingly gendered, with men portrayed as more involved in sports than women. Meanwhile, women were primarily perceived to be engaged in fitness activities. Sociologist and historian Helen Lenskyj, for instance, argues that skills associated with sports – pain, endurance, strength, discipline, competition – and fitness – pleasure, play, dancing, skipping, walking – tend to be gendered. The former term seemed to have male sport connotations, while the latter denoted female fitness programs.[39] However, many women engaged in fitness because there were so few options for participating in sports leagues. The fitness movement gained widespread popularity in the 1970s and 1980s among young professionals who were unwilling to sacrifice their health for their demanding work schedules and sedentary lifestyles. Both men and women recognized the growing value of physical and mental fitness.[40]

This dissertation also addresses the presence of a Canadian sporting culture. It can be difficult to narrow down the meaning of such a term. Ann Hall, et al. in *Sport in Canadian Society* approached culture as a way of life. They view culture as the activities and ideas that shape how people structure their lives and find meaning, such as through leisure.[41] They also argue that Canadians were drawn to sport for three reasons: excitement, physicality, and community.[42] The uncertain outcome of competition was an exciting enticement and could foster an emotional connection between supporters and participants. The physical skills – such as endurance, balance, strength, dexterity, coordination, and agility – that children first learned

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[39] Helen Lenskyj, *Gender Politics and the Olympic Industry* (Basingstoke, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 24-25.
[40] Nancy Theberge, "Gender and Sport," in *Handbook of Sports Studies* eds., Jay Coakley, and Eric Dunning, (London: SAGE, 2000), 324.
[41] Hall, Slack, Smith, and Whitson, *Sport in Canadian Society*, 30.
[42] *Ibid*., 33.

when they were introduced to a sport served as a point of admiration for high-performance athletes who had mastered their craft. Athletes were celebrated as representatives of local and national communities at international events.[43] Supporters admired athletes for their ability to perform physically challenging skills, the emotional triumph of winning, and their role as positive representatives of their community. Craig McGregor, a cultural critic, says, "Culture is what we are all about. It is a crystallization of what we feel, what we want, what we fear, what we live for. We shape it, it shapes us, it both reflects and determines our being, it is the way we try to understand and give meaning to our lives. Our culture is us."[44] Millions of Canadians held such an attachment to sports and high-performance athletes that their fears, hopes, and dreams were tied to the accomplishments of Canada's representatives on the world stage.

Questions about a perceived Canadian national identity and the implications of government-sponsored fitness and sport guide the dissertation. How did politicians and the media use international athletic competitions as tools to shape a particular version of national identity at the Winter Olympics? How was a Canadian nationalism expressed internationally? How important was fitness to political leaders and the general Canadian population? How did fitness directives from ParticipACTION contribute to creating a healthy populace? Why was it important for Canadians to get active? In what ways were age, ability, class, gender, indigeneity, race, region, and sexuality applied to constructing a version of a national identity? What contradictions and conflicts arose as a result of omitting some groups of Canadians in the construction of a national identity? In approaching these questions, this dissertation examines a variety of recurring themes, including: federal policies and legislation related to building a

[43] Hall, Slack, Smith, and Whitson, *Sport in Canadian Society,* 34-36.
[44] Craig McGregor, *Pop Goes the Culture* (London: Pluto Press, 1984), 99.

national fitness and sport system; federal interest in expanding the fitness domain by investing in the national promotion organization, ParticipACTION; the pressure athletes faced to win Olympic medals; the ineffectiveness of government policies to equitably include Canada's diverse population, and the distorted cultural expressions of a Canadian identity beyond the sites of competition.

This dissertation contributes to the field of sport history by analyzing the federal government's interest in influencing a national fitness and sport system for generations of Canadians at the turn of the twenty-first century as a way to achieve national identity, unity, and health objectives. It outlines the three generations of Canada's fitness and sport system. The first generation, between 1960 and 1970, includes the early inception of a formalized structure overseen by the federal technocrats. The second generation, between 1970 and 1990, includes the federal government identifying the need for mass participation while also trying to host the Winter Olympic Games successfully. Finally, between 1990 and 2010, corporate-government partnerships were formed to support national sport organizations and individual athletes.

Although snow covers much of Canada for most of the year, many skiing disciplines that developed in the twentieth century required mountains for young athletes to refine their skills. As a leisure activity, skiing in North America had historically been restricted to white middle-class participants.[45] The cost of purchasing equipment and the requirement to join a ski club, for instance, limited the sport's potential for widespread adoption. Ice, on the other hand, was more readily accessible with public ice rinks and arenas found in communities across Canada and learning the basic skill of skating only required lacing up a pair of skates. The elusive gold

[45] Annie Gilbert Coleman, "The Unbearable Whiteness of Skiing," in *Sports Matters: Race, Recreation, and Culture*, eds. John Bloom, and Micheal Nevin Willard (New York: New York University Press, 2002), 155.

medals became prized national possessions to improve Canada's prestige. It may have been simple to track medal results at each Olympics, but every four years, Canadians were invited to appreciate their athletic heroes and heroines who had worked so hard to compete on the world stage.

## Methodology

This dissertation includes varied primary-source research from both physical and digital archives. Archival records from the Library and Archives of Canada and records about ParticipACTION from the University of Saskatchewan, along with online sources, explained the top-down approach that the federal government used to influence Canadian national identity. Cross-referencing the sources exposed the diverse perspectives between the federal government and local communities across the country. Federal government documents explained how Ottawa was trying to use fitness and sport to shape national identity and reinforce unity. Layering these sources with newspaper articles offered a social commentary on how Canadians were responding to top-down messaging. In some cases, there were signs of misinterpretation or resistance against the federal government's influence. This dissertation draws on archival sources to provide insight into the political and cultural motivations and consequences of the federal government's decision to invest in a strong national fitness and sport system in Canada.

While rigorous, the research presented in this dissertation was constrained by certain limitations. The global COVID-19 pandemic restricted in-person access to the Library and Archives of Canada and the International Centre for Olympic Studies at Western University. Archival research produced limited internal departmental communications in the federal Fitness and Amateur Sport Branch. The files within the Branch that were accessible identified its

evolving direction towards prioritizing high-performance sport. Thus, expressions of national identity were mostly examined through publicly accessible online sources, such as press releases, government reports, and media coverage of the Olympic Games. Government press releases and public reports on the Calgary Winter Olympics were available at the Library and Archives of Canada. Those released at the turn of the twenty-first century have been digitized and remain accessible online. These government documents were public facing; therefore, they sought to convey the government's agenda to Canadians in a positive, constructive way by highlighting achievements. This left discerning readers to interpret what was being prioritized or neglected through the federal government's investment in programs within the national fitness and sport system. The Olympic ceremonies courtesy of the International Olympic Committee [IOC] digital archive are amplified by and contrasted with newspaper coverage from across Canada. Television coverage of the Olympic ceremonies lacked the commentary from licensed broadcasters, so the presentation of cultural performances remained the principal point of analysis, without the additional interpretation of commentators.

By reporting on municipal, regional, provincial, national, or international events every day, each newspaper provides a service to its readers. As historian Valerie J. Korinek states in *Roughing it in the Suburbs: Reading Chatelaine Magazine in the Fifties and Sixties* (2000), newspapers and magazines represented the concerns of their readers.[46] Korinek acknowledges that each publication existed within its own historical and cultural context.[47] From the author's intended message to the viewer's interpretation, she adds that popular culture contains layers of

[46] Valerie J. Korinek, *Roughing It in the Suburbs: Reading Chatelaine Magazine in the Fifties and Sixties* (Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, 2000), 3.
[47] *Ibid*., 17.

meaning that scholars need to deconstruct.[48] Therefore, a critical reading of news publications is required. In his article, "Reading Newspapers – Cultural Histories of the Popular Press in Modern Britain", historian Adrian Bingham notes that newspapers provided an important avenue of research into the popular culture of a historical place and time. Newspapers commonly offered researchers an agenda for discussion in private and public settings, as well as a lens into how some people made sense of the world. Bingham concluded that while newspapers recorded history, they also shaped it through their reporting of events.[49] For researchers, then, the size, placement, and content of a newspaper article provide valuable insight into the perspectives of a community consuming the news from each publication.

For this dissertation, newspapers provided insight into how Canadians were supposed to view themselves, reflecting the public diplomacy efforts the federal government was trying to shape. Newspaper articles were used as one means to understand the thoughts and feelings of English Canadians from populations of different sizes across the country. Newspaper articles from Indigenous news sources are also included to illustrate a perspective often absent from mainstream news. By covering anti-Olympic protests, newspapers also highlighted points of contention among Canadians opposed to the nationalistic event. Newspaper articles published between 1980 and 2010 were sampled from the *Canadian Major Dailies* database on Olympic coverage, focusing on preparation and the reflection following the Calgary and Vancouver Games. Particular attention was given to articles about the Games in Calgary and Vancouver, including preparation, during, and reflections on the legacy following the Games. Keyword searches for "Olympics," "torch relay," "Canadian unity," "Canadian identity," and

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[48] Korinek*, Roughing It in the Suburbs*, 20.

[49] Adrian Bingham, "Reading Newspapers: Cultural Histories of the Popular Press in Modern Britain," *History Compass*10, no. 2 (2012): 142-45.

"ParticipACTION" produced the largest referenced sample of articles in the dissertation. For the most part, articles were from the front page and sports sections of the newspapers. Very few articles were opinion pieces or editorials. The articles needed to represent the voices of Canadian athletes and sport fans, not just the opinions of the newspaper editorial board or reporters.

Since the events of this study occurred during an era of extensive media coverage, it includes interviews from the public domain with former athletes, officials, and broadcasters regarding their experience representing Canada at the Olympics. Their reflections on being in the moment and on what the event meant to them as Canadians offer additional perspective beyond the roaring crowds. Similar to newspapers, television coverage actively constructs the news by framing it within a context by placing a camera on the sideline and a microphone in front of athletes. The gender disparity in media coverage became pronounced during this era. Most of the media attention, with higher-quality broadcasting, was directed towards male sports.[50] Despite the success of women athletes at the Winter Olympics, their media coverage beyond the Games was nonexistent compared with that of men's sports.

Even though the events explored in this dissertation took place within living memory of many Canadians, it does not rely on oral interviews and instead on memoirs as one form of primary source evidence. The vast breadth of research can be maintained by including multiple personal perspectives from media interviews conducted at that time. Additionally, the memoirs, particularly by Frank King and John Furlong allow scholars to gain insights into organizing and hosting the mega-event of the Winter Olympics. It must be noted, however, that a critical lens needs to be applied to memoirs given their reliance of memory after-the-fact. The memoirs of

[50] Lawrence Wenner, *MediaSport* (London: Routledge, 1998), 172-73.

such leaders have a particular audience and were intended to frame the work of these men as particularly special. Unlike other scholarly publications, this project will trace the evolving expression of Canadian identity at the Olympics from Lake Placid in 1980, during the final decade of the Cold War, through the first decade of the twenty-first century and the 2010 Winter Olympics in Vancouver.

Chapter Outline

Throughout the dissertation, the chapters consider the precarious balance between high-performance success serving as a form of cultural diplomacy and mass participation serving as a form of public diplomacy. Increasingly, the former was favoured, as politicians preferred strengthening Team Canada rather than promoting healthy, active lifestyles among Canadians. They also incorporate Canada's efforts to host and participate in the Winter Olympic Games between 1980 and 2010. As a result, sport policies and expressions of Canadian national identity were not inclusive. The national fitness and sport system did not address inequities the Indigenous peoples, para-athletes or women faced regularly. Ottawa promised that the system would welcome everyone, no matter their ethnic or socio-political background. However, it remained the privileged few who could afford the time and financial costs to travel and train for the honour of representing Canada. This study, therefore, questions who was left out of the nation.

Chapter One analyzes the federal government's interest in creating a national fitness and sport system through the *Fitness and Amateur Sport Act* of 1961. The chapter serves as a baseline for measuring the political priorities that underpinned the government's promotion of international sporting success. Federal intervention in the national fitness and sport system

carried many objectives. High-performance athletes were consistently recognized as cultural ambassadors for the Canadian nation. Competitions against foreign athletes were occasions for cultural exchange between nations. Furthermore, greater success against the world's best athletes was interpreted as having significant potential to elevate Canada's status. For a national population, these accomplishments would supposedly encourage national pride. Through Sport Canada, high-performance programs with proven success received most federal funding while marginal funds were directed to fitness programs overseen by Fitness Canada. Thus, this chapter also analyzes the circumstances that allowed a national fitness promotion organization to remain operational while the majority of government resources were tailored towards high-performance sport.

Chapter Two focuses on the federal government's support of Canada's fitness promotion organization, ParticipACTION. It investigates how federal policies to improve high-performance sporting success and ParticipACTION's fitness promotion programs were used as forms of public diplomacy. The federal government invested in ParticipACTION to reduce healthcare costs caused by sedentary lifestyles. Fitness governance fell within provincial authority in Canada, but the federal government found a way around jurisdictional boundaries by creating ParticipACTION. By financing their operating budget, the federal government could promote its message on the benefits of healthy, active lifestyles without interfering with provincial rights. The federal government could also avoid accusations of overbearing authoritarianism by refraining from dictating how Canadians should spend their leisure time. ParticipACTION deployed soft power domestically to inspire Canadians' competitive spirit to be more active than their rival neighbour, community, or country. Canadians of all ages and abilities were encouraged to get moving through individual activities and community events.

The latter were occasions to meet neighbours and to develop shared experiences at a local level. Fitness competitions against municipalities invigorated regional rivalries while respectfully engaging with Canadians across the country. However, at the end of the century, ParticipACTION was forced to cease operations after the federal government severely reduced its funding in favour of supporting high-performance sport.

After two decades, the national sport system was tested as Calgary prepared to host the XIV Winter Olympiad. Chapter Three focuses more specifically on the negotiations, bidding, planning, and organizing involved in the XV Olympic Winter Games. This chapter serves as a case study of the efforts by federal politicians and sport administrators to unite Canada for the world's largest winter sporting competition. It was Canada's second time hosting the premier gathering of the world's best athletes after Montreal hosted the Summer Olympics in 1976. The Winter Olympics, however, made it more significant because it aligned closely with the country's identity as a winter sporting nation. Even though Calgary was awarded the honour of hosting the Games, Canadians from every province and territory came together to celebrate. The federal government, in association with ParticipACTION, planned hundreds of community events across Canada to generate excitement for the sporting spectacle. The federal government took advantage of the international spotlight to invest in Canada's culture through high-performance winter sport, making the Calgary Games the "best ever". However, organizers had to navigate through considerable turmoil in Canada at the time, including protests by Indigenous groups raising awareness of inequities in Canadian society. Although the Calgary Games attracted international attention, cracks in the national image began to appear when Canadians tried to celebrate an orchestrated representation of the nation's identity.

Chapter Four explores how many Canadians were left outside the national fitness and sport system by the beginning of the twenty-first century. Indigenous peoples, Canadians living with disabilities and women struggled to gain access and progress through the national fitness and sport system like their Anglo male contemporaries. The federal government only became interested in creating policies for these groups at the turn of the twenty-first century because of the belief that they could advance its cultural diplomacy objectives at the Olympic and Paralympic Games. This chapter also identifies the federal government's support for athletes' training and competition at the highest levels. Most of these athletes could also benefit from family support. At a time when the federal government was trying to make the national fitness and sport system equally accessible, it continued to privilege wealthier Canadians who could afford the financial and time commitments. The ability to represent Team Canada required more than athletic skill. Canada's high-performance athletes also needed to come from privileged backgrounds in terms of geography, socioeconomic class, and gender. Many talented young athletes were forced to redirect their energy to other interests after encountering barriers in the national fitness and sport system.

The efforts by the federal government to host the Vancouver 2010 Winter Olympics and Own the Podium will be examined in Chapter Five. National culture was expressed as sport diplomacy by federal politicians and Olympic organizers. The world's attention would be on Vancouver in 2010 when it hosted the Winter Olympics. An expression of a particular Canadian national identity was put on display at the Olympics for domestic and foreign audiences. The opening ceremony became one strategy to highlight the host country's cultural heritage beyond the competition space of the Games. With billions of viewers worldwide watching through various media outlets, Canada had the chance to showcase its competitive spirit, sportsmanship,

and unique culture. As in Calgary, the Vancouver Games incorporated Indigenous iconography into their ceremonies, with mixed results. While the Olympic ceremonies presented a particular version of the country's culture and history, Canada's best athletes were not a true representation of the country's population.

## Chapter 1: Contextualizing Federal Sport Policies in Canada, 1960s-2000s

The development of fitness and sport in conjunction with Canada's identity formation existed within wider political and cultural contexts of the second half of the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. During this era, Canada faced an identity crisis domestically and internationally. At home, national unity was tested by Québec separatism and by efforts to define Canadian symbols such as a national flag and anthem. Internationally, during the Cold War, Canada sought to carve out a distinct identity within America's sphere of influence by positioning itself as a global mediator and peacekeeper. Historian Colin McCullough argues that Canada assumed a responsibility to be a respected middle power through its military, economic, and diplomatic influence on the global stage. He adds that Canada was also creative with its use of culture and national identity in Canada's peacekeeping past.[51] This dissertation adds another layer to Canada's role as a middle power through its efforts to use sport as a form of diplomacy. This chapter will examine the federal government's involvement in fitness and sport from its first piece of legislation in 1961 to its replacement in 2003. It argues that the federal government became invested in fitness and sport as tools of diplomacy because of a belief that they could unite Canadians through a shared identity and promote the country's international prestige.

Federal politicians wanted to foster greater national unity while emphasizing Canada's differences from the United States and its status as a unique nation within the British Commonwealth. Both domestic and international goals could be achieved by celebrating Canada's fitness and sport accomplishments. The spectacle of the Olympic Games served as one platform to convey Canada's character. There had been larger spectacles such as international

[51] Colin McCullough, *Creating Canada's Peacekeeping Past* (Vancouver, British Columbia: UBC Press, 2016), 11.

expositions, but Canada hosted only a single World's Fair in 1967 – Expo '67 – whereas it hosted three Olympic Games in 1976, 1988, and 2010.

The federal government looked for opportunities, especially after the Second World War, to invest in cultural activities that promoted common Canadian experiences in the areas of film, music, and sport. As greater media attention became devoted to international sport, the federal government looked to the Olympic schedule for opportunities to reinforce Canadian national identity. The Canadian state incorporated the celebration of Canada's athletes into the civic nationalist tradition because they were exemplary members of the Canadian nation.[52] Therefore, the pressure for Canada's athletes to be successful sport leaders and positive role models intensified every four years. While the Olympics were superficially a collection of sporting competitions, closer examination reveals that they held relatable human experiences. Athletes entered the games by overcoming personal trials and tribulations. Spectators admired Canadian athletes and celebrated their accomplishments. After years of training both physically and mentally, it was a special moment for spectators to witness an athlete competing at their best on the biggest stage.[53] While there were reasons to celebrate Canadians on the world's stage, consecutive defeats at the Olympics and public criticism of the nation's fitness became sources of national embarrassment, thus prompting a federal re-examination of fitness and sport in Canada.

After a decade of poor performances at the Winter Olympics, most notably by men's hockey teams in 1954 and 1956, followed by a scolding from the Duke of Edinburgh in 1959,

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[52] Ann Hall, Trevor Slack, Garry Smith, and David Whitson, *Sport in Canadian Society* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1991): 90.

[53] Alexander J. Poulton, *Canadians in the Winter Olympics* (Montreal: OverTime Books, 2009), 10.

members of parliament were called upon to take greater responsibility for developing Canadian athletes and sport policy.[54] The Soviet Union's participation in the Olympics from 1952 meant something had to change if Canada still wanted to be among the best sporting nations.[55] At a Canadian Medical Association conference in 1959, Prince Philip criticized the nation's fitness level and implored the federal government and medical community to do more to promote a healthy lifestyle:

> There is evidence, that, despite everything, people in Canada are not as fit as they might be. Some scheme to encourage participation in all sports and recreations, for all ages and sections of the community, is absolutely essential to any modern community with a high standard of living. With a few notable exceptions, Canada's achievements are hardly in keeping with a country which claims almost the highest standard of living in the world.[56]

Prince Philip's sparked public discussion by the media and members of parliament, who reflected on the paradox of Canadians being so unhealthy despite a high standard of living.[57] Such attention became a factor in the federal government's intervention in Canada's fitness and sport system.

In September 1961, the federal government officially became involved in overseeing fitness and sport in Canada by passing Bill C-131, commonly known as the *Fitness and Amateur Sport Act*. It was intended to promote amateur fitness and sport in Canada. The Act outlined a cost-sharing agreement between the federal and provincial governments to fund sport and

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[54] Macintosh, Bedecki, and Franks, *Sport and Politics in* Canada, 11-12.
[55] Colin Howell, *Blood, Sweat, and Cheers: Sport and the Making of Modern Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), 99.
[56] Gerald A. Regan, *A Challenge to the Nation: Fitness and Amateur Sport in the 80s* (Ottawa: Ministry of Fitness and Amateur Sport, 1981), 3.
[57] Macintosh, Bedecki, and Franks, *Sport and Politics in Canada: Federal Government Involvement Since 1961*, 10-11.

recreation programs in Canada.[58] This allowed the federal government to fund high-performance athletes competing internationally and assist the provinces in developing future athletes under the governance of a federal directorate.[59] Coaches also became professionalized with competitive salaries and access to the latest scientific and technical data. In addition to receiving financial assistance for expenses, coaches and athletes were compensated based on their performance results as an incentive for continued improvement. The state began transforming the once voluntary, self-regulatory sports-governing bodies into government-directed, professionally administered non-profit corporations with national development and training programs.[60] The *Fitness and Amateur Sport Act* of 1961 was the first step towards improving Canadians' fitness level and providing greater support for the country's elite amateur athletes by creating a nationally centralized fitness and sport system.

Following the passage of the *Fitness and Amateur Sport Act*, Canada's national fitness and sport system was created to support participants at all levels. The system assigned each level of government responsibility for different areas of physical activity. Municipal governments were responsible for recreation programs that introduced Canadians, young and old, to various sports. When athletes had the ability to compete against the best in their province, they entered leagues overseen by their provincial government. The federal government supported the other two stages of the sport system because Canada's best high-performance athletes ideally came from the municipal and provincial levels. The federal government directly supported those

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[58] Ann Hall, *The Girl and The Game: A History of Women's Sport in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016), 217.

[59] Comeau, Gina S. "The Evolution of Canadian Sport Policy," *International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics* 5, no. 1 (March 2013): 79.

[60] Bruce Kidd, "The Elite Athlete," in *Not Just a Game: Essays in Canadian Sport Sociology*, eds., Jean Harvey, and Hart Cantelon (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press), 294.

athletes who represented Canada on the world stage. The image often associated with this system was a pyramid with a wide base of participants involved recreationally, fewer Canadians in competitive sport, higher up, and even fewer highly skilled athletes at the peak, representing the country abroad.[61]

Another objective of the *Fitness and Amateur Sport Act* was to improve Canadians' health by encouraging them to be active and reducing participation barriers.[62] The federal government acknowledged that mass participation at the base was not disconnected from international amateur or high-performance sport. The 1967 "Report on Federal Policy in Support of Fitness and Amateur Sport, with Special Reference to the Sponsorship of International Events" emphasized the importance of hosting the world to promote national pride domestically and a favourable image of Canada abroad. International competitions were an extension of general participation with the added hope that success at the highest level of the pyramid would create a feedback loop of higher participation rates at the bottom.[63] Through the *Fitness and Amateur Sport Act*, the federal government also sought to increase accessibility to facilities. New or renovated sport facilities were intended for use by the wider Canadian population, not just for hosting sporting events.[64] The Minister of Amateur Sport at the time, John Munro, also conceived of Canada's national sport system resembling the shape of a pyramid. Ideally, athletes progressing through the system would eventually replace those at the top of the pyramid. Recreation for society at large surrounded the pyramid. It included recreational sports in both

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[61] Comeau, Gina S. "The Evolution of Canadian Sport Policy," 79.
[62] *Ibid*., 79.
[63] Cora McCloy, "Canada Hosts the World: An Examination of the First Federal Sport Hosting Policy (1967)," *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 26, no. 9 (July 19, 2009): 1163.
[64] Bruce Kidd, "The Elite Athlete," in *Not Just a Game: Essays in Canadian Sport Sociology*, eds., Jean Harvey, and Hart Cantelon (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press), 294.

competitive and non-competitive settings, general recreation, and a blend of physical activity known as "play".[65] Munro wanted all Canadians to find a place in this national system. Canada's state bureaucracy grew with the intention of accommodating Canadians at each level of the pyramid.

By the end of the 1960s, the federal Task Force and the National Advisory Council for Fitness and Amateur Sport called for greater government support for fitness in Canada. The Chair of the Council, Philippe de Gaspé Beaubien, specifically asked Prime Minister Trudeau for funding to create an arm's length fitness promotion organization. The federal government supported the strategy of introducing Canadians to physical activity through a national fitness promotion organization. The first official meeting of "Sport Participation Canada" was held in September 1971. With men such as Keith McKerracher as chief executive officer, Philippe de Gaspé Beaubien as president, Jacques Gravel, Russ Kisby and Lester B. Pearson on the Board, the agency had considerable business and political acumen.[66] They had to quickly learn that their role was to sell a lifestyle rather than a commodity. Adrian Bauman et al. defines this approach as "social marketing," which entails the voluntary adoption of ideas that benefitted both the marketer and the consumer. It shared some similarities with public health communication methods which used mass media to raise awareness among a target population

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[65] John Munro, *A Proposed Sports Policy for Canadians* (Ottawa, Ontario: Department of National Health and Welfare, 1970), 26.

[66] Peggy Edwards, "No Country Mouse: Thirty Years of Effective Marketing and Health Communications," *Canadian Journal of Public Health/Revue Canadienne de Sante'e Publique* 95 (2004): S7.

regarding health issues. Sport Participation Canada built upon that framework by enhancing their persuasion efforts through grassroots community events to engage the population actively.[67]

In 1972, the name changed to be more widely accepted across Canada. Kisby explained that research from focus groups revealed that any mention of "exercise" or "fitness" was associated with work, "sports" with high-performance athletics and "Canada" with government influence. ParticipACTION was selected as a play on "participation" and "action", and it did not have to be altered when messages were created in French. In addition, the logo of a blue and red pinwheel implied movement and spun in television ads. ParticipACTION's decision-makers intended to combat several social, economic, linguistic, age, and gender barriers that had inhibited participation in sports across Canada by focusing on the inclusivity of fitness. Canadians could pursue active lifestyles simply by gardening, walking, swimming, cycling, among other daily activities. ParticipACTION's strategy involved using mass media to persuade the population about the importance of physical fitness and to make it socially acceptable.[68]

Federal investment in ParticipACTION coincided with a widespread fitness boom in Canada to counter the increase in unhealthy lifestyles. Technological innovations in the workplace reduced physical exertion while increasing repetition and routine. Workers in office settings spent most of their day seated at a desk. These sedentary habits also extended into leisure activities as the television grew in popularity across Canada. In his report, *A Challenge to the Nation*, the Secretary of State and Minister of Fitness and Amateur Sport, Gerald Regan, noted the evolution of Canadian fitness over the previous generation. Regan remarked that

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[67] Adrian Bauman, Judith Madill, Cora Lynn Craig, and Art Salmon, "ParticipACTION: This Mouse Roared, But Did It Get the Cheese?" *Canadian Journal of Public Health/Revue Canadienne de Sante'e Publique* 95 (2004): S14.

[68] Edwards, "No Country Mouse: Thirty Years of Effective Marketing and Health Communications," S8.

Canadians in the 1960s would have admitted that their most vigorous exercise involved racing to the fridge to grab drinks and snacks during intermissions of *Hockey Night in Canada* on television and radio. While he admitted that Canada was still a sedentary nation, he recognized a transformation of attitudes towards valuing fitness as a positive pursuit. Becoming fit grew from a personal endeavour to be accepted and appreciated by one's peers in society. Despite not identifying a specific cause for this change, Regan proudly declared that increased participation in fitness had found favour across nearly every age group and would serve as the broad base to feed the high-performance sports system with new athletes. Regan expected the improvement in sports and fitness standards to enhance national prestige and self-confidence, among other economic and social benefits.[69] Regan stated that improved fitness would lead to greater well-being and quality of life for individuals, better coping with daily stress and reduced alcohol and tobacco consumption.[70] These individual benefits should also be celebrated at the national level if Canadians were motivated to take action together. More Canadians concerned with personal fitness were considered to have entered the national fitness and sport system with the potential to progress through its ranks. The efforts of ParticipACTION to bring Canadians together under the banner of fitness will be a theme throughout this study and will be analyzed more closely in the next chapter.

The failure of Canada to win a single gold medal on home soil at the 1976 Montreal Olympics indicated deficiencies at the top of the national fitness and sport system. This was considered a national defeat and prompted the federal government to increase its efforts to avoid future embarrassments in front of the world by building a stronger national system. Two years

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[69] Gerald A. Regan, *A Challenge to the Nation: Fitness and Amateur Sport in the 80s* (Ottawa: Ministry of Fitness and Amateur Sport, 1981), 4.
[70] *Ibid*., 16.

later, at the 1978 Commonwealth Games in Edmonton, Canada won more medals than any other country for the first time. Iona Campagnolo, the Minister of State for Amateur Sport, celebrated the victory with the athletes at the closing ceremonies.[71] With this sense of accomplishment, the stage was set for Canadian policymakers to invest in the future of high-performance sport.

The federal government recognized the benefits of its involvement in athletic development aimed at achieving international success. From the time Juan Antonio Samaranch became president of the International Olympic Committee in 1980, policies concerning strict adherence to amateurism began to weaken. Most notably, dropping Rule 26 in 1986 allowed professional athletes to represent their country on the biggest stage. This also permitted governments to fund or subsidize high-performance athletes without risking eligibility status.[72] The Canadian federal government, among others, created programs to fund training facilities and coaches and directly compensate successful athletes. In the 1980s, the federal government invested more money than ever before to develop sports facilities and high-performance athletes.[73] Government funding for athletic development, such as the Best Ever '88 and Own the Podium programs, were Canadian examples of state intervention in sport. Canada became one of the countries that financially rewarded its athletes for winning medals and entered each Olympiad with expectations of winning a certain number of medals. These decisions were made by governments representing two of Canada's major political parties.

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[71] Macintosh, Bedecki, and Franks*, Sport and Politics in Canada: Federal Government Involvement since 1961*, 107.

[72] Dwight H. Zakus, "Appendix A: The International Olympic Committee," in *Encyclopedia of the Modern Olympic Movement,* eds., John E. Findling, and Kimberly D. Pelle (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2004), 439.

[73] Macintosh, Bedecki, and Franks*, Sport and Politics in Canada: Federal Government Involvement since 1961*, 4.

Between 1961 and 2010, the Canadian federal government was led by five different Conservative prime ministers for eighteen years and five Liberal prime ministers for thirty-three years. The Conservative government of John Diefenbaker first became involved in promoting the cultural benefits of sport and recreation as a tool of international diplomacy through the *Fitness and Amateur Sport Act*. However, they maintained a minimal role by providing financial assistance to sport organizations and the provinces. The Liberals were the first to take an active role in line with the growing welfare state. In the late 1960s, Pierre Elliot Trudeau instituted policies based on the theory that successful high-performance athletes could strengthen Canada's national identity domestically and its prestige internationally.[74] The Conservatives viewed sport as a way to promote Canada's image around the world. The Liberals expanded this to advocate for the domestic benefits of a self-sustaining national sport system.[75] In the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, Conservative politicians were more concerned with managing budget expenditures and minimizing the federal government's presence in Canadians' lives. In contrast, the federal Liberals were willing to centralize control over high-performance sports within an expansive government bureaucracy.

Creating a National Fitness and Sport System

In 1961, the federal government's *Fitness and Amateur Sport Act* laid the foundation for state intervention in fitness and sport for the rest of the twentieth century by assuming a greater role in supporting fitness and recreation, previously under the jurisdiction of municipalities and

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[74] Bruce Kidd, "Sport, Dependency and the Canadian State," in *Sport, Culture and the Modern State,* eds. Hart Cantelon, and Richard Gruneau, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982), 295.

[75] Bruce Kidd, "The Canadian State and Sport: The Dilemma of Intervention." *Sport in Society* 16, no. 4 (2013): 364.

provinces. The plan was for Ottawa to conduct national surveys, organize mass media campaigns, and research the benefits of fitness activities.[76] Initially, the federal government signed cost-sharing agreements with the provinces and offered grants to organizations that included fitness and sport programs.[77] Fitness Canada and Sport Canada were created as a result of the *Fitness and Amateur Sport Act* to allow federal administrators to target specific needs. Fitness Canada's mandate was "To raise the fitness level of Canadians by promoting increased participation in physical activity, thereby encouraging healthy lifestyle behaviour".[78] Public diplomacy was evident through ParticipACTION, which became the most significant organization for promoting fitness in Canada. Sport Canada was created "To provide leadership, policy direction and financial assistance for the development of Canadian sport at the national and international level. To support the highest possible levels of achievement by Canada in international sport."[79] Sport Canada allocated resources to support high-performance athletes pursuing excellence, thereby aligning with cultural diplomacy goals. In the decades following the introduction of *The Fitness and Amateur Sport Act*, politicians wanted to ensure that every Canadian would benefit from both Fitness Canada and Sport Canada, but they made some assumptions about how this could be accomplished. Politicians overseeing the Fitness and Amateur Sport portfolio consistently underscored the inclusivity of fitness, believing that all Canadians could also gain access to the domain of high-performance sports. It would not be

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[76] Gerald A. Regan, *A Challenge to the Nation: Fitness and Amateur Sport in the 80s* (Ottawa: Ministry of Fitness and Amateur Sport, 1981), 17-18.

[77] Donald Macintosh, Tom Bedecki, and C.E.S. Franks, *Sport and Politics in Canada: Federal Government Involvement since 1961* (Kingston: McGill-Queens University Press, 1987), 10.

[78] Regan, *A Challenge to the Nation*, 17.

[79] Minister of State for Fitness and Amateur Sport, *Sport Canada Policy on Women in Sport* (Ottawa: Government of Canada, 1986), 3.

until the twenty-first century that politicians recognized that cultural diplomatic benefits were associated with the success of underprivileged groups, such as Indigenous peoples, women, and people living with disabilities, in high-performance sports. That recognition prompted the implementation of specific sport policies.

The opening sentences of National Health and Welfare and Amateur Sport Minister John Munro's report *A Proposed Sports Policy for Canadians* (1970), declared his wish to increase the participation in fitness activities and sports for "the greatest number of Canadians possible". Munro added that physical activities deserved equal attention from the federal government because they played an equal role in shaping Canadian culture, alongside the arts.[80] He saw three primary benefits of participating in fitness and sports. The first was improving an individual's physical health, leading to a better attitude and more energy throughout the day.[81] The second was to enhance personal and national mental health. Fitness and sports were regarded as dynamic and invigorating activities, in contrast to work, which had become an increasingly passive, tedious, and numbing task. Fitness and sports served as healthy means of escape that could be enjoyed for their own sake. Medical professionals also identified physical activities as healthy outlets for daily stresses to fight against the growing popularity of pills, alcohol, and hallucinogenic drugs.[82] Lastly, Munro argued that fitness and sport could improve one's overall quality of life and satisfaction. They were social activities in which participants could work together as a team or motivate one another to be their best. Through these activities, Munro hoped that Canadians could take pride in their accomplishments, support one another, and

[80] John Munro, *A Proposed Sports Policy for Canadians*, (Ottawa, Ontario: Department of National Health and Welfare, 1970), 1.
[81] *Ibid*., 9.
[82] *Ibid*., 10-11.

develop a sense of community in a society based on individualism.[83] Reforming individuals' fitness habits could, in turn, help build a better society for all Canadians, thereby creating a culture of mass participation.[84]

Although Munro remained committed to increasing mass participation at the community level, he also hoped this would enhance Canada's high-performance successes. This "New Focus" in Canadian fitness and sport programming was an effort to create a feedback loop that began with a strong base of mass participation, led to the country's best athletes achieving international excellence, and inspired the next generation to dream big and be their best.[85] Munro declared that the state must do its part to support the national goal of excellence, no matter the field of human achievement, because it would lead to greater national confidence, unity, and reputation. In this case, the state held a "moral duty" to aid Canadians in their endeavour to become world-class athletes.[86] Accordingly, unlike previous decades under Munro's direction, federal involvement favoured direct intervention with budgetary oversight and benchmarks for National Sport Organizations [NSOs] rather than through cost-sharing agreements and grants.[87] However, it would not be until 1976 that sport organizations for athletes living with disabilities began receiving funds through the recreation unit of the Fitness and Amateur Sport Branch of Health and Welfare Canada.[88] This was a significant and strategic redefinition of state intervention in fitness and sport.

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[83] Munro, *A Proposed Sports Policy for Canadians*, 12.
[84] *Ibid*., 23.
[85] *Ibid*., 23.
[86] Donald Macintosh, Tom Bedecki, and C.E.S. Franks, *Sport and Politics in Canada: Federal Government Involvement since 1961* (Kingston: McGill-Queens University Press, 1987), 65.
[87] Gina S. Comeau, "The Evolution of Canadian Sport Policy," *International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics* 5, no. 1 (March 2013): 81.
[88] Canada, Ministry of Sport, *Policy on Sport for Persons with a Disability* (Ottawa, June 2006).

In 1976, Iona Campagnolo was the first Canadian parliamentarian to oversee the fitness and amateur sport portfolio solely. Like Munro, Campagnolo acknowledged the importance of fitness and sport in bringing Canadians from diverse backgrounds and regions together.[89] Campagnolo recognized that aspiring athletes depended on the energy of citizens, governments, and businesses to help them pursue their dreams.[90] Therefore, in theory, every Canadian was entitled to celebrate Olympic success because everyone contributed towards sending medal-winning athletes abroad. However, Canada risked international embarrassment and losing hard-earned prestige if elite athletes did not bring home medals. For those chosen to represent their country, much was expected.

In 1979, Campagnolo released *Partners in Pursuit of Excellence: A National Policy on Amateur Sport*, which included findings from her first three years in office. She believed that the federal state should take a leadership role in fitness and sport comparable to other cultural forms that carried lasting benefits for the Canadian public.[91] While the federal government sought to fund the development of the country's best athletes, there was a jurisdictional balancing act among the levels of government. Iona Campagnolo stated that cooperation between provincial and federal governments was needed. For Canada's sports system to reach its optimal efficiency, the two levels of government had to respect each other's responsibilities. Campagnolo explained that while the provinces – and even municipalities – took the lead in organizing and implementing fitness programs, the federal government should set national health standards.[92] With Ottawa focusing most of its resources on high-performance sport at the pinnacle of the

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[89] Comeau, "The Evolution of Canadian Sport Policy," 85.
[90] Iona Campagnolo, *Partners in Pursuit of Excellence: A National Policy on Amateur Sport* (Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services Canada, 1979), 8.
[91] *Ibid*., 7.
[92] *Ibid*., 5.

national system, the federal government promoted itself as the primary supporter of Canada's athletes pursuing excellence. They assisted the provinces with their sports programs aimed at developing athletes to reach the national level.[93] Ottawa also financially supported NSOs related to developing training facilities and programs for high-performance athletes.[94] A significant stipulation for federal support, according to Campagnolo, was a broad base of participation in a particular sport. Funding priority was given to a sport's high-performance program if it had a strong connection to Canada's cultural identity and high numbers of participants with growth potential at the provincial and municipal levels. Sport administrators were concerned about a drain on resources from sports such as bobsleigh and luge that struggled to attract corporate sponsorship and lacked a participation base to feed into their high-performance programs.[95] Thus, there was a funding disparity between ice hockey and bobsleigh, for instance. Nevertheless, Campagnolo asserted that the federal government could not spend its finite resources on assisting more ephemeral or exotic sports with limited nationwide appeal.[96]

Gerald Regan continued to highlight the importance of fitness and sport, as his predecessors, Munro and Campagnolo, had done, because there were political, social, cultural, and economic advantages to encouraging more people to engage in fitness and sport. In 1981, Regan called on all Canadians to take responsibility for the nation's health and not have it as just a government agenda item. He identified two obstacles that would motivate his office for the next decade. The first dealt with fitness by continuing efforts to increase the number of Canadians participating in some form of physical activity. The second focused on continuing the

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[93] Campagnolo, *Partners in Pursuit of Excellence*, 7.
[94] *Ibid*., 22.
[95] Kidd, "The Philosophy of Excellence: Olympic Performances, Class Power and the Canadian State," 381.
[96] *Ibid*., 19.

momentum of high-performance excellence by winning more medals at international competitions. Regan reminded Canadians of their responsibility to maintain their own physical fitness standard while cheering on the nation's best athletes.[97]

By the 1980s, the Canadian federal government positioned itself as the primary patron of high-performance athletes at the apex of a national fitness and sport system while encouraging mass participation at its base for the rest of the twentieth century. The federal government became an active agent in fostering a national culture that connects Canadians through physical activity and sport as a form of public diplomacy. Politicians were hopeful that international success could inspire future athletes and unify the country in support of their accomplishments. Public diplomacy was achieved through a physically active lifestyle, including nationalistic expressions such as participating in community-based fitness programs organized by ParticipACTION and celebrating Canada's elite athletes at the Olympics.

Symbols of Canadian Nationalism

For decades, while the federal government sought to fund the development of the country's best athletes, there was jurisdictional pushback from the provinces, primarily Québec. Coming out of the Quiet Revolution, Québec politicians were skeptical of any federal government initiative to expand its role and impede their jurisdictional rights. They were concerned about English-speaking Canadians and Americans imposing their identities on the French-speaking minority. The Québec government wanted to pursue an athletic development

[97] Gerald A. Regan, *A Challenge to the Nation*, 5.

program distinct from the federally directed one.[98] The policies of Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau were aimed at forging a united Canada by enhancing the federal government's position.[99] Trudeau was aware that strong performances by Canadian athletes at the Olympics would solidify his image as a promoter of pan-Canadian unity under a strong federal government.[100]

Canada has a history of changing its national identity. Since Confederation in 1867, successive federal governments have had to balance the national interests of English and French Canadians. In the second half of the twentieth century, Canada's national image shifted from bilingual to multicultural. In 1971, Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau introduced the policy of "Multiculturalism within a Bilingual Framework" to support the integration of new Canadians to use English, French, or both languages. This would complement the recently enacted *Official Languages Act*, which declared that English and French were Canada's two official languages. Trudeau's multiculturalism policy identified eighty different ethnic or cultural groups which could access federal support, particularly from the newly created Ministry of Multiculturalism, to develop or maintain cultural and linguistic identities. Trudeau asserted that despite the presence of two official languages, there was no official culture or ethnic group that took precedence in Canada. Francophone critics were concerned that the Anglophone-dominated federal government was trying to transform the Québécois into another cultural group. Eva Mackey, a scholar of Canadian identity and multiculturalism, saw Trudeau's policy to make Canada the

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[98] Jean Harvey and Roger Proulx, "Sport and the State in Canada," in *Not Just a Game: Essays in Canadian Sport Sociology*, eds., Harvey, and Cantelon (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1988), 103.
[99] Macintosh, Bedecki, and Franks, *Sport and Politics in Canada*, 46-47.
[100] Kidd, Bruce, *The Struggle for Canadian Sport* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 7.

world's first official multicultural country as a tactic to weaken rising Québec nationalism and preserve Canadian unity.[101] Decades later, after a narrow victory in a referendum on Québec's sovereignty, Chapters 3 and 5 will explore how Canadian officials were tasked with presenting a united national image to the world through Olympic ceremonies in Calgary and Vancouver.

