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EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

ANDREW C. BILLINGS

What you are about to read represents the best work submitted not only for the special issue of *Journal of Communication Studies*, but also work that was presented along with many other studies at the 3rd Summit on Communication and Sport, which was held from February 28-March 1, 2008 at Clemson University in Clemson, SC. The first two Summits were held at Arizona State University and the quality and amount of scholarship in this burgeoning area of communication studies research continues to expand. Communication and sport is a topic that aptly is receiving greater attention in the field. In 2004, eight scholars published a piece in *Communication Yearbook* that outlined many timely areas of scholarship within the intersection of communication and sport, including enacting, (re)producing, consuming, and organizing sport (Kassing, Billings, Brown, Halone, Harrison, Krizek, Meân, & Turman, 2004). The four pieces you are about to read utilize and, in many instances, expand upon these issues. Coupled with journal special issues in *Western Journal of Communication* and *American Behavioral Scientist*, one clearly witnesses a great deal of growth within communication and sport scholarship. I believe this special issue continues that dialogue.

REFERENCE

KASSING, J.W., BILLINGS, A.C., BROWN, R.S., HALONE, K.K., HARRISON, K., KRIZEK, B., MEÂN, L., TURMAN, P.D., (2004). COMMUNICATION IN THE COMMUNITY OF SPORT: THE PROCESS OF ENACTING, (RE)PRODUCING, CONSUMING, AND ORGANIZING SPORT. *COMMUNICATION YEARBOOK*, 28, 373-410.

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“IS THIS A CHURCH? SUCH A BIG BUNCH OF BELIEVERS AROUND HERE!”: FAN EXPRESSIONS OF SOCIAL SUPPORT ON FLOYDLANDIS.COM

JEFFREY W. KASSING AND JIMMY SANDERSON

This study examined how fans displayed social support for American cyclist Floyd Landis via their comments posted to his website floydlandis.com. The examination spanned the course of 7 months in which Landis battled doping allegations. The fan comments were posted in response to consistent updates provided on floydlandis.com as part of the Landis defense campaign. A thematic analysis using constant comparative methodology of 831 fan postings revealed five themes related to social support: (a) empathy and sympathy, (b) confirmation, (c) testimony, (d) sharing a common enemy, and (e) offerings. In addition, the analysis displays how the qualitative nature of social support evolved and shifted over time.

Key Words: social support, parasocial interaction, web blogs, fan-athlete interaction, cycling

Media consumers enjoy not only the drama of sport, but also the drama that encircles sport celebrities off the field (Brown & Basil, 1995; Brown, Basil, & Bocarnea, 2003; Brown, Duane, & Fraser, 1997). Our seemingly insatiable desire to know more about our athletic heroes is captured in such outlets as the popular MTV show “Cribs”, which profiles professional athletes displaying their elaborate mansions and luxury vehicles (Smith & Beal, 2007). In addition, media attention increases when sport celebrities face crises of identity and reputation. The use of performance enhancing drugs is a particularly compelling allegation leveraged against athletes and one that undoubtedly induces crisis for athletes.

The situation that emerged around American cyclist and disputed winner of the 2006 Tour de France, Floyd Landis, represents an interesting case in which allegations of doping have disrupted an athlete’s career and future¹. In response to the accusations Landis used his website to wage a campaign in his defense. The website provided updates and information to site visitors and fans about his ongoing battle with various governing and regulatory bodies like the Union Cycliste Internationale (UCI), the United States Anti-Doping Agency (USADA), the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA), and the French testing lab Laboratoire National de Dépistage du Dopage (LNDD), as well as

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information about the status of his appeal. In addition, he launched the Floyd Fairness Foundation (FFF) and conducted a series of Town Hall Fund Raisers across the country to raise awareness and funds for his defense campaign. Reputedly these efforts resulted in over a million dollars in donations from fans and supporters (Corbett, 2007).

Landis' public campaign, his use of communication technology to reach fans and supporters, and his prolonged fight to clear his name coalesce to form a rich site for exploration of sport fans' communication of social support. His case is particularly relevant because it provides researchers with the opportunity to explore how fans demonstrate social support via communication technologies, and how they do so during the course of a crisis faced by a sport celebrity. Thus, our intention in this paper is to examine fan/supporter postings on floydlandis.com to discern patterns of social support for the athlete and to reveal if and how those patterns evolve and change over time.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

SOCIAL SUPPORT

Social support refers to a collection of supportive behaviors realized through social relationships (Cutrona & Suhr, 1991; Goldsmith, 2004; House, 1981; Richmond, Rosenfeld, & Hardy, 1993). Through these behaviors people in relationships offer one another affect, affirmation, and aid. Varying typologies of social support behavior provide greater or lesser degrees of distinction between how people specifically and particularly provide these fundamental elements of social support (Cutrona & Suhr, 1991; House, 1981; Richmond, et al., 1993). In an early attempt to categorize social support behavior House (1981) concluded that previous typologies collapsed into four types of social support: (a) emotional support or the provision of empathy, caring, love, and trust realized through expressions of affect and concern; (b) instrumental support or the display of behaviors that help other people in a variety of ways enacted via offers of financial support, time, and other resources; (c) informational support or the provision of information that helps one cope with challenges and problems achieved by advice giving, suggestions, and directives; and (d) appraisal support or the provision of information specifically linked to self-evaluation accomplished through affirmation and feedback. A decade later Cutrona and Suhr (1991) introduced an additional form of social support called network support, which entails communication that signals membership and belonging to a group with shared experiences.

Richmond et al. (1993), in turn, provided the greatest degree of differentiation when they identified eight types of social support. These included: (a) listening support (i.e., perceived nonjudgmental listening); (b) emotional support or displays of caring and comforting; (c) emotional challenge designed to help the recipient evaluate his or her attitudes, beliefs, and feelings; (d) reality confirmation support or the confirmation of one's perspective by similar others; (e) task appreciation support or recognition and validation of someone's efforts; (f) task challenge support (i.e., challenging one's way of thinking as a motivational strategy to solicit greater involvement); (g) tangible assistance

or support offered through financial assistance, products, and/or gifts; and (h) personal assistance support (i.e., performing tasks that assist the other in some specific way).

Social support, then, occurs in an assortment of ways, yet remains grounded within relationships between people (House, 1981). Researchers have examined social support in various contexts including marital and family relationships (Christian, 2005; Dehle & Landers, 2005; Hyman, Gold, & Cott, 2003), as well as in educational and health care settings (Lin, 2006; MacGeorge, Samter, & Gillihan, 2005; Witherspoon & Richardson, 2006). For the purpose of this work, however, we focus on the provision and occurrence of social support in sport and via computer-mediated communication.

SPORT AND SOCIAL SUPPORT

Sport represents a particular domain in which scholars have attended to social support (Rees, Hardy, & Evans, 2007) as it appears to influence athletes' self confidence by counteracting the effects of stress (Rees & Freeman, 2007) and relates to success for athletes at varying levels of competition (Morgan & Giacobbi, 2006; Rees & Hardy, 2000). In their qualitative investigation of international level athletes' social support experiences, Rees and Hardy (2000) determined that emotional, esteem, informational, and tangible support were apparent. Likewise, Morgan and Giacobbi (2006) confirmed the existence of these types of social support in the social networks of highly successful collegiate athletes who received social support from family, coaches, and teammates. Thus, the nature and prevalence of social support in sport aligns with the behavioral provision of social support in other contexts. However, the sources of social support shift somewhat to include coaches, trainers, and teammates (Morgan & Giacobbi, 2006; Robbins & Rosenfeld, 2001). Consider, for example, the work of Robbins and Rosenfeld (2001) which revealed that athletes perceived that their trainers provided greater social support during rehabilitation versus their head and assistant coaches, but that no significant differences were noted across providers prior to injury.

Representations of social support in sport also inhabit the popular press and historically have done so for some time. Consider the case of Reverend Herbert Redmond of St. Francis Roman Catholic Church in Brooklyn imploring his parishioners to pray for slumping Brooklyn Dodgers first baseman Gil Hodges during the 1952 World Series (Clarridge, 2007) or the unexpected support offered by the traditionally ferocious and unsentimental Oakland Raiders fans to Green Bay Packers quarterback Brett Favre during a game played shortly after his father's death (Cohn, 2004). A classic example that merits mention involves NBA superstar Earvin "Magic" Johnson. After contracting HIV Johnson retired yet was named by fans as a starter at the All-Star game. Although the league restricted him from starting, an extra roster spot was created for Johnson and he was allowed to play in the game (Nance, 2007). These examples merely highlight the numerous occasions in which fans provided social support to their athletic heroes. With the advent of new communication technologies fans now have a new and robust medium by which to express social support.

COMPUTER-MEDIATED COMMUNICATION (CMC) AND SOCIAL SUPPORT

People use CMC to express social support in a wide range of contexts, such as doctor-patient communication (Bresnahan & Murray-Johnson, 2002), interaction with cancer patients (Shaw, McTavish, Hawkins, Gustafson, & Pingree, 2000), within step-families (Christian, 2005) and by people with disabilities (Braithwaite, Waldron, & Finn, 1999). Evidently CMC serves as a mechanism for people to give and receive social support without being bound by time and space (Meier, 1997). Moreover, CMC facilitates social support through the development of social connections (Eun-Ok et al., 2007; Tichon & Shapiro, 2003), as CMC support groups help participants construct relationships and feel socially connected to other members of the community (Bunde, Suls, Martin, & Barnett, 2006).

Some work in this area reflects the full spectrum of social support behavior evident in other relational contexts (Coulson, 2005; Coulson, Buchanan, & Aubeeluck, 2007), whereas other research reveals the prevalence of particular forms of social support sought and provided via CMC (Bunde, et al., 2006; Drentea & Moren-Cross, 2005; Gooden & Winefield, 2007). For example, Coulson (2005) found that postings on a computer-mediated support group for Irritable Bowl Syndrome illustrated emotional support expressed primarily through demonstrations of empathy and support, esteem support achieved through praise for the attributes and abilities of others, information support realized through guidance about and presentation of coping strategies including referrals to particular sources (e.g., organizations, websites, and books), network support which involved explicit recognition of the centrality of sharing within the group, and tangible assistance which incorporated offers to help others in specific and direct ways (e.g., forwarding information). Coulson et al. (2007) confirmed the existence of these same types of social support in their content analysis of the postings from members of an online support group for Huntingdon's disease. Additionally, they discovered that postings predominantly displayed information, emotional, and network support, and to a lesser extent esteem and tangible assistance forms of support.

In their examination of social support among women facing hysterectomies, Bunde et al. (2006) found that information support was the predominant reason women interacted, yet the website was just one of several sources of information for users. Moreover women did not appear to lack social support outside of the website indicating that the site served a complimentary rather than compensatory function for users. In contrast, breast and prostate cancer online discussion boards revealed the use of both information and emotion support and a strong sense of connectivity participants felt with the group (Gooden & Winefield, 2007). Information and emotional support also appeared to be prevalent on a parenting website for women (Drentea & Moren-Cross, 2005).

Apparently a certain degree of policing behavior accompanies social support interaction displayed via CMC (Drentea & Moren-Cross, 2005; Gooden & Winefield, 2007). Gooden and Winefield (2007), for instance, found that interaction norms developed around setting "firm boundaries regarding what the group should and should not talk about" (p. 110-111). Similarly, in their examination of a parenting website for mothers, Drentea and Moren-Cross (2005) noted that community building entailed protection of the social support network. This became apparent when certain threads escalated to heated conversations prompting members to admonish one another with

statements like “We don’t need negative comments here!!!!” (p. 934). Following the development and resolution of these occasional heated discussions led Drentea and Moren-Cross to conclude that “women on the board worked to restore their supportive community” (p. 934) and clearly developed a sensibility that the site was not for criticism of each other’s opinions or choices. Thus, online social support communities appear to engage in varying degrees of self-regulation around emergent social norms.

Interestingly, House (1981) claimed that “a necessary condition for supportive acts or behaviors is some interaction between two people” and offered that social support occurs “primarily in the context of relatively stable social relationships” (p. 29). However, CMC affords those dispersed geographically with the opportunity to give and receive social support from one another. Thus, new communication technologies implicate a shift in the traditional relational situatedness of social support. Whereas CMC provides for interaction between people it does not mandate that such interaction be based on stable social relationships. Furthermore, the interaction need not necessarily be two-way, but rather can be parasocial in nature.

PARASOCIAL INTERACTION AND FAN IDENTIFICATION

Parasocial interaction (PSI) concerns how media consumers relate to and develop relationships with media personae. Originally, Horton and Wohl (1956) argued that viewers develop bonds of intimacy over time with media personalities that resemble interpersonal social interaction, but differ because they are one-sided and mediated. Research suggests that perceived realism and attraction to media figures drives PSI (Rubin, Perse, & Powell, 1985) and that social attraction more so than physical attraction predicts PSI (Rubin & McHugh, 1987). Homophily particularly with regard to attitudes, appearance, and background is an important factor in the strength of parasocial relationships as well (Turner, 1993). The way in which mediated figures deal with problem solving is a fundamental component of PSI too (Auter & Palmgreen, 2000). Given that attraction and homophily underpin PSI one would expect to see social support emerge in instances in which mediated figures are faced with challenges or problems to solve. That is, when presented with the opportunity to provide social support we would expect those vested in parasocial relationships to express social support as if they were in actual social relationships.

Furthermore, group interaction and identification with a mediated figure is a recognized facet of PSI (Auter & Palmgreen, 2000) as well as emphatic interaction which entails some degree of behavioral or affective response from viewers such as verbally addressing the media figure or feeling embarrassed when the media figure makes a mistake (Gleich, 1997). Thus, PSI potentially occurs communally and can manifest behaviorally. Provision of social support provides a behavioral means by which a group of people can collectively direct their positive intentions toward a mediated figure.

Although traditionally and originally confined to the examination of newscasters, PSI research has extended to include sport personalities (Brown & Basil, 1995; Brown et al., 2003). Grounded in identification with athletes the effects of PSI can be seen in a series of studies. For instance, Brown and Basil (1995) found that after Magic Johnson announced that he was carrying HIV individuals who had an emotional identification

with Johnson were more likely to show an increase in their personal concern about AIDS, in their concern regarding the risk of contracting AIDS, and in their intention to reduce high-risk behavior. Similarly, Brown et al. (2003) discovered that people with a strong identification with Mark McGwire developed knowledge about and a desire to use dietary muscle enhancements that McGwire was using at the time. In another high profile case, the O.J. Simpson trial, audience members with a high degree of identification with Simpson were more likely to believe that he was innocent (Brown et al., 1997). These examples illustrate identification with professional/celebrity athletes and hint at the powerful capacity of PSI to shape and inform fans' attitudes and behavior. In addition, with the increased availability of media technologies, such as the Internet, athletes' websites, and athletes' blogs, opportunities for developing parasocial relationships with athletes have become more readily available.

Blogs represent a recent addition to the family of new media technologies, yet one that has experienced rapid growth in the past few years and acceptance as a normalized form of reporting (Dyrud & Worley, 2005; Singer, 2005). Blogs contain information that people post electronically. The standard format incorporates date/time stamped posts written by an author(s) and links to areas that feature reader comments posted in response to the original author's entries or to fellow visitors' comments. Other identifying features of blogs include frequent updates displayed in reverse chronological order (Lawson-Borders & Kirk, 2005; Trammell & Keshelashvili, 2005). Scholars have considered impression management and self presentation within blogs generally (Trammell & Keshelashvili, 2005) and fans use of blogs to express their allegiance to favorite teams and players in particular (Thebarger, 2005).

Knowing that people readily display and provide social support for one another via CMC and that professional athletes engender identification and PSI among their fans we suspect that athletes' blogs may provide an outlet for fans to enact social support for celebrity athletes, particularly in times of identity/reputation crisis. To date, though, there has been no systematic examination of how fans may use athletes' blogs as a vehicle for displaying and providing social support. To explore how and the degree to which this occurs we pose the following research questions:

- RQ1: How do fans communicate social support via their blog entries on athletes' websites?
- RQ2: Does the content of social support displayed in fan blogs change during the course of an athlete's crisis?

METHODOLOGY

A thematic analysis of postings that appeared on floydlandis.com was conducted using constant comparative methodology (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Reports appear monthly on the homepage of floydlandis.com, which cover various aspects of Landis' racing career, recuperation from hip replacement surgery, and defense campaign. The reports, which are archived on the site back to 2005, have been posted by Landis as well

as his doctor, trainer, publicist, and legal team members and in some cases anonymously. On average a total of 4 news reports a month appear, however there are months with as little as one report. Not all, but many of the reports allow fans and site visitors to post messages in response to specific content. We were particularly interested in the reports that allowed fan responses.

Overall 36 reports appeared between the time the doping allegations surfaced in late July of 2006 and the release of Landis' bestselling book in July of 2007. From this total 21 (58%) dealt specifically with content related to Landis' image restoration efforts, legal case or defense campaign and 10 of these were open for fan comments. Table 1 provides information about the content of the reports as well as the date each was posted and the frequency count of responses the report generated. To identify the location of excerpts taken from the texts we used the number assigned in Table 1 to the report and the number of the post within that given blog. So, for example, the 3rd post in the 4th blog received the code (4-3). The code not only served to identify the excerpt, but also indicated where in time, relative to other posts, the text appeared. To provide a better sense of the entire content of the reports we have listed the reports that remained closed to comments in Table 2.

Table 1
Reports and Fan Postings Examined on floydlandis.com

<u>Title of Report</u>	<u>Date Posted</u>	<u>N Responses</u>
1. Landis' Lawyer to Submit Formal Request Recommending Dismissal of Case against Tour de France Champion	9/08/06	192
2. Landis Attorney Submits Motion for Dismissal to USADA	09/14/06	147
3. Landis Preparing for Appeal, Hip Surgery	09/22/06	172
4. Landis Case Information Now Online	10/12/06	110
5. Dr. Arnie Baker to Present Updated Floyd Landis Slide Show	11/13/06	44
6. Floyd Landis Defense Summary v2.1 Now Online	11/20/06	25
7. Simon Spotlight Entertainment to Publish Floyd Landis' Positively False	02/14/07	32
8. Floyd Fairness Fund Announces Town Hall Fundraiser	02/19/07	11
9. Additional Events Hosted by Floyd Fairness Fund	02/21/07	36
10. USADA Orders LNDD to Deny Floyd Landis' Observer Access to "B" Sample Retesting	04/23/07	62

Table 2
Reports Closed to Fan Postings on floydlandis.com

<u>Title of Report</u>	<u>Date Posted</u>
Floyd on Larry King Live	7/28/06
Keep the Faith	8/4/06
Floyd Landis Responds to UCI Announcement of Positive 'B' Sample—Landis to Appeal Laboratory Findings and Actions of UCI in 'A' Sample Leak	8/5/06
Floyd Speaks Out!	8/7/06
An Open Letter to the Phonak Professional Cycling Team	8/15/06
Video and Audio Now Available: Dr. Baker's Presentation of Landis Defense Summary Presentation	10/24/06
Floyd Fairness Fund Events in Lancaster County	3/19/07
Critical Landis Stage 17 Evidence Erased from Hard Drive at LNDD, Original Data Destroyed	4/30/07
Floyd Landis Hearing Web Streaming Information	5/14/07
"Positively False: The Real Story of How I Won the Tour De France" Officially On-Sale Today	6/26/07
"Positively False" Makes New York Times Bestseller List	7/08/07

The 10 reports open for fan comments generated a total of 831 postings. The first 4 reports, posted in September and early October, generated a total of 621 responses (*Range* = 110-192, *M* = 155.25), whereas the remaining 6 postings, which spanned from mid November to mid April, generated a total of 210 responses (*Range* = 11-62, *M* = 35.00). Overwhelmingly the comments were positive and supportive (*n* = 784, 94.34%). A small portion of comments were negative (*n* = 35, 4.21%). Examples of negative comments included: "Give it up champ. You took the chance you lost. Unlucky" (1-76), "I could probably win the tour on that much juice!" (1-112), and "Is the trouble with your hip or hipocrisy?" [sic] (3-67). A smaller subset of comments expressed doubt about Landis and his achievements (*n* = 12, 1.44%). Examples of doubtful comments included: "Floyd, I want to believe you" (1-47), "Sorry, not sure I can buy any of this" (1-130), and

“It’s got to the point that I don’t really know who or what to believe anymore” (2-26). Postings ranged in length from two words (e.g., “Go Floyd!”) to 1,217 words. Although residents of the United States predominantly posted messages there were 31 postings from people outside the U.S. The largest clusters of these comments came from England ($n = 6$), Australia ($n = 4$), and Canada ($n = 4$), but people from Cameroon, France, Germany, Holland, India, Japan, New Zealand, Portugal, Scotland, South Africa, and Switzerland posted comments as well.

Categories developed as data analysis unfolded rather than a priori to data analysis. Data were classified into emergent categories. Development, clarification, and refinement of categories continued until new observations did not add substantively to existing categories. Because the analysis was exploratory and interpretive we allowed for the possibility that several themes could be apparent in a single posting and that overlap between categories may exist. Both authors reviewed all postings independently then discussed emergent themes until consensus was reached regarding the content and nature of themes.

RESULTS AND INTERPRETATION

Five themes emerged from the analysis: (a) empathy and sympathy, (b) confirmation, (c) testimony, (d) sharing a common enemy, and (e) offerings. We discuss each of the emergent themes in the following section and provide exemplars drawn from the postings. In addition, to speak to the second research question we describe qualitative changes in the themes across time as and when appropriate.

EMPATHY AND SYMPATHY

Emotional support, which entails communicating empathy, caring, love, and trust through expressions of affect, concern, and comforting (House, 1991; Richmond, et al. 1993), clearly emerged as a form of social support in the current data. Generally postings revealed empathy and sympathy with regard to challenges Landis faced that included: (a) the hardship the process of defending himself produced and (b) the toll doing so was taking on his family. This theme, in fact, emerged early appearing succinctly in the very first post of those considered: “I am sure that this has been a tremendously challenging time in your life and in the lives of your family members” (1-1).

With regard to the hardship defending oneself produced one fan lamented, “I am still in shock over the way you have been treated so unfairly by the media sharks! It’s been like a witchhunt! [sic]” (1-46), whereas another referred to it as “enduring this nightmare” (1-83). Others recognized the deprivation caused by the doping allegations. “Floyd, I’m so sorry that what should be a time of sweet victory is instead battle and sorrow” (1-139) and “I am so sorry that you have been deprived of all the wonderful post-race events and honors, not to mention the financial gain you will not realize, because of this ridiculous allegation” (1-169). These postings acknowledged what Landis had lost due to the allegations and invoked a form of bereavement evident in comments like “my deepest sympathy to you and your family for your loss” (1-135) and “my deepest condolences for the personal and professional trauma you have suffered” (4-52).

In addition to mourning lost opportunities, fans also revealed a genuine emotional reaction to Landis' predicament. For example, people stated "I am saddened that you have to go through this" (1-62) and "I cried, I'm sorry for all the pain this must be causing!" (1-163). Fans' concerns were not limited to Landis himself, but also frequently extended to his family. Examples of comments relating to his family included: "I can only guess how hard the last couple months have been on your family" (1-32), "I wish all the best for you and your family as you go through so much pain and trial" (1-142), and "I can only imagine the stress this situation has put you and your family through" (4-97).

Scholars have recognized the important role empathy and sympathy play in providing social support (Filak & Pritchard, 2007; Miller, 2007; Pudlinski, 2005). For example, findings indicate that operators on a peer support line used empathy to communicate that they understood callers' problems and that human service workers used empathy to connect and bond with patients (Miller, 2007; Pudlinski, 2005). The same practice appears to be at work here whereby supporters displayed empathy and sympathy to connect and bond with Landis regardless of the mediated format. This perhaps should be expected as there is evidence to suggest that people have displayed sympathy in website postings in response to crises (Filak & Pritchard, 2007).

With regard to changes over time empathy and sympathy and therein emotional support remained fundamentally similar in terms of content, but waned from higher levels in the earlier postings as other mechanisms of social support became predominant.

CONFIRMATION

Postings revealed that fans clearly felt the need to confirm Landis in a variety of ways. This pattern of social support incorporated elements of appraisal support (House, 1981), esteem support (Cutrona & Suhr, 1991), and task appreciation support (Richmond et al., 1993). Accordingly, people confirmed Landis' accomplishments, his character, and his tact regarding how he conducted himself in light of the allegations. One way in which fans visibly displayed confirmation was to speak about Landis' disputed winning of the Tour de France in terms that removed any doubts about the accomplishment. Fans stated:

Floyd, I want you to know that regardless of the results of your appeal, I still beleive [sic] you won the tour de france [sic]. No-one can say or do anything that will change my mind (4-16).

Floyd, if you read this...I just want to tell you that I've always believed in you and I will never doubt you are the true winner of the Tour de France. And that is that (9-15).

Others added "No doubt you are the champion of the Tour" (1-10), and "You are the one and only 2006 TDF [Tour de France] champion regardless of what anyone says" (3-92). Additionally, fans enacted confirmation by referring to Landis' cycling accomplishment in factual terms. Statements like "Floyd Landis is the 2006 Tour de France Champion" (1-6), "Floyd Landis. 2006 Tour de France Champion. Period" (1-11), and "you ARE the Champ!" (1-87) relied upon clear and concise declarative statements to bolster the "fact" that he won. Thus, enacting confirmation involved the active and conscientious removal of doubt as well deploying declarative statements to establish a

factual basis for Landis' accomplishment. By affirming Landis' accomplishment this type of fan feedback functioned as appraisal support (House, 1981).

