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ARTICLE

Cultural Nationalism, Anti-Americanism, and the Federal Defense of the Canadian Football League

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ABSTRACT

During the 1960s nationalism flourished in Canada as did American influence, both cultural and economically, as well as separatist sentiment in Quebec. The Canadian federal government became more interventionist to combat threats to Canadian sovereignty: internal threats from Quebec and external threats from the United States. The federal government used sport as a nation-building tool and eventually acted to protect the Canadian Football League (CFL) as a display of resistance to Americanization and in an attempt to unite French and English. Canadian football had become a symbol of the nation and therefore could be used by the government in a symbolic way to resist cultural imperialism and promote national unity. On two occasions the federal government acted to ensure the CFL preserved its Canadian identity; first, to prevent Canadian-based football teams from joining an American professional football league, and second, to prevent American-based teams from joining the CFL. John Munro was the key Canadian politician who formulated policy to protect Canadian football.

KEYWORDS

Canadian Football League; nation-building; US cultural influence in Canada; national unity; 1960s and 1970s

Canadian cultural nationalism can be understood, at one level, as symbolic protection from, and resistance to, American domination. Anthropologist Frank Manning noted that Canadian research concerning the American influence on Canada has concentrated on hegemony and dependence. According to Manning, cultural "[d]omination has attracted far more attention than resistance." (1993, 7). This article focuses on an overlooked example of state resistance to cultural domination. The study relates to and extends a central issue in Canadian Studies, the question of Canada's viability as a nation in the face of powerful American economic and cultural influences. It interprets Canadian football as a cultural form that offsets dependency by fulfilling three of the main criteria for nation building: a sense of a shared past, occupation of a territory, and a focal point of collective discourse.

During the 1960s nationalism flourished in Canada and grew to combat two major concerns–the rise of nationalism in Quebec and the growing influence of American culture in Canada. Canadian sovereignty was threatened internally by Quebec separatism and externally by Americanization. Canadian nationalists needed to counter both threats and sports played a role in this time of heightened nationalism. Part of the strategy to use sport as a forum for nationalism was the federal government's protection

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of the Canadian Football League (CFL) when it was threatened by American incursions. Liberal John Munro, Minister of Health responsible for Sport under Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau from 1968 to 1972, led this resistance. Munro, and other powerful figures in the federal government including Trudeau, took this action to display a resistance to Americanization while also attempting to unite the French and English in Canada during a time when separatist sentiment grew in Quebec.

In the study of Canadian sport and culture, hockey has usually dominated the national conversation. Numerous academic studies of hockey have declared that it is the sport most closely linked with Canadian identity (Gruneau and Whitson 1994; Whitson and Gruneau 2006; Holman 2009; Wong 2009). From its inception in Canada during the 1860s, however, football also played a role in the construction of Canadian national identity. An effort to create a Canadian pastime led early promoters and players to differentiate it from both British rugby and American football by developing and defending distinctive Canadian rules for the game. Football evolved in Canada during the 1860s; a period of nation-building (Poulter 2009). Confederation, although primarily Anglo-engineered, began a sincere effort to establish in the new Dominion a sense of nationhood different from both British and American identities. Sports such as Canadian football could be used to help differentiate Canada from Britain and the United States. What made Canadian football Canadian, different from both American football or British rugby, was its rules. Rules were important for defining a game, and ensuring safety, fair play and order, but unique rules could also be used to provide identity. Changing the rules was a way to nationalize a sport, linking it to the nation by making it distinctive (Poulter 2009). Unique rules set Canadian football apart from the American game and discouraged continental integration.

In the 1860s universities were the catalysts for Canadian football's development with the most activity happening at McGill University in Montreal and the University of Toronto. In 1873 the first Canadian football association was formed and the following year the first inter-provincial competition took place. The Victorian belief in "Muscular Christianity," the idea that participation in sport, particularly amateur team sports, would develop positive masculine character traits including morality, discipline, and patriotism, took hold in Canada as it did elsewhere. Because football adhered to the amateur, character-building tenets of Muscular Christianity, it became attractive to influential classes in Canadian society, and particularly among the middle-class Anglo-Saxons who dominated McGill University and the University of Toronto.

Those who played Canadian football in Central Canada lived in a nation that was rapidly coming of age, part of a conscious effort to liberate themselves from both the British domination of the Atlantic and the American domination of North America. Canadians needed a national economy as much as they needed a national identity. Linking Central Canada to the eastern and western provinces was key to this nation building. The construction of transportation and communications infrastructure on an east-west axis was a prominent feature of this Canadian nation building. The development of the railway made it faster and more convenient to move, goods, people, ideas, and information. Sport, including Canadian football, spread across the country along these railways as much as any other commodity. By 1890, teams and leagues had formed across the country (Sturrock 1971).