Amid an era of pronounced expressions of Canadian identity in the 1960s through the 1980s, two national symbols were extensively debated. Once again, the federal government tried to navigate the opinions of an increasingly diverse populace. For a century after Canadian Confederation, the country lacked an official national anthem, aside from God Save the Queen, which was inherited from Great Britain. The Red Ensign, with the Union Jack and Canada's coat of arms, flew above the parliament buildings until 1965, when Canada unveiled its national flag. Choosing a new national flag became one of Lester B. Pearson's election promises in 1963. Pearson asked Canadians to submit their ideas for a new flag to an all-party committee, commonly known as the Flag Committee. They received around 6,000 submissions, which included a variety of symbols such as the Rocky Mountains, Canada geese, beavers, Prairies, and grizzly bears.[102] However, it was a historian's suggestion at the Royal Military College in Kingston that received the committee's unanimous support. George Francis Gillman Stanley recommended an uncluttered design with a single red maple leaf on a white background flanked by two red bars. Months of vigorous debate ensued until the House of Commons voted in favour of the new flag. On February 15, 1965, through a ceremony on Parliament Hill, the Red Ensign was replaced by the Maple Leaf.[103]

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[101] Eva Mackey, *The House of Difference: Cultural Politics and National Identity in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002), 64.
[102] Donald Wright, "Flag," in *Symbols of Canada*, eds., Michael Dawson, Catherine Gidney, and Donald A. Wright (Toronto, ON: Between The Lines, 2018), 89-90.
[103] *Ibid*., 92.

It took another fourteen years to select an official national anthem. One reason Canada did not have an official national anthem until 1980 was the country's linguistic divide, particularly between French and English Canadians. For generations, nationalistic songs celebrated each settler culture exclusively and occasionally to the derision of the other. For example, God Save the King and, alternatively, God Save the Queen served as a national anthem in schools and at sporting events, honouring Canada's presence within the British Empire. Therefore, it was difficult for the national anthem to be accepted by non-British settler cultures. O Canada was first written in French by Sir Adolphe-Basile Routhier for the 1880 Saint-Jean-Baptiste Day celebrations in Québec City. It celebrated the survival of French Canadians in North America. In 1908, Robert Stanley Weir's English version of "O Canada" included phrases popular among English Canadians such as "true patriot love", "stand on guard for thee", and "The True North, strong and free".[104] It was difficult to get English Canadians, especially, to agree to a single bilingual anthem. For example, during a 1978 Toronto Blue Jays game, the anthem singer faced jeers for singing in English and French. In 1980, three versions of "O Canada" in English, French, and bilingual were recognized by the federal government as official national anthems.[105] The national flag and national anthem would be celebrated by generations of Canadian athletes who dreamed of standing on the podium, listening to "O Canada", and seeing the Maple Leaf raised during the medal ceremony. However, not everyone identified with these forms of Eurocentric national symbols, nor did they feel welcome in the kind of

[104] Michael Dawson and Catherine Gidney, "National Anthem," in *Symbols of Canada*, eds., Michael Dawson, Catherine Gidney, and Donald A. Wright (Toronto, ON: Between The Lines, 2018), 80.
[105] *Ibid*., 82-83.

nationalism that was taking shape in this era. The nation that was designed from the top down by the federal government primarily benefitted white, middle-class, settler Canadians.

By participating in, and especially hosting, international events such as the Olympic Games, Canada aspired to demonstrate its unique character to the world. Between 1980 and 2010, Canadian Winter Olympic athletes won an increasing number of medals. From a silver and bronze medal at the Lake Placid Olympics in 1980, Canadian athletes led the world in fourteen gold medals by 2010 in Vancouver. This success at the Winter Olympics captured the hearts and minds of millions from coast to coast to coast.[106] However, it was not enough to say that a single Olympic moment initiated a tidal wave of nationalist fervour. The roots of this tradition existed decades generations earlier when the federal government recognized the importance of Canadian athletic success at international winter competitions to enhancing the country's prestige.

Fostering National Unity Through Fitness and Sport

Canadians developed a common tradition of participating in leisure activities, especially fitness and sport, all year round. This was especially significant given Canada's climatic and geographic ranges. George Woodcock, a prominent Canadian literary author, noted that the character of an individual and a nation could be found in their ability to adapt to a set of circumstances.[107] Shared experiences and memories related to fitness and sport programs became one of the few causes for Canadians to overcome their regional and language

[106] John Furlong, and Gary Mason, *Patriot Hearts: Inside the Olympics That Changed a Country* (Toronto: Douglas & McIntyre Publishers, 2011), 281.
[107] Woodcock, *The Canadians*, 297.

differences. They connected Canadians domestically and presented a unified national identity abroad.

Shared successes and failures could influence the development of nations. Sport was an integral way to shape what political scientist and historian Benedict Anderson termed "imagined communities." According to Anderson, nations were "imagined" because their existence remained within the minds of their members, who built a sense of comradery and pride within their "community".[108] Anderson argues that, in the fifteenth century, developments in print capitalism contributed to the formation of a national consciousness in Europe.[109] A comparable advancement in communication technology in the twentieth century, television in this instance, enhanced the power of sport to harness national unity in Canada. Canadians regularly participated in the modern Olympics and used the international event to construct their unique identity. The visual representation of the nation was the athlete dressed in national symbols and colours. Identity barriers seemingly disappeared when athletes donned their national uniform, and especially when they successfully reached the podium.[110] Clarifying what constituted a distinct Canadian national identity had been an ongoing debate among politicians and scholars.

The growing volume of resources devoted to sports in many countries, including Canada, led scholars to examine the link between national pride, sports success, and mass participation. A study on national pride resulting from Olympic success in the Netherlands contains some parallels with Canada. Sport sociologists, Ivo Van Hilvoorde, Agnes Elling, and Ruud Stokvis show that in some instances, international sports came to be regarded as an "alternative to war",

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[108] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 2006), 6-7.
[109] *Ibid*., 44-45.
[110] Allen Guttmann, *Games and Empires: Modern Sports and Cultural*, 183.

with a country's best representatives competing to determine winners and losers. These peaceful "battles" had the potential to arouse national rivalries such as those between Canada and the Soviet Union or the United States of America. Beyond specific sports events, competitions were also based on an unofficial Olympic medal index. Although the International Olympic Committee [IOC] did not endorse the final medal totals for each nation, the index drew considerable media attention, especially since it was organized by gold medals won, then silver, and then bronze. A country that won the most gold medals still topped the list, even if it may not have won the most medals overall.[111]

There was a general belief among politicians and sport officials that winning Olympic medals had a positive effect on a country's cultural identity, participation in recreational activities and even its economy. There was some evidence that supporting one's country could forge a sense of togetherness for a cause greater than oneself. However, there was no correlation between a trickle-down effect of high-performance success and mass participation at the community level.[112] By the end of an Olympic Games, the narrative that typically remained consisted of explanations or excuses for why certain medals were won or lost. These results led to conclusions reflecting a country's training facilities, coaches, athletes, or even its "vitality" as a nation.[113] Ivo Van Hilvoorde et al. concluded that stories about extraordinary athletic performances, rather than the final results, generated the desired sense of belonging.[114] Despite minimal evidence connecting Olympic success to national pride, the Canadian government still

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[111] Ivo Van Hilvoorde, Agnes Elling, and Ruud Stokvis, "How to Influence National Pride? The Olympic Medal Index as a Unifying Narrative," *International Review for the Sociology of Sport* 45, no. 1 (2010): 92.
[112] *Ibid*., 88-89.
[113] *Ibid*., 94.
[114] *Ibid*., 99.

devoted considerable resources to developing internationally renowned high-performance athletes. This was done with the expectation that Canadians from coast to coast to coast would proudly support athletes representing their homeland. Canadian officials focused on sports, such as winter ice sports, that were likely to achieve success and generate greater media attention. Therefore, supporting these sports was considered to be an effective tool for achieving national unity goals.

A fundamental component of building national unity involved the shared experience of spectators cheering on their nation's athletes. The Olympics became a source of communal gathering around a television set in public and private spaces. At local bars and in residential living rooms, Olympic events connected friends, neighbours, and co-workers to the nation. Canadians could participate in the Games as athletes, spectators, and volunteers. Canadian high-performance athletes competing against the world's best became role models. Whether it was an exciting victory or a disappointing defeat, Canadians were passionately connected and reacted with prideful exuberance or soulful dismay.[115] Sports at any level were exciting for spectators because of the uncertain outcome. More powerfully, sport contained stories about people who made sacrifices to compete, how they coped with the joy of reaching their goal, or the disappointment of coming up short.[116] Memorable performances and accomplishments by "made in Canada" athletes were used to enhance a sense of togetherness.[117] An instrumental component of building nationalism during the Olympics was the shared experience of spectators

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[115] Sport Canada, Fitness and Amateur Sport, Government of Canada, *The Status of the High-Performance Athlete in Canada: Final Report*. By Ekos Research Associates Inc. (Ottawa: Government of Canada, Fitness and Amateur Sport, 1992), 1.

[116] Ian Gregson, Irresistible Force: Disability Sport in Canada (Victoria: Polestar Books, 1999), 11.

[117] Macintosh, Bedecki, and Franks, *Sport and Politics in Canada: Federal Government Involvement Since 1961*, 174.

cheering on their nation's athletes. Canadian sporting culture created national icons who, in some cases, inspired younger generations to learn the sport and carry on the tradition. Even though not every young athlete had the honour of representing their country, they could still do their part by teaching other participants.[118] Canadians may have viewed themselves differently across the country, but when it came to the Olympics, many felt a sense of unity in watching athletes wearing the red maple leaf.

During the Cold War, Canadian politicians valued goals of improving national unity. Encouraging participation in fitness and sport had many positive benefits for society. Not only could participation lead to healthier Canadians, but it could also be a way for individuals to connect with others who share similar interests. Youth participation in physical exercises built one's character and self-esteem in addition to contributing to an individual's social and physical development. One of the most convincing arguments for government involvement was that participation in fitness and sport served as a preventive measure against future healthcare costs. Maintaining a healthy lifestyle with regular exercise strengthened the body against obesity, heart disease, mental illness, arthritis, diabetes, osteoporosis, and cancer.[119] A 2001 discussion paper from Sport Canada placed a conservative estimate on the annual healthcare costs from physical inactivity at $2.1 billion.[120] Participating in fitness and sport activities could contribute to individuals' social development as productive citizens and to the protection of their mental and physical health in the future. It was, however, difficult to convince the Canadian population growing up, living, and working in an increasingly automated economy to engage in these

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[118] Leduc, Graham, and Léger, *Lace Up*, 9.
[119] Sport Canada, *Building Canada Through Sport: Towards a Canadian Sport Policy: A Discussion Paper*, 5.
[120] *Ibid*., 5.

activities. Common questions from Canadians about their participation in fitness often included, "What is the point? Why should it matter to me?". To motivate Canadians to get moving, the Government of Canada identified three benefits: personal health; developing specific performance skills such as balance and flexibility; and proving that their community was better than another town, province or country.[121] Participating in fitness and sport carried significant social, cultural, and medical consequences, and attracted the attention of the Canadian government to get involved in designing a healthy nation before members of the populace became ill and required medical care.

Sport and physical activity served as points of commonality for Canadians from diverse socioeconomic and ethnic backgrounds.[122] They taught Canadians, young and old, immigrants and citizens, about the nation's values. They instilled habits of teamwork, as well as the values of fun, leadership, determination, discipline, and respect for others, along with fair play for all participants, officials, and volunteers. Finally, sport and physical activity taught younger Canadians about the myths and legends of past national heroes, with the hope of inspiring them to cherish such lofty goals.[123] Politicians believed that fitness and sport contributed an improved identity and health for individuals, communities, and the nation as a whole. Individuals expressed themselves in the sports they played, the equipment they used and the strategies they deployed. Support for sports at the community level encouraged social development through volunteer programs. Nationally, sport became a source of national pride and identity associated with the development and success of high-performance athletes. For politicians, Canadian

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[121] P.S. Ross & Partners, *A Report on Physical Recreation, Fitness and Amateur Sport in Canada*, 234.
[122] Hall, Slack, Smith and Whitson, *Sport in Canadian Society*, 39.
[123] Sport Canada, Department of Canadian Heritage, *Building Canada Through Sport: Towards a Canadian Sport Policy: A Discussion Paper* (Ottawa, 2001), 6.

national pride was found in Canadians' participation, volunteer commitments, community development, and concern for their personal health.[124] Participation in physical fitness and sport was expected to become one of the many ways Canadians identified with one another and with the wider world. The shared experiences involved in these activities drew the attention of politicians seeking to bring diverse communities in a country like Canada together.

Canada's Sport Policies for the Twenty-First Century

At the turn of the twenty-first century, federal efforts to design a healthy nation took the form of targeted policies and legislation to include more Canadians who faced barriers to the national sport system. By issuing a policy, the government declared its involvement in solving a social problem.[125] As mentioned in earlier chapters, the healthy Canadian nation was more than just a collection of physically healthy individuals; it was also supposed to be unified and proud. The Canadian government used Canadian sport policies to unite the country politically, socially, and culturally. Despite efforts to address the diverse needs of Indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities, and women through sport policies, a lack of proper understanding of those needs prevented lasting reforms. On the surface, federal policies may have been viewed as an effort at achieving inclusivity. As will be argued, however, the federal government aimed to include more Canadians in the national fitness and sport system to increase the likelihood of a Canadian standing on an Olympic podium. Turn-of-the-twenty-first-century policymakers focused on using high-performance international sporting success to serve cultural and public diplomacy

[124] Sport Canada, Department of Canadian Heritage, *Building Canada Through Sport: Towards a Canadian Sport Policy: A Discussion Paper* (Ottawa, 2001), 1-2.
[125] Leslie A. Pal, *Beyond Policy Analysis: Public Issue Management in Turbulent Times*, 4th ed. (Nelson Education, 2010) 2.

objectives. ParticipACTION's fitness promotion also contributed towards creating national unity, and the national identity of a physically healthy population. The sport policies marked a shift in federal priorities away from fitness that benefited Canadians through a healthy lifestyle towards high-performance sport that would enhance Canada's prestige internationally.

Canadian policymakers assessed the condition of the national fitness and sport system as they devised the country's first sport policy. In 2001, forty years after implementing the *Fitness and Amateur Sport Act*, Canadian policymakers revisited the original themes as they began developing a modernized policy in the latest document, *Building Canada Through Sport*. However, the policymakers held concerns similar to those of the 1960s about shaping a physically active and culturally cohesive nation through fitness and sport.[126] A comprehensive sport policy could potentially reduce diseases and illnesses while promoting social cohesion, thus effectively allowing the social integration of marginalized communities, and national unity. Fitness and sport were again used to strengthen national identity and help marginalized Canadians develop self-esteem.

In 2002, after decades of white papers, discussion papers, policy proposals and national surveys, the federal government released its first national sport policy. It held that culture, health and well-being, and social and personal development were among the many recognized benefits of sport for Canadian society. *The Canadian Sport Policy* declared that culturally, sport pervaded the lives of millions of Canadians to the extent that stories, myths, and fables of Canadian sporting accomplishments were passed down through generations. Moreover, sport taught adults and youth the value of having fun, fair play, teamwork, respect for others,

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[126] Sport Canada, *Building Canada Through Sport: Towards a Canadian Sport Policy: A Discussion Paper* (Ottawa: Canadian Heritage, 2001), 5.

discipline, and hard work. Regular physical activity, including sports participation, enhanced mental and physical fitness while lowering the risk of diseases such as osteoporosis, heart disease, diabetes, and obesity. Sport contributed to one's mental, physical, and social development. For communities, sport fostered a strong sense of belonging, pride, and togetherness. With a quarter of Canada's population participating in sports in 2002, millions of Canadians regularly experienced sport's many benefits.[127] However, a lack of inclusivity in the national fitness and sport system prevented more Canadians from participating. The *Canadian Sport Policy* outlined expectations for "Canada's sport community" for the next ten years. Whereas previous government papers explicitly aimed to enhance national unity through sport, this policy spoke of a sport community of fourteen government jurisdictions working to improve all Canadians' sporting experiences. The vision of the *Canadian Sport Policy* for 2012 aimed to empower all Canadians to participate in sport and fully pursue their athletic interests, including at the highest competitive level.[128] As a result, the federal government began releasing additional legislation and policies to achieve that vision.

In 2003, the federal government passed Bill C-12: *An Act to Promote Physical Activity and Sport* to develop, encourage, and promote fitness and sport in Canada. By the end of the year, the Minister of State (Sport) in the Department of Canadian Heritage had a mandate that included supporting sport research, coordinating federal sport and physical activity initiatives, overseeing the promotion of Canadian involvement in national and international sport, and facilitating corporate funding for sport development. Bill C-12 led to the development of training curricula for coaches and the creation of special bursaries to assist individuals in

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[127] Sport Canada, *Canadian Sport Policy* (Ottawa: Canadian Heritage, 2002), 5-6.
[128] *Ibid*., 2.

pursuing their goals in high-performance sport. Through the Act, the Minister had the authority to engage with foreign countries to promote the positive value of physical activity and sport.[129] Language in Bill C-12 demonstrated an effort to achieve physical activity and sport to realize the cultural-diplomatic objectives of enhancing Canada's foreign relationships.

With the passage of the *Physical Activity and Sport Act* in 2003, the Canadian government tried to bring fitness and sport closer together. It declared Ottawa's intentions to coordinate federal responsibilities related to physical activity and sport, without promising to treat them equally, however. Many of the facets outlined in the Act had been promised in the past, including federal assistance for developing athletes and coaches, promoting sport as a form of social development domestically and internationally, encouraging financial commitments from the private sector, and exploring possibilities to host major sporting events.[130] Subsequent sport policies sought to include more people in Canada's fitness and sport system, yet the exclusionary theme of "excellence" remained a priority. The exclusionary aspects of Canada's national fitness and sport system, including the groups of Canadians who were not benefitting from it will be explored more closely in Chapter 4.

From the second half of the twentieth century, the Canadian government became increasingly involved in designing and shaping a national fitness and sport system. Investments in supporting Canada's high-performance athletes and the national fitness promotion organization, ParticipACTION, were part of a trend to create a unique national identity from the top down. The efforts to unite Canadians through common causes and using newly selected symbols, such as the national flag and anthem, helped mitigate a divisive period in the country's

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[129] *Physical Activity and Sport Act*, Statutes of Canada 2003, c.2, 3-4.
[130] *Ibid*., 3.

history. The objectives of bringing Canadians together and elevating Canada's position on the world stage remained a shared objective between Conservative and Liberal prime ministers. ParticipACTION will be the focus of analysis in the next chapter, tracing efforts to balance mass participation within the national fitness and sport system.

## Chapter 2: Federal Support for ParticipACTION to Create a Healthy Canada with Fit Canadians, 1971-2001

The history of fitness in Canada has remained in the shadows while attention has been paid to more exciting sport narratives. Fitness is not an organization, nor does it have rules or a governing body. Participants are mainly self-motivated or encouraged to maintain a healthy lifestyle, which offers the opportunity to meet new people or escape daily stress. As the previous chapter mentioned, federal legislation and policies related to fitness and sport in the late twentieth century were designed to allocate funds to sports that could produce tangible results, such as podium finishes. Federal officials were primarily interested in their return on investment and did not consider the value of fitness to the country until data revealed the substantial medical costs Canadians were incurring each year. Fitness promotion gained prominence within the federal government when theories about the benefits of regular fitness for health and productivity entered public discourse. By 1971, Ottawa sought to relieve the burden on the newly formed welfare system by funding initiatives to prevent ailments that required medical attention.

In the second half of the twentieth century, politicians raised questions Canadians' health by asking: How could Canadians be educated about the dangers of poor fitness? How could Canadians be motivated to get physically active? How could such a change in habits be measured? How could the federal government get involved? From 1971 until 2001, the Government of Canada invested in the national fitness promotion organization, ParticipACTION. This chapter examines how federal policymakers sought to address a domestic need: simultaneously relieving preventable strain on the welfare system and bringing the country together through public diplomacy by promoting the benefits of fitness. Canadian officials recognized the value of community building through fitness within the broader domestic objective of greater national unity. As a result, from 1971 until 2001, the Canadian government

invested in the national fitness promotion organization, ParticipACTION. The success of ParticipACTION became a source of pride within Canada and was studied by the international community.

Victoria Lamb Drover's dissertation, "ParticipACTION: A Legacy in Motion (1971-1999)" [2016], provides a valuable foundation for studies of the fitness promotion organization. One of Drover's arguments was that ParticipACTION served as an institutional gatekeeper by prescribing rules for Canadians to live healthy, active lifestyles.[131] Drover also analyzed the unwritten citizenship rules that ParticipACTION was involved in (re)shaping. Canadians learned to police their personal behaviour and that of their families regarding fitness habits. There was a level of social exclusion for those who did not participate in regular exercise. Beauty standards were created around the "desired" body type as being thin with muscular definition. This altered the boundaries of a valued Canadian citizen to someone who was somewhat fit and healthy.[132] Drover concludes that ParticipACTION's connections to federal objectives were intentionally separated from the organization's historical narrative.[133] This chapter seeks to build on Drover's analysis and further explores ParticipACTION's role in Canada by applying the conceptual frameworks of Jeremy Bentham's panopticon, Michel Foucault's disciplinary society, and Nikolas Rose and Carlos Novas's biological citizenship.

This chapter argues that between 1971 and 2001, ParticipACTION's executives demonstrated that fitness, rather than just high-performance sport, could be used to achieve cultural and medical objectives, resulting in greater national unity, improving Canada's position

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[131] Victoria Lamb Drover, "ParticipACTION: A Legacy in Motion (1971-1999)," PhD diss., (University of Saskatchewan, 2016), 16.
[132] *Ibid*., 70.
[133] *Ibid*., 74.

on the world stage, and reducing healthcare costs caused by sedentary lifestyles. For three decades, ParticipACTION campaigns educated and motivated Canadians to get active. ParticipACTION's logo and message became widely recognizable across Canada, with millions leaving their homes to participate in community fitness events. National fitness surveys provided sufficient evidence of ParticipACTION's efficacy in creating a physically active and healthy nation, enabling the federal government to maintain ParticipACTION as an arm's length government-sponsored organization for three decades. Nevertheless, the balance between fitness and sport was unsustainable in Canada, so by the turn of the twenty-first century, ParticipACTION's fitness ideals were sacrificed for high-performance Olympic glory.

## Creation of ParticipACTION

As discussed in the previous chapter, the federal government's early interest in sports was primarily concerned with poor results in international competitions in the 1950s and the negative impact these results were having on the country's standing on the world stage. This self-consciousness was not solely the result of embarrassments at international competitions that the whole world saw; Canadians were also scolded at home by Prince Philip for not being a healthy society.[134] Such attention became a factor in a call to action to build a robust national fitness and sport system.

In the 1960s, the Canadian state underwent a considerable expansion in the areas of public health. Canadians – especially those in the middle class – supported the formation of the welfare state as a system to pool the costs of protecting one's health in a dangerous world.

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[134] Macintosh, Bedecki, and Franks, *Sport and Politics in Canada: Federal Government Involvement Since 1961*, 10-11.

Modern health care offered more protection from disease, injury and ageing through medical procedures and pharmaceutical drugs. All of these medical innovations to protect Canadians cost more money than most households could afford. Successive federal governments were aware of the substantial medical costs associated with treating various ailments. Costs continued to accumulate and soon the strain on the welfare state from medical care outran early predictions. More treatments such as radium for cancer and kidney transfusions for diabetes, were only available through hospitals as well as life events such as childbirth and death.[135] By the end of the decade, government spending on healthcare had increased by a hundredfold from the 1930s.[136] Rather than spending money treating medical problems, there should have been a way to reduce the number of Canadians seeking medical attention each year. Politicians were therefore keen to support ParticipACTION's proactive strategy to educate, motivate, and guide Canadians toward active, healthy lifestyles. ParticipACTION inserted itself as the principal campaigner for fit bodies in Canada. They defined what it meant to be fit and how Canadians could achieve this status.

ParticipACTION built upon that framework by enhancing their persuasion efforts through grassroots community events to actively engage the population.[137] With business and political leaders on the board, the early leaders used their expertise to implement marketing techniques effectively, including promotion, branding, and identity development. ParticipACTION was created to help Canadians confront several social, economic, linguistic,

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[135] Elsbeth Heaman, *A Short History of the State in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015), 185-186.
[136] *Ibid*., 182.
[137] Adrian Bauman, Judith Madill, Cora Lynn Craig, and Art Salmon, "ParticipACTION: This Mouse Roared, But Did It Get the Cheese?" *Canadian Journal of Public Health/Revue Canadienne de Sante'e Publique* 95 (2004): S14.

age and gender barriers that had inhibited participation in sports by focusing on the inclusivity of fitness. Canadians could pursue active lifestyles simply by gardening, walking, swimming, cycling, among other daily activities. ParticipACTION's strategy involved using mass media to persuade the population about the importance of physical fitness and to make it socially acceptable.[138]

ParticipACTION was created as an arm's length organization with financial backing from the Fitness and Amateur Sport Branch. ParticipACTION's mandate included motivating Canadians to be active in the short term by raising awareness of opportunities to be physically active in their communities, thereby improving the country's fitness in the long term. ParticipACTION sought to foster long-term commitment to fitness by advertising the social and health benefits for adults and children. As has been noted in a previous chapter on the decades-long rise of ParticipACTION's popularity, it did not matter what sports or activities Canadians engaged with, ParticipACTION wanted everyone to follow an active lifestyle.[139] Domestically, through ParticipACTION, the federal government wanted Canadians to adopt a variety of fitness activities to relieve the burden on the healthcare system. By creating healthy habits, Canadians could more effectively prevent many common medical ailments.

Federal Interest in Fitness

Fitness Canada was created as a result of the *Fitness and Amateur Sport Act*. Fitness Canada's mandate was, "To raise the fitness level of Canadians by promoting increased participation in physical activity thereby encouraging healthy lifestyle behaviour". The federal

[138] Edwards, "No Country Mouse: Thirty Years of Effective Marketing and Health Communications," S8.
[139] Campagnolo, *Partners in Pursuit of Excellence*, 16.

government stepped up to support fitness and recreation under the jurisdiction of municipalities and provinces. They would conduct national surveys, mass media campaigns and research the benefits of fitness activities. The staff at Fitness Canada were keenly aware of the value of national voluntary associations in fostering lifelong commitment to fitness by developing and delivering national fitness programs.[140] ParticipACTION would become the most significant platform for delivering its message. Bruce Kidd argues that Fitness Canada and its cousin, Sport Canada, directed most of the administrative resources and implanted a "One Canada" ideology by aligning the boundaries of the Canadian nation closer to the federal state.[141] Therefore, the goal of promoting physical activity for every Canadian could be achieved by supporting ParticipACTION.

By funding ParticipACTION as an arm's length not-for-profit organization, the government deployed soft power rather than coercive manipulation to persuade the population to improve their fitness. Rather than receiving instructions from a federal agency, Canadians accepted humorous, upbeat public service announcements that motivated them to get active.[142] With government financial backing and corporate partnerships, ParticipACTION efficiently disseminated public advertisements and organized community events to increase national fitness awareness. Following Joseph S. Nye's concept of soft power discussed earlier, ParticipACTION was the latest attempt to motivate Canadians to alter their behaviour for their own betterment rather than to coerce them.

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[140] Gerald A. Regan, *A Challenge to the Nation: Fitness and Amateur Sport in the 80s* (Ottawa: Ministry of Fitness and Amateur Sport, 1981), 17-18.

[141] Bruce Kidd, "The Canadian State and Sport: The Dilemma of Intervention." *Sport in Society* 16, no. 4 (2013): 365.

[142] Lamb Drover, "ParticipACTION, Healthism, and the Crafting of a Social Memory (1971–1999)," 295.

The federal government had to navigate a fine line in delivering its health messaging. On the one hand, Canadians supported new welfare-state programs. However, politicians were cautious about the state instructing Canadians to change their behaviour, which would draw harmful comparisons to socialist governments during the Cold War. As Molly Johnson demonstrated in *Training Socialist Citizens*, socialist governments tried to organize leisure time around ideologically aligned athletic opportunities.[143] The East German state organized fitness testing in schools and workplaces.[144] The health of a society began with improving the health of individual citizens.[145] However, governments across the political spectrum shared similar goals of organizing fitness and sport programs to enhance their country's international standing, national identity, and patriotism.[146] Johnson's study of East Germany explored how the socialist government used sport to improve the physical abilities of its citizens, which can draw parallels with liberal democratic governments during this era, including Canada.

The Canadian government was beginning to exercise this kind of power at the same time as French philosopher Michel Foucault was beginning to articulate his work in the 1970s and 1980s. Foucault formulated a hypothesis about the power dynamics between individuals in positions of authority and subjects whose behaviour they intended to alter. Scholars have come to understand his framework as "governmentality" – a framework which can also help explain ParticipACTION's influence over Canadians. In a 1982 article, "The Subject and Power", Foucault argued that power is exercised when one modifies the actions of another person. Power

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[143] Molly W. Johnson, *Training Socialist Citizens: Sports and the State in East Germany* (Boston, MA: Brill, 2008), 2.
[144] *Ibid*., 75.
[145] *Ibid*., 70.
[146] *Ibid*., 14-15.

could be exercised only over free subjects, who could choose to comply or resist.[147] Foucault explained that the oppositions to power he witnessed in his lifetime were directed at the medical profession, among others. Medical professionals gained considerable power over how people should maintain healthy bodies.[148] ParticipACTION regularly partnered with medical professionals to lend legitimacy to their argument. However, in doing so, medical advice became an instrument of power, moving beyond the confines of the doctor's office into the public domain through advertisements, brochures, posters, and directives.

The 1970s and 1980s were decades of increasing popularity for the Fitness Movement nationwide. ParticipACTION operated in an era when bodybuilding, exercise regimens, gymnastic programs, and the glorification of the beautiful, healthy body were used in mainstream advertising. The human body was being judged in the public domain as fit/unfit, overweight/underweight, muscular/emaciated, masculine/feminine, or attractive/unattractive. Gymnasiums, fitness centers, and weight rooms became public spaces where one would judge themselves and be subject to the judgement of others. ParticipACTION deployed a form of power that encouraged individuals to become their own disciplinarians and observant of others, thereby creating a sort of panopticon across society. This concept broadly refers to mechanisms of power and surveillance beyond state institutions (for example, in jails, schools, and factories). It evolves into individuals following health recommendations and choosing to monitor their behaviour. It was first devised by the nineteenth-century social reformer Jeremy Bentham for all-seeing prisons. Sociologist David Lyon describes this architectural design, in which prisoners in the panopticon were given the impression that they were under constant surveillance by

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[147] Michel Foucault, "The Subject and Power," *Critical Inquiry* 8, no.4 (Summer 1982): 788-790.
[148] *Ibid*., 780.

guards.[149] According to Pirkko Markula and Richard Pringle, Foucault's power relations and panoptic discipline could be found everywhere in modern society and experienced daily. Instead of being physically coerced to police their bodies, individuals felt societal pressure to fit in and have a normal body type.[150] Thus, ParticipACTION's efforts to prescribe fitness habits for Canadians were, in some ways, part of a tradition in which medical professionals tried to reinforce a standard of normalcy for human bodies in society. This strategy reinforced homogeneity in the population by normalizing individual body differences in favour of an ideal healthy one that was disciplined and not a burden to the healthcare system.

Charlene Elliott documented notions of fit and failed citizens in twentieth- and twenty-first-century Canada based on their physical bodies. The concept of fitness was interpreted through the visible appearance of a lean body. On the other hand, obesity was perceived to be a sign of moral failure and a weakness that could be overcome through a healthy lifestyle.[151] Contributing members to society were viewed as physically fit, whereas physically overweight bodies were viewed as a potential drain on the healthcare system. An overweight body was uncontrolled, unrestrained, and undisciplined; it was a body that gave in to temptations of unhealthy foods and sedentarism. This body was the subject of ParticipACTION's national fitness programs and public health policy decisions. Responsible citizens were celebrated as fit in the sense that they did not create health problems through their unhealthy habits.[152] This

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[149] David Lyon, "Bentham's Panopticon: From Moral Architecture to Electronic Surveillance," In *Surveillance, Crime and Social Control*, edited by Dean Wilson & Clive Norris (New York, NY: Routledge, 2017), 13-14.

[150] Pirkko Markula, and Richard Pringle, *Foucault, Sport and Exercise: Power, Knowledge and Transforming the Self* (London: Routledge Ltd., 2006), 42-44.

[151] Charlene Elliott, "Big Persons, Small Voices: On Governance, Obesity, and the Narrative of the Failed Citizen," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 41, no. 3 (2007): 135.

[152] *Ibid*., 140-141.

pressure was felt especially by young people who were inundated with images of tall, thin, and fit models in the media as the norm.

These ideas about defining what constituted a normal human body were not new in ParticipACTION's era. As Stephen Gould demonstrated in his book, *The Mismeasure of Man*, Western scientists in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries contributed towards an ideology of biological determinism. Gould described biological determinism as the belief that common behavioural norms among human groups, as well as social and economic differences between groups based on class, race, or sex, were inherited.[153] In the nineteenth century, scientists measured human skulls and bodies to determine biological differences between humans. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the burgeoning academic discipline of psychology tried to test, document, and categorize human intelligence.[154] Intelligence was an abstract concept that experts tried to quantify and, in turn, used to rank people against each other. Gould declared that this was built on two fallacies: reification and ranking.[155] Scientists also wanted to determine someone's likelihood of being a criminal based on their physical dimensions. Italian physician Cesar Lombroso claimed to have connected multiple characteristics attributed to criminals: large jaws, long arms, absence of vascular reaction (blushing), greater skull thickness, and large ears.[156] People were forced to live with the consequences of these body measurements, which were perceived as determining their contribution to society. These measurements further marginalized groups of people who were deemed "innately inferior."[157] By the 1970s, fitness was only the latest abstract theory that

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[153] Stephen Jay Gould, *The Mismeasure of Man* (New York, NY: W.W. Norton, 1996), 53.
[154] *Ibid*., 57.
[155] *Ibid*., 56.
[156] *Ibid*., 159.
[157] *Ibid*., 56.

scientists tried to measure. ParticipACTION's efforts to prescribe fitness standards for Canadians were, in some ways, part of a long tradition in which medical professionals tried to reinforce a standard of normalcy for human bodies in society.

In their attempt to avoid the "abnormal" label, youth might try a food diet and exercise regimen. An unhealthy version of these practices would be eating disorders and body dysmorphia. Physical education teachers, coaches, fitness instructors, sport scientists, and advertising creators – including ParticipACTION – could all be considered "agents of normalization." It could be added that everyone who desired to conform to the norm participated in the power relations by affirming the messages. As a national organization, ParticipACTION sought to improve the nation's health by educating and motivating Canadians to take responsibility for maintaining a healthy body through proper diet and exercise.[158]

Justifications for federal intervention in physical fitness became clearer as the government collected more data. Medical care costs and production lost because of illness, premature death and subsequent grief could harm the economy. This was especially important if the possibility of such outcomes could be reduced. Between 1970 and 1978, personal health care costs per capita more than doubled from $285 to $689. A 1978-79 Canada Health Survey found that regular commitment to physical fitness could lead to reduced drug use, fewer consultations with healthcare professionals and fewer sick days. While millions of dollars could be saved from reduced absenteeism, there was also the potential for Canadians to spend even more on sporting goods. Secretary of State and Minister of Fitness and Amateur Sport, Gerald Regan, concluded in his report, *A Challenge to the Nation*, that increasing Canadians' fitness levels would be an

[158] Markula, and Pringle, *Foucault, Sport and Exercise*, 45.

enticing goal for the federal government because it would lead to improvements in their quality of life and economic benefits for the country.[159]

Federal investment in ParticipACTION coincided with a widespread fitness boom in Canada. As mentioned in the previous chapter, by his 1981 report, *A Challenge to the Nation*, Regan admitted that although Canada was still a sedentary nation, he was beginning to observe a transformation of attitudes towards valuing fitness as a positive pursuit. Therefore, Ottawa saw an opportunity to capitalize on Canadians' growing interest in fitness and effectively used ParticipACTION to broadcast its intentions. ParticipACTION relied on a steady stream of federal funding to continue spreading its message.

In a 1979 report to David S.H. Macdonald, Secretary of State of Canada and Minister of Communications, ParticipACTION's President, Russ Kisby, reiterated his organization's reliance on federal funds. Kisby outlined ParticipACTION's successes in his request for federal assistance against additional financial cuts. The financial contribution on which ParticipACTION operated steadily decreased from around $500,000 each year. Kisby was being asked to continue or do more with less money. However, ParticipACTION's operating budget still relied on funding from Fitness and Amateur Sport for the small Toronto office in, which employed nine full-time staff members. Cuts in federal support have hindered ParticipACTION's efforts to focus on a pillar of their marketing strategy – public fitness service announcements. Kisby explained that they had to reduce the number of creative promotions made each year because they were directly tied to federal funds. He asserted that they were at a key moment to increase their programming because Canadian children were averaging twenty-six hours a week in front of the television, and Nutrition Canada had concluded that 50 percent

[159] Regan, *A Challenge to the Nation: Fitness and Amateur Sport in the 80s*, 30.

of Canadians were obese. Despite some positive transformations among Canadians, the country still ranked among the lowest in the world for fitness levels. This should have been a concern for the government, he continued, because it translated into higher health care costs per capita in the world. Kisby suggested that other federal offices beyond Fitness and Amateur Sport such as the Secretary of State and the Department of Health and Welfare could pool their resources to fund ParticipACTION. Kisby explained ParticipACTION's pedigree in working with limited resources in numerous programs. However, he asserted that this was the time to capitalize on growing momentum and not make further reductions.[160]

ParticipACTION's executives remained committed to building the fitness movement from the grassroots while also harbouring aspirations for the power of fitness to bring Canadians together. Reflecting on their accomplishments in ParticipACTION's first ten years of existence, President Russ Kisby wrote about the national implications of Canadians improving their fitness. In *PARTICIPACTION's 10th Anniversary Report, 1971-1981 A Decade of Action*, Kisby was appreciative of the relationship between ParticipACTION and the Canadian government. While touting ParticipACTION's independence, Kisby acknowledged that the organization received continual sponsorship from the Fitness and Amateur Sport Branch.[161] This sponsorship came without any form of operational control, but ParticipACTION's future was never certain. Since ParticipACTION relied on federal funds to operate, its support represented a tacit blessing each

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[160] *ParticipACTION and the Government of Canada: A Request for Assistance*, Prepared for the Honourable David S.H. Macdonald, Secretary of State of Canada; and Minister of Communications, Prepared by Russ Kisby, President of ParticipACTION, November 6, 1979, RG131, Box 32, Folder 2320-1, Vol. 1, Government of Canada, Library and Archives of Canada, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada.

[161] "A Fit Nation", *ParticipACTION's 10th Anniversary Report, 1971-1981 A Decade of Action*, MG 291, box 9, 1981, ParticipACTION fonds, University of Saskatchewan, University Archives & Special Collections.

time it approved money to be given towards fitness promotion. Kisby added that there were two levels to ParticipACTION's mandate. Their obvious intention involved promoting physical activity and improving fitness for individual Canadians. Implicitly, ParticipACTION sought to create a healthy national population.[162] Such nationalistic rhetoric was used to attract corporate sponsors to support their fellow citizens, secure consistent government grants, and encourage Canadians to act patriotically by participating in physical fitness.[163]

With the federal government's vital financial support of $3.5 million over eight years, ParticipACTION had generated an additional $3.1 million from approximately forty corporations. ParticiParks had been created in sixty communities across Canada with the assistance of Kinsmen Clubs of Canada and Sun Life Assurance Company. Kisby estimated that the value generated by ParticiParks was $1,600,000. Corporations such as Eddy Match, Colgate-Palmolive, Gage Stationary, St. Lawrence Sugary, the Canadian Football League, the Canadian Sports Network, and Laiterie Laval contributed $500,000 towards fitness promotions. The Toronto Dominion Bank assisted in the production and distribution of a national fitness promotion campaign valued at $250,000. Standard Brands assisted in the production of a thirty-minute film for national television and subsequent screenings in schools, hospitals, and recreation centres across Canada. In addition to the film, 600,000 copies of the family fitness booklet generated a value of $250,000. The $250,000 in costs associated with publishing the *Fitness: The Facts* booklet series were covered by company purchases. Nine provincial governments purchased, and distributed booklets and posters created by ParticipACTION in both

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[162] "A Fit Nation", *ParticipACTION's 10th Anniversary Report, 1971-1981 A Decade of Action*, MG 291, box 9, 1981, ParticipACTION fonds, University of Saskatchewan, University Archives & Special Collections.

[163] Lamb Drover, "ParticipACTION, Healthism, and the Crafting of a Social Memory (1971–1999)," 297.

official languages at a value of $175,000. Finally, ParticipACTION broke even on the sale of promotional items such as pins, t-shirts, stickers, etc., valued at $100,000. This was a result of ParticipACTION's message having mass appeal, as well as Canadians' growing personal commitment to improving their fitness.[164] It would require time to make ParticipACTION and its message an influential part of the Canadian consciousness. Public service advertisements, community events and merchandise would go a long way, but Canadians needed to be reminded why fitness was a national concern. While ParticipACTION was trying to build national notoriety, there was also interest in organizing community events.

ParticipACTION's Innovative Approaches to Fitness Education

As ParticipACTION transitioned to a national audience, the staff's tactics evolved to reach more Canadians with their fitness messages. They sought to make everyone aware of fitness activities that were available to them. They also wanted to educate the country about the benefits of engaging in physical activities. ParticipACTION tried to motivate Canadians to get up by encouraging them to try a variety of physical activities rather than settling into accustomed sedentary habits. This was accomplished through a variety of means: public advertisements on the radio, television, and in print media; presentations to children at schools; corporate partnerships; community mobilization; and in-person leadership through organized events.[165] While ParticipACTION relied on government funding to cover its operating costs, its corporate

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[164] *ParticipACTION and the Government of Canada: A Request for Assistance*, Prepared for the Honourable David S.H. Macdonald, Secretary of State of Canada; and Minister of Communications, Prepared by Russ Kisby, President of ParticipACTION, November 6, 1979, RG131, Box 32, Folder 2320-1, Vol. 1, Government of Canada, Library and Archives of Canada, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada.

[165] Edwards, "No Country Mouse: Thirty Years of Effective Marketing and Health Communications," S6.

partners provided the means to spread their message to Canadians across different media platforms.

ParticipACTION's message was popular in every region, in both the country's official languages and was not restricted by political, religious, or ethnic affiliations. ParticipACTION's advertisements in English and French totalled 533 television segments and 549 radio segments complementing the hundreds of messages printed for newspapers, magazines, etc.[166] From their early days, ParticipACTION's managers knew they also needed assistance from community groups to succeed in promoting fitness at the local level. They understood the value of partnerships within a target community. Businesses, media, educators, and politicians with diverse backgrounds were asked to participate in this initiative, and in many cases, they stepped up with various forms of assistance.[167] Between 1975 and 1995, at the height of their promotional years, ParticipACTION developed professional relationships with 110 daily newspapers, 350 television and cable stations, 580 radio stations, 950 weekly newspapers, 1,100 commercial/professional magazines and another 1,100 corporate newsletters to disseminate ParticipACTION's dozens of national campaigns to Canadians.[168] The themes evolved from shocking Canadians to get their attention about the country's poor fitness, to educating them about the merits of fitness and active living, to motivating the populace to take action.