People offer esteem support when they praise the attributes and abilities of others (Cutrona & Suhr, 1991). Confirmation entailed this practice as fans consistently referenced and framed Landis' character in positive terms. People referred to Landis as "an honest, hard working athlete who does not have time for bs [sic] and just wants to train and race hard" (1-22), "the kind of man who would rather lose honestly than win dishonestly" (2-120), "a man who can be taken at his word" (4-48), "a top-shelf athlete and a real guy" (3-91), "a rare pure class act" (5-13), and "an American Hero!" (4-44). Moreover people confirmed that Landis was an athlete with "honesty, integrity and truly phenomenal athletic abilities" (1-175) as well as "intelligence, integrity, and clarity" (9-23). A particular fan cleverly juxtaposed the doping allegations against Landis' character stating, "You ride with a strength and integrity that could never come from any drug" (1-122). Thus, confirmation involved people providing esteem support by attesting to the perceived character of Landis.

Finally, as the defense campaign moved forward postings began to display task appreciation support (Richmond et al., 1993) by confirming how Landis was handling the allegations and the on-going process of defending himself. Fans expressed gratitude to Landis for taking his case public and for sharing the case documentation his legal team was amassing. For instance people shared their gratitude by saying "Thank you for your leadership example in handling absurd circumstances" (1-37), "Thanks for having the courage and guts to put all these documents out there" (4-4), and "Thanks for fighting for the truth to be revealed" (4-71). How Landis conducted the legal defense campaign provoked people to substantiate their character assessments of him. For example, people claimed:

I am proud that you are insisting that the appeal be an open process, it is what I would expect from someone with your obvious courage (3-7).

Your stoic manner in this challenging situation shows your true character and unfettered integrity (4-59).

You've got a lot of class and a lot of guts to do what you're doing (4-50).

Thus, fans viewed Landis' handling of the case as additional character revealing behavior that in turn warranted confirmation.

Other fans likened Landis' "performance" in facing the ongoing challenges of the legal battle to clear his name and retain his title to his performance in the Tour de France. For example, people claimed "Much like your performance of stage 17, this move is aggressive, gutsy and one of the coolest things I've ever seen" (4-53) and "you've been as courageous facing those charges as you were on the race course and you continue to earn our admiration" (4-100). Similarly, another devotee, who was "a long-time fan" inspired by Landis' Tour performance, claimed "I am even more inspired & now humbled with how you are dealing with the past 3 months" (4-30). For others the legal defense "performance" provided the impetus for believing in Landis' innocence. Consider the following statement, for example:

I sincerely believe that your conduct, the manner in which you conduct yourself and even your reactions to pain and appearance throughout this sordid ordeal lead me to believe in you being a clean athlete (4-84).

Across time appraisal and esteem support gave way to more indications of task appreciation support as confirmation shifted from a focus on the accomplishment of “winning” the Tour de France to the character Landis displayed in dealing with the allegations and the mounting of his defense campaign. In both instances, however, at a fundamental level the “performance” of Landis in both the race and in the legal battle provided a backdrop from which fans could confirm what they perceived to be the positive attributes of his character. That is, appraisal, esteem, and task appreciation support coalesced to form a solid foundation for confirmation of Landis’ character.

The practice of confirmation undoubtedly involves communicating appraisal/esteem support. The prevalence of confirmation messages on floydlandis.com suggests that the site served as a place in which a support group could emerge naturally and members cognizant of the importance of appraisal/esteem support could display it accordingly. Mitchell, Neil, Wadey, and Hanton (2007) found that esteem support assisted athletes rehabbing from injury. Supporters of Landis, then, recognized the importance and power of confirmation as a mechanism for providing appraisal/esteem support to a person in crisis and an athlete struggling to clear his name.

TESTIMONY

Along with or in addition to confirming Landis’ success and character, countless fans proclaimed that they believed Landis or believed in him. This practice, dubbed testimony, reflected a combination of reality confirmation support and network support (Cutrona & Suhr, 1991; Richmond et al., 1993). Reality confirmation support entails the authentication of one’s perspective by similar others; in this case, the confirmation of Landis’ success by his fans.

Common exclamations included: “We believe in you Floyd!” (1-55), “Floyd, WE BELIEVE!” (1-58), and “We always believed in you, Floyd!” (2-96). In fact, statements such as these were so prevalent that they spurred one site visitor to post the comment selected for the title of this paper, which read: “Is this a church? Such a big bunch of believers around here!” (3-115). This comment reveals that not only was belief in Landis prevalent, but that religious-like testimony was as well. The religiosity of comments played out primarily in references to faith and keeping the faith. Thus, a regular pattern was for fans to testify on Landis’ behalf that they believed in him and to counsel him to keep the faith. Examples include: “Floyd, I CHOOSE TO BELIEVE!!! Keep the faith” (1-45) and “I believe in you. Stay the course” (1-24). Although fans appeared to be testifying on behalf of Landis independently they likely were echoing to some degree the tone and sentiment displayed in Landis’ August 4th, 2006 post entitled “Keep the Faith”, a 520-word early declaration of his innocence. He concluded the declaration by stating: “I am a fighter. I did not give up during the Tour and I won’t give up now, no matter what the results of the ‘B’ sample are. Keep the Faith, Floyd.” Whether or not Landis’ post influenced people in terms of how they performed testimony is secondary to the fact that supporters seized the opportunity to testify and to provide reality confirmation support.

Fans worked to establish credibility for their testimony (i.e., to be seen as similar others) by disclosing that they had supported Landis over the course of his career, across time, or both. Fans referenced his former team, U.S. Postal, saying things like “Floyd, I supported you since you were on the U.S. Postal team” (1-22) and “I have been a big fan of yours since your early days on Postal” (1-83). Others used less specific and more generic markers to denote their support across time, stating that they “knew all along...that you were innocent” (2-65), that they supported Landis “100%” and “always have always will” (2-77), that they “believed” in Landis “when you won” (3-50), “from the beginning” (1-75), and “have since day one” (1-108). Making one’s testimony credible, like confirmation, appeared to hinge to some degree on the dismissal of doubt, but in these instances the removal of doubt concerned Landis’ innocence rather than his accomplishment of winning the Tour. People often attested to the fact that they had no doubts about Landis’ innocence, commenting “I never questioned for 1 second you are innocent. No question, no suspicion, no doubt, not ever” (2-54) and “I’ve never doubted your innocence for a minute” (1-96). Testimony also took the form of demonstrating a level of confidence and belief in Landis that did not warrant reinforcement. This can be seen for example in the statement “I don’t need any lengthy legal argument or scientific explanation. I’ve believed in you from the beginning” (1-75). Thus, reality confirmation support played out through testimony about Landis’ innocence. It also served to connect people to Landis as well as to the emergent social support community achieved through exhibits of network support.

To reinforce that a community of supporters existed, fans displayed network support that signaled membership and belonging for Landis. Fans testified that their loyalty was widespread as he had “a lot a people behind” him and “a ton of support” (1-53). Fans reminded him “that you have so many people who are supporting you” (1-114) and that “the cycling community still believes in you” (1-14), instructed him to “just remember that for every one person who thinks you cheated, there are five that know you didn’t” (3-51) and shared with him that “so many people wish you well, believe in you, and sincerely celebrate your achievements” (3-14). Others played on the notion of fans’ network support by inviting Landis to call upon them if needed: “Don’t stop fighting, Floyd, and if you need a few thousand fans to show up to cheer you on, just say the word. We’ll be there” (2-60). Network support was echoed too in conventional notions of supporting one by backing them. People told Landis that they were “behind you all the way” (3-144) and “behind you on this thing” (9-28) and reminded him that the “the backing of your fans” (10-51) was present.

Network support extended along familial lines as well. For example, one father recounted how he hung a jersey Landis had signed for his son and testified that “it will stay regardless of the outcome” (1-73). Similarly, a mother recalled the inspiration her and her young son, who shared a similar hip ailment that plagued Landis, derived from his success. Her post concluded with the question “Guess what he’s going as for halloween [sic] this year?” and the emphatic response “YOU!!!” (3-50). In addition, fans performed network support by testifying to others regarding their belief in Landis’ accomplishment and innocence. On several occasions people disclosed that they had defended Landis to others, claiming that “I keep telling all my friends that I believe you are not guilty and that you are not the type of person who would or needs to cheat” (1-59), that “I was cheering you on and have defended you to my friends and family” (1-

140), and that “I will continue to believe in you, and get in anyone’s face who says otherwise” (4-36). Thus, testimony that involved retelling familial accounts and defending Landis to others worked to mobilize network support.

SHARING A COMMON ENEMY

The steady stream of case documents and posts appearing on *floydlandis.com* established a particular reality for site visitors. As part of the defense campaign the Landis legal team challenged several entities including USADA, WADA, the UCI, and the French lab (LNDD) that conducted the doping tests. In an effort to display reality confirmation support fans, in turn, readily adopted the notion that they too should challenge and attack these groups or their respective representatives. Thus, a consistent theme in the data entailed adopting and sharing a common enemy with Landis. This practice appeared to emerge from fans’ desire to demonstrate reality confirmation support whereby they confirmed Landis’ struggle with and against these entities. Interestingly, though, fans at times overstepped the bounds of the Landis defense campaign and attacked the French in general as well as fellow posters who supported the allegations against Landis.

Sharing a common enemy manifested in several ways. First, there were comments that complimented the attacking tactics of the Landis legal defense team. Fans, for example, commented “I am glad to see that Team Floyd is on track to put the knife into Pat McQuaid [UCI President] and Dick Pound [WADA Chairman]” (2-45) and “It’s time someone showed Dick and the boys at WADA that you can’t just run over people” (2-69). Fans too though went on the attack against these personalities claiming that “Dick Pound and others involved” were “assholes” (1-9) and “the most despicable untrustworthy people on the face of the earth” (10-39). Fans also directed criticism at the respective agencies calling them “blind AND stupid” (1-25), and “worse than the old Communist Totalitarian Dictatorships” (2-74), characterizing their behavior as “shoddy (and dare I say, shady) procedures” (3-37). Fans’ disgust with the perceived conduct of these agencies was captured in comments like “what they have done is either disgustingly evil, or incompetent beyond embarrassment” (7-27) and led them to call for the agencies to be “brought out of the shadows and into responsibility before the world” (1-42), “removed from further testing” (3-165), and “closed down” (10-19).

Fans contended that “that the test was flawed or manipulated” (6-18) and that “the UCI is the scandal in this, not Floyd Landis” (3-165) because there was “a clear campaign of mis-information by the TdF [Tour de France] organisation [sic], WADA and the UCI” (4-20). Fans commented that “this is not a ‘search for the truth’ by USADA and WADA but simply a ‘win at all costs’ mission by a bunch of guys who want to save face and keep their jobs” (10-61) and that “Those Lab Rats at LNDD [the French lab] and USADA are remaking this into the TOUR de FABRICATION. What a sham of fairness, openness, and visibility” (10-42). Some fans juxtaposed the French lab’s performance against their own expertise. For example, one fan recounted majoring in biochemistry before entering medical school and jested that his “Freshman lab did better work than our Chatenay-Malabry ‘professionals’ [the French Lab]” (4-46). In contrast the disgust was palpable in the post provided by an “analytical chemist (and cyclist!)” who claimed that

“The French lab should be ashamed of themselves—they have no right to destroy the public’s confidence in my profession (as well as yours), and they should be fired immediately” (5-22). Thus, critiquing, questioning, and attacking the agencies involved in the case against Landis proved to be a common and acceptable display of reality confirmation support. Belief in the necessity and regularity of doing so was apparent when a fan stated: “If we the people don’t support Floyd, WADA and USADA win by default” (5-39).

As the Landis defense team moved forward with the case and released more documents about the lab proceedings, the alleged evidence, and the agencies handling of their legal requests a clear sense of conspiracy emerged among fans. Early “suspicions that Floyd was framed” (2-2) and “set up by the testing people” (2-8) gave way to full-fledged claims that “the drug test” was “a frame-up” (2-105, 2-142) and “foul-up” (2-130) and that the whole case was “nothing but a railroad job” (4-79). Fans concluded that Landis was “being railroaded!” (3-40) and “getting screwed” (4-12), while the lab was acting “as if they had a personal interest in the test results” (2-63). Some fans demonstrated a degree of discomfort in suggesting a conspiracy was at work by beginning their comments with disclaimers like “I typically try to avoid being a conspiracy theorist” (2-45) and “I’ve never bought into conspiracy theories” (4-19), yet fans were compelled to conclude that “this whole saga smacks of a conspiracy to smear the name of a great champion” (6-19) and that “there’s a lot going on behind the scenes that the public and maybe even the racers don’t know about” (5-37). Indeed, the prevalent indications of belief in a conspiracy prompted one site visitor to comment “Whoa! Too many soap opera junkies writing in here. Cut the ‘conspiracy theory’ B.S.” (2-93). Thus, sharing a common enemy involved skepticism, which evolved into conspiratorial thinking. This centered, often, around the simple idea that the French were conspiring to keep Americans from winning the Tour de France because “the US has won so much they are trying to come up with any measures to try to put an end to it” (3-134). Here we see how reality confirmation support left unchecked and perhaps cultivated through continuous and targeted revelations about the way in which the case was proceeding led to a form of confirmation support that was not grounded in reality but rather anchored in skepticism and conspiratorial thinking.

Misguided reality confirmation, in turn, led some members of the Landis support community to position the French people as a shared common enemy. Landis’ supporters claimed that “From the data and the reputation of the French, it is intuitively obvious to the most casual observer that this was a set-up” (4-52). Thus, sharing a common enemy spilled over from sport governing and regulatory bodies to the French people. Anti-French sentiment was conspicuous in many postings with people claiming that the “frogs tainted the samples” (1-48) and that the “whole affair reeks of Francocentric horseshit” (2-56) and imploring Landis’ legal team to “stick it to those French bastards!” (3-38). The anti-French sentiment expressed, coupled with the conspiratorial tone, in these postings prompted a “a French citizen, and a legal resident in the US” to clarify for Landis supporters that “Floyd was very much liked in this year’s Tour, and still is in many ways” and to conclude by admonishing Americans to remember that “other cultures are not failed attempts at being you” (3-172).

Additionally, there were instances in which fellow bloggers attacked those who posted dissenting opinions on floydlandis.com (i.e., posts that accused Landis of being guilty and getting caught). In these situations the shared common enemy became bloggers who countered the prevailing reality confirmation social support being offered by Landis fans. These attacks were targeted at specific bloggers and were alarmingly vicious and cruel at times. For example, unsupportive bloggers were told they were “beneath contempt” (1-102), that they were “small people”, and that they could not “even manage an intelligible sentence” (2-138). One was referred to as a “misinformed, stupid mr fr!!!!!!!!!!!!” [sic] (1-106). Most of these were short, terse condemnations that attacked the composition (e.g., “At least learn how to spell loser before you throw the word around” 2-52) or content of people’s posts (e.g., “I am guessing you would not even be able to buy a clue!! I am also guessing you don’t have the words work ethic and determination in your vocabulary” 2-95), but one particular post was a 584-word retort that provided multiple lines of evidence refuting claims made by several different unsupportive bloggers. Thus, Landis supporters made it clear that floydlandis.com was not the forum for refuting Landis’ innocence and that people were foolish to think otherwise. The following post displayed this sentiment well:

A note for other bashers out there...if your IQ is less that [sic] the spoke count on Floyd’s wheels you are at the wrong address and need to go over to iamaretard.com.....pretty much covers all of them I suspect (2-139).

As was evident in other online communities, Landis supporters policed the site by establishing standards regarding what should be discussed (Gooden & Winefield, 2007) and by reprimanding those who deterred from what was deemed to be acceptable content (Drentea & Moren-Cross, 2005). The need to preserve both the reality confirmation support occurring and the network support emerging mandated that Landis fans sanction those who failed to participate in providing social support. With regard to time, sharing a common enemy progressed as the case unfolded from early insults of sport governing and regulatory bodies to conspiracy theories and anti-French criticism.

OFFERINGS

The theme of offerings, which involved the practice of offering Landis something, captured elements of personal assistance support, tangible assistance/instrumental support, and information support (Cutrona & Suhr, 1991; House, 1981; Richmond, et al., 1993). Fans offered personal assistance support early, displaying a genuine desire to help in whatever way necessary (e.g., “Don’t be afraid to ask if there is something we fans can do” 1-181 and “Let us know what we can do to help” 2-5). Actual personal assistance support took the form of mounting letter writing campaigns targeted at “Floyd-bashing” writers (2-75), “legislators” (9-15), and “congressional reps” (10-47). Offers also included forms of tangible assistance/instrumental support where fans in early postings asked about how they could “help Floyd with his legal costs” (1-7) adding “if you need money for the cause, let us know and I’ll be the first to send what I can” (1-48), prompting others to ask “Is there a Floyd Landis legal defense fund? I would like to make a monetary contribution” (2-91) and to claim that “Enough of cyclists believe in you and are so fed up with the situation that we might forgo a latte or two to help bankroll your

efforts” (2-146). Interestingly, the Floyd Fairness Fund (FFF) was set up along with a webpage separate from, but linked to, the floylandis.com site after inquiries about helping Landis financially surfaced in the blog. Once established fans disclosed how they had carried through with their offers to contribute monetarily to the defense campaign, stating “After much consideration for your situation & reworking my 2007 budget, I have decided to contibute [sic] to your fairness fund” (8-6), “Since I couldn’t get to the town meeting in Brooklyn I donated the fee anyway” (9-15), and “Today, I have contributed to the FFF” (10-47). Thus, supporters achieved social support by donating their personal assistance, money, and time.

There was a noticeable shift in fans’ offerings as the case progressed. People moved from offering financial support to offering technical and strategic advice about Landis’ case and defense (i.e., from tangible assistance/instrumental support to information support). To refute the allegations against him people suggested that Landis and his team consider naturally occurring testosterone spikes due to training methods and performance factors (5-42), the effect of and relationship between cortisone (which Landis was taking during the race to combat pain from his degenerative hip condition) and testosterone (4-87), and detection of sample manipulation (10-41). Supporters also recommended that they review the case of other athletes who tested positive for testosterone and the findings and evidence in those cases (4-68, 4-69, 4-102). In these instances people spoke “from experience” like the senior citizen on a cortisone drug regimen who suggested that cortisone injections could “skew his Testosterone level results” (4-78) and from expertise like the statistician who offered “competent statistical advice” (8-3) and the lawyer who offered “some comments on how [the What’s Fair is Clean slideshow] may be improved” (6-23). Whereas early offers to help were succinct and concise, the later advice-laden offerings were quite extensive often surpassing several hundred words in length.

Findings suggest that the practice of providing informational support increased health related quality of life for stroke patients (Hilari & Northcott, 2006), reduced stress for foreign students acculturating to the United States (Ye, 2006), and minimized academic stress for students (MacGeorge et al., 2005). The provision of information support is a customary social support practice within personal relationships and a predominant means of social support within online communities (Bunde et al., 2006; House, 1981). The current data reveal that it also occurs as a manifestation of PSI with celebrity athletes. The time and energy supporters devoted to composing these detailed posts highlights the relational status fans perceived between themselves and Floyd Landis and the confidence with which they believed the information would be utilized by his defense campaign.

CONCLUSION

This work sought to reveal how fans enacted social support for athletes during a time of crisis in the athletes’ career by considering the case of American cyclist Floyd Landis. Several themes emerged from the analysis indicating that fans displayed social support in a variety of ways, consistently across the duration of the athlete’s crisis, and in line with commonly held notions of doing social support. Social support for Landis

involved variations of several common social support practices including information support, emotional support, appraisal/esteem support, instrumental/tangible assistance support, personal assistance support, reality confirmation support, and task appreciation support (Cutrona & Suhr, 1991; House, 1981; Richmond, et al., 1993). Overall, the social support behaviors uncovered here reflect the generalized practices of providing social support apparent in interpersonal relationships. Yet these behaviors were displayed in parasocial relationships between fans and a celebrity athlete, suggesting that people draw upon the same social support practices in parasocial relationships that they would in actual social relationships. New communication technologies provide users with the ability to be considerably more interactive in parasocial settings than previously possible. Thus, researchers should continue to explore how social support and other attendant interpersonal behaviors share similarities with and differentiate from traditional face-to-face interpersonal interactions. Continued examination of celebrity athletes' websites should prove fruitful as athletes have been recognized as a viable group with whom media consumers form parasocial bonds (Brown & Basil, 1995; Brown, et al., 2003; Brown, et al., 1997).

Also worth exploring in future research is the degree to which the means for displaying social support in this work are unique deviations specific to sport. For example, sharing a common enemy reflects the aggressive nature of sport and the common use of war metaphors to characterize it (Jansen & Sabo, 1994; Shapiro, 1989; Trujillo, 1995). By openly, publicly, and collectively attacking those who doubted Landis or those suspected of perpetrating a conspiracy against him, Landis' fans exhibited the intensity of their parasocial bonds with him. The aggression displayed against unsupportive bloggers could be ascribed to common associations between sport and aggression and the intersection of the two that manifests in fan behavior. However, the policing of unsupportive posts by members of online social support groups unrelated to sport emerged in previous research as well (Drentea and Moren-Cross, 2005). Thus, further work is necessary to determine if social support provided by sports fans occurs in comparatively more aggressive forms than support provided by members of other communities or whether such aggression is a function of the online medium and the absence of face-to-face interaction. As a single case study determining the degree to which the manifestations of social support revealed herein are unique to the Landis case or to sport in general is difficult. Consideration of social support displayed for other celebrity athletes should help to clarify these concerns.

The spectrum of social support behaviors evidenced in these data illustrated considerable parasocial interaction (Brown & Basil, 1995; Brown, et al., 2003; Brown, et al., 1997). Parasocial interaction involves identification with media personae, group interaction about media personae, and emphatic interaction or emotional and behavioral responses to media personae (Auter & Palmgreen, 2000; Gleich, 1997). Identification with Landis led to confirmation of his character and accomplishments, as well as testimony about believing in his innocence. Landis' blog and fans' postings in response to it provided a vehicle for group interaction, allowing users to read one another's comments and to collectively police those who were not demonstrating social support for Landis. The practice of sharing a common enemy, then, can be seen as a possibility derived from and an extension of group interaction. Finally, emotional and behavioral

aspects of parasocial interaction were apparent in social support that displayed sympathy and empathy and that promised offerings of material goods and expertise.

Tracing the trajectory of social support across the crisis and in light of the different means for displaying it leads to some interesting conclusions as well. First, there appears to be a general trend toward social support becoming more strategic and information-based versus emotive and esteem-based. This was apparent in several ways. First, although all forms of social support carried throughout Landis' case there was a general decline in displays of empathy and sympathy as well as testimony. Second, there was a notable change in the nature of offerings toward the provision of strategic and technical advice that served as information support. Together these trends signal a move away from concise and pointed, emotionally based forms of support that involved comparatively little effort to craft, toward elaborate and deliberate forms of support that were painstakingly and meticulously crafted. Additionally, adhering to a particular version of reality and in turn providing reality confirmation support served as a springboard for some fans to practice ethnocentrism and nationalism in problematic ways. That is, through overt and malicious attacks on parties which were not necessarily involved in the disputed case (e.g., the French people and unsupportive bloggers). This trend merits additional attention as it signals the possibility for certain forms of social support to mask anti-social behavior rather than producing prosocial behavior as expected (Davis, 1994).

This work should prove heuristic regarding how people provide social support in general, to celebrity athletes in particular, within parasocial relationships, and inside mediated contexts. Although comprised of considerable data this research is bound significantly by the specific case considered. Different athletes facing different crisis may provoke different demonstrations of social support. Moreover a very specific fan base was examined in this work and other fan bases may behave and do social support distinctively. Given the limitations of the work it does initiate an important undertaking and signal an essential opportunity for the continued examination of fan-athlete interactions and communication and sport.

END NOTES

1. ON SEPTEMBER 20, 2007 LANDIS RECEIVED A SPLIT DECISION RULING HANDED DOWN BY THE WADA/USADA ARBITRATION PANEL. IN OCTOBER HE ANNOUNCED THAT HE WOULD APPEAL THE DECISION TO THE INTERNATIONAL COURT OF ARBITRATION FOR SPORT (CAS). IT IS IMPORTANT TO RECOGNIZE THAT THE DATA CONSIDERED HERE REFLECT FANS PROVISION OF SOCIAL SUPPORT PRIOR TO THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF LANDIS' ARBITRATION HEARING. THUS, THE FACT THAT HE WAS FOUND "GUILTY" IS NOT REFLECTED IN FAN POSTINGS. ALTHOUGH ONE COULD SPECULATE THAT THE GUILTY VERDICT MIGHT CONFOUND FANS' PROVISION OF SOCIAL SUPPORT FOR LANDIS NO DATA (AT LEAST FROM THE SPECIFIC SOURCE EXAMINED HERE) APPEARED AFTER THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE RULING. THIS IS DUE TO THE FACT THAT ONLY TWO POSTS REGARDING HIS DEFENSE CAMPAIGN AND HEARING APPEARED SUBSEQUENT TO THE HEARING OUTCOME. THE FIRST, ENTITLED "DEAR FRIENDS AND SUPPORTERS", APPEARED ON SEPTEMBER 27, 2007 AND PROVIDED LANDIS' REACTION TO THE SPLIT DECISION RULING. THE SECOND, ENTITLED "LANDIS TO APPEAL SPLIT DECISION RULING BY WADA/USADA ARBITRATORS", APPEARED ON OCTOBER 10, 2007 AND DESCRIBED LANDIS' PLANS TO APPEAL THE DECISION TO THE NEXT LEVEL OF ARBITRATION. BOTH REMAINED CLOSED TO COMMENTS AND THEREFORE FAILED TO PRODUCE ADDITIONAL FAN COMMENTARY FOR ANALYSIS.

