

LOOKING AT THE YANKS: A WORLD CULTURE PERSPECTIVE OF HOW THE
UNITED STATES NATIONAL MEN'S SOCCER TEAM IS COVERED BY
NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL ONLINE NEWSPAPERS DURING THE 2010
WORLD CUP

by

CHAPLEIGH CATHLINE DENMAN

(Under the Direction of Leara Rhodes)

ABSTRACT

Soccer, known to the rest of the world as football, does not hold the same place in the hearts and minds of Americans as the rest of the world. The traditional lack of American fan enthusiasm and perceived inferior talent of American players means the United States traditionally lacks international credibility in the sport. With technology advancements resulting in greater media capabilities and faster exchange of information, media coverage and consumer access to sport content has never been greater. World culture theory provides a lens through which to examine a country's place in the greater soccer sporting world. In this study, a textual analysis using the online editions of four English-language newspapers is conducted to examine content written about the U.S. national men's soccer team during the 2010 FIFA World Cup to learn what that content indicates about the team and its place within the international soccer world.

INDEX WORDS: world culture theory, globalization, soccer, World Cup, sport, United States, textual analysis, online newspapers

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CHAPLEIGH CATHLINE DENMAN

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CHAPLEIGH CATHLINE DENMAN

Major Professor: Leara Rhodes

Committee: Janice Hume
Patricia Thomas

Electronic Version Approved:

Maureen Grasso
Dean of the Graduate School
The University of Georgia
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DEDICATION

First and foremost, I dedicate this thesis to The Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The opportunity to live, grow, and learn began and could not be to this day without their presence and goodness. I pray that God's love and my faith in God will always guide me through whatever triumphs and challenges life brings.

Second, I dedicate this thesis to my parents. I am blessed with parents who love, encourage, and set a positive example as role models. Their emphasis on the importance of education is priceless. I could not be who I am or where I am without them.

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I also want to thank my family members and friends who make my life special. While there is not room to mention them all by name, their encouragement, and positive impact have contributed to this accomplishment and I want to honor that here.

PREFACE

My goal in writing this thesis is twofold: to contribute to the vast body of knowledge in some small way and to spark questions and discussions about the significance of sport in human culture. Sport is much more than games, scores, and statistics. Sport contributes to the composition and understanding of culture, be that at a local level such as a swim meet in a local swimming league or at a global level such as the FIFA World Cup. I hope that readers will see that sport and the study of sport are valuable in the pursuit of learning and the understanding of human culture and socialization.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The argument is easy to make that there is a lack of congruence between the United States and the rest of the world when it comes to the sport of soccer, or football as it is known elsewhere. Soccer's popularity, both to be played and to be watched, throughout the international community gives the sport a geographical span such that it could be considered to be the ultimate global game. The passion that soccer lovers have for their sport is well-documented. Like baseball, soccer has acquired a nickname deriving from the appreciation for the intricacies and playing styles of the game and the ideals that the sport is seen to represent; "the beautiful game."

To Americans, the term 'football' refers to American football, arguably the most popular American sport. To the rest of the world, American football is, in practice, an inferior, distant younger cousin to rugby and in theory, another example of Americans' fascination with being different. American children may play soccer for fun during recess, on school varsity teams and neighborhood club leagues, and even a precious few will play in college. Beyond that, however, the American interest in soccer seemingly comes to an end.

In the United States, soccer is a sport played by few and watched by fewer compared to baseball and American football. In the home of the brave, baseball is the "American Pastime," the game of Babe Ruth, Ty Cobb, Jackie Robinson, Ted Williams and Hank Aaron. However, even baseball cannot compete in television ratings with

American football, a game of toughness, “pigskin,” and gridiron glory. American football’s executive body, the National Football League (NFL), is the most profitable sporting league in the United States. According to Cork Gaines of *Business Insider*, for American football, “the title of ‘most popular sport’ in the U.S. is well-earned. The NFL’s \$9 billion in revenue is nearly 30 percent more than Major League Baseball, the second biggest sport in the states.” The Super Bowl, the national championship game for American professional football, consistently earns the highest television ratings in the United States, with Super Bowl XLV in 2011 being the most watched telecast in American history (“Super Bowl XLV Most Viewed Telecast in U.S. Broadcast History”).

As a distant cousin to baseball and American football, soccer in the United States has seen an increase in television coverage based on more channels to view sports and the growth in popularity of both the sporting industry and of televised sport. Though Major League Soccer (MLS) and Women’s Professional Soccer (WPS) struggle for attendance and viewership, European soccer is more accessible than ever on American television. What do these contradictions about soccer mean about how soccer is conceptualized in the American psyche?

Americans are still famously patriotic and hold expectations of superior performance in all sport, especially against other countries. When the Winter and Summer Olympics and the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) World Cup roll around, Americans still want their athletes to be the best, even if, realistically, they are not the best.

So, why does the sport of soccer exist differently in the United States versus the rest of the world? The 2010 FIFA World Cup is an opportunity to ask how American

soccer, in the form of the U.S. Soccer team representing the United States in the World Cup, is framed in American and global media.

To answer this question, English-language newspapers were used. The newspapers represent four global geographic regions participating in the World Cup: *The New York Times* (United States), *The Guardian* (U.K.), *Buenos Aires Herald* (South America), and *The Sunday Times* (South Africa).

The goal is to gather a collective picture of how the U.S. national team identity is conceptualized (framed) throughout the world. Future studies will be able to use this study as a baseline to measure how attitudes about American teams in international soccer and, perhaps U.S. credibility as a nation within the lens of soccer, evolve over time.