Alongside a national transportation system emerged a national communication system, and Canadian football rose during the "golden age of print" in Canada, an era when more newspapers and periodicals reached a larger and more varied audience than ever before, and when the print media enjoyed great power (Oriard 1993; Lorenz 20032003). Newspaper coverage helped make the game even more popular in Canada. In many cases, as local daily newspapers were established, local football teams were also started; one feeding off the other. Both served to advertise the viability of a municipality. By 1896, promoters organized a national championship in central Canada as well as a national body to facilitate further growth and integration across the young country.

The national transportation system and the rising popularity of sports reporting created an ideal context for the rapid growth of football in towns and cities across the country as well as the integration of those teams into a national association. In 1893 Governor General Lord Stanley donated his now famous trophy for hockey and in 1901 Governor General Lord Minto supplied a cup for the sport of lacrosse. In 1909, Governor General Lord Grey, a vigorous promoter of Canadian unity, donated a trophy for the football championship of Canada. The allure of the trophy successfully built connections between the different regional leagues, and the trophy became highly sought after with league champions from a variety of regions vying for the chance to compete for it. The Grey Cup game soon grew to provide a common annual experience for Canadians. By the 1920s Canadian football drew larger crowds than any other sport in Canada with multiple leagues and more than 20 teams vying for the Grey Cup. The real challenge was not making sure football remained popular in Canada, it was protecting the uniqueness of the Canadian game and its trophy from the influence of American football.

The Threat of Continentalism at the Turn of the Century

The north-south pull of continentalism meant that Canadian football, like Canadian culture, would always need to resist American influence. In Canada there was consistent resistance to adopting too many aspects of the American game of football. Between 1882 and 1892, Yale University head coach Walter Camp, known as the father of American football, dramatically changed the rules used in the United States. Some sought to incorporate Camp's changes into the Canadian game, but early organizers specifically rejected them as being "too American" (Sproule 2003, 6). Camp revised the rules to require the offense to gain five yards in three attempts or lose the ball. According to Everett-Green (2012, S1), a report from a Canadian football association meeting in 1884 revealed that organizers refused to consider "anything approaching the American style of scrimmages." Despite pressure to play the American version of the game, sports historian S.F. Wise notes that "Canadian footballers stubbornly refused to alter the game they had created" (Wise 1989, 121). As one sport historian claimed, these early organizers of sport in Canada "appear to have been fervent Canadian nationalists" (West 1973, 27). While other sports in Canada including hockey, baseball, and basketball evolved continentally, Canadian football retained unique Canadian aspects specifically in an effort to resist American influence in Canada. As sport historian Alan Metcalfe wrote, "Football remained Canadian … and thus served as a visible symbol of something uniquely Canadian" (Metcalfe 1987, 61). Canadian football, according to Hayes, became

"a genuine and potentially liberating form of cultural expression" (Hayes, 1994). A distinctly Canadian game could help citizens imagine themselves as Canadian (Poulter 2009).

Despite a history of resistance, Canadian football did reluctantly accommodate some American rules. Almost 25 years after American football incorporated the forward pass, the Canadian game finally adopted the tactic in 1929, amid much opposition (Reeve 1931). This new tactic was accompanied by the importation of more American players experienced in the use of the pass. In response, teams were limited to a maximum of five foreign players in 1936. Sports like lacrosse and hockey, potentially much more representative of the Canadian myths of rugged northernness, were subsumed by American rules, organizations, and even culture, and therefore were less effective in contributing to Canada's uniqueness (Roberts 1931). Throughout the early days of Canadian football, organizers attempted to maintain a distinctively Canadian game that differed from American and British versions. By the 1950s and 1960s, as American commerce, culture, and sport increasingly influenced Canada, all while Canada faced renewed internal threats to a national cultural identity, symbols of Canadiannesss became all the more important, and the Canadian Football League emerged as one of those symbols.

Canadian Nationalism: Post Second World War

Continentalism and nationalism often go hand-in-hand in Canadian history and are complex topics. Canada, a large and diverse country, has experienced nationalisms in many forms throughout its history.[1] Nationalism is an ideology built upon both a resistance to others and efforts to construct a sense of shared identities. Consequently, nationalism is both destructive and constructive. Throughout Canada's history, the idea of "nation-building;" the opportunity to create "Canadian" institutions and forms of cultural expressions, has been as important as efforts to resist other imposing identities[2] (Granatstein 1997). Even as Canada fought cultural imperialism from abroad (both British and American) a singular Canadian identity also had to confront the emergence of a renewed French-Canadianism in the 1960s.

The Quiet Revolution, which profoundly changed Quebec, emerged with the 1960 election of Quebec premier Jean Lesage (Cook 1995). Modernization and secularization followed, directed by an activist Quebec government. The feelings of cultural nationalism finally manifested in a political movement that represented the aspirations of many French-speaking people of Quebec. The rising separatist movement in Quebec was an internal threat to the formation of a united Canadian nation. In response to growing French-Canadian nationalism, Prime Minister Pearson's government formed the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism in 1963. The Commission resulted in major changes to language policy, bilingual education, and multiculturism in Canada. While Pearson's commission illustrates his concern with internal division in Canada, he was also concerned by the growing American influence in Canada.