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OFF THE FIELD:
THE INTEGRATION OF MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL
AS A RHETORICAL RESOURCE

RAYMOND I. SCHUCK

On April 15, 1947, Jackie Robinson became the first African-American to play major league baseball in over sixty years, integrating the game in an event that has been called “a direct agent of social change” (Tygiel, 1983, p. 9). Since then, Jackie Robinson and the integration of baseball have been used repeatedly within the field of sport as a means for individuals, groups, and organizations to be associated with progress toward equality for marginalized groups. Additionally, Robinson and the event of integration have been used in the same capacity within other fields of social practice. Using Giddens’ structuration theory to analyze one specific instance in which Robinson was referenced outside of sport—a February 19, 2003, reference by Democratic presidential nomination candidate Carol Moseley-Braun—this study argues that practices of referencing sports entities outside of sport as a means of identification or association can be seen as uses of rhetorical resources that provide both agency and constraint. In the process, these practices both inform and are informed by the social structure in which they occur. Combined with a critical rhetorical perspective, the study argues that, as rhetorical resources, references to Robinson and the integration of major league baseball provide agency on the basis of conveying connectedness to rhetorical communities through the use of sport and on the basis of drawing on a prominent signifier of progress toward social equality, but these references also reinforce the heterosexual male dominance that permeates the field of sport, while also reinforcing white dominance that characterized the form and path that integration of major league baseball took.

Keywords: structuration, sport, Jackie Robinson, rhetoric, practice

On April 15, 1947, Jackie Robinson became the first African American man to play major league baseball since Moses Fleetwood Walker in 1884. In the process, Robinson and Brooklyn Dodger president Branch Rickey broke an informal ban on hiring black players that had been maintained by major league baseball teams over the sixty-three years since Walker played. Since then, both Robinson and the event have been

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celebrated as significant parts of American sports and as significant parts of American history in general, particularly as both have become synonymous with progress toward civil rights and efforts at equality, especially racial equality, in the United States. The social significance of Jackie Robinson and the integration of major league baseball have been the subject of a significant amount of analysis. Much of this work has looked at how Robinson and the event contributed to the Civil Rights Movement and progress toward equality in the United States. Additionally, some work has taken a more critical approach toward the significance and meaning of the event, attempting to point out some of the deeper politics of the event. However, the subject warrants a more detailed critical analysis that looks more fully at the communicative significance of Robinson and event.

In terms of their communicative significance, Jackie Robinson and the integration of major league baseball have been described as symbols and as mythological icons. While Robinson and integration may serve these roles, they also can be theorized, in line with Anthony Giddens' structuration theory, as rhetorical resources that are used both within and outside of sport as means of associating individuals, groups, and organizations with progress for social equality, particularly for racially marginalized groups. Conceptualizing the integration of major league baseball as a rhetorical resource in connection with Giddens' theory of structuration provides a number of useful insights. Such an approach situates the significance of Robinson and integration in terms of practices and it illustrates how these practices both influence social structures and are influenced by social structures. In the process, this approach recognizes both constraint and agency within individual practices and provides a lens through which to contextualize these practices and understand more fully and clearly the ways in which references to phenomena like the integration of major league baseball work rhetorically. In combination with a critical rhetorical method, which seeks to uncover the taken-for-granted assumptions that inform rhetorical practices, such analysis can show how these rhetorical resources rely on routinized, enthymematic premises that provide agency in that they offer practical ways of making cases and conveying identities, while they also limit the forms of change and influence that an individual, group, or organization can produce, due to the constraints that are embedded in the politics of the premises. Practices of using these resources produce agency and constraint in terms of both the politics of sport in general and the specific politics of the entity that is referenced.

This essay will offer such an analysis, with emphasis on the example of a reference to Jackie Robinson made by former United States senator Carol Moseley-Braun on February 19, 2003, while speaking to the National Press Club in Washington, DC, on the same day that she set up a fundraising committee in preparation for a run at the Democratic nomination for the 2004 presidential race—a run that would maintain low single-digit poll numbers throughout its entirety until being aborted with the endorsement of fellow Democrat Howard Dean on January 15, 2004 (Lawrence, 2004). In this particular speech, Moseley-Braun began by indicating that she was born on the day that Jackie Robinson signed his first major league contract, which she described as “the very beginning of the end of apartheid in America” (Lawrence, 2003, ¶7). She then used this reference to Robinson as a means of moving into discussion of the Civil Rights Movement and her own identification with that movement. The reference became a prominent feature of the initial weeks of her presidential campaign. A week later, while

delivering a seven-page address at Roosevelt University, Moseley-Braun reiterated the connection to Robinson in similar fashion toward the beginning of her address by stating,

By way of illustration I would like to tell you a bit about myself. I was born in Chicago at the very beginning of the end of apartheid in America. In fact, my birthday was the very day that Jackie Robinson signed with the Brooklyn Dodgers and became the first black baseball player to integrate the major leagues. This was a particularly big deal because it signaled the beginning of the end of segregation, and the beginning of the liberation movements that expanded participation in civil society for blacks, women and all people whose opportunity to contribute had been constrained and limited by some aspect of their physical being. What came to be called the civil rights movement percolated just under the surface of American society until Rosa Parks' refusal to move from her seat on the bus galvanized all the disparate forces of resistance to segregation that already existed. ("Ambassador," 2003, ¶4)

Here again, Moseley-Braun used the reference to Robinson as a bridge from her own identity to the Civil Rights Movement, then made no further references to Robinson or the integration of major league baseball beyond these opening remarks. While Moseley-Braun did not in either case directly connect these sentiments to her newly-formed presidential campaign, the correspondence of the timing of these speeches with the opening days of her campaign provide a context for recognizing such a connection. The reference to Robinson served a significant element through which Moseley-Braun identified herself and initialized her presidential campaign to a more nationalized audience in the form of the National Press Club and to a more localized audience in Chicago at Roosevelt University.

I will show how Moseley-Braun's reference to Jackie Robinson as a means of associating herself and her presidential campaign with the fight for equality for marginalized groups was made possible because the history of practices, both within sport and outside of sport, created a social structure in which the association of Robinson and the integration of major league baseball with the quest for social equality was taken for granted as a routine, enthymematic premise upon which Moseley-Braun could rely. I will illustrate how use of the reference to Robinson as a rhetorical resource provided Moseley-Braun with agency in the form of an accepted means of identifying herself with the fight for civil rights and equality, while use of a rhetorical resource from the field of sport offered her an accepted means of illustrating her connectedness to the lives of the American public, which might convey her fitfulness as a candidate for President of the United States. I will also illustrate how Moseley-Braun's reference to Robinson was constrained by the politics of the reference, both in terms of the politics of American sport in general and in terms of the specific politics of the case of Robinson's integration of major league baseball. Combining these, I argue that by utilizing Jackie Robinson as a rhetorical resource, Moseley-Braun identified herself, through sport, as connected to the American public and, through the connection to Jackie Robinson, as connected to the fight for equality of marginalized groups, especially in terms of race, but that Moseley-Braun's reference to Robinson was also constrained in terms of the vision of American society that it implied. As the reference relied on the enthymematic premises that sport is

significant to American society and that the integration of major league baseball was a unilaterally progressive event, the reference to sport reinforced the heterosexual male dominance that characterizes American sport, while the specific reference to integration reinforced the form of white dominance that characterized the way in which the integration of major league baseball occurred. This example illustrates how the routinized practice of using a rhetorical resource from the field of sport in a situation outside of sport carries with it the agency and constraint of both structures of sport in general and the specific structures of the entity that serves as the resource.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF JACKIE ROBINSON AND MLB INTEGRATION

The integration of major league baseball has been credited with paving the way for fuller integration of major league baseball and fuller integration of professional sports in the United States in general (Tygiel, 1983). At the same time, the event has become the subject of much commemoration and much study, from a variety of fields and perspectives. Numerous works have discussed the impact of integration and the life of Jackie Robinson (Broom, 1973; Kelley, 1976; Lowenfish, 1978; Washburn, 1981; Falkner, 1995; Rampersad, 1997; Tygiel, 1997; Dorinson & Warmund, 1998; Lamb & Bleske, 1998; Malec & Beckles, 1999; Powell, 2002; Tygiel, 2002; Eig, 2007). Of particular note, Jules Tygiel (1983) has suggested that the integration of baseball has been significant not only within the field of sport, but also outside of sport. According to Tygiel (1983),

The integration of baseball represented both a symbol of imminent racial challenge and a direct agent of social change. Jackie Robinson's campaign against the color line in 1946-7 captured the imagination of millions of Americans who had previously ignored the nation's racial dilemma. For civil rights advocates the baseball experience offered a model of peaceful transition through militant confrontation, economic pressure, and moral suasion. (p. 9)

By Tygiel's account, the integration of major league baseball produced social change because of the visibility of baseball to Americans at that time. That visibility allowed the integration of baseball to be an agent in the creation of a situation that allowed other forms of integration and other events in the development of the Civil Rights Movement to occur. Tygiel implies that the agency of the integration of baseball in producing social change was derived from the significance of sport—specifically, the significance of baseball—to American life. Since baseball was so visible and so important to American life and identity, people could see integration played out and then take those insights out of the field of sport into other fields to produce similar social change there.

While such accounts offer reason to celebrate the advancements that occurred because of the integration, the event has not been without its critiques. Among earlier critiques, Harry Edwards (1970) suggested that “the sports world in America (on the basis of a few exploitative ‘breakthroughs’ such as Jackie Robinson's entering white-dominated professional baseball) has been portrayed as a citadel of racial harmony and purity” (p. 34). Here, Edwards alludes to the idea that integration of major league

baseball is typically considered a “breakthrough” and, thus, it is celebrated for how it changed society and promoted more progressive race relations; yet, Edwards’ characterization of that breakthrough as “exploitative” conveys the idea that this event has been used by white-dominated society as a means of suggesting that equality exists even though it has not truly developed. Some more recent works explain more specifically why the event did not promote equality to the extent that many who celebrate it would have one believe (Snyder, 2003; Rhoden, 2006; Carroll, 2007a; Carroll, 2007b). Perhaps William C. Rhoden (2006) conveys this critique most effectively when he states that

[Negro League founder Rube] Foster used black resources to build a baseball league that nurtured talents like Robinson while establishing an economically viable alternative to Major League Baseball. Robinson became a symbol of the process of integration, a process that ultimately enriched white institutions while weakening and in many cases destroying black institutions. White America determined the pattern of integration; the white power structure chose blacks who made whites feel comfortable, who more or less accepted the vagaries of racism. This was the Jackie Robinson model of how an integration-worthy African-American behaved: taking abuse, turning the other cheek, tying oneself in knots, holding one’s tongue, never showing anger, waiting for racist sensibilities to smolder and die out—if your spirit didn’t die first. This model was hardly progress for black athletes. It was, in fact, a reversal of the paradigm for black involvement in sports that Foster and other had created out of a hard necessity. (p. 101)

Such critiques of the integration of major league baseball recognize that integration occurred in a way that reinforced white dominance in American society. These critiques play a significant role in understanding the politics and meaning of Jackie Robinson and the integration of major league baseball, though they have historically been outnumbered substantially by works of celebration (both academic and non-academic).

A number of these accounts, both celebratory and more critical, convey some sense of the communicative significance of Jackie Robinson and the integration. As noted, Tygiel characterizes the event as both a symbol and an agent of social change. In his critique, Rhoden also acknowledges that Robinson has been viewed as a symbol. Additionally, Frank Ardolino (2005) has characterized Robinson as “a mythical force” (p. 159). In Ardolino’s study, Jackie Robinson and integration are examined in terms of how they are used or referenced in some capacity within films that were released between 1987 and 2003. Ardolino (2005) does not explicitly discuss these uses as rhetorical or as resources, much less as rhetorical resources, but his analysis and conclusions do align significantly with such a view, particularly as he suggests that “by including the name, number, picture, and presence of Robinson [the films] are relying on the audience to recognize their memorialization of him into a multifaceted cultural artifact, a repository of beneficial and salutary meanings” (p. 159). Ardolino’s argument lies in noting how these films use these references to advance their own narratives and how they rely on recognition of what Robinson signifies culturally. What is needed is a more critical look at how Robinson and integration are referenced that examines more fully the ways in

which these references affect society, including both the ways that they assist individuals, groups, and organizations in advancing their own interests, as well as the ways in which such references reinforce the politics of sport and the politics of integration.

CRITICAL RHETORIC

To examine this topic, my analysis will be overarched by a critical rhetorical perspective. Critical rhetoric, as Raymie E. McKerrow (1989) articulates it, “examines the dimensions of domination and freedom as these are exercised in a relativized world ... to unmask or demystify the discourse of power. The aim is to understand the integration of power/knowledge in society—what possibilities for change the integration invites or inhibits and what intervention strategies might be considered appropriate to effect social change” (p. 91). Critical rhetoricians look for assumptions that underlie utterances in order to unveil the power relations that these assumptions reinforce. Critical rhetoric argues that ideology and critique are best viewed as practices and that analysis assesses “the ‘effects of truth’ upon social practices” (McKerrow, 1989, p. 102), with truth understood to be a manifestation of the structures of power that exist within a society.

This emphasis on practice aligns critical rhetoric with theory of structuration and, though McKerrow does not explicitly link structuration theory to critical rhetorical analysis, McKerrow does link the perspective to the work of Giddens. McKerrow draws on Giddens’ suggestion that discourse ought to be considered in terms of how it relates to structures of power, so that, as McKerrow (1989), quoting Giddens, puts it, “the emphasis has shifted from the question ‘is this discourse true or false?’ to ‘how the discourse is mobilized to legitimate the sectional interests of hegemonic groups’” (p. 93). This becomes more fully aligned with structuration theory when McKerrow (1989) cites the work of Giddens as corresponding to the notion that “those who are dominated also participate in the social structure and are affected by—and affect—the orders of discourse by which their actions are moderated” (p. 93). McKerrow’s point mirrors one of the central tenets of structuration theory, which recognizes both how discourse legitimates hegemonic structures and how practices both affect and are affected by those structures, while McKerrow adds the communicative spin of analysis of assumptions that inform rhetorical practices.

STRUCTURATION IN COMMUNICATION STUDIES

Giddens’ theory of structuration has been utilized by numerous communication scholars as a means of looking at communicative phenomena. Most prominently, structuration theory has been applied to organizational communication processes to theorize how individuals and organizations engage in communication practices to advance their own interests and agendas as well as how those practices are structured by and within organizational histories and contexts (Poole & McPhee, 1983; Poole, Seibold, & McPhee, 1985; McPhee, 1985; McPhee, 1989; Poole & DeSanctis, 1989; Banks and Riley 1993; Bastien, McPhee, & Bolton, 1995; McPhee & Zaug, 2001). Additionally, among communication research using structuration, some recent studies have utilized

structuration theory alongside critical approaches that look at how power is embedded in the rhetorical and discursive structures that inform communication practices (Durham, 2005; Harter, Berquist, Titsworth, Novak, & Brokaw, 2005; Goodier & Eisenberg, 2006; Parvez & Ahmed, 2006; Schmidt, 2007; Sillince, 2007; Van Couvering, 2007). Most closely related in terms of subject matter to the present analysis, Durham (2007) has applied structuration specifically to the Civil Rights Movement, examining how structural rules affected the relationship of *The Knoxville Journal* with the rest of the Tennessee press and the state government between 1959 and 1967, when the *Journal* maintained an emphasis on anti-communism as a means to oppose desegregation, while the rest moved away from that emphasis. The present analysis adds to this field of work by focusing specifically on rhetorical practices in connection with sport communication as well as the politics that are invested in these practices and the structure that informs them, with an interest in illustrating the ways in which rhetorical practices in which sports entities are referenced outside of sport provide means of asserting agency, while also reinforcing structures of power.

GIDDENS' THEORY OF STRUCTURATION

Giddens' (1984) theory of structuration revolves around the concept of "structure," which can be defined more fully as "rules and resources recursively implicated in social reproduction; institutionalized features of social systems [that] have structural properties in the sense that relationships are stabilized across time and space" (p. xxxvi). Here, structure is a characteristic of human society that is constituted and reconstituted in practice. Practices are structured by those parts of a society that are available for use in the creation of the practices, while the structure of practice cannot develop except as it is embodied in actual practices. Within practice, structure takes two forms: rules and resources. Rules, which consist of normative elements and codes of signification, can be understood not just as codified ways of and limitations for operating within a social system, but also, mainly, as "procedures of action" (Giddens, 1984, p. 21). Procedures of action may or may not be explicit or written and, to at least some degree, are understood by actors to whom they apply. Rules structure experience in that they limit or codify how resources might be used. Resources themselves can be authoritative or allocative. Authoritative resources refer to resources to which one has access and the ability to control because of the ways in which human activity is coordinated within a society, while allocative resources are material items to which one has access and the ability to control. So, for instance, food would be an allocative resource because it is a material item that one might control, while access to rare foods or finer restaurants would be an authoritative resource because that access is, in large part, determined by social standing.

Within this conceptualization, rhetoric might be viewed as a type of resource, particularly as rhetoric is conceptualized, dating back to interpretations of the work of Aristotle, as the available means of persuasion within a given case (Herrick, 2005). Rhetorical moves and strategies constitute authoritative resources, as they serve as means through which individuals and groups can persuade others to associate the individuals and groups with characteristics, movements, identities, and other things. These means are subject to the social positions and standings of the individuals and groups who utilize

them. Additionally, these means, as resources, are subject to rules that govern how associations can be made and what is and is not able to be persuasive. In conjunction with these rules, rhetorical resources both structure practices and are structured by practices. In this case, the practices might be termed rhetorical practices, since they serve such rhetorical functions as persuading, associating, and identifying. Such a conceptualization, in line with Giddens' model, provides a basis through which to understand the role of rhetoric as a prominent and significant means through which human society is constituted and reconstituted.

Giddens suggests that because rules and resources are constituted in practice, while also setting conditions for practice, the relationship between structures and individuals is best characterized as a duality. As Giddens explains, structure and individuals have often been theorized as a dualism—as a binary opposition in which the two separate entities come into contact with one another. Rejecting this idea, Giddens suggests that structure and individuals are bound together, as two sides of the same coin, so to speak. Since structure and individuals are bound together, structure, which has been represented mainly in terms of constraint in accounts such as structuralism, is not just a matter of constraint, but is also the basis for enabling individuals because it is only produced by individuals in their activities. As Giddens (1984) suggests, “structures exist only in their instantiation in the knowledgeable activities of situated human subjects, which reproduce them as structural properties of social systems embedded in spans of time-space” (p. 304). Without individuals to enact structures, there would be no structures, yet without structures to inform action, there would be no ability to act. The individual and structure are necessarily intertwined.

The intertwining of structures and individuals rests primarily on routines. As Giddens (1984) explains, “the concept of *routinization*, as grounded in practical consciousness, is vital to the theory of structuration. Routine is integral both to the continuity of the personality of the agent, as he or she moves along the paths of daily activities, and to the institutions of society, which are such only through their continued reproduction” (p. 60). In other words, routines allow for structure to occur in practice and, thus, they provide a basis for individuals to act, to work together, and to communicate with one another. In the process, “ordinary day-to-day life – in greater or less degree according to context and the vagaries of individual personality – involves an *ontological security* expressing an *autonomy of bodily control* within *predictable routines*” (Giddens, 1984, p. 50). By ontological security, Giddens refers to a feeling of trust that the individual has in relation to the system of signs and practices that make up her or his experiences. In feeling ontological security, the individual feels that he or she can operate within a system on the basis of understood meanings and codes, without having to articulate them as he or she operates. Since ontological security is not a feeling that we usually articulate, routines operate on the level of practical consciousness, which Giddens (1984) defines as “the cognitive and emotive anchor of the feelings of *ontological security* characteristic of large segments of human activity in all cultures” (p. 36). In other words, each of us has a practical consciousness that we do not articulate in our practice, yet from which we draw to enact the very routines that form the basis for our lives. In contrast to this, Giddens (1984) suggests that each of us also partakes of discursive consciousness, which he defines as “being able to put things into words” (p. 45). Giddens (1984) states that the distinction between practical and discursive

consciousnesses is not a rigid one and that it might best be understood as “differences between what can be said and what is characteristically simply done” (p. 7), with the former being discursive consciousness and the latter being practical consciousness.

When things are “simply done,” as Giddens suggests about practical consciousness, then the influence of power on behavior becomes more significant. As Giddens (1984) suggests, “power relations are often most profoundly embedded in modes of conduct which are taken for granted by those who follow them, most especially in routinized behaviour, which is only diffusely motivated” (p. 176). However, power should not be seen just in terms of how it limits behavior, since knowing the rules and resources allows an individual to use them. As Giddens (1984) explains, “power is the capacity to achieve outcomes; whether or not these are connected to purely sectional interests is not germane to its definition. Power is not, as such, an obstacle to freedom or emancipation, but is their very medium—although it would be foolish, of course, to ignore its constraining properties” (p. 257). While rules and resources limit the ability to achieve outcomes, in order to achieve any of the outcomes that are available in a given situation, an individual must use the rules and resources that are available in that situation. In the process, even constraint on behavior is not overly determining. Instead, constraint, as Giddens (1984) suggests, “is best described as *placing limits upon the range of options open to an actor, or plurality of actors, in a given circumstance or type of circumstance*” (p. 176-177). An individual does have the ability to achieve desired outcomes, but there are limits to the ways in which and degrees to which he or she can achieve them. When behavior is routinized on the level of practical consciousness, it does limit the behaviors in which one will engage, but, at the same time, it allows one to engage in certain behaviors or predict the behaviors in which others will engage without having to go through the process of articulating why these behaviors are occurring or to go through the deliberation of choosing these behaviors. One is liberated in the sense that one now can put the time and energy that is saved through practical consciousness to other uses.

This freedom through practical consciousness and ontological security becomes a factor in the determination and expression of identity. As Giddens (1991) suggests, “freedom is not a given characteristic of the human individual, but derives from the acquisition of an ontological understanding of external reality and personal identity” (p. 47). In other words, one needs a level of ontological security in order to be able to articulate one’s identity or one’s self, which, according to Giddens (1984), “is not some kind of mini-agency within the agent. It is the sum of those forms of recall whereby the agent reflexively characterizes ‘what’ is at the origin of his or her action. The self is the agent as characterized by the agent” (p. 51). As one characterizes one’s self, one must use the rules and resources that are available for doing so, which means that one must necessarily define one’s self in terms of social positions, which, according to Giddens (1984), “exist only in so far as actors make discriminations in their conduct based upon the attribution of certain identities to others” (p. 211). In the process of using these rules and resources to define one’s self, one must rely and depend upon patterns of social expression.

Ultimately, though, according to Giddens (1991), “a person’s identity is not to be found in behaviour, nor—important though it is—in the reactions of others, but in the

capacity to keep a particular narrative going” (p. 54). Behavior and the reactions of others are important, but identity finally rests on how much these combine with one’s own use of rules and resources to maintain in social settings a particular story about one’s self. As the concept of narrative suggests, one’s story might change, but in order to maintain an identity, the story must change in ways that others will recognize as consistent with the identity itself. Change, then, ultimately depends not just on the individual’s understanding of identity, but also on the complex web of understandings of that identity that are held by others, which will be related to one another insofar as the others who hold these understandings come into contact with one another. This process makes more manifest the duality of structure; the structure of social life has the capacity to change and the individual has the capacity to change identity and other features of social life, but only insofar as those changes are recognized and accepted by others with whom the individual interacts, both knowingly and unknowingly. One must also be identifiable within those social patterns to others, which means that one must continually exhibit behaviors in ways that others will recognize.

SPORT AS A FIELD OF PRACTICE

Giddens argues that individuals express identities through lifestyles. On the subject of lifestyle Giddens has specifically tied his own work to that of Pierre Bourdieu. At one point in particular, Giddens (1991) states that “as Bourdieu has emphasized, lifestyle variations between groups are also elementary structuring features of stratification, not just the ‘results’ of class differences in the realm of production” (p. 82). This reference to Bourdieu highlights a similarity in the work of each theorist. Namely, each sees lifestyle and identity as both products of practices and influences on practices. Since Bourdieu has applied his model directly to sport, this similarity between the work of Bourdieu and the work of Giddens offers an opening for using Giddens’ structuration theory to examine identity in relation to sport, which Bourdieu (1991/1978) has suggested can be seen as a “field,” by which he means that “the history of sport is a relatively autonomous history which, even when marked by the major events of economic and social history, has its own tempo, its own evolutionary laws, its own crises, in short, its own chronology” (p. 358). Here, Bourdieu argues that sport can be examined as a semi-autonomous area of study; we can isolate events and practices that occur within what is defined as sport, yet we cannot divorce these events and practices from other fields, such as economics, politics, education, and so on. Nor can these other fields be divorced from sport, which has played at least some role in the development of these other fields even as it has developed as a field unto itself. From such a theorization, practices from the field of sport can be recognized as such, but they can also be recognized as having significance within other fields, including how they are used as rhetorical resources by those other fields.

CAROL MOSELEY-BRAUN’S USE OF JACKIE ROBINSON

For a number of reasons, the aforementioned example of Carol Moseley-Braun’s reference to Jackie Robinson on February 19, 2003, provides a useful example for analyzing the practice of referencing integration outside the field of sport. First, it is a

prominent instance in which reference to Jackie Robinson was made within a context that is not historically defined as part of the field of sport. Moseley-Braun was not engaging in a sport activity; rather, she was initiating a campaign to run for the highest political office in the United States. That the reference occurred within the context of a political campaign heightens the significance of this example. Moseley-Braun's reference was deliberately rhetorical and, thus, intended to draw specifically on assumed cultural connections to Jackie Robinson and the integration of major league baseball. Additionally, Moseley-Braun's reference to "apartheid" and subsequent connection of Robinson to the Civil Rights Movement make clearer the sense that this reference was meant to draw on the connection of Robinson to the struggle for racial equality. Finally, Moseley-Braun's reference was made with a direct goal of identification, which is most clearly indicated by associating a significant event from her own life (her birth) with a significant step in the integration of major league baseball (Robinson's signing of his first major league contract). This reference is a clear attempt to utilize Robinson as a rhetorical resource and capitalize on available agency that that resource offers in order to maintain the particular narrative that she is a candidate for civil rights.