If soccer is the world's game, then understanding where American soccer fits into the global scheme is important and using media is a way of observing world opinion. Scholars have found that media affect audience through agenda setting and framing (Entman, 1993; McCombs, Llamas, Lopez-Escobar, & Rey, 1997).

Justification

Why the U.S. national soccer team?

Though soccer is deemed to be the world's game, it is certainly not the darling of American sport. It has been suggested that soccer is relegated to the status of "afterthought amongst sports fans" (Brown, 2005, p. 51). Markovits and Hellerman (2001) identify three reasons why soccer has not attained the prestige in the United States that it holds in other countries: 1) from a historic and socio-economic perspective, "soccer as both a recreational and spectator activity was 'crowded out' " early in

American history by baseball for the lower to middle classes and by American football for the middle and upper classes (p. 52); 2) from a cultural perspective, soccer has been both dismissed by American nativists and celebrated by immigrants who came to America as a non-American sport; and 3) from an organizational perspective, soccer in the United States did not have the proper organizational foundation required to support the growth of the sport relative to soccer (football) in other countries or to other sports in the United States (Markovits & Hellerman, 2001, p. 52-53). To another degree, it has been observed that Americans even hate soccer. Foer (2010) writes, “But the United States is perhaps the only place where a loud portion of the population actively disdains the game, even campaigns against it” (p. 240). Soccer’s relevance as sport in American culture has been called into question for these very reasons.

Also problematic for the United States’ soccer identity is that Americans who are fans of soccer are not fans of American soccer. Brown (2005) found that the Champions World Tour Series, which brought foreign teams to the United States, 1) did not improve interest (i.e. attendance) in American MLS soccer teams and 2) their findings suggested the presence of two types of fans: the Americans who are the most passionate fans of soccer who follow European soccer and the casual or disinterested fan who may have a fleeting interest in MLS teams or American pro teams in international events (Brown, 2005). It would appear that not only is the United States “a decidedly nonsoccer nation” but it is also a decidedly non-U.S. soccer nation (Cyphers, 2010, p.38).

Despite the past, there are signs that acceptance of U.S. professional soccer may be growing. The U.S. national team has flown under the global soccer radar but, with a good outing in the 2010 World Cup, may soon be discovered by Americans and

international soccer enthusiasts who follow the sport. Cyphers (2010) points out that the U.S. national team has “qualified for six straight World Cups, giving them a longer streak than perennial powers like France, Portugal, and the Netherlands” (p.38).

Fan expectations are evolving in a promising way. Further, Cyphers (2010) continues, the U.S. national team’s performance in the 2002 World Cup heightened expectations for the team in 2006, which proceeded to disappoint them. Despite early elimination in 2006, the expectations for the U.S. team are positive. Cyphers quotes former U.S. striker Brian McBride, “It’s healthy. It means U.S. soccer is good enough for people to expect better things” (p. 39). Cyphers suggests that “the U.S. team has matured enough that its fans are starting to realize that winning is relative” (p.38). Cyphers believes, “the sport’s steady, almost stealthy spread can’t be denied” (p. 39).

Why soccer?

Soccer is a valuable subject of study because of the cultural, sociological and socio-economic, and organizational insight it can offer in comparing and contrasting the United States with the rest of the world. These three lenses can also be used to examine the acceptance, participation, and viewership of soccer.

The cultural aspect of soccer, as discussed in the previous section, can provide insight into American values and opinions and how they are similar or different with those of other countries. Markovits and Hellerman (2001) point out that there is a relationship between what people participate in (or participated in as children) and what they follow as spectators (p. 12). Soccer is interesting, however, because even though participation in youth soccer is high, ratings of and attendance at American soccer matches are low (Brown, 2005). This does not mean that participation is irrelevant;

rather, that participation is but one of many factors that impact a sport's acceptance, role, and value (defined by attention from and spectatorship by fans) in a culture.

Socio-economic status is another factor affecting soccer, players, and the identity of the sport. Foer (2010) observes that American youth soccer [in conjunction with the sociological factor] reverses the socio-economic identity of soccer/football. He writes,

In every other part of the world, soccer's sociology varies little: it is the province of the working class....Here, aside from Latino immigrants, the professional classes follow the game most avidly and the working class couldn't give a toss about it. Surveys, done by the sporting goods manufacturers, consistently show that the children of middle class and affluent families play the game disproportionately. Half the nation's soccer participants come from households earning over \$50,000. (p. 238-239)

His words mirror other literature that explore this subject. Andrews (2000) observes, "soccer's most profound incursion into American existence can be discerned from its centrality for millions of suburban families" (p. 31). Zwick and Andrews (1999) explore the degree to which soccer is a reinforcer of already established suburban privilege.

Perhaps the United States is not as different from more soccer-friendly nations as meets the eye when it comes to soccer and socio-economic status. In England, football has upper crust roots. English football has roots in the prestige universities (Oxford) and public schools (non-government funded; private) schools such as Rugby, Eton, and Harrow-on-the-Hill and later, especially in the nineteenth century, evolved into the pride of the working class (Giulianotti, 1999; Szymanski & Zimbalist, 2006). Some of the British elite who attended these public schools often traveled across the world for political and/or business matters for the British Empire and brought the game with them. Interestingly, Kuper and Szymanski (2009) indicate that while the British elites certainly helped bring the game to colonial members of the empire, soccer caught on with greater

fervor in “the noncolonies: most of Europe, Latin America, and parts of Asia. Here, it probably benefited from not being seen as a colonial ruler’s game” (p. 159). The sport carried a sophisticated pastiche:

If you were a young man like Mandela who wanted to become a British gentleman, one of the things you did was play soccer. That’s why the game’s early adopters in the informal empire tended to be rich people who had contact with British gentlemen.... Soccer conquered the world so fast largely because the British gentleman was such an attractive ideal. (Kuper and Szymanski, p. 160)

That said, the British elites of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century embraced soccer for different reasons than the American suburban elite of the mid-to-late twentieth century: the former viewing soccer as a “man’s game” while the latter viewed soccer as a less physically-threatening sport alternative for children than American football, so safe even girls could play (Kuper and Szymanski).