Nationalist fears about American economic and cultural imperialism flourished as Canada struggled to preserve its independence in the face of powerful American influences. This influence was seen as a threat to Canadian nationhood and hampered the ability of Canadians to use culture to help define a Canadian identity. The threat of

American domination preoccupied Canada's federal government and in many cases, including sports, justified government intervention in areas of culture and the economy (Ostry 1978; Thompson 1992).

Canadian children of the post-war era grew up exposed to more American culture than any previous generation (Owram 1996). American publications outnumbered Canadian newspapers and magazines three to one and US firms controlled more than three-quarters of the English book market in Canada (Crean 1976). Movies, television, music, and other forms of entertainment spilled easily through a porous border. In 1956 almost half of English programming shown on televisions in Canada originated from the United States. A 1960 report revealed that almost 80 percent of English viewing-time in border cities like Toronto was devoted to American content. In March of 1963, seven of the top ten shows on the public broadcaster, the CBC, were American (Bumsted 1986). Pierre Juneau, the first Chair of the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunication Commission (CRTC) responsible for broadcasting and telecommunications in Canada, noted that Canadians were "a minority voice in their own country" (as quoted in Crean 1976, 52).

American influence was apparent not just in the area of culture, but in the Canadian economy as well. In the 1960s, Canada was the world's leading recipient of foreign direct investment. By 1964, 80 percent of long-term foreign investment in Canada was American (Levitt 1970). Surveys showed that two-thirds of Canadians wanted action taken to lessen the amount of foreign control in the Canadian economy and a majority felt the Canadian way of life was influenced too much by the United States (Bashevkin 1991; Granatstein and Hillmer 1991). During the turbulent years of the 1960s, race riots, Vietnam, McCarthyism, and political assassinations deepened the divide between Canada and the United States. This public perception encouraged the development of a Canadian nationalism that was more anti-American than anything else. Consequently, the federal government had wide public support to act to counter these perceived threats.

John G. Diefenbaker, who became prime minister in 1957, was a staunch Canadian nationalist who pushed the country in a decidedly anti-American direction. He was able to capitalize on anti-American sentiment and contribute to it in the elections of 1957 and 1958 (Azzi 1999; Granatstein 1997). He was succeeded by Liberal Lester Pearson, whose government produced new powerful symbols to unite Canadians. The selection of the Maple Leaf flag to replace the Red Ensign was particularly important as it represented a movement away from Britain, and by the late 1960s, *O'Canada* had largely surpassed *God Save the Queen* as the publicly recognized national anthem (Bumsted 1992). As historian Philip Buckner put it, any "lingering sense of a shared [British] identity seems to have vanished remarkably quickly in the 1960s" (Buckner 2005, 201).

Powerful symbols such as a new flag and anthem fueled Canadian nationalism. The height of state-sponsored nationalism in Canada occurred in 1967 with Canada's Centennial celebrations and Expo '67. The Centennial was both a boost to, and an expression of, the new post-war nationalism. The budget devoted to the Centennial party, a massive nation-building project, was the largest single infusion of cash in the history of Canadian culture (Mackey 2002). The centennial celebrations were successful nation-building exercises that saw the state become even more involved in the lives of Canadians. According to Wright (2004) and Rao (2010), this nationalism

peaked in the late 1960s and early 1970s, yet the decades also coincided with Quebec's Quiet Revolution, which, on the surface, threatened that nationalism, as did the ever-expanding ability of American culture to reach well beyond its own borders. These represented dual threats to a nation that was eagerly trying to buttress its own identity.

Internal threats in the form of French-Canadian nationalism converged with the struggle to preserve independence in the face of powerful American influences to compel the Canadian federal government to act. Canadian culture required state support to counteract the market forces that tilted the playing field in favor of American cultural products and made the creation of a Canadian national culture a challenge. Long-existing fears of American economic and cultural imperialism emerged after the Second World War provided the federal government with greater support to engage in using national culture for nation-building. National independence depended upon an activist state; the state depended upon nationalism to legitimize its sovereignty. Cultural and economic nationalism certainly complemented each other, yet economic nationalism was more controversial because it threatened the pocketbooks of Canadians. Cultural nationalism was less risky politically and offered greater symbolic dividends.

During the the 1950s and 1960s, therefore, the federal government designed policies to protect and promote many aspects of Canadian culture. Royal Commissions, including the Massey Commission on the Arts, examined Canadian culture, and Ottawa established Canadian content regulations for television. Surveys demonstrated that the majority of Canadians supported these commissions and regulations (Stewart and Hull 1994). The 1960 Royal Commission on Publications recommended that Canadian companies not receive tax deductions for advertising in American magazines. The Canadian Film Development Corporation was founded in 1967 to support the development of a Canadian feature film industry. The government formulated an Arts and Cultural Policy with a goal of national unity (Edwardson 2008). The state was now more likely than ever before to play a role in promoting, protecting, and producing Canadian culture. At first federal cultural policies focused on high culture, but by the 1960s cultural policies broadened to include various forms of popular culture, including sport.