THE STRUCTURE OF MOSELEY-BRAUN'S REFERENCE

Moseley-Braun does not reference the integration of major league baseball explicitly; rather, two parts of her statement work together to signify it. First, she mentions Jackie Robinson, who is many ways synonymous with the integration of major league baseball. Second, she characterizes Robinson's signing of a major league baseball contract as a significant step toward ending segregation in general, including reference to apartheid—a term that denotes a system of racial segregation and oppression. No further explanation of Robinson or the integration of major league baseball occurs and, thus, the association of the integration of major league baseball with progress toward ending racial oppression is assumed to be understood by the audience. Additionally, Moseley-Braun utilizes the sports reference of Jackie Robinson without any indication of why it would be useful for someone running for political office to reference sport. It is assumed that such a reference will work favorably toward the campaign. These links are possible because of the cultural contexts that have allowed these associations to be viewed as taken for granted. Each of these assumptions has become routinized to the point that they are firmly established enough in American culture for Moseley-Braun to utilize them with the understanding that the audience would already take them for granted.

The premise that a sport reference will work favorably toward a political campaign is one that has precedent in many previous practices within American culture. Endorsements by sports athletes range from Babe Ruth's public statement of support for Democratic presidential candidate Al Smith in 1928 through a host of others, right up to major league pitcher Curt Schilling's 2007 endorsement of Republican presidential nomination candidate John McCain. Politicians have commonly attempted to connect themselves to specific teams that represent the constituencies that they would serve. For instance, in her 2000 campaign for the United States senate, Democratic candidate Hillary Clinton expressed a rooting interest in the New York Yankees. Such references provide a basis through which politicians identify themselves as connected to American communities. Clinton's use of the New York Yankees, for instance, attempted to convey

a connection to the state of New York, for which she was running as senator. This was particularly significant for Clinton because of questions about her legitimacy as a New York resident, since she had taken up residency in New York not long before the 2000 senatorial election cycle, to the belief of some that the move was one of convenience to become elected in the state (“Repeating,” 2007). Such connectedness is rooted in the kind of rhetorical communities that are associated with sports and sports affiliations, in which, as Zagacki and Grano (2005) note, “individuals who [participate] in the rhetorical vision ... [share] a common symbolic ground and [respond] to messages in ways that were consistent with their rhetorical vision” (p. 48). For Moseley-Braun, who was attempting to appeal to a national community, reference to a figure of national significance would serve to advance the narrative that she is connected to the national community. Robinson fits squarely into that role, particularly as he has been explicitly connected to United States national identity by the likes of sportscaster Howard Cosell (1973), who once suggested that the Brooklyn Dodgers “became the American dream when Jackie Robinson joined them” (p. 90).

Robinson’s connection to American identity rests on the association of him and the integration of major league baseball with progress toward equality within the United States. That association also has significant precedent, perhaps most prominently and officially when Major League Baseball as an organization has actively promoted this connection. In 1997, on the fiftieth anniversary of Robinson’s first major league game, Major League Baseball commemorated the event with a special game between the Los Angeles Dodgers and the New York Mets that included festivities remembering Robinson, the integration of baseball, and their impact on American society. Major League Baseball also announced that year that it would retire Robinson’s number 42 for all major league teams, so that no one would be assigned the number again on any major league team. For the sixtieth anniversary in 2007, Major League Baseball inaugurated a yearly tradition of holding an exhibition game called the “Civil Rights Game,” which was played as a way of “memorializing a movement in which Major League Baseball had an early and very significant role” (Bloom, ¶1). Additionally, various players and teams throughout major league baseball asked for and were granted permission to wear Robinson’s number 42 for the day in games on April 15, 2007.

This connection has been furthered in many other instances, including many examples in which the events or the individuals involved were not directly a part of the world of baseball or the world of sports in general. For example, Civil Rights leader Jesse Jackson gave a eulogy at Jackie Robinson’s funeral in 1972. Also, in her autobiography, *Coming of Age in Mississippi*, Civil Rights Movement leader Anne Moody recalls meeting Jackie Robinson for the first time and remembers the significance of Robinson as a source of inspiration for African American men and women. As Moody (1968) states,

I remembered how when Jackie became the first Negro to play Major League baseball, my uncles and most of the Negro boys in my hometown started organizing baseball leagues. It did something for them to see a Negro out there playing with all those white players. Jackie was a good moderator, I thought. He kept smiling and joking. People felt relaxed and

proud. They appreciated knowing and meeting people of their own race who had done something worth talking about. (p. 262)

More recently, at the 1997 unveiling of a new sign to rename the Interborough Parkway in Brooklyn and Queens, New York as the Jackie Robinson Parkway, New York Governor George Pataki connected Robinson to the quest for equality by stating that “by breaking the color barrier in baseball and changing the way America looked at race, Robinson helped open the door of opportunity to countless minorities and taught us all the importance of equality, fairplay, and perseverance” (“Mayor,” 1997, ¶5). Additionally, in an example that more specifically connects Robinson and integration to the struggle for rights beyond race, in his memoir in which he discusses how he was treated within major league baseball as a gay man, former major league umpire Dave Pallone uses Robinson and the integration of baseball as a resource for associating himself with progress for marginalized groups and for associating major league baseball with a lack of such progress. Pallone suggests that major league baseball attempts to associate itself with progress, stating that “baseball always talked about how open, fair, and inclusive it was—the All-American game that gave us Jackie Robinson” (Pallone & Steinberg, 1990, p. 3). However, according to Pallone, baseball should not be associated with progress toward equality because “Jackie’s presence finally started baseball on the road to becoming a truly ‘American pastime’ but until it accepts gays openly, it can never really be ‘American’” (Pallone & Steinberg, 1990, p. 4). Here, the reference to Robinson serves as a basis for Pallone to assert his claim about the need for equality and to identify himself as part of the struggle for equality. In all of these cases, as in many others, Jackie Robinson and the integration of baseball have been commemorated or referenced in ways that explicitly link them to the Civil Rights Movement or to social equality. Links and uses of Robinson and integration as a rhetorical resource like Pallone’s, which occur within the field of sport, provide a contextual basis for the use of these as rhetorical resources outside of sport. By the time of Moseley-Braun’s reference, these kinds of references and associations had become routinized as part of ontological security within American culture. They are taken for granted and, thus, they exist as enthymematic premises upon which Moseley-Braun and others might make associations and identifications. In line with a critical rhetorical approach, these assumptions can be analyzed for the structures of power that they reproduce. To conduct such an analysis in a way that corresponds with Giddens’ theory of structuration means looking at the forms of agency and constraint that inform practices of referencing Jackie Robinson and the integration of major league baseball.

AGENCY AND CONSTRAINT IN MOSELEY-BRAUN’S REFERENCE

One part of structure in structuration theory is agency, or the ability to act. According to Giddens, structure provides the basis upon which individuals are able to act, since it provides the rules and resources that people use in order to take action. In the case of Moseley-Braun, reference to Robinson as a rhetorical resource provides a basis for Moseley-Braun to show her connectedness to a rhetorically constructed American community, while also providing a basis for her to convey her association with the quest for social equality. The reference to Robinson helps Moseley-Braun keep a particular narrative going in order to project that identity. This occurs in terms of both the general

practice of referencing sport to identify oneself as connected to a community and the specific practice of referencing Jackie Robinson or integration to identify oneself with civil rights and equality.

Use of sport offers a form of agency in that it provides an opportunity to convey an identity of connectedness to communities, which provides a basis for attempting to persuade audiences that one will act in the community's interests. The botching of such connections by candidates running for president offers evidence of how sports references play some part in establishing this kind a connection. For example, in 1996, Republican presidential candidate Bob Dole, in an attempt to compare his campaign to a no-hitter pitched by Los Angeles Dodger pitcher Hideo Nomo, mistakenly said that Nomo pitched for the Brooklyn Dodgers. That Dole referenced a team that had ceased to exist nearly forty years earlier was utilized as evidence to suggest that Dole was lost in the past, not up-to-date in his understanding of American issues, and, thus, out of touch with the American public (Dowd, 1996). Eight years later, Democratic presidential candidate John Kerry mistakenly called Lambeau Field—the home of the Green Bay Packers and one of the most well-known stadiums in professional football—"Lambert Field." Kerry's mistake was portrayed as evidence that he too was out of touch with the American public. In this case, the mistake was referenced to identify him as an individual from a wealthy upbringing who did not understand the needs and interests of middle and working class Americans in places like Wisconsin who, presumably, would know the name of the Packers' stadium (VandeHei, 2004). In the case of Moseley-Braun, the American public is the interest that would be represented. Reference to a national figure in the form of Jackie Robinson offers the potential to connect to that interest and build upon the connection that that fosters¹.

Additionally, the specific case of Jackie Robinson and the integration of baseball offers a form of agency in that it provides a means of making a case for civil rights and one's connection to civil rights. This agency was suggested in a statement by former president Bill Clinton in 1997, when he said, "if you were arguing the integration side of the argument, you could always play the Jackie Robinson card and watch the big husky redneck shut up, because there was nothing they could say" ("Baseball," 1997, ¶15). Clinton's statement suggests that the rhetorical practice of citing Robinson allows one to make arguments that might not be otherwise possible and, thus, it provides the means for conveying how integration has led to equality. As such, a reference to Robinson or integration also has the potential to provide a basis for associating an individual with equality. In the case of Moseley-Braun, connecting herself to Robinson conveys her commitment to equality, which was a theme of her campaign. Moseley-Braun entered the presidential race as a candidate who, according to the Associated Press story that reported her speech, had "made clear she intends to 'advance and advocate' for blacks and women." (Lawrence, 2003, ¶2) Furthermore, as an African American woman, she occupies two positions of identification that had not been represented in the United States presidency in the past: female identity and African American identity. In line with one of these identifications, her campaign featured the statement "I am here today to take the men-only sign off the White House" (Lawrence, 2003, side box). Within this context, the integration of baseball provided Moseley-Braun with some agency to identify herself with progress toward equality, both specifically in terms of race and more broadly in terms of other marginalized groups.

Meanwhile, though, both the agency tied to sport in general and the agency tied specifically to Robinson and integration contain significant constraints. In the case of sport in general, use of sport provides the opportunity to convey connection to community, but in the process the structures of power within that community are reinforced. In particular, since the history of American sport is steeped in power relations that provide positions of dominance for heterosexual men (Pronger, 1990; Trujillo, 1991; Messner, 1992), uses of sports references from American sport that do not do much to challenge this structure of power reinforce the power of heterosexual men, while marginalizing women and gay men. This reinforcement particularly occurs as these references are accepted as taken-for-granted parts of American communities. Additionally, reference to integration without qualifiers suggests that the only significant type of integration is racial integration, which leaves out, for instance, the fact that there are no, nor have there ever been, any women as major league baseball players. Also, while major league baseball could be said to be integrated in terms of sexual orientation, since it is likely that gay men who have not publicly admitted their sexuality are playing alongside heterosexual men, this is not an integration that exists on equal terms, since gay men are not free to disclose their sexuality in the ways that heterosexual men may. While Moseley-Braun advanced the narrative that she was the candidate who would advance the rights of women and her support of practices such as gay marriage also indicated her interest in advancing the rights of gay men and women, her use of a sports entity in the form of Jackie Robinson as a taken-for-granted rhetorical resource reinforced some forms of marginalization on the basis of gender and sexuality.

Meanwhile, while reference to Robinson provides the opportunity to identify oneself with the fight for equality, particularly along the lines of race, the specific politics of the form of integration that occurred when Robinson broke baseball's color barrier limit the version of equality that is being advanced. As mentioned earlier, the integration of major league baseball has been the subject of critique, especially in terms of the ways in which it reinforced white power in American society. Of note in this regard are the Negro Leagues, which consisted of baseball teams that fielded black players, beginning in 1920, when the first Negro National League began. Between that time and the integration of major league baseball in 1947, the Negro Leagues provided what became a viable business enterprise for a number of black business people—mainly men, though, notably, also including a woman, Effa Manley, who owned the Newark Eagles from 1934 to 1948 (Rogosin, 1983; Ribowsky, 1995; Heaphy, 2003; Lanctot, 2004). In addition to their economic significance, as Donn Rogosin claims in his history of the Negro Leagues, “black teams, representing black communities, formed a replica of major league baseball, separate and unequal in everything but athletic ability. Though it was virtually ignored by the dominant white culture, in the black community the Negro league was a cultural institution of the first magnitude” (Rogosin, 1983, p. 4). However, with the integration of major league baseball, the number of black ballplayers in the major leagues grew, decreasing the pool of talent for the Negro Leagues, which adversely affected attendance. At the same time, with black ballplayers in the major leagues, black fans attended major league games instead of Negro League games more than they had in the past, since they could now root for black players at the major league games. This, too, affected Negro League attendance. By 1958, the Negro leagues no longer existed and, by the mid-1960s, the few remaining teams that had barnstormed the country ceased operation as well

(Ribowsky, 1995). While the integration of major league baseball may have contributed to the Civil Rights movement, it did so at the expense of the viable black economic and cultural institution of the Negro Leagues. To this day, no major league baseball teams are owned by African American men or women. Given the demise of the Negro Leagues and the relegation of black roles in baseball to employees of white business owners, the integration of baseball signifies the appropriation of black business opportunities to a dominantly white institution. When integration is referenced in a way that portrays it unquestioningly as a progressive force, not only is this appropriation hidden, but the entire event is articulated as just the opposite—as not appropriating at all, but, in fact, as leading to more equal social relations between blacks and whites. In the process, the rhetorical resource reinforces a white-dominated version of integration, while neglecting the possibility of integration founded on more equitable power relations.

That said, Moseley-Braun did qualify the connection of integration to the quest for equality by calling it a “beginning” and, thus, suggesting that integration was a stepping stone and not an act that produced complete equality. As references to Jackie Robinson and the integration of major league baseball go, then, Moseley-Braun’s statement does provide room for recognition that integration was a limited gain. Still, in usage of Robinson as a rhetorical resource to identify herself with the quest for equality, Moseley-Braun’s statement does rely on audience recognition of the premise that Robinson and integration signify equality. At least insofar as audience members are not explicitly asked to recognize those limitations, the statement does lend itself to the reconstitution of the structure of white dominance that the path of integration in sports, along with other fields such as education and the media, has taken.

CONCLUSION

Ultimately, critical rhetoric asks researchers “to identify the possibilities of future action available to the participants” (McKerrow, 1989, p. 92). For the present analysis, such action begins with promoting recognition of the politics of sport practice and advocating change in the routinized assumptions that American culture takes for granted. For researchers who study the field of sport, this means more fully accounting for the structures of power that inform the sport phenomena that are being researched. Part of that project means understanding more fully the ways in which sport communication and sporting practice extend beyond what is typically defined as the field of sport. When individuals, groups, and organizations whose identities are not largely or primarily bound to sport engage in practices that refer in some way to sport, these practices involve sport communication. Carol Moseley-Braun’s reference to Jackie Robinson represents one of the prominent ways in which such sport communication occurs, exemplifying how use of a sports reference serves as a means through which to identify oneself with a community. Further research might map more fully the dynamics through which use of sport outside of sport to identify with a community occurs. Additionally, further research might investigate other reasons why sport might be used as a reference by individuals, groups, and organizations that are not primarily identified in connection with sport. In doing so, researchers might recognize more fully the extensiveness of the scope of sport communication.

Furthermore, seeing these references as rhetorical resources, in line with Giddens' theory of structuration, provides a useful lens through which to conduct two lines of examination that align more deeply with the goals of critical rhetoric: (1) analysis of how these references utilize and reproduce the politics of sport in general, including the position of sport in the broader social structure, and (2) analysis of the specific politics that are tied to the entities that are being referenced. Carol Moseley-Braun's reference to Jackie Robinson illustrates how using sport to connect to communities can also reinforce the heterosexual male dominance that pervades American sport, while her specific reference to Jackie Robinson provides a means of identifying with progress toward equality, yet identifying in a way that can also reinforce the structure of white dominance that was perpetuated by the way that integration occurred. The case of Moseley-Braun provides particularly significant insight because of the hegemonic roles that the politics of her reference to Jackie Robinson might play, given that her political identity was significantly attached to the advancement of the interests of women and African American men and women. Meanwhile, Moseley-Braun's reference is representative of the kinds of practices that occur every day in American culture, as individuals make references to sports entities outside of contexts that are primarily associated with the field of sport. These many and varied references assume the semiotic significance of the entities that are being referenced and, in the process, reinforce the politics of the symbolic connections that the references take for granted. Jackie Robinson and the integration of baseball constitute one of the most pervasive and mythical of such references in American culture. Further research could look at the politics that occur in the enthymematic assumptions of other sports references, especially those that rival Robinson and integration in prominence. This might include mapping out instances in which these references offer more or less possibilities for agency. It might also include further mapping of the communicative and social structures that these references help to create and/or maintain. Such analysis could illuminate the significance of rhetorical practices involving the use of sport outside of sport in constituting and reconstituting structures of power. The practice of conducting and articulating such analysis has the potential to challenge those rhetorical practices and the routinized, assumed premises that underlie them, which might, thus, help reconstitute society in a more equitable manner.

END NOTES

1. IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT MOSELEY-BRAUN MADE HER OWN MISTAKE ON THE DATE OF ROBINSON'S SIGNING. ROBINSON SIGNED HIS FIRST MAJOR LEAGUE CONTRACT ON APRIL 11, 1947, NOT ON MOSELEY-BRAUN'S BIRTH DATE OF AUGUST 16, 1947. MOSELEY-BRAUN'S CAMPAIGN LATER ACKNOWLEDGED THIS AS A MISUNDERSTANDING ON THEIR PART, THOUGH SHE WOULD USE THE REFERENCE AT LEAST ONCE MORE—IN A SPEECH AT THE SEVENTH ANNUAL CULTURAL DIVERSITY CONFERENCE AT SUNY-BROCKPORT ON MARCH 1, 2007 ("KEYNOTE SPEECH," 2007, ¶31). STILL, REFERENCE TO A SPECIFIC DATE DOES NOT SEEM TO CARRY THE SAME NEED FOR EXACTNESS THAT NAMES LIKE LAMBEAU FIELD, THE LOS ANGELES DODGERS, AND, PRESUMABLY, JACKIE ROBINSON DO. MANY AMERICANS KNOW THESE, BUT WOULD NOT KNOW THE EXACT DATE OF ROBINSON'S SIGNING.

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THE GREAT WHITE HYPE: RHETORIC AND RACIAL BIOLOGY IN COVERAGE OF THE 1968 OLYMPIC PROTEST

EMILY PLEC

Since the 1950s, U.S. Americans have experienced a substantive shift in public discourse about racial identity, difference, and inequality. Despite those changes, popular ideas about inherent African American physical prowess continue to demonstrate, and likely reinforce, racist thinking and rhetorical practices. In order to trace the development and outline some of the characteristics of the rhetoric of racial biology, and specifically the theme of inherent Black athletic ability as it has played out in dominant U.S. American media, I focus on a particular, highly publicized sports controversy involving several African American Olympians who represented the United States at the 1968 Summer Games in Mexico City, despite pressure to boycott the Games. Analysis of popular periodical articles and consideration of a prominent documentary film about the African American athletes who supported the boycott and demonstrated at the Games reveals the prevalence and transformation of racial biology discourses over the past 40 years. Such discourses contribute to the reproduction of racism in three major ways: (a) by essentializing difference in racial terms, (b) by alluding to a “law of compensation” in which physical ability is juxtaposed with mental acuity, and (c) by utilizing dehumanizing animal metaphors.

Key Words: rhetoric, race, racial biology, Black athletes, Olympic Games

The black players are superior. No doubt. I go to Lebanon in the summer, and we have pickup games, and there’s this one 18-year-old Nigerian playing in the Lebanese league who can touch his head on the rim. It’s amazing, (Blacks’) athletic ability. They’re built, they’re buffed. We work out to get a body like that, and they just come out naturally buffed.

— now-retired NBA player Rony Seikaly¹

In a 1998 *Sports Illustrated* article titled “Whatever happened to the White athlete?” renowned sportswriter S. L. Price refers to Seikaly’s comment, above, as “the logic of the obvious” (p. 35). The article does not provide any scientific evidence of

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physical differences between Blacks and Whites. Instead, Price relies upon observational data gathered from coaches and players to justify the perpetuation of this particular racial biology discourse. Price focuses on the disproportionate number of Black male athletes in the NBA and NFL, in relation to the percentage of Black men in the general population, as evidence of their physical superiority. The absence of poverty, and therefore economic pressure, in the lives of many White would-be professional athletes is described in the article as a “social barrier,” albeit a different kind of social barrier than those facing many Black athletes. Price also highlights the decreasing percentages of White NCAA scholarship athletes, thus further equating the partial collapse of unearned White privilege with discrimination (Price, 1998).

From this single article, written by an award-winning sports journalist, it is easy to see the contemporary prominence and continued social circulation of racial biology discourses, especially in the realm of sport. For centuries, scientists, criminologists, and sports fans (among others) have employed racial biology theories in efforts to explain and justify differences between Blacks and Whites and shore up the assumptions of white supremacy (Ferber, 1998; King, Leonard & Kusz, 2007; Kusz, 2001). Popular efforts such as Hoberman’s *Darwin’s Athletes* and Entine’s *Taboo* provide overviews of historical and contemporary research studies that attempt to define the genetic and evolutionary features of Black athleticism against an implicitly White and European model of human performance. The narrative of inherent Black physical ability that drives many racial biology theories (a narrative recorded in this country, for the first time, as a justification for slavery) has been repeated and revised in popular references to Black athletes throughout the last half century.

It is important to note that ideas about “natural” Black physical ability have been adopted, and advanced, by both Whites and Blacks. As White sprinter Kevin Little states, “It comes from everywhere” (as cited in Price, 1998, p. 36). I refer to the narrative of natural Black athletic superiority as “The Great White Hype” because physiological and biological theories of race-based superiority have rarely, if ever, been advanced to the benefit of people of color. This is not to say that the narrative is not adopted and subsequently redefined by Black athletes who either internalize or see the strategic value of such a premise. For example, former Detroit Pistons star Isaiah Thomas believes many Black athletes “want to keep the stereotype that we’re better than whites; it’s an advantage. When two guys walk on the court to play basketball, and the White athlete’s dealing with the guy’s blackness and the black guy’s dealing with the business of basketball, the black guy beats him” (as cited in Price, 1998, p. 37). Instead, by referring to the theme of natural Black athletic fitness as “The Great White Hype,” I highlight the ways in which narratives about Black physical ability work within the larger discursive framework of whiteness.

In order to trace the development and outline some of the characteristics of racial biology discourse in a sports context, I analyze more than 30 years of media coverage of a sports controversy involving several African American Olympians who represented the United States at the 1968 Summer Games in Mexico City. A highly publicized but unsuccessful Black boycott of the Mexico City Olympics and the now-famous raised fist protest of African American medalists Tommie Smith and John Carlos offer a unique context for examination of sports communication about racial difference. Other recent

studies of the 1968 Olympic protest emphasize historical aspects and sociological effects of the boycott movement and rostrum demonstration (Bass, 2002, Hartmann, 2003). In contrast, I am principally interested in the rhetorical dimensions of coverage of the 1968 Olympic Games; in this case, how media discourses resist and/or perpetuate racial biology theories.

Indeed, coverage of the boycott and Olympic demonstration in mainstream U.S. American periodicals and the 1999 television documentary *Fists of Freedom: The Story of the '68 Summer Games* demonstrates the persistence of racial biology discourses that position Blacks (especially Black men) as natural athletes. In these texts, references to the African American members of the 1968 U.S. Olympic men's track and field team repeatedly invoke racial biology discourses in both overt and subtle ways. Such discourses contribute to the reproduction of the rhetoric of racism in three major ways: (a) by essentializing difference in racial terms, (b) by alluding to a "law of compensation" in which physical ability is juxtaposed with mental acuity, and (c) by employing dehumanizing comparisons to animals. Since these discourses can and do shape contemporary debates about racial inequality, it is even more important that we understand how they operate and investigate the rhetorical standpoints they conceal, including a hegemonic ideology of whiteness. Understanding the rhetorical strategies through which racial biology is perpetuated as a social discourse enables us to identify, intervene, and hopefully alter the discourse of discrimination in sports.

RACE, SPORT, AND REPRESENTATION

Throughout the long Civil Rights Movement, U.S. Americans have experienced and shaped substantive changes in public discourse about racial identity, difference, and inequality. Sports and the media attention they garner can play a significant role in this transformation of language and consciousness (Ashe, 1998; Whannel, 1992). Several studies have shown that the disparities in descriptions of White and Black Quarterbacks, for example, have diminished over the years (Billings, 2004). Occasionally, studies demonstrate that media coverage of African-American athletes has increased, including an increase in the number of comments about African American athletes' leadership skills (Denham, Billings, and Halone, 2002). Moreover, in a study of 2000 Sydney Olympic Games coverage in a number of Florida newspapers and the *New York Times*, Hardin, Dodd, Chance & Waldorf (2004) found "U.S. Black athletes were overrepresented in Olympic sports photos" (p. 223). Despite these reports of increasing coverage of Black athletes and decreasing disparities between Blacks' and Whites' depiction (e.g., Byrd & Utsler, 2007), much research still show a consistent overrepresentation of White athletes in sports coverage (see, e.g., Billings & Angelini, 2007; Billings & Eastman, 2002) and the nature of the representations of both Black and non-Black athletes has not changed dramatically. For instance, in his examination of media coverage of the home-run race between Mark McGwire and Sammy Sosa, Butterworth (2007) concludes that "in addition to popular media such as film and television, sportswriting participates in the unspoken privileging of whiteness" (p. 238). Whites are still depicted as fast-thinking leaders and mythic heroes, at least when they're winning (Billings, 2003; Butterworth, 2007) while Blacks and members of other minority racial groups, are still often depicted in ways that reinforce stereotypes about strength,

size, force, and other dimensions of physicality. The significance and persistence of these stereotypes is muted by the fact that portrayals of Black athletes are now drawn from a much wider “discursive reserve,” which Ferguson (1998) defines as “a range of rhetorical and linguistic reference points which are constructed over time and which can be identified and passed from individual to individual and group to group” (p. 158).