All sports evolve with the culture and the times as values and social norms evolve. In England, soccer was introduced by “well educated reformers” to local social settings such as industrial towns to promote the “health, moral fortitude and spiritual well being of the urban work force” (Sugden, 1994, p.224). Sugden explains, “an unintended consequence of this was that the gentleman-amateur soccer player lost control of his own game as it became massively among the working class and, by 1885, openly professional” (p.224). The evolution of football in England from an association with class and prestige to a source of activity and relief from hard work for the working class is an example of how a sport’s cultural identity can change. Therefore, the present and future study of American soccer merits attention. With increased media coverage of European football and the U.S. national team in the World Cup and with the shifting

racial demographics of the United States, the continuing evolution of soccer is certainly relevant.

The study of soccer illustrates organization principles and concepts. As discussed earlier concerning the findings of Markovits and Hellerman (2001), organization of any sport affects its success. In their book *National Pastime: How Americans Play Baseball and the Rest of the World Plays Soccer*, Szymanski and Zimbalist (2006) explore soccer and baseball as leagues through a social, cultural, and organizational lens. Extending Foer's (2010) discussions about the United States, the world, soccer, and globalization, they write that soccer is organized in its own "American sports model rather than the established model of European soccer leagues" (p. 2). They discuss the differences between the closed, carefully controlled, expansion-inhibiting model of American sports compared with the open, hierarchal, more expansion-friendly European model. The organizational differences in European and American sport arguably reflect the time and political climates of the respective places as sport develops. European colonial empires embraced the game for its social value as a moniker for elite status, versus the more isolationist, profit-driven business approach to sport in the United States (Szymanski and Zimbalist; Kuper and Szymanski, 2009).

Szymanski and Zimbalist (2006) do not endorse one model over another so much as they explore the organizational differences. Though the American model works for traditional American sports such as football, baseball, and basketball; soccer struggles in the United States. That is not to say that other factors are irrelevant or that the American model will fail soccer; indeed, it would likely take an American sport business model to make soccer successful in the United States. It is unrealistic, given the traditional

business-like approach to organized sport in the United States, to envision organized soccer developing in the United States as it did in Europe: the European model of sport development is less economically viable (Szymanski and Zimbalist). Indeed there are suggestions that professional soccer leagues over time will evolve to adopt and incorporate the American sport business model to improve their financial standing (Giulianotti and Robertson, 2009). That said, other conditions must change if professional soccer is to succeed in the United States. Attitudes and media coverage are parts of that equation.

Soccer as a sport merits study particularly in relation to national and global identities and interests. As noted, Americans are traditionally ambivalent about soccer as a spectator sport. There is evidence that interest in soccer is growing, particularly in the marketing-friendly under-35 age group (Wolff, 2010). The American identity includes the sense that there is little interest in the American professional league MLS but there is a growing “vogue for overseas soccer” (Wolff); which while not reinforcing nationalism in the sense of supporting the American team, could be a sign of reinforcing a national identity of Americans priding themselves in being the best or surrounding themselves with the best through adoption and consumption. Soccer, even for the United States, provides a global platform for the negotiation of identities.

Why media coverage of sports can make a difference

Media coverage of all sport significantly affects how sport is socialized into culture, and soccer/football is no exception. Crolley & Hand (2002) explain how media and sport together impact and reflect the culture in which they exist:

It is our contention, though, that the media do far more than report the outcome of football matches and explain the technicalities of the game.

Football is mediated as an extension of social structures and values; it becomes 'indexical' in that it is appropriated to communicate information about society itself and is used to represent the perceived characteristics of a given group, region or nation's identity.² (p. 19)

The global reach of soccer means that how football is "mediated" in a country is a reflection of the way society in that country is ordered: social norms, the rules that define what is and is not acceptable in that society, and the values that define people think is important (Crolley and Hand).

Media role, impact, and form in relation to sport are important to consider. The media's role in relation to sport is summed up as symbiotic: two parties working together to bring two products (the sport product and the media channel/package that contains it) to consumers. There is a business aspect to this relationship, as Marchand (1996) acknowledges,

without a loyal and enthusiastic audience, the sponsors, the advertisers, and the backers would have no reason to support the financing of either one. We can therefore accept the hypothesis that press has contributed to a large extent to the development of sport and especially to its popular success, on the condition that we qualify this assertion with: *for better or for worse*. (p. 15)

Media benefit just as much from sport. De Cordova (1996) writes, "Another truth: sport sells...it is not new to anyone that the sports pages are what sell newspapers, and that sports programmes attract the biggest audience both on radio and television" (p. 65). The role of the media, its power and its limitations, in turn dictate much of its impact on sport.

Media content contributes to how consumers think. All sports draw positive and negative coverage in the media. Foer (2010) says sportswriters and other media members have played a role in influencing or reinforcing American negativity towards soccer:

This anti-soccer lobby believes, in the words of *USA Today*'s Tom Weir, "that hating soccer is more American than apple pie, driving a pickup, or

spending Saturday afternoons channel surfing with the remote control.” Weir exaggerates the pervasiveness of this sentiment. But the cadre of soccer haters has considerable sway. Their influence rests primarily with a legion of prestigious sportswriters and commentators, who use their column inches to fulminate against the game, especially on the occasions of the World Cup. (p. 240)

Conversely, the media are important to the evolving identity of soccer in the United States. Brown (2005) concludes in his study that television coverage is essential to the “emergence of soccer into the collective American psyche” (p. 58). To that point, ESPN has invested a significant amount of money (the most in its history) into promoting the 2010 FIFA World Cup in South Africa (Cyphers, 2010). The “water cooler” effect and increase in media coverage following the U.S. national team’s victory over Spain in the 2009 Confederation Cup semifinals has created more exposure, drawing more American eyes and ears to the potential of the U.S. national team in South Africa (Cyphers, 2010).