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[166] Background to Mass Media PSA Campaigns, MG 291, box 1, General Information Binder, ParticipACTION fonds, University of Saskatchewan, University Archives & Special Collections.

[167] Christa Costas-Bradstreet, "Spreading the Message Through Community Mobilization, Education and Leadership: A Magnanimouse Task," *Canadian Journal of Public Health/Revue Canadienne de Sante'e Publique* 95 (2004): S26.

[168] Background to Mass Media PSA Campaigns, MG 291, box 1, General Information Binder, ParticipACTION fonds, University of Saskatchewan, University Archives & Special Collections.

Corporate support, from donating airtime for public service announcements to be broadcast over the radio to distributing ParticipACTION merchandise to adults and youths, became pivotal to enhancing ParticipACTION's reach. ParticipACTION's messaging did not rely solely on print, audio, or televisual media; however, it may have reached only a portion of the population. The pinwheel logo could be found on notebooks, hats, shirts, shoelaces, and water bottles. Such cooperation and occasional direct involvement in community events legitimized ParticipACTION's non-political message. With such a broad objective of promoting healthy activities for Canadians, ParticipACTION tried to motivate everyone to get up and moving without directing people to specific sports.[169] Corporate sponsors covered most of the funding for ParticipACTION to create their print materials (i.e., brochures, newsletters, booklets, etc.). ParticipACTION maintained editorial control and often involved medical professionals to share their expertise.[170] ParticipACTION's success depended on cooperation between elected officials at every level of government, bureaucrats, corporations, media outlets non-governmental and grassroots organizations. Elected officials and senior bureaucrats wanted tangible results to document a return on their investment.[171] It was important to remember that addressing Canada's fitness deficiencies would remain a long-term objective, with results being seen in future decades and generations.

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[169] Costas-Bradstreet, "Spreading the Message Through Community Mobilization, Education and Leadership: A Magnanimouse Task," S26-S27.

[170] ParticipACTION National Promotions, MG 291, box 2, 1980-86, ParticipACTION fonds, University of Saskatchewan, University Archives & Special Collections.

[171] Irving Rootman, and Peggy Edwards. "The Best Laid Schemes of Mice and Men...: ParticipACTION's Legacy and the Future of Physical Activity Promotion in Canada." *Canadian Journal of Public Health/Revue Canadienne de Sante'e Publique* 95 (2004): S41.

ParticipACTION had to be creative to work within a finite budget to educate Canadians about fitness. An early marketing strategy involved satire to capture the public's attention. Signs on city buses instructed Canadians to jog to their seat because that was likely the only exercise they would get all day. One placed on the rear of the bus reminded anyone who might be chasing after it, "Don't run for the bus. The shape you're in, you might not make it. Swim, ski, jog. Do something to get yourself in shape. Then run for the bus."[172] One played with a line from the national anthem by replacing "strong" with "soft" to read "Canada, the true North soft and free".[173] Another strategy took advantage of the *Godfather*'s popularity in the mid-1970s, in which the tough figure of a godfather admitted to hearing ParticipACTION's radio ads and has since been standing rather than sitting during mob deals. Media campaigns would focus on several themes in their messaging to Canadians. Education was ParticipACTION's most important theme for their media campaigns. Canadians needed to be taught about the many ways they can exercise and the benefits of maintaining a healthy routine. For example, ParticipACTION emphasized the benefits of walking fifteen minutes three times a week and compared Canada's fitness level to other countries. Another approach involved motivating people to stop thinking about getting active and do it, plus reinforcing positive behaviour by celebrating the increasing participation numbers with slogans such as "Way to Go, Canada!"[174] These advertisements required the viewer to reflect on how their poor fitness habits might have contributed to such statements.

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[172] Wilfred List, "ParticipACTION Still Pushing Fitness 60-Year-Old Swede no Longer has the Best of Canadians," *The Globe and Mail*, Jan 29, 1988.
[173] Edwards, "No Country Mouse: Thirty Years of Effective Marketing and Health Communications," S8.
[174] *Ibid*., S11.

The campaigns were not meant to be too serious, as they risked losing interest. Therefore, they highlighted practical and simple ways to participate in fitness. They laid the foundation to make Canadians aware of the benefits of fitness so that by the end of the 1970s campaigns such as Walk-a-Block had strong turnouts reaching tens of thousands of participants across the country.[175] Decades later, Sneaker Day was the premier event of Canada's Fitweek for schools, workplaces, clubs, and municipalities to wear their sneakers and participate in physical activities throughout the day.[176] Among all of the strategies deployed by ParticipACTION, the one that put them on the map involved a direct comparison between Canadians and Swedes.

One of ParticipACTION's most iconic advertisements, which drew national attention, compared the fitness level of a thirty-year-old Canadian to that of a sixty-year-old Swede. In 1972, members of ParticipACTION's executive came across Dr. Roy Shephard's research on fitness in different countries. Shephard concluded that an active sixty-year-old could have the same fitness level as a sedentary individual half their age. Sweden sat at the top of Shephard's list while Canada was much further down. Keith McKerracher created an ad for ParticipACTION using Shephard's conclusions. The video ad depicted an older Swedish man running beside a younger Canadian man. As the camera panned upward from their running shoes, the voice-over said that the two men appeared to be equals because the average thirty-year-old Canadian was in the same shape as an average sixty-year-old Swede. The ad concluded with a call to action, "Run. Walk. Cycle. Let's get Canada moving again." It aired only six times

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[175] Wilfred List, "ParticipACTION Still Pushing Fitness 60-Year-Old Swede no Longer has the Best of Canadians," *The Globe and Mail*, Jan 29, 1988.

[176] Sneaker Day Final Report, MG 291, box 10, 1993, ParticipACTION fonds, University of Saskatchewan, University Archives & Special Collections.

during Canadian Football League games in 1973, but proved to be influential in the nation's psyche.[177] Politicians would refer to this comparison years later as they tried to improve the national fitness level.

By the late 1970s, ParticipACTION's ads focused on fostering inclusivity, health, and community through fitness. Physical activities were not solely meant for young people or athletes. Fitness could lead to improvements in one's health, and ParticipACTION sought to show Canadians how easy it was to get fit. ParticipACTION partnered with Kinsmen Clubs of Canada and Sun Life Assurance Company to open ParticiParks in communities from Nanaimo, British Columbia, to Gander, Newfoundland. These parks included exercise stations along woodland trails across Canada. This would make it easier for Canadians to exercise while walking through the parks. Entrants would encounter apparatuses made of wood along the side of the trail with a post labelling the intended exercise. Individuals could choose to participate in the exercise or continue walking.[178] Promotional materials, such as brochures, films, and posters, also helped generate awareness of the fitness trails. Adults and children alike could enjoy the benefits of exercising in the ParticiParks.[179] Unlike other ephemeral promotional campaigns, the ParticiParks were meant to be enjoyed by successive generations of Canadians.

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[177] Edwards, "No Country Mouse: Thirty Years of Effective Marketing and Health Communications," S7.

[178] ParticiPark Photos, MG 291, box 2, 1977-81, ParticipACTION fonds, University of Saskatchewan, University Archives & Special Collections.

[179] *ParticipACTION and the Government of Canada: A Request for Assistance*, Prepared for the Honourable David S.H. Macdonald, Secretary of State of Canada; and Minister of Communications, Prepared by Russ Kisby, President of ParticipACTION, November 6, 1979, RG131, Box 32, Folder 2320-1, Vol. 1, Government of Canada, Library and Archives of Canada, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada.

During the 1980s, ParticipACTION's leadership celebrated opening its 100th ParticiPark in Canada among its many accomplishments.[180]

Historians Nikolas Rose and Carlos Novas argue that a new form of citizenship was being defined in Western countries in the twentieth century. ParticipACTION's efforts could be characterized by what Rose and Novas call biological citizenship in Canada. They use the term biological citizenship to refer to the biological existence of being a human, with an added layer of identity as a citizen in a particular nation.[181] Rose and Novas argue that state-funded health promotion organizations have become national priorities and have received additional support to address perceived needs of the nation's citizens.[182] National citizenship projects defined how those in authority acted upon the behaviour of potential citizens.[183] Through ParticipACTION, the federal government pressed the belief that valued Canadians were active not just politically and economically, but also physically. Active citizens were obligated to stay informed about the health risks and benefits of their decisions. However, Rose and Novas identified struggles over citizenship in the new age of biomedicine, which paralleled Foucault's earlier work. There were struggles over claims to expertise, access to knowledge, the powers held by healthcare providers, and the responsibilities of individuals vis-à-vis public bodies.[184] For ParticipACTION, an example included designing public spaces (for example, ParticiParks) to encourage citizens to

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[180] Edwards, "No Country Mouse: Thirty Years of Effective Marketing and Health Communications," S9.
[181] Nikolas Rose, and Carlos Novas, "Biological Citizenship," in *Global Assemblages: Technology, Politics, and Ethics as Anthropological Problems*, edited by Aihwa Ong and Stephen J. Collier (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 440.
[182] *Ibid*., 444.
[183] Rose, and Novas, "Biological Citizenship," in *Global Assemblages*, 439.
[184] *Ibid*., 442.

feel, think, and act in a particular way. ParticipACTION strove to encourage active citizens everywhere by adding exercise stations along trails in local parks.

Canadian pop culture stars also became involved in the growing fitness movement. They were seen as valuable spokespeople for raising awareness about fitness. Beyond identifying activities that Canadians could try or motivating them to act, ParticipACTION used the influence of Canadian role models to get its message across. Musicians saw the benefits of a physically active lifestyle as their tours expanded to more cities around the world. Although some of the most successful artists of their generation might have been able to afford portable gyms to privately exercise while on tour, others participated in common fitness activities. For example, Rik Emmett played soccer, and his Triumph bandmates played golf; rock'n'roll artist, Gown, played pick-up hockey; Bryan Adams played squash and ran; Anne Murray played tennis; Neil Peart would go cycling, and his Rush bandmates played tennis; and Dan Hill was regularly spotted jogging along Toronto's boardwalk. As with thousands of other Canadians, Gordon Lightfoot enjoyed the popular Canadian hobby of canoeing.

In some cases, the artists participated in fitness activities as part of a training regimen to build up stamina ahead of a stressful tour. A *Vancouver Sun* article noted that a rock star's fitness pedigree ran contrary to their public image of partying hard with drugs and alcohol. Brian Vollmer, a singer for the Canadian hard-rock band Helix, admitted that he used to be a heavy drinker until he focused on a regular fitness routine. Vollmer commented, "Now, exercise is my anchor. It relieves the stress that builds up from writing, touring, and performing." He was grateful that he made the switch to regularly lifting weights, running, and cycling. Part of his motivation was that early rock'n'roll stars rarely made it past the age of thirty without dying or being physically injured. As more artists publicly embraced a healthy active lifestyle, the federal

government and ParticipACTION capitalized on their profile to promote fitness. The rock band Loverboy became spokesmen for a youth fitness campaign while singer Billy Newton-Davis starred in ParticipACTION advertisements.[185] ParticipACTION relied on pop culture stars, particularly rock stars who made their livelihood from an image of partying hard, as spokespeople sharing their transition towards a healthy, active lifestyle.

In 1989, ParticipACTION chose to partner with spokespeople who eventually became linked with fitness. Hal Johnson and Joanne McLeod were the creators and hosts of *Body Break*, a fitness education series on television. Health Canada provided the core funding for this arrangement. Typically, they were ninety-second segments during a commercial break and highlighted the variety of ways Canadians could get active. Messages included, but were not limited to, the following: preventing sports injuries by properly stretching beforehand; airplane exercises; limiting stress; proper posture in the workplace; and turning housework into a form of exercise. Their tagline, "Keep fit and have fun," emphasized that exercising could be enjoyable rather than a source of stress. Three years and sixty-five video spots later, *Body Break* became one of the most successful campaigns ParticipACTION had supported.[186] Johnson and McLeod's efforts to create a fitness program for all Canadians who may have felt excluded from the national fitness and sport system will be investigated more closely in Chapter 5. Fitness had the potential to become ingrained as a way of life for individuals across the country. ParticipACTION's successes in workplace health promotion paralleled their efforts to encourage Canadians to be proud of themselves and their communities for participating in fitness.

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[185] "Pop Stars Catch the Fitness Craze," *The Vancouver Sun*, Jul 16, 1987.
[186] "Body Break." *The ParticipACTION Archive Project*. Accessed November 24, 2021. http://digital.scaa.sk.ca/gallery/participaction/english/motivate/bodybreak.html

Healthy Relationships with Body, Community, and Nation

ParticipACTION's executives remained committed to building the fitness movement from the grassroots while also harbouring aspirations for the power of fitness to bring Canadians together. ParticipACTION brought Canadians together in the name of fitness through community competitions. Through ParticipACTION's programs, Canadians interacted with one another in their local communities, helping them learn more about each other, especially given Canada's growing immigrant population. Local volunteers developed organizational skills to deliver ParticipACTION's fitness events.

ParticipACTION tested its strategy in Saskatoon by arranging a fitness competition against the residents of Umëa, Sweden. From 12 to 15 May 1975, residents of each city recorded how many times they spent at least an hour participating in physical activity over a three-day period. The time spent being active did not matter as much as the number of people being active. Saskatoon was declared the winner, with an average of 41.8 percent of its citizens exercising for at least one hour over three days, edging Umëa by two percent in the final average. Decades later, Victoria Lamb Drover contacted the Achievement Week Award winners about their recollections of these events. Some of the respondents passionately recalled their experiences during the competition. However, none could remember which city or country they competed against. A few mentioned defeating Europeans, while one proudly stated they "beat" the Soviets.[187] Just like high-performance sports, the Cold War mentality permeated friendly fitness competitions. These individual benefits could also be celebrated at the national level if Canadians could be motivated to take action together.

[187] Lamb Drover, "ParticipACTION, Healthism, and the Crafting of a Social Memory (1971–1999)," 298-299.

As part of National Physical Activity Week each year, ParticipACTION and its corporate partner, Crown Life Insurance Company, organized a challenge that pitted municipalities across Canada against each other to determine which community was the fittest. On the single day of competition, cities recorded how many residents exercised for at least fifteen minutes. The admissible exercises could range from tennis to gardening. Kingstonians could exercise on their own, at work or at one of many events in the city. A local radio station, CKLC, sponsored multiple fitness events, including a street hike and a dance workout. The important part was to submit their participation to a local radio station, City Hall, or any McDonald's.[188] One resident learned, however, that not every physical activity would be counted when he tried to report that he and his wife had just had sex for the past forty minutes. The city with the highest percentage of residents exercising would be declared the winner. The 1984 winner was Fredericton with 29,778 of its 45,000 residents, a participation rate of 66.2 percent. In 1985, Kingston tried to make its case with 30,492 residents or 57.9 percent of its 52,616 residents. This was an encouraging improvement from the previous year's participation rate. In Kingston's first year in the challenge, only 18,500 people, or 35.2 percent, exercised. However, Red Deer came out on top, with 34,442 of the 51,070 residents participating, with a participation rate of 66.7 percent.[189] Municipalities of every size across Canada became increasingly involved as local groups organized events to get people active for at least a few days each May.

ParticipACTION's events brought Canadians together through friendly competition and enhanced inter-city rivalries. In 1987, 3.7 million Canadians from 257 communities participated

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[188] Bill Fitsell, "Are You Ready, Kingston? ParticipACTION Challenge is Set to Swing into Action," *The Whig - Standard*, May 28, 1985.

[189] Ian MacAlpine, Michael Lea, Rob Cowperthwaite, "Puff! Groan! More People Turn Out to Get Fit," *The Whig - Standard*, May 30, 1985.

in the Crown Life ParticipACTION Challenge. The country's large urban centres competed against one another for bragging rights. The rivalry between Montreal and Toronto extended to fitness competition, with 390,283 participants in Montreal prevailing over Toronto's 358,049. Civic organizations were not the only ones organizing fitness events for the challenge. Companies also encouraged their employees to get active. In Saint John, NB alone, 30,000 employees spent a minimum of fifteen minutes exercising in some capacity. Nearly 93 percent of the city's 76,381 residents recorded their activities. Peterborough, ON reached 94 percent of its residents participating. One of the highest percentages, however, belonged to Keno City, YT, which organized a wood-chopping event that drew forty out of forty-three residents. Unfortunately, a perfect score was not reached because three of their residents were out of town at the time of the competition.[190]

By 1988, the competition during Fitweek grouped similarly sized municipalities to compete against each other. The city that could rally the most residents to exercise for at least fifteen minutes on a predetermined day would have the honour of flying its flag atop the opposing city hall for the rest of the week. John Ibbitson, writing for the *Ottawa Citizen*, lamented that his city could not defeat Hamilton in two consecutive years. Steel City had 34,084 more citizens participating in fitness activities than the nation's capital. Despite losing the single-day competition, the broader festival drew tens of thousands of people to get active in a variety of ways, including cleaning the house, weightlifting, walkathons, swimming, and a steeplechase.[191] The festivities lasted for nine days and became the world's largest celebration of fitness, attracting international attention. France, the United States, and even the Soviet Union

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[190] Wilfred List, "ParticipACTION Still Pushing Fitness 60-Year-Old Swede no Longer has the Best of Canadians," *The Globe and Mail*, Jan 29, 1988.
[191] John Ibbitson, "Hamilton 'Fitter' than Ottawa," *The Ottawa Citizen*, May 26, 1988.

wanted to get involved by pairing communities in their countries with ones in Canada.[192] These events brought citizens together to exercise while also fostering a sense of competition that might motivate people to get involved in something bigger than just their personal health.

Throughout the Olympic year of 1988, ParticipACTION celebrated Canadians who made fitness a priority in their lives. ParticipACTION featured the stories of individuals and groups in their national radio, television, and print media campaigns engaging in a variety of fitness activities. ParticipACTION reminded Canadians that "physical activity success stories" could be found beyond the Olympic Village, implying that anyone could be honoured for their fitness accomplishments. Some of the messages proclaimed how many Canadians participated in each type of physical activity. For example, 699,465 Canadians played squash, 752, 763 Canadians curled, and 6,103,943 Canadians swam.[193] ParticipACTION's community initiatives also coincided with national unity during the 1988 Olympic Torch Relay. The federal government invested $1.5 million in events across Canada. Ten staff members fulfilled the role of "community animators" and organized events in over 1,700 communities supporting the Petro-Canada Relay leading up to the Calgary Olympics.[194] Ahead of an international sports festival, ParticipACTION reminded Canadians that an active lifestyle was not the purview of high-performance athletes alone. As will be explored in subsequent chapters, there were struggles to balance sports and fitness within a national system which became ingrained in Canada's national culture.

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[192] Wilfred List, "ParticipACTION Still Pushing Fitness 60-Year-Old Swede no Longer has the Best of Canadians," *The Globe and Mail*, Jan 29, 1988.

[193] "Way to go, Canada!", MG 291, box 1, 1988, ParticipACTION fonds, University of Saskatchewan, University Archives & Special Collections.

[194] Costas-Bradstreet, "Spreading the Message Through Community Mobilization, Education and Leadership: A Magnanimouse Task," S25-S26.

After a decade of organizing Canada's Fitweek and SummerActive programs each May, it was not until 1995 that ParticipACTION unveiled a winter pilot program. From 1 January to 28 February, four Canadian cities, Fredericton, New Brunswick; Québec City, Québec; Edmonton, Alberta and Victoria, British Columbia were the focus of ParticipACTION's WinterActive '95 festivities. ParticipACTION wanted to encourage Canadians to remain active all year long, no matter the weather. This was part of a wider pivot in ParticipACTION's messaging, aimed at helping Canadians incorporate physical activity into their daily routine. "Active living," according to ParticipACTION, "is a way of life in which physical activity is valued and integrated into daily life." WinterActive encouraged people to participate in indoor and outdoor cold-weather activities. Organizers relied on Canada's identity as a winter nation and on Canadians being a hardy lot who enjoy physical activities in all weather conditions. They also cited increasing participation rates each year from 1981, so that by 1995, more than a third of Canadians aged 18 and older were regularly active. This was not an increase in sport participation; rather, low-cost, unstructured, moderate-intensity activities, such as walking, or skating.[195] As they released nationwide public service announcements and organized community engagement events, it became important for ParticipACTION's staff to measure their influence through national surveys.

## Assessing ParticipACTION's Effectiveness

ParticipACTION was beginning to sway the hearts and minds of Canadians by demonstrating that the organization stood for a healthier future for all Canadians. Public support

[195] WinterActive, MG 291, box 8, 1995, ParticipACTION fonds, University of Saskatchewan, University Archives & Special Collections.

for community events and the extensive media coverage – which would not have been offered if media outlets believed the public did not care – were early indicators that ParticipACTION was beginning to meet its objectives. ParticipACTION used information gathered from multiple national public surveys conducted between 1978 and 1994 to prove their effectiveness.[196] Russ Kisby saw ParticipACTION expanding relationships with schools, religious groups, sports clubs, universities, and recreation departments as part of a "Canadian Movement for Personal Fitness". He also identified that physically active lifestyles were becoming another facet of the national identity, and ParticipACTION was introducing Canadians to its benefits. Even though the federal government was not involved in regular operations, it would continue to support ParticipACTION as long as there were measurable results.[197]

By the end of the 1970s, ParticipACTION could demonstrate its positive influence on Canada's self-image both domestically and internationally. Canada was also becoming recognized as a society devoted to becoming physically active. According to Kisby, resources should be devoted to cycling paths, walking trails, and skiing paths as important centres of national culture comparable to stadiums, theatres, or museums. Just as the federal government believed excellence in high-performance sports could translate to international prestige, Kisby declared that ParticipACTION's success had also garnered international recognition. He stated

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[196] Measures of Awareness and Impact (over the years), MG 291, box 9, 1978-94, ParticipACTION fonds, University of Saskatchewan, University Archives & Special Collections.

[197] *ParticipACTION and the Government of Canada: A Request for Assistance*, Prepared for the Honourable David S.H. Macdonald, Secretary of State of Canada; and Minister of Communications, Prepared by Russ Kisby, President of ParticipACTION, November 6, 1979, RG131, Box 32, Folder 2320-1, Vol. 1, Government of Canada, Library and Archives of Canada, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada.

that Australia, Brazil, England, France, Germany, Israel, Japan, Sweden, and the United States were following "Canada's successful approach" to fitness promotion.[198]

ParticipACTION tracked its success in raising awareness through national surveys. Kisby cited the results of a 1978 study by Contemporary Research Centre Inc., which interviewed 2,128 Canadians aged 15 and older.[199] Chief Executive Officer Keith McKerracher was proud to admit that by the mid-1970s, ParticipACTION had become one of Canada's top five advertising agencies without ever purchasing space or time.[200] They found success because, by 1978, 79 percent of Canadians were aware of ParticipACTION's brand and logo.[201] Seventy-eight percent of those Canadians believed ParticipACTION's efforts were positive. Nearly a third of respondents who were aware of ParticipACTION personally knew an average of nine people who were persuaded by ParticipACTION's message to get physically active. Results from this survey indicate that physical fitness was a serious concern and that ParticipACTION was well received by Canadians after six years of operations.[202] The creative advertisements created a lot of buzz for ParticipACTION. Kisby also mentioned that they received considerable

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[198] *ParticipACTION and the Government of Canada: A Request for Assistance*, Prepared for the Honourable David S.H. Macdonald, Secretary of State of Canada; and Minister of Communications, Prepared by Russ Kisby, President of ParticipACTION, November 6, 1979, RG131, Box 32, Folder 2320-1, Vol. 1, Government of Canada, Library and Archives of Canada, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada.

[199] Letter to Peter B. Lesaux from Russ Kisby, April 21, 1980, RG131, Box 32, Folder 2320-1, Vol. 1, Government of Canada, Library and Archives of Canada, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada.

[200] Lamb Drover, "ParticipACTION, Healthism, and the Crafting of a Social Memory (1971–1999)," 291.

[201] Edwards, "No Country Mouse: Thirty Years of Effective Marketing and Health Communications," S8-S9.

[202] Survey Results by Contemporary Research Centre, MG 291, box 9, 1978, ParticipACTION fonds, University of Saskatchewan, University Archives & Special Collections.

positive feedback from the 250 letters received each day at ParticipACTION's offices from church groups, companies, schools, individuals, and other organizations across Canada.[203]

ParticipACTION's relationships with corporations and local community leaders enabled it to stretch its small annual government grant and spread its message. For the 1972-73 fiscal year, ParticipACTION received $300,000 from Fitness and Amateur Sport for its annual grant. The organization generated $3,127,000 in donated media exposure for its ads.[204] Russ Kisby was proud to admit that ParticipACTION had transformed the federal government's annual commitment of less than $500,000 in 1979 into an annual valuation of $8,000,000 for their national campaigns with private support. Essentially, for every $1 the federal government invested, ParticipACTION generated $15 of support from the private sector.[205]

Results released throughout the 1980s indicated a positive trend towards more Canadians participating regularly in fitness. Canadian participation in specific fitness and sports was also documented. Between 1972 and 1976, tennis participation grew by 197 percent, while skiing grew by 153 percent, and jogging rose by 148 percent. A comparison of Statistics Canada data on leisure time found that in 1978 there was a 12 percent increase in adults participating in sports and fitness compared to six years earlier. Municipal demand for physical recreational programs also grew in the 1970s. By 1979, the Young Men's Christian Association [YMCA] had recorded

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[203] Survey Results by Contemporary Research Centre, MG 291, box 9, 1978, ParticipACTION fonds, University of Saskatchewan, University Archives & Special Collections.

[204] Lamb Drover, "ParticipACTION, Healthism, and the Crafting of a Social Memory (1971–1999)," 287.

[205] *ParticipACTION and the Government of Canada: A Request for Assistance*, Prepared for the Honourable David S.H. Macdonald, Secretary of State of Canada; and Minister of Communications, Prepared by Russ Kisby, President of ParticipACTION, November 6, 1979, RG131, Box 32, Folder 2320-1, Vol. 1, Government of Canada, Library and Archives of Canada, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada.

400,000 registered participants in one hundred different physical activities.[206] Canadians were not just changing their attitudes; an increasing number were regularly active. By the end of the 1970s, 25 percent were active, and by 1982, that grew to 37 percent, with another 35 percent participating in "occasional physical activity".[207] Although there could be multiple factors explaining this behavioural shift, it was no coincidence that the surge occurred since ParticipACTION began operations.

On April 21, 1980, Russ Kisby wrote to Assistant Deputy Minister of Health and Welfare, Peter Lesaux, imploring him to continue federal funding. Kisby argued that ParticipACTION had achieved success in its first eight years through its national advertising campaigns. Their ads were disseminated in 500 weekly newspapers, 305 radio stations, 200 special interest publications, 145 television stations, and thirty-five national magazines, regularly across Canada. Kisby estimated the value of donated media support to be at least $51 million. Kisby believed that ParticipACTION's ability to generate corporate donations directly stemmed from the federal government's commitment.[208] After nearly a decade, Canada's largest national fitness survey began with the potential of solidifying ParticipACTION's influence.

In February 1981, the Canada Fitness Survey began gathering data. It was the largest and most comprehensive fitness study ever undertaken in the world.[209] Fitness and sport administrators realized that they did not have a data-driven answer to the question posed by the

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[206] Regan, *A Challenge to the Nation: Fitness and Amateur Sport in the 80s*, 15.
[207] Measures of Awareness and Impact (over the years), MG 291, box 9, 1978, ParticipACTION fonds, University of Saskatchewan, University Archives & Special Collections.
[208] Letter to Peter B. Lesaux from Russ Kisby, April 21, 1980, RG131, Box 32, Folder 2320-1, Vol. 1, Government of Canada, Library and Archives of Canada, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada.
[209] Communiqué from Fitness and Amateur Sport, "We're Catching up!", June 21, 1982, RG131, Box 32, Folder 2320-1, Vol. 1, Government of Canada, Library and Archives of Canada, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada.

*Canadian Medical Association*, "Has there been a significant improvement in the fitness of the average Canadian since (1959) when Prince (Philip) frowned on our sedentary habits?" One hundred and seventy-five staff members travelled to eighty-two urban and rural communities to collect data on 35,000 Canadians.[210] More than 20,000 people between the ages of 7 and 97 were interviewed about their fitness activity patterns. Another 15,000 had their fitness levels tested.[211] They involved flexibility, body fat, muscle strength and physiological analysis of heart and lung function.[212] On 21 June 1982, Gerald Regan, the Secretary of State and Minister of Fitness and Amateur Sport, was proud to proclaim to Canadians, "We're catching up!" While Regan attended the annual conference of the Canadian Association for Health, Physical Education and Recreation (CHPER), he asserted that the comparison with a mythical "60-year-old Swede" that haunted Canadians for the past decade was no longer reasonable. Early results of the Canada Fitness Survey were promising, with over 50 percent of the Canadian population reaching the recommended level of cardiovascular fitness. The report also found that within the previous five years, 23 percent more Canadians participated in sport.[213] These findings were encouraging, as ParticipACTION began in the 1980s, motivating Canadians not just to educate them, but also to continue being active.

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[210] Canada Fitness Survey: Rationale and Description, 1980, RG131, Box 32, Folder 2320-1, Vol. 1, Government of Canada, Library and Archives of Canada, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada.

[211] Communiqué from Fitness and Amateur Sport, "We're Catching up!", June 21, 1982, RG131, Box 32, Folder 2320-1, Vol. 1, Government of Canada, Library and Archives of Canada, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada.

[212] Canada Fitness Survey: Rationale and Description, 1980, RG131, Box 32, Folder 2320-1, Vol. 1, Government of Canada, Library and Archives of Canada, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada.

[213] Communiqué from Fitness and Amateur Sport, "We're Catching up!", June 21, 1982, RG131, Box 32, Folder 2320-1, Vol. 1, Government of Canada, Library and Archives of Canada, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada.

ParticipACTION relied on community partnerships to deliver its messages to schools, homes, and workplaces through a variety of modes. This was even more remarkable because funding for Sport Canada dwarfed that of Fitness Canada by 5:1 in the 1970s and by 8:1 a decade later. Such a disparity shows how much politicians valued high-performance sport over fitness initiatives. Successful community events that promoted mass participation and fitness activities did not command the same amount of media attention or international prestige as an international sports medal. The federal government continued to favour efforts to host and participate in high-performance sports competitions, with the hope that they would inspire future generations and serve as occasions to improve sports facilities. Sport sociologist Peter Donnelly concluded that, separately, high-performance sports or fitness programs could not truly enhance national pride, but together they could be quite strong.[214] The immediacy of winning medals could lend itself to the long-term investment of ParticipACTION's fitness objectives. The next chapter will explore how ParticipACTION continued to elevate its presence in the minds of Canadians by organizing community events ahead of the 1988 Calgary Winter Olympic Games.

The federal government tried to include every Canadian with its fitness programming. Unfortunately, they remained vague in their promises and came up short in their execution. Regan announced that "Fitness in the Workplace" was a major theme in the 1980s. ParticipACTION's campaign included large corporations that employed white-collar employees. The federal government also tried to develop pilot projects in conjunction with unions and corporations to improve the fitness of blue-collar workers. Fitness Canada was also developing a new participation skills development program to ensure the active participation of all Canadians.

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[214] Peter Donnelly, "Sport Participation," in *Sport Policy in Canada*, edited by Lucie Thibault and Jean Harvey (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 2013), 186.

This became a priority for the federal government in because the United Nations declared 1981 the International Year of Disabled Persons. The government sought to encourage opportunities for Canadians living with disabilities to participate in fitness and sports but was unclear how this would be achieved.[215]

More detailed findings in the 1990s revealed ParticipACTION's influence over the previous two decades and provided valuable data to ParticipACTION's administration. ParticipACTION's name recognition reached its peak in 1992, with nearly 90% of respondents in a sample of over 1,000 Canadian adults. Two years later, another survey conducted by Tandemar Research asked more detailed questions among its Canadian sample. Among respondents aware of ParticipACTION, 65 percent reported being influenced by its fitness promotion. Although national brands or retailers could expect 50 to 60 percent of respondents to remember seeing their advertising campaigns on billboards, in magazines, newspapers, on radio, or on television, 83 percent reported seeing ParticipACTION's advertisements. ParticipACTION was rated very highly by respondents for emphasizing the importance of health and fitness and for encouraging the public to incorporate physical activity into their daily lives. ParticipACTION, however, was not associated with helping Canadians develop healthier eating habits, nor raising awareness about the dangers of tobacco or alcohol. Although the vast majority of respondents agreed with the statement that daily physical activity was important for children and that it should be compulsory in school, Tandemar Research found a demographic gap in ParticipACTION's messaging. Respondents over the age of 65 were the least aware of ParticipACTION, were less influenced, and felt their fitness promotion was less useful than that

[215] Regan, *A Challenge to the Nation: Fitness and Amateur Sport in the 80s*, 19-20.

of other organizations.[216] ParticipACTION was viewed as an important motivator and educator in healthy living; however, its specific contribution remained unclear. The growing popularity of fitness activities and other health promotion organizations, such as YMCA, YWCA, and Heart & Stroke Foundation, etc. cannot be ignored. All this data was very important for ParticipACTION as it approached the new millennium.

Considering ParticipACTION's longevity and recognition among Canadians, Michel Poulos was not alone with his sentiments. "ParticipACTION not only promotes an active and healthy lifestyle," said Poulos, "it brings people closer together across our entire country."[217] By using clear messaging and effectively developing business partnerships, ParticipACTION met federal objectives by building community cohesion and awareness of physical fitness through many programs that reached millions of Canadians. There has not been another organization delivering public health messages in Canada or around the world for as long as ParticipACTION.[218] They asked Canadians to be more conscious of how their inactivity affected their health and reminded everyone that it was not difficult to make a change for the better. Even though cycling, jogging, swimming, running, or walking can be viewed as solitary exercises, these popular activities brought communities, cities, provinces, and the nation together under the banner of fitness.

The federal government used ParticipACTION as part of its plans to create a healthier nation and foster a sense of togetherness. ParticipACTION was created as an arm's length

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[216] Tandemar Research, MG 291, box 9, 1994, ParticipACTION fonds, University of Saskatchewan, University Archives & Special Collections.

[217] Crown Life ParticipACTION Challenge, MG 291, box 3, 1992, ParticipACTION fonds, University of Saskatchewan, University Archives & Special Collections.

[218] Adrian Bauman, Judith Madill, Cora Lynn Craig, and Art Salmon, "ParticipACTION: This Mouse Roared, But Did It Get the Cheese?", S19.

organization that depended on federal funding to remain operational. For nearly three decades, from 1971 through 2000, their objectives remained the same, even though there were disagreements over what constituted sufficient funding. Therefore, ParticipACTION had to be flexible in its dealings with corporate sponsors who provided additional support. In its heyday, ParticipACTION was one of the largest public advertising agencies in Canada. It successfully created advertisements that made more Canadians aware of fitness activities they could do alone or with family in their community. The marketing tactics ranged from educating the public about the benefits of fitness to shaming Canadians for not being as fit as they might expect. One's motivation to participate certainly included improving one's health, but ParticipACTION made sure that Canadians could use fitness as a social event. Canadians could get physically active on their own, but ParticipACTION provided several occasions to do it with other members of their local community. ParticipACTION also tried to conjure national pride through their fitness challenges that pitted their community against another in Canada or Europe. These clashes were common in sport, but ParticipACTION allowed ordinary Canadians to experience a similar rivalry. After several years of national advertising campaigns and successful community events in Saskatoon, ParticipACTION expanded its offerings with corporate sponsors to organize local competitions with municipalities across Canada.

With sustained participation in sport, the federal government could focus on strengthening its national sport system achieve high performance and foster national unity. Achieving both a healthy populace and a world-renowned sport system began in the early 1970s with the creation of ParticipACTION. Protecting the future of a healthy population could be sustained through participation in recreational sport and physical fitness as part of uniting

Canada. A parallel federal objective was to improve the health of Canadians through mass participation in fitness, also to build civic, regional, provincial, and national comradery.

By the end of the 1980s, ParticipACTION had become a mainstay in fitness promotion across Canada and would become involved in a variety of ways. It had organized numerous promotions, community events, and proactive media campaigns, and had opened one hundred ParticiParks with its corporate partners.[219] ParticipACTION gained public acceptance because its messages did not scare or inundate the public with scientific theories.

ParticipACTION's mandate was to advertise the benefits of fitness for Canadians, young and old. Its structure as an arm's length national organization benefitted federal budgets because ParticipACTION was tasked with doing more with less money. ParticipACTION's creation and negotiation for access to federal funds existed within the context of a growing budget focused on high-performance international sports expected to bring gold medals back to Canada. For three decades, ParticipACTION developed creative public service announcements and community events to get Canadians moving in simple ways, such as walking, running, swimming, or biking. The location of these activities did not matter to ParticipACTION: Canadians were encouraged to get physically active in the workplace, school, home, park, or public transit. ParticipACTION's logo and message became widely recognizable across Canada, with millions leaving their homes to participate in community fitness events.

Through federal policies, politicians tried to incorporate fitness into Canada's national identity alongside sport. However, they ended up prioritizing sports funding and goals over fitness. It was hoped that national unity could grow from shared experiences participating in

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[219] Edwards, "No Country Mouse: Thirty Years of Effective Marketing and Health Communications," S9.

similar fitness and sports activities, plus cheering on the country's top high-performance athletes. Federal support would dwindle in the 1990s as objectives favoured high-performance sport. By the early 1990s, the federal government's priorities shifted away from fitness, marking ParticipACTION's declining influence until it shut down at the end of the century.

ParticipACTION officially ceased its operations in 2001 after federal funding disappeared. This development coincided with wider federal restructuring at the turn of the twenty-first century. Canadian policy and funding prioritized high-performance sport, as evidenced by the federal government's guaranteeing millions of dollars to Vancouver and Whistler's bid to host the 2010 Winter Olympics.[220] In 2007, six years after the organization closed its doors, a survey assessed how many Canadians remembered ParticipACTION and its usefulness. From the 4,424 respondents, 78 percent could – when prompted – remember ParticipACTION. Approximately three-quarters of those adults believed ParticipACTION's message was useful.[221] ParticipACTION's place in the nation's consciousness was declining while more than half of Canadian adults were not exercising regularly, and nearly a third of youth between the ages of 12 and 17 were overweight. A direct correlation between ParticipACTION and Canada's fitness level was not definitive.

Nevertheless, there was measured growth in the popularity of physical activities during ParticipACTION's lifetime, followed by a subsequent decline since it closed. This may explain why, in 2007, the Public Health Agency of Canada announced it was reinvesting in the health

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[220] Vancouver Organizing Committee for the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games, *Vancouver 2010: Bid Report* (November 2009), 19.

[221] John C.Spence, Lawrence R. Brawley, Cora Craig, Ronald C. Plotnikoff, Mark S. Tremblay, Adrian Bauman, Guy Ej Faulkner, Karen Chad, and Marianne I. Clark. "ParticipACTION: Awareness of the ParticipACTION Campaign Among Canadian Adults - Examining the Knowledge Gap Hypothesis and a Hierarchy-of-Effects Model." *International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity* 6, no. 1 (December 9, 2009): 87.

promotion organization.[222] However, as the following chapters will demonstrate, the federal government's goals for ParticipACTION and mass participation remained secondary to the success of high-performance sport in achieving federal public and cultural diplomacy objectives.

[222] "ParticipACTION Reborn." *Prince George Free Press*. August 29, 2006.

## Chapter 3: Soft Power and Diplomacy at the 1988 Calgary Winter Olympic Games

Canada's northern climate fostered a tradition of winter sporting culture, eventually showcased on the world stage when Calgary hosted the 1988 Winter Olympic Games. The federal government grasped the importance of sport's cultural influence in the second half of the twentieth century. When it came to sport, federal officials viewed their country's athletes as international ambassadors who embodied their national culture. Just as Canadians of every age and ability were encouraged to get moving through ParticipACTION's fitness programs, Ottawa wanted Canadians from across the country to celebrate and participate in the Calgary Games. Olympic- and ParticipACTION-themed nationwide events drew Canadians out of their homes to endure cold temperatures and get active. Canadians were encouraged to participate in various ways and dream about standing on the podium. Organizers hoped international competitions between high-performance athletes would inspire healthy lifestyle practices amongst all Canadians. The Winter Olympics were a sporting event and a political tool used to strengthen the national Canadian culture. Politicians argued that fitness levels and athletic performances at the Olympics could gauge a country's vitality and vigour. The presence of a national fitness and sport system – introduced in the previous chapter – made it possible for Canada to host the world's most prominent winter sporting spectacle. The young Canadian athletes who competed at the XV Olympic Winter Games in 1988 developed their skills within a new, rationalized modern sport system that ranged from youth recreational activities to the national senior teams.

As outlined in the previous chapter, the federal government's increased investment in developing sports facilities and high-performance athletes in the 1980s was a testament to its commitment to sports and to the potential of sport to shape Canada's cultural reputation. The federal government leveraged athletic success to shape a national sporting culture – what Joseph

S. Nye terms "soft power." Nations deployed soft power to gain international prestige by displaying intangible assets such as culture, political values, institutions, and policies.[223] As discussed previously, such instances of international influence were examples of cultural diplomacy. Domestically – i.e., within the nation itself – individuals could also experience the effects of soft power. This domestic form of soft power can be characterized as public diplomacy. It refers to the influence of governing authorities upon a domestic population, encouraging them to come together in celebration of the nation. Examples included harnessing a country's intangible assets through broadcasting, subsidizing cultural production, and arranging cultural exchanges.[224] The Canadian government viewed involvement in the Calgary Winter Olympic Games as a valuable opportunity to use soft power both domestically and internationally. Hosting the Winter Olympics in 1988 was a culmination of years of federal planning, a moment that filled Canadians with pride as they presented their best athletes to the world. It was a unique occasion for the country to come together in celebration, fostering a sense of national unity. The Olympics enabled Canada to express its prowess as an international leader in winter sports.

Canadians have a long history of playing sports at a recreational level and competing in the modern Olympics. This chapter argues that high-performance sport at the Calgary Winter Olympic Games became a valuable element in defining Canada's cultural reputation to domestic and international audiences in the second half of the twentieth century. The Canadian government utilized soft power throughout the bidding, planning, and implementation stages of the Calgary Olympics, aiming to enhance international prestige and national unity. The

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[223] Joseph S. Nye, "Public Diplomacy and Soft Power," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*616 (2008): 95.
[224] *Ibid*., 101.

Canadian government supported the Calgary Olympics because politicians believed in the event's potential to improve Canada's position abroad through cultural diplomacy and to foster national pride domestically through public diplomacy. However, in the effort to present clear messages about what forms of Canada should be remembered or celebrated, cracks in the nation's image surfaced. Despite some nationally significant moments during the Games, there were flashes of division within Canada.