As mentioned previously, one of the features of racialized sport discourse that has remained remarkably intact over the last century is the association of Black athletes, as a group, with innate physical ability and natural athletic talent (Rada, 1996). Many of the scholars cited above agree that the perception of African Americans’ innate athletic gifts is one of the most persistent characterizations in sports coverage, despite some of the otherwise positive changes in representation. Understanding how this discourse is mobilized and whose interests it serves helps us to uncover the racial and cultural politics behind the hype. For, as Hartmann (2007) notes, “the American sports world both complies with and advances the cultural formations of Whiteness” (p. 56). In the case of the rhetoric of racial biology, whiteness occupies what Jackson (1999) defines as an “uninterrogatable space” (p. 46).

Whiteness functions in a wide variety of forms and contexts in the United States—in ideologies and discourses, in popular cultural practices, and in institutional arrangements and the cultural logics that animate them. The challenge for the critical race scholar is not so much to find Whiteness but rather to figure out the insidious, nefarious, and not so obvious ways it works to perpetuate the normativity of White world views and maintain the privileged position of Whites, even without many whites themselves understanding what is going on. (Hartmann, 2007, p. 58).

Along similar lines, media critics have demonstrated the ways in which narrative structures privilege White experiences and characterize Whites as heroes (Dyer, 1988; Madison, 1999). For example, Shome (1996) examines “the predominant rhetorical tropes through which whiteness is articulated” in cinematic texts such as *City of Joy* (p. 506). Shome calls for critical analyses that expose the rhetorical practices of whiteness at work in mass media texts.

We now urgently need a critical vocabulary that can enable both White and non-White people to “see” the operations of whiteness better—especially the hidden rhetorics through which it secures its everyday dominance in the cultural landscape. This is important because whiteness dominates all other racial configurations in this society. . . . Thus, unless we can build a vocabulary that can map the specificities through which whiteness enacts its dominance, we will not be able to devise adequate anti-racist strategies or rewrite the racial matrix in productive ways. (Shome, 1996, p. 515).

Like Shome (1996) and others, I am concerned with the ways whiteness (as both a discourse and a racial identity) might be “recentering, reasserting, and resecuring its power and privilege through various aspects of public life” (p. 515). In particular, I am interested in exposing the ways in which sports culture reproduces hegemonic ideologies and discourses, such as racial biology.

BLACK ATHLETES AND THE OLYMPIC BOYCOTT MOVEMENT

Beginning in 1960 when a reporter asked African American decathlete Rafer Johnson about the likelihood of an Olympic boycott in support of the struggle for civil rights in the American south, the world's international sports spectacle has been a tempting forum for Black social and political expression. As Hartmann (1997) points out, one of the factors "underlying the attractiveness of a boycott as an effective tool for forcing racial change was the importance of international, Olympic-style sport for American international relations concerns at the height of the Cold War" (p. 58). During the first half of the 1960s, several half-hearted Olympic boycott appeals were advanced. In 1963, comedian, civil rights activist, and former collegiate athlete Dick Gregory asked Black athletes to boycott an AAU track meet in Moscow. He argued that, without their contributions, the lackluster performance of the White athletes would "bring this thing into the open . . . push this thing out on an international level" (Gregory, 1964, p. 193). The athletes were initially unenthusiastic but many began to examine the hypocrisy of competing in interracial meets abroad while being denied entrance into segregated sports facilities in America. In March of 1964, former Olympic gold medalist Mal Whitfield advocated a boycott of the Games in Japan unless "Negro Americans" were guaranteed equal rights and first class citizenship (Hartmann, 1997, p. 58). Despite these early calls for a boycott by African Americans, it was the racial apartheid policies of South Africa that would provide the impetus for the IOC's official reconsideration of the role of racial and cultural politics in the Olympic forum.

The Rome Olympics in 1960 initially appeared a triumph in the wake of the upheaval of the 1940s and 1950s but the IOC was burdened with the political question of South Africa's participation. The South African National Olympic Committee (SANOC) was prohibited from sending a team to the 1964 Games in Tokyo as a result of its failure to demonstrate a change in official apartheid policy as it related to sports. Other African nations such as Egypt and Ethiopia were admitted during the 1960s as South Africa was slowly forced out of Olympic participation. Despite unsatisfactory evidence of SANOC's compliance with IOC regulations, the committee voted early in 1968 to invite South Africa to the Summer Games in Mexico City. Immediately after the decision was announced, Algeria and Ethiopia threatened to boycott the Games. Within a few weeks, nations within the Organization of African Unity, the Caribbean, the Middle East and Soviet Union all threatened to withdraw from the Games if South Africa's invitation was not withdrawn (Guttman, 1992).

Black athletes in the United States also demanded the expulsion of South Africa from the IOC. Several collegiate athletes and their mentor, a San Jose State sociology instructor named Harry Edwards who would later emerge as a leader of sociological studies of student athletes and sports organizations, coordinated a boycott movement. Their demands included, among others, the restoration of Muhammad Ali's title and right to box in this country, the removal of Avery Brundage from his position of leadership within the IOC, the appointment of Black coaches and Black USOC members, and the total desegregation of the New York Athletic Club (Edwards, 1969, pp. 58-59). Like African Americans throughout America, the Black student athletes and other members of the Olympic Project for Human Rights (OPHR) were disappointed by the lack of change accompanying social, economic, and institutional reforms. They viewed the plight of

Black Americans as a cause worthy of international attention and had successfully used sport as political leverage in the past (Edwards, 1969).

Working explicitly against the popular and racist White establishment view that Black athletes should be grateful for what sport has given them, young men such as Tommie Smith, Otis Burrell, Lew Alcindor, and Lee Evans assessed what they had given sport and found the returns lacking. These four, and numerous other Black athletes and activists, gathered at the Los Angeles Black Youth Conference to announce the organization of the Olympic Project for Human Rights. On the 23rd of November, the OPHR officially announced the unanimous endorsement of a boycott of the 1968 Olympic Games by “Black men and women athletes” (Edwards, 1969, p. 55).

Negative publicity denouncing the OPHR and its aims contributed to frequent harassment of those involved in the boycott and the Youth Conference meeting (Carlos, 2001; Edwards, 1969). The successful boycott of a New York Athletic Club (NYAC) indoor track meet at Madison Square Garden in the early part of 1968 fueled both the OPHR and the media’s interest in the Olympic boycott movement (Edwards, 1969). In order to use the mass media to their advantage, Harry Edwards and other members of the OPHR adopted much of the visual display that had proven effective for community and campus radicals. Reflecting on the boycott movement in his autobiography, Edwards (1980) admits, “It was [Louis] Lomax’s flair for the dramatic and his abiding appreciation for the character and power of the electronic media that led him to advise me to discard my suit and tie” (p. 168). In their stead, he donned a black beret, dark sunglasses, a scarf, and black leather jacket. Drawing upon the militant style of the Black Panthers, Edwards captured the media’s attention long enough to convince many Americans that the boycott was a reality, despite a lack of consensus among Black athletes.

Black athletes who supported the ideals of the OPHR faced a difficult dilemma. As representatives of the United States, they had the opportunity to contribute to the possible development of an American nationalism that openly included Blacks. Additionally, Black athletes who did not turn professional found very few financial opportunities, and almost no institutional support, in the United States after their collegiate eligibility was exhausted. Thus, the Olympics offer Black athletes a chance at international fame, lucrative advertising contracts, and at least temporary acceptance by mainstream White American society.

As history shows, Black athletes did choose to participate in the 1968 Summer Games. Many symbolically stated their support for the cause by wearing OPHR buttons and donning artifacts associated with a Black Power aesthetic. The most prominent public demonstration of support for the principles of the OPHR at the Games is also considered one of the most memorable Olympic moments of the 20th century. On October 17th, after winning the bronze and gold in the men’s 200-meter dash, John Carlos and Tommie Smith stood on the Olympic rostrum to receive their medals. Australian Peter Norman took the silver and wore the OPHR button on the stand. As the American anthem began to play, Smith and Carlos men raised black-gloved fists into the air. In an interview following the demonstration, for which the two men were expelled from the Olympic village and sent back to the U.S., Smith explained:

My raised right hand stood for the power in black America. Carlos' raised left hand stood for the unity in black America. Together they formed an arch of unity and power. The black scarf around my neck stood for black pride. The black socks with no shoes stood for black poverty in racist America. The totality of our effort was the regaining of black dignity. (as cited in Matthews & Amdur, 1974, p. 197).

Upon returning to the U.S., Carlos and Smith faced mixed reactions. They were vilified in the mainstream media yet celebrated by the Black press, especially *The Black Panther* (White, 1968, p. 1). Over the course of the past 40 years, representations of the Olympic demonstration in the mainstream press have changed substantially with Smith and Carlos now celebrated widely as heroes of the Civil Rights movement. Recently, students at San Jose State University erected a statue commemorating the historic moment and issued honorary doctorates to Smith and Carlos. Despite these changes in mainstream representations and responses, black athletes are still represented in problematic ways – especially by White sportswriters. One major feature of this persistent rhetoric of racism is the persistence of the myth of inherent Black athletic ability.

METHODOLOGICAL PROCEDURES

The analysis that follows emerges from a larger study of public memory of the 1968 Olympic Games (Plec, 2002). The discourse analyzed here was drawn from the 1999 HBO documentary and a survey of 147 articles from several mainstream periodicals, which yielded about 60 articles focusing specifically on the athletes involved in the boycott or protest in any substantive way. Selection of articles was based upon headings and sub-headings in the *Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature*. For the years 1968 to 2007, all artifacts relating to the 1968 Olympic Games or boycott movement that appeared under the headings “Negro athletes” (1968-1977), “Black athletes” (1977-2007), and “Olympic Games” were included in the preliminary analysis. In addition, I supplemented the data set with articles gathered from the electronic EBSCO database Academic Search Premier®. The original search terms were, in most cases, too broad to be useful for the purposes of this study. For example, “Black Athletes” yields tens of thousands of search results. In order to narrow the focus of the search and still acquire artifacts about the 1968 Olympic protest, the following search terms were used: Harry Edwards OR Tommie Smith OR John Carlos AND Olympi*. The data collection was then analyzed using critical discourse analysis (Huckin, 2002; McKerrow, 1989; van Dijk, 1993). Critical discourse analysis focuses on the articulation of power in relation to representational practices. In this case, a preliminary analysis revealed repetition of several themes and characterizations in the discourse. A secondary close textual analysis examined the nature of the recurring themes in discourse about the boycott movement and demonstration. Most prominent among in the characterization of the athletes themselves was the theme of inherent Black physical ability². The 1999 HBO *Sports in the 20th Century* documentary *Fists of Freedom: The Story of the '68 Summer Games* (Greenburg, 1999) was also included in the analysis as a point of contemporary comparison since many of the articles demonstrating racial biology discourses appeared during the late 1960s and 1970s.

DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

Essentially Black or Essentially Fast?

Accounts of the Black boycott movement consistently mention the key role played by the Black sprinters on the U.S. track and field team. Jack Scott (1968), who was supportive of the aims of the OPHR in general, notes in *Ramparts* that a successful boycott would equal “a devastating loss for the American team” (p. 60) because of the U.S. team’s dependence on Black athletic achievement. Articles published in *Ebony* in 1968 also note that “black athletic power would boost American chances of grabbing a majority of medals at Mexico City this year” (“Olympic Trials,” 1968, p. 186) and Black athletes “would have a definite bearing on the outcome of the 19th Olympiad” (p. 188). A European coach reportedly stated, “If not for the blacks the U.S. team would finish somewhere behind Ecuador” (Kane, 1971, p. 74). Dick Drake, the editor of *Track and Field News* in 1968, predicted, “the U.S. would lose a net of 15 [gold medals] should the Negroes [sic] boycott, for Caucasian athletes could make up for only three of the 18” (“Should Negroes Boycott,” 1968, p. 112). In fact, Black athletes established all eight of the Olympic records set by runners at the 1968 Summer Games. Noting such achievements, college football coach Bobby Bowden argued in the late 1990s that Black football players, many of whom starred in track, are crucial to sport: “You see better catches, runs, tackles—anything involving mobility, toughness, anything physical . . . You ask what [blacks have] brought to the table? They’ve brought better athletes” (as cited in Price, 1998, p. 35).

Other journalists covering the 1968 Mexico City Olympic Games emphasize the role of Black athletes, male Kenyan runners in particular, in the gold medal aspirations of their nations. Underwood (1968b), for example, describes how the “super Kenyans” succeeded in the sprints and distance running events because they have “the advantage of being born to it” (p. 19). His geographical speculations are outdone by a *Sports Illustrated* article about the banning of South Africa from the 1968 Olympics which recounts a White South African official’s belief that Africans “are black because their skin must absorb heat so that they do their best in warm weather” (Maule, 1968, p. 62). Other writers point to “well-known findings which suggest that animals living in hot climates tend to have longer extremities and a lesser body mass in order to dissipate heat. With their long legs and arms, blacks have a greater surface area from which to dissipate heat through the skin” (Kane, 1971, p. 76). Such geographical arguments may initially appear well reasoned when compared to some more overtly racist claims about genetic predispositions for athletic activity among Blacks that are discussed later, but they nonetheless perpetuate an understanding of Black sociology and physiology that ignores the social, economic, and geographical impact of the African Diaspora. In other words, race, a social construction with highly contestable roots in the observation of phenotypic differences among members of humanity, is marked as a fixed discursive category by the visual sign of skin color. The innumerable physical differences among African people (and African American men, in particular) are for all practical purposes erased, while other characteristics are essentialized as inherent features of the Black ‘race.’

The erasure of major and minor differences in order to highlight race as *the* differential category, regardless of its valence, continues a long-standing Anglo American discursive tradition. Condit and Lucaites (1993) argue that, although “an elaborate ideology of inherent racial inferiority was already in the making” by the early nineteenth century, “*the mere fact of difference*, without any explicit hierarchicalization, was adequate as a grounds for separation” of Whites and Blacks in the rhetoric of the American Colonization Society (p. 66). By essentializing race as a physical marker of identity, and articulating Blackness to athletic ability, these writers promote a racial reasoning whereby Black skin equals physicality and vice versa. In the sports world, speed and quickness, in particular, are equated with Blackness, leading one prominent sportswriter to assume that the University of Nebraska’s effort to recruit “quicker, Miami-type [football] players for their defense” was just another way of saying “Nebraska needed more blacks” (Price, 1997, p. 6).

One of the most common ways in which the theme of inherent Black physical ability is advanced, to the possible benefit of the Black athlete but also to the benefit of racist White historical memory, is through a narrative of slave conditioning. As late as 1961, the *Journal of the American Medical Association* was entertaining ideas about slavery as a “Great Biological Experiment,” that produced physically superior African Americans (Hoberman, 1997). In one article, Lee Evans, gold medalist in the 400-meter dash at the 1968 Summer Games and OPHR supporter, responds to a question about the disproportionate number of successful Black athletes by posing a version of this narrative: “We were bred for it. Certainly the black people who survived in the slave ships must have contained a high proportion of the strongest. Then, on the plantations, a strong black man was mated with a strong black woman. We were simply bred for physical qualities” (as cited in Kane, 1971, p. 79). Likewise, another article quotes psychiatrist Alvin Poussaint, who “attributes these [physical] advantages to the grim selectivity of slavery” (“The Black Dominance,” 1977, p. 59). Notably, sportscaster Jimmy “The Greek” Snyder was fired in 1988 after stating, during a controversial T.V. interview, “that Blacks had been bred to be better athletes since slavery” (“CBS Axes ‘The Greek’,” 1988, p. 48). Thus, slavery is advanced as an argument for Black athletic superiority by both Blacks and Whites, but with different emphases and different agendas.

In his consideration of the slave narrative as justification for Black athletic superiority, Kane (1971) claims that the Black male slave “became a very valuable piece of property” and “was treated as such once he passed the seasoning test” (p. 81). Elsewhere in the article, Kane (1971) refers to “seasoning” without comment, then defines the term as “the three-to-four-year period during which a slave was broken to work in the fields or elsewhere” (p. 81). There is nothing necessarily incorrect about this definition but it erases the brutality inherent in the practice of “seasoning” by omitting information about the numbers of Africans and African Americans who survived the psychological and physical torture that constitute “seasoning.” It also defines the physical act of seasoning in passive terms (a slave “was broken,” “was treated [as property]”), thus removing the presumably White agent of oppression from actions, or events, in the narrative. According to Moon (1999), “Passive voice enables white people to recognize historical events (and thereby demonstrate their tolerance and empathy for racial others), while repressing any connection to them” (p. 189). The references further absolve Whites

of any complicity through legacy by referring only to slave traders and plantation owners as other agents in the narrative. When Kane (1971) does mention Whites, he does so in order to point out that they were often considered disposable and, hence “marooned in the Indies” (p. 81). He even goes so far to state that “it was not too unusual for the slaves to be better fed than the White crewman” (p. 81) on the slave ships. According to this formulation, the oppression of White laborers is at least on par with, if not more devastating than, the chattel slave experience of many Blacks. As Asante (1989) points out, “Racist language makes the victim the criminal” (p. 32). These rhetorical strategies (oversimplification, omission, passive voice, and shifting blame) allow Kane, and many other writers describing the success of African American athletes, to evade questions of accountability. In addition, Kane’s historical narrative also subtly suggests that African Americans should be grateful for their ancestral subjection to slavery because the experience helped make them the athletes they are today.

Such historical framing can be articulated to White pole vault champ Bob Seagen’s reaction to the victory stand demonstration by Smith and Carlos. “I didn’t think it was proper. If it were not for the United States, they wouldn’t be here. If they don’t like the United States, they can always leave” (as cited in Lerner & Wolf, 1968, p. 64D). This rhetorical approach enacts a form of “discursive amnesia” (Wander & Lee, 1998) whereby the historical oppression of Blacks is forgotten and a White logic of “my way or the highway” masquerades as “the American way.” Nakayama and Krizek (1995) also refer to this discursive strategy of whiteness as the conflation of whiteness with Americanness.

In addition to the propagation of slavery as the origin of superior Black athletic ability, the discourse advances the theme of natural Black athletic ability by drawing upon racial biology theories of inherent Black physiological advantage. These strategies differ primarily in terms of the questions they address; the slave narrative posits selective breeding and harsh conditions as the causes of Black physical superiority whereas the racial biology theories do not purport to ask *why* Blacks are physically superior but only to explain *how* they are superior. Such racial biology discourses specify the anatomical and biological differences between White and Black subjects, usually athletes, in order to explain the impact of race on athletic performance. Because of their presumed grounding in scientific discourses, racial biology theories pretend to greater objectivity than they actually achieve. What they reveal are expectations for behavior and performance that are often grounded in stereotypes, as well as investments in delineating particular differences.

According to the author of an article about the lack of recognition and financial rewards for Black Olympians, “A substantial amount of Whites consider Blacks to be ‘natural athletes,’ and they *expect* them to excel athletically” (“A Slap,” 1985, p. 94). In his retrospective on world records set by Bob Beamon and Lee Evans at the ’68 Summer Games, Moore (1987) suggests his presumably White readership “reflect upon what *natural wonders* these men were” (p. 48; italics added). Employing a discursive strategy of whiteness identified by Nakayama and Krizek (1995) as a confusion of whiteness with nationality, specifically Americanness, Moore (1987) states that “America” was “already reeling from changes in thought and mores” (p. 56) and did not care for the success of Black athletes or the victory stand by Smith and Carlos.

The assumption that Black athletic ability is the natural result of genetic, anatomical, and biological differences is pervasive in the periodical discourse. Admitting that “environmental factors have a great deal to do with excellence in sports,” Kane (1971) nonetheless goes on to present questionable research studies of racial difference as established scientific fact.

Researchers have found that the black American, on the average, tends to have a shorter trunk, a more slender pelvis, longer arms (especially forearms) and longer legs (especially from the knees down) than his white counterpart. He has more muscle in the upper arms and legs, less in the calves. There is reason to believe that his fat distribution is patterned differently from that of the white man—leaner extremities but not much difference in the trunk. And there is a trifle of evidence—this aspect has been studied so little that it still is in the highly speculative state—that the black man’s adrenal glands, a vital factor in many sports, are larger than the white man’s. (Kane, 1971, p. 74).

In this excerpt, Kane’s (1971) assertion that the adrenal gland difference between Black and White men is “speculative” suggests that his other claims are established scientific facts when, in fact, the studies he cites throughout the article deal exclusively with studies of athletes, and runners in particular. After summarizing the conclusions of two anthropologists and the notorious Dr. J. M. Tanner as scientific evidence of the physical differences that “might well have enhanced the athletic potential of the Negro in certain events” (p. 74), Kane offers the “theory” advanced by former San Jose State track coach Bud Winter, “Who holds that black athletes ‘have a distinctive ability to relax under pressure’” (p. 75). Winter’s theory elaborates pseudo-scientific racial biology theories in the public sphere by perpetuating a popular association between African Americans and dance. According to Winter,

Their antagonistic muscles—the muscles that extend—stay loose. . . . What heritage or heredity brought the black athlete this ability to keep tension out, no one knows. . . . I mean the quality of remaining limber, as you can note in the way they dance. A limber athlete has body control, and body control is part of athletic skill. It is obvious that many black people have some sort of head-start motor in them, but for now I can only theorize that their great advantage is relaxation under stress. (as cited in Kane, 1971, pp. 75-76).

Despite the fact that Coach Winter resists essentializing all racial differences by pointing out that “black athletes differ from each other physically quite as much as whites do, regardless of the averages, which are what scientific studies are concerned with” (Kane, 1971, p. 75), his stereotypical references to dancing echo Seiter’s (2002) observation that Black children are “routinely granted the authority of a privileged relation to sports and music” (p. 216) in television advertising. She argues that these representations “are distorted because they appear not as aspects of culture but as innate, natural talents. They are the only arenas for achievement and ambition allowed Black children” (Seiter, 2002, p. 216). These stereotypical associations persist in *Fists of Freedom* with archival footage of Lee Evans and others dancing and Tommie Smith singing “Nobody knows the trouble I’ve seen . . .” (Greenburg, 1999). Winter’s belief in

Blacks' ability to relax under pressure is epitomized by the film's heavily biased depiction of John Carlos as an athlete who "could eat a hot dog, drink a soda and come out and beat most guys" (Greenburg, 1999). In a montage of interview footage Jack Scott recalls, "They're announcing 'last call for the hundred meters.' All the other guys are there at the starting line. John is sitting up in the stands joking with his friends" and Steven Millner adds, "Drinking wine, smoking dope, after being challenged by three sprinters, he walked down underneath the stands, got in a track uniform . . ." (Greenburg, 1999). The assumption here is that Carlos' natural athleticism and relaxed manner could compensate for a lack of preparation for the race.

A more obvious example of the way in which Winter's formulation of natural Black athletic ability positions the White coach/fan as voyeur-observer of the entertainer-performer Black athlete is offered by San Jose coach Stan Dowell:

They walk loose, they dance loose, they *are* loose. You see it easily in their dancing. Their knees aren't stiff. . . . I've discussed this with Lee [Evans], Carlos and Smith—about letting their bodies go. I think it is linked with the suppressed life of the black man in America. Their emotions come out in their bodies, and we notice this kind of expression develops body muscle control. Have you noticed how, when they're dancing or playing games, their heads seem to flop around? It's magnificent. (as cited in Kane, 1971, p. 76)

These types of comments appear less frequently in the eighties and nineties, and almost disappear from discourse about the 1968 Olympic Games by the year 2000. Racial biology theories, however, remain popular rationalizations in sports discourse. According to Edwards (1992), there still exists a "prevalent, ill-informed and substantially racist argument that African-Americans are biogenetically different, distinct and uniquely endowed with some presumed gene-based, race-linked capacity for sports achievement" (p. 128). The racism latent in journalists' invocation of racial biology discourses is marked by their praise of Black athletes for skills they ostensibly acquired at birth, according to *The Great White Hype*.

The Law of Compensation

One particularly problematic variation on the theme of Black athletic superiority relies upon a racist logic of inversion in which mental and physical acuity are juxtaposed. The logic is inherently racist because it does not purport to explain lack in White intelligence or physical ability. Rather, the construct that Hoberman (1997) refers to as the "Law of the Compensation" is deeply tied to scientific racism and is a law that governs only the interpretation of Blackness. The Law of Compensation can be seen clearly in White sports commentators' descriptions of White and Black basketball and football players in the 1970s (Rainville & McCormick, 1977). Frequently, White players will be credited with quick thinking or knowledge and experience while their Black counterparts are credited in similar situations with physical quickness or agility. More recent studies confirm the persistence of this representational pattern in football commentary, with Black players being depicted solely in terms of their athleticism and Whites being additionally credited with intellectual command of the game (Rada, 2000).

The logic of this “law” requires that, if the Black male athlete has a superior physique, he must be intellectually inferior to the White male athlete, whose physique is not as “naturally” equipped for certain sports (Hoberman, 1997). Although the White male athlete functions as an implicit reference point for these judgments, his aptitude is rarely the object of judgment.