Media form influences how consumers experience media content. Words like “synergy” and “convergence” are winding their way throughout the field as the world travels deeper into the digital age. Boyle and Haynes (2003) write, “the speed at which journalists can send information to each other and to online media is radically altering our expectations of sport news and our capacity to consume it” (p. 96). The Internet provides new ways of consumer consumption and creation of content. Blogs, fan websites, and social networking have added a new dimension to the spread of information and distribution of news content. Older members of the media (press, radio, and television) are married with the Internet to provide a seemingly limitless and constant vault of digital information. Boyle and Haynes (2003) use BBC Online as an example of how the convergence of media types can blend well,

The website enables BBC to interpose between the scheduled breaking of radio and television news and the traditional reportage of sports journalism. It can provide the depth of coverage missing from the brief sports bulletins of broadcast news and also the speed and global reach missing from the production of the sports pages of daily newspapers. (p. 101)

Boyle and Haynes go on to discuss how not only are newspapers using websites as a digital extension of their product, the online versions are increasingly becoming their own unique, but still related, product (Boyle & Haynes).

For large media events such as the World Cup, these online newspapers are particularly useful. Rivenburgh (2003) identifies “media events” that are few in number but large in spectacle such that,

Media events are a unique media genre that results when television’s visual and narrative power taps into public fascination with a story that transcends daily experience...The narration of these events purposefully transcends the problems and imperfections that surround them. As a result, media events have the ability to integrate and unify people, even to dissolve social divisions—however momentarily. They create a ‘spirit’ or ‘mood’ that can allow new things to happen and new definitions to emerge⁵. (p. 31-32)

The Summer and Winter Olympics and the FIFA World Cup are among these events.

The 2010 World Cup in South Africa particularly fits Rivenburgh’s description considering the political strife in the history of South Africa. The narrative of remembering, progressing, and improving in national stability is ripe as the World Cup represents a South African step to modernity while continuing to negotiate political and cultural issues that remain. In addition to the narrative of the host country comes the narrative of the qualifying teams (Rivenburgh, 2003). These sections cover one narrative that defines the U.S. national team via rethinking and redefining expectations of success

while simultaneously striving to be better than what others (and selves) think they are.

English-language online newspapers around the globe will provide the window to that narrative in this thesis.

CHAPTER 2

FRAMING

In his book *Frame Analysis*, Erving Goffman (1974) defines frame analysis as “a slogan to refer to the examination in these terms of the organization of experience” (p. 11). Frame analysis is a method that sheds light on how “frames are learned and applied in daily life” (Kent and Davis, 2006, p.3). According to Goffman (1974), “frames are definitions of a situation that include organization and subjective elements” (Bryant and Miron, 2004, p. 693). Entman (1993) writes, “to frame is to *select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation* for the item described” (p. 52). Framing can also identify a problem or lack of understanding. Frames “*define problems...diagnose causes...make moral judgments...and suggest remedies*” (Entman, 1993, p. 52). If a telescope represents the physical path of a communicated message, framing is the lens of the telescope, the means by which one sees and attempts to make sense of what is on the other side. According to Goffman, “The individual’s framing of activity establishes its meaningfulness for him...rendering what would otherwise be a meaningless aspect of the scene into something that is meaningful” (p. 345, 21). Zhongdang and Kosicki (1993) cite research that defines a frame as a “‘central organizing idea or story line that provides meaning’ (Gamson & Mondigliani, 1987, p. 143) to events related to an issue” (p. 56).

In the spirit of trying to communicate an intended meaning, choices (conscious or unconscious) are made in how something should be said. Entman (1993) suggests these choices are guided by frames that organize the belief system of the speaker. Framing is an organized sense of self, reflected in the communication of that person.

Framing, like the conditions that led to its conception, is complicated. While framing seemingly cures ambiguity in communication in its role of defining meaning, the problem remains regarding “possibilities” of meaning or the fact that more than one way of conceptualizing the world exists, particularly since meaning is created and dissolved. For example, Entman (1993) describes how the framing mechanisms surrounding a communicator are not guaranteed, nor likely to be, entirely the same as the framing mechanisms which direct the message to the receiver. This is not a fault of framing theory; indeed it is a contribution to the understanding of the communication process because it establishes the place of meaning in the creation and reception of messages while also providing an understanding of how meaning can be lost and created in the transmission of one message.

Framing: How It Works

As a lens of deriving meaning, framing hones in on portions of information within a communication exchange; which consequently increases those portions of information in salience (Entman, 1993). Entman defines salience as “making a piece of information more noticeable, meaningful, or memorable to audiences. An increase in salience enhances the probability that receivers will perceive the information, discern meaning, and thus process it, and store it in memory” (p. 53). Entman continues, “frames select and call attention to particular aspects of the reality described, which logically means that

frames simultaneously direct attention away from other aspects” (p. 54). Certain information pieces are given attention that others are not, thus those with that much more attention are more likely to be received and retained by the receiver because there is one less step the receiver has to take to actively receive the information, rather than simply be “given” that information. Frames are defined by what they include and omit because that piece of information omitted can have just as significant consequences in how the message is received and interpreted as that piece included (Entman, 1993).