## Bidding to Host the XV Winter Olympiad

Plans for Calgary to host the most prominent winter sporting spectacle began a decade before the lighting of the Olympic cauldron in McMahon Stadium. In 1978, Members of Calgary's Booster's Club and former Canadian Olympians began assessing the city's potential to host the Winter Games. Since 1952, the Calgary Booster Club had been supporting the city's athletic potential. The city's greatest achievement would be hosting the Olympic Games. Businessmen Frank King, Bob Niven, Bill Nield, Fred Wuotila, alongside former Olympic rower Roger Jackson, and former Olympic ice hockey player Jack Wilson, took the lead in bringing the Winter Olympics to Calgary. They knew that after three previous bids failed decades earlier, Calgary needed more decisive leadership and planning. Frank King published a memoir reflecting on his time as a leader of the bidding and hosting committees. This memoir has provided scholars with insight into the challenges and successes of bidding for and hosting the 1988 Winter Olympics in Calgary. For King, this was an underdog story of a small western city becoming the first in Canada to host the Winter Olympics. The construction of world-class winter sports facilities sat at the top of booster's priority list, followed by the issue of who would cover the costs. Fourteen other Canadian cities had newer and larger ice rinks than Calgary's

thirty-year-old Stampede Corral. Canada was ranked third in the world in speed skating despite lacking an indoor refrigerated track for athletes to train. Accordingly, the need for an uninterrupted training schedule forced some of Canada's best athletes to travel abroad. In 1982, Frank King and Bob Niven soon realized that while a lack of facilities was a reason the bid could fail, it was also an opportunity to build the "Best Ever" Olympic Games from the ground up with state-of-the-art facilities. They were working on a blank canvas rather than being concerned with using the kind of older facilities that burdened European bid organizers.[225]

Cooperation between different levels of government and Calgary's boosters, who organized the bid, was essential. Federal officials and the Calgary Olympic Development Association [CODA] recognized the need to learn from the 1976 Montréal Summer Olympics. Montréal Mayor Jean Drapeau pursued his grand vision of Montréal as one of the world's most economically and culturally dynamic cities. Despite not receiving the same level of federal government support as Vancouver's bid for the 1976 Winter Olympics, Drapeau proceeded with his Summer Olympic project. Federal politicians and sport administrators believed hosting the Winter Olympic Games in Canada was a more feasible first attempt to host the mega-event. However, Drapeau wanted to sustain the momentum after years of societal reforms by using the Olympics to assert Québec's prestige internationally and to enhance the provincial legislature's authority within Canada.[226]

In the 1960s, the province of Québec underwent its own nationalistic reforms, in what became known as the Quiet Revolution. The Quiet Revolution was a nationalistic movement to

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[225] Frank W. King, *It's How You Play the Game: The Inside Story of the Calgary Olympics* (Calgary: Script, the Writers' Group, 1991), 10-11.

[226] Bruce Kidd, "The Culture Wars of the Montréal Olympics," *Sport in Society* 16, no. 4 (2013): 474.

reinforce Québec's distinct national identity within Canada through societal reforms in education, the economy, language, and welfare.[227] The Québec government assumed greater authority over areas it deemed to be nationally significant. For example, the provincial government took control of the education system away from the Catholic Church in Québec. It reformed educational priorities towards progressive pedagogy and had schools offering more academic subjects beyond religious studies for the twentieth century, such as business, mathematics, and science. The nationalization and development of hydroelectric power plants enabled Québec to achieve energy self-sufficiency. The distribution of public capital to support Québec businesses, known as "Québec Inc.," safeguarded the province's economic independence. All of these features had been on display at Expo '67 [a world's fair hosted by Montréal in the summer of 1967], reinforcing Québec's uniqueness within Canada.[228] Following the renowned success of Expo '67, Montréal Mayor Jean Drapeau brought the world back to Montreal in 1976 for the Summer Olympics.

Despite Drapeau's grand plan for the Montréal Olympic Games, the total cost rose to more than $2 billion and left the city with a debt that lasted for the next thirty years, making it widely recognized as a financial disaster.[229] Frank King recalled that the goal for his team would be to avoid the mistakes made in Montréal. He stated, "We will use the strength of the people in our community to avoid the problems of Montréal. We will ask people to give much, not to take from the project." King said that government involvement would not expand beyond financing

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[227] Ramsay Cook, *Canada, Québec, and the Uses of Nationalism* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1995), 135.
[228] David Whitson, "Bringing the World to Canada: 'The Periphery of the Centre'," *Third World Quarterly* 25, no. 7 (2004): 1219-1220.
[229] *Ibid*., 1224.

construction projects.[230] After the success of the 1967 World's Fair and the financial troubles of the Montréal Olympics, the Canadian government recognized the need to balance its support between French and English Canada.[231] Federal politicians also tried to assert greater operational control beyond financially supporting the Calgary Games. Successive Ministers of State for Fitness and Amateur Sport understood what this could mean to millions of Canadians beyond Calgary. A successful Olympics could have lasting social, cultural, and economic benefits for Canadians. The federal government and Calgary's bid committee had grand expectations for the winter sporting spectacle and ideas about their particular role in preparing for the event.

Calgary's civic boosters knew that they needed a financial commitment from all levels of government to be taken seriously. Promises from the federal government forced the Alberta and Calgary governments to carefully consider the proposed bid. In January 1979, King became chairman of CODA's board of directors, and Bob Niven became the president. Just as it had done with its first three bids, the association became the organizing body behind the Olympic bid. In the February press conference announcing the bid, King recalls speaking beyond the immediate financial and cultural benefits of hosting the Games. His goal was to make Calgarians excited about the positive legacy of an effectively organized event.[232] Having legacy plans would help secure public support and make Calgary's bid stand out among other contenders.

Capitalizing on Canada's lead on the medal table at the 1978 Commonwealth Games in Edmonton, Frank King and Roger Jackson met with Iona Campagnolo, the federal Minister of

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[230] King, *It's How You Play the Game*, 16-17.
[231] Whitson, "Bringing the World to Canada: 'The Periphery of the Centre'," 1225.
[232] King, *It's How You Play the Game*, 16-17.

State for Fitness and Amateur Sport. As a former director of Sport Canada, Jackson had established a working relationship with Campagnolo. Based on the costs for the previous Olympics in Innsbruck and Grenoble, as well as the upcoming Games in Lake Placid, King and Jackson believed they would need at least $200 million for the Calgary Games. They intended to apply lessons from the 1976 Montréal Games, particularly by remaining fiscally responsible. At the time, they hoped to receive funding from Canada's national lottery program, which the federal government had created to pay off debt from the 1976 Montréal Olympics and fund the 1978 Commonwealth Games. Campagnolo recognized the benefits of hosting the Olympics and quickly approved the proposal, declaring, "You can do it, you must do it, and I will support you all the way."[233] Even after Campagnolo lost her seat in the 1980 federal election, she joined CODA's leadership. The $200 million promise would serve as a decisive core of the relationship between CODA and the federal government for the next decade. Challenges soon arose, however, when Loto Canada was discontinued because of a jurisdictional dispute with the provinces. Internal figures prepared by the federal Fitness and Amateur Sport Branch in 1981 showed that Loto Canada revenues helped offset expenditures for major sports events such as the 1978 Commonwealth Games. Thus, it became unclear from what source the federal funds promised to the Calgary organizers would originate, since the source was no longer available.[234] An agreement on federal financial assistance was crucial for future support from other levels of government, and for IOC members voting to approve Calgary's bid.

Successive Federal Ministers of State for Fitness and Amateur Sport recognized the potential of the international sports event to boost Canada's cultural, economic, and national

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[233] King, *It's How You Play the Game*, 14.
[234] Gerald A. Regan, *A Challenge to the Nation: Fitness and Amateur Sport in the 80s* (Ottawa: Ministry of Fitness and Amateur Sport, 1981), 26.

prestige. However, the federal sport ministers and CODA did not see eye to eye on several issues, including the state's role in organizing the games. While CODA sought financial support from the federal government, a report by the Office for the 1988 Olympic Winter Games described Ottawa's intention to be an active partner in hosting the Games.[235] Ottawa viewed the mega event as an opportunity to deploy soft power by highlighting Canada's values and cultural accomplishments, especially in sport. It was not just foreign governments that could be persuaded. Cultural diplomacy also had the potential to shape perceptions of a country among future tourists, investors, and citizens worldwide.[236] A country's national image was not what it claimed to be, but how others perceived it. One way to influence this perception was through cultural achievements.[237] For generations, Canadian culture has had a strong connection with hockey. However, the growth of the Olympics worldwide allowed Canadians to showcase their athletic talents in various winter sports.[238] Between the early 1960s, with the initial federal involvement in high-performance sports, and the end of the 1980s, with the Calgary Olympics, Canadians began to regain a sense of confidence that had waned since the Second World War. Québec separatist campaigns, regional divisions, and economic uncertainty led the federal government to seek opportunities to bring Canadians together in positive ways. Canadians were proud to display their technological, economic, and cultural competitiveness at international events such as the Olympic Games. After hosting an international exposition and the Summer

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[235] Office for the 1988 Olympic Winter Games, *The 1988 Calgary Olympic Winter Games: Report on the Participation of the Government of Canada* (Ottawa: Government of Canada, Minister of State for Fitness and Amateur Sport, 1988), 5.

[236] Joseph S. Nye, "Public Diplomacy and Soft Power," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 616 (2008): 95.

[237] Evan H. Potter, *Branding Canada: Projecting Canada's Soft Power Through Public Diplomacy* (McGill-Queen's University Press, 2009), 34.

[238] *Ibid*., 122.

Olympics in Montréal, highlighting that city's vibrancy, it was time for Calgary to receive international attention.

The Calgary Olympic Development Association's leadership recognized the opportunity to position their municipality as a world-class Canadian city. A successful bid and the organization of the Games could propel Calgary from a peripheral city to a national leader in Canada. Hosting the Olympics provided the opportunity to showcase the city's cultural, economic, and technological accomplishments. David Whitson, a political scientist, and Canadian studies scholar, suggests that discourses touting Calgary's identity, competitiveness, and drive for excellence were directed to locals as much as to foreign visitors and external audiences, even before the city won the Olympic bid. The Premier of Alberta, Peter Lougheed, believed that a significant legacy of the Olympics would be to provide Albertans with the self-confidence needed to excel on the world stage in fields beyond sport.[239] This self-confidence would result from successful public diplomacy initiatives. Although the Olympics might initially be perceived as merely an occasion to showcase the city, residents would be encouraged to reconsider their relationship with the rest of the country and the wider world. Supporters of the Olympics in Calgary imagined it as a transformative experience for the city's future.[240]

Calgary's Olympic Development Association set its bid apart from previous Games at the outset by promising to focus on a legacy for future athletes, officials, coaches, and spectators. By September 1979, the bid committee received support from all three levels of government and made its pitch to the Canadian Olympic Association [COA]. Under IOC regulations, a country may submit only one bid to host an Olympic Games. Accordingly, the Canadian Olympic

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[239] Whitson, "Bringing the World to Canada: 'The Periphery of the Centre'," 1221.
[240] *Ibid*., 1223.

Association had to choose between Calgary and Vancouver's bid. With plans to build so many new sports facilities, CODA focused its selling points on arguing that it was creating a Games legacy that would live beyond the three-week event. They wanted to sell the Games as a benefit for all Canadians by constructing state-of-the-art facilities accessible to everyone as recreational and cultural centres. Achieving this would involve creating a sports development fund to cover the facility maintenance and the training of young Canadian athletes. The plans also revealed a hope of trickle-down interest, with the facilities potentially becoming tourist attractions and inspiring a love of sport among the general public.[241] An Olympic development fund worth $5 million remained the highlight of their plans to establish a legacy for the Calgary games. For the first time in Olympic history, a prospective host promised to allocate funds to help aspiring athletes overcome financial barriers to compete as part of its bid. "The Calgary Winter Games will produce a long-term benefit for all athletes," CODA's proposal promised, "all Canadians, and the Olympic movement." After earning COA's endorsement as Canada's bid in October 1979, the process to make Calgary "the best Games ever" was underway.[242] With the federal government's assistance, Calgary Olympic Development Association representatives began travelling the world to sell their city and country to IOC voters.

As mentioned previously, the federal government provided support in several ways throughout the bidding process. Federal departments provided valuable assistance and legitimacy to CODA's lobbying efforts. They included financial assistance, embassies coordinating travel and meeting arrangements with diplomatic contacts, and Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau agreeing to meet IOC President Juan Antonio Samaranch personally. The

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[241] King, *It's How You Play the Game*, 27.
[242] *Ibid*., 30-31.

Department of External Affairs assisted CODA by arranging meetings with IOC members and foreign diplomats.[243] Canada began experimenting with cultural diplomacy through sport during negotiations for a Canada Cup hockey series with the Soviet Union following the successful Summit Series in 1972. A part-time officer coordinated foreign sport exchange agreements between the Department of External Affairs and Sport Canada. From 1974 onwards, the responsibility of managing this fell to the full-time permanent posting at the International Sport Relations desk within External Affairs, which Eric Morse occupied for the first twelve years.[244] He facilitated communications between Canadian officials and foreign diplomats regarding sport matters. Thus, the federal government had the capacity to effectively assist CODA with its lobbying efforts.

Calgary Olympic Development Association delegates met with IOC members in Singapore, Indonesia, South Korea, Thailand, Malaysia, Hong Kong, and Japan for ten days.[245] They began lobbying for IOC votes around the world as soon as they received COA's approval. Iona Campagnolo and Roger Jackson focused on IOC members in Africa. Board members Bill Warren and Jack Wilson were assigned to Western European IOC members. Steve Corbett, CODA's General Manager, lobbied South American IOC members. Bob Niven, CODA's President, devoted his attention to the Middle East, India, Pakistan, and European countries along the Mediterranean. Calgary Olympic Development Association Chairman Frank King's task was to lobby one of the most challenging voting groups in the Soviet bloc, especially since Canada announced its boycott of the 1980 Moscow Olympic Games.[246]

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[243] King, *It's How You Play the Game*, 67.
[244] Donald Macintosh, and Michael K. Hawes, *Sport and Canadian Diplomacy* (Montréal: McGill-Queens University Press, 1994), 182.
[245] King, *It's How You Play the Game*, 67.
[246] *Ibid*., 71.

The Soviet government regarded the boycott as a means of severing its sporting ties with Canada. On three separate occasions, the Soviet Union's president of the national Olympic committee and sports minister failed to attend the meetings arranged with King.[247] The Canadian Minister of Amateur Sport, Gerald Regan, was invited to Moscow in the spring of 1981 on the condition that he would not discuss Calgary's bid with Sergei Pavlov. Despite the Soviet diplomat claiming that the decision was objective, the USSR supported the bid from Falun, Sweden. Regan learned that even though the Soviet Union had expressed "no feeling of vengeance" for Canada's boycott a year earlier, the resulting diplomatic distance between the two countries guided the decision.[248] Regan used the occasion to try to repair Canada's bilateral relations with the Soviet Union. Citizens in both the Soviet Union and Canada were apprehensive about their governments' plans to build bridges. However, the two sports ministers tried looking to the future by scheduling cultural exchanges, including athletic competitions. Canada and the Soviet Union took noteworthy steps to normalize diplomatic relations by negotiating popular sports competitions. The Red Army hockey team would travel to Canada in September to compete in the 1981 Canada Cup tournament. Assurances were given that international relations between Canada and the Soviet Union would not be further damaged if Calgary earned the right to host the Olympics.[249]

A separate CODA delegation toured Africa, meeting with IOC members in Cameroon, Senegal, Kenya, Mali, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Tunisia, and Sudan. The Calgary Olympic

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[247] King, *It's How You Play the Game*, 89-90.

[248] Correspondence from Canadian Embassy in Moscow to Department of External Affairs, 31 March 1981, RG25-A-3-c, Vol. 11241, File Part 4, Government of Canada, Library and Archives of Canada.

[249] Department of External Affairs Report, 17 June 1981, RG25-A-3-c, Vol. 11241, File Part 4, Government of Canada, Library and Archives of Canada.

Development Association's leadership knew that each of the eighty-four IOC votes mattered, and they went as far as to present their ideas to countries with little winter sports experience.[250] Canada's Minister of Fitness and Amateur Sport, Gerald Regan, travelled to Caracas, Venezuela, to assist in giving a presentation to the Pan American Sports Organization. Regan joined the presenting group, which included King, Corbett, and COA President and Canadian IOC member Dick Pound.[251] IOC President Samaranch and Canada's Prime Minister Trudeau further fueled CODA's hopes by meeting each other. This meeting was significant because Canada had been involved in a diplomatic scandal since 1976, when it refused to accredit Taiwanese athletes. Juan Antonio Samaranch wanted a guarantee from the Prime Minister that all eligible athletes would be permitted to enter Canada.[252] With such an assurance from Trudeau, Samaranch was satisfied that CODA's bid could proceed to the final vote.

The 1981 Olympic Congress in Baden-Baden, West Germany, remained the final hurdle to being awarded the honour of hosting the XV Winter Olympiad. Aside from creating public displays and in-person presentations, much of the groundwork leading up to the Baden-Baden vote had been completed. The public displays may not have influenced IOC members who had previously met with the organizing committees or read the bid books; however, they created quite a spectacle for media attendees. King admitted that CODA's display was relatively modest compared to those prepared for Cortina, Italy and Falun, Sweden. The difference remained in the people who added to the display's appeal. In addition to the fifty-person CODA delegation dressed in "dignified western" attire – grey slacks, navy-stripped ties, white shirts and a blue

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[250] Telex from Sport Canada to Department of External Affairs, 9 April 1981, RG25-A-3-c, Vol. 11241, File Part 4, Government of Canada, Library and Archives of Canada.
[251] King, *It's How You Play the Game*, 69.
[252] *Ibid*., 61.

sports jacket – two members of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police wore their Red Serge uniform, an Indigenous chief, Lambert Fox and his wife, Yvonne, from southern Alberta, wore their regalia; also attending were the Canadian Brass and Gary Buck Calgary Western Band.[253] Rather than spending money on an artistic display, CODA figured they could convey their Western Canadian style with physical representation.

By September 30, 1981, CODA representatives had been busy promoting their vision domestically while meeting with nearly all eighty-three IOC members around the world. After three years of fundraising, CODA raised a total of $415 million, with $200 million from the Canadian government, $70 million from the Alberta government, $25 million from the Calgary government, and $120 million from sponsorships and promotional sales.[254] When CODA made its final presentation to IOC members, it achieved the rare distinction of being endorsed by all six winter sports federations (hockey, luge, biathlon, skating, skiing, and bobsleigh).[255] At 3:57 p.m., after two rounds of voting on September 30, 1981, Juan Antonio Samaranch announced the winner was "la Ville de – Calgary."[256] CODA successfully sold its vision to policymakers at all levels of government and to the IOC. The next step would be to make it a reality for everyone to enjoy. With the financial support of three levels of government, Calgary won the bid to host the Olympics, embarking on a project that could potentially unite Canada through sport. Hosting the Olympic Games was an ideal national endeavour for a federalist like Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau, who was trying to foster national unity through international events. However, it had to come at the right price.

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[253] King, *It's How You Play the Game*, 84-85.
[254] *Ibid*., 79.
[255] *Ibid*., 73.
[256] *Ibid*., 102.

Funding the XV Olympiad

The dilemma of who would cover the extensive costs of hosting an Olympics remained a concern, as the debt from the 1976 Montréal Games was scheduled to linger on the city and province's books for years to come. Organizers of the newly formed organizing committee, Olympiques Calgary Olympics '88 [OCO'88], knew they needed much more than public funds to ease their concerns. This was especially true in the first half of the 1980s, when the Canadian economy weakened amid a worldwide recession. After prosperous years of oil production, Alberta felt the most dramatic changes. Prime Minister Pierre Elliot Trudeau's National Energy Policy, which taxed Alberta's oil revenues to fund national programs and support poorer provinces, created economic instability in the country's largest oil-producing province.[257] The flow of money from west to east further exacerbated regional divisions in Canada as Calgary prepared to host the XV Winter Olympiad in 1988.

One way to reach the funding target for OCO'88 was a lucratively exclusive television deal with an American broadcaster. The Olympics became the most extravagant international television event every four years, attracting 1.5 billion viewers. Since the 1960 Squaw Valley Games in California, Olympic television rights had grown substantially from the USD 50,000 sale. A decade later, USD 5.4 million was paid to cover the 1972 Sapporo Games and grew again to USD 91.5 million for the 1984 Sarajevo Games. The absence of North American-hosted Olympics increased OCO'88's expectations to generate at least USD 200 million for the television rights for Calgary's Games.[258] The Olympic television rights were valuable because

[257] Gayle Thrift, "'The Blue-Eyed Sheik of Saudi Alberta': Peter Lougheed, Oil Shocks, and The National Energy Policy of 1980," *Alberta History* 64, no. 4 (2016): 13.
[258] King, *It's How You Play the Game*, 125.

the broadcaster remained the only agency airing Olympic coverage in their country. Advertisers were eager to invest significant funds in promoting their products during the broadcast. The Calgary Olympic Development Association budgeted the television revenue to cover approximately two-thirds of the Olympic costs. Canadian Television Network (CTV) paid CAD 4.5 million to be the official broadcaster of the Calgary Olympics and Canada's national rights holder. Negotiations for exclusive American television rights, on the other hand, were more intense. It took eleven hours of negotiation between three of America's largest private broadcasters (ABC, CBS, and NBC) and OCO '88 to reach a winning bid of USD 309 million (CAD 386 million) placed by ABC.[259] A 30-second commercial slot during the Calgary Games ranged between CAD 18,500 and CAD 250,000.[260] Possibly because of the high expectations and excitement generated by OCO'88, the Calgary Games felt different, and television broadcasters were willing to invest in its coverage.

The extended schedule of Olympic events in Calgary offered a great deal to the television audience, stretching from twelve to sixteen days and including a third weekend for primetime viewership. The Calgary Games also offered three demonstration sports (curling, freestyle skiing, and short track speedskating), making their Olympic debuts, which could have attracted new fans.[261] Olympic coverage grew from sixty-three hours to over one hundred hours in Calgary, along with new perspectives to provide a more comprehensive experience for the home viewers. Canadians could watch fifteen hours per day of the Calgary Olympics with CTV's regular coverage, ABC's American primetime coverage, as well as The Sports Network's [TSN]

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[259] King, *It's How You Play the Game*, 139.
[260] Tony Atherton, "Television Coverage Will Emphasize Olympic Sounds; Countdown to Calgary," *Montréal Gazette*, 9 February 1988.
[261] King, *It's How You Play the Game*, 128.

recaps and wrap-up interviews each morning. Installing state-of-the-art audio receiving equipment at each venue would pick up skis carving the snow and a coach's final instructions. Television broadcasters wanted to make their audience feel that they saw and heard the same, if not more, than a patron attending in person.[262] Calgary Olympic organizers considered the television spectator experience, leveraging technological advancements in broadcasting to unite people around sport.

After successful negotiations over television broadcasting, the federal government sought to renegotiate its initial investment. Since they could not rely on revenue from Loto Canada Inc., they had few options to raise $200 million from non-tax sources. On January 19, 1984, the federal cabinet reviewed the government's support of hosting the XV Winter Olympiad. The cabinet agreed that the Minister of State for Fitness and Amateur Sports should remain committed to the organizing committee to achieve federal objectives. The cabinet reasserted its desire to achieve maximum visibility for its contribution to the Games' success, thereby enhancing national pride and advancing the athletic, cultural, and economic benefits for Canada.[263]

In a March 1984 press release, two Canadian senators discussed the significance of successfully organizing an international event such as the Olympics. Senator Horace Andrew Olson from Alberta declared that the Calgary Games were nationally significant because the world would witness Calgary, Alberta, and Canada's ability to serve as host. Pride at the local, regional, and national levels could grow from the Games' successes. Senator Ray Perrault, who

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[262] Tony Atherton, "Television Coverage Will Emphasize Olympic Sounds; Countdown to Calgary," *The Gazette*, 9 February 1988.

[263] Record of Cabinet Decision – 1988 Calgary Olympic Winter Games – Review of Federal Participation, January 19, 1984, RG131, Box 32, Government of Canada, Library and Archives of Canada.

had been the Minister of State for Fitness and Amateur Sport a year earlier, confirmed that the Games were a valuable opportunity to attract international attention to Canada's prominent athletic, cultural, and economic achievements.[264] Investing in Canada's athletes would be pivotal to demonstrating the country's image as a winter sporting nation.

Another example of state intervention in sports was the federal government's creation of an athletic development fund for Canadian winter high-performance athletes. In 1983, the federal government unveiled the "Best Ever '88" Olympic funding program focused on investing in high-performance athletes training for the Calgary Games. Akin to the Game Plan '76 program for summer athletes ahead of the Montréal Games, the $25 million package covered training costs, coaches, sports science, and travel expenses.[265] Before that point, officials had only an annual federal government allocation of $2.9 million to develop Winter Olympic athletes. As the Olympics got underway, *The Globe and Mail* published a promotional magazine that reported how the Calgary Winter Games would be different. In the five years leading up to the Calgary Games, the federal government invested $5 million annually in high-calibre training, coaches, and equipment to bring out an athlete's best. Canada had competed in the previous fourteen Winter Games, winning thirty-four medals for an average of 2.7 medals per Olympics. Canadian sports officials knew they had a considerable distance to cover to establish themselves as one of the premier winter sports nations globally, given that Norway averaged 11.4, Finland 7.2, Austria 5.9, and Sweden 5.7 medals per Olympics.[266]

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[264] News Release – Federal Grant to Calgary Olympic Winter Games, March 3, 1984, RG131, Box 32, Government of Canada, Library and Archives of Canada.
[265] King, *It's How You Play the Game*, 148.
[266] *The Globe and Mail Guide to Calgary '88*, 16.

Budgets grew for every Canadian sports association, sending athletes to Calgary with the expectation that Team Canada would be more competitive than in the past. Annual government funding for the bobsleigh and luge programs, in particular, grew from $40,000 in 1980 to $838,000 by 1988. For the first time in their careers, athletes received premium instruction from foreign-born coaches and travelled to more competitions to prepare for the Olympics.[267] The ten national sport governing bodies overseeing winter sport disciplines were expected to invest in professional coaches, professional development sessions for coaches, training centres, attending and hosting international competitions, medical monitoring and sports science research to measure athlete performance, and direct financial assistance for athletes.[268] Not only did Canadians want to be recognized as international champions by winning a gold medal, but they also wanted to avoid the dubious distinction of failing to win at home in both the Summer and Winter Games. The program's success relied on results rather than solely on the number of athletes competing at the Olympics. Politicians believed there may have been a correlation between international excellence and interest in sports. It increased expectations and pressures for Canadian athletes to win the first gold medal on home soil while solidifying federal investment in high-performance athletes pursuing excellence.

On March 30, 1984, OCO'88 reached a federal Olympic funding agreement with then-Minister of State for Fitness and Amateur Sport Jacques Olivier. In addition to the federal government funding OCO'88, $200 million was indexed to 1982 dollars to assist with construction, immigration, security, customs, and international relations.[269] The federal

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[267] *The Globe and Mail Guide to Calgary '88*, 17-18.
[268] 1988 Olympics – "Best Ever", 1984, RG131, Box 32, Government of Canada, Library and Archives of Canada.
[269] King, *It's How You Play the Game*, 167.

government allocated $155 million (1982 CAD) to fund the preparatory stages of the Olympic Games, with $62.2 million for Canada Olympic Park, $35 million for the construction of the Olympic Speedskating Oval, $30 million for an Olympic Endowment Fund, and $27.8 million for the Olympic Saddledome. The difference in funds for constructing the Olympic Park or Speedskating Oval would be added to the Olympic Endowment Fund if they were completed under budget. Organizers planned to devote the remaining $45 million to other aspects of organizing and running the Games, including covering budget overruns and operational expenses. Under the Umbrella Agreement, the Canadian government acknowledged the national significance of hosting the Olympics as an occasion to generate national pride and international prestige.[270] Ottawa also established an Olympic Secretariat to assist with immediate concerns before and during the Games.[271] The federal government cherished the opportunity presented by the Olympics to foster national unity in 1988 and beyond.

The federal government managed to raise its $200 million financial contribution from non-tax revenue. In 1985, Otto Jelinek, Minister of State for Fitness and Amateur Sport and a former world champion pairs figure skater, persuaded the provinces to contribute $100 million from provincial lottery commissions in return for the federal withdrawal from the business. The Royal Canadian Mint raised approximately $40 million by selling Olympic stamps and a Maple Leaf gold coin across North America, Europe, Asia, and Australia. National Olympic Committees around the world benefited from receiving 3 percent of the coin's revenue in countries where it was sold. With less than a year until the opening ceremony, OCO '88 reached

[270] Umbrella Agreement, March 30, 1984, RG131, Box 32, Government of Canada, Library and Archives of Canada.

[271] "Government Involvement – OCO'88's Partners," in *Hosting Manual, Calgary '88* (Calgary: XV Winter Olympic Games Organizing Committee, 1988), 23.

an agreement with the Royal Canadian Mint that the seigniorage from a new dollar coin minted for circulation would cover the remaining balance of the federal government's $200 million commitment.[272] The federal government continued the momentum by assuming responsibility for major Olympic-related construction projects.

Federal funding went towards the vital construction of state-of-the-art Olympic venues. The measured results of its involvement allowed the federal government to receive valued public recognition.[273] A Department of External Affairs document following the Sarajevo Olympics outlined some noteworthy projects the federal government was funding for the Calgary Olympics. Competition, training, and housing facilities were intended to serve Olympic personnel during the Games as well as future generations of athletes, coaches, and officials. Dormitories at the University of Calgary and in Canmore were to be used as the Olympic Village to house athletes, coaches, trainers, and support staff. The seating capacity of McMahon Stadium, the outdoor venue for the opening and closing ceremonies, would be increased from 36,000 to 50,000. Calgary was to be the first Winter Olympic host to hold the opening and closing ceremonies outdoors. The Saddledome became one of the most iconic venues for the Calgary Olympic Games. Designed along the western theme of the event as a horse's saddle, the 20,000-seat arena would be the stage for figure skating and ice hockey.[274] To build the Saddledome, the Canadian government contributed $27.8 million (1983 CAD) toward the costs, with OCO'88, the City of Calgary, and the province of Alberta covering the rest.[275] The federal

[272] Office for the 1988 Olympic Winter Games, *The 1988 Calgary Olympic Winter Games*, 13-14.
[273] King, *It's How You Play the Game*, 149.
[274] Department of External Affairs, *Canada at the Olympics, 1984* (Ottawa, Canada, 1985), 7.
[275] Office for the 1988 Olympic Winter Games, *The 1988 Calgary Olympic Winter Games*, 23.

government provided financial assistance to construct these venues and took responsibility for two others.

The Canadian government oversaw the construction of the Olympic Oval and Canada Olympic Park. As part of a larger 20,000-square-metre Olympic Oval and fieldhouse, they planned to build the world's first entirely enclosed 400-metre speedskating track. The construction of the Olympic Park included ski jumping, freestyle skiing, bobsleigh, and luge facilities. Located ten minutes from Calgary's downtown core, it could accommodate 50,000 spectators in an earth bowl at the bottom of the ski hills. The venue became one of the few refrigerated combination bobsleigh and luge tracks in the world.[276] Upon completion, the tracks were celebrated as both the fastest and safest in the world. The 1,480-metre reinforced concrete course included 14 skill-testing corners and maintained ice integrity at outdoor temperatures of up to 25 degrees Celsius. Sensors were installed in every corner for unprecedented training and competition data. The Y-shaped design allowed separate bobsleigh and luge entrances before coming together partway through the course.[277] The federal government sought to use these facilities to attract internationally renowned athletes and coaches to train in Calgary in the future.

The Calgary Games soon became the most expensive Winter Olympics in history, with costs exceeding CAD 1 billion. The Alberta government spent $15.4 million to build cross-country and biathlon courses in Canmore. The federal government's spending remained within the $35 million (1983 CAD) budget to build the Olympic Oval. The two most extensive construction projects involved the creation of Canada Olympic Park and the Saddledome. Ottawa struggled to remain within the $60 million (1983 CAD) budget for the construction of the

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[276] Department of External Affairs, *Canada at the Olympics, 1984* (Ottawa, Canada, 1985), 7.
[277] Office for the 1988 Olympic Winter Games, *The 1988 Calgary Olympic Winter Games*, 16-17.

Canada Olympic Park.[278] The Saddledome, with its iconic shape, remained a successful joint venture between the three levels of government. The Olympic Saddledome opened in 1983 with a ribbon-cutting ceremony that included Minister of State for Fitness and Amateur Sport Céline Hervieux-Payette, Alberta Premier Peter Lougheed, and Calgary Mayor Ralph Klein.[279] When IOC President Juan Antonio Samaranch toured the Olympic venues ahead of the Games in September 1987, he reassured OCO'88 CEO Frank King, "You have the best winter sports facilities in the world. We are very, very pleased." The legacy fund for future athletic development and facilities' maintenance reached $90 million.[280] Beyond construction costs, the Government of Canada spent $40.2 million to assist OCO'88 with operating costs. The government covered OCO'88 start-up costs in 1982, assisted with operating two Olympic Villages, contributed to the running of the Olympic Arts Festival, and offset the operating costs of the accreditation, language services, pageantry, and transportation divisions.[281] With the most extensive and expensive Winter Olympiad ever organized, Calgary Olympic organizers and Canadian politicians used their influence to inspire the nation in the lead-up to the first day of competition.

Inspiring the Nation while Hosting the World

Getting Calgarians on board began as soon as the plan to host the Winter Olympics became public. At various speaking events with the public and businesses, OCO'88 CEO Frank King

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[278] Office for the 1988 Olympic Winter Games, *The 1988 Calgary Olympic Winter Games*, 20-21.
[279] King, *It's How You Play the Game*, 107.
[280] *The Globe and Mail Guide to Calgary '88* (Toronto: Globe and Mail, 1988), 13.
[281] Office for the 1988 Olympic Winter Games, *The 1988 Calgary Olympic Winter Games*, 25-27.

highlighted the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to host the Games. It would put Calgary on the map as one of Canada's premier cities, not just home to cowboys and oil magnates. The Games would benefit Calgarians and Canadians through their investment in the country's future in sports and physical fitness. King wanted to excite everyone with the vision of a special event, the best Games ever organized.[282]

Even though the City of Calgary was the official Olympic host, the Canadian nation would also be judged for its hospitality towards foreign tourists, athletes, and officials. Evidence of Canada's ability to be a "host to the world" would be found in the quality of the country's athletes, officials, facilities, volunteers, and infrastructure.[283] The Games required coordination among multiple state agencies to present an idealized image of the Canadian nation. Although Sport Canada's mandate focused on developing high-performance athletes, federal support stretched beyond the field of play. Other federal agencies oversaw logistics, security, communications, translation, television broadcasting, and immigration.[284] Canadian athletes would take centre stage as reified representatives of an imagined community.g Supporters would exhibit their membership to the national community by wearing national colours, singing the national anthem, and waving the national flag. The nation's strength would be displayed against the world's best athletes. Medal victories or disappointments would influence national rhetoric about the nation's vitality or lethargy.[285] The 1988 Calgary Olympics represented a crescendo of

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[282] King, *It's How You Play the Game*, 65.
[283] *Sport Canada Hosting Policy*, (Ottawa: Government of Canada, Fitness and Amateur Sport, 1983), 3.
[284] *Ibid*., 17.
[285] Toby C., Rider, and Matthew P. Llewellyn. "The Five Rings and the 'Imagined Community' – Nationalism and the Modern Olympic Games," *The SAIS Review of International Affairs* 35, no. 2 (Fall 2015): 23-24.

Canadian celebrations that took place throughout the 1980s and was a national test against the world and, unexpectedly, within Canada itself.

Beginning in the 1980s, Canadians experienced several occasions to celebrate and come together as a nation. Between April and September 1980, Terry Fox ran his Marathon of Hope to raise money for cancer research. He began in St. John's, Newfoundland, and tried to run forty-two kilometres each day across Canada before being forced to retire near Thunder Bay, Ontario.[286] On July 1, 1980, O Canada officially became Canada's national anthem. The 1982 *Constitution Act* repatriated the Canadian Constitution [the *British North America Act*] from the United Kingdom. The Act also introduced the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, which guaranteed political rights to Canadian citizens and established the process for amending the Constitution in the future.[287] In April 1984, the *Canada Health Act* was enacted to allocate federal funds to assist provinces and territories with rising healthcare costs. It was the latest addition to the welfare state, intended to ensure that Canadians had access to healthcare regardless of their geographic location or income.[288] In 1985, Paralympian Rick Hansen left Vancouver on his Man in Motion tour to raise money for spinal cord research. He returned to Vancouver two years later after traversing the world in his wheelchair.[289] The federal government promoted these occasions as national celebrations to counter instances of national discord.

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[286] Ian Gregson, *Irresistible Force: Disability Sport in Canada* (Victoria: Polestar Books, 1999), 112.

[287] Howard Leeson, "Four Lenses of Patriation." *Constitutional Forum / Forum constitutionnel* 26, no. 2 (2017): 44.

[288] Privy Council Office, and Marie-Claude Prémont, *The Canada Health Act and the future of health care systems in Canada (*Saskatoon, SK: Government of Canada, 2002), iv-vi.

[289] Ian Gregson, *Irresistible Force: Disability Sport in Canada* (Victoria: Polestar Books, 1999), 113-114.

During the 1980s, instances of national divisiveness came from a Québec separatist referendum and a constitutional crisis. On May 20, 1980, Québec held its first referendum on the future of Québec within Canada. Québec's separatists feared losing their status as a "distinct society" within Canada and refused to sign the 1982 *Constitution Act*.[290] In 1987, the Meech Lake Accord attempted to bring decentralized change to Canadian federalism to encourage Québec to sign the *Act*. Support for the Meech Lake Accord collapsed as these events tested a shared conception of Canadian identity.[291] It would be another twenty-four years before the Canadian House of Commons passed a motion recognizing the Québécois as a nation within a united Canada.[292] The 1988 Calgary Olympic Games became an ostentatious distraction from Québec's test of Canadian unity.

The Calgary Organizing Committee prioritized inspiring Canadian youth in sports and fitness to be future Olympians. Former Canadian Olympians spoke at community centres and schools about their experiences as high-performance athletes and valued community members. It was a valuable opportunity for young Canadians to meet national sports legends and role models, as OCO'88 facilitated once-in-a-lifetime experiences for thousands of children to attend the Games. A portion of the speaker's fee for OCO'88 presentations went towards the Children's Ticket Fund, eventually covering the ticket price for 12,400 children to attend the Calgary Olympics.[293] In addition, Canadian schools received educational materials created by OCO'88 and distributed by the federal government. Fourteen thousand schools across Canada

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[290] Howard Leeson, "Four Lenses of Patriation." *Constitutional Forum / Forum constitutionnel* 26, no. 2 (2017): 47.
[291] Doug Owram, "The Historical Context of Meech Lake," *Constitutional Forum / Forum constitutionnel* 2, no. 1-4 (1990): 24.
[292] Government of Canada, Vote No. 72, 39th Parliament, 1st Session, November 27, 2006. https://www.ourcommons.ca/members/en/votes/39/1/72
[293] King, *It's How You Play the Game*, 251-252.

received an Olympic Resource Kit entitled *Come Together: The Olympics and You*.[294] The 500-page booklet contained pamphlets, posters, classroom activities and a video cassette. Students could learn about the Olympics in multiple subjects. In math, students could apply the velocity formula to Olympic skiers. Home Economics students could investigate the features of a speedskating suit. Chemistry students could create snow in their classroom laboratories.[295] The kits helped students get interested in the history of the Olympic Movement and look forward to the Calgary Games in 1988. Canadian politicians hoped that hosting such international competitions would have a trickle-down effect on mass participation in various sports and have a lasting impression on future generations of Canadians. The federal government tried to achieve this goal by organizing events that taught Canadians about sports and fitness in association with the Olympic Games.

The promotional events before the Olympic Games created excitement but did not convey the same reverence as the Torch Relay. The Olympic Torch Relay was a popular tradition that connected the host city to the original home of the Olympic Movement in Athens. Petro-Canada became the official sponsor of the relay by spending $5.5 million to cover the Torch's travel costs across the country. The 18,000-kilometre 88-day journey across Canada was the longest route in Olympic history.[296] Managing the Torch Relay became a major production, with 1,000 Petro Canada volunteers serving as drivers, escort runners, and coordinating medical and security personnel. The gas, accommodation and food alone cost Petro-Canada $10,000 per day.[297] Thousands of proud Canadians carried the Olympic Torch by

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[294] Office for the 1988 Olympic Winter Games, *The 1988 Calgary Olympic Winter Games*, 31.
[295] King, *It's How You Play the Game*, 250.
[296] *Ibid*., 224.
[297] Philip Authier, "Olympic Effort Moves Torch; Runners Prepare to Share the Flame," *The Ottawa Citizen*, 10 December 1987.

airplane, snowmobile, dogsled, and ferry. Torchbearers for each 1.5-kilometre leg were selected by a random draw, except for the beginning and the end of the 11,000-kilometre land route. Managers of the Torch Relay wanted Canadians of every age and athletic and physical ability to apply. Canadians who used wheelchairs were also permitted to carry the Torch, along with someone who wished to run or walk alongside them. They did not want to repeat the privileged registration system used for the Summer Olympics four years earlier in Los Angeles, where participants had to pay up to USD 3,000 to run with the Torch. Despite raising USD 12 million, the IOC condemned "commercializing" the relay for the wealthy to primarily enjoy. Corporate logos on tracksuits worn by the torchbearers were not permitted. Politicians, Petro-Canada employees, and members of OCO'88 were not allowed to carry the Torch, giving thousands of Canadians from all walks of life the honour of being cheered on by their fellow citizens.[298]

By April 1987, interest in being an Olympic torchbearer exceeded organizers' expectations, with 6,624,582 applications submitted to fill 6,214 spots.[299] Canadians were thrilled to participate in such a unique event preceding the Olympic Games. Nearly 300 additional torchbearers were selected to present an image of equality, including people with mental and physical disabilities, past Olympic athletes, and Indigenous peoples. The Olympic Torch Relay averaged eighty-five bearers each day between November 17, 1987, and February 13, 1988.[300] Some Canadians, including Joe Marshall of Kingston, Ontario, were motivated by their previous interest in the Olympics and savoured the opportunity to join the tradition. "It's

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[298] Robert Brehl, "Canadians of all Size Needed to Carry Torch to Games in Calgary," *Toronto Star*, 25 March 1987.

[299] Derek Ferguson, "6.6 Million Applications Made to Tote Calgary Olympic Torch," *Toronto Star*, 15 April 1987.

[300] Philip Authier, "Olympic Effort Moves Torch; Runners Prepare to Share the Flame," *The Ottawa Citizen*, 10 December 1987.

fantastic," Marshall said, "It's the closest you'll ever come to participating in the Olympics. For myself, it's a dream come true."[301] For some adult Canadians, being a torchbearer might be the closest they ever came to participating in the Olympics; the experience of seeing, holding, or touching the Torch could inspire them to become committed to the Games.

Since Canadians were free to submit multiple applications, it was unlikely that one-quarter of the population volunteered. Canadians strategically applied for one of the coveted spots. While it would have been a primary choice to run in one's hometown, many people selected a day when the Torch would be in a remote area. This would explain why 2,000 applications were submitted for the fourteen spots around the northernmost point of the entire route in Inuvik, Northwest Territories. One way to control the odds involved filling out dozens or hundreds of applications. The couple, Kevin and Wanda Lawhead of Windsor, Ontario, submitted 850 applications to carry the Torch near North Bay, Ontario. Even though Kevin completed 750 forms, his wife, Wanda, was selected. She recalled the pride of being chosen by saying, "I really think it's quite an honour. It's one way to take part in the Olympics." They were not the only ones to acknowledge the significance of such an event. "I think this has fired the imagination of Canada," said OCO'88 spokesman Terry Steward, "from Newfoundland right to Vancouver. This really ignites the spirit of what the Olympics is all about."[302] Special moments could be found along the Torch Relay route and in neighbouring communities across Canada.