Former Olympian Steve Holman (1998) argues that the racist stereotype of inherent Black athletic ability “is directly related to assumptions regarding African-American intellectual inferiority” (p. 5E). According to Hoberman (1997), “The search for racial athletic aptitude is important precisely because it threatens to transform the spectacle of black athleticism into a highly public image of black retardation” (p. 146). The subtle suggestion of Black intellectual inferiority, usually contrasted to claims about the inherent physical superiority of the Black athlete, pervades discourse about the Black Olympians and the boycott movement of 1968. For instance, Harry Edwards is frequently characterized in terms of his physical size and only occasionally credited with the title of “professor” of sociology. When his academic career is mentioned, some authors express surprise or even doubt about his credibility. Consider, for example, one journalist’s introduction of Harry Edwards to the *Time* reader:

At California’s San Jose State College a few years back, Harry Edwards, now 25, was quite an athlete: captain of the basketball team, school record holder in the discus, and such a hot prospect in football that several pro teams made him offers. Edwards, a tall (6 ft. 8 in.), brainy Negro, passed them all up to become an assistant professor of sociology at virtually all-white San Jose because “scholarship was my longest suit.” Not quite. For the past six months, Harry’s long suit has been Black Power and bitter protest—specifically a campaign to cajole or coerce Negro athletes into boycotting what he considers “white-dominated” sporting events, from next fall’s Mexico City Olympics on down. (“The Black Boycott,” 1968, p. 61)

The author names “Black Power and bitter protest” as the focus of Edwards’ professional career and suggests that he chose scholarship over professional athletics in order to “campaign to cajole or coerce Negro athletes into boycotting . . .” (“The Black Boycott,” 1968, p. 61). With few exceptions, Edwards is described in the periodical discourse in terms of both his height and weight. His former status as an athlete is also featured as prominently as his current status as a professor.

In coverage of the boycott movement, Edwards, the Black athletes, and their supporters are consistently depicted as ill-advised, inexperienced, and disorganized. Axthelm (1968), falling prey to racist stereotypes about Black intellectual inferiority and Black men’s propensity for violence, argues, “What was important . . . was the test of whether Edwards, [Ken] Noel and their followers could organize an effective and nonviolent protest” (p. 24). Likewise, Black athletes are described as “intimidated, disorganized” and the victory stand by Smith and Carlos is labeled “a stubborn protest” (Larner & Wolf, 1968, p. 64D). After his support of the boycott was publicized, Tommie Smith was booed at the Los Angeles Invitational Track Meet (at which he took third in the 440-yard dash).

In the two months since Tommie declared himself for the boycott he has listened to many calm, rational arguments against his position. "Most people want to advise us," Smith said. "They say that they agree with our complaints about discrimination but that we're fighting it the wrong way. We still think that we're using the best means we have." (Axthelm, 1968b, p. 56)

Questioning the organizational abilities of Black boycott supporters and offering advice as to how they should proceed are some of the subtle ways reporters and commentators perpetuate a racist stereotype of Black intellectual inferiority. More obviously racist are the descriptions of the victory stand as "stubborn protest" or, according to a different author, a "public display of petulance" that was "painfully petty" ("Black Complaint," 1968, p. 62) and the indication that violence is a predictable counterpart to Black protest. Bode (1968) remarks with surprise, "Despite the despair felt by whites and the hostility shown by most blacks at the [UTEP Black Student] conference, nothing burned in El Paso the night after Harry Edwards and Dick Gregory spoke." (pp. 559-560). Axthelm (1984), while remembering and celebrating the victory stand as "mild and dignified," also articulates the Black athletes to the urban uprisings of the summer of 1968 when he states, "desperate people have burned down entire ghettos without gaining the worldwide attention of that protest" (p. 22). Leavy (1988) utilizes a similar discourse of Black violence when he claims that the demonstration by Smith and Carlos gave the Olympics "a black eye" (p. 118).

Comments such as these can be articulated to contemporary representations of African American men as childlike, angry, emotionally unstable, and violent, such as those circulated through MTV's *The Real World* (Orbe, 2002; Orbe & Hopson, 1998) or through the characterizations of outspoken athletes such as Latrell Sprewell and Allen Iverson (Brown, 2005; Collins, 2005). These articulations imply an inherent physicality that governs the actions and reactions of Black men. Such representations are consistently used to characterize John Carlos in *Fists of Freedom* as well as in the periodical discourse. Carlos, who is represented only by archival footage and second-hand accounts, is described in terms of his innate athletic ability, his drinking, illegal drug use, aggressive language on the track and in other public settings, threats of physical violence to others, and the suicide of his first wife, thus further perpetuating negative stereotypes of the Black male athlete. Interestingly, a counter-discourse (of the thoughtful, reasonable, emotionally mature and intelligent African American athlete) is used to characterize Tommie Smith in *Fists of Freedom*, a point taken up in the conclusion of the essay.

As mentioned previously, the racist logic that undergirds the Law of Compensation is most overt in sportscasters' comparative discourses about White and Black athletic performance. Frequently White athletes are praised for mental quickness in situations in which Black athletes are praised for physical quickness. In 1987, Detroit guard Isaiah Thomas was criticized for suggesting that the success and popularity of White NBA players such as Larry Bird had something to do with race. NBA playoff coverage, however, showed how "sportscasters described black players as 'wondrous to watch' and 'acrobatic' . . . while the Celtics' Bird was 'smart'" ("Strike One," 1987, p. 52).

Articles about the San Jose State track team and the Olympic Project for Human Rights consistently invoke these racist dualisms. Bud Winter, SJSU coach in '68, argues that Black athletes have the ability to stay relaxed under pressure whereas, "In white athletes the conscious mind takes over and the tensions mount" (Kane, 1971, p. 76). In an article about the controversy surrounding former Dodgers General Manager Al Campanis's claim that Blacks are few in number in sports management because they "lack some of the necessities," Harry Edwards condemns the racist logic that produces the Law of Compensation, but suggests that it is people like Campanis who open our eyes to the ways discourse functions to reproduce racial subordination. The article summarizes and mildly critiques the racist logic that bars "all but a few blacks from front office jobs and 'thinking' playing positions" ("Strike One," 1987, p. 52). "In a way, today's attitudes are more insidious than the old ones—simply because they are often unconscious. White owners who would blanch at being labeled racist nonetheless want coaches who are educated, articulate and well dressed, and they don't necessarily associate those qualities with blacks" (p. 54)

In some cases, the belief in Black intellectual inferiority was official doctrine. In 1968, eleven Black track athletes at UTEP had their scholarships canceled after they refused to compete at the Mormon school, Brigham Young University, because of the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. and, as one student athlete put it, "because of [the Mormon] beliefs that the blacks are inferior and that we are disciples of the devil" ("Black Hired Hands," 1968, p. 68). Incidences such as this support Black athletes' claims that they are exploited for their ability and ignored as students and human beings. For many White racists at historically White colleges and universities in 1968, the idea of natural Black athletic ability justified Black collegiate athletes' presence and legitimated their exploitation. In fact, articles that referenced the OPHR or the victory stand demonstration by Smith and Carlos often featured other examples of the prejudice and racial essentialism experienced by Black athletes. Athletic departments, according to then Iowa State basketball star Don Smith, see the Black student athlete first and foremost as an athlete and then, to the extent that eligibility is concerned, a student.

They don't care about the black athlete per se. They just want him to produce. Instead of trying to help us they want us to pass just enough to get by. They tried to put me into physical education, but I didn't want to be in it because I didn't enjoy it. . . . They [his teammates] didn't care what I did. They just thought of me as a basketball player. (as cited in Olsen, 1968b, p. 20)

Matthew "Mack" Robinson and Tommie Smith recount similar experiences. Robinson, the older brother of baseball legend Jackie Robinson, won the silver medal in the 200-meter dash at the 1936 Berlin Games. He attended the University of Oregon on a track scholarship but never graduated since, as he puts it, "We were more or less used for our ability" ("Where," 1968, p. 13). Tommie Smith was frequently asked by his professors, "What do you run?" He estimates, "Eighty percent of the White conversations I have on this campus are about athletics. You get the feeling that you are being exploited for your talent. You worry that after your eligibility is up the coaches might forget you because you can't do them any good anymore" ("The Olympic Jolt," 1968, p. 23). Neglect of minority student athletes and their academic careers is a much larger issue yet

their perception that they are considered valuable only for their natural athletic (and not intellectual) abilities draws attention to the power of racial essentialism and the Law of Compensation as ideological constructions consistent with the privileging of whiteness.

The Discourse of Dehumanization

In addition to positing a Law of Compensation whereby physical ability is juxtaposed with mental acuity, racial biology theories sometimes imply an evolutionary continuum in which Blacks are closer to nonhuman animals (or sometimes illiterate savages) than are Whites. The discourse dehumanizes principally by comparing Black athletes to animals. Animal metaphors are used to articulate the powerful Black man to the stereotype of the savage in the film *Deep Cover*, for example, when an elitist White drug dealer describes a Black undercover cop as “some beautiful panther, or, or, or jungle storm . . . You’re like a dangerous, magnificent beast” (as cited in Ferguson, 1998, p. 226).

In the late 1960s, dehumanizing animal metaphors appear as descriptions or analogies for Black athletic ability, in addition to reports of more overtly racist epithets. This discourse does not originate with coverage of the 1968 Summer Games but its presence is acknowledged in articles that reference the Black boycott and demonstration. In a way, the discourse of dehumanization is positioned as a kind of warrant for the Black athletes’ protests. For example, journalist Pete Axthelm recalls hearing an “Olympic Committee functionary” ask, in reference to the victory stand by Smith and Carlos, “Who put those jungle bunnies up to this?” (Axthelm, 1974, p. 55). Similarly, among the “reasons for grave dissatisfaction among all black athletes at UTEP” are “the repeated use of the word “nigger” by a member of the athletic department, and the coach’s reference in a letter to the action of one track member as an ‘animal response’” (“Black Hired Hands,” 1968, p. 68). Olsen (1968a) discusses numerous accounts of such practices of rhetorical dehumanization offered by Black collegiate and professional athletes, as well as examples provided by racist White coaches and administrators.

The prevalence of racist and dehumanizing language led John Carlos, during a statement given at a press conference following the Olympic demonstration, to summarize the problem: “White people seem to think we’re animals. I want people to know we’re not animals, not inferior animals, like cats and rats. They think we’re some sort of show horse. They think we can perform and they will throw us some peanuts and say ‘Good boy, good boy’” (“The Olympics,” 1968, p. 62). In an unusual turn on the racist characterization of the Black athlete as “show horse,” Moore (1991a) refers to Smith and Carlos’ teammate Linda Huey as “the lone female in [Bud] Winter’s sprint stable” (p. 62).

While the most overt examples of this type of racist language are presented for critique in the articles, subtle forms continue to be asserted without commentary. In an article about Black success in sport, a White former pro-football player fantasizes about the African equivalent to his childhood “chasing rabbits.” He suggests, “When they turn loose African athletes who have been chasing, say, cheetahs, they will rewrite the record books. It’s not because they’re black but what they’ve been doing” (“The Black Dominance,” 1977, p. 58). This example draws upon the discursive reserve of

dehumanization and perpetuates an association between Blacks and, in this instance, cheetahs. The quote still uses animals as a reference point for Black athletic ability but shifts the comparison from the Black athletes to the activities they *naturally* perform, thus further perpetuating the stereotype of natural Black athleticism.

By the late 1970s, overt animal references and discriminatory language largely disappear from discourse about the 1968 Olympic Games. Remnants of such discourses, however, persist in much more subtle ways. Among the more subtle examples of rhetorical dehumanization through the use of animal metaphors is an article in which long jumper Bob Beamon is described as “the most deerlike” athlete at the Echo Summit Olympic training facility in 1968 (Moore, 1991a, p. 68). In *Fists of Freedom*, Tommie Smith is depicted in ways that subtly reinforce these already-existing racial codes. Like Lee Evans, who is described as a “ferocious,” “tenacious,” “Tasmanian Devil” (Greenburg, 1999), Smith’s running style is described with dehumanizing animal metaphors. Sports reporter Jack Scott describes Smith as “gazelle-like” as the footage shows a slow-motion tape of Smith in full stride (Greenburg, 1999). By likening the runners to exotic animals, commentators and teammates alike signify on racist stereotypes, revising them for contemporary audiences. Tommie Smith is likened to an animal considered to be graceful and gentle, unlike his teammate Lee Evans. It is important to note that Smith is not only likened to an animal, he is likened to a non-threatening African animal. The comparison of Smith to a gazelle both exoticizes and demystifies his athletic prowess by signifying on dehumanizing animal metaphors, suggesting natural physical ability, and coding him in contrast to animals considered dangerous or intimidating. Such comments also further support the idea that, as coverage of African American athletes improves, there is still a strong tendency toward the use of physical descriptors to characterize Black players (Byrd & Utsler, 2007)

Other overtly racist and dehumanizing rhetorical practices, such as the reported racial slurs of IOC President Avery Brundage, are occasionally mentioned in the periodical coverage of the 1968 Games. One story notes, “A magazine reporter once quoted millionaire Brundage as saying he would sell his exclusive Montecito Country Club in Santa Barbara, Calif., ‘before letting niggers and kikes’ become members” (“Should Negroes Boycott,” 1968, p. 112). Brundage denies using such terms but admits that he supports the Club’s right “to accept only red-haired barbers for members” if they so choose. He then goes on to address the OPHR’s demand for an African American member on the USOC Board. “I think Jesse Owens is a fine boy,” says Brundage (as cited in “Should Negroes Boycott,” 1968, p. 112). The use of racist epithets and the emasculating term “boy” are widely recognized as racist rhetorical practices. Notably, Brundage’s use of the term “boy” is also highlighted and critiqued in *Fists of Freedom*, in which the former USOC and IOC President is presented as the foil to the courageous Smith and Carlos, who are likewise juxtaposed to each other. Smith is depicted in the film as heroic, soft-spoken, intellectual, and accommodating while Carlos is depicted as coincidental, brash, outspoken, and aggressive, even violent (Plec, 2001). This representational juxtaposition of the film’s key protagonists codes Smith through a framework that reinscribes the privilege of whiteness and Carlos through a rhetorical framework that invokes the stereotype of the “Bad Buck” (Bogle, 1973).

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

Critical analysis reveals the articulation of the theme of inherent Black athletic superiority in popular periodical coverage of the 1968 Olympic boycott and protest for several decades following the Games. Variations on the theme include the essentialism of racial difference, racial biology theories of natural Black physicality which include assumptions about slave conditioning, the suggestion of Black intellectual inferiority through a Law of Compensation, and the dehumanization of the Black athlete through comparisons to animals. These ways of talking about Black athletes, while they may be representative of broader categories of discourse, need not be entirely separated from the context of the '68 Olympics and the boycott movement. The themes contribute to a larger narrative in which dissenting "militant" Black athletes, who have physiological advantages when it comes to sport, haphazardly come together in a misguided attempt to call attention to the problem of racism in the United States. The narrative is substantially revised in *Fists of Freedom*, the more recent documentary account of the 1968 Mexico City Olympics, as well as in recent commemorations of the protest and eulogies for silver medalist Peter Norman, who formed a lifelong friendship with Smith and Carlos. *Fists of Freedom's* story of the '68 Summer Games draws upon racial biology theories in much more subtle and infrequent ways and complicates the stereotypical representations of Black masculinity by coding Tommie Smith through the normative discourse of whiteness and contrasting him to the more stereotypically "Black" John Carlos, whose only admirable quality appears, in the film, to be his natural athletic ability.

Discourse about inherent Black physical ability, whether muted or overt, shifts attention away from the goals of the boycott and fixes it, instead, on the sacrifice of the individual Black athletes by pointing out the importance of Black athletes for the Olympics and the Olympics for Black athletes. The idea that Black athletes stand to benefit more from their Olympic participation than from a boycott is consistent across articles in mainstream periodicals, with the exception of *Ebony* which was more likely to print articles that supported the boycott movement. Even *Jet* and *Ebony*, however, occasionally indicated that the sacrifice made by the Black athletes (especially Smith and Carlos) might not be worth the reward of dramatizing the plight of their people.

The danger of these discursive practices includes the continued essentializing of Black athletes as inherently physical and non-intellectual, the undermining of organized struggles against racial injustice, and the depoliticization and denial of sport as a significant site of social protest. As Ashe (1993) reminds us:

In the 1960s, black athletes were vital cogs in the machinery of the black social revolution. They manned picket lines, sat in at segregated lunch counters in the South, petitioned for redress of grievances at White colleges, demanded an end to discriminatory practices of White coaches, and even threatened to boycott that most cherished symbol of equal opportunity—the Olympic Games. (Ashe, 1993, p. xxii).

Today, charges of racism and efforts to combat discrimination by Black athletes are met with similar resistance. Scholars should continue to examine the ways in which racialized discourse, including ideas about Black athletic ability, function in mainstream sports discourse, particularly discourse that attends to Black athletes' claims about racism

in sport organizations. In 2003, prior to leaving the Portland Trail Blazers and signing with the Detroit Pistons, NBA star Rasheed Wallace made the following comment:

I ain't no dumb-ass nigger out here . . . I see behind the lines. I see behind the false screens. I know what this business is all about. I know the commissioner of this league makes more than three-quarters of the players in this league . . . In my opinion, they just want to draft niggers who are dumb and dumber . . . That's why they're drafting all these high school cats, because they come into the league and they don't know no better . . . and they don't know the real business, and they don't see behind the charade . . . They look at black athletes like we're dumb-ass niggers. It's as if we're just going to shut-up, sign for the money and do what they tell us. (as cited in Arnold, 2003, p. D1).

Wallace's statement, as well as the media's and NBA Commissioner's response to it, is a timely reminder that the rhetoric of racism and the discursive power of whiteness in sports persist. The rhetoric of racial biology, whether intentionally invoked or not, continues to be a troubling characteristic of dominant discourses about Black athletes, despite greater understanding of the limited biological factors linked to racial characteristics (Oates & Durham, 2004). Rhetorical dehumanization, while considerably less common than four decades ago, still occasionally appears in the discourse of sportswriters, commentators, coaches, and players. Fortunately, the ability of Black athletes and their allies to use the media's obsession with sport to call attention to racism, also remains intact. Perhaps the greatest potential for rhetorical and ideological transformation of the rhetoric of racism in sports can be found in the expressions of empathy and implication made in recent years by Peter Norman and John Carlos. When asked about his support for Smith and Carlos during the 2000 Sydney Games, Norman said "I did the only thing I believed was right . . . I asked what they wanted me to do to help." Carlos, remarking on the death of Norman in October of 2006, stated: "Peter was a piece of my life. When I got the call, it knocked the wind out of me. I was his brother. He was my brother. That's all you have to know" (as cited in Zirin, 2006).

NOTES

1. SEIKALY, AS CITED IN PRICE, 1998, P. 35.
2. OTHER THEMES REVEALED IN THE ANALYSIS INCLUDE PROGRESSIVE INDIVIDUALISM, WHITE ALIENATION, AND ALLEGED RACISM. CHARACTERIZATIONS INCLUDE STEREOTYPES OF THE UNCLE TOM, BAD BUCK, BRUTE, BLACK POWER RADICAL, AND LIBERAL WHITE SUPPORTER.

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RESISTING CHANGE: BLOGGING AND LOCAL SPORTS MEDIA

BRAD SCHULTZ AND MARY LOU SHEFFER

New technologies continually change the role of the sports media. This study sought to investigate the impact of blogging at the local sports media level. A survey of local radio, television and newspaper outlets revealed a resistance to implementing blogging in terms of journalist work roles, management strategy and perception of value. The reasons for such resistance--including age and experience, management and inertia--are discussed. The implications of such resistance could include the marginalization of local mass media in the immediate future.

Keywords: blogging, mass media, sports journalism

“Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose”

“The more things change the more they stay the same,” according to a French proverb that goes back at least to writer Alphonse Karr and *Les Guêpes* in 1849. More than a century later, the saying seems especially appropriate when considering the role of the local sports media. While new technologies seem to be revolutionizing the entire media industry, the local sports media seem unwilling or unable to embrace the change.

Within just the past generation, there have been drastic changes in how media content are organized, created and distributed. Communication links have become faster and more accessible, due primarily to the emergence of the Internet. In a relatively short period of time, the Internet went from an elite medium to part of everyday life of the average citizen; drastically changing the way citizens communicate and access information (Madden, 2006).

This study investigated how the mass media, specifically radio, television and newspapers, are moving into new online platforms such as blogging. There is evidence to suggest that while the mass media give the appearance of change, in reality very little is actually changing, particularly at the local media level. These media remain tied to traditional methods of communication, an anachronism that threatens their identity, if not their survival.

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LITERATURE REVIEW

Historically, the media have played an important role in sports in the United States, even as far back as colonial times (Bryant & Holt, 2006). It has been a symbiotic relationship in which the mass media have provided distribution and publicity, while sport has offered content and revenue (Bellamy, 1998; McChesney, 1989, Rowe, 1999). But in one aspect the relationship between mass media and audience has been more one-sided in that audiences have played a passive role in the consumption of mediated sports content. Wenner (1989) referred to this relationship as the transactional model of sport communication, where the media had powerful gatekeeping and agenda-setting functions. However, changes brought about by new technologies have fundamentally altered this transactional model and the way audiences understand sports (Wenner, 2006).

In this era of new media technology, consumers now have more options, and thus more power, than ever before (Poindexter & McCombs, 2001). For example, with the increased popularity of web sites like YouTube and Bebo, sports fans and participants have now become content providers. The results of these technological changes have altered the way the media do business (Levy, 2005; Bucy, 2003), including the way mass media companies collect, edit and distribute content, and how audiences access and consume such content. As a result, citizens have become more active participants in mediated sports communication (Wood & Benigni, 2006).

On the Internet, and especially through blogging, sports communication has grown to include voices outside the mainstream media. Blogging is a type of Internet communication that allows for two-way dialogue between audience members and the mass media, and gives consumers the opportunity to produce their own content for distribution to a wider audience. Beyond additional content, the Internet also provides a means to generate revenue via sports (Real, 2006; Salkever, 2003). A *web blog* or *blog* communicates information in reverse chronological order, is web-based and typically includes frequent updates and opinions (Nardi, Schiano, Gumbrecht & Swartz, 2004). Blogs range from simple personal diary entries to more sophisticated designs with photos, videos and/or music. The word *blog* can also be used as a verb to describe the process of writing a blog, and users are typically known as *bloggers*.

There are several different formats for blogs. Many are owned and operated by private individuals who simply want a forum to voice and share opinions on certain topics. In its study of blogging, the Pew Internet & American Life Project (Lenhart & Fox, 2006) found that the main reason for keeping a blog is creative expression and sharing personal experiences. The study also found that most bloggers were young (54% between the ages of 18-29), male (54%), White (60%), heavy Internet users, and did not think of what they were doing as a form of journalism.

Many blogs have challenged the traditional media in regards to disseminating news and information, and are competing for media consumers (Skoler, 2005; Singer, 2003; Outing, 2003). Whether by design or accident, many bloggers have become *citizen journalists*. According to Lemann, (2006) "Citizen journalists are supposedly inspired amateurs who find out what's going on in the places where they live and work, and who bring us a fuller, richer picture of the world than we get from familiar news organizations, while sparing us the pomposity and preening that journalists often display"

(¶4). Outing (2005) writes, “The news media landscape is changing. Journalists now share the spotlight, as [the] tsunami coverage powerfully demonstrated. Citizen reporters, armed with 21st century technology, can cover a story in ways that mainstream journalists don’t” (p. 79). A report from the Project for Excellence in Journalism (“The state of,” 2006) refers to blogs as “a symbol of the new, democratized citizen media.”

This realization has helped fuel a tremendous growth in blogging. The level of postings, which is how often people contribute to a blog, is 1.2 million posts per day, or about 50,000 per hour (Sifry, 2006). In the spring of 2007, there were more than 70 million blogs. According to Sifry (2006), the *blogosphere* constantly changes as it doubles in size roughly every six months.

The motivations for blogging can best be explained through a uses and gratifications perspective, which emphasizes audience activity and choice (Katz, Blumler & Gurevitch, 1974). In blogging, the audiences’ enjoyment increases through participation (Wood & Benigni, 2006; Melnick, 1993), which also creates a sense of empowerment. Some argue that this shift in power creates a challenge for mainstream media as consumers gravitate more toward blog sites (Karlgaard, 2005). Hull (2006/7) says because blogs generate so much comment and attention from readers they can drive more traffic to newspaper Web sites.

Faced with these realities, and the growth of blogging, the traditional mass media have begun incorporating blogs as part of their content, with reporters and other staff members serving as bloggers. There is no definitive list of how many of these sites exist or how many media outlets offer blogs, but there appears to be a heavy and growing investment. The *San Antonio Express-News* has a blog on bowling, while the *Commercial-Appeal* in Memphis has one on pets (Hull, 2006/7). At the *News & Observer* in Raleigh public editor Ted Vaden says the newspaper has expanded its stake from a half-dozen blogs in 2005 to 18 a year later (“Blogs and the law,” 2006).

Since most sports consumers are White males between the ages of 18 to 29 years old (Gantz & Wenner, 1991; Perse, 1992), it is not surprising that sports blogs rank among the top three blogging categories (Lenhart & Fox, 2006). Sports also engender the passion and commentary associated with blogging. One example is a sports blog created by teenager Marc James, which now staffs roughly 40 people, publishes three original sports columns a week, and receives more than 120,000 posts. According to James, “I think blogs are the wave of the future because they give a voice to the ordinary fan that has an intelligent opinion, but in the past didn’t have the medium to voice it. People want to hear less of what the so-called experts have to say and more of what the sports geek down the street thinks” (Bruscas, 2004, ¶3).

But there is also evidence to suggest that blogging is having little, if any, effect on the mass media. Reporters have struggled to figure out what goes in a blog and how to manage it effectively. As a result, they recycle existing material, which simply reinforces existing practices. Research (Schultz, 2000; Downes & McMillan, 2000) shows that as the traditional media have moved online, they choose to repurpose existing material rather than develop new strategies for interactivity and personalization.