What is sometimes hard to grasp about framing is that it is a positive tool in understanding human communication. Framing theory is a way of explaining how meaning is made (and manipulated). Thinking about the concepts that brought about framing theory, one can see that it is the individuals who communicate who are the source of frames. Frames thus “reflect judgments made by message creators or framers” (Bichard et al., 2007, p. 73). People use framing as a means to make meaning. The tool is useless without a worker to use it.

Framing in Sport and How the U.S. Team Could be Framed

Framing theory has been used in studies about or related to a context of sport (Barnett, 2008; Bichard et al., 2008; Zaharopoulos, 2007). The study of large “mega events,” as coined by Rivenburgh (2003), using frame analysis supports its application to a similar event like the FIFA World Cup.

Extending the concept of framing as an organizational system, “as a research methodology, frame analysis examines the selection of certain aspects of an issue, images, stereotypes, messengers, metaphors, and so on, used to cue specific responses” (Bryant & Miron, p. 693). Frame analysis can be used as a means of examining

stereotypes as a type of categorization and critiquing how particular persons, groups, or concepts are presented and interpreted. Barnett (2008) examined how the issues of race, rape, sexual assault, and crime allegations were framed during the Duke Lacrosse team controversy in four U.S. newspapers and in Duke PR publications. The United States is notorious for its perceived ambivalence toward soccer and the World Cup. Gay's (1994) article, written around the time the United States hosted the World Cup in 1994, not only discusses this but cites examples of media exaggeration that evoke stereotypes. He quotes one sports writer, "“Millions of people will watch the world's most widely known and popular game on television but Americans are only dimly aware that soccer is football played with the feet,' he writes” (Gay, para. 6). This frames Americans as disinterested, but also ignorant.

Frame analysis provides insight into the narrative of events. These narratives are important because they can shape the meaning consumers take from messages, which in turn can shape how they process, conceptualize, and recall the information (Zaharapoulos, 2007). Such narratives can send vital and self-fulfilling messages to media consumers. Book, Little, & Jessell (2010) note in their findings that the lack of female executives covered in a feature column of *Broadcasting & Cable* can send the message to female communication students and females in general that the media industry is not welcoming to women. Framing analysis can shed light on whether framing within the media coverage of the U.S. team is consistent.

A counter-frame to the traditional image of U.S. soccer may emerge as professional soccer gains appeal in the U.S. There are three primary reasons for this potential turnaround. First is the surprising (to some) success of the U.S. national team in

the 2002 World Cup and other professional tournaments such as the 2009 Confederation Cup. Second is the presence of American players in European Leagues, suggesting some growing value placed on those players. As these players compete in the more esteemed European leagues, they are having a growing impact on the game and its European fans. While no quantitative evidence is presented, Jeffrey Marcus, a sports writer for *The New York Times*, argues in “Goal,” *The New York Times*’ online soccer blog, that Americans are changing how English teams and fans value the goalkeeper position (Marcus, 2010). English kids who were seemingly discouraged as a result of media condemnation of goalkeeper mishaps now aspire to play the position (Marcus). Third, the growing power of sports media may be influencing soccer’s prominence and attitudes toward the game. ESPN’s coverage of the 2010 World Cup could be influential because of a) the significant advertising and promoting of their coverage (Cyphers, 2010); b) the coverage of every game using their multiple media channels and platforms; and, c) increasing the quality of their product by bringing in high quality talent and targeting loyal soccer fans (Sands, 2010; Sandomir, 2010). ESPN’s 2010 coverage could increase the respect other countries’ fans have for U.S. fans and U.S. soccer, simply because ESPN did not dumb down the content or condescend to viewers (Sandomir, 2010). The coverage seemingly aims to attract the already-knowledgable fans and also encourage the casual fan to become more involved in the game. Whether or not this produces more U.S. fans of U.S. soccer; U.S. fans of other countries’ teams, or other countries’ citizens having a higher respect for American soccer fans and American soccer remains to be seen.

In addition to the frame of the U.S. reputation concerning soccer are the frames within each match. The England vs. USA match, for example, garners much interest

(Longman, 2010). Going into the 2010 World Cup, the United States had not played England since 1950, when they upset England, which already is a narrative in the media. Matches between mother countries and their current or former colonies are covered in soccer literature (Foer, 2010). The theme of freedom that Americans value, including in the national anthem, directly corresponds to the American colonies' success in defeating England in war and moving forward as a new country. It is likely that the historical background is felt by fans from both sides and will be invoked in the media. The heightened presence of American players in the English Premier League, the length of time since the U.S. upset of England and the historical and evolving relationship of the two countries make a significant frame for that particular match (Longman).

The following frames could be used in media coverage of the U.S. team:

- Historical ambivalence of Americans towards soccer
- Historical poor performance by the American team in contrast with recent success
- Americans proving the world wrong by advancing and exceeding expectations
- Conversely, disappointing the growing expectations at home should they not perform well
- U.S. team's style of play
- Frames in relation to the countries the U.S. team is competing against.
- American viewership and interest in the World Cup (ESPN's ratings)

Dates and Games

This study examines content written about the U.S. national soccer team and their performance in the 2010 World Cup. Included are media stories about the U.S. team's matches from online editions of selected newspapers. Newspapers are an appropriate

medium to use because people with various interest levels might read these articles: soccer fans, sport enthusiasts, those of casual interest or little interest in sports but are interested in reading about the U.S. team specifically. In addition, international newspaper content is more convenient to access for analyzing than other international media content. The number of matches played depended on how far the team advanced in the tournament. Four matches are covered. The first three matches were in the first or “group” stage of the tournament. In the World Cup structure, 32 teams are assigned into eight groups (labeled A through H) of four teams each. In the first round of competition, a team plays three matches; one against each of the other teams in the group. Based on a points system, the top two teams in each group advance to the next round.