Canada's relationship with the northern climate and geography played a significant role in shaping its national identity. The Olympic Torch Relay leading up to the Calgary Games

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[301] Murray Hogben, "Torch Relay 'A Dream''For Local Runners," *The Kingston Whig - Standard,* 27 June 1987.

[302] Derek Ferguson, "6.6 Million Applications Made to Tote Calgary Olympic Torch," *Toronto Star*, 15 April 1987.

served as a powerful catalyst to unite Canadians because of what the flame represented and the accomplishment of traversing Canada's vast geography in the middle of winter. Thousands of people braved various forms of poor weather to see or run with the flame. On several occasions, Canadians made the moment even more special by proudly singing *O Canada*, and a few people took lit candles from the Olympic flame home to serve as the pilot light for their furnaces.[303] A father and his nine-year-old daughter shared a special New Year's Day moment when each carried the Torch.[304] A young man told Frank King about his newfound interest in the Olympics, sparked by the Torch Relay. This young man had not previously been interested in the Olympics until the Torch started travelling across Canada. He became proud of how Canadians came together to cheer on the runner and their country's achievements.[305] This was not the first time the Olympic Torch travelled in Canada, but the scale of the relay gave the journey greater significance. The Olympic Torch travelled 18,000 kilometres in 88 days, reaching the capital cities of every province and territory.

The Olympic Torch Relay was the latest national celebration that brought Canadians together. Similar to earlier events, including the Centennial train traversing Canada ahead of Expo '67 and Terry Fox's Marathon of Hope across Canada in 1980, the Olympic Torch also captured the country's attention. Canadians regularly followed the Torch's progress across Canada's vast landmass using various telecommunications. Scholars such as Harold Innis and Marshal McLuhan have commented on technological innovations in communication from the

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[303] King, *It's How You Play the Game*, 3.
[304] Scott Burnside, "City Residents to Share in Olympic Torch Dream," *The Windsor Star*, 9 July 1987.
[305] King, *It's How You Play the Game*, 224.

nineteenth century onwards that kept Canadians connected.[306] The devices may have changed over the decades from telegraph to telephone and radio to television, but the desire to quickly be informed about family or national events remained constant. By 1988, regular news broadcasts showed video updates of the Olympic Torch, carried by Canadians in various modes of transportation, as it made its way to Calgary. This allowed supporters to keep track of the flame and possibly encounter the procession as it travelled through their locality.

Canada's Torch Relay overcame the country's geography and climate while inspiring ancillary fitness and sporting events. The convergence of fitness and sports was evident in the community activities organized during the Torch Relay. The Canadian government supported community events nationwide during the Torch Relay. A Celebration '88 task force assisted 1,700 municipalities in organizing events during the Torch Relay with approximately $1 million from the federal government and additional private sector funds. The task force awarded six medals and fifty certificates to individuals in each participating municipality who demonstrated exemplary qualities of the Olympic spirit, such as sacrifice, dedication, togetherness, and determination.[307] In a February 22, 1988, House of Commons debate during the Calgary Winter Olympics, Otto Jelinek, the Minister of State for Fitness and Amateur Sport, proudly announced, "There is no doubt in my mind that the Celebration '88 program with the torch relay produced perhaps the most unifying effect that this country has seen in decades, if ever."[308] During the

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[306] Gaëtan Tremblay, "From Marshall McLuhan to Harold Innis, Or from the Global Village to the World Empire," *Canadian Journal of Communication* 37, no. 4 (2012): 570.

[307] Doug Yonson, "All Canadians Will be Touched by '88 Olympics," *The Ottawa Citizen*, 4 June 1987.

[308] Otto John Jelinek, "XV Olympic Winter Games – Report by Minister on Preparations and Progress," House of Commons, Vol. 10, 2nd Session, February 22, 1988, https://lipad.ca/full/permalink/3715805/.

nationalistic Olympic Torch Relay, the federal government sought to create opportunities for Canadians to celebrate their localities.

As discussed in the previous chapter, ParticipACTION got involved in nationalistic occasions to help unify Canada. ParticipACTION's community initiatives came together with national unity during the 1988 Olympic Torch Relay. Ahead of an international festival of sport, ParticipACTION reminded Canadians that an active lifestyle was not solely the purview of high-performance athletes. ParticipACTION's "Way to Go Canada!" ad campaign focused on "physical activity success stories" beyond high-performance athletes by congratulating active ordinary Canadians.[309] The public service announcements also identified how many Canadians participated in various winter sports; for example, there were 752,763 curlers, 151,082 figure skaters, and 84,806 speed skaters in Canada.[310] ParticipACTION pitched in to coordinate mini-Olympics, sports events, and winter carnivals on the community level.[311] Federal officials estimated that around 90 percent of Canadians had opportunities to participate in various ways.[312] These were some strategies to use public diplomacy to engage Canadians as more than just fans during the Winter Olympics. The Torch Relay and the associated events brought Canadians together and generated national interest leading up to the Calgary Olympics. Television host Lloyd Robertson noted that there was more anticipation for the Calgary Olympics by the Opening Ceremony than in Montréal twelve years earlier.[313] The organizing

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[309] Background to Mass Media PSA Campaigns, MG219, Box 1, University of Saskatchewan, University Archives & Special Collections, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada.
[310] Way to go, Canada! 1988, MG219, Box 1, University of Saskatchewan, University Archives & Special Collections, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada.
[311] Doug Yonson, "All Canadians Will be Touched by '88 Olympics," *The Ottawa Citizen*, 4 June 1987.
[312] Office for the 1988 Olympic Winter Games, *The 1988 Calgary Olympic Winter Games*, 32.
[313] Tony Atherton, "Television Coverage Will Emphasize Olympic Sounds; Countdown to Calgary," *Montréal Gazette*, 9 February 1988.

committee raised public awareness and created a buzz for the Games that was difficult to ignore beyond Calgary.

Indigenous Participation and Representation

As opportunities arose, Calgary Olympic organizers regularly used Indigenous imagery throughout the bid and staging phases. For example, ahead of the spring 1981 meeting between the IOC President and the Canadian Prime Minister, CODA and Calgary's mayor, Ralph Klein, arranged for Juan Antonio Samaranch to become an honorary chief of the Blackfoot Nation. Chief Leo Pretty Young Man, plus several other members of the Blackfoot Nation, performed a ceremony at the Olympic House in Montréal. They painted Samaranch's face, danced around him, and finally placed a headdress on his head. The Indigenous dancers used hula hoops, but this was a missed opportunity according to CODA's chairman, Frank King, "to include the Olympic symbol in their traditional performance."[314] Non-Indigenous people in positions of authority regularly scrutinized Indigenous contributions. For the IOC Congress in September 1981, the combination of cowboy attire, two Canadian Mounties, and Chief Lambert Fox and his wife, Yvonne, drew the attention of IOC delegates towards Calgary's contingent and away from their competitors.[315] Eighty-one Inuit carvings were even "gifted" from CODA to IOC members at the Olympic Congress in Baden-Baden. The federal government assisted in the shipment of the $175 carvings on a Canadian Air Force cargo plane.[316] Indigenous leaders stood alongside Mounties at the Olympic Congress in Baden-Baden, and Treaty Seven representatives performed

[314] King, *It's How You Play the Game*, 61-62.
[315] *Ibid*., 85.
[316] Department of External Affairs Memorandum, 14 August 1981, RG25-A-3-c, Vol. 11241, File Part 4, Government of Canada, Library and Archives of Canada.

at the opening ceremony. Stereotypical Indigenous representation, alongside the scarlet red Mountie uniform and the Western cowboy persona, provided a decorative background for the Anglo-Canadian organizers who maintained their leadership of centre stage.

Since 1985, the Ministry of Indian Affairs and Northern Development had been working with OCO'88 to coordinate Indigenous participation in cultural events associated with the Games. However, Indigenous leaders' input was given little consideration in the decision-making process. The federal government still assumed a paternalistic role by authorizing cultural events that highlighted Canada's seemingly harmonious relationship with Indigenous peoples. This led to *The Spirit Sings: Artistic Traditions of Canada's First Peoples*, an exhibit presented by Calgary's Glenbow Museum, which attracted the most controversy. The exhibition was advertised as the most ambitious museum project in Canadian history because it would display Indigenous and settler artifacts from one hundred museums in sixteen countries. Most items were "gifted" to European travellers centuries earlier and had not been returned to Canada since then.[317] Whether the pieces were gifts or stolen from Indigenous communities remained debated. During *The Spirit Sings* exhibition, the chiefs of Treaty Seven nations led powwows, Indigenous fashion shows, and a youth conference, among other cultural performances, as a demonstration of their vibrant cultures in the present, not stuck in the past as the museum pieces suggested. Federal grants and loans from the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development were also sent to Indigenous groups in Alberta to complete projects related to the Games.[318] An Indigenous liaison, Sykes Powderface, was hired to coordinate the Native

[317] King, *It's How You Play the Game*, 216.
[318] Office for the 1988 Olympic Winter Games, *The 1988 Calgary Olympic Winter Games*, 42.

Participation Program and manage the federal funds.[319] Although the federal government appeared to be including more Indigenous representation than was the case in the Montréal Games, Indigenous groups did not feel as if their voices were being heard.

*The Spirit Sings* exhibition soon became the target of a boycott from the Lubicon Lake Nation in Alberta. They had an unresolved land dispute with the provincial and federal governments dating from 1940.[320] Protesters were particularly offended by oil corporations making further profits from their sponsorship of the Olympics after destroying the Lubicon homeland with hundreds of oil drills. By sponsoring *The Spirit Sings* and the Olympic Torch Relay, Shell and Petro Canada were seen as supporting Canadian interests even though they had been exploiting Indigenous land. Since neither the federal nor provincial governments recognized their homeland, the Lubicon Lake Nation had no legal way to stop oil extraction. After resigning from her position on Glenbow's Program Committee, anthropologist Joan Ryan admitted that Indigenous groups had been pressuring OCO'88 to be involved since 1985. However, organizers preferred to portray Indigenous stereotypes of beads, dances, and feathers in their presentations using Treaty Seven nations to the exclusion of the Lubicon Lake Nation.[321]

Indigenous protesters across Canada supported the Lubicon Lake Nation. They disputed land rights with the Canadian government. They objected to the acquisition and display of their cultural artifacts. The items included in the presentations reinforced a Western narrative of a romanticised Indigenous culture of the past without considering how people survived generations

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[319] Kevin B. Wamsley and Mike Heine, "'Don't Mess with the Relay – It's Bad Medicine' Aboriginal Culture and the 1988 Winter Olympics," in *Olympic Perspectives: Third International Symposium for Olympic Research*, edited by Robert Knight Barney(London: Centre for Olympic Studies, University of Western Ontario, 1996), 175.

[320] King, *It's How You Play the Game*, 216.

[321] Wamsley and Heine, "'Don't Mess with the Relay – It's Bad Medicine' Aboriginal Culture and the 1988 Winter Olympics," in *Olympic Perspectives*, 174.

of colonial rule. The World Congress of Indigenous Peoples, the Indian Association of Alberta, the Grand Council of the Cree in Québec, the Assembly of First Nations, the National Congress of American Indians, and the Métis Association of Alberta all endorsed the boycott proposed by the Lubicon Lake Nation. They showed solidarity with demonstrations along the Torch Relay route in Kahnawake, Toronto, Edmonton, and Lethbridge.[322] A final rally was held in Calgary on the morning of the opening ceremony as the Torch arrived in the city. More than 200 people gathered in downtown Calgary at 6 a.m. before a crowd of thousands arrived to see the Olympic flame. They waved placards and chanted, "Share the shame," which upset other audience members because it impeded their view of the stage. Calgary resident Pat Singer shared a common perspective against the protests by saying, "We all have a certain sympathy for them, but I'm not sure this is the time to make an issue of it." Lubicon Lake Nation Chief Bernard Ominayak travelled 800 kilometres to Calgary to participate and stated, "Sure, some people are saying sports and politics don't mix, but I think they are forgetting what the spirit of the Olympics is all about."[323] Olympic organizers tried to use international attention to celebrate Canada's cultural diversity. However, marginalized groups also used the spotlight to highlight inequalities in Canada. Protests eventually influenced ten foreign museums to end their involvement with *The Spirit Sings*.[324]

The Opening Ceremony in Calgary was a significant tool in cultural diplomacy, intended to provide the global audience with a positive impression of Canada. As a host, foreign travellers and international television audiences could witness Canada's unique cultural identity,

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[322] Wamsley and Heine, "'Don't Mess with the Relay – It's Bad Medicine' Aboriginal Culture and the 1988 Winter Olympics," in *Olympic Perspectives*, 175.
[323] Laurie Monsebraaten, "Lubicons Launch 'Last Chance' Protest Indian Band Seeking More Land Finds Some Support in Calgary," *Toronto Star*, 14 February 1988.
[324] King, *It's How You Play the Game*, 216.

vast natural resources, technological sophistication, and burgeoning tourist industry.[325] Organizers used the presence of Indigenous peoples and cultural symbols to convey Canada's unique cultural identity to the world. Calgary's opening ceremony was supposed to signify Western Canada's evolution towards "civilization" with the entrance of different groups of actors. Paddy Simpson, the non-Indigenous executive director of the opening ceremony, instructed Treaty Seven representatives to wear face paint, headdresses and buckskin clothing and ride into the stadium arena on horseback. Representatives of neighbouring First Nations were introduced as "our Native Albertans" by the public address announcer. The Blackfoot, Peigan, Blood, Sarcee and Stoney nations were named "The tribes of Treaty 7 of 1877, of treaties still in effect and honoured today." They rode out to the centre of McMahon Stadium on horseback, saluted the crowd and rode off as quickly as they entered. Mediated through the announcer, the five Indigenous representatives welcomed the crowd "to the host city of Calgary in the great province of Alberta, Canada and to the XV Olympic Winter Games."[326] Cowboys riding horses and chuckwagons followed them, showing off their lasso skills. Then, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police rode their horses in formation to perform their famous Musical Ride routine. Canada's Governor General Jeanne Sauvé entered while "O Canada" and "God Save the Queen" were played.[327] Toronto-born ABC news anchor Peter Jennings seemed to internalize the idea of the "gentler hand of civilization" symbolized by the Mounties when he told his American audience on the ABC television network that Canada was proud of not

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[325] Don Morrow, and Kevin B. Wamsley, *Sport in Canada: A History*. Vol. 2 (Don Mills, Ontario: Oxford University Press, 2010), 233-234.

[326] *Calgary 1988 - Opening Ceremony,* Olympics.com (International Olympic Committee), https://olympics.com/en/video/calgary-1988-opening-ceremony.

[327] Jennifer Adese, "Colluding with the Enemy? Nationalism and Depictions of 'Aboriginality' in Canadian Olympic Moments," *American Indian Quarterly* 36, no. 4 (2012): 489.

engaging with Indigenous people through warfare, as the Americans had done in the nineteenth century.[328] The successive groups entering McMahon Stadium conveyed an inaccurately simplistic pattern in Canada's seemingly inevitable historical development to modern nationhood. Indigenous peoples and cowboys symbolized savagery and lawlessness in Canada before white civilization could be enforced through law and order by the Mounties and overseen by Canada's representative of the British monarchy. Later, Indigenous musicians played drums as a cadence for Cathy Priestner and Ken Read to carry the Olympic Torch around the stadium. The Olympic Cauldron at McMahon Stadium, surrounded by a structure reminiscent of a teepee, further showcased indigeneity. Near the end of the Opening Ceremony, Daniel Tlen from the Yukon sang O Canada in his native language of Southern Tutchone before it was sung in English by another artist.[329]

The Calgary Olympic Organizing Committee appropriated Indigenous imagery in the design of the Olympic medals as a gesture of inclusion of Indigenous culture. Historian and Indigenous Studies scholar Christine O'Bonsawin has studied the use of Indigenous symbols at the Olympic Games that Canada has hosted. The reverse side of each of Calgary's Olympic medals featured two figures: an athlete wearing an olive wreath on their head in the background and an Indigenous person in the foreground wearing a headdress consisting of equipment used in Olympic sports, such as a hockey stick, rifle, skate blades, skis, ski poles, bobsleigh and luge.[330]

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[328] Adese, "Colluding with the Enemy? Nationalism and Depictions of 'Aboriginality' in Canadian Olympic Moments," 490-491.

[329] *Calgary 1988 - Opening Ceremony,* Olympics.com (International Olympic Committee), https://olympics.com/en/video/calgary-1988-opening-ceremony.

[330] Christine O'Bonsawin, "Indigenous Peoples and Canadian-Hosted Olympic Games," In *Aboriginal Peoples and Sport in Canada: Historical Foundations and Contemporary Issues*, edited by Janice Forsyth, and Audrey R. Giles (Vancouver: Aboriginal UBC Press, 2012), 49-50.

Despite there being more of an Indigenous presence in the Calgary Olympics than in Montréal, Anglo-Canadian organizers still presented a Western narrative that placed Indigenous peoples in the past without a present or future in Canada. The Olympics aimed to unite the country through sports, but it also sparked controversy over persistent injustices faced by Indigenous peoples. These issues could potentially harm the legacy of the "Best Ever" Olympics.

Cultural Diplomacy during the Calgary Winter Olympics

The Winter Olympics also served as an occasion to organize cultural events, bringing artists from across Canada and abroad to commemorate the artistic expression of sports. The Canadian government and OCO'88 welcomed international travellers and dignitaries by hosting numerous events leading up to and during the Calgary Games. Approximately 1,200 federal officials assisted OCO'88 with organizing receptions, hospitality venues, and special events, including the opening of the Olympic Arts Festival on January 23, 1988. The Olympic Arts Festival contributed to the national unity project by showcasing Canadian cultural icons beyond sport. The Calgary Organizing Committee dedicated $12.6 million to the most extensive and longest cultural festival ever held during the Winter Olympics.[331] The Canadian government also contributed $1.4 million to the cultural festival and facilitated the participation of cultural icons from fifty countries.[332] For five weeks between January 23 and February 28, 1988, 200,000 tickets were sold for 258 cultural events, with 2,200 artists and performers displaying their work to the world. High-class cultural performances, such as musical ensembles, operas, chamber music, choirs, stage productions, and philharmonic orchestras, were primarily offered

[331] King, *It's How You Play the Game*, 216.
[332] Office for the 1988 Olympic Winter Games, *The 1988 Calgary Olympic Winter Games*, 41.

alongside a few mass culture options such as dance troupes, jazz, and variety entertainment.[333] Despite the Winter Olympics primarily being a sporting event, the cultural festival provided a platform to showcase Canadian artistic culture. The cultural festival inspired an appreciation for the Arts. The Olympics inspired admiration for elite athleticism. Together, they exposed attendees to a broader view of Canada, thereby supporting Canada's cultural diplomacy goals.

There were numerous nationalistic symbols on display for the Canadians and the worldwide audience during the Games. Estée Fresco – a scholar of sport media, Canadian identity, and Indigenous-Settler relations – has studied how Calgary's Organizing Committee thoughtfully designed its emblem with national symbols. The small letter Cs around the border represented Calgary, and the larger ones in the centre represented Canada. The intersections created five interlocking Cs that represented the theme of "Coming Together in Canada." The lines of the design resembled a snowflake representing the Olympic Winter Games. Together, it took the shape of a stylized Maple Leaf, one of Canada's national symbols.[334] Canadians were taught about significant national symbols and values through OCO'88's marketing campaigns. As a result, Canadians were expected to become increasingly enthusiastic about welcoming the world to their home.

In addition to promoting national pride, the Olympics became a vital chance for Calgarians to celebrate their civic pride and importance within Canada. Calgarians learned to be self-confident in front of the rest of the country and the world through this domestic influence, which exemplified soft power and public diplomacy. The *Hosting Manual* instructed Olympic volunteers in Calgary to take advantage of the "Opportunity Games." The once-in-a-lifetime

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[333] King, *It's How You Play the Game*, 216.
[334] Estée Fresco, *Red Mitten Nationalism: Sport, Commercialism, and Settler Colonialism in Canada* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2022), 81.

endeavour to host the world could enhance Calgary's status within Canada and abroad. Volunteers and spectators in Calgary played a crucial role in demonstrating the city's hospitality. OCO '88 CEO Frank King wrote, "These Games will be successful because the people of Calgary have a tradition, a tradition of gracious hospitality, of western informality, of civic pride."[335] Evidence of such inclusion was displayed with the enthusiastic support of the parents of Olympic athletes. Labatt Brewing Company covered the plane trip and tickets to Olympic events for Canadian parents to cheer on their children. Since accommodations were expensive and hard to find, 1,000 Calgarians opened their homes to host Olympians' families.[336] The hosts, other Canadians, and foreign visitors formed personal, lasting connections with each other. The organizers hoped the athletes would carry over acts of kindness and support for each other beyond the Olympic Games.

The Canadian government wanted to demonstrate that Canada belonged on the world stage with their Western allies. As addressed in the previous chapter, high-performance athletes exercised soft power through cultural diplomacy, as unofficial national ambassadors travelling the world for competitions. Canadian athletes were expected to exemplify national values of respect, integrity, and politeness through their behaviour while abroad. By hosting the Olympics, foreign travellers and international television audiences could learn about Canada's vast natural resources, technological sophistication, and burgeoning tourist industry.[337] Within the cultural diplomacy framework, countries considered their athletes representatives of national cultural strength, vitality, and excellence, or, conversely, of national weakness, decadence, and

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[335] Frank King, "Letter to Volunteers," in *Hosting Manual, Calgary '88* (Calgary: XV Winter Olympic Games Organizing Committee, 1988), 1.
[336] King, *It's How You Play the Game*, 252.
[337] Don Morrow, and Kevin B. Wamsley, *Sport in Canada: A History*. Vol. 2 (Don Mills, Ontario: Oxford University Press, 2010), 233-234.

mediocrity. International sport was understood to be an integral tool of cultural diplomacy. In practice, a country's international prestige among athletes could enhance cultural diplomacy.

Inwardly, public diplomacy took the form of a domestic feedback loop of pride in athletic achievement, creating a sense of national unity. High-performance athletes served as role models for youth across Canada. A significant way to enhance the nation-building project was to celebrate athletic accomplishments. The organizers designed the Olympic celebrations to continue beyond the day's competitions. They set up the Olympic Plaza in downtown Calgary so that medal winners from events as far away as Canmore could receive their medals in a centralized location. Between 30,000 and 60,000 people congregated in the plaza each night to listen to live music performed by Canadian artists and cheer on Olympic medal winners.[338] Five medals were awarded to Canadians at the Olympic Plaza throughout the Games.

Laurence Chalip suggests two concepts to understand the social value of international sporting events such as the Olympic Games. In these large-scale spectacles, social rules and distinctions appeared to be diminished, creating "liminality," and participants experienced a heightened sense of community – or "communitas."[339] Communitas's positive energy and excitement could make hosting or attending a mega-event appealing beyond any financial consideration if deployed effectively. Chalip explains that creating liminality and communitas at events involves a sense of celebration and social camaraderie. Liminality and communitas did not solely exist within sporting venues during competition.[340] Ancillary events and spaces, like the Olympic Plaza in downtown Calgary, fostered celebration and comradery as strangers

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[338] King, *It's How You Play the Game*, 256.
[339] Laurence Chalip, "Towards social Leverage of Sport Events," *Journal of Sport & Tourism* 11, no. 2 (2006): 110-111.
[340] *Ibid*., 112.

gathered to rejoice in Olympic achievements and listen to live music. These "imagined communities," as Benedict Anderson has posited, could be found at both national and local levels, as individuals bonded over a powerful shared experience.[341] Canadian success stories made the joyous occasion even more special.

Elizabeth Manley gave one of the most memorable performances in Canadian Olympic history on her way to winning the silver medal in the women's singles figure skating event. Unlike Kurt Browning and Brian Orser, who were expected to reach the podium, commentators may have believed a minor miracle would land Manley in the bronze medal position behind East German Katarina Witt and American Debi Thomas. She remained under the radar ahead of her final free skate program on Saturday night, February 28, 1988. This allowed her to spend time preparing for her routine, away from the nation's pressure to succeed. Manley wanted to transform the love and support of Canadians into a positive motivator, "It's great to have the Olympics in Canada, and I'm so glad to be part of it."[342] In front of tens of thousands of Canadians watching at the Saddledome and on television, Elizabeth Manley became a household name in minutes by winning an Olympic silver medal. Supporting Canadian athletes and celebrating Manley's achievement demonstrated the public diplomacy strategy that Olympic organizers and federal officials envisioned.

In 1988, the largest contingent of Canadian athletes at a Winter Olympics won the most medals in fifty-five years. Unfortunately, Canada did not win a gold medal at the Calgary Games and became the record holder for being the only summer and winter host to fail in such a

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[341] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 2006), 7.

[342] Martin Cleary, "Showdown at the Saddledome; Manley Controls Her Own Destiny; Series: Calgary '88," *The Ottawa Citizen*, 27 February 1988.

manner. Canada was more successful at the Winter Paralympic Games, winning five gold medals out of a total of thirteen. However, this tally did not qualify because the 1988 Winter Paralympics were held in Innsbruck, Austria. According to the International Paralympic Committee, there were issues with OCO '88 bringing the Paralympics to Calgary.[343] It remains unclear what specific problems led to such a decision. As suggested in the previous chapter, the failure to win gold at the Olympic, not Paralympic, Games in Canada prompted greater federal involvement in high-performance sport through targeted policies and investments to improve Canada's position as a sporting nation. Federal investments in sport could enhance soft power influence among foreign and domestic populations. Hosting the world in Calgary for the Winter Olympic Games inspired the nation despite the poor results. However, another outcome included using the occasion and media spotlight to increase awareness of systemic injustices in Canada, particularly towards Indigenous peoples.

Legacy of Calgary Winter Olympics

Several factors are involved in determining the legacy of a mega-event, such as the Olympic Games. In Calgary, the "Spirit of the Games," the soft power of sport, and expressions of a perceived cohesive national identity were significant features of the Olympic legacy. The participation of Calgarians as volunteers represented a powerful domestic expression of the Olympic spirit as public diplomacy. Through shared experiences, all these people contributed to the "Spirit of the Games" – the communitas of the Olympics. Data, such as attendance, television audience, and tourism, attest to the success of the Olympics, as the world's attention

[343] "Innsbruck 1988," International Paralympic Committee, accessed July 2, 2024, https://www.paralympic.org/innsbruck-1988.

shifted to Calgary for two weeks in February 1988. Events in Calgary inspired a love of sport and community service that might not have existed without of the Olympics. The XV Winter Olympiad became a significant national moment for the federal government to use soft power.

In addition, steps were also taken to make the legacy a source of soft power for the next generation. For example, three-time Olympic figure skater [2010, 2014, & 2018] Patrick Chan grew up on stories about the Calgary Olympics and the performances of the Canadian Calgary Olympians Brian Orser and Kurt Browning. He aspired to be Canada's first male figure skating gold medalist, a feat Orser and Browning failed to achieve.[344] Finally, Calgary's Olympic Legacy can be viewed through the lens of how the Canadian nation was portrayed. Particularly with the inclusion of Indigenous imagery, there was a tug-of-war between the imagined Canada of peaceful coexistence and mutual respect and the real Canada with unresolved colonial issues. The imagined celebratory nature during the Olympic Torch Relay was contrasted by the reality of protestors objecting to the exploitation of Indigenous land and the appropriation of cultural artifacts. The Opening Ceremony, especially as it pertained to Indigenous peoples, presented a repeat of a traditional Wild West Show, disregarding colonial violence, acts of resistance and the vibrancy of Indigenous cultures.

Canadians chose to get involved in the Calgary Olympics in more ways than simply purchasing tickets as spectators. They seized the opportunity of greater national attention to assist one another and celebrate the nation. Frank King was thankful for each of their contributions because the Games would not have succeeded without them. Ten people worked behind the scenes for each athlete who competed and garnered so much media attention.[345]

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[344] *Patrick Chan Chasing Olympic Gold in Men's Figure Skating*, *CBC News: The National* (CBC News, 2014), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SYmBMIX0PcU.
[345] King, *It's How You Play the Game*, 2.

Reflecting on the power of sports to bring people together, King found that the Olympic spirit inspired athletes and volunteers to appreciate the closeness of the world's population and work towards peace and harmony for everyone.[346]

Television viewership, attendance/tourism records, local events, and volunteers provide valuable quantitative data for measuring what the games meant to Canadians. Calgary experienced a surge of tourism, with two million people attending the XV Winter Olympiad. Two billion people, forty percent of the global population, watched television coverage worldwide.[347] Over 12,000 people volunteered to join Team '88 during the Games.[348] The crowning accomplishment for the Calgary Olympic celebration came at the closing ceremony when IOC President Juan Antonio Samaranch announced, "These have been the best-organized Olympic Winter Games in history."[349] It was the first time Samaranch used this expression to describe an Olympic Winter Games. This final confirmation confirmed that Calgary and Canada had achieved their "Best Ever" goals.

Part of Calgary's unprecedented success was its lasting impression on winter sports in Canada. By the 1980s, countries, including Canada, treated sport as a form of cultural diplomacy to garner prestige and elevate their position on the world stage. Hosting the Olympics was an essential component of this strategy, as well as sustaining high-performance success. Canada was among the many nations that did not follow Pierre de Coubertin's original call for amateurism at the Olympics. As the founder of the modern Olympic Movement, Coubertin regularly stated, "The important thing in the Olympic Games is not to win but to take part, the

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[346] King, *It's How You Play the Game*, 3.
[347] *Ibid*., 325.
[348] *Ibid*., ix.
[349] *Ibid*., 1.

important thing in life is not the triumph but the struggle. The essential thing is not to have conquered but to have fought well."[350] Despite winning the 1972 Summit Series, Canadians were tired of losing to the Soviet Union in the Olympic Games in sports they deemed nationally important, such as ice hockey. The federal government wanted its winter athletes to remain competitive in as many Olympic disciplines as possible, and it all started with an investment in their training regiments ahead of the Calgary Games. The federal government wanted Canada's athletes to be their best as the world came to Calgary for the "Best Ever" Games. Ottawa expected to improve its international reputation by hosting a successful Olympics and supporting world-class athletes.

Legacies beyond the Games included the physical presence of buildings and the economic, cultural, and social attention that hosting brought. Some of the most apparent legacies of the Games were the venues used to stage certain events. The federal government had its own objectives for the Olympic facilities and venues, such as Canada Olympic Park and the Saddledome. First and foremost, they hoped that the Calgary Games set a new benchmark for staging Olympic events. Secondly, they expected that Calgary's Olympic facilities would have a lasting legacy of use, one way or another, after the closing ceremony. Thirdly, the federal government wanted to protect a tradition of world-class high-performance training and competition in winter sports. Fourthly, they aimed to create a feeder system for aspiring Canadian athletes to reach the senior national team. Lastly, the federal government's Olympic legacy strategy included allowing the public to use spaces for recreation and becoming financially stable by repurposing some spaces for alternative cultural performances, such as

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[350] "General Olympic Information," in *Hosting Manual, Calgary '88* (Calgary: XV Winter Olympic Games Organizing Committee, 1988), 1.

concerts.[351] Calgary's Olympic legacy ensured the city became Canada's foremost winter sports training base for future generations of athletes dreaming about reaching the podium.

The Calgary Olympic legacy included financial support for Canada's next high-performance athletes. Calgary's public and private investment funding model set a precedent for supporting high-performance sports across Canada. In 1987, the federal government established the Olympic Torch Relay Legacy Fund to distribute financial aid to aspiring athletes who struggled to afford the costs of training and coaching. The $5 million fund was financed from sales of Olympic glassware in Petro-Canada stations across the country. Another $4 million was dedicated to help fund world-class coaches in winter sports.[352] For Estée Fresco, the sale of commemorative glassware was an expression of national unity during neoliberalism, when Canadians were expected to financially contribute to nationally significant events. In this way, Canadians used their hard-earned money to support a social cause of funding Canada's elite athletes. There was similar messaging about the sale of Olympic coins to help cover the federal government's responsibility for funding Canada's sports programs.[353] The federal government's legacy projects were intended to propel Canada as a winter sports leader for generations. There was also a $30 million contribution to an Olympic Endowment Fund following the 1988 Calgary Games, governed by the Canadian Winter Sport Institute [WinSport], which would oversee operations at Canada Olympic Park.[354] While some events may have inspired young athletes to dedicate their lives to sport, the facilities attracted world-class talent from across Canada and abroad to train in Calgary. Among thousands of other Canadian Olympians, figure skater Patrick

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[351] Office for the 1988 Olympic Winter Games, *The 1988 Calgary Olympic Winter Games*, 48.
[352] King, *It's How You Play the Game*, 177.
[353] Estée Fresco, *Red Mitten Nationalism: Sport, Commercialism, and Settler Colonialism in Canada* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2022), 97-99.
[354] Office for the 1988 Olympic Winter Games, *The 1988 Calgary Olympic Winter Games*, 29.

Chan trained at state-of-the-art facilities built by all levels of government in Calgary after the Olympic competition concluded on February 28, 1988. However, this also contributed to a greater emphasis on elite sports and less on recreational fitness. As suggested in the previous chapter, by the end of the twentieth century, the Canadian government favoured high-performance sports as a form of cultural diplomacy. Overall, Calgary's favourable Olympic legacy made it easier for Canadians a generation later to get excited about the prospect of Vancouver hosting the Winter Olympics in 2010.

The Government of Canada's support for the Calgary Olympics may have been initiated at a seemingly innocent meeting between the Minister for Fitness and Amateur Sports and Calgary businessmen. However, it blossomed into a firm commitment to promote Canada's high-performance sports program and enhance its national unity. The federal government wanted to play a more prominent role than simply writing the cheque as Calgary hosted the world. The Government of Canada became interested in the XV Winter Olympiad to further political, economic, and cultural goals.

Ottawa hoped national unity could grow from Canadians' shared experiences of participating in fitness and sports activities and cheering on the country's top high-performance athletes. Federal politicians believed that winning medals would simultaneously generate international prestige and greater interest among young Canadians pursuing their dreams of high-performance sports. Athletes became valued diplomatic assets for federal officials who began to appreciate their importance as cultural ambassadors to foreign nations. The federal government assumed responsibility for high-performance sports. Federal funds would cover an athlete's basic expenses, allowing them to devote more time to training and competing. International sports competitions provided a micro-comparison of each nation's vitality between its best

athletes in a given sport. This comparison became more pronounced in nationally significant sports such as those on ice for Canadians. For countries like Canada, which valued sports and fitness as part of their national identity, support for these programs indicated how the government's willingness to invest in the nation's future.

By February 1988, the federal government realized an unexpected outcome from hosting the Winter Olympics. Despite the celebratory nature of the Olympic Games and the international attention, when Canadians tried to celebrate each other and the country's diversity, cracks in the national image began to appear. Protests by Indigenous groups raised awareness of inequities in Canadian society. The federal government was forced to listen to their concerns or risk international criticism. National unity did not necessarily mean that everyone was happy and viewed the future through rose-coloured glasses. For example, the failure of Olympic organizers to incorporate the Paralympics in Calgary minimized the value of para-athletes. As a result, fewer young Canadians were given the impression that becoming a Paralympian was a worthy dream. It showed that more work was needed, and this attention motivated more Canadians to work toward solving common societal problems. Some of the initiatives included creating public and private funding programs to support underprivileged athletes. The 1988 Winter Paralympics would also be the last time the event was organized separately from the Winter Olympics.

The disparity between perceptions of Canada at the Olympics and the reality of the fitness and sport system will be examined in the next chapter. It will explore how the Olympic Games hosted in Canada attempted to emphasize commonalities among Canadians rather than differences. As an Olympic host in 1988 and 2010, the opening and closing ceremonies were opportunities to showcase Canada's togetherness. On both occasions, however, federal attempts to promote national unity caused resistance from groups who did not see themselves represented

in Canada's fitness and sport programs. Canada's best athletes were not a reasonable representation of the country's diverse population. This also applied to Paralympians who could not showcase their skills in the same Olympic venues in Calgary as Olympians. The entire national fitness and sport system created barriers that denied progress to some and privileged other Canadians to compete at the highest level. Olympians were regularly prioritized over their Paralympic counterparts in funding and media coverage. Canada's inequitable national fitness and sport system which led to barriers to participation at the turn of the twenty-first century will be analyzed in the next chapter.

## Chapter 4: Sport Policies for Women, Indigenous Peoples, and People with Disabilities

The Canadian government re-evaluated its national fitness and sport system following poor results at the 1988 Calgary Winter Olympic Games. Despite Team Canada winning five medals, their highest medal count at the Winter Olympics since 1932, Canadian athletes again fell short of securing an Olympic gold medal on home soil. Canada instead made Olympic history by failing to win a gold medal at the two Games it hosted in 1976 and 1988. Canada became the only country in Olympic history to host multiple Games and fail to win a gold medal at home. In 1988, Canada hosted a financially successful Olympics; however, Team Canada had a great deal of work to do to produce notable results.

For Canadian athletes to be valued as cultural ambassadors, they needed to achieve high-performance success on the world stage. When Canadian athletes travelled and competed around the world, their victories attracted media coverage across Canada as nationally significant accomplishments.[355] A 1998 Sub-Committee Report on the Study of Sport in Canada, commonly referred to as the Mills Report, noted that with each medal won, Canada's reputation was elevated, resulting in an enhancement of Canada's cultural diplomacy.[356] However, it was not easy to inspire Canadians through public diplomacy or foreign nations through cultural diplomacy if Canada's athletes only won silver and bronze medals.

The balancing act that the federal government had maintained between mass participation and high performance began to erode in the decades following the Calgary Winter Olympics. As

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[355] Don Morrow, and Kevin B. Wamsley, *Sport in Canada: A History*. Vol. 2 (Don Mills, Ontario: Oxford University Press, 2010), 217.

[356] Canada, Parliament, Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage, Sub-Committee on the Study of Sport in Canada, *Sport In Canada: Everybody's Business Leadership, Partnership and Accountability*, 1st sess., 36th Parliament, December 1998. Committee Chair Dennis Mills, M.P. https://www.ourcommons.ca/DocumentViewer/en/36-1/CHER/report-6/page-2

suggested in earlier chapters, the self-sustaining national fitness and sport system, designed to support itself by producing high-performance athletes through the encouragement of mass participation, evolved into a top-heavy entity in which officials were more concerned with winning the next Games than with developing the foundation for long-term success. Canada's national fitness and sport system may have been intended to benefit all Canadians. However, the national system was not equitable for everyone. Women, Indigenous peoples, and Canadians living with disabilities were left out in the cold. Therefore, barriers to entry and progression for underprivileged and marginalized Canadians became greater, further exacerbating problems in a multicultural country. This chapter will examine how the intentions of Canadian policies, as discussed in previous chapters – to create a broad participant base – clashed with the lived reality of systemic barriers that inhibited the inclusion of Indigenous athletes, women athletes, and para-athletes in the national fitness and sport system.

This chapter argues that in the decades following Calgary's 1988 Winter Olympic Games, Canadian sport policies attempted to balance mass participation as public diplomacy, with high-performance success as cultural diplomacy. However, the policies that once aimed to improve Canadians' physical health and to train the next generation of athletes to represent Team Canada consistently emphasized high-performance success at the expense of mass participation. Accordingly, they did not adequately address inequities in the national fitness and sport system. Indigenous peoples, para-athletes, and women faced barriers to participation and advancement within the system.

The Canadian government prioritized enhancing its national image in high-performance sports, even at the expense of the health of its citizens. Cultural diplomacy triumphed over public diplomacy, with international prestige elevated as intended goals ahead of improving

domestic fitness participation rates, which were treated only as welcome outcomes. This greater emphasis on cultural diplomacy was an effort by the federal government to conceal problems with its public diplomacy. By the turn of the twenty-first century, athletes and politicians alike were motivated to break the curse of not winning an Olympic gold medal in Canada. This effort of the Canadian government to prove itself on the international stage contributed to a fracture of mass participation fitness and high-performance sport within a sport diplomacy framework. Thus, multiple long-standing inequities within Canada's national fitness and sport system unaddressed. As Canada prepared to host the Vancouver 2010 Winter Olympics, the primary focus was to end the humiliating streak of failing to win a gold medal as the host nation. As a result, it was considered more beneficial if more Canadians could participate in high-performance sport.

For generations, Canadians participated in outdoor athletic competitions for social, leisure and health reasons. A family's time and resources were sometimes allocated based on participation in summer and winter sports. Bonding between parent and child took place as they became involved in sport as athletes, coaches, volunteers, and spectators.[357] Despite the goal of promoting mass participation among Canadians nationwide, some groups remained underrepresented and marginalized. Barriers hindered lower-income families, Indigenous, and women athletes from reaching the pinnacle of athletic competition. Not everyone had the same path to representing Canada at the Olympic Games. A large portion of Olympic competitors came from families that could afford the privilege of enrolling their children in athletic programs.[358] After all, as noted in Chapter 1, it was only the repeated poor results of white male

[357] Hall, Slack, Smith, and Whitson, *Sport in Canadian Society*, 12.
[358] *Ibid*., 184.

athletes in Canada's own sport of hockey at the Olympics that prompted greater intervention by the state.

Canada's National Fitness and Sport System after the Calgary Winter Olympic Games

Indigenous peoples, ethnic minorities, women, and people living with disabilities struggled to be included in Canada's sport system in leadership positions and as participants. Indigenous peoples faced racism and high costs of participation. This resulted in fewer sport or fitness programs available in Indigenous communities to potentially reduce the alcohol and drug consumption among youth. The economic barrier of covering the high costs of building facilities, acquiring equipment, and travelling also prevented many Canadians from directly engaging in these nation-building activities.[359] Canadian sport sociologists Donald Macintosh and David Whitson argue that goals for mass participation in fitness and recreation were more often aimed at raising Canada's standing on the world stage through high-performance athletics. Resources that could have been devoted to increasing opportunities for all Canadians, regardless of their socioeconomic, ethnic, gender, or physical differences, were redirected to developing elite athletes.[360] In a separate study with fellow sport sociologist Richard Gruneau, David Whitson argues that people living in Canada who identified as Black, Indigenous and people of colour faced discrimination and lacked the privileges that sport offered to other members of the Canadian nation. Celebrating high-performance athletes as a form of hero worship was difficult with Canada's diverse population. Those individuals placed on such a vaunted pedestal were not

[359] Sport Canada, *Building Canada Through Sport: Towards a Canadian Sport Policy: A Discussion Paper*, 12-13.
[360] Donald Macintosh, and David Whitson, *Game Planners: Transforming Canada's Sport System* (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 1990), 183.

representative of every Canadian who struggled to be recognized as members of the nation.[361] Gruneau and Whitson conclude that Canada's struggle with national identity revolved around inauthenticity and invented traditions created by a dominant culture in political office.[362] This chapter builds on their work and examines the role of fitness and sport in the formation of a unified Canadian identity within the wider historical context.