Media managers are also aware of the limits of blogging, which could further retard change. A recent Gallup Poll indicated that “most Americans are clueless about

blogs, bloggers and blogging” (Sincere, 2005, ¶2). The poll showed that while 76% of Americans regularly use the Internet, only 7% said they were very familiar with blogging, and 3% consult blogs on a daily basis. Sincere (2005) added, “Blogging is a highly personalized form of communication. Millions of blogs are still little more than on-line diaries of interest only to friends and family of their creators” (¶18).

In his study of the effect of new technologies on news reporting, Reich (2005) found a strong trend of continuity. To the extent that news coverage has changed, the change is related to more channel capacity and an emphasis on textuality. “The role played by new technologies in news information production [is a] conservative revolution,” according to Reich. “Most of the changes over time are characterized by small effect sizes. Despite major changes in the means of news information production, there are relatively minor changes in ... production” (p. 564). This delay in change or adoption could be a result of organizational constraints related to journalistic routines (Fishman, 1982; Gans, 1979; Tuchman, 1978). In regards to news media outlets integrating the web as a content provider, Jay Smith, president of Cox Newspapers said, “I think we were slow to catch on ... I think it’s perfectly natural to protect what you have, to think what you have is the only thing people want” (Smolkin, 2006, p. 2).

This study sought to assess the impact of sports blogging from the local mass media perspective as it relates to Wenner’s transactional model. Are the mass media fully implementing this new technology or not? And what are the consequences of this action or inaction?

RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND METHODOLOGY

Given the exploratory nature of the study, the following research questions were developed:

- RQ1: How involved in blogging are the local sports mass media, including newspapers, radio and television?
- RQ2: To what degree has blogging changed the local sports mass media in terms of habits, practices, content, work roles and the like?

If the local sports mass media are truly responding to a shift in the transactional model, they should be going through changes in content, practices and work roles. A lack of change would suggest that the media are not responding to the shift.

- RQ3: How do these sports journalists-bloggers feel about blogging both personally and professionally?

This would help explain motivations for a response or lack of response to the shift in the transactional model. Response could be due to several factors, including technological, economic and/or personal.

The research questions were applied to traditional mass media outlets (radio, television, newspaper) at the local level, where journalist work habits and patterns have become established over a period of time. Local sports were defined as broadcast or printed sports content within a newscast or newspaper that is distributed by local television or radio stations, and newspapers to primarily local audiences. The research

questions were tested through a convenience sample of sports journalists currently involved in blogging. For the purposes of the study, blog was defined as a type of website produced by a sports media outlet in which commentaries and/or opinions from both local sports journalists and audience members are displayed in a diary fashion. A key feature was feedback and interaction with audience members, which eliminated several outlets that hosted forums or billboards (forums and billboards allow audience members to contribute opinions with no journalist input). It also eliminated those sites that provided links to outside blogs. A professional journalist associated with the local media outlet had to be making contributions to the blog.

The sample was created using Internet and industry sources (“US Newspaper,” 2006; “SHG Resources,” 2006; “Sports radio,” 2006) to identify potential respondents at local newspapers, television stations and sports-talk radio stations. A yes/no coding was applied to media websites regarding the following three variables: blog maintained by media outlet, blog hosted by sports journalist, and blog two-way or interactive with viewers/readers. All three variables had to be answered affirmatively in order for a media outlet to qualify for inclusion in the study, which created a sample of 248 media outlets and 596 journalist-bloggers. Further investigation indicated that 22 potential respondents did not qualify for various reasons, including some who were no longer working at the outlet. This reduced the sample to 574.

Electronic mail and an online questionnaire seemed to be appropriate methods of data collection, given the nature of the study. The second week of January 2007 sports journalist-bloggers in the sample were sent an electronic mail message inviting them to take part in the study and directing them to the web address for the online questionnaire. Follow-up e-mail reminders were sent to the participants three weeks after the initial invitation and were followed by phone calls. Final response was 30% (170 total responses).

To enhance the study, qualitative data was also collected via open-ended questions on the survey and informal interviews conducted during the follow-up phone call procedure. The main qualitative survey question specifically asked respondents to share any additional thoughts or comments they might have on sports blogging. The same question was asked during the follow-up phone calls. During this part of the data collection, researchers were able to ask respondents to further expand on their thoughts and perceptions of blogging.

INVOLVEMENT AND WORK ROLES IN BLOGGING

The online questionnaire specifically addressed the research questions in that it asked reporters what they did for their blogs, their perceptions of how much their work roles had changed, what specific changes had taken place, and their perceptions of the impact of blogging on their profession. In terms of measuring the dependent variable of sports journalists’ involvement in blogging (RQ1) one question specifically asked, “How involved are you professionally as a blogger in terms of producing material or engaging in blogging for your media outlet?” This was measured on a five-point Likert scale where 1 represented “no involvement” and 5 represented “extreme involvement.” Participants were also asked how blogging originated at their media outlet. Potential

responses included “It was my suggestion,” “Someone else in my department suggested it,” and “Someone in management suggested it.” To assess media outlet involvement in blogging, the total number of media outlets in the universe were compared to the number of outlets currently offering sports blogs.

To help gauge how work roles had changed through blogging (RQ2) respondents were asked to rank the following items in terms of which was the most frequent blogging activity: “Engaging in conversation with audience members,” “Giving updated scores or summaries from a live sports event,” “Producing or overseeing a blog site,” “Putting breaking news on blog site,” “Putting commentary or opinion on a blog site,” and “Editing submissions to a blog site.” Additionally, respondents were asked, “How much would you say your job or professional duties as a sports journalist have changed as a result of blogging?” and “To the extent that your job duties have changed, in what areas have they changed the most?” Respondents were then given answer choices corresponding to changes in covering events, writing stories, conducting interviews, dealing with sources and time spent on the job. An open-ended question asked respondents to go into more detail about how their work roles had changed.

PERCEPTIONS OF BLOGGING VALUE AND DEMOGRAPHIC PREDICTORS

Several items on the questionnaire measured both positive and negative respondent attitudes about blogging (RQ3). Positively-framed questions included, “Blogging makes an important contribution to our sports coverage,” “Our blog site is better than sites run by fans or individuals,” “The role of blogging in sports journalism will increase in the future,” “Feedback from management about our blog has been positive,” “Colleges should start training journalism students as bloggers,” and “Blogging has made me a better sports journalist.” The negatively-framed questions were, “Lack of training/resources for blogging has been a problem,” “Blogging takes too much time away from my other duties,” and “I worry that blogging will negatively affect my credibility.” The question, “When blogging, I write much more opinion/commentary than usual” could be viewed as either positive and negative. All responses were measured using a five-point Likert scale where 1 represented “strongly disagree” and 5 represented “strongly agree.”

Demographic predictors consisted of size of media outlet, type of media outlet, years of professional experience, and gender.

RESULTS

In terms of the demographics of respondents, most worked as newspaper sports reporters or editors ($N = 124$, 73%). This was followed by television station sports anchors or reporters ($N = 26$; 15%), radio station sports reporters or anchors ($N = 15$, 9%) and website journalists ($N = 5$; 3%). The majority of respondents were male (96%), worked at what they described as large media outlets (54%), and had more than 20 years of professional media experience (33%). Males and newspapers were seemingly overrepresented, but the figures for all categories were consistent with the demographics

of the universe. For example, in the universe only three percent of all sports bloggers were female.

For RQ1, out of 654 television stations currently offering a local sports segment within a newscast, 83 stations were involved in blogging (13%). From a total of 506 sports talk radio stations in the universe, 22 stations had blogs (4%), and of the 3,743 daily and weekly newspapers in the universe, 143 offered sports blogs (4%). Using the scale where 1 represented “no involvement” and 5 represented “total involvement,” respondents seemed to be heavily involved in blogging, $t(180) = 13.88$, $p < .001$ ($M = 3.88$, $SD = .84$). This was determined using a one-sample t-test, which has been used to determine how a known mean differs from a hypothesized mean (Walker, 2002). The hypothesized mean chosen as a test value was 3.0, because as the neutral or middle position any significant variation above it would suggest involvement.

Most respondents indicated that the idea for their blogging originated with management (53%), followed by themselves (27%) and someone else in their department (15%). This was important because there were significant differences between the group motivated by management and other groups. The group motivated by management was less likely than other groups to believe that their blogging had helped increase audience size, $F(4, 157) = 2.64$, $p < .02$; was less likely to blog if not forced by management, $F(4, 114) = 2.45$, $p = .03$; was less likely to believe that blogging had made a positive contribution to the media outlet, $F(4, 156) = 2.86$, $p < .02$; and was less likely to believe that blogging had made them better journalists, $F(4, 134) = 3.06$, $p < .01$.

When considering RQ2, respondents were asked a variety of questions about changes in work roles, habits and practices. Their responses were based on a 1 to 5 scale where 1 represented “no change” and 5 represented “total change.” Again, one-sample t-tests were used with a hypothesized mean value of the middle position (3.0). For each category, the respondent means were significantly lower than the hypothesized mean, suggesting little if any change. This included changes in time spent on the job, $t(158) = -12.55$, $p < .001$; the way journalists cover events, $t(126) = -10.99$, $p < .001$; the way they write stories, $t(112) = -10.78$, $p < .001$; the way stories are researched, $t(95) = -10.27$, $p < .001$; the way interviews are conducted, $t(76) = -10.87$, $p < .001$; dealing with story sources, $t(87) = -11.11$, $p < .001$; increases to commentary and/or opinion, $t(163) = -1.80$, $p < .01$ and perceived changes to overall job duties, $t(168) = -7.47$, $p < .001$.

Respondents were also asked various questions to assess their perceptions of blogging (RQ3) using a 1 to 5 scale, where 1 represented “totally disagree” and 5 represented “totally agree.” One-sample t-tests were used on these questions with 3.0 as the hypothesized mean, and the negative t values and significance levels to these questions suggested very negative attitudes. Respondents were asked if they thought blogging made an important contribution to their coverage, $t(170) = -4.31$, $p < .001$; if blogging could eventually replace traditional sports journalism, $t(97) = -9.77$, $p < .001$; if their blogging efforts had increased the audience size for their outlet, $t(170) = -8.66$, $p < .001$; and if blogging had made them better journalists, $t(147) = -8.87$, $p < .001$. Respondents had a positive attitude toward the future role of blogging in sports journalism, $t(169) = 2.62$, $p < .01$.

For the demographic predictors, there were no significant differences related to gender, sport covered by the respondent, media outlet size or time spent using the Internet. However, there were important differences related to professional experience between the group with more than 20 years of experience and the group with 19 years or less. The older group was much more concerned about issues of blog training, $F(1, 165) = 9.84, p < .003$. Although not statistically significant at the .05 level, older respondents were more pessimistic and negative about the impact of blogging compared to the younger group. The more experienced group was less likely to be involved in blogging, more worried about the effect of blogging on personal credibility and other ethical issues, less likely to believe that blogging had made them better journalists, and less likely to perceive that blogging had made a positive contribution to their media outlet.

There were also significant difference between respondents who initiated blogging at their media outlet and those who were required to blog by management. Self-motivated bloggers were more positive in regards to blogging changing the way they write stories $F(1, 111) = 3.89, p < .05$, more likely to believe blogging had increased their audience size $F(1, 169) = 7.92, p < .003$, and more likely to blog if not required by management $F(1, 126) = 7.19, p < .02$.

DISCUSSION

This survey of local radio, television, and newspaper news outlets revealed a resistance to implement blogging in terms of journalists work roles, management strategy and perception of value. The results of the study showed that in terms of both percentage and total number the local sports journalists are not heavily involved in blogging. Perhaps even more telling, those stations and journalists that are blogging revealed negative attitudes about its role and impact for local mass media outlets. There are a variety of possible explanations for these positions.

Going back to Wenner's (1989) transactional model, the mass media have held a significant position of *power* in relation to sports audiences. The media have always been able to determine the production, tone and distribution of content as part of their gatekeeping function (White, 1950; Dexter & White, 1964). For example, Brown and Bryant (2006) found that in 2004 more than 80% of all media generated sports programming was either event coverage or journalism. Discussion programming, which is the essence of blogging, ranked near the bottom of all categories at 8%. Perhaps the growth of blogging is due in part to what bloggers perceive as a lack of opportunity through the mainstream media. Research by Outing (2004), Peskin (2003), and the Pew Research Center ("Internet election," 2002) support this assumption.

Related to power is *inertia*, or the tendency of the sports media to avoid change and maintain the status quo. This seems counter-intuitive given all the recent changes in media technology and distribution, but the local sports media have not been quick to adapt. Schultz and Sheffer (2004) found that local sports content had changed little over the past 25 years and remained very conservative and traditional. According to John Steigerwald, a television sports anchor for more than 20 years, "We're doing the sports today the same way we did it when I started. We haven't reacted to any changes" (Smizik, 2004, ¶4).

As developing technology challenges and changes the media landscape, the level of *fear* and uncertainty rises. According to Bucy (2003), new media entrepreneurs challenge the gatekeeping role and power of traditional news media outlets. In response, mass media outlets must reexamine traditional methods, practices and models. But the fear of the economic unknown leaves some waiting on the sideline. For example, some television station managers may have delayed investing in online platforms because they believe it could lead to economic self-destruction (Schultz & Sheffer, 2007). Burton (1999) argued that if television and other traditional media began developing an Internet presence it could lure audiences away and undercut media profit.

In addition to economic fear there is also the concern that blogging will change long-accepted journalistic beliefs and *ethics*. "I think [the] practice of hearsay journalism is creeping into the mainstream," said a newspaper respondent. "Hopefully, the traditional media can get a grip on blogging and gravitate back to substance." Another newspaper journalist noted, "Editors want three or four people to read something before it gets in the paper, but don't care that no one reads anything before it goes online." One respondent went so far as to call for government control of blogs, much like the broadcast airwaves are controlled. But the strongest response came from a long-time newspaper journalist:

It's the worst kind of insidious, stupid-creep to have ever infected our profession. Blogging blurs the lines between journalism and pajama-wearing nitwits sitting in their mothers' basements firing off bile-filled opinions. Newspaper editors and managers sit around at meetings and wonder why their circulation is falling and they have themselves to blame for lowering all of us into the foul-smelling muck of the blogworld.

A journalist's age and/or *experience* could also be a possible contribution to this fear element. In his theory of diffusion of innovation, Rogers (1995) argued that older more traditional and more experienced laggards resist and delay implementing new media technologies because they believe that traditional methods and practices work just as well. This was suggested by the quantitative data and also supported by qualitative responses. One newspaper journalist with more than 20 years experience called blogging "a waste of time," while another said that "it has no relation to journalism." One respondent from this group noted, "I believe the same profound, immutable guidelines I follow in writing for our print edition also apply to my blogs. I guess that qualifies me as a relic." That older journalists may share this attitude was recognized by a younger respondent, who said, "The editors are often dismissive, as are veteran sportswriters, viewing blogging as a cheapened, fast-food substitute for real journalism."

A common thread throughout the qualitative response was the respondents' belief that blogging was a *management* directive that had been forced upon them. As noted, the majority of respondents began their blogging at the suggestion of management and their attitude toward blogging in several areas was significantly more critical than other respondent groups. "While I see blogging as part of a professional activity," said a television sports journalist from a large market, "I would NOT participate if it were not part of my job" (emphasis original). A newspaper journalist said much the same thing, "I would not participate in sports blogging if it wasn't required by management. I prefer to focus on my actual reporting duties."

There was also a strong belief on the part of the respondents that media managers rushed into blogging without a better understanding of how it works or a dedication of resources to make it effective. A newspaper journalist from a large market noted, "Our management has a unique take on blogging—'do it, but don't expect us to check it, read it or even edit it very closely.' That has been frustrating." Another newspaper journalist commented, "It's a new field and there is a huge learning curve. Although management wants blogging, they do not market it well. Why bother doing it if they won't let people know it's happening?" Much of the qualitative response confirmed research (Schultz & Sheffer, 2005) that shows a disconnect between management and rank-and-file sports journalists.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

An obvious limitation to the study was the somewhat low response. Combined with extremely heavy response from newspaper journalists and males, it could make results more difficult to generalize. However, the researchers believe that because the response was almost directly proportional to universe, generalization is possible.

There could also be issues with external validity, but respondents were very consistent with answers to multiple questions on the same topic. For example, the responses to "lack of blog training is a problem" ($M = 2.39$, $SD = .96$) were similar to responses for "colleges should train bloggers" ($M = 2.40$, $SD = 1.07$). Both questions were framed on a 1 to 5 scale with 1 representing "strongly disagree" and 5 representing "strongly agree."

Since the results of the study seemed to point to the importance of local management in blogging, that would seem to be the logical area for future research. A questionnaire aimed at editors, news directors and other media managers could help expand upon the results found here, especially in terms of why outlets are blogging and what value they perceive from it. Within this area, future research should explore what tangible outcomes media managers' hope to gain from blogging. In other words, is blogging just a means to compete with citizen journalists, or are media managers truly looking to expand content and reach a larger audience? In addition to further exploring media managers' motivation in blogging, research regarding the actual content of journalists' blogs should be conducted. A comparison could then be made from what journalists said they were doing with their blogs and what actually appears on blogs.

Another obvious area for future research would be sports content consumers, especially those who are blogging. Such research could focus on why these people blog and the value they place on blogging efforts by local media. The same study could also be conducted on the national level (using media such as ESPN, *Sports Illustrated* and *USA Today*) to give greater meaning to the results. Lastly, a comparison could also be made between citizen blog sites and media sponsored sites. Researchers could investigate whether citizen blogs offer unique and different content or perspectives to their blog sites than media sponsored blogs, thus indicating a consumer need not being met by traditional news media outlets.

IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

The resistance and reluctance of the local mass media in regards to blogging raises several important issues. As the balance of power in the transactional model shifts toward sports consumers and audiences, there is a very real danger that these media could become marginalized and there is evidence to suggest this is already happening. Several stations, including those in Las Vegas, Tampa, and Wichita, Kansas have entirely eliminated sports from certain newscasts (Holtzclaw, 2007; McGuire, 2005; Greppi, 2002). “Whether it's medical or education or crime or government or Michael Vick, all news has to earn its way into the newscast,” said Shane Moreland, then-news director at WTKR-TV in Virginia, which dropped its sportscast in 2007. “There's no longer going to be a segment where you just give someone three minutes. Time is too valuable to give it to somebody and say, ‘Whatever you can come up with, put it in there’” (Holtzclaw, 2007, ¶3).

Other stations have drastically reduced the time allotted for the sports segment, integrated sports content within the newscast instead of separating it as a stand-alone entity, or outsourced the production of local sports (“Metro sports,” 2003). Pittsburgh is one market in which several stations have reduced the time devoted to the sports segment. At KDKA, there’s no time allotted for sports between 4 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. Former sports anchor Guy Junker noted, “We’d get seven to eight minutes on a Saturday night. On Sunday, we’d have a Steeler extra and get 15 minutes. Now, these guys get two and a half and three minutes” (Smizik, 2004, ¶6).

Instead of, or in addition to, cutting time, other stations are reassessing the role and placement of sports within the newscast. In 2005, WTEN in Albany, New York eliminated the traditional anchored sports segment at the end of the newscast and instead mixed sports stories into the body of the news (McGuire, 2005). That same year, WDSU in New Orleans did the same thing with its sports segment in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. At KPNX in Phoenix, the time for sports has been reduced at 5 p.m., and the station also uses sports talent to cover general news stories (Buch & Dupont, 2003).

But such experimentation reveals a potentially fatal flaw for the local mass media, namely that they are still focusing on their own gatekeeping roles. None of these changes recognize the shift that has taken place in the transactional model and the growing empowerment of sports consumers, even at the local level. Through outsourcing, cutting time or even eliminating sports completely these local media demonstrate that not only do they not have the answers, they do not even understand the questions.

To make the local mass media relevant in the community of sport, managers must stop thinking about gatekeeping and focus more on audiences. This can be accomplished in several ways, including making sports content hyper-local. The local mass media outlet is still the only place to get detailed information about local athletes, events and schools. By increasing coverage of these elements media outlets have unique content to offer consumers.

Media outlets must also make a greater effort to understand local audiences. Too often, content is decided by consultants and managers who incorrectly apply national research to local situations. For example, in its most recent study that included local television sports, the Radio and Television News Directors Foundation found that only

31% of the viewing public expressed a strong interest in the sports segment. That compared to 72% for weather and 65% for local crime (“RTNDF Journalism,” 1998). Such studies have been used as justification by local media to reduce the time allotted to sports or completely eliminate it. But again, these are gatekeeping-focused approaches that often ignore what is really happening in local markets. Do sports audiences in Minnesota really want their local media to reduce hockey content? Would sports consumers in Indiana think that reducing the coverage of basketball is a good idea?

In addition, journalists along with local media managers need to incorporate a more open line of communication with the public. Blogs could offer an avenue in which sports journalists and sports media consumers could have an open dialogue that could provide content for journalists. According to Skoler (2005), the public approaches stories with a different insight and knowledge that could enhance a journalist’s story. “Used well, online tools can open the newsroom to more input, more diverse voices, and more questioning of our [media] editorial instincts” (Skoler, 2005, 22).

Furthermore, local media managers need to do a better job of communicating their strategies and expectations. Increased communication would give rank-and-file journalists a greater stake in the implementation strategy. Without feedback, the respondents often assumed that the implementation is unsuccessful or had suspicious attitudes about management motives. One respondent wrote, “Management at our newspaper is largely concerned with the number of hits to the site more than what is [on the] blog. Blogs could be a useful resource for readers, but the people in charge ... do a very poor job.” The results indicated the importance of positive management feedback, especially for implementing a new media technology.

Managers should be aware of the role of age and experience in implementing new technology strategies. The respondents to this study were mostly older, more experienced respondents who were highly resistant to change. If resistance is related to age and experience, implementing new technologies such as blogging will become easier as the laggard group retires from the scene.

It should not be inferred that current resistance to sports blogging means that the local mass media are headed on the road to oblivion. However, if it is symptomatic of a larger trend of resistance, delay and mismanagement, as this study seems to suggest, the position of local mass media in the community of sport will continue to be marginalized.

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BOOK REVIEWS

CENTER FIELD SHOT: A HISTORY OF BASEBALL ON TELEVISION. JAMES R. WALKER AND ROBERT V. BELLAMY, JR., LINCOLN, NE: UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA PRESS, 2008. 379 PP. \$24.95 PBK.

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The relationship between sport and the mass media has been described as a “very symbiotic” one (McChesney, 1989). As McChesney has explained, “Media attention fans the flames of interest in sport and increased interest in sport warrants further media attention” (p. 49). However, all sports have not received even-handed treatment in the proliferation of media technologies. For instance, television’s penetration into American homes in the 1950s and 1960s played a substantial role in precipitating the ascension of football to the top of the U.S. sports hierarchy while all but decimating the state of boxing (Rader, 1984). What of television’s impact on the national pastime, though?

James R. Walker and Robert V. Bellamy Jr.’s *Center Field Shot: A History of Baseball on Television* (2008) examines the relationship between the two, “emphasizing how a pre-television entity like baseball deals with the most powerful of all media” (p. xiii). The association between baseball and television has been touched on by previous researchers in broad examinations of sport and media (McChesney, 1989; Quirk & Fort, 1999; Rader, 1984), general histories of the sport (Rader, 2002), and in more specific accounts of the announcer (Smith, 1992). *Center Field Shot* represents the first book-length history specifically focused on the interplay between Major League Baseball (MLB) and the medium. The authors posit that while television has presented more challenges for baseball than for the other major U.S. sports, the relationship has, nonetheless, been one of mutual benefit.

Walker and Bellamy examine the association between baseball and television by partitioning the text into five thematic sections. Parts 1 & 2, “The Local Game” and “The National Game” delineate key historical developments between the sport and the medium, with particular emphasis on business arrangements. These early sections emphasize the important separation between experimental televising of baseball between 1931 and 1946, the game as a product of local broadcasts until 1952, and the era of national network television (and later cable and satellite) that followed. These eras would impact the structure and economics of the relationship for years to come. In Part 3, “Television and Baseball’s Dysfunctional Marriage,” Walker and Bellamy dig into contentious issues including the impact of television on the minor leagues, the role of Congress and the courts, and the synergistic corporate ties between teams and the media. It is in this section that the authors take note of historical, social, and economic factors many critics have overlooked in decrying the medium’s impact on the game. Part 4, “How the Game Was Covered,” takes a look at the history of the production process for televising baseball games. Finally, the epilogue, “Baseball in the Advanced Media Age,” looks ahead to the future of the mediated game in light of recent developments like the 30-team joint-venture announced in 2005, Major League Baseball Advanced Media.

Center Field Shot has two areas of substantial value: the histories of 1) baseball's dealings with media organizations, and 2) production techniques for televised baseball. Though a reader may find the authors' narrative on broadcast rights acquisitions somewhat less compelling than prior histories of the sports/media complex (Dunnivant, 2004; Rader, 1984; Smith, 2001), Walker and Bellamy's history of deals between MLB, teams, and media organizations provides both a thorough record of the "game behind the game" and a deep understanding of the economic and historical dynamics unique to baseball. Baseball's tug-of-war between local and national broadcast interests (relative to the NBA and NFL) presents a level of complexity for conceptualizing the sport's economic structure. Walker and Bellamy capture this complexity while providing a constructive framework for the historical development of televised baseball's dynamics.

The book's final section, "How the Game Was Covered" examines the history of the televised game with emphases on the announcer, director, and the production process. Bellamy and Walker's introduction of the "MAT" theory for explaining the legendary status of some announcers (Media used, Announcers' talents, and quality and location of Teams covered) could serve as an area for further conceptualization, elaboration, and critique; however, the final chapter's look behind the camera at the history of the director's role and the production process provides some of the most rich and insightful content of the book. For instance, the title *Center Field Shot* is a reference to the signature camera angle in baseball that captures second base, the pitcher, catcher, batter and umpire. It was also a production development necessitated by the unique challenges of televising a game that does not adhere to either the horizontal or confined action of other major televised sports. Students and instructors of sports broadcasting would find this and much of the other chapters helpful in fleshing out the evolution of their practices in a framework that acknowledges the larger structural pressures of the industry.