Government Support for Sport

State involvement in sport was initially linked to the development of fitness, but the realization that sport was a critical component of national culture soon followed (Macintosh, Bedecki, and Franks 1988). The nationalistic Diefenbaker government became increasingly interested in using international sporting events to promote Canadian national identity. Prime Minister Diefenbaker saw how sport was tied to nationalism in the Olympics and that certain countries successfully used sport for national prestige. He visited the Canadian team at the 1959 Pan-American Games in Chicago (Macintosh, Bedecki, and Franks 1988), and the next year he referred to sport in the government's Speech from the Throne. In 1961, he officially opened the Hockey Hall of Fame. At the ceremonial opening, the prime minister announced his intentions for a National Bill on Fitness and Sport. Diefenbaker's nationalist outlook became the catalyst for the federal government venturing into the area of sport (Hallett 1981). Bill C-131, An Act to Promote Fitness and Amateur Sport, passed unanimously in 1961.

Most scholarship points to the 1960s as the key period in the development of Canadian sport policy, attributing it to an increase in nationalism, state activity in the area of culture, and concerns about Americanization (Galasso 1972; West 1973; Broom and Baka 1978; Kidd 1982; Macintosh, Bedecki, and Franks 1988). Bill C-131 was the first significant government initiative in the area of sport. While the bill purportedly was concerned with health and fitness, in implementing it the government seemed more interested in improving Canada's performance in international sport to increase prestige, to contribute to national identity to counter Americanization, and to quell the troubling national unity crisis. According to Macintosh and his coauthors, "[s]port was now important enough to become useful for the federal government in its quest to promote national unity and identity in the country" (Macintosh, Bedecki, and Franks 1988, 74). The government had for the first time become involved in amateur sport. Intervention in a professional spectator sport was a logical next step.

Fears of Americanization during the 1960s, evident in both the economy and in the area of culture, had extended to professional sport. The NHL added six American-based teams in 1967. With the addition of these teams as well as American interests having more control of the league, Macintosh argues that NHL hockey was "a much less important symbol of Canadian identity" (Macintosh 1996, 40). With the Americanization of the NHL, a league that now had ten of twelve teams based in the United States, a confidential CBC internal memo called the Canadian Football League "perhaps the most important league in Canada" (Hunka 1968). With Canada's national sport of hockey increasingly under American influence, the CFL could fulfill an important function as a distinctively Canadian sporting institution and tradition. Football had a longer history in Canada than it did in America, and, as a game, it fit within the dominant Anglo-Victorian culture of Canada. The CFL was the lone professional sporting league featuring only Canadian-based teams, the professional sports league with the highest number of franchises based in Canada, and it employed a quota to ensure the majority of players were Canadian. Canadian football became an identity marker that nationalists could use to define the country and to differentiate it from other nations.

Prime Minister Pearson, in power after Diefenbaker, identified the rise of Quebec nationalism and American dependency as threats to Canadian cultural unity (Magder 1994). Pearson, an avid sportsman who had played hockey, baseball, lacrosse, and had played and coached football at the University of Toronto, actively supported sports across Canada. He attended several Grey Cups, performing the ceremonial kick off on occasion, and in his message in the 1964 Grey Cup program he referred to the Grey Cup game as "a genuine national symbol–a force for unity and understanding" (Pearson 1964, 5). According to Mackey (2002), Pearson saw symbolic and ritual aspects of nation building as essential to the country. Pierre Trudeau, who succeeded Pearson, exhibited a pan-Canadian approach to nationalism, which differed from Diefenbaker's and Pearson's approaches, but, like Diefenbaker and Pearson, Trudeau used sport in an attempt to unite the country.

In a 1968 campaign speech, Trudeau stated that national sports could promote nationalism and ease tension between French and English (Macintosh and Whitson 1990). The next year, Trudeau's government produced the Task Force on Sport Report. The report stated "Canadian sport, in many of its branches, is in serious difficulty. A mass of evidence gathered both in this country and abroad, has convinced us that many of

the problems facing sport in Canada can only be overcome with the assistance of the federal government" (Canada 1969, 19). While governments around the world focused on international amateur sport or fitness and recreation, this report concentrated on professional sport. Professional sport attracted large audiences and therefore could unite different languages, cultures, and regions. Not only could it unite the country across both geographic and linguistic divides, but the report also argued that professional sport could act as "an effective antidote to economic and cultural domination by the United States" (Macintosh, Bedecki, and Franks 1988, 74). The report raised concerns over the continental structure of professional hockey and singled out Canadian professional football for contributing to national unity. The report praised the CFL for employing a Canadian quota, featuring only Canadian teams, being distinctive from American football in its play, and providing national competition in defiance of continental norms. The government for the first time now had an official advisory body recommending support for Canadian professional football.