The three first round matches for the U.S. team were:

- Saturday, June 12 vs. England
- Friday, June 18 vs. Slovenia
- Wednesday, June 23 vs. Algeria

The Americans advanced to the second round, or round-of-16. The team’s round-of-16 match was:

- Sunday, June 26 vs. Ghana

This second round and all subsequent rounds in the World Cup are elimination rounds, meaning the winner moves on to the next round and the loser is eliminated. The United States lost its second round match and was eliminated from the World Cup.

Feature stories about the U.S. team (though not necessarily about specific matches) will also be examined. Both types of stories (game stories and feature stories)

reflect media perception and reaction to the U.S. team and impact the perceptions readers may have about the U.S. team.

The goal of the study is to attain a broader picture of how the American team, representing a country deemed not to be “soccer friendly,” is portrayed in different global media. This exercise, if repeated after future World Cup tournaments, could show whether and how coverage the American team changes over time.

Newspapers

The online editions of four English-language newspapers published in four different countries in four different continents provide content examined in this study. The newspapers were selected for their reputation of quality journalism and for the content offered in English. Using English-language newspapers avoids translation errors. These are also publications American soccer fans might read if they sought international sports news and what English-speaking residents and visitors in those countries would read.

The newspapers to be used are: *The New York Times* (United States/North America); *Buenos Aires Herald* (Argentina/South America); *The Guardian* (England/Europe); and *The Sunday Times* (South Africa/Africa). Specifically, the corresponding websites to these newspapers are: <http://www.nytimes.com>; <http://www.guardian.co.uk>; <http://www.buenosairesherald.com>; and <http://www.timeslive.co.za/>

The online editions or sites for these newspapers are used because they are more accessible than hard copies and because consumers are increasingly likely to rely on them.

Three of the newspapers are daily newspapers: *The New York Times*, *Buenos Aires Herald*, and *The Guardian*. South Africa's *The Sunday Times* is a weekly newspaper. Because the content will come from the newspapers' online editions, the use of a daily vs. a weekly paper is not a concern because the sites are updated daily with breaking news. This is necessary to attract audiences demanding that information be delivered in a quick and timely manner.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Textual analysis is a qualitative methodology “for those researchers who want to understand the ways in which members of various cultures and subcultures make sense of who they are, and of how they fit into the world in which they live” (McKee, 2003, p.1).

Textual analysis is a subcategory or method of discourse analysis, which examines a communication process (or processes) taking place, the cultural aspects behind it, and what that process says about that or other cultures present within it.

Johnstone (2008) discusses the distinction between ‘discourse’ and ‘discourses.’ ‘Discourse,’ which she describes as a “mass noun,” is indicative of the “actual instances of communicative action in the medium of language” (p. 2). Johnstone explains that individuals accumulate a knowledge, based on their learned experiences, from which they identify meanings with words and how sentences are put together (p. 3).

Discourse is both the source of this knowledge (people’s generalizations about language are made on the basis of the discourse they participate in) and the result of it (people apply what they already know in creating and interpreting new discourse). (p. 3)

Fairclough (2003) refers to discourse as an important facet of social life that is intimately linked with other facets that together comprise a web of social life. As for ‘discourses,’ Johnstone defines the (plural) term as,

conventional ways of talking that both create and are created by conventional ways of thinking...Discourses are ideas as well as ways of talking that influence and are influenced by the ideas. Discourses, in their linguistic aspect, are conventionalized sets of choices for discourse, or talk. (p. 3)

Discourse may be more often conceptualized or associated with linguistics and word-based communication media, but, as Johnstone (2008) points out, discourse includes non-linguistic sources. Johnstone presents visual and performing arts, photography, architecture, clothing, music and dance as examples.

Fields of study include communication, cultural studies, and sociology (Johnstone, 2008). Johnstone writes, “Discourse analysts help answer questions about social relations, such as dominance and oppression or solidarity. Discourse analysis is useful in the study of personal identity and social identification...” (p. 7). Furthermore, Johnstone explains,

To the extent that discourse and discourses – meaning-making, in linguistic and other modes, and ways of acting, being, and envisioning self and environment – are at the center of human experience and activity, discourse analysis can help in answering any question that could be asked about humans in society. (p. 7)

One example is Shabir and Iqbal’s (2010) use of discourse analysis to explore how coverage in prestigious newspapers in the United Kingdom create meaning which contributes to shaping the image of the country of Pakistan.

Textual analysis is an important form of discourse analysis (Fairclough, 2003).

Fürsich (2009) writes,

Textual analysis is generally a type of qualitative analysis that, beyond the manifest content of media, focuses on the underlying ideological and cultural assumptions of the text. Text is understood as a complex set of discursive strategies that is situated in a special cultural context (Barthes, 1972 [1957]). (p. 240)

Fairclough enumerates three ways in which discourse is connected to social practice: 1) as genres, where “we can distinguish different genres as different ways of (inter)acting discursively; 2) as discourses, which are indicative of the representations of various

aspects of cultural life; and 3) as styles, “constituting particular ways of being, particular social or personal identities” (p. 26). A text is difficult to define but is considered to be an instance where language (also visual and other sounds) is created (Fairclough) from which one derives meaning (McKee, 2003). Within a text, there are three “types of meaning” that are “co-present” within texts and reflect the three connections of discourse with social practice: action, representation, and identification (p.27, 225).