In a chapter titled "Television and the 'Death' of the Golden Age Minors," Walker and Bellamy counter one of the conventional critiques from the "television was bad for baseball" (p. 205) school – that over-saturation of MLB games during the 1950s was detrimental to the number of teams and attendance in baseball's minor leagues. Their revision is convincing: conceding a degree of impact from television, the authors identify a number of social, historical, and economic influences (particularly the role of radio) that may have had more impact on the deterioration of the minors than television alone. As the authors point out, "the teams that declined most rapidly in the 1950s were those in small markets that had little television penetration and almost no televised baseball" (p. 218).

While Walker and Bellamy describe the relationship as "dysfunctional," the authors state that they "do not believe that television has harmed baseball" (p. xv). Countering critical perspectives on television's impact with examples like the minor league case above and their assessment of the Dodger and Giant moves to the West Coast, *Center Field Shot* provides strong support for the "mutually beneficial" claim; however, much of the evidence presented for television's benefit to the game is based on the assumption that increased revenue from broadcast rights fees is a blessing for a sport. In the era of advanced capitalism, a major professional league's sustainability is based on its capacity to acquire substantial rights fees, yet increases in television revenue have oft-presented issues of integrity for baseball. While the authors do consider concerns about

labor battles and baseball's tenuous anti-trust exemption, an assessment of television in light of troubling issues of integrity like hypercommercialism and performance-enhancing drugs would have been intriguing – particularly in the wake of the Balco scandal. These noticeable omissions point to the element of *Center Field Shot* that seems underdeveloped – television's impact (or lack of impact) not only on the economics, but on the integrity of the game.

In terms of the book's readability, *Center Field Shot* strikes an appropriate chord between accessibility and inquiry; however, it struggles at times to maintain structural continuity between chapters and a smooth flow within the text. This is perhaps less a fault of the writing and more so the integration of five chapters that appeared as previous versions in the academic journal *Nine: A Journal of Baseball History and Culture*. Although these chapters provide historical depth and useful frameworks for understanding the baseball and television relationship, their introduction is at times choppy and unnatural.

Despite its shortcomings, *Center Field Shot* remains a quality resource on the history of the business and production of televised baseball while presenting an insightful challenge to conventional thinking on the relationship between the national pastime and the 20th century's most powerful medium.

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WELCOME TO THE TERRORDOME: THE PAIN, POLITICS, AND PROMISES OF SPORTS. DAVID ZIRIN. CHICAGO: HAYMARKET BOOKS, 2007. 258 PP. \$16.00 PBK.

REVIEWED BY KAREN HARTMAN, ASHLAND UNIVERSITY

Sports columnist David Zirin's latest book, *Welcome to the Terrordome: The Pain, Politics, and Promise of Sports*, offers a critical view of how sport in America presents serious racial, social, and cultural issues that are widely ignored in mainstream media perceptions of sport. In this book, Zirin steps beyond his sports journalism background to offer a deeper explication of the problems with sport and a possible answer to using sport as a site of resistance. The book's significance stems from Zirin's well-researched historical knowledge that he parlays into a broader understanding of the communicative nature of sport – how the messages of sport create much different

perceptions than the reality of an industry built on power, greed, and corruption. Ultimately, Zirin's writing offers a nice bridge between the easily accessible writing of the sports media and the critique of sport usually found in academic circles, resulting in an appropriately balanced critical exposition.

Zirin exposes professional sports as a rhetorical enterprise that portrays itself as an area of opportunity and equality that obfuscates its systemic structures of power, racism, and class division. He meets this objective through writing that illuminates a wide variety of issues: from the manner in which Major League Baseball exploits young players in the Dominican Republic, the racist underpinnings of the controversy surrounding Barry Bonds and steroids, and the exercises of power which exploit the Olympics. Particularly well developed is his chapter, "Barry Bonds Gonna Git Your Momma: When Steroids Attack," which argues that steroid use is a function of class dynamics. Zirin suggests that the media largely ignore how team owners and the sports industry demand that their workers increasingly produce results that create better profit margins. Zirin's approach in this chapter offers a more nuanced view of the sports industry and media rather than more popular explanations that simply portray athletes who use steroids as cheaters. Overall, the book is a polemic waged against the professional sports industry, using case studies to call attention to larger social issues.

A refreshing aspect of *Terrordome*, which makes it a strong candidate for undergraduate courses in sport communication, is that Zirin calls attention to voices of resistance within the realm of professional sports. Most sports fans might not be aware of counter-statements offered by such figures as Etan Thomas, the Washington Wizards center who spoke out against the death penalty and the government's response to Hurricane Katrina, and C. Vivian Stringer, the head women's basketball coach at Rutgers who called out the racist, misogynistic remarks of radio talk-show host Don Imus. According to Zirin, "[I]f we wish to reclaim sports, we must look at history, learn from the role sports play in our world, and listen to the athletic rebels of today who are so often ignored in the media" (p. 22). His writing illuminates these figures and provides a way to counter the problems with contemporary sports that he exposes.

Although Zirin's writing offers insight into problems that need much more attention in popular sport communication, there are a few areas of the book that could be improved. For example, Zirin moves between topics broadly but with little direction. For example, in the chapter, "Relearning Roberto Clemente," Zirin starts with an analysis of Clemente's legacy, but quickly moves on to discuss Martin Luther King, Jr., Curt Flood, and Jackie Robinson. Context is important, but Zirin ultimately moves the reader through so many historical issues that he seems to lose focus on the main purpose of the chapter. This loose form is repeated in the chapter, "Soccer: The Perilous Practice of Political Projection." Zirin opens by discussing soccer's place in mainstream America; proceeds to the role of Title IX and women's rights; divulges a personal narrative of his time in Chile and how that led to a love of the game; describes the dictatorship of Pinochet; and finally ends with an analysis of Diego Maradona and Ronaldo. Instead of coming across as a layered analysis, Zirin's writing often comes across as a pastiche of personal opinion and research.

A second area that needs more development is that at times the writing does not go far enough. There are some real opportunities to delve into notions of race, culture,

xenophobia, and anti-immigration in Congress, but Zirin only scrapes the surface. Instead of using individuals such as Roberto Clemente and Barry Bonds as vehicles to probe these concepts, he tends to revert back to historical explications instead of critical insight. Finally, it is interesting that Zirin provides no source citation at any point in the book. Apart from the fact that I am simply curious as to where some of the quotes and research came from, the lack of citations (and bibliography) questions the validity of some of his claims.

Ultimately, Zirin offers an important book that addresses issues that need more attention. His critical lens offers a view of sport often unknown to undergraduate students. I recommend the book for use in a sport communication or sport culture undergraduate class as Zirin provides easy, accessible writing about a wide variety of issues that can act as a springboard for discussion. The writing reflects the feelings of many in the sporting public, but the issues are generally glossed over or ignored in the mainstream media. Toward the end of the book, Zirin comments on the state of sport in America and suggests the feelings of many who are often unheard:

“The fact is that so many of us are sick and tired of being sick and tired. We are sick of the casual racism. We are tired of the smirking, drive-by sexism. We are done with people who make their living by selling the idea that some people are less human than others. We are fed up with the politics of division and hate. We are the majority in this country, but are often entirely without voice” (p. 248).

Zirin’s book is a successful attempt to provide that voice.

SPORTS MARKETING AND THE PSYCHOLOGY OF MARKETING COMMUNICATION. LYNN R. KAHLE AND CHRIS RILEY (EDS.). MAHWAH, NJ: LAWRENCE ERLBAUM ASSOCIATES, 2005. 440 PP. \$55.00 PBK.

REVIEWED BY AMY GRABAN CRAWFORD, YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

In the preface to their book *Sports Marketing and the Psychology of Marketing Communication*, editors Lynn R. Kahle and Chris Riley note that sports marketing research is a rapidly growing part of marketing communication. The editors posit that the environment of sports allows marketers to communicate to audiences in ways that make sports marketing and communication unique. This text is an insightful examination of not only the characteristics of how sports marketing are unique, but why it is fertile ground to examine the intersection of marketing, communication, and audience research. Editor Kahle’s areas of study include applied social psychology and sports marketing. He has also written or edited two additional texts on marketing and psychology. Chris Riley is an expert in the research and development of brands and works in the field of media, marketing, and graphic design. The exploration of the academic and private sectors allows for a nice balance of theory and application.

The text contains 19 chapters under five overall themes that look at categories of sports marketing and communication including consumer behavior, sports celebrity endorsements, the consequences of sponsorship, marketing strategy, and social issues and sports marketing. The authors of each chapter are working from several academic disciplines including communication, business, marketing, kinesiology, sports marketing, and public administration. The authors employ a quantitative methodology, but the text does provide a broad interdisciplinary look at sports marketing.

Chapter 1 is a replication of a seminal study in sports and consumption communities and the impact that media has on sports participation. The original study by Shoham and Kahle (1996) identified a relationship between a number of media consumption activities and participation in sports or attendance at sporting events. The new study confirmed Shoham and Kahle's findings, but did not add much to the original study. One new variable in this study examined the correlation between media use and participation in an exercise class or club membership. The new study identified an interesting negative correlation, indicating that media use may encourage participation in some sports, like hunting, fishing, or team sports but inhibit individual fitness activities.

Chapter 2 provides a textual analysis of fan behavior in the context of everyday life. This phenomenological investigation seeks to learn the attitudes, perceptions, and behaviors of self-described team fanatics. The authors instructed 30 fans of University of Kentucky basketball to keep a journal during the 1998 NCAA Tournament, answering a particular question each day. Of particular interest are the findings that indicate the behaviors fans performed in an effort to help the team and the feelings of esteem and satisfaction derived from their team's wins. Similarly, chapter 3 examines the phenomenon of basking-in-reflected-glory and looks at how companies and sports teams use this phenomenon to promote their product or team.

Continuing the examination of consumer behavior, chapter 4 examines the psychology behind participation in risky sports, such as sky diving. In this descriptive and interpretive study the authors review existing models of risk-taking from the psychological research and add to this the notion of hedonistic consumption or the emotional reaction felt during use of a product or service. This chapter is an interesting synthesis of current literature, but is rather narrowly focused toward psychological theory and provides few implications for the study of communication or media.

The second section of this text looks at the use of sports celebrities for product endorsement. Chapter 5 provides a historic overview, through a content analysis, of the risks and benefits of using a celebrity as a spokesperson. The content analysis also reveals trends of which athletes were chosen as spokespersons for different eras and how they were portrayed in print ads. Chapter 6 is an analysis of the role that multiple endorsements has on an athlete's efficacy as a spokesperson. Through a 2 x 2 x 2 x 4 mixed factorial analysis, the authors test their hypotheses that multiple endorsements will lead to clutter and ultimately confusion for the consumer. This thorough analysis also includes appendices with the instruments used for analysis. Chapter 7 examines four case studies to examine how the perceptions of athlete's behaviors impact their effectiveness as advocates for social causes.

Section three examines the economic and social consequences of sports sponsorship for companies and businesses. This section is particularly focused on the real-world implications of consumer and communication theory on the marketplace. Chapter 8 details the psychological mechanisms which can influence how sponsorship affects a brand. According to the authors, sponsorship works on many levels, from simply adding to the mere awareness of a brand to the more complex transference of the viewer's affection for the team to the product. Chapter 9 is an overview of the deals that Nike and Reebok have initiated with college sports programs. This case study analysis looks at reactions to the deal from players, coaches, and students at each university. Chapter 10 enquires into how consumers feel about corporate sponsorships of sports. Through a telephone survey, the authors were able to reveal several trends in this straight-forward, but enlightening quantitative study. Chapter 11 is a simple correlational analysis of the relationship between sports sponsorship and stock prices. This is an intriguing question, and the authors are able to examine the impact of both the initial introduction of a new celebrity spokesperson and the long-term payoff of such an advertising relationship. The final chapter of this section looks at how identification with a sports team becomes an extension of the fan's own perception of self and how this goodwill can rub off on products and companies associated with the team or celebrity.

Section 4 of the book examines the strategy of using athletes in advertising and brand development by focusing on the issues facing sports marketers. Two issues covered include audience segmentation, in chapters 13 and 14, and the effectiveness of ambush marketing in chapter 15.

The final section of the book focuses on the social impact of sports marketing. Chapter 16 addresses, through case study analysis, how violence and aggression are used as attention-getting devices in advertising campaigns centered around sports figures. Chapter 17 looks at, largely from a Canadian perspective, how cigarette companies used sports sponsorship to maintain their market exposure after cigarette ads were banned from television. Chapter 18 focuses on how sports figures have been used as a part of social marketing campaigns and looks socio-psychological mechanisms. Chapter 19 examines the role that peer pressure plays on a teenagers desire to adopt new products which are endorsed by athletes. The authors, using a survey methodology also asked subjects which is a greater factor when purchasing athletic shoes – cost or endorsement – and does the advantage of a celebrity endorsement compensate for the added cost.

Overall this very broad examination of sports marketing and communication covers the breadth of approaches and theories that can be applied to the study of sports marketing. A communication researcher may find this text to be a great resource. The studies provide a largely quantitative examination of the questions posed, but incorporate literature from a number of disciplines, providing opportunities to view research questions from new angles. A teacher looking for a classroom text for a sports marketing or communication seminar course may find that this breadth may work against this book. In a classroom, this text may be difficult to use as it does call for a background in theory from marketing, business and psychology literature. This may provide an excellent opportunity for synthesis, but may complicate the cohesiveness of the overall course objectives. *Sports Marketing and the Psychology of Marketing Communication* provides

a multi-faceted way to examine, or re-examine, the role that communication plays in the sports marketing.

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HUSKERVILLE: A STORY OF NEBRASKA FOOTBALL, FANS, AND THE POWER OF PLACE. ROGER C. ADEN. JEFFERSON, NC: MCFARLAND, 2008. 257 PP. \$29.95 PBK.

REVIEWED BY BRIAN C. PATTIE, KENT STATE UNIVERSITY AND LAWRENCE W. HUGENBERG, KENT STATE UNIVERSITY

After reading *Huskerville: A Story of Nebraska Football, Fans, and the Power of Place*, it becomes much clearer just what it means to be a Nebraskan. Roger C. Aden, (Ph.D., University of Nebraska-Lincoln), explains the link between being a Nebraskan and how their identity is shaped by The University of Nebraska Cornhusker football team. Aden, who grew up in Scottsbluff, NE, writes, “Nebraska football is how we experience, shape, and share our understanding of being a Nebraskan” (p. 10). Throughout *Huskerville*, Aden describes what distinguishes Nebraska football fans from other sports fans. Aden makes no claims about giving an unbiased perspective throughout his book. Rather, he states, “what you’ll read is a Nebraskan explaining just why...there is no place like Nebraska” (p.16).

In the first chapter, “Rooting: Sugar Beets, Family, and Fans,” he discusses how cultural and familial roots are important in *Huskerville*. Aden explains how the sugar beat industry is an important part of what it means to him to be a Nebraskan. He describes in detail how Nebraska fans cheer. Aden writes that when Nebraska fans cheer, they are “rooting” themselves in a place. He explains that the landscape of Nebraska encourages such “rooting,” due to its big spaces, wind, harsh climate, and small populations. Aden also explores what Nebraska Cornhusker fandom means in this chapter and how the energy, force, and electricity of Husker fans are so powerful that they radiate literally around the world. He explains how, in Nebraska, almost every business throughout the state, a Nebraska Cornhusker poster, game schedule, or calendar is prominently displayed. Another example of such fandom is the fact that if a Husker fan cannot make it to Memorial Stadium to for the game, they can listen to the broadcast on one of 32 various Nebraska radio stations that produce live broadcasts the games.

Aden’s explanation of Cornhusker fandom outside the state of Nebraska is interesting. With chapter titles including: “Anchored in Nebraska,” “The Spirit of *Huskerville*: ‘There is No Place like Nebraska’,” “Remaining Down-to-Earth,” and “It’s a Small Husker World,” he paints a clear picture of the intertwined relationship among the State of Nebraska and University of Nebraska football. He suggests they are devout followers of the team, and that “rooting” for their team helps them stay “rooted” in

Nebraska. In other words, University of Nebraska football represents the entire state's rooting interests. Aden demonstrates this when he points out that in a 2004 *Sports Illustrated* poll, Nebraska fans declared that their state's passion for sports was an 89.1 on a 100 point scale—more than any other state. Aden illustrates Husker fans' passion by reporting that approximately 60,000 fans attend the annual scrimmage that marks the end of the spring practice season. In explaining the relationship among Nebraskans and the Cornhuskers, Aden noted:

When people with Nebraska connections and roots took care of the football program, when the way things were done seemed consistent with the way we did things ourselves, and when the coaching staff went out of its way to treat the team as belonging to us, we could honestly and genuinely believe that the team was ours. (p. 62)

In the next chapter, "Homesteading: 'They Know How to Plow'," Aden wrote that when responding to his questionnaires, Nebraskans described themselves as hard-working, friendly, loyal, honest, and having good values. He then makes the point that these characteristics also describe the Husker football team. Perhaps Nebraska fans see similar characteristics in themselves and in the Husker football team. Aden reveals throughout the book that he believes both the football team and its fans share similar characteristics.

Aden also discusses how working hard is a "bedrock of principal" in Nebraska (p. 77). He also suggests that this work ethic is evident in the Husker football team by presenting many examples in the book. One example he uses is that six walk-on athletes (athletes not receiving a football scholarship) have earned All-America honors. Another example is that each year between 1990 and 2004 the football team averaged four starters who walked-on to the team. Aden argued that becoming successful through dedication and hard work can be found not only on the plains of Nebraska but also between the lines at the University of Nebraska football field.

Along with being a hard-working culture, Aden points out that Nebraskans are friendly. Nebraskans say "hello" to each other when they meet on the street. A strong sense of community is underscored throughout the book. Another component of this friendliness is the down-to-earth atmosphere that is promoted by Nebraskans. Aden states, "Huskervillers use words such as straightforward, genuine, well-rounded, honest, trustworthy, fundamental, and plain in association with down-to-earth" (p. 118). He adds that:

being down to earth in Huskerville means being connected to the land in which you grew up, to a history in which homes were built from the land, and to families who make (and continue to make) lives from the land. (p. 119)

In the final section of the book, "Cornhusking," Aden illustrates the bond that Nebraskans share with one another. He explains how at the end of each fall harvest, farmers who grew corn invite their neighbors over for what amounts to something of a communal work party. At these community parties, neighbors share in food, drink, song, dance, and games. In his view, this illustrates the collectiveness of the Husker spirit, and that sense of community takes precedence in *Huskerville*. Throughout the final section of

the book, Aden reveals the voices of Nebraska football fans helping the reader create a mental picture of the meaning of the “Spirit of Huskerville.” Several quotes illustrate this. One fan noted, “Husker pride, if displayed properly, is also infectious to those around us” (p. 142). Another said, “I learned to ‘worship’ the Huskers when I was 3 years old...I guess it’s kind of like a religion. When you grow up in it, it just becomes a part of you” (p. 145).

The Husker fan narratives included in the Appendix, “Stories from Huskerville,” reiterate the importance of Nebraska football to Nebraskans. For example, one fan reported on his experience being a Nebraska fan among non-Nebraska fans, stating “I remember when my friends used to give me a hard time about being a Husker fan. I would just tell them, ‘You just don’t understand, I have Big Red blood flowing through my veins’” (p. 188). After reading the narratives in the appendix materials, one not only understands the passion of Nebraska football fans—one feels it.

In *Huskerville*, Aden provides insight on the intimate connection between Nebraskans and their football team at the University of Nebraska. After completing the book, readers have a better understanding of Cornhusker football and its relationship to the citizens of the great state of Nebraska. All highly identified and motivated college football fans, regardless of the college or university, will relate well to Aden’s descriptions of fandom across Nebraska and the dedication of the football team’s fans. Finally, after reading *Huskerville*, non-native Nebraskans understand better the saying: “There is no place like Nebraska”.

OLYMPIC MEDIA: INSIDE THE BIGGEST SHOW ON TELEVISION. ANDREW C BILLINGS. NEW YORK: ROUTLEDGE. 184 PP. \$42.95 PBK.

REVIEWED BY ADAM C. EARNHEARDT, YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

I had the pleasure of reading *Olympic Media: Inside the Biggest Show on Television* by Andrew Billings two months before the 2008 Summer Olympic Games in Beijing. Being a sports enthusiast and Olympics junkie, the only fix for my Beijing addiction prior to this book was the occasional Olympic Torch tidbit on the evening news or a visit to the official website of the IOC. Thankfully, *Olympic Media* came along in time to sufficiently whet my appetite for the largest sports spectacle in the world.

What Billings has accomplished in his examination of the Olympics telecast is remarkable. He offers in-depth observations and analyses of the telecast by focusing on production processes, organizational influences, and viewer perceptions of this cultural megaevent. In terms of cultural significance, the only other sporting events that come close to the importance of the Olympics are World Cup soccer and Wimbledon. It is rare to find a study that explores media effects from inception (i.e., NBC’s eight-year pre-production process) to reception (i.e., viewer reactions to and perceptions of the Games). In just under 200 pages, Billings conducts interviews with gatekeepers and storytellers at

NBC Sports, performs content analyses of primetime coverage from the last 10 years of Olympic telecasts, and analyzes the cultivating effects of the Olympics telecast using survey data from television viewers.

Chapter 1 opens with a historical review of the Olympic telecast. From the Berlin Summer Games in 1936 to the Torino Winter Games in 2006, he provides a review of key moments in Olympic telecast history. He concludes the chapter with strong rationale for his methods and preview of the remaining chapters.

Chapters 2 and 3, quite possibly the most interesting chapters in the book, offer interviews conducted with NBC's producers and reporters juxtaposed with relevant facets of the television production and narrative process. Specifically, in chapter 2, Billings offers analyses and excerpts of his interviews with three producers and one director, most notably Dick Ebersol, executive producer of the Olympic telecast. Many questions concerning the evolution of the Olympic telecast are answered by Ebersol in this chapter, including decisions that directly impacted viewership (i.e., the elimination of boxing from the primetime telecast). In chapter 3, he presents analyses and excerpts of interviews with seven NCA sportscasters including Bob Costas, primetime anchor, and Jim Lampley, the weekend/late-night anchor. Once again, Billings effectively synthesizes questions concerning the storytelling process with relevant, meaningful answers from a variety of sportscasters, many of which are multi-medal-winning Olympians.

Chapters 4 through 6 are content analyses of nationality, gender, and ethnicity using ten years of data from the most recent Olympic telecasts. Each chapter tackles these important issues by examining the production influences, or the time allotted to athletes based on the nation they represented, gender of the athlete, and ethnic background of the athlete. His study of nationalism and the Olympic telecast (chapter 4) is a dissection of the "unabashedly American" (p. 91) coverage and the production value in telling the "American" story. He provides historical overviews of women in sports (chapter 5) and media coverage of female athletes including clock-time, athlete mentions, and sportscaster gendered descriptions. To conclude his content analyses, Billings examines depictions of ethnicity (chapter 6) through analyses of sportscaster descriptions and athlete mentions. In part, he found that the depictions of athletes can fluctuate depending on the nationality, gender, and ethnicity of the athlete in question.

In chapter 7, Billings opens his examination of the "perceptions" of television viewers by asking "What do American Olympic viewers *think* happened in Torino?" He prefaces this perception exploration by noting the constant media drumbeat (mostly on NBC's drums) of the stories of American male athletes and how this coverage may skew audience perceptions of winners, losers and overall medal counts. One statistic that stands out was that respondents believed the U.S. won about 30 percent of the medal which was almost triple the amount the U.S. really won.

Finally, chapter 8 synthesizes the in-depth interviews with the producers and reporters, content analyses, and viewer response to arrive at an explanation for why the Olympics are "the biggest show on television." It is clear from the interview transcripts, and transcript analyses, that the producers and reporters at NBC know the impact of their choices on the audience. What this book sheds light on are the choices at NBC and the effects of those choices on the Olympic telecast audience.

The most prevalent strengths to this book are the interviews with the leading “storytellers” at NBC. Couple that with Billings’ mastery of mixed-methodologies and you have a winning book for your sports media collection. If there is a weakness to the book it is in his brief analyses of interview data. However, it is hard to be critical of brevity. His analyses of the NBC producer and reporter interview transcripts were minimal, and it left me wondering what else the gatekeepers were saying, or not saying. Although the interviews certainly opened my eyes to the production process, at times it seemed Billings was providing an abridged version of a much longer interview transcript – probably for the sake of the read.

Nonetheless, his analyses are effective and efficient. The desire to read more about his interviews with the NBC producers and reporters is the direct result of Billings’ succinct writing style. He gives the basic gist of the interview as well as direct quotes, as they pertain to that section of the chapter, and then he moves on. Although he has presented findings from those interviews in the conference panel setting, this is probably the only venue outside of a classroom or lecture series in which Billings can bring it all together – from sender (NBC) to receiver (TV audience) – from production to outcomes and effects.

Olympic Media is an important book for anyone interested the Olympic or large-scale event production process. The interviews provide information on the production of a mega sporting event. The book, in general, serves as a useful guide for graduate students interested in learning about the successful applications of quantitative and qualitative methodologies. Billings offers a great example of three traditional methodologies: applied interview data analyses, content analyses, and survey data analyses. In fact, this book would serve as an excellent “how-to” reference text for any undergraduate or graduate research methods course. *Olympic Media* is one book to recommend for library purchase and an important study to keep on your media effects bookshelf.