The CFL, like all national icons, was an imperfect vessel for the promotion of Canadian nationalism; certainly, there were elements of Canada that the CFL did not include.[3] While it did bring together east and west during the playing season, and most famously at Grey Cup time, Atlantic Canada was not represented, and the Canadian game was dependent on American stars and coaches. However, the CFL, and in particular, the Grey Cup game, could still be effectively employed for the promotion of national identity because, unlike hockey, it was exclusively Canadian in its operation and uniquely Canadian in its rules. Its continued ability to resist American control attracted Canadian politicians interested in promoting nationalism, and, as such, these politicians needed to protect Canadian football.

Under the Trudeau government, the focus on sport policy slowly shifted to using sport to contribute to national identity while stemming the troubling national unity crisis. The government created Sport Canada to improve Canada's performance in international games. Minister of National Health and Welfare John Munro, whose portfolio also included sport, was instrumental in the creation of Hockey Canada to counter Canada's declining performance in international competition (Macintosh and Hawes 1994). The largest portion of funding associated with Bill C-131 was not allocated to fitness or recreational opportunities, but instead went to elite athletes for international competitions. With the government intervening in elite amateur sport and hockey, it was conceivable to intervene in other sports as well, including those at the professional level.

American Football's Invasion of Canada

As nationalists warned that American cultural forces inundated Canada, the realm of football was no exception. Formed in 1960, the American Football League (AFL) identified Canadian cities as potential locations for expansion (Frewin 1955). An article in *Maclean's* magazine speculated that the AFL was interested in both the Toronto and Montreal markets for potential franchises (Trimble and Frayne 1960). The AFL's American competitor, the National Football League (NFL) also scouted potential Canadian locations. In 1962, an article in the *Toronto Telegram* revealed that Toronto Argonauts part-owner John Bassett was lobbying NFL commissioner Pete Rozelle for a franchise in

Toronto (Siggins 1979). In November 1964, construction magnate Lawrence Shankman applied for an NFL franchise for Toronto. The next year Toronto was officially included on the list of potential NFL expansion sites (Simmons 2006).

At the same time, influential citizens in Montreal worked hard to bring American football to that city. Montreal Mayor Jean Drapeau and city councilor Gerry Snyder petitioned for a National Football League team (Naylor and Brunt 2007). The pair had successfully lobbied for a Major League Baseball expansion team in Montreal in 1969, which was the first time a major American professional sporting league had established a franchise outside the United States. Professional baseball at the highest level had joined the continentalist NHL and a continental football league might not be far behind. All of thisoccurred within the context of increasing French-Canadian nationalism. The new nationalism that emerged in Quebec had been intensified by French president Charles de Gaulle when he referred to an independent Quebec in Montreal during his visit to Expo in the summer of 1967. Trudeau felt that intensive investment in state-sponsored cultural nationalism could challenge the appeal of French-Canadian nationalism (Zakus 1996). Nationalism, American-dominated continentalism, sports, and a French-Canadian renaissance all seemed to be converging in Montreal at this time.

With nationalism peaking after a year-long centennial celebration, a new interventionist government led by Pierre Trudeau attempted to combat fears of Americanization and Quebec separatism by deploying aggressive protection of a national sporting league that represented the nation under threat. The stage was set for government intervention. Minister Munro met with CFL commissioner Jake Gaudaur. Both men were from Hamilton, home of the Canadian Football Hall of Fame and the Hamilton Tiger-Cat football team, the only professional sports team in town. After the meeting Munro stepped into action, producing a memorandum about the grave situation the CFL faced. On July 29, 1969, the Cabinet Committee on External Policy and Defence, after discussing Munro's memorandum, recommended that the Canadian Ambassador in Washington ascertain the NFL's expansion plans and requested Munro's memorandum be discussed at Cabinet level "at the earliest opportunity" (Wright 1969).

After a prosperous decade in the 1950s, the CFL had struggled during the 1960s as NHL hockey grew more popular and American football more powerful. Competition between the AFL and NFL in the United States may have motivated each league to explore expansion into Canada. The political economy of football conspired against the CFL in its struggle to compete. The NFL featured teams in larger metropolitan areas that generated a robust complex of media coverage, advertising, sponsorship, and media revenues. In contrast, CFL teams generally served smaller markets with fewer resources to support franchises. Sports reporters started to predict the demise of the league (Siggins 1979; Frayne 1968). In June 1969, *Weekend Magazine* published a feature article entitled "Is Canadian Football Dying?". The lead from the article read "The Canadian Football League is in grave trouble and by 1971 it could be dead" and speculated that the "American invasion" into Canada would doom the CFL (O'Brien 1969, 8). The NFL had just merged with the AFL and was in a position to absorb the CFL as well. The article referenced the historical support received from prime ministers and the decline of the CFL's popularity in Montreal. The league as a whole suffered from declining television ratings and falling ticket sales. In 1966, Jake Gaudaur, then President and General Manager of the Hamilton Tiger-Cats, had hired a management consulting firm to

examine the CFL's operations. The confidential report revealed that teams suffered financially as interest in the NFL increased (Siggins 1979). Although hidden from the public, the report was shared with all nine teams and acted as the catalyst for Gaudaur's proactive lobbying. Eventually Gaudaur became league commissioner and worked tirelessly to support the league he had been involved with as a player and team executive for 28 years. A key component of his work was seeking support from the federal government.