The embarrassment of not winning an Olympic gold medal on home soil for a second time was the impetus for government action to reprioritize Canada's fitness and sport system. In 1988, a federal Task Force led by Assistant Deputy Minister of Fitness and Amateur Sport, Lyle Makosky, and Sport Canada Director General, Abby Hoffman, released their report, *Toward 2000: Building Canada's Sport System*, which called for greater recognition of sport as an integral component of Canadian culture.[363] The Task Force continued to appeal to the federal government to develop an accessible sport system for everyone and to provide international-calibre services for elite athletes to perform at their best.[364] As part of the report, the Task Force also recognized that the federal government invested in sport for several reasons – that sport was becoming an integral cultural expression of the Canadian identity that presented significant opportunities to assist athletes to reach the pinnacle of sport competition, for which all Canadians could come together in celebration of their success. Sport had meaningful social and health benefits, such as gender equity, bilingualism, fair play, and accessibility at every level of the sport system. Members of the Task Force were aware of the legacy sport created for generations

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[361] Richard Gruneau and David Whitson, *Hockey Night in Canada: Sport, Identities, and Cultural Politics* (Toronto: Garamond Press, 1993), 252.
[362] *Ibid*., 278.
[363] Task Force on National Sport Policy, *Toward 2000: Building Canada's Sport System - The Report of the Task Force on National Sport Policy*, (Ottawa: Government of Canada, Fitness and Amateur Sport, 1988), 8.
[364] *Ibid*., 9-12.

of supporters, volunteers, administrators, coaches, and athletes in Canada. They wanted future generations to have the same desire to pick up a pair of skates, a stick, a racket, or a bat as active participants and for this sentiment towards sport to become part of Canadian culture. For task force members, sport could be used as an instrument to promote Canada as proud, democratic, competitive, and diverse.[365] They believed that, as with the arts, sport fostered common beliefs, values, and community ties, and that athletes competing abroad were responsible for serving as Canadian cultural ambassadors. From coast to coast to coast, sport participation enhanced a national culture.[366] Providing opportunities for all Canadians, regardless of their physical ability level, should benefit the country.

In the late 1980s, guided by a desire to provide all Canadians with access and opportunities to participate in sport, the Canadian government chose to improve its support for disability sport following the formation of the Paralympics, believing it offered similar cultural and public diplomacy benefits as the Olympic Games. In this way, the mainstream national sport system integrated high-performance sport for athletes living with disabilities.[367] This coincided with the creation of the International Paralympic Committee in 1989 and the first Paralympic Games to use Olympic facilities a year prior. In 1993, the Canadian Paralympic Committee [CPC] was formed with the mission of stimulating the growth of the Paralympic movement across the country. It was recognized by the International Paralympic Committee [IPC] as the National Paralympic Committee of Canada. As such, it was responsible for selecting athletes to

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[365] Task Force on National Sport Policy, *Toward 2000: Building Canada's Sport System - The Report of the Task Force on National Sport Policy*, 16-17.
[366] *Ibid*., 7.
[367] Canada, Ministry of Sport, *Policy on Sport for Persons with a Disability* (Ottawa, June 2006).

compete on behalf of Canada at the Paralympics.[368] The Paralympics were an international sport competition for athletes living with physical disabilities to compete in modified Olympic disciplines. The Winter Paralympic program included alpine and Nordic events, sledge hockey, and wheelchair curling.[369] The Paralympics became the largest showcase of sport for people living with disabilities, with an average of 3.5 million people attending the Paralympics in the 1990s.[370]

In 1992, a Task Force on Federal Sport Policy consisting of diplomat Cal Best, Vice-President of the Canadian Sport Council, Marjorie Blackhurst, and Assistant Deputy Minister of Fitness and Amateur Sport, Lyle Makosky, expressed optimism that the country was on the verge of an era of high-quality and fully accessible sport "made in Canada." Any policy was supposed to reflect the country's diverse geography and society, and to foster pride in participation and the pursuit of excellence.[371] After the federal policies were unveiled, it was clear that pursuing high-performance excellence was a consistent priority. The Task Force supported federal investment in sport excellence for cultural reasons, including national pride. Athletes were expected to operate within a system that encouraged them to "be the best they can be" and, in some cases, to "be the very best!" Federal officials believed that high-performance success measured by winning at the highest level could influence Canadian society by increasing national unity and pride.[372]

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[368] Karen P., DePauw, and Susan J. Gavron, *Disability Sport*, 2nd ed. (Windsor: Human Kinetics, 2005), 123-124.
[369] *Ibid*., 94-95.
[370] *Ibid*., 252.
[371] Minister's Task Force on Federal Sport Policy, *Sport: The Way Ahead - An Overview of the Task Force Report*, (Ottawa: Government of Canada, 1992), 3.
[372] *Ibid*., 210.

The 1992 Task Force on Federal Sport Policy included data from Decima Research to justify further investment in the system. Seventy-eight percent of Canadian respondents were involved in amateur sports as either spectators, coaches, participants, volunteers, or administrators. Ninety percent of Canadians believed their country should participate in international amateur sporting events. In addition, the same percentage of Canadians felt the government should be involved in amateur sports.[373] Although Canadians valued fitness and sport activities, policies in the twenty-first century reflected the federal government's prioritization of international high-performance sporting excellence at the cost of broad-based domestic fitness programs.

In 1993, after years of financial cutbacks and following the recommendation of The Task Force on Federal Sport Policy, the Canadian government created a Core Sport Commission to adjust its support of fitness and sport. Under Prime Minister Kim Campbell, the federal government also undertook internal restructuring. Responsibilities previously held within the Ministry of Fitness and Amateur Sport were divided between the Department of Health Canada and the newly formed Department of Canadian Heritage. Whereas Fitness Canada was absorbed into Health Canada, thereby contributing to the advocacy for a balance of physical exercise and healthy eating habits, Sport Canada moved within the purview of Canadian Heritage, as part of the focus on Canada's cultural presence on the world stage.[374] Federal policies were supposed to build a resilient national fitness and sport system that produced world-class Canadian athletes. The separation of fitness and sport into distinct departments in the 1990s made it even easier for

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[373] Minister's Task Force on Federal Sport Policy, *Sport: The Way Ahead - An Overview of the Task Force Report*, 15.

[374] Gina S. Comeau, "The Evolution of Canadian Sport Policy," *International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics* 5, no. 1 (March 2013): 86.

the federal government to prioritize high-performance excellence in specific, culturally significant sports. Fitness objectives moved further into the background after the realignment of federal departments.

Persistent Inequities in the Fitness and Sport System

Since the enactment of the first federal sport legislation in 1961, the Canadian government has sought to use sport to promote a unique national identity. Given the ethnically and regionally diverse population, Canadian sport policy attempted to ensure equal access to sport and fitness programs. Despite the goal of promoting mass participation for every Canadian across the country – as addressed in earlier chapters – some groups remained underrepresented and marginalized. The Canadian high-performance sport system produced minimal diversity at its highest levels. Resources that could have been devoted to increasing opportunities for all were instead redirected to developing elite athletes.

Physical activity inclusion scholars, Wendy Frisby and Pamela Ponic, define "social inclusion" as a process of creating equitable systems that allow people to choose to participate in a variety of activities, including sports and recreation. The goal of social inclusion had been to improve everyone's quality of life, regardless of their social or economic status.[375] The federal government was aware that fitness and sport could accomplish social goals and reduce regional disparities by creating more access for Indigenous peoples, women, and people living with disabilities.[376] This leads to questions about how marginalized communities, such as Indigenous peoples, recent immigrants, families living in poverty, people living with disabilities, and

[375] Wendy Frisby and Pamela Ponic, "Sport and Social Inclusion," in *Sport Policy in Canada*, eds. Lucie Thibault and Jean Harvey, Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 2013), 381-382.
[376] Minister's Task Force on Federal Sport Policy, *Sport: The Way Ahead*, 183.

women, have struggled to maintain a healthy and active lifestyle while facing barriers to participating in fitness and sports.[377] Frisby and Ponic suggest that success in sport has less to do with inherent skills and more to do with one's opportunities and a support system that is more readily available to specific population segments.[378] Instead of expanding opportunities for all Canadians, officials redirected resources to develop elite athletes in the national fitness and sport system.[379] While voicing political rhetoric of inclusivity for all, government funds gradually moved away from the idealistic goals of the national fitness and sport system.

Scholars, policymakers, and politicians have characterized those who live beyond society's mainstream as experiencing social exclusion. Scholars of sport management, social identity, and inclusion, Haydn Morgan and Andrew Parker argue that sport was a valuable tool for reducing social exclusion and marginalization because it reinforced connections between people and mainstream society.[380] However, harassment, intolerance, racism, a lack of fair play, and an overemphasis on winning contributed to creating a system of social exclusion in Canada. Social exclusion worsened in Canada as the federal government tried to make the national fitness and sport system inclusive.

As early as 1969, *A Report on Physical Recreation, Fitness and Amateur Sport in Canada* found that participation in outdoor recreational activities decreased in a descending correlation with one's socioeconomic level. On the surface, a lack of discretionary income seemed to prevent Canadians from participating, but researchers who examined this more closely

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[377] Frisby and Ponic, "Sport and Social Inclusion," in *Sport Policy in Canada*, 381-382.
[378] *Ibid*., 389-390.
[379] Macintosh, and Whitson, *Game Planners: Transforming Canada's Sport System*, 183.
[380] Haydn Morgan and Andrew Parker, "Generating Recognition, Acceptance and Social Inclusion in Marginalised Youth Populations: The Potential of Sports-Based Interventions," *Journal of Youth Studies* 20, no. 8 (2017): 1028–29.

found that Canadians in lower socioeconomic strata were less aware of recreational opportunities in their communities.[381] As discussed earlier, in 1970, John Munro, the Minister of National Health and Welfare, described the idealized national fitness and sport system as a pyramid with high-performance athletes at the peak, representing Canada on the world stage. This group was supposed to be followed by organized competition at the national, regional, provincial, skill and age levels. Recreation for society at large surrounded the pyramid. It included recreational competition, sports in both competitive and non-competitive settings, and general recreation, followed by a blend of physical activity known as "play." Young people participating in competitive sport and recreational fitness were at the bottom of the pyramid. Ideally, athletes progressing through the system would surpass and replace those at the top of the pyramid. In theory, this hierarchical system worked to provide funding for Canada's top athletes, push all those engaging in competitive sports up the pyramid, and allow interested Canadians to engage in sports at a recreational level. However, this structure began to crumble because many sports lacked representation. In Canada there were multiple sports without any recreational or introductory programs. For example, there was no developmental system for young people to participate in bobsleigh as there was for figure skating.[382] Access to the national fitness and sport system was inequitable for some sports and for Canadians from underprivileged backgrounds.

Minister Munro stated that fitness and sport were vital to shaping Canadians' quality of life, regardless of their economic or social situation. Munro knew that this objective was

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[381] P.S. Ross, & Partners, *A Report on Physical Recreation, Fitness and Amateur Sport in Canada*, (Ottawa: Fitness and Amateur Sport Directorate, 1969), 310.

[382] John Munro, *A Proposed Sports Policy for Canadians* (Ottawa, Ontario: Department of National Health and Welfare, 1970), 26.

dependent on motivation and opportunity.[383] However, the federal government's motivation did not reach a level high enough to reform the system and create more opportunities for underprivileged Canadians to participate. He elaborated on the systemic disparities using an analogy that suggested there were different starting lines for privileged and underprivileged Canadians.[384] Contemporary scholars would call this analogy the "privilege walk."[385] Munro explained, "Unfortunately, in terms of facilities, coaching, promotion and programming, the sports scene today resembles a track on which some people have twenty-five yards to run, some fifty, some one-hundred, and some as much as a mile or more."[386] Munro foreshadowed the struggle for social inclusion among marginalized Canadians.

Marginalized and racialized Canadians faced additional challenges beyond finding the motivation to participate. In some cases, they needed assistance purchasing essential equipment or dealing with limited access to a recreational facility that was too far from home or in need of renovations. Even those who registered and had adequate access to resources often felt alienated by the sport's social atmosphere. In turn, they encountered prejudice because they were not regarded as possessing the necessary athletic skills to succeed.[387]

Canadian politicians accepted the idea that sports could teach young people discipline, goal setting, commitment, pride, teamwork, responsibility, and leadership.[388] However, John Munro noted that the economic barrier of managing the high costs of building facilities,

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[383] Munro, *A Proposed Sports Policy for Canadians*, 1.
[384] *Ibid*., 3-4.
[385] Elizabeth A. Brown, and Rosemarie Jones, "Discussing Systemic Racism and Racial Privilege at a Large, Academic Health Center Using a Modified Privilege Walk," *BMC Medical Education* 24, no. 1 (2024): 328.
[386] Munro, *A Proposed Sports Policy for Canadians*, 3-4.
[387] *Ibid*., 28-29.
[388] Minister's Task Force on Federal Sport Policy, *Sport: The Way Ahead - An Overview of the Task Force Report*, 165.

acquiring equipment, and travelling also prevented many Canadians from directly engaging in these nation-building activities. He added that equal opportunities for Canadians from different socioeconomic backgrounds remained out of reach for those seeking recreation and fitness, or high-performance sports.[389] Indigenous peoples, ethnic minorities, women, and people living with disabilities encountered barriers to entering the national fitness and sport system, and these were even more amplified if they were economically disadvantaged.

At multiple levels of the national fitness and sport system, athletes faced barriers that further hindered their progression. In his 1970 *A Proposed Sports Policy for Canadians*, Munro concluded that for generations, Canada's sport system excluded Indigenous peoples, women, and people living with disabilities from participation and leadership roles. Indigenous peoples faced racism and high costs of participation. As a result, fewer fitness and sport programs were available in Indigenous communities.[390] Economic conditions in the following decade would further intensify these inequities. By 1987, a quarter of Canadian households living below the poverty line (a rate even higher among Indigenous communities), and access and equity issues became more acute for those living with financial insecurity.[391] Through the Task Force on Federal Sport Policy, the federal government recognized that ethnic minorities, who accounted for a quarter of Canada's population by 1992, experienced limited access to sport. Youth from various ethnic groups learned that their athletic opportunities were limited to North American

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[389] Munro, *A Proposed Sports Policy for Canadians*, 12-13.
[390] *Ibid*., 12-13.
[391] Minister's Task Force on Federal Sport Policy, *Sport: The Way Ahead - An Overview of the Task Force Report*, 165.

sports, like hockey, which remained inaccessible to many. Coaches, physical educators, and sport administrators allowed their bias to cloud their judgement about an athlete's skills.[392]

Multiple barriers, including racism, poverty, a scarcity of coaches, and outdated sport infrastructure, impeded Indigenous participation in fitness and sport. Racism created barriers to sports participation – from limitations to registration to inappropriate prejudices on the playing surface. Many Indigenous peoples in Canada struggled to meet the financial obligations associated with sport, including money for equipment and travel. Few Indigenous coaches had expertise in sports valued in the national system, and very few non-Indigenous coaches demonstrated sufficient interest or cultural sensitivity to enhance the athletic skills of Indigenous youth. There had been a lack of adequate facilities for Indigenous communities to participate in daily recreation and sport.[393]

A need for more resources and opportunities characterized the reality of sport for Indigenous peoples. Few communities could support various youth sports programs, with hockey, softball, soccer, and volleyball among the most offered. This was especially difficult since many children wanted to participate in recreational and competitive sports. Additionally, more qualified coaches were needed within Indigenous communities. Those talented enough to pursue a career in sports had to leave their home to train, which involved considerable social and financial obstacles.[394]

Part of the allure involved in supporting Canada's high-performance athletes was that they were individuals to whom people could relate. In his 1992 report on the federal sport

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[392] Minister's Task Force on Federal Sport Policy, *Sport: The Way Ahead - An Overview of the Task Force Report*, 161-162.
[393] Sport Canada, *Sport Canada's Policy on Aboriginal Peoples Participation in Sport*, 4.
[394] Minister's Task Force on Federal Sport Policy, *Sport: The Way Ahead - An Overview of the Task Force Report*, 154.

policy, Pierre H. Cadieux, the Minister of State for Youth, Fitness and Amateur Sport, remarked that while Canadians seemed to value how sports promoted personal, moral, and physical development, built character, enhanced a social network, and improved their health, Canada's Olympians symbolized excellence, discipline, courage, and the best Canada offered. Accordingly, Olympian role models who chose to dedicate their time and energy to compete against the world's best athletes could become national heroes and cultural ambassadors.[395] Canada's Olympians might have grown up around the corner in a working-class neighbourhood, but they overcame the odds to make it to the highest level of competition. However, the reality of these successes was more comparable to winning a lottery than simply having athletic talent.

The 1992 Task Force Report, *Sport: The Way Ahead*, identified problems with high-performance sport in Canada. The Canadian government's strong emphasis on athletic excellence led to unrealistic expectations for both athletes and spectators, who anticipated continuous high-performance success. Despite the federal government's overarching responsibility for high-performance sport in Canada, it had set unrealistic objectives without understanding the provincial, regional, or local realities.[396] The Task Force blamed many gaps on Ottawa's attempt to force a "national face" through its policies on community-run programs. They found that national sport organizations created planning models for athletic development focused on winning.[397] Between 1961 and 1991, the federal government invested more than $814 million in fitness and sport initiatives. The distribution of funds, however, was not even. Approximately 86 percent, $702 million, was dedicated to funding high-performance sports programs at the national system's peak, while the remaining $112 million was allotted to

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[395] Minister's Task Force on Federal Sport Policy, *Sport: The Way Ahead*, 39-40.
[396] *Ibid*., 45-46.
[397] *Ibid*., 27.

national organizations and fitness promotion. This funding continued to be inaccessible to Indigenous peoples, women and people living with disabilities who required assistance at lower levels of the system's hierarchy.[398] The goals for government investments in the national fitness and sport system changed as federal ideology evolved.

*The Status of the High-Performance Athlete in Canada* found that they did not have the same sociodemographic composition as the broader Canadian population. According to the 1986 Census, a majority of Canadians (61 percent) identified English as their first language, 25 percent of the population spoke French as their first language, and 13 percent spoke a non-Charter language. More than three-quarters of carded athletes identified as Anglophones. Although the percentage of carded athletes who are immigrants to Canada nearly matches the national average of 16 percent in 1986, more than half of the athletes representing Canada were born in Ontario and Québec. Carded athletes grew up in privileged households, with 35 percent of their parents attaining higher levels of education than the national average (14 percent). More than half of athletes' fathers and nearly a third of mothers were white-collar professionals.[399] Equal opportunities for Canadians from different socioeconomic backgrounds remained out of reach for those wanting to pursue high-performance sports or recreation and fitness.

By the late 1980s and early 1990s, financial realities for Canadian high-performance athletes meant they required assistance from family members and the federal government to realize their athletic dreams. Training and competing required considerable devotion of time, energy, and money. The federal government, through Sport Canada, was only willing to invest in the most promising athletes competing in popular sports. The creation of the carding system

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[398] Minister's Task Force on Federal Sport Policy, *Sport: The Way Ahead*, 218.
[399] Sport Canada, *The Status of the High-Performance Athlete in Canada: Final Report*, 44-45.

was the predominant method of organizing athletes' abilities and how much money they deserved. The top two tiers – A and B cards – were assigned to athletes who could finish in the top third or half in their sport discipline. The C and D card classifications were assigned to those with the potential to reach higher levels.[400] An athlete's carding status would be re-evaluated every twelve months, except for A cardholders, which lasted for two years.[401] In 1987, carded athletes training and competing internationally were entitled to receive financial assistance to cover tuition, babysitting, relocation costs, and a monthly tax-free stipend of $150-$650.[402]

The Sport Canada Athlete Assistance Program [AAP] was strict about ensuring that athletes could commit to their rigorous training and competition schedules. Carded athletes were expected to spend thirty weeks out of the year in intensive training. During this period, an average of thirty-four hours per week was dedicated to training, meeting with sport scientists and coaches, travelling, competing, and recovering.[403] Training did not stop in the offseason, as athletes typically spent seventeen hours each week for the remaining twenty-two weeks of the year.[404] The financial assistance did not include food, transportation, clothing, rent, coaching, or medical expenses, which remained the athlete's responsibility to pay.[405] In addition to this regular source of income, athletes would also receive a stipend based on their achievement. Under this agreement, the athlete essentially became an employee of the state, which invested in

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[400] Minister of State for Fitness and Amateur Sport, *Sport Canada Athlete Assistance Program, Policy and Guidelines, 1986-1987*, (Ottawa: Government of Canada, 1986), 10-11.
[401] *Ibid*., 12.
[402] *Ibid*., 195.
[403] Sport Canada, Fitness and Amateur Sport, Government of Canada, *The Status of the High-Performance Athlete in Canada: Final Report*, By Ekos Research Associates Inc., (Ottawa: Government of Canada, Fitness and Amateur Sport, 1992), 163-164.
[404] *Ibid*., 275.
[405] Minister of State for Fitness and Amateur Sport, *Sport Canada Athlete Assistance Program, Policy and Guidelines, 1986-1987*, 14.

the athlete's future potential. If they did not meet their expectations, the sport system ensured there was always another highly motivated younger athlete waiting to take their place.

By the 1990s, there were several thousand high-performance athletes at the top of the national sport pyramid. This premier group received the greatest media and government attention when national pride was on the line. These athletes would train and compete in relative obscurity in the months leading up to such a moment. They were followed by millions of registered athletes competing at different levels in Canada. As competition became more intense, Canadian athletes were required to devote more time and energy to training at the best facilities. In many cases, they had to travel abroad to accomplish this.[406]

In many cases, athletes would have to relocate to train at a high-performance centre for at least six months out of the year.[407] Athletes who wanted to commit to travelling, even across Canada, for training opportunities had to consider the difficult circumstances of distancing themselves from friends and family. The relocation decision for young adults was made even worse for those with family responsibilities. In some cases, athletes chose to retire and focus on their families before they reached their peak athletic ability.[408] The reality for high-performance athletes beyond the bright lights of competition was gruelling and fraught with difficult personal decisions.

An Ekos Research survey found that, as a group, Canadian carded athletes lacked the diversity found in the general population. In 1992, the *Status of High-Performance Athlete in Canada Study* created a profile of the country's high-performance athletes based on responses

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[406] Sport Canada, Fitness and Amateur Sport, Government of Canada, *The Status of the High-Performance Athlete in Canada: Final Report*, by Ekos Research Associates Inc., 1-2.
[407] *Ibid*., 169.
[408] *Ibid*., 59.

from over 1,000 survey respondents. One theme from their findings was a "socioeconomic segmentation" in the sports system. For the most part, Canadian high-performance athletes came from financially stable families and were well educated themselves. They believed that they could catch up academically and economically with their peers after retiring from sports.

Meanwhile, the socioeconomically disadvantaged were more likely to be hindered by economic barriers and to choose a non-sport career rather than make greater financial sacrifices to train.[409] The majority indicated that they were male, anglophone, and 24 years old and younger. Parents of carded athletes commonly obtained higher educational and occupational levels, and the athletes themselves were normally better educated than the average Canadian in their age group. The majority of Canadian-born high-performance athletes grew up in Ontario and Québec, followed by British Columbia and then Alberta. Although 61 percent of the general Canadian population were anglophones, 78 percent of respondents identified as anglophones.[410] These figures were even higher among retired athletes at the time of the survey, with 84 percent anglophones and 42 percent born in Ontario.[411] Scholars have characterized the carded athletes represented in this survey as the first generation raised within Canada's sport system since the reforms offered in John Munro's 1970 *Proposed Sport Policy*.[412]

Access to financial support beyond government training assistance was a luxury not equally available to every athlete. By 1992, only 16 percent reported not having to rely on financial support from friends or family to keep up with their training and competition schedules.

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[409] Sport Canada, Fitness and Amateur Sport, Government of Canada, *The Status of the High-Performance Athlete in Canada: Final Report*, By Ekos Research Associates Inc., 286.
[410] *Ibid*., 44-45.
[411] *Ibid*., 50.
[412] Rob Beamish, "The Persistence of Inequality: An Analysis of Participation Patterns Among Canada's High-Performance Athletes," *International Review for the Sociology of Sport* 25, no. 2 (January 1990): 145.

This was possible, in many cases, because families were typically of a higher socioeconomic status than average.[413] Compared to their demographic cohort in the civilian workforce, male athletes had a lower average annual income of $15,979, while women athletes had an average annual income $3,685 lower than their peers.[414] Over half of their annual personal income came from non-sport sources, including scholarships, employment and financial support from family.[415] Athletes stated they required an average total income of $5,000 above their current income to adequately cover personal and athletic costs.[416] Researchers found that financial stress was directly linked to lower athletic performance. Athletes who were concerned about their finances were nearly three times more likely to report chronic fatigue than those who were satisfied.[417] Nearly three-quarters of athletes surveyed in 1995 believed that the federal government should increase financial AAP support to levels comparable to the average Canadian's personal income.[418] This shows that athletes from poorer families had been forced out of the system due to the high financial demands. It is widely accepted that sports can teach young people discipline, goal setting, commitment, pride, teamwork, responsibility, and leadership. However, with a quarter of Canadian households in 1987 living below the poverty line and even higher rates among Indigenous communities, access and equity issues were more acute among poorer families.[419]

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[413] Minister's Task Force on Federal Sport Policy, *Sport: The Way Ahead*, 58-60.
[414] *Ibid*., 199.
[415] Sport Canada, Fitness and Amateur Sport, Government of Canada, *The Status of the High-Performance Athlete in Canada: Final Report*, By Ekos Research Associates Inc., 156.
[416] *Ibid*., 129.
[417] *Ibid*., 133.
[418] Sport Canada. *1996 Status of the High-Performance Athlete Survey, Tracking Study* (Hull, Québec: Government of Canada, 1998), 33.
[419] Minister's Task Force on Federal Sport Policy, *Sport: The Way Ahead - An Overview of the Task Force Report*, (Ottawa: Government of Canada, 1992), 165.

Between 1993 and 2003, Prime Minister Jean Chrétien profoundly affected the fitness and sports systems already struggling with equity by adopting neoliberal practices, such as cutting or limiting federal programs to eliminate budget deficits in Canada. Chrétien continued the neoliberal practices first introduced in Canada by Brian Mulroney during his tenure as prime minister in the 1980s. Responsibilities for fitness and health were decentralized from the government's purview to the individual.[420] In a neoliberal society like Canada, where public funding for school and community recreational programs was limited, parents were expected to shoulder the financial burden of developing talented athletes. This included parents covering the costs of coaching, equipment, and travel until their child was selected to compete at higher levels of the national system.[421] Following decades of welfare state expansion that created an extensive state bureaucracy, Ottawa focused on reducing budget deficits and limiting spending on social programs. In turn, national sport and multi-sport organizations were instructed to seek private sponsorship. However, this led to underprivileged groups encountering greater social exclusion.[422]

The federal government reassessed its strategy for financing high-performance sport by seeking efficiencies and providing greater support to those most likely to succeed. The 1992 Task Force's assessment of the Canadian sport system recommended efficiently targeting specific sports for investment. Government assistance was directed towards athletes with a track record of success and participation in culturally significant sports.[423] These developments also coincided with the 1993 reorganization of the fitness portfolio to the Department of Health

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[420] Peter Donnelly, "Sport Participation," in *Sport Policy in Canada*, 184.
[421] *Ibid*., 187.
[422] Gina S. Comeau, "The Evolution of Canadian Sport Policy," *International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics* 5, no. 1 (March 2013): 83.
[423] Minister's Task Force on Federal Sport Policy, *Sport: The Way Ahead*, 210.

Canada and Sport Canada to the newly formed Department of Canadian Heritage. In the 1990s, Sport Canada's funding exceeded allocations to Fitness Canada by up to 9:1. This was in line with the belief that investing in high-performance sport, hosting international sports events, and winning medals could inspire the nation. Domestic pride and international prestige were among the intended outcomes of sporting excellence. Another expected by-product was a trickle-down of interest in mass participation in sport among Canadians.[424] However, this goal did not translate into realistic outcomes because fitness and recreational sport were not as accessible as they should have been. In national surveys conducted for Canadian Heritage between 1992 and 2010, sport participation rates among Canadians 15 years of age and older steadily decreased from a peak of 45 percent to 26 percent.[425] High-performance sports have received greater attention as the Canadian government has focused more on pursuing success in high-profile competitions such as the Olympic Games.[426]

Equity with "Mass Participation" and ParticipACTION

The Canadian government used the "mass participation" tagline as an attainable policy objective and attempted to include every Canadian in its fitness programming. However, with fitness programs remaining largely inaccessible to the underprivileged, federal objectives remained vague, and their promises fell short in execution. Peter Donnelly, a scholar of sport policy and politics, argues that federal involvement in mass participation was problematic. Provincial governments retained jurisdictional authority over fitness, recreation, and mass sport,

[424] Peter Donnelly, "Sport Participation," in *Sport Policy in Canada*, 186.
[425] Canadian Heritage, *Sport Participation 2010 Research Paper* (Ottawa: Statistics Canada, 2013), 8.
[426] Regan, *A Challenge to the Nation*, 10.

leaving the federal government in a supportive role. For the federal government, there was more to gain politically from investing in high-performance sport than from investing in fitness. However, this focus on high-performance sport led to the neglect of mass-participation programs and facility construction, which could have significantly improved public health. While Canada proclaimed "sport for all" as an objective, it was not treated as a right, so there had not been a concerted effort to build recreational facilities in the decades since the centennial confederation celebrations of 1967.[427] Even Canada's national fitness promotion agency, ParticipACTION, created public service advertisements that rarely depicted Canada's diversity. One reason for this was that mass participation, and the government support necessary for it to exist, was not compatible with the neoliberal practices used by Canadian governments at the turn of the twenty-first century. Mass participation required greater involvement by the federal government than neoliberal politicians provided. Canada's vast geography, regional disparities, and convoluted jurisdictional responsibilities were strained further by poor planning, limited national research, vague objectives, and insufficient resources, leaving communities to organize their own resources to renovate or construct recreational facilities.[428]

As explored in Chapter 2, ParticipACTION's public service announcements motivated Canadians to participate in fitness because it was fun rather than warning about the likelihood of heart disease from inactivity. The messaging tried to be more inclusive than sports, as participants were not asked to pay for registration or equipment. Everyone, regardless of age, ethnicity, gender, ability level, or socioeconomic status, was encouraged to get up, go outside,

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[427] Peter Donnelly, "Sport Participation," in *Sport Policy in Canada*, eds. Lucie Thibault and Jean Harvey, Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 2013), 179-180.
[428] *Ibid*., 179-180.

and have fun moving at any pace.[429] Nevertheless, ParticipACTION's president and chief executive officer, Russ Kisby, admitted that middle-class Canadians were more involved in the fitness boom by the end of the twentieth century. Therefore, ParticipACTION still had to prioritize lower-income communities.[430] This lack of representation led Hal Johnson and Joanne McLeod, two of the most recognizable spokespeople for ParticipACTION, to spearhead their own fitness promotion. Canada's fitness and sports programs failed to go far enough to achieve the federal government's intended goals of promoting social inclusion, instead allowing a grassroots movement to fill this gap with fitness programs and pressure the federal government to enact more inclusive policies.

While the national fitness and sport system was failing marginalized Canadians, Hal Johnson and Joanne McLeod were among the few who did not stand by silently. Hal Johnson and Joanne McLeod filled a gap in ParticipACTION's messaging by highlighting participation by people from diverse ethnic backgrounds and ability levels. Johnson has since revealed that his desire to create fitness public service announcements for Canadians was an effort to combat racism. Together with McLeod, they chose to begin their own grassroots fitness promotion program to raise awareness of their struggles and ensure greater access for all Canadians. Johnson and McLeod were motivated to develop *Body Break* following racial incidents in sports broadcasting. In a 2020 interview with journalist Jessica Patton, Johnson recalled losing his job offer at The Sports Network [TSN] in Toronto because executives did not believe the company needed another Black reporter. Only ParticipACTION agreed to support the fitness infomercials

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[429] Francois Lagarde, "The Mouse Under the Microscope: Keys to ParticipACTION's Success," *Canadian Journal of Public Health*95 (2004): S21.

[430] Wilfred List, "ParticipACTION Still Pushing Fitness 60-Year-Old Swede no Longer has the Best of Canadians," *The Globe and Mail*, Jan 29, 1988.

from the forty-two production companies they approached. Johnson and McLeod also identified a gap in fitness promotion, which needed more diverse voices in its messaging. ParticipACTION supported the dream of using fitness to encourage all Canadians – regardless of background or ability level – to live, work and play together. ParticipACTION provided Body Break with the national audience for three years to gain a consistent following. Then, Hal Johnson and Joanne MacLeod moved on to produce episodes on their own. At its peak in its nearly thirty-year lifespan, *Body Break* videos were played 1,500-1,800 times per week on multiple Canadian broadcast channels.[431]

One component of bringing Canadians together involved diverse representation among fitness leaders. In the 1980s, Hal Johnson and Joanne McLeod wanted to create a fitness promotion campaign that appealed to Canada's diverse population. Through their partnership with ParticipACTION, the Johnson and McLeod's Body Break program successfully promoted the benefits of a physically active lifestyle. This satisfied some of the demands to balance Canada's national fitness and sport system while the federal government's attention was preoccupied by high-performance sport.

Johnson and McLeod were among the leaders to fill the void left by the federal government by organizing grassroots programs such as *Body Break* to encourage all Canadians to be active. In turn-of-the-twenty-first-century Canada, the reality of mass participation did not deal with inclusivity. Canadian policies did not sufficiently support communities in offering programs that included everyone. In the first decade of the new century, officials became fixated

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[431] Jessica Patton, "Hal Johnson Says BodyBreak Was Created to Combat Racism," *Global News*, June 16, 2020, Accessed December 03, 2020. https://globalnews.ca/news/7071438/bodybreaks-hal-johnson-racism/?fbclid=IwAR1PcAoF0jWuwGG3R9G8mQiRfb3rXcdyLeqWo5ouuBdA4WP71dPdd1hMC2c.

on preparing to host the world for the Winter Olympics in 2010, an exclusionary event that promised to benefit everyone.

Evolution of Sport Policy for Indigenous Peoples, 1980-2006

Starting in the early 1980s, there was growing interest among Indigenous leaders in forming an organization to advance Indigenous sport in Canada. The importance of such a plan became even more evident following the publication of Gerald Regan's *A Challenge to the Nation* in 1981. As the Minister of Amateur Sport, Regan failed to mention Indigenous peoples as recipients of federal funding and instead directed ever more resources to the pursuit of high-performance excellence.[432] The 1992 Task Force on Federal Sport Policy also failed to address the presence of Indigenous sports in Canada, because it was more concerned with integrating Indigenous athletes into the mainstream Canadian sports system.[433]

In 1995, the Aboriginal Sports Circle [ASC] filled the void as the national voice advocating for the participation of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples in fitness and sport in Canada.[434] They worked to create sporting spaces that celebrated Indigenous cultural and sporting traditions. Events such as the North American Indigenous Games, which brought together Indigenous athletes from thirteen provinces and territories in Canada and thirteen regions in the United States of America, provided opportunities for cultural exchange among Indigenous youth. The Canadian government was minimally involved in organizing these events. Requiring athletes to be of Indigenous heritage fostered pride in their Indigenous identity

[432] Sport Canada. *Sport Canada's Policy on Aboriginal Peoples Participation in Sport*, 12-13.
[433] Minister's Task Force on Federal Sport Policy, *Sport: The Way Ahead*, 159.
[434] Sport Canada. *Sport Canada's Policy on Aboriginal Peoples Participation in Sport*, 12-13.

through sporting competitions and associated cultural programs.[435] This would, in turn, make space for role models. Indigenous youths could grow up cheering for athletes who reflected their own cultural identity. Given that Indigenous athletes were not welcome or valued within the national system, the Aboriginal Sports Circle created a space that promoted cultural solidarity outside the mainstream. The Aboriginal Sports Circle bridged the gap left by ineffective federal policy by fostering cultural solidarity and creating opportunities for Indigenous athletes beyond the mainstream system.

The release of *Sport Canada's Policy on Aboriginal Peoples Participation in Sport* in 2005 marked a formal commitment by the federal government to include Indigenous peoples in the national fitness and sport system. While the *Policy on Aboriginal Peoples* promised to fund Indigenous sport organizations and events such as the Aboriginal Sports Circle and the North American Indigenous Games, its scope was limited.[436] Scholars of Indigenous physical cultures and sport-based power relations, Janice Forsyth and Victoria Paraschak, argue that because this was a Canadian Heritage departmental policy, it lacked coordination with other federal ministries, such as Indigenous and Northern Affairs and Health Canada.[437] Therefore, the unequal power relations between the federal government and Indigenous nations remained unaltered with *Sport Canada's Policy on Aboriginal Peoples Participation in Sport*, as exemplified by its failure to include the history of lacrosse in the policy document.[438] Indigenous

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[435] Paraschak, "Aboriginal Peoples and the Construction of Canadian Sport Policy," 104-105.
[436] Janice Forsyth and Victoria Paraschak, "The Double Helix – Aboriginal People and Sport Policy in Canada," in *Sport Policy in Canada*, eds. Lucie Thibault and Jean Harvey, (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 2013), 281.
[437] *Ibid*., 275.
[438] Victoria Paraschak, "Aboriginal Peoples and the Construction of Canadian Sport Policy," in *Aboriginal Peoples and Sport in Canada: Historical Foundations and Contemporary Issues* eds. Janice Forsyth, and Audrey R. Giles (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2012), 116.

nations had played lacrosse for centuries, and in 1994, the Government of Canada adopted it as one of its national sports. *Sport Canada's Policy on Aboriginal Peoples Participation in Sport* concluded by stating, "This policy aims to drive the actions necessary to create and maintain an inclusive Canadian sports system that supports Aboriginal participation in sport from playground to podium." The policy declared the government's intention to assist Indigenous athletes in competing and achieving victories on the world stage. To achieve the goals of the earlier *Canadian Sport Policy*, the realities, barriers, and values of Indigenous peoples had to be addressed. However, *Sport Canada's Policy on Aboriginal Peoples Participation in Sport* consistently referenced Euro-Canadian sports as contributing to Canadian culture, society, and identity rather than highlighting Indigenous culture, sports, and achievements.[439]

Sociologist Victoria Paraschak states that *Sport Canada's Policy on Aboriginal Peoples Participation in Sport* privileged mainstream sports while minimizing the value of Indigenous approaches to sport.[440] Including more stakeholders, especially Indigenous leaders, in devising the Policy would have made it more feasible to approach the systemic barriers to participation. Underlying these barriers was the implication that Indigenous peoples were not integrating into the mainstream sport system as Sport Canada had planned.

In a policy document intended to provide for greater opportunities for Indigenous peoples to participate in sport in Canada, there was a whitewashing of history which ignored any previous contributions Indigenous people made. Rather than acting as a policy document to support Indigenous peoples in participating in popular Indigenous sports, the government used language that aimed to assimilate Indigenous peoples, imposing its own vision on them – one

[439] Sport Canada, *Sport Canada's Policy on Aboriginal Peoples Participation in Sport*, 8.
[440] Victoria Paraschak, "Aboriginal Peoples and the Construction of Canadian Sport Policy," 96.

that primarily served Canada's interests in cultural diplomacy. *Sport Canada's Policy on Aboriginal Peoples Participation in Sport* sought to promote greater inclusion of Indigenous peoples in the national fitness and sport system, but it revealed deeper problems regarding the place of Indigenous peoples in Canada. The federal government's intentions did not align with the realities of fitness and sport for Indigenous peoples.

Evolution of Sport Policy for People Living with Disabilities, 1980-2006

The disparity between high performance and recreation was particularly evident among athletes with disabilities. Sport had been perceived as a way to gauge one's physical prowess. Disability sport scholars Karen DePauw and Susan Gavron show that people living with disabilities struggled to gain recognition as capable athletes. Those who could not measure up to this apparent ideal typically faced physical exclusion from sport and social exclusion from society.[441] Some of the barriers faced by people living with disabilities included a lack of access to sport facilities, a lack of coaches and training programs, a lack of experiences to introduce individuals to sport, and a lack of formal organized sport programs. This placed greater importance on visible role models who overcame all the barriers. Role models could simultaneously expose systemic problems and inspire people living with disabilities.[442] Therefore, it became important for the federal government to assist Canadians living with disabilities to achieve their athletic dreams.

In the 1980s, the Minister of State for Fitness and Amateur Sport also oversaw athletic programming for Canadians living with disabilities. Without specifying targeted goals, Gerald

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[441] Karen P., DePauw, and Susan J. Gavron, *Disability Sport*, 2nd ed., (Windsor: Human Kinetics, 2005), 9.
[442] *Ibid*., 13-14.

Regan affirmed that more attention would be paid to help more sportspeople living with disabilities train and compete at the highest levels. This was especially important because 1981 was declared the United Nations International Year of Disabled Persons.[443] Fitness Canada also developed a new participation skills development program to ensure the active involvement of all Canadians.[444] Also in 1981, the Canadian Federation of Sport Organizations for the Disabled [CFSOD] was formally incorporated. Its mandate was to coordinate, promote and facilitate sport for Canadians living with disabilities among member organizations, including the Canadian Blind Sports Association, the Canadian Deaf Sports Association, the Canadian Wheelchair Sports Association, the Canadian Amputee Sports Association, and the Canadian Cerebral Palsy Sports Association.[445]

The CFSOD continued to serve as the coordinating agency for disability sport until a federal restructuring in fitness and sport in 1993. As a result, the Canadian Paralympic Committee [CPC] became a not-for-profit organization and was recognized by the International Paralympic Committee [IPC] as the National Paralympic Committee of Canada.[446] Every four years, high-performance athletes living with physical disabilities competed at the Paralympics. The CPC oversaw Canada's athletes participating in the Paralympics, held in the same venues used by able-bodied Olympians beginning in Seoul, South Korea, in 1988 for the Summer Games and in Lillehammer, Norway, in 1994 for the Winter Games.[447] Fundamental issues however, remained in introducing Canadians marginalized by gender and physical ability to

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[443] DePauw, and Gavron, *Disability Sport*, 12.
[444] Gerald A. Regan, *A Challenge to the Nation: Fitness and Amateur Sport in the 80s* (Ottawa: Ministry of Fitness and Amateur Sport, 1981), 19-20.
[445] DePauw, and Gavron, *Disability Sport*, 123-124.
[446] *Ibid*., 123 -124.
[447] DePauw, and Gavron, *Disability Sport*, 136.

sport. Results from the 1986-88 national survey on physical activity for women with disabilities identified limited awareness by participants about programs in their area. Among those who were aware, very few were satisfied with the type of activities available. The most common barriers to participation included time constraints, inaccessible facilities, transportation problems, and a lack of available information.[448] In addition, sports for people with disabilities typically focused on the athlete's disability rather than their athletic skill.[449]

As mentioned earlier, Canadians in the 1980s drew inspiration from the accomplishments of Terry Fox and Rick Hansen, who raised public awareness through their fundraising campaigns. Although the CFSOD coordinated sport competitions to demonstrate the athleticism of Canadians living with disabilities, themes of excellence dominated public discourse. The Paralympics allowed Canadians to participate in the activities they enjoyed within the mainstream sport system. Despite the creation of the Canadian Paralympic Committee and the popularity of the Paralympics, attracting millions of viewers by the twenty-first century, the federal government needed a national plan to address the needs of para-athletes. However, creating sport policies or legislation did not guarantee that inequities in the fitness and sport system would be solved. The government sought to encourage opportunities for Canadians living with disabilities to participate in fitness and sport, yet it remained unclear how this could be achieved.