A text or texts are valuable to the exploration of culture and merit the honing and specialization of study to texts by themselves. The process of communicating includes the sender producing and encoding a text, the message or text itself, and the recipient receiving and decoding the text (Fairclough, 2003; Fürsich, 2009). Fürsich defends the practice of “text-only analysis,” in particular its use in journalism and media studies, because “the narrative character of media, its potential as a site of ideological negotiation and its impact as mediated ‘reality’ necessities interpretation in its own right” (p. 238). The purpose and process of textual analysis does not ignore that texts are but one facet of cultural makeup, indeed the researcher is encouraged to remain considerate of other cultural factors, however, texts are sources of rich information (Fürsich, 2009; Lester-Roushanzamir & Raman, 1999).

As a qualitative methodology, textual analysis is valid and contributes to scholarly research in a way its quantitative counterparts do not. Textual analysis is often viewed as the qualitative counterpart to the quantitative methodology of content analysis. Two facets that may be troubling to quantitative-based researchers are that 1) textual analysis does not calculate numbers and 2) the steps and conclusions reached are not, per se,

repeatable (McKee, 2003). Despite these concerns, there are valid counterarguments, as discussed by McKee, that

- quantitative or “subjective” scientific methods are not the only ways to gain understandings of culture;
- scientific studies may not provide perfect understanding, despite their objectivity, because humans, their actions, their thoughts, their cultures are not scientific in the sense that given the same situation more than once, an identical outcome is not guaranteed;
- the objectivity of quantitative/scientific methodology is open to debate (McKee)

Hall (1975) argues it is a mistake to assume that the “precise criteria” of quantitative methods, such as content analysis, make it purely objective or that “because literary/linguistic analysis steers clear of code-building it is merely intuitive or unreliable” (p. 15). Methods like textual analysis are essential in exploring latent meanings of the text (Hall; Lester-Roushanzamir & Raman, 1999). In so doing, textual analysis, “preserve[s] something of the complexity of language and connotation which has to be sacrificed in content analysis in order to achieve high validation” (Hall, p. 15). It is the openness of textual analysis that allows for meaning and the significance of that meaning within a culture to be explored.

An important tenant of textual analysis is that no single reading or interpretation of a text is the only possible or correct way of reading of the text. As a post-structural method, textual analysis is not about determining or establishing a single true or accurate way of interpreting text (McKee, 2003; Fairclough, 2003). A text can have multiple readings (McKee; Fürsich, 2009). Instead, textual analysis “seeks to understand the ways in which these forms of representation take place, the assumptions behind them and the kinds of sense-making about the world they reveal” (McKee, p. 17). The term “reading”

reflects “the interpretive position of researchers. Moreover, it acknowledged the autonomy of cultural practices or objects as signifiers in their own right, independent of the intentions of the authors and producers or reception of the audience” (Fürsich, p. 240). A textual reading “does not suggest that structure is absolutely determining, but rather that structures exist in relationships with history and human agency” (Lester-Roushanzami & Raman, 1999, p. 704). This tenet of textual analysis does not mean that an analyst can blindly interpret anything from a text. The analyst must take evidence from the text and incorporate cultural context to show how possible readings of the text have merit (McKee).

While textual analysis does not per se have the procedural steps of a scientific experiment, there is a general path the researcher can use for this method. The order presented here integrates material from McKee (2003) and Lester-Roushanzami & Raman (1999). First, the researcher should develop a question (McKee). The question may evolve some, but the question is important because different methods answer different research questions. Once the researcher decides to employ textual analysis, the question is useful in determining what texts to study. After the texts are selected, the researcher begins thoroughly engaging the text, the “preliminary soak,” and conducting a close reading of the text (Hall, 1975; Lester-Roushanzami & Raman, 1999; Fürsich, 2009). Next, the analyst interprets the text, which requires cultural context (McKee). For example, when an audience hears a joke and they laugh, the assumption is there is something the audience knows, a context, which makes the joke humorous; and the analyst seeks to find out what knowledge exists to shed light on the context of the humor (McKee). McKee (p. 93) suggests finding relevant texts, which include: 1) other texts in

the series; 2) the genre of the text; 3) intertexts (“those texts that are explicitly linked to another text”) about the text itself; 4) and the wider public context in which a text is circulated. Finally, textual evidence is linked to a larger cultural picture (Lester-Roushanzamir & Raman, 1999). Yin and Miike (2008) analyze fortune cookie sayings as texts and, using research about values and ideals from Chinese and American cultures, identify discourses present in the texts and from which culture those discourses draw their meaning. Therefore, textual analysis provides a starting basis for analyzing media coverage of the U.S. Soccer team during the 2010 FIFA (Fédération Internationale de Football Association) World Cup because it is used in a variety of fields. Textual analysis is also suitable for examining the meanings of texts written about the U.S. team and what those meanings may say about the United States’ identity and how it may be viewed in the international soccer world.