In 1969 Minister Munro produced a report entitled "Problems Facing the Canadian Football League and its Future." The report stated that the main threat to the League was the possibility that the NFL would move into Toronto and Montreal, which would result in the demise of the CFL and the loss of the "nation-knitting" ability of the league. In a 1968 meeting, NFL commissioner Pete Rozelle had mentioned Montreal, Toronto, Vancouver, and Ottawa as potential cities for NFL franchises (Gaudaur 1971). In his report, Munro stressed the "significance of this outcome on the national unity of Canada." Munro commented on the importance of Canadian football's century-old tradition and lamented that the collapse of the league would mean fewer job opportunities for Canadian players, but more importantly, would result in the loss of the Grey Cup, the CFL's championship game, "one of the great binding forces of Canada" (Munro 1969). Munro felt the federal government should become more involved in this area of Canadian culture.

In his brief, Munro outlined six courses of action for the federal government. First, the Canadian Department of External Affairs could communicate to the US State Department its concern and then the US State Department could express this concern to the NFL Commissioner. Second, the Canadian Embassy in Washington could communicate the Canadian government's opposition to American expansion to members of Congress who were concerned with United States-Canada relations. Third, the Minister of National Health and Welfare could make a public statement outlining official government policy that Canadian football was a national cultural resource and that the government would prohibit American penetration as it did American ownership of Canadian newspapers.[4] Fourth, the Minister of National Health and Welfare could discuss this official government policy with Montreal Mayor Drapeau. Fifth, the Minister of National Health and Welfare could look at the legality of preventing American players signing with Canadian-based teams. Sixth, and finally, the federal government could meet with the CRTC to prevent television stations from televising games featuring American football teams (Munro 1969). The brief suggested unprecedented government intervention into protecting a professional sports league. Munro asked Edgar Ritchie, Canadian Ambassador to the United States, to discuss this concern with American authorities (Wright 1969).

In the April 1970 Quebec provincial election, the first election for the separatist Parti Québécois (PQ), the PQ earned 23 percent of the vote. Quebec separatism was now a tangible threat. That same year Montreal was awarded the 1976 Olympic Summer Games, and the right, with government support, to spend millions of dollars to build facilities for the Games, including a massive stadium to be used for track and field competitions and the Opening and Closing ceremonies. This venue could also be used to host a football team in either an American or Canadian professional league.

Montreal had evolved into a truly cosmopolitan metropolis. As the most populous city in Canada, it was the perfect site for a new NFL franchise. Its downtown was flourishing, a modern subway was finished, a new professional baseball team was playing, and the business community was growing. Leading citizens wanted Montreal to be seen as a major international city. Mayor Drapeau felt that an American NFL team was more suitable for the dynamic city of Montreal than a CFL team (Gaudaur 1971).

The Montreal franchise in the CFL was in serious trouble. The arrival of the Montreal Expos and talk of an NFL team did not help the CFL team's bottom line. The French-English divide was growing in Quebec and also among football supporters. Surveys indicated that English-speaking supporters, making up about two-thirds of the Alouette fan-base, did not support an NFL team, but French-speaking fans did (Proudfoot 1972). Supporters of Canadian football had worked endlessly to attach the game to the nation. A sport tied to Canadian nationalism was much less appealing with French-Canadian nationalism and separatist sentiment growing in Quebec.

Federal government officials met with Montreal Mayor Jean Drapeau to inform him that the federal government did not support the establishment of an NFL team in Canada (Health and Welfare Canada 1974). In July of 1970 a key meeting took place between CFL commissioner Jake Gaudaur and Pete Rozelle, commissioner of the National Football League. At the meeting Gaudaur informed Rozelle that the Canadian federal government would intervene to prevent an NFL invasion. Most certainly Rozelle was told of the protective actions the federal government could implement that were outlined in John Munro's brief. In response Gaudaur received Rozelle's promise that the NFL would not expand into Canada (Gaudaur 1971). Rozelle was true to his word and NFL activities in Canada came to a sudden stop. Throughout the 1960s, there had been seven NFL exhibition games played in Canada, including two in Montreal in 1969 alone, when city lobbyists attempted to prove that the city was worthy of an NFL franchise. After learning about the federal government's concern, the NFL stopped playing games in Canada for two decades, even as the league held games in Mexico, Japan, Sweden, and the United Kingdom. The intervention of the Canadian government had successfully thwarted an American professional football league's invasion of Canada.

The CFL's Invasion of the United States

While there was concern about the NFL moving into Canada and potentially damaging the CFL, there was also concern about American cities joining the CFL. Some American cities expressed interest in an NFL franchise, but the League carefully controlled its expansion plans to increase franchise values. As an alternative some of these American locations expressed interest in a CFL franchise. New York, Chicago, Indianapolis, Detroit, San Antonio, Tampa, Portland, and even Mexico City had applied for CFL expansion teams (Gaudaur 1972; Goodman 1982; Fulton 1996).