As a result of these disparities, there was also an attempt to address the barriers faced by Canadians living with disabilities in federal sport policy. Viewing sport as a reflection of society meant that politicians could translate lessons learned into broader societal applications by

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[448] *Ibid*., 258-259.
[449] *Ibid*., 135.

identifying barriers in sport. A newly elected Conservative government in 2006, led by Prime Minister Stephen Harper, tried to separate itself from previous Liberal governments, which had held power since 1993. The Liberals had created the Department of Heritage as part of the federal departmental reorganization and released the country's first *National Sport Policy.* The Harper-led Conservatives were quick to create sport policies that targeted groups who were struggling to benefit from the national fitness and sport system. In the Minister's Foreword to the *Policy on Sport for Persons with a Disability*, Michael Chong, Minister of Sport, wrote, "Canada's new government is committed to developing sport in Canada." According to Chong, the policy dealt with the environmental, personal, social, systemic, and structural barriers that impeded Canadians living with disabilities from being complete participants in society. In 2006, the *Policy on Sport for Persons with a Disability* sought to include more Canadians in the national fitness and sport system for cultural diplomatic purposes. For the first time, the federal government tried to include Canadians who were living with disabilities and had not directly benefitted from the *Canadian Sport Policy.* This should have satisfied public diplomatic goals. The *Policy on Sport for Persons with a Disability* stated that people living with disabilities were welcome to participate in Canadian sport based on their level of interest and ability. The four objectives for the Policy began with enhanced participation, followed directly by enhanced excellence, enhanced capacity, and enhanced interaction. This policy was compatible with Sport Canada's Excellence Strategy by improving talent identification, development, coaching, sport medicine, and competition opportunities with the expectation of improved results at the Paralympic Games.[450] However, emphasizing excellence at the Paralympics as a goal of the *Policy on Sport for Persons with a Disability* reflected Canada's cultural diplomacy ambitions.

[450] Canada, Ministry of Sport, *Policy on Sport for Persons with a Disability* (Ottawa, June 2006).

Accordingly, alongside other sport policies released in the early twenty-first century, this approach also relegated social inclusion to a welcome but secondary priority.

The *Policy on Sport for Persons with a Disability* was developed as a one-size-fits-all plan to include everyone with disabilities. It was meant to address the needs of Canadians living with a disability who could not find their needs addressed in the umbrella document of the *Canadian Sport Policy*. However, by defining "sport for persons with a disability" in broad terms as sport at all levels and for all people living with a disability, it excluded some individuals who needed targeted interventions. The order of the Policy's objectives was significant. Although it began with rhetoric about participation and encouraged more people to engage in sport, the focus quickly shifted towards sporting excellence. For example, the second objective of the document was to achieve "enhanced excellence," which aligned with the federal government's guiding principle of "sport champions excellence" outlined in the *Canadian Sport Policy*. This objective also coincided with the growing media coverage and increased funding for Paralympic programs across Canada. Through this Policy, the federal government was trying to exercise cultural diplomacy by suggesting that wider inclusion in the national fitness and sport system would lead to high-performance sporting success.[451] However, the focus on high-performance excellence distracted from the implementation of inclusive programming for another equity-seeking group.

Evolution of Sport Policy for Women, 1980-2010

The federal government also sought to address gender disparities in sports by promoting greater female participation, though with limited success. After generations of being cast aside

[451] Canada, Ministry of Sport, *Policy on Sport for Persons with a Disability* (Ottawa, June 2006).

into gender-specific roles as supporters and spectators, the federal government sought to encourage more women to participate in sport. As *A Report on Physical Recreation, Fitness and Amateur Sport in Canada* noted in 1969, the relationship between a woman's fitness level and chronic illnesses, such as back pain, headaches, and fatigue was well documented. However, women's fitness levels in Canada had declined with each generation since the Second World War.[452] Women in post-war Canada had little opportunity to participate in organized sports activities. In addition to strict feminine ideals counselling against excessive exercise, women were expected to assume most domestic responsibilities and had less disposable income for equipment and registration fees.[453] Despite the release of federal policies that emphasized greater inclusion, women continued to face social exclusion when accessing the national fitness and sport system.

In the 1970s and 1980s, Canadian federal sport policy finally included women as a target audience, with the goal of achieving equality for women and men in the country's fitness and sport system. Gender discrimination has denied equal opportunities for women to participate on a scale comparable to men. It was a disparity that drew attention after 1975, when the United Nations declared it International Women's Year, and in 1981, when Canada added sexual equality and anti-discrimination laws to the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Several programs and organizations were formed to encourage more women to participate in fitness and sports. Between 1960 and 1984, the IOC added four winter and forty-two summer Olympic events for

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[452] P.S. Ross, & Partners, *A Report on Physical Recreation, Fitness and Amateur Sport in Canada*, 216.

[453] Gina S. Comeau, "The Evolution of Canadian Sport Policy," *International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics* 5, no. 1 (March 2013): 79.

women while creating ten winter and twenty-nine summer events for men.[454] Ottawa officially recognized the need to engage women in fitness and sports once it became apparent that their success could enhance cultural diplomacy.

The Canadian Association for the Advancement of Women and Sport [CAAW&S] originated from community-based advocacy efforts to address gender disparities in fitness and sports. It was founded in 1981 as a non-profit organization and eventually received some funding from the federal Fitness and Amateur Sport Branch. Its mandate was to "promote, develop and advocate a feminist perspective on women and sport."[455] In 1986, the federal government introduced the *Sport Canada Policy on Women in Sport,* which exclusively focused on supporting women through the national fitness and sport system. Gender discrimination still denied equal opportunities for women to participate on a comparable scale as men. Several programs and organizations were formed to encourage more women to participate in fitness and sport. The Fitness and Amateur Sport Women's Program received $250,000 to research the presence of women in fitness and sport in Canada. They found that women were more prominent in the middle and lower end of a sport's organizational structure. This meant that they were involved in carrying out directives but not present in the decision-making process. These findings led to the creation of the Internship Program for Women Athletes and the National Association Contributions Program. The Internship Program was initially intended to support prospective women administrators for sport management positions within national sports associations. The Women in Fitness and Sport Leadership Program expanded to include courses

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[454] Bruce Kidd, "The Elite Athlete," in *Not Just a Game: Essays in Canadian Sport Sociology*, eds., Jean Harvey, and Hart Cantelon (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press), 302.

[455] Minister of State for Fitness and Amateur Sport, *Sport Canada Policy on Women in Sport* (Ottawa: Government of Canada, 1986), 7-8.

for potential women coaches at the national level. The National Association Contributions Program cast a broader net to encourage girls and women to participate in fitness and sports at every level in Canada.[456] The creation of policies and organizations attempted to address gender equity in fitness and sport, but there were no easy solutions to systemic problems.

In 1992, more than thirty years after the passage of the *Fitness and Amateur Sport Act*, the General Social Survey reported that Canada reached a peak in national participation in physical activity. Forty-five percent of Canadians 15 years of age and older regularly participated in organized sport and recreation.[457] However, the Minister of State for Fitness and Amateur Sport's Task Force on Federal Sport Policy concluded that Canada's sport system still lacked equity and access. Common barriers to participation persisted, including few leaders from diverse groups, limited connections to introduce poorer communities to mainstream sport, and widespread discrimination. For example, at the turn of the twenty-first century, more women were left outside the sport system, as demonstrated by the ongoing disparity in participation rates between men and women, which grew from 14 percent in 1992 to 19 percent in 2010.[458] The Minister of State for Fitness and Amateur Sport's Task Force on Federal Sport Policy concluded that Canada's sport system was lacking in its level of equity and access. Common barriers to participation included a lack of diversity among leaders, limited connections to promote coordination between poorer communities and mainstream sport, and widespread discrimination. Despite the creation of the *Policy on Women in Sport* six years earlier, the Task

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[456] *Minister of State for Fitness and Amateur Sport, Sport Canada Policy on Women in Sport*, 9.

[457] Peter Donnelly, "Sport Participation," in *Sport Policy in Canada*, eds. Lucie Thibault and Jean Harvey, Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 2013), 184.

[458] Sport Canada, Fitness and Amateur Sport, Government of Canada, *The Status of the High-Performance Athlete in Canada: Final Report*, By Ekos Research Associates Inc (Ottawa: Government of Canada, Fitness and Amateur Sport, 1992), 149; Peter Donnelly, "Sport Participation," in *Sport Policy in Canada*, 182.

Force heard from women who still felt left out of the sport system.[459] Knowing the benefits of an active citizenry, federal budgets constrained by neoliberal politicians made it even more challenging to maintain quality fitness and sports programs for Canadians.

Political sociologist William Walters argues that one of the defining features of neoliberal ideology was that states had a limited capacity to support the social safety net and therefore demanded that citizens assume greater responsibility for their own wellbeing.[460] For a generation, the Canadian government was aware of the lack of equitable participation among women in the national fitness and sport system. Despite the release of a sport policy targeting women's inclusion, by the twenty-first century, the disparity in participation rates between men and women had grown, while national expectations and pressures on Canada's athletes to achieve success intensified.

In 2009, the federal government continued to release sport policies that included more people in Canada's fitness and sport system, this time focusing on supporting women and girls. The document, *Actively Engaged: A Policy on Sport for Women and Girls*, emphasized that the Department of Canadian Heritage, which oversaw sport among other cultural activities, was committed to providing quality sport experiences for women and girls. This was the first policy that sought to cultivate sport environments "from playground to podium" for girls and women to engage in sport as officials, coaches, athletes, and administrators.[461] This was the third policy released by the Department of Canadian Heritage that addressed an equity seeking group in the

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[459] Sport Canada, Fitness and Amateur Sport, Government of Canada, *The Status of the High-Performance Athlete in Canada: Final Report*, By Ekos Research Associates Inc., 149.

[460] William Walters, *Governmentality: Critical Encounters* (Milton, Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2012), 64.

[461] Canada, Ministry of Sport, *Actively Engaged: A Policy on Sport for Women and Girls* (Ottawa, January 2009), 6.

twenty-first century. It replaced the 1986 *Sport Canada Policy on Women in Sport* because, as the policy document states, the sport landscape had changed in several ways. Human rights cases allowed sport as a right for women and girls around the world.

Additionally, there were more opportunities for women to compete and "regularly achieve podium success" at Olympic and Paralympic Games. This policy was unveiled one year ahead of the 2010 Vancouver Winter Olympics, during which the largest contingent of Canadian women athletes would compete. *Actively Engaged* also cited a study of Fortune500 companies which revealed that companies with more women serving on the boards of directors outperformed those with fewer women.[462] Thus, it was not only important to encourage more women to participate in sport as athletes, but also to create leadership opportunities for women in sport. Sociologist of sport Parissa Safai argues that the under-representation of women in leadership positions and the consistently limited opportunities for them to be leaders, remained severe obstacles. This was happening while more women were participating as athletes at the higher levels than in the past and even approaching parity with men on Olympic teams in the twenty-first century.[463]

Observations by the Minister of State for Fitness and Amateur Sport, Jacques Olivier, about the benefit of investing in women's athletic training and development in 1984 remained true decades later. The policy document noted that by the 2006 Winter Olympics in Turin, women won sixteen out of Canada's twenty-four total medals. The federal government acknowledged that, while more women and girls were competing successfully at the highest

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[462] Canada, Ministry of Sport, *Actively Engaged: A Policy on Sport for Women and Girls* (Ottawa, January 2009), 4-5.

[463] Parissa Safai, "Women in Sport Policy," in *Sport Policy in Canada*, eds. Lucie Thibault and Jean Harvey, (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 2013), 341.

levels, the number of women coaching these athletes remained low.[464] As mentioned in the Introduction, politicians acknowledged the importance of investing in women's sports after it became apparent that Canadian women athletes were winning more medals than men. As athletes, women in the national fitness and sport system were seen to have greater potential as cultural ambassadors because they won more medals than their male counterparts.

This chapter examined how the Canadian government sought to promote public and cultural diplomacy by improving the national fitness and sport system. All of these sport policies demonstrated the growing importance of diversifying the federal government's investment in Indigenous peoples, people living with disabilities, and women. However, in the realm of public diplomacy, the sport policies failed to address the barriers marginalized Canadians face in accessing the national fitness and sport system. Instead, policies touted as inclusive for all primarily favoured those who could bring home medals and thereby accomplish Canada's cultural diplomacy objectives through high-performance sport. The federal government recognized the problems within the national fitness and sport system, and while it tried to create conditions for Canadians to overcome barriers to participation, and yet many were still excluded. By the second decade of the twenty-first century, the Canadian fitness and sport system still benefitted those who were privileged enough to participate.

The earliest justifications for federal intervention in fitness and sport from the 1960s were to alleviate pressure on Canada's healthcare system. However, by the end of the twentieth century, government, fitness, and sport programs and policies could no longer exist independently of high-performance excellence. Canada's fitness and sport system could not achieve its social goal of inclusivity because economic and political objectives took priority.

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[464] Canada, Ministry of Sport, *Actively Engaged: A Policy on Sport for Women and Girls*.

This lack of focus on inclusivity is a significant issue, as it has affected Canadians who grew up in this system over decades, resulting in a system that prioritized high-performance excellence over mass participation. Since 1961, the pursuit of excellence has dominated Canadian high-performance sports. Theories about improving accessibility and promoting inclusion became a mainstay in federal sport policies. However, the policies did not disrupt the ongoing emphasis on achieving international success. The importance of inclusivity in shaping a more equitable future cannot be overstated.[465]

Canadian sport policies in the twenty-first century were meant to address decreasing participation rates among an increasingly diverse population. However, the goals for the 2002 *Canadian Sport Policy* consistently focused on achieving sustainable excellence for future generations of athletes, even though it also claimed to address systemic equity issues. Sport policies targeting the needs of Indigenous peoples, women, and people living with disabilities were created as secondary ones to accompany the broader national policy.[466]

Between 1980 and 2010, the Canadian government was aware of the inequities within the fitness and sport system, but it did not adequately address what was required to allow all Canadians to gain entry. As a result, it faced greater disparities, social exclusion, and inequity. Again, politicians often prioritized high-performance sports goals over fitness and recreation domestically because they believed that achieving sport excellence would more likely increase Canada's prestige internationally.[467] Young Canadians may have been encouraged to dream about standing on the podium and hearing the national anthem with a gold medal around their

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[465] Comeau, Gina S. "The Evolution of Canadian Sport Policy." *International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics* 5, no. 1 (March 2013): 89.
[466] Thibault and Harvey, eds., *Sport Policy in Canada*, 334-335.
[467] Macintosh, and Whitson, *Game Planners: Transforming Canada's Sport System*, 183.

neck. However, that possibility was available only to those with certain economic, physical, social, geographic, and ethnic advantages. The programs, whether explicitly or implicitly, promoted a national identity that predominantly appealed to white middle-class Canadian men. The dream of any Canadian reaching the podium, promoted by sport leaders over the years, was accessible only to a minority of the population. However, fitness and high-performance sports in Canada still did not reflect the country's diverse population. For generations, Indigenous peoples, women, people living with disabilities, and people of colour were not welcomed within the national sport system as leaders or even participants. The economic barrier of covering the high costs of building facilities, acquiring equipment, and travelling prevented many Canadians from participating. Additionally, Indigenous peoples faced racism and high costs of participation, resulting in few sports or fitness programs available in Indigenous communities.[468] A more inclusive system could have tapped into the potential of all Canadians, fostering a stronger national identity that truly reflected Canada's diversity.

In the years following the Calgary 1988 Winter Olympics, politicians and sport officials tried to include more Canadians, including Indigenous peoples, women, and people living with disabilities to potentially create stronger public diplomacy. The next chapter will explore how, as Canada prepared to host the world for its second Winter Olympics, preference was given to high-performance excellence to ensure a Canadian athlete stood atop the podium in Canadian-hosted Games for the first time, thereby improving Canada's cultural diplomacy. By the time of the Vancouver 2010 Winter Olympics, a watered-down, harmonized version of Canada was being celebrated that did not match the lived reality of its athletes.

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[468] Munro, *A Proposed Sports Policy for Canadians*, 12-13.

## Chapter 5: Vancouver Olympics for Whom?

As has been argued, one way to promote Canada's international reputation in sport involved hosting an Olympic Games. As a host, Canada could enhance its cultural diplomacy abroad while also exercising public diplomacy domestically. However, during the Vancouver Winter Olympics, federal priorities continued to emphasize cultural diplomacy goals, shaping a specific image of Canada through a results-oriented focus on high-performance excellence. This chapter will examine efforts by the federal government and the Vancouver Olympic Organizing Committee [VANOC] to bring Canadians together in the country's second time hosting the Winter Games. Conveying Canada's unique national identity both domestically and internationally, began with the Olympic Torch Relay. Canadians braved the harsh winter weather to be part of the world's longest relay. Canada's chance to make an influential first impression for the twenty-first century came with the opening Ceremony in Vancouver. The city wanted to highlight favourable aspects of Canada, but they were not historically accurate.

This chapter will argue that, similar to the 1988 Winter Olympics, the 2010 Winter Olympics celebrated simplified aspects of Canada's past for a global audience. There were clashes between organizers who wanted to showcase Canada's culture for the twenty-first century and protest movements trying to raise awareness for the country's inequities. Nevertheless, the 2010 Vancouver Olympics were celebrated for the success of Canada's athletes, who not only ended an embarrassing streak by winning gold medals but also broke a record for the most gold medals won by any host nation.

Through the Torch Relay, cultural performances during Olympic ceremonies, and the achievements of Canada's athletes during the Games, Canadians had many opportunities to celebrate their country. Just as in Calgary, Vancouver's organizing committee incorporated

Indigenous participants from the surrounding area, without addressing outstanding environmental, economic, social, or political issues. Despite including the Four Host First Nations, objectors pointed to the appropriation of Indigenous symbols, the exploitation of natural resources on Indigenous lands and the underrepresentation of Indigenous peoples in positions of influence as realities ignored by the Canadian state. The cultural displays attempted to perpetuate a questionable history of harmony between Indigenous peoples and Canadian colonists.[469] Significantly, the portrayal of Canada's identity to the world did not represent Canada's diverse population.

Cultural and Public Diplomacy in the Vancouver 2010 Winter Olympic Torch Relay

The events leading up to the Vancouver 2010 Winter Olympic Games offered Canadians and the world an opportunity to learn what it meant to be Canadian. Unlike the Opening Ceremonies, the Torch Relay was an event in which Canadian officials balanced cultural and public diplomacy. Just as in Calgary in 1988, the Olympic Torch Relay was intended to galvanize Canadians' participation. In this sense, the Olympic Torch connected Canadians along the route in anticipation of the Games. As was the case with the Calgary Games, the increased media attention along the Torch Relay route also presented an opportunity for protests. However, once the Torch arrived in Vancouver for the Opening Ceremony, the objectives of influencing foreign perceptions of Canada abroad through high-performance sport prevailed.

The Torch Relay for the 2010 Winter Games began its journey in Canada on October 30, 2009, in Victoria, BC. The route was the longest domestic Torch Relay route in Olympic

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[469] Christine M. O'Bonswain, "Indigenous Peoples and Canadian-Hosted Olympic Games," in *Aboriginal Peoples and Sport in Canada: Historical Foundations and Contemporary Issues*, eds., Janice Forsyth, and Audrey R. Giles, (UBC Press, 2012), 59-60.

history, travelling two and a half times further and lasting eighteen days longer than the 18,000 kilometres over eighty-eight days for the Calgary Winter Olympics. For 106 days, from October 30, 2009, to February 12, 2010, over 12,000 people carried Vancouver's Olympic Torch across more than 45,000 kilometres in Canada. The Olympic Torch Relay travelled through each province and 1,000 communities across Canada. To ensure that the Olympic Torch did not simply pass through, local celebrations were organized in 189 of these communities. The federal Department of Canadian Heritage gave grants to communities through its Major Events and Celebrations Branch.[470] In a federal report, *Canada's Games*, the largest municipal pre-Olympic celebrations, attracted as many as 23,000 people at Parliament Hill, 20,000 people in Calgary and 12,000 people in Moncton. As with Calgary's Olympic Torch Relay, Vancouver's Olympic Flame was transported by diverse modes, representing the multitude of ways Canadians traversed the vast country. On land, people carried the Olympic Torch by hand and attached it to wheelchairs, horse-drawn carriages, cross-country skis, snowmobiles, and tractors. The Olympic Torch was flown to remote communities in Northern Canada, including Alert, Nunavut, the most northerly permanently inhabited community in the world. (The community of Alert is 414 kilometres closer to the North Pole than Inuvik, Northwest Territories, which welcomed the Olympic Flame in 1988.) Finally, the Olympic Torch was transported by water using kayaks, ferries, and canoes designed, built, and operated by Indigenous people. These diverse modes of transportation also allowed the Olympic Torch to reach 123 Indigenous communities. By expanding the Torch Relay route, more Canadians were able to see, experience, and celebrate the historic occasion of hosting the Winter Olympics than in 1988.[471]

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[470] Canadian Heritage, *Canada's Games: The Government of Canada and the 2010 Vancouver Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games* (Gatineau, Québec: Canadian Heritage, 2010), 48.
[471] *Ibid*., 51.

In 2010, there was an increased Indigenous presence during the Olympic Torch Relay. The festivities in Victoria began with the Four Host First Nations Chiefs (Musqueam, Squamish, Tsleil-Waututh, and Lil'wat) escorting the Olympic Flame to the stage in front of British Columbia's provincial legislature. Indigenous and Olympic historian Christine O'Bonsawin documented the role of Indigenous communities in the Olympic Torch Relay. Community torchbearers were selected specially to carry the Olympic Torch through their Indigenous territory. The Olympic Torch travelled through at least one First Nations, Métis, or Inuit community in each of Canada's provinces and territories. In British Columbia specifically, the Olympic Torch travelled through fifty communities, nearly half of the route's total. Eleven Youth Flame Attendants, seventy-one Language Torchbearers, and ten Hero Torchbearers accompanied the Olympic Flame. Local celebrations were held in each Indigenous community and included an Honorary Elder Fire Keeper who delivered welcome blessings and shared traditional teachings.[472] In addition to arranging for the Vancouver Olympic Torch to travel to more than 100 Indigenous communities across Canada, the Vancouver Organizing Committee's Aboriginal Torch Relay Program ensured that 600 Indigenous athletes, youth, and elders participated as torchbearers, flame attendants, or honorary firekeepers. Malcolm Crawford, a young athlete from the Musqueam First Nation, carried the Olympic Torch through the 2010 Aboriginal Pavilion in Vancouver.[473] Even though he was the final person to carry the Olympic Torch before the Opening Ceremony, the media focused more on the group of former Olympic athletes who brought it into BC Place and ignited the Olympic Cauldron. This group included

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[472] Christine M. O'Bonsawin, "Igniting a Resistance Movement Understanding Indigenous Opposition to the 2010 Olympic Torch Relay," *Problems, Possibilities, Promising Practices: Critical Dialogues on the Olympic and Paralympic Games* (2012): 100.

[473] Canadian Heritage, *Canada's Games*, 54.

para-athlete Rick Hansen, basketball player Steve Nash, speedskater Catriona Le May Doan, hockey player Wayne Gretzky, and alpine skier Nancy Greene. This was another example of high-performance sport role models being more valuable as cultural ambassadors because they were stronger symbols of Canadian cultural achievements and pride than those who participated in less competitive sports or fitness.

While significant public diplomacy was aimed at Canadian audiences, the Olympic Torch Relay also served as a vehicle for cultural diplomacy to foreign audiences. For example, the Canadian Tourism Commission saw the Relay as an opportunity to engage international media and highlight Canada's tourist destinations. They collaborated with the Vancouver Organizing Committee [VANOC] to choose fourteen torchbearers from "key global markets." The foreign-born torchbearers were selected based on the assumption that, as national icons in their own countries in sports, entertainment, and the media, they represented the Olympic spirit.[474] The Canadian Tourism Commission's *Olympic Games Tourism Strategy* targeted the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, France, Mexico, Japan, China, South Korea, and Australia because they had the highest potential to influence their country's perceptions of Canada by participating in the Olympic Torch Relay.[475] The Canadian Tourism Commission filmed the experiences of the foreign-born torchbearers as they traversed Canada's beautiful landscape and broadcasted the journey in their home country.[476]

The 2010 Olympic Torch Relay galvanized Canadians in support of the Vancouver Games, as was the case in Calgary. The Vancouver Organizing Committee's President, John

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[474] Canadian Heritage, *Canada's Games*, 121.
[475] Canadian Tourism Commission, *Leveraging Canada's Games: 2008-2012 Olympic Games Tourism Strategy* (Gatineau: Industry Canada, 2008), 6. https://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2008/ic/Iu86-39-2008E.pdf
[476] Canadian Heritage, *Canada's Games*, 121.

Furlong, argued that the extended route for 2010 generated stronger national support among Canadians than in 1988. Reflecting on the weeks leading up to the Opening Ceremony, as the Olympic Torch traversed across Canada, Furlong believes that "If we hadn't touched so many people with the relay, the reaction in Vancouver and across the country may not have been so powerful."[477] During the initial meetings to plan the route, Furlong's goal was to have the Olympic Torch travel within an hour's drive of nearly 95 percent of Canadians.[478]

In 2010, Canadians once again stepped outside their homes during the cold winter months to celebrate the forthcoming Olympic Games along the Torch Relay route and at community celebrations, just as they did in 1988. Journalists across Canada recorded the personal journeys and connections Canadians were making with each other and the Olympic Flame. Scott Haddow of the *Sudbury Star* reported on the expressions of community spirit when the Olympic Torch arrived in Sudbury, Ontario, on January 2, 2010. Despite the windchill reaching -37 degrees Celsius, nearly 6,000 people were outside to celebrate the Olympics together. Olympic swimmer Alex Baumann, who grew up in Sudbury, carried the Torch and lit the local cauldron. When he saw Baumann with the Olympic Torch, Haddow noted, "In an instant, the cold was gone. Replaced by a warm, fuzzy feeling of goodness and pride."[479] The excitement also returned when the Olympic Flame returned to Calgary twenty-two years later. The honour to carry the Olympic Torch for the first 300-metre leg of the fourteen-kilometre route through Calgary went to the last person to carry the Torch in 1988. Robyn Ainsworth (neé Perry) was twelve years old when she lit the Olympic Cauldron in McMahon Stadium to open the Games in 1988. She was

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[477] John Furlong, and Gary Mason, *Patriot Hearts: Inside the Olympics That Changed a Country* (Toronto: Douglas & McIntyre Publishers, 2011), 175.
[478] *Ibid*., 154.
[479] Scott Haddow, "Olympic Torch Relay Brings out Community Spirit," *Sudbury Star*, January 5, 2010.

among the thousands of proud Calgarians to welcome the Flame back to the city two decades later. In 2010, she was a 34-year-old newlywed with a deeper understanding of the privilege that comes with carrying the Torch. Ainsworth recognized her place in Calgary, Canadian, and sport history when she carried the Torch for the second time.[480] The Olympic Flame connected Canadians to each other, from coast to coast to coast, and the wider world. The Olympic Torch Relay served as a unifying influence for the domestic population.

As a result of the relay's public diplomacy, the Olympic Torch seemed to inspire Canadians to be proud of each other and their country, from small towns to large cities. Members of the travelling entourage also observed the various emotions Canadians displayed when they were near the Olympic Torch. Yvonne Zacharias, who worked for the *Star-Phoenix*, interviewed Victoria Police Sgt. Tony Parks, reflecting on his experiences escorting the Olympic Torch as he approached the end of the route. The twenty-year veteran rode his bike along the route, except on extremely cold days, through the northern territories, Saskatchewan, and northern Ontario, when wind chills reached -40 degrees Celsius. He was impressed to see prairie towns double in population when the Olympic Torch appeared. He noticed that people were consistently excited and overwhelmed by the Olympic Torch Relay. Parks commented that everyone was on their best behaviour, even the protestors who just wanted their message heard. Ahead of an international sporting competition, Canadians had the opportunity to personally connect with an Olympic symbol in their local community. There was potential for Canadians to gain a greater appreciation of their country. Parks mentioned that after his work with the Torch

[480] Valerie Fortney, "Torch Reignites Glory of '88; Torchbearers Relive Honour 22 Years Later," *Calgary Herald*, January 19, 2010.

Relay, his next vacation would likely be to revisit, with his family, some of the locales that were along the route.[481]

*National Post* journalist Shannon Proudfoot reported on the events as the Olympic Torch travelled through the northern Ontario towns of Dryden and Upsala. On January 3, 2010, dozens of people near Upsala, Ontario, braved -16-degree Celsius to run alongside the Olympic Torch and chant "Go Canada". By the time the Torch arrived in Dryden, Ontario, the following day, 2,000 people were waiting to show their Olympic spirit. Some families drove as much as three hours for the experience. The Darling family made the one-hour trip from Sioux Lookout, Ontario, and told Proudfoot what the Torch Relay meant to them. Glenda Darling said, "We appreciate anything from the national stage that makes it local." Brent Darling added, "It's the community spirit, which is a steppingstone for the national spirit."[482] These links between the local community and the national spirit made the Olympic Torch Relay a unique exercise in public diplomacy.

A positive nationalistic sentiment was not the only feeling onlookers had along the Olympic Torch Relay route. While Olympic supporters were eager to celebrate the Torch, detractors used the increased media coverage to publicise their grievances. As the Relay got underway in Victoria, BC, a demonstration organized by a group calling themselves "No 2010 Victoria" attracted 400 protestors to the streets, disrupting and diverting the route. Anti-Olympic sentiments focused on injustices and rights violations involving the British Columbian and Canadian governments' disregard for land sovereignty rights and treaties with Indigenous

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[481] Yvonne Zacharias, "Police Escort Kept Busy on Olympic Torch Relay," *Star-Phoenix*. January 27, 2010.

[482] Shannon Proudfoot, "Olympic Flame Draws 2,000; Torch Relay; Crowds Turn Out Chanting 'Go Canada,'" *National Post*, January 5, 2010.

communities. Protesters hoped that increased media coverage of Olympic events would raise awareness of their cause across Canada and abroad.[483] Similar to the hiring of Sykes Powderface for the Calgary Olympics in 1988, Phil Fontaine, former National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations, 1997-2009, was appointed by Olympic Torch Relay co-sponsor Royal Bank of Canada [RBC] as a Special Advisor on Indigenous issues. As in 1988, Indigenous protestors in 2010 objected to corporations using the Olympics to improve their image while they profited from intensive resource extraction on Indigenous lands. In this case, RBC invested in the Alberta Oil Sands, which protesters claimed violated Indigenous sovereignty and treaty rights. Anti-Olympics protestors in 2010 also tried to raise their ongoing sovereignty concerns regarding claims to unceded land in British Columbia.[484]

Eventually, most of the anti-Olympics protest groups, ranging from advocacy of Indigenous rights to opposing capitalism, merged under the slogan "No Olympics on Stolen Native Land." They wanted to remind Canadians that most of British Columbia existed on land not ceded to the Crown through negotiated treaties, as in other provinces. In other words, the theft of land and destruction of territory since the establishment of the mid-nineteenth-century colony continued to violate Indigenous sovereignty. Further along the Olympic Torch Relay route, anti-Olympic banners lined the roads, and protests led to the arrest of activists in many cities, including Fort Rupert, Guelph, Kahnawà:ke, Montréal, Oneida of the Thames, Six Nations of the Grand River, Spanish River, Toronto, and Vancouver.[485]

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[483] O'Bonsawin, "Igniting a Resistance Movement Understanding Indigenous Opposition to the 2010 Olympic Torch Relay," 99.
[484] *Ibid*., 101.
[485] *Ibid*., 101.

The closest potential for conflict came when the Olympic Torch was supposed to arrive in Kahnawà:ke. Representatives from the Mohawk Nation released statements expressing support for Indigenous nations in British Columbia, who had supported them twenty years earlier during the Oka Crisis. In the summer of 1990, Mohawk warriors faced off against Québec Provincial Police and the Canadian military in a tense standoff after they set up barricades to protest the expansion of a golf course on a sacred burial ground. Eventually, they reached a settlement that cancelled the planned developments on Kahnawà:ke territory.[486] The support they received from Indigenous communities across Canada during the Oka Crisis marked another instance of solidarity that appeared again in 2010.

As the Vancouver Olympic Torch approached Kahnawà:ke in December 2009, the Mohawk Nation rejected the RCMP escort. A negotiated settlement between VANOC and the Mohawk Council of Kahnawà:ke allowed the local policing unit to escort the Torch rather than the RCMP, which was regarded by many as a foreign, colonial police force.[487] In his memoir, VANOC President John Furlong glossed over the tension and focused on the successful outcome. Thus, he minimized the issues expressed by the Kahnawà:ke protesters. Furlong believed that seeing two-time Olympic canoeist Alwyn Morris carry the Olympic Torch through Kahnawà:ke would remain in the children's memories for years.[488] The role of Indigenous peoples in the Torch Relay and through their acts of protest drew national and international attention.

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[486] O'Bonsawin, "Igniting a Resistance Movement Understanding Indigenous Opposition to the 2010 Olympic Torch Relay," 112.
[487] *Ibid*., 102.
[488] Furlong and Mason. *Patriot Hearts*, 168.

Indigenous peoples continued to be involved in the Paralympic Torch Relay, despite the event being truncated. On March 3, 2010, three days after the Olympic Closing Ceremony, the Paralympic Torch Relay began with a ceremony in Ottawa. Elders from nearby First Nations communities, the Algonquins of Pikwàkanagàn and Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg, lit the Flame to begin the Paralympic Torch Relay. For the first time in Paralympic history, organizers arranged the Torch Relay on a non-linear route, with celebrations in ten communities across Québec, Ontario, and British Columbia. The first stage of the route connected cities in Ontario and Québec before being flown west to British Columbia. More than 600 torchbearers carried the Paralympic Torch. Residents in the other seven provinces did not see the Paralympic Torch.[489] This was another example of the lack of support for the Paralympics in Canada, which received less fanfare and media attention than the Olympics. Ottawa contributed $24.5 million for Vancouver's Olympic and Paralympic Torch Relays.[490]

The Vancouver 2010 Winter Olympic Torch Relay generated considerable national pride and unity in Canada, at least in the eyes of elected officials, an integral component of public diplomacy. Following the conclusion of the XXI Winter Olympiad and the Tenth Paralympics, the Department of Canadian Heritage reported that approximately ninety percent of Canadians were within an hour's drive of the Torch Relay.[491] Similar to the Relay in 1988, Canadian unity in 2010 was also tested through the actions of protestors. Again, they objected to corporations using the celebratory nature of the Torch Relay to cover up their support of harmful, and in some cases illegal, resource extraction operations. Despite increased input from Indigenous leaders in 2010, many Indigenous nations across the country expressed their dissatisfaction by protesting

[489] Canadian Heritage, *Canada's Games*, 49.
[490] *Ibid*., 82.
[491] *Ibid*., 51.

the Torch Relay, as in 1988. Just as the Olympic Torch Relay organizers tried to use the event as a tool of public and cultural diplomacy, protestors worked to bring attention to more problematic aspects of Canada's identity. One difference in 2010 was the Paralympic Torch Relay, as Calgary did not host the Paralympic Games in 1988. The limited route reflected the diminished attention para-sport received in Canada. By the Opening Ceremonies, with the protestors cast aside, the presentation of Indigenous cultural appropriation and a perceived harmonious relationship between Canadians and Indigenous peoples by Olympic organizers made the protestors' concerns seem warranted.

Cultural Diplomacy Takes the Lead at Vancouver 2010 Winter Olympic Ceremonies

By hosting the 2010 Winter Olympic Games, Vancouver had a great opportunity to make a positive impression on the world. The organizers could present a modernized version of Canadian national identity for the twenty-first century through cultural performances at the Olympic ceremonies. These performances were supposed to reintroduce Canada to the world in the new century and shape a positive international impression of Canada. The Opening Ceremony, in particular, was viewed as a significant opportunity to highlight the host country's cultural heritage beyond the competition space of the Games because it was an occasion when the world's attention was on Canada. The efforts at cultural diplomacy did gain prominence but did not escape controversy.

Olympic Opening Ceremonies functioned as powerful instruments of state representation, allowing Canada to shape both domestic and international perceptions of national identity. By presenting a cohesive and harmonious image of the nation, these ceremonies obscured internal social divisions and masked persistent inequities, particularly those affecting ethnic minority

groups. This carefully curated portrayal reduced pressure on the state to address structural inequalities within Canadian society and its fitness and sport system.

At the international level, the Opening Ceremonies offered Canada an opportunity to enhance its prestige and strengthen its position on the world stage by projecting an appealing and unified national narrative. As the Olympic host nation in 1988 and 2010, Canadian organizers deliberately used this global platform to highlight traits deemed central to Canada's identity. However, this narrative relied on a selective representation of the nation, reinforcing an idealized façade of Canadian inclusivity while privileging a national fitness and sport system accessible primarily to those with the economic and social privilege to compete at the highest levels.

As the organizers in Vancouver prepared to host global events in the years following the Calgary Games, they faced ongoing criticism for overlooking the persistent tensions between Indigenous peoples and the Canadian government. In 2005, accusations of Indigenous cultural appropriation were directed against Vancouver's Organizing Committee [VANOC] when they unveiled their logo for the 2010 Winter Games. The five-piece multicolour logo, often referred to as an Inukshuk, was named "Ilanaaq" and represented VANOC's commitment to increasing the visibility of Indigeneity in the Games. The design, created by Elena Rivera MacGregor from Vancouver, was selected from approximately 1,600 submissions. However, critics argued that the culturally significant for Inuit people was out of place for an event centred in Vancouver. As former Nunavut Commissioner Peter Irniq commented, the structure with arms, legs, and a head was distinct from "Inukshuks." The chosen "Inunguat" represented an imitation of a person, whereas "Inukshuks" represented safety, hope, friendship, and a directional marker. Irniq

compared the significance of Inukshuks to the Canadian flag for Inuit identity.[492] Recalling the selection of Ilanaaq, VANOC's CEO John Furlong said, "It was a stone beacon that visitors looking for the Games could rely on to guide them." Although Furlong acknowledged that the Inuit had used Inukshuks in the North for centuries, by 2010, it had become "A new Canadian icon, it was ours."[493] The appropriation of Indigenous cultural symbols was underway.

An Olympic tradition during each Closing Ceremony was to permit the host of the next Games to showcase their culture. In 2006, during the Closing Ceremony for the Torino Winter Games, VANOC had its first chance to display Canada's unique identity and invite the world to Vancouver. The organizers decided to use Ilanaaq and incorporate it into the cultural performance at the Torino Closing Ceremony. Representatives from the Four Host First Nations spoke directly to the audience, inviting the world to Canada. Instead of having a Canadian politician inviting the world to Canada for the 2010 Winter Games, representatives from the Tsleil-Waututh, Musqueam, Lil'wat and Squamish Nations were given the honour. Since the Canadian cities of Vancouver, Whistler, and Richmond, British Columbia, were selected as sites for Olympic venues, the cultural performance began with a video highlighting British Columbia's natural environment with a flyover of mountains, waterfalls, lakes, forests, islands, and killer whales. A Cirque du Soleil performance symbolized Canada's cold climate. Cirque du Soleil acrobats constructed a giant replica of Ilanaaq and projected the colourful logo for the Vancouver Winter Olympics on the stadium floor. They used blocks representing ice blocks to

[492] "Vancouver Olympic Emblem Comes Under Fire," CBCnews (CBC/Radio Canada, April 27, 2005), https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/vancouver-olympic-emblem-comes-under-fire-1.557252.

[493] Furlong and Mason. *Patriot Hearts*, 140.

build Ilanaaq.[494] The non-Indigenous performers constructed the enormous Inukshuk, as it was referred to by VANOC, in the corner of the stage in an inaccurate representation of the practice for building the Inuit cultural symbol.[495]

Four years later, in 2010, the Opening Ceremony at BC Place for the Vancouver Winter Olympics displayed Indigeneity in various ways. The Ceremony was an important chance for Indigenous peoples to warmly welcome the world to their home, known as Canada. Four Coast Salish welcome poles rose from the stadium floor and moved to form a traditional greeting gesture. Four groups of representatives from the Tsleil-Waututh, Musqueam, Lil'wat and Squamish Nations stood by each pole. As members of the Four Host First Nations, they welcomed the world to their land in their language, as well as in English and French. First Nations, Métis, and Inuit performers from across Canada joined in the dancing around the welcome poles. The Indigenous performers were introduced by their region of origin, while the Métis and Inuit performers were acknowledged separately. Together, they greeted the world's athletes during the Parade of Nations.[496] The Four Host First Nations representatives eventually joined IOC President Jacques Rogge and Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper in the VIP box to enjoy the rest of the Opening Ceremony.

Indigeneity also intersected with a musical performance during the Opening Ceremony. Following the Parade of Nations, Bryan Adams and Nelly Furtado sang "Bang the Drum,"

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494 *Torino 2006 - Closing Ceremony*. *Olympics.com*. International Olympic Committee. Accessed September 20, 2022. https://olympics.com/en/video/torino-2006-closing-ceremony.

495 O'Bonsawin, "The Conundrum of 'Ilanaaq' - First Nations Representation and the 2010 Vancouver Winter Olympics," *Proceedings: International Symposium for Olympic Research*, (2006): 391.

496 *Vancouver 2010 - Opening Ceremony*. *Olympics.com*. International Olympic Committee. Accessed September 20, 2022. https://olympics.com/en/video/vancouver-2010-opening-ceremony.

surrounded by Indigenous dancers from across Canada. This was a song created especially for the Vancouver Winter Games. A round platform representing a drum that was used during the earlier performance with Indigenous dancers became a stage for the two mainstream Euro-Canadian singers. Their lyrics called on the audience to "bang the drum a little louder so the whole world can hear." Members of the audience also received little drums to play along with the song. Partway through the song, the Indigenous performers gathered around the stage while chanting replaced Adams' and Furtado's vocals. All the First Nations, Métis, and Inuit performers exited as the song concluded.[497] Once again, Indigenous contributions at an Olympic ceremony were mediated by someone else. Although Indigenous artists had a voice early on, there were no further performances from them.

The first cultural performance in Vancouver began with an icescape projected onto the stadium floor. White confetti represented snow falling throughout BC Place. Performers dressed in white coats and warm winter furs mingled on the ice. Cameras zoomed in on performers' reactions to convey their amazement at the cold, barren landscape. Instrumental music could be heard in the background, accompanied by a testimonial from an immigrant who arrived at Halifax's Pier 21. Canadian actor Donald Sutherland read the testimonial, "I came to Canada as a refugee … Forty-five years later for me, Canada is a refuge still." Performers exchanged friendly greetings as if they were meeting for the first time. One person in the centre of the stage banged their staff on the ground, producing ripples along the ice and the northern lights above. Constellations of animals such as buffalo, eagle, wolf, and bear appeared as if they were in the night sky. The final image of the bear seemed to show stars falling on the performers

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[497] *Vancouver 2010 - Opening Ceremony*. *Olympics.com*. International Olympic Committee. Accessed September 20, 2022. https://olympics.com/en/video/vancouver-2010-opening-ceremony.

below, producing a giant sparkling puppet of a Kermode bear. The spirit bear was British Columbia's official provincial mammal. The stomping of the Kermode bear caused the ice to break up and the performers to scramble off stage.[498] This scene symbolized Canada's harsh winter landscape, beauty, spirituality, and the belief that Canada has been a welcome place for newcomers.