Textual Analysis and Newspapers

Newspapers are a popular and common fodder for textual analysis. Newspapers have historic significance because, prior to the Internet, newspapers of various forms were a primary way for the public to access information. The immediacy and nature of newspaper journalism requires stories to be topical, therefore, “the newspaper must have a sense of the continuing areas of interest in the society it serves” (Hall, 1975, p. 12). There is, as Hall (p. 11) describes, “a strong, continuous practice which, by traditions and routines, defines what constitutes ‘news’, how to get it, how it should be presented, which is the hottest story.” That practice has been evolving with technology and public expectations of instant access to news, now that the Internet allows for quicker access to news, more updates, and more competition in terms of sources for news (Web sites,

online newspaper, blogs, etc.) and newspapers find themselves having to adapt in order to survive. Nonetheless, newspapers, particularly national newspapers still carry the prestige of being sources of journalistic credibility. Whether published on paper or online, "...a news item therefore takes its place and significance in an existing structure of awareness which frames events..." (Hall, p. 12). Hall puts it best,

Newspapers, then, do not merely report the news: they 'make news meaningful'. Their linguistic and visual style, their presentation and format, their address to audiences and topics, their rhetorics and appearance offer us the vital clues to their collective identities. (p. 21)

There are many examples of researchers analyzing newspapers. Hall's (1975) chapter in the text *Paper Voices* is often cited by textual analysis researchers. He discusses his research of the *Mirror* and the *Express*, investigating how core values and structures of newspapers may shape the interpretation and meaning of political change over time. Lester-Roushanzamir and Raman (1999) add to the literature by looking at newspaper content created by the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* for child or young consumers pertaining to the 1996 Summer Olympic Games in Atlanta. They examine what discourses are present in the text surrounding the portrayal of the teams from visiting countries and the countries themselves.

Textual Analysis and Sport

Sport is a significant presence in the social fabric of cultures all over the world and textual analysis is a method of exploring that presence. Sport is fascinating in its complexities and opposing pairs: the winners and the losers; the physical and the mental; the objective, numbers-based statistics and the human, emotional element; the blissful, euphoric escapism and discordant, troubling controversy that exists. Textual analysis

enables researchers to examine how all these factors (and others) create and reflect the meaning of sport in culture.

Textual analysts examine the issue of identity, in its various forms, in sport and the meanings behind identity. Bishop (2005) looks at the coverage by local Seattle, Washington sportswriters on the holdout situation of National Football League (NFL) player Joey Galloway. Bishop asks what discourses exist within the text about player values versus team values and how they contributed to shaping the way Galloway was portrayed in the articles. He argues that a dominant reading in those articles marginalized alternative readings of the situation, putting forth strictly “one view of looking at the world;” that Galloway was greedy and self-serving. Further, the dominant reading “only briefly explored the reasons offered by Galloway for his holdout....[and] did not entertain the possibility that Galloway was holding out as a matter of principle” (p. 456). Barnett (2008) draws from literature about journalistic crime stories, feminist theory, and framing theory and uses textual analysis to explore how four American newspapers and Duke University public relations texts portrayed the issue of rape as well as shaped the representation of the accused rapists and the accuser during the 2006 Duke Lacrosse scandal.

How nations are represented in a global world is an area of interest in sport as well as in politics and economics. As mentioned earlier, Lester-Roushanzamir and Raman (1999) look at how children’s content in the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* shape the identities of participating foreign countries during the 1996 Summer Olympic Games in Atlanta. Winterstein (2007) explores the conflict of different countries’ cultures and how they create varying discourses concerning the identity of a single soccer player. He

explores not only the identity of player Zinedine Zidane, an Algerian-born citizen of France and member of the French national soccer team during the 2006 World Cup, but also the identities of the cultures (French and Algerian) whose media are being analyzed. Thus, there is precedence for the analyzing media texts to explore national identity within the realm of international sport; leaving open opportunity to learn about American national identity through the lens of international soccer and the 2010 FIFA World Cup.

Selected Texts

Because the World Cup is an international event in which countries from the six inhabited continents are represented, it merits examining newspapers from various parts of the world. An American newspaper was chosen because the identity of the American soccer team is the subject of the selected articles. Newspapers from Great Britain and Argentina were selected because the two countries have unique and different but equally proud and fervent heroes, values, and traditions in the history of world soccer. A South African newspaper was chosen because South Africa played host to the 2010 FIFA World Cup, the geographic setting of the subjects being covered.

There are limits to this study that should be addressed. The four newspapers do not represent the entire media content of their respective countries nor do they represent all the perspectives that exist concerning how peoples of all countries view the United States national soccer team, the United States, or Americans. The reality of examining every country and every culture for perspectives is that such an examination cannot be completed by one person within a reasonable timeframe. Also, the fact that all are English-speaking newspapers knowingly comes with its limits as well, not incorporating Spanish speaking media from a Spanish-speaking country like Argentina or not

incorporating media representing the various languages spoken in South Africa. These four newspapers were chosen to incorporate an international analysis while keeping the study manageable.

Online newspaper articles were collected from four newspaper websites: *The New York Times* (USA), *The Guardian* (U.K.), *Buenos Aires Herald* (Argentina), and *The Sunday Times* (South Africa). The newspapers were selected for three primary reasons: 1) representation of countries from differing continents participating in the FIFA World Cup, one of the most covered international sporting events in the world; 2) respected reputations; and 3) English language coverage. Most newspapers offer digital and hard copies of their content but for this research the online access is easier. The researcher found difficulty in acquiring hard copies. Newspaper websites also offer additional content, such as writer blogs or event-specific blogs that do not run in print editions. Blogs were included in this analysis because readers would have access to those blogs and draw information and opinions from their content as they would from an article.

The 2010 FIFA World Cup began on June 11 and concluded with the championship match on July 11. The United States played in four matches during the World Cup. The first three were against other members of Group C: England (June 12), Slovenia (June 18), and Algeria (June 23). As one of the top two teams to finish in group play, the United States moved on to the next round to face Ghana (June 26). The United States was eliminated after losing that match.

The researcher followed the websites of the four indicated newspapers and printed articles as the World Cup took place. This approach was chosen as it best mimics how the typical newspaper reader and website user would encounter and select articles from a

logistical and time perspective. 73 articles were collected. Articles were allotted to one of six categories: primary news article specifically for the matches (16) (one article per paper per match); articles leading up to or following the England match (10); articles leading up to or following the Slovenia