In his 1971 annual report, Commissioner Gaudaur noted that some teams, notably those in Saskatchewan and Winnipeg, were in financial distress. Expansion fees from new American franchises might help alleviate some of the financial stress the CFL faced. In addition, the inclusion of American cities might provide a first-class feel to a league that suffered from an inferiority complex (Gaudaur 1972). Canada has been subservient to another world power throughout its history, and this has fostered a hegemonic

inferiority complex that the nation's football league was not immune to. American domination of Canadian sport contributed to the complex with those cultural practices being valued as more legitimate. With the addition of teams in American cities such as New York, Chicago, or Detroit, the CFL might be seen as a world-class league. Expansion into the United States might mitigate another problem the CFL faced. Rather than waiting for Montreal or Toronto to bring an NFL team to Canada and damage the CFL, some CFL franchise owners wanted to bring in American teams and revitalize the league with not only a world-class feel, but also revenue from expansion fees and American radio and television rights (Siggins 1979) and thus beat the NFL at its own expansionist strategy.

However, there were concerns that including American-based teams would lead to an erosion of the distinctiveness of Canadian football. The new American-based CFL teams would not adhere to the Canadian player quotas, resulting in fewer jobs for Canadian players and potentially the elimination of the Canadian player quota. In addition, smaller markets, particularly those in the west, might lose franchises to larger American cities, similar to what had happened in the 1920s in hockey (Gaudaur 1972). There was fear the Americanization that had occurred in hockey would happen in Canadian football.[5]

Commissioner Gaudaur was mainly concerned that US expansion might result in the eventual merging of the CFL with the NFL. For Canadian nationalist politicians, the chief concern was the loss of both the CFL and the Grey Cup as important national traditions (Gaudaur 1972). Perhaps most importantly, if the CFL moved into the United States, the NFL might reciprocate and move into Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver. Public support was clearly not in favor of American expansion. A Gallup poll revealed that 67 percent of Canadians were opposed to American teams participating in the Canadian Football League (Gallup 1973). In one interview, Gaudaur proclaimed that, "Our football league is a very close reflection of Canada's problem as a nation in holding on to its identity and its autonomy in the face of a stronger force to the south." (as quoted in Batten 1972, 94).

The CFL formed a committee to closely examine the issue of expansion (Fulton 1996). A majority of teams, including all the teams in the east as well as the BC Lions in the west, supported the inclusion of at least two US-based franchises (Sullivan 1974). The smaller community-owned teams on the prairies opposed the move, feeling that smaller markets would lose franchises to larger American markets. An emergency meeting on expansion was held in Winnipeg on November 16, 1972. Officials from the four eastern teams (Ottawa Rough Riders, Hamilton Tiger-Cats, Montreal Alouettes, and Toronto Argonauts) threatened to withdraw from the CFL and set up a new league with American-based teams if the league denied American expansion (Beddoes 1972). The CFL faced a serious revolt from within. Once again, the federal government rescued the CFL from Americanization in the name of Canadian nationalism.

On November 18, 1972, just two days after the Winnipeg meeting, Minister Munro attended the CFL playoff game in Ottawa. At halftime he held an impromptu press conference and stated "[e]xpansion to the States would represent an erosion of Canadianism … The Government must act to stop such a possibility" (Beddoes 1972, S1). Munro felt that American expansion would result in the elimination of all but three or four Canadian cities from the league as well as the loss of the Grey Cup game (Cosentino 1995). He offered to meet with CFL officials to see what the government could do to eliminate the need for expansion into the United States. During the

interview he said, "we must make representations to the US Congress to prevent the CFL from losing its Canadian identity" (Beddoes 1972, S1). Munro not only pledged support, but also threats on behalf of the government. "Any federal funds that go to build an Olympic stadium in Montreal, say, might have to carry a restriction, which could be that only Canadian teams be allowed to use the stadium for football when the Olympics are over." The government, according to Munro, could legislate against foreign football teams, just as it banned foreign control of the Canadian media. John Munro, in a football stadium during half-time of a playoff game, formed official federal government policy dedicated to using sport as a tool of nationalism. He proposed recognizing the CFL as an important nation-building instrument, linking east and west like the railroad or the CBC. As such, the CFL should enjoy government protection. Munro and others were concerned that the Americanization of the NHL would be repeated in the CFL. If the league wanted more teams Munro recommended expansion teams be awarded to Halifax, London, and Quebec City, but the federal government would not allow American teams to join the CFL (Beddoes 1972, S1).