Since it was the first cultural performance scene during the Opening Ceremony, it represented Canada's origin with Indigenous peoples and European settlers meeting on a barren icescape. The characters symbolized the perception of a harmonious relationship between early European settlers and Indigenous peoples. It honoured how Indigenous peoples assisted the first European settlers during the harsh winter conditions. The experience of each person living through a Canadian winter was cast as a bond that united the nation. The audio from Pier 21 also acknowledged a tradition of Canada being a refuge for centuries following this mythical scene. Indigenous peoples received more attention during the initial performances of Vancouver's Opening Ceremony than in Calgary in 1988. In the interests of cultural diplomacy, however, tensions between Indigenous peoples, settler Canadians, and the federal government were cast aside in favour of depicting a longstanding harmonious relationship.

As VANOC CEO, John Furlong had the opportunity to address the global audience and promote Canada's reputation. Furlong not only invited the world to watch the Olympic events taking place in Canada but also said, "…we invite people everywhere to share an experience, even for just a few moments, what it feels like to be a proud Canadian." In his welcome speech, John Furlong added that the Games were meant to be a national rather than a regional

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[498] *Vancouver 2010 - Opening Ceremony*. *Olympics.com*. International Olympic Committee. Accessed September 20, 2022. https://olympics.com/en/video/vancouver-2010-opening-ceremony.

celebration. He declared, "…the spirit and soul of all 33 million Canadians has been sewn into the fabric of these Winter Olympic Games." He elaborated, "All Canadians: Aboriginal Canadians, New Canadians, English and Francophone Canadians, and the myriad of cultures, micro-cultures, languages, and peoples that make Canada – Canada." These were not just Vancouver's or British Columbia's Olympics but Canada's. Furlong welcomed the world to Canada by saying, "From whatever continent you have come, we welcome you to Canada – a country with a generous heart."[499] The world's attention may have been on Canada, but an authentic version of the nation was not necessarily shown.

During the Opening Ceremony, the world encountered a homogenized version of Canada. The federal government contributed $20 million to the 2010 Opening Ceremony. However, the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages with the Government of Canada criticized the lack of bilingual balance during the spectacle. The report by the Office of the Commissioner found "an obvious disparity" between the use of English and French languages during the national event.[500] It added that "VANOC missed a golden opportunity to show that linguistic duality is an intrinsic part of the Canadian identity."[501] Three years earlier, the 2007 Senate Committee on Official Languages, led by Maria Chaput and Andrée Champagne, sought assurances that VANOC would fulfill its obligations of including events and participants that represent both official Canadian language groups. Since VANOC was to receive federal

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[499] *Vancouver 2010 - Opening Ceremony*. *Olympics.com*. International Olympic Committee. Accessed September 20, 2022. https://olympics.com/en/video/vancouver-2010-opening-ceremony.

[500] Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages, *Raising Our Game for Vancouver 2010: Final Report on the Vancouver 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games* (Deslibris, Documents Collection, Ottawa, Ont.: Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages, 2011), 15.

[501] *Ibid*., 7.

assistance for the Olympic Ceremonies, organizers had to ensure the performances accurately reflected Canada's bilingual reality. Jacques Paquette, Assistant Deputy Minister of International and Intergovernmental Affairs and Sport at Canadian Heritage, told the committee,

> [T]here is no question that these ceremonies must reflect the diversity of the country. … We are examining ways to ensure the objectives we have in our minds will be reflected through these ceremonies and that Canadians from all backgrounds will be proud of what they see on television.[502]

With hundreds of millions of people watching around the world, the organizers implied that anglophones were a greater presence in Canadian identity. Through the Opening Ceremony, all Canadians should have seen themselves expressed in the nation's cultural fabric, which was shared with the world.[503] Josée Verner, Minister for Official Languages, also told the committee,

> The Government of Canada, in collaboration with the organizing committee and British Columbia, wants to project to the world not only the excellence of its athletes and the richness of its culture but also the image of a strong country, proud of its linguistic duality.[504]

However, the Opening Ceremony depicted Canada's identity as an anglophone settler nation that embraced a distorted understanding of its relations with Indigenous peoples.

Indigenous peoples had more opportunities beyond the Olympic ceremonies to have their culture celebrated in Vancouver. During the Games, the Government of Canada, the province of British Columbia, and the Four Host First Nations opened a cultural pavilion in the heart of Olympic festivities in downtown Vancouver. The 65-foot-tall temporarily inflated multimedia

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[502] Canada, Senate, Standing Senate Committee on Official Languages, *Reflecting Canada's Linguistic Duality at the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games: A Golden Opportunity*, February 2007, Committee Chair Maria Chaput, 11.

[503] Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages, Raising *Our Game for Vancouver 2010*, 16.

[504] Canada, Senate, Standing Senate Committee on Official Languages, *Reflecting Canada's Linguistic Duality at the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games: A Golden Opportunity*, February 2007, Committee Chair Maria Chaput, 11.

sphere used technology to showcase the diversity of the cultures, histories, sports and businesses of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples in Canada. In a 2009 news release from the Office of the Premier of British Columbia, "special theme days" were scheduled for Indigenous communities from across Canada to highlight their cultural achievements, such as Inuit throat singing, Métis jigging, and hoop dancing.[505] As CEO of VANOC, John Furlong was proud to declare that with the participation of so many different Indigenous communities, the pavilion represented another example of the event being Canada's Games. Mary Simon, President of the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, an organization representing Inuit interests in Canada, was looking forward to the opportunity to teach the world about the people behind the Inukshuk.[506] Chief Andrew of the Lil'wat First Nation, one of the Four Host First Nations for the Games, was also looking forward to welcoming the world and delivering an "authentic Aboriginal experience in 2010."[507] Through the Olympic ceremonies, organizers had to teach the world about a couple of hundred years of Canadian history in a couple of hours. At the Aboriginal Pavilion, the Four Host First Nations taught visitors through a variety of cultural performances about thousands of years of living on the land. This pavilion was among many that used cultural diplomacy to influence visitors' understanding of Canada at the Games.

Canada's branding strategy during this era masked persistent inequalities within the country. As Canadian media studies scholar Melissa Aronczyk comments, Canada's "fantasies of diversity" frequently obscured its colonial foundations and the unequal realities faced by Indigenous peoples and other marginalized groups. Despite the self-congratulations surrounding

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[505] Office of the Premier of British Columbia and Four Host First Nations. "2010 Aboriginal Pavilion to Showcase First Nations Inuit and Métis Peoples During 2010 Winter Games," 1.
[506] *Ibid*., 2.
[507] *Ibid*., 3.

multiculturalism, Canada's history of diversity-as-unity was based on Indigenous heritages, colonial settlements, and generations of immigration, producing a diverse cultural coexistence.[508] This dissertation also showed that tensions were evident within Canada's national fitness and sport system. However, Canadian officials continued to prioritize international sporting success both as competitors and hosts, because of their perceived ability to enhance Canada's global image. In this context, the Vancouver 2010 Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games functioned as a major exercise in cultural diplomacy, demonstrating how successfully hosting mega-events could reinforce Canada's international prestige.

The design of an Olympic uniform authorized by the National Olympic Committee [NOC] became a visual cultural symbol to define nationhood. The clothing athletes wore to the Olympic ceremonies featured national colours and symbols. The Canadian Olympic Committee [COC] sought to make cultural statements domestically and abroad. For example, red and white colours, along with the maple leaf symbol, distinguished Canadian representatives from other nations. The Canadian Olympic Committee ensured Canadians athletes made their mark in the Parade of Nations during the Opening Ceremony through the design of unique uniforms. Towards that end, over the years, the COC partnered with Canadian clothing manufacturers such as Hudson's Bay Company [HBC], Roots, and most recently, Lululemon. As a result of corporations sponsoring Canadian athletes, a more tangible benefit was greater demand for Canadian brands in international markets. For example, the clothing manufacturer Roots saw increased demand for its stylish products after it designed Team Canada's uniforms for the 1998

[508] Melissa Aronczyk, *Branding the Nation: The Global Business of National Identity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 113.

Nagano Winter Olympics.[509] While a corporation could benefit from increased market share by partnering with a National Olympic Committee, countries also gained from using popular Olympic uniforms as a tool of soft power.

The unique design of Olympic team uniforms is a form of cultural diplomacy that has been analyzed as "fashion diplomacy." With the proliferation of communications technology, such as social media, countries have tried to enhance their national brand through uniforms worn by their Olympic athletes.[510] Canada's athletes were drawn into the nationalist competition even before arriving at the Olympic venues. National Olympic Committees organized large press conferences with Olympians to unveil their uniforms for the world to judge. In *Red Mitten Nationalism*, culture and sport studies scholar Estée Fresco used the term "commodity nationalism" to explain how branded commodities shaped Canadian national identity. The design, advertisement, and consumption of branded commodities influenced how Canadians could support their nation.[511] The fashion designs were aimed at a broad clientele – Canadians could buy the same apparel at a premium. Catherine Carstairs concluded that while branded nationalism helped propel Canada's image on the world stage, it gave Canadians a sanitized lesson in the country's history and values, if at all.[512] These non-sporting practices of designing uniforms with commercial appeal intersected with political and cultural traditions to influence

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[509] Canada, Parliament, Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage, Sub-Committee on the Study of Sport in Canada, *Sport In Canada: Everybody's Business Leadership, Partnership and Accountability*, 1st sess., 36th Parliament, December 1998, Committee Chair Dennis Mills, M.P. https://www.ourcommons.ca/DocumentViewer/en/36-1/CHER/report-6/page-2

[510] Stephan Rabimov, "Fashion Diplomacy at 2018 Winter Olympics: When Uniforms Compete," *Forbes*. Forbes Magazine, February 1, 2018.

[511] Estée Fresco, *Red Mitten Nationalism: Sport, Commercialism, and Settler Colonialism in Canada* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2022), 14.

[512] Catherine Carstairs, "Roots Nationalism: Branding English Canada Cool in the 1980s and 1990s," *Histoire Sociale/Social History* 39, no. 77 (May 1, 2006): 254.

national identity at the Olympics.[513] Canadians were asked to express their national pride and support high-performance athletes by being consumers.

Vancouver Olympic Legacy through Cultural and Public Diplomacy

High-performance sport gained greater prominence as the Department of Canadian Heritage worked to promote Canada's national culture and brand both domestically and internationally. By the twenty-first century, global brands were becoming increasingly important for countries and corporations, and the Olympics were seen as a prime opportunity to cultivate a national brand. In his memoir, VANOC CEO John Furlong cited an international study conducted by FutureBrand and BBC World News to reinforce his claim that the Vancouver 2010 Winter Olympics was considered the best-run sporting event that year, beating the Tour de France, FIFA World Cup, Super Bowl, and World Series.[514] The study confirmed the influence of the Vancouver Olympic Games on Canada's cultural diplomacy brand.

Canada was the top-ranked country in the world in FutureBrand and BBC World News's annual Country Brand Index [CBI]. The study collected quantitative data from 3,400 businesses and leisure travellers from thirteen countries across all five continents. It also included qualitative research from focus groups conducted in fourteen major cities around the world. The CBI measured levels of advocacy, foreign awareness, consideration, familiarity, preference, and active decisions to visit a country. Additionally, foreign perceptions in several categories determined a country's brand strength, including tourism, heritage and culture, business

[513] Canadian Olympic Committee, *Annual Report.* 2010, 8.
[514] Furlong, and Mason, *Patriot Hearts*, 323.

suitability, a population's quality of life, and a value system.[515] One metric for measuring the success of cultural diplomacy has been foreign tourism. In the CBI, Canada ranked fourth in tourism, aided by "Canada's Olympic Year," which increased international awareness of Canada as a safe, friendly, fun, world-class country.[516]

The Canadian Tourism Commission created promotional campaigns to increase Canada's presence as a premier tourist destination while the country prepared to host the 2010 Winter Games. A concerted effort led by the Canadian Tourism Commission and the three levels of government improved the country's position from four years earlier, when Canada ranked twelfth in the world. They refreshed Canada's brand with the "Canada: Keep Exploring" campaign, which highlighted the country's culture, people, and geography.[517]

The CBI also identified Canada's weakness in foreign perceptions of its history, ranking lowest in the category of History among the top six overall rankings.[518] This is even more glaring given the global spotlight of the Olympics, which is meant to teach the world about Canada's past. As such, it reveals VANOC's inability to use the Olympic platform to teach the world about the history of Canada effectively. Nevertheless, successfully hosting the world and winning the most gold medals ever by a Winter Olympic host nation – 14 – were occasions for Canadians to celebrate. However, as discussed in earlier chapters, the Canadian athletes who achieved this unprecedented accomplishment were the products of an exclusive national fitness and sport system.

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[515] FutureBrand and BBC World News, rep., *2010 Country Brand Index*, 2010, 5. https://sete.gr/_fileuploads/entries/Online%20library/GR/Future%20Brand%202010.pdf.
[516] *Ibid*., 7, 13.
[517] Canadian Tourism Commission, *Canada's Federal Tourism Strategy: Welcoming the World* (Ottawa: Industry Canada, 2011), 26. https://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2011/ic/Iu4-146-2011-eng.pdf
[518] FutureBrand and BBC World News, rep., *2010 Country Brand Index*, 2010, 19.

Sidney Crosby's goal that secured the Canadian Olympic team's final gold medal has been replayed and relived by those in the arena and at home. Years later, the overtime goal remains one of the most memorable moments of the games. Chris Cuthbert, who called the play-by-play for the game, secured its place in history by naming the moment the "Golden Goal." In a 2020 interview with TSN's James Duthie, Sidney Crosby reflected on the ongoing legacy of that goal scored ten years earlier. He cherished the experience of winning a gold medal in Canada as a hockey player. Crosby said that people were still approaching him to say where they were watching him score the goal, for example, at a beach bar.[519] This collective pride in Canada may have been a motivating factor for Crosby to continue suiting up for Team Canada at the Olympics and World Championships for two decades.

In *Mega-Events and Modernity Olympics and Expos in the Growth of Global Culture*, Maurice Roche outlined the personal attachment to a mega-event. Societies and communities categorize lifespans by "rites of passages." People will remember life events in relation to these moments in time.[520] For example, hockey fans may divide their memory of events before the Olympics, where they were when Crosby scored, and celebrating afterwards. One reason for so much attention to this goal surrounds its symbolic value. At the 2002 Winter Olympics in Salt Lake City, the Canadian Men's and Women's Olympic Ice Hockey Team captured gold against the United States. Many people attached a personal significance to protecting home ice by the two teams again winning Olympic gold against the United States. Given the sentimentality

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[519] James Duthie, Interview with Sidney Crosby, *10 years since the Golden Goal: Crosby discusses Olympic gold, the Leafs and more.* The Sports Network, TSN, February 20, 2020.

[520] Maurice Roche, *Mega-Events and Modernity Olympics and Expos in the Growth of Global Culture* (London: Routledge, 2000), 5.

around hockey as one of Canada's national sports, there was added pressure on the team to win. Crosby's "Golden Goal" has been so heavily documented and commemorated as a special moment for Canada and Canadians. The celebrations of the men's and women's gold medal hockey victories in 2010 also represent the culmination of five decades of work by Canadian sport officials who began formalizing the national fitness and sport system in 1961 after Canadian athletes began losing hockey supremacy in the 1950s.

Keith Pelley, president of Canada's Olympic Broadcast Media Consortium stated that he expected Canadians to tune in to the games, but the magnitude surprised him. Overall, the Vancouver Olympics would be the most watched television event in Canadian history with an average audience of 23 million people each day.[521] With high broadcast ratings and sellout crowds at Olympic venues, the Vancouver Winter Olympics became an important tool for public and cultural diplomacy at the start of the twenty-first century.

Through its sport policies between 1988 and 2010, the federal government emphasized the importance of being the best by winning the most gold medals at the Olympics. Ottawa wanted to make sure Canada's athletes were well prepared for the XVI Winter Olympiad in Calgary, and again when Vancouver won the right to host the XXI Olympiad. Once it was known that Vancouver would host the 2010 Winter Olympic Games, the federal government unveiled a collaborative program with the Canadian Olympic Committee, the Canadian Paralympic Committee, winter sport organizations, and the Vancouver Organizing Committee. The Own the Podium – 2010 program was an enhanced version of Game Plan '76 and Best Ever '88, with funding for athletes and coaches preparing to end Canada's embarrassing reputation as

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[521] Gillian Shaw, and Rebecca Lindell, "Decent Ratings for NBC Make 2010 Games Sure to Be Headlines for U.S. Media Outlets Canada's Biggest TV Event," *Vancouver Sun*, February 16, 2010.

the only host country not to win gold on home soil.[522] An investment of $110 million was allocated to support Canada's high-performance athletes, which included $66 million from the federal government and $44 million from provincial and corporate sponsors.[523] Individual Canadians could also contribute to the cause by purchasing red mittens from the Hudson's Bay Company because a portion of each sale went to the nationally important cause.[524] Own the Podium helped Canadian athletes win fourteen gold medals, more than any host nation in Winter Olympic history. Additionally, Canada's total of twenty-six medals was the most the country had ever won at any Winter Olympic Games.[525] This was especially significant because Canada had previously been the only host country in Olympic history to host twice and fail to win a gold medal at either Games.

However, the single-minded focus on winning medals became a point of contention for athletes and scholars. Reflecting on the success of the Own the Podium strategy, sport policy and politics scholar Peter Donnelly argued that most of the world would not remember who won the most medals at a particular Olympics. However, even for those who may remember or care to do the research, they may incorrectly judge the United States as the better country to live in because its athletes won eleven more medals than Canada's. The medal table only identifies the best of the best athletes, and not an active, healthy population. Donnelly concludes that the

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[522] Thibault and Harvey, eds., *Sport Policy in Canada*, 26.

[523] Donnelly, Peter. "Own the Podium or Rent It? Canada's Involvement in the Global Sporting Arms Race." *Policy Options*. December 2009. http://policyoptions.irpp.org/magazines/the-2010-olympics/own-the-podium-or-rent-it-canadas-involvement-in-the-global-sporting-arms-race/.

[524] Estée Fresco, *Red Mitten Nationalism*, 167.

[525] Anthony G. Church, "Owning more than the Podium: an examination of the policy network surrounding Canada's most recent Olympic athlete funding program." *Proceedings: International Symposium for Olympic Research* (2006): 383.

trickle-down effect of increased participation is a fiction because economic, geographic, and infrastructure barriers do not disappear when a Canadian athlete won a gold medal.[526]

The legacy of the Vancouver Winter Olympics, then, may not be solely about the number of gold medals won; rather, it may be about the golden moments of Canadian athletes. This represented an important way in which sport could be used for diplomacy. For example, Jon Montgomery won the gold medal in skeleton. However, his stroll to the medal ceremony in Whistler, wearing his Canadian Olympic apparel and carrying a pitcher of beer, became a uniquely Canadian moment. A street north of Whistler was eventually named Jon Montgomery Stroll.[527] In figure skating, it was Joannie Rochette's emotional performance three days after her mother's death that won her a bronze medal and the honour of being Canada's flagbearer at the Closing Ceremony.[528] The results cannot be entirely removed, but these moments were influenced by the in-person fans interacting with the athletes.

Sport diplomacy did not only exist in the realm of competition. It also involved the way national identity was constructed and presented to domestic and global audiences. The 2010 Winter Olympics in Vancouver offered the best opportunity to redesign Canada's distinct national identity to the world for the twenty-first century. Olympic organizers used the world stage to teach Canadians and the world what made Canada special. The global spectacle became an occasion to display a particular version of Canada's national identity without considering the country's history for better or worse. Sport diplomacy was a means of elevating a country's

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[526] Donnelly, Peter. "Rent the Podium Revisited: Reflections on Vancouver 2010." *Policy Options*, April 2010. http://policyoptions.irpp.org/magazines/budget-2010/rent-the-podium-revisited-reflections-on-vancouver-2010/.

[527] Furlong, and Mason, *Patriot Hearts*, 264.

[528] Dan Barnes, "Rochette Etches Heroic Olympic Legacy; South Korean Skater Dominates, but Canadian Woman wins Hearts," *Times – Colonist*, February 26, 2010.

status on the world stage and enhancing national unity domestically. Canada became a leader in winter sports, with world-class athletes and facilities. Annual use of venues for international events became one of the continuing legacies from hosting the Winter Olympics.

The state-corporate relationship in sport would grow closer in the twenty-first century with a major Olympic sponsor, Royal Bank of Canada [RBC], being involved in identifying Canada's next Olympians. This is significant because RBC was filling a void left by Canada's insufficient national fitness and sport system. In the twenty-first century, the Royal Bank of Canada began organizing annual events as part of its RBC Training Ground program to introduce young Canadians to various Olympic sports. Through the RBC Training Ground events first held in 2016 across the country in partnership with the Canadian Olympic Foundation, thousands of Canadians were tested in endurance, power, strength, and speed. The event was free to all Canadian athletes. Some were athletes new to the highest level of sport, and others were exploring the potential of transferring between Olympic disciplines. In the first two years of the program, RBC invested $1.3 million to support eighty-seven athletes assigned to train with a national sport organization aligned closely with their skill set.[529] The talent identification camps exposed the limits of Canada's national sport system. It circumvented the system because athletes were not progressing through the pyramid's tiers to reach the peak of high-performance sport as originally intended.

Additionally, less popular national sport organizations that struggled to maintain a mass-participation base to replace the top-level athletes would benefit from more popular sports. For example, bobsleigh success in the twenty-first century was in part the result of athletes such as

[529] "Royal Bank of Canada: Olympic Champions and Hopefuls Gather for First-Ever RBC Training Ground National Final," *News Bites - Private Companies,* Sep 05, 2019, 1-2.

Jesse Lumsden and Cynthia Appiah successfully transitioning from football and track and field respectively. The nationalistic messaging was changing as private corporate sponsors took on the responsibility of supporting Canada's athletes, leaving the Canadian government with less fiscal responsibility.

The legacy of the Vancouver 2010 Winter Olympic Games for Canada and its athletes has been noted a decade after the Closing Ceremony, with increased private-sector involvement in supporting high-performance sport. In an interview with the *Canadian Press,* Canadian Olympic Committee Chief Executive Officer David Shoemaker said that the notoriety of the Vancouver Games helped develop lasting corporate partnerships. By February 2020, Shoemaker noted that they had thirty-six corporate sponsorship contracts to support Canada's high-performance athletes.[530] This is significant because the 2010 Winter Olympics marked a shift in how Canada's athletes were supported, with the federal government pulling back and private corporations taking more responsibility.

Hosting the Winter Olympics in 1988 and 2010 were nationally significant events that brought Canadians together to celebrate their country's accomplishments. However, future attempts to host the world again in Calgary and Vancouver did not garner sufficient public support for the submission of a formal bid. There may have been political interest in hosting the Olympics, but Canadians were concerned about what could be gained from the immense costs.

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[530] Donna Spencer, "What the 2010 Winter Olympics Wrought, a Decade of Canadian Confidence in Sport; 2010 Sparked Canada's Confidence in Sport." *Canadian Press,* February 11, 2020.

## Conclusion

This dissertation has examined the Canadian federal government's deliberate exploitation of Canadian success in ice sports at the Winter Olympic Games between 1980 and 2010, coupled with its efforts to improve national fitness standards among Canadians, to unify the country. There were several events in this period, such as economic recessions, east-west regional discontent, confrontations between Indigenous peoples and the Canadian state and Québec sovereignty campaigns that could have divided Canadians. Thus, hosting the Winter Olympic Games and sending medal-winning teams abroad were viewed by politicians as significant reasons for Canadians to celebrate one another.

This dissertation has argued that between 1980 and 2010, the Canadian federal government sought to bring Canadians together in the name of fitness and sport. Through federal legislation and policies, lawmakers in Ottawa sought to design a healthy nation that was united and consisted of physically fit individuals. As the federal government saw it, Canada's vast geography and diverse population required a strong sense of identity to enhance national unity at both the local and national levels. Generations of policymakers designed a national sport system to introduce Canadians to sport through fitness and, subsequently, develop world-class athletes. Politicians and sport administrators believed that supporting fitness and sport initiatives would bring Canadians together, fostering a collective identity centred on healthy, active lifestyles and celebrating international sporting successes. However, the federal government's direction also changed during this period, from focusing on fitness that benefitted the general Canadian population to high-performance sport that would enhance Canada's international reputation. As Winter Olympic hosts in 1988 and 2010, officials chose to showcase a unique national identity to Canadians and the world. As a result, only a particular version of the nation

was celebrated, with specific parameters of ability, age, ethnicity, gender, and sexuality determining which athletes had the privilege to represent the best of Canada.

This dissertation analyzed the federal government's involvement in fitness and high-performance sport through the lens of sport diplomacy. In this context, sport served as a diplomatic tool through which Canada sought to engage foreign audiences and project a favourable national image abroad and inspired Canadians domestically. This dissertation's original contribution to the existing historiography is its analysis of issues regarding federal involvement in fitness promotion and high-performance sports, representations of national pride during the Calgary and Vancouver Winter Olympics, and equitable participation in the national fitness and sport system through the lens of sport diplomacy.

As political scientists Stuart Murray and Geoffrey Allen Pigman argue, sport diplomacy can transcend cultural differences by uniting diverse groups through shared athletic interests. Within this framework, athletes served as representatives of the nation and participated in diplomatic activities on behalf of and in conjunction with their government. Sport diplomacy engaged foreign audiences and created a favourable image of a country, potentially improving its position on the world stage.[531] By hosting sporting events and to a lesser extent, athletes competing abroad, Canada was able to showcase national values and enhance its international standing. This was particularly evident in hosting a mega-event such as the Winter Olympics, as Canada did twice in 1988 and 2010, which implicitly signalled to the international community that Canada was a responsible global citizen and a reliable international partner. When national identity and sporting values were deliberately aligned, these events had the potential to improve

[531] Murray, Stuart, and Geoffrey Allen Pigman. "Mapping the Relationship between International Sport and Diplomacy." Sport in Society 17, no. 9 (2013): 1101.

foreign perceptions of Canada and strengthen its position on the world stage. The perception of foreign nationals can be enhanced by thoughtfully presenting the host nation's image in alignment with sporting values.

Within the umbrella term of sport diplomacy, this dissertation also considered cultural and public diplomacy. Cultural diplomacy is similar to sport diplomacy because it involves presenting a country's image to the global community. An important facet of cultural diplomacy is that the intended audience is not simply foreign governments but their populations. In a globalized world, foreign nationals played a role in ensuring a country had international prestige. Along with other diplomatic tools, sport diplomacy could culturally influence foreign investment decisions and international tourism. In the post-war world dominated by two superpowers, Canada had to find a way to stand out as a respected middle power on the world stage. It did so by relying on soft-power strategies, such as sport diplomacy, to project national values and enhance its reputation abroad. In addition, public diplomacy was used to influence the domestic population. Through fitness and sport, the federal government encouraged Canadians to come together at a time marked by shared national interests, despite internal divisions between regions and groups. Therefore, it became especially important for Canada to host the mega sporting events such as the Olympic Games. Success in high-performance sport competitions, politicians believed, could simultaneously improve national pride and Canada's international prestige. For Canada to effectively use sport diplomacy abroad, it had to develop a strong national fitness and sport system at home.

Medical professionals have understood fitness and sport as beneficial activities for every Canadian, with obvious health benefits. There were also social and cultural advantages to encouraging Canadians, young and old, citizens and recent immigrants, to share the common

experience of participating in some form of physical activity together. Federal policies in fitness and sport between 1980 and 2010 promised equity and inclusion in the national system. The reality, however, was a system that focused on producing high-performance athletes from economically and socially privileged homes. Shifting federal priorities in the 1990s would lead to a significant reduction in fitness and sports infrastructure, jeopardizing the momentum generated decades earlier.

A fit and healthy nation became a priority when it was clear that Canadians were not as fit as they should be compared with other nations. Through federal policies, politicians tried to incorporate fitness into Canada's national identity alongside sport. Canadian sport policies were used politically to bring the country together socially and culturally from "playground to podium". However, they ended up prioritizing sport funding and goals over fitness. To improve Canada's standing on the medal table at each Winter Olympics, Ottawa chose to prioritize investments in high-performance sport over fitness and mass participation. It was hoped that national unity could grow from shared experiences of participating in similar fitness and sports activities, and cheering on the country's top high-performance athletes. Successful community events that promoted mass participation and fitness activities did not command the same amount of media attention or international prestige as an international sports medal. The federal government continued to favour efforts to host and participate in high-performance sports competitions, with the hope that they would inspire future generations and provide opportunities to improve sport facilities.

In the 1970s, Minister of Amateur Sport John Munro conceived of Canada's national sport system resembling the shape of a pyramid, with high-performance athletes representing Canada on the world stage at its peak. This group was followed by organized competition at the

national, regional, provincial, skill and age levels. Young people participating in competitive sport and recreational fitness were found at the bottom of the pyramid. However, the system favoured the privileged few who could afford the demanding financial and time commitments to join Team Canada. As mentioned in this dissertation, in the ensuing decades, mass participation through fitness programs was linked to high-performance sport in Canada's system. However, not all Canadians – particularly Black people, Indigenous peoples, people living with disabilities, and women – experienced equitable opportunities to access or progress to the highest level of the system.

The federal government's efforts to create an expert-led system from the top-down resulted in greater social exclusion because community input and feedback were absent.[532] High-performance athletics more often subsumed goals of mass participation in fitness and recreation to raise Canada's place on the world stage. Federal officials were warned against imposing a one-size-fits-all strategy for mass participation in such a diverse country. They missed out on the benefits of supporting local leaders, who could demonstrate that their community belonged in Canadian society. Canada's fitness reality was not as inclusive as originally conceived. Despite the goal of promoting mass participation for every Canadian across the country, some groups remained underrepresented and marginalized.

Canada's national fitness and sport system was meant to transfer Canadian athletes from the wide base of recreation up through successive tiers of high-performance programs, with increased levels of regional, provincial, and national competitions. Ideally, everyone who had the talent and desire to compete at the Olympic Games should have had the opportunity to pursue

[532] Lucie Thibault, and Jean Harvey, eds., *Sport Policy in Canada* (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 2013), 393.

their dream. However, the athletes who earned the honour of representing Canada on the world stage were in the minority, benefitting from financial, geographical, educational, and familial advantages, as well as talent. Yet, every Canadian was encouraged to support these athletes through community celebrations, volunteering, and purchasing apparel.

During the Olympic Torch Relay, a popular nationalistic event leading up to the Olympic Games, Canadian federal officials and ParticipACTION's managers organised thousands of community events across the country to foster a sense of togetherness in the name of sports. Most Canadian athletes were products of the country's reformed sports system and generated considerable excitement from coast to coast to coast. Millions of Canadians volunteered, attended the Olympics, and watched on television together despite not having the best results. The Calgary Olympic Games created a stable legacy of facilities and funding for future athletes to pursue excellence on the world stage. Despite poor results of not winning a gold medal, the federal government laid the foundation for generational success by dedicating hundreds of millions of dollars each year towards the goal of using fitness and sports to bring Canadians together. Politicians understood the importance of Canada's high-performance athletes in achieving cultural diplomacy goals of promoting the country's prestige. These objectives would justify federal investment and control over a national sports system that would constantly feed young athletes through the ranks, replacing older or unsuccessful competitors. Athletes were important cultural ambassadors as they competed and won at events around the world.

A key element of this dissertation was to examine how Canada was represented to the millions of viewers who watched the Olympic coverage. Canadian national identity was on display during the Opening Ceremonies of the Winter Olympics. The Olympic ceremonies became forums for Canada's multi-faceted cultural expressions. As the Olympic host nation for

the Games in Calgary and Vancouver, Canadian Olympic organizers took advantage of the world's attention to convey a prescribed narrative of the nation's heritage and identity. Canada's struggle with national identity revolved around inauthenticity and invented traditions created by a dominant culture in political office.[533] Canadian Olympic organizers played a crucial role in shaping the nation's heritage narrative, using various strategies to convey it and capture the world's attention. For example, the prevalent use of Mounties in Calgary and Vancouver symbolized a strong effort to teach the international audience about Canada's seemingly peaceful colonial past. Gymnastics performances courtesy of Cirque Du Soleil glossed over a colonial past fraught with tension between white settlers and Indigenous peoples. Canadian officials used the opening and closing ceremonies to elevate the country's position on the world stage by advertising its united national identity as a multicultural nation with its world-class cultural talent to a global audience. Decisions to express a Canadian national identity in this way existed amid regional divisions, generations of natural resource extraction, and prominent calls for reconciliation with Indigenous peoples.

Despite recommendations from multiple federal task forces, the national narrative in the fitness and sport system focused on being the best. It was not about trying to be the best by equally valuing the benefits of both fitness and sport. Until this changed, the dream of an inclusive system of mass participation in fitness and sport would remain elusive. In addition, despite Ottawa's intentions, some groups had easier access to the system while others were excluded. Canada prioritized high-performance athletics over mass public participation in fitness and recreation. Ottawa chose to concentrate its limited resources on high-performance sports that were more likely to win gold medals at international competitions. As federal policymakers

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[533] Gruneau and Whitson, *Hockey Night in Canada: Sport, Identities, and Cultural Politics*, 278.

outlined their goals for the fitness and sport system, they were motivated by political, social, and economic factors.

By the 1980s, high-performance sports programs depended on the federal government for approximately 90 percent of their funding, with the remaining 10 percent coming from membership fees and the private sector. In subsequent decades, the federal government chose to withdraw its minimal support from lower levels of the national fitness and sport system. As neoliberal governments in the 1980s and 1990s tried to reduce federal expenditures, there was an opportunity to strengthen state-corporate partnerships in Canada. While jurisdictional responsibility fell to provincial and municipal governments, private corporations moved in to fill some gaps in health, wellness, fitness, and youth sport programs. Royal Bank of Canada, General Motors, Air Canada, Shell, and Molson's were among the early contributors, and more would be added to the list.[534]

In 1998, the report on sport in Canada, led by Dennis Mills, a member of the Canadian Heritage Committee, recommended that the federal government actively encourage Canadian corporations to sponsor high-performance athletes, as this would serve their global marketing interests. More specifically, the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade should work with national sport organizations to achieve this objective.[535] International sporting successes were occasions for Canadians to be proud of their nation which was enhanced by state and corporate allies.[536] Private corporations such as Tim Hortons, Canadian Tire, Bank of

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[534] Regan, *A Challenge to the Nation: Fitness and Amateur Sport in the 80s*, 13.

[535] Canada. Parliament. Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage. Sub-Committee on the Study of Sport in Canada. *Sport In Canada: Everybody's Business Leadership, Partnership and Accountability*. 1st sess., 36th Parliament, December 1998. Committee Chair Dennis Mills, M.P. https://www.ourcommons.ca/DocumentViewer/en/36-1/CHER/report-6/page-2

[536] Macintosh, and Whitson, *Game Planners: Transforming Canada's Sport System*, 123.

Montreal, Scotiabank, Sport Check, Biosteel, Royal Bank of Canada, Bell, and Lululemon sought national brand recognition by sponsoring high-performance sport programs.

As this dissertation has shown, Canadian Olympic success constituted more than a disparate collection of outstanding athletes. It also included the communities, institutions, and governments that provided support in various forms. This study investigated the federal government's interest in supporting a national fitness promotion agency for thirty years. ParticipACTION's lifespan was examined in this dissertation to demonstrate the significance of the federal government using an arm's length fitness promotion organization to influence national unity and encourage Canadians to improve their lifestyles. In the early 1970s, the federal government invested in the national program because it recognized the need to promote healthy and active lifestyles. Their educational and community programs celebrated Canadians sharing their journey of participating in fitness together. The federal government hoped to reduce healthcare costs associated with sedentary lifestyles by encouraging the public to engage in fitness activities. The federally funded fitness promotion organization, ParticipACTION, became the mouthpiece for advocating a physically active lifestyle to reduce demands on the national healthcare system. ParticipACTION advocated for all Canadians to get moving, but it emerged that primarily middle-class Canadians followed its recommendations.[537]

Mass participation was meant to improve health, which was primarily under provincial jurisdiction, while the federal government focused on high performance, which could lead to greater national unity.[538] Despite federal policies that emphasized mass participation, more

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[537] Wilfred List, "ParticipACTION Still Pushing Fitness 60-Year-Old Swede no Longer has the Best of Canadians," *The Globe and Mail*, Jan 29, 1988.

[538] Comeau, Gina S. "The Evolution of Canadian Sport Policy." *International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics* 5, no. 1 (March 2013): 78.

attention was directed toward high-performance programs. Government priorities changed at the turn of the twenty-first century, further favouring high-performance success. Without federal funding ParticipACTION closed its doors in 2001 after thirty-one years of operation only to reopen six years later after there was a noticeable decline in physical activity among Canadians.

As this dissertation showed, Canadian politicians and Olympic officials increasingly treated international sport as a strategic tool for projecting Canada's image as a distinctive and respected middle power. Central to this approach was the deliberate branding of Canada on the world stage, one that relied heavily on soft power. As international relations scholar Evan Potter argues, Canada became a brand state which depended on soft power to maintain a positive reputation on the world stage.[539] Therefore, Ottawa sought to use effective nation-branding strategies to demonstrate that the country had unique contributions to make to an interconnected world.

International mega-events, particularly the Olympic Games, became key platforms for communicating this branded national identity. Canadian officials emphasized diversity as a core national value, presenting narratives of stability, civility, and mutual benefit within a diverse country.[540] These values were often symbolized by cultural icons such as the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, who were featured prominently in the opening and closing ceremonies of the 1988 Calgary and 2010 Vancouver Olympic Games.

Federal policymakers at the turn of the twenty-first century devised top-down parameters for Canadians to be active members of a healthy nation. As was mentioned in previous chapters,

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[539] Potter, Evan H., *Branding Canada: Projecting Canada's Soft Power through Public Diplomacy* (McGill-Queen's University Press, 2009), 42.

[540] Melissa Aronczyk, *Branding the Nation: The Global Business of National Identity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 114.

these policies did not achieve their intended goal of eliminating discriminatory barriers in the national fitness and sport system. The reality did not meet the regular pledge to ensure sport was available to all Canadians. The athletes representing Canada at the pinnacle of the national sport system carried many forms of privilege.

In 2008, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission [TRC] began its mandate to gather evidence about the harmful impact of residential schools on former Indigenous students. In 2015, the TRC released its final report and ninety-four Calls to Action for institutions and governments across Canada to adopt as steps towards reconciliation with Indigenous peoples.[541] Five of the TRC's Calls to Action centred on "sports and reconciliation." The TRC called upon all levels of government to support public history and education programs to teach Canadians about the achievements of Indigenous athletes. The TRC called upon the federal government to ensure the longevity of the North American Indigenous Games and the development of future Indigenous athletes. The TRC called for amendments to the 2003 *Physical Activity and Sport Act* to ensure the national fitness and sport system was inclusive for Indigenous peoples. Additional steps could be taken to ensure that sport policies were inclusive of Indigenous peoples, safeguarding stable sources of funding and access to sport programs, establishing a specific elite athlete development program for Indigenous peoples, and providing culturally relevant training programs, along with anti-racism awareness, for coaches, officials, and support staff who worked with Indigenous peoples. The final TRC Call to Action related to sport declared that Canada should work collaboratively with Indigenous populations as a host country

[541] Maura Forrest, "'Talk and Not a Lot of Action': Truth and Reconciliation Commission Drawing Mixed Reviews," *The Ottawa Citizen*, Jan 04, 2018, N4.

throughout the planning and staging of the events.[542] Accurate and appropriate Indigenous representation at the Olympics could only be a step along the journey of reconciliation. It was clear that, even in the twenty-first century, Canada had a lot to do to foster inclusivity in fitness and sport.

The federal government's policy goals of improving the health of Canadians by encouraging them to be active and creating a national unity through success at the Winter Olympics were not entirely accomplished in the period of this dissertation, 1980-2010. Consistently, accessibility and excellence were referenced as objectives in this era. In a 2011 national survey for the Canadian Sport Policy renewal, cost and time were cited as the most prevalent challenges/barriers to participation.[543] Barriers to accessing organized sport remained a concern for Canadian sport policy writers. Conversely, the Canadian Olympic Committee's 2010 annual report proclaimed, "Olympic spirit reached new heights as Canadians – sport fans or not cheered on one team." Further research after the Vancouver Games found that Olympic interest was at an all-time high.[544] The success of the Calgary Winter Olympic Games made it easier for Vancouver organizers to garner support to host the world in 2010. The positive outcomes from high-performance excellence brought Canadians together in celebration. However, this was not sustainable for an increasingly diverse population and a national fitness and sport system that did not serve everyone.

Canadians have independently built on the legacy of Hal Johnson and Joanne McCleod by taking the initiative to create programs that ensured fewer racialized athletes and fitness

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[542] Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, *Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada* (2015), 10.
[543] Sport Information Resource Centre (SIRC), Rep., *Canadian Sport Policy Renewal 2011 - National Electronic Survey Summary Report*, 11.
[544] Canadian Olympic Committee. *Annual Report.* 2010, 4.

participants face barriers to joining. They have operated on their own accord, recognizing that serious cracks in the system have left people behind. The Aboriginal Sport Circle was created in 1995 with representatives from each of the Provincial/Territorial Sport Bodies plus two elders forming the Board of Directors. Renee Hess founded Black Girl Hockey Club in 2018. The Canadian Black Coaches Association was founded in 2020 by Lee Anna Osei. The Hockey Diversity Alliance was founded in 2020 by Evander Kane, Matt Dumba, Akim Aliu, Nazem Kadri and Wayne Simmonds. These organizations have undertaken a task that was meant to be fulfilled by the Canadian state. Sport officials may have believed that these issues would be addressed in Canada's second national sport policy.

The *Canada Sport Policy, 2012*, sought to build on the momentum of high-performance sport successes from the previous decade to unite the country behind Canada's Olympians. The Policy's vision addressed Canada as having "a dynamic and innovative culture that promotes and celebrates participation and excellence in sport."[545] The sociocultural success of the Vancouver 2010 Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games made the primacy of sporting excellence even clearer.[546] By the 2012-2013 fiscal year, Ottawa was investing $210 million annually on the Athlete Assistance Program, national and multi-sport organizations, Canadian Sport Centres/Institutes, hosting programs and sport participation initiatives. This was nearly a fourfold increase from the mid-1980s.[547] The successful implementation of a sport policy could help address many health-related challenges Canada faced including obesity, an aging population, and illnesses linked to physical inactivity.

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[545] Sport Canada, *Canadian Sport Policy 2012* (Ottawa: Canadian Heritage, 2012), 2.
[546] *Ibid*., 4.
[547] Thibault and Harvey, eds., *Sport Policy in Canada*, 27-28.

In terms of the federal government's involvement in the Winter Olympic Games, this dissertation has shown that officials hoped all Canadians would rally behind Team Canada and share the dream of reaching the podium. The preceding chapters identified barriers to sport participation that prevented many from pursuing their athletic dreams due to the considerable time commitment and financial costs involved. Instead, the federal government's nationalistic goals in fitness and sport mobilized Canadians of a certain socioeconomic class to come together. However, the ambitious promise of national unity only indicated how Ottawa wanted Canada to be perceived rather than being a lived reality. Canadian officials understood the value of sport as a diplomatic tool for promoting the country's prestige by hosting two Winter Olympic Games and ensuring that Canada's athletes were prepared to compete and excel on the world stage.

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