Munro's threats made front-page news across the country. Provincial governments backed the federal government, with Ontario Premier William Davis suggesting that the federal government had to act to prevent the CFL's US expansion (*Toronto Star*, 1972). Less than 48 hours after his halftime impromptu press conference, Munro summoned CFL Commissioner Gaudaur and Toronto Argonaut owner John Bassett to a meeting in Ottawa where he expanded on his government-backed threats. Munro told Commissioner Gaudaur that he felt a CFL team in the US or an NFL team in Canada would kill the league, which was too important to Canada (Gaudaur 1974). Munro explained his position: "My government is prepared to do what it can to preserve the CFL as a Canadian entity and the Grey Cup game as an instrument for national unity" (*Toronto Star*, 1972, A1). He elaborated on his position stating that the federal government "would regard expansion of the NFL into Canada as something to be deplored. We will do everything we can to prevent it happening. This is Government policy." Munro explained how the government could take such unprecedented actions by echoing some of his earlier suggestions to save the league. He stated that the government could use immigration policy to prevent players on American teams from playing in the country by withholding visas; the government could likewise revoke licenses to prevent Canadian broadcasters from televising games featuring American teams; or the government could retract tax exemptions for television sponsors on such broadcasts. The government would enact these approaches, Munro said, to "prevent invasion of Canada by the National Football League or the expansion of the Canadian Football League into the United States … We will immediately explore every possible area in which we can help … This is the only way to preserve the Grey Cup as a Canadian tradition" (Vipond 1972, 1). Nationalism was at the heart of Munro's football policy.

Munro asked Bassett to drop his motion of expansion so that the government would not be forced to act (Loeb 1972). With the threat of losing television revenue and potentially American players, Argonauts owner Bassett, as well as owners David Loeb in Ottawa and Sam Berger in Montreal, and representatives from the community-owned teams in Hamilton and Vancouver decided against pursuing expansion. Once again, the federal government had intervened to save the Canadian Football League.

This would not be the last government intervention into the CFL. Marc Lalonde replaced John Munro in the Health portfolio and when the American-based World Football League placed a franchise in Toronto in 1974, Trudeau's Liberal government responded by proposing a Bill that would have prevented Canadian-based teams from playing in an American professional football league. Although Munro was no longer responsible for sport, his policy of protecting Canadian football and using Canadian football as a tool for Canadian nationalism continued throughout the Trudeau government.

Conclusion

By the early 1970s, the CFL and the Grey Cup were seen as sufficiently constitutive of the nation to justify federal government support. Since the state had interceded in both the economy and in the area of culture to limit American influence, supporting the CFL was seen as a politically-safe, logical next step.

American cultural products swamped Canada at a time when an interventionist federal government attempted to stem the tide. During the 1960s the federal government had introduced policies designed to protect Canadian culture and promote national identity and unity. The Trudeau Liberals believed that federal government intervention into many areas of Canadian society was in the public interest. The government began to recognize popular culture as a powerful national bonding agent and intervened in the area of sport. Canadian football was viewed as an influential form of popular culture, recognized for the contributions the game could make to Canadian identity and unity. This outlook justified federal government intervention to protect Canadian professional football and was also consistent with this dominant paradigm. This involvement occurred at a time when, on a global scale, state intervention in the area of professional sport was extremely rare.

The growth of Canadian nationalism in post-war Canada played an important role in this government intervention. Centennial celebrations and Expo '67 fed its growth, and Canadian nationalism continued to swell through the late 1960s and into the 1970s. In addition, the national unity crisis played a key role in Minister Munro's actions. The goal of the government's involvement in sport included the creation of national identity and using sport to unite the country. An important reason for this was the rise of Quebec separatism during the 1960s. While peak nationalism had emerged in English-speaking Canada, a French complement had developed in Quebec. The federal government could use the CFL to counter this Quebec nationalism. Government intervention into professional football was seen as one of the ways to unite French and English at a time when this was becoming more difficult. In this nationalistic climate, the CFL was worth saving because it represented the nation. The government worked diligently to keep the NFL out of Montreal, and to have a team representing the province of Quebec playing in a Canadian league. As the province of Quebec attempted to distance itself from the rest of Canada, the federal government desired to maintain connections in any form that could link Quebec to Canada, even if the connection was a football league.

At one level, the government acted because the CFL, a Canadian business, was threatened by American influence. But on a broader level, the government was acting

to protect the CFL because Canadian culture was threatened internally by Quebec separation and externally by Americanization.

Notes

1. See for example technological nationalism (Charland 1986), cultural nationalism (Vipond 1974; Edwardson 2008), economic nationalisms (Azzi 2014), permeable nationalism (Rao 2010), popular nationalisms (Hastings 2007), banal nationalism (Rao 2010) and Quebec nationalism (Cook 1995).
2. I am indebted to an anonymous reviewer for this important point.
3. I am indebted to an anonymous reviewer for this important point.
4. The 1970 Davey Report, written by Senator Keith Davey, recommended preventing American interests from owning Canadian newspapers.
5. On fear of the Americanization of hockey see Kidd, 1969, "The Continentalization of Canadian Sport," *Canadian Dimension*, 1969 and Kidd and Macfarlane, 1972, *The Death of Hockey*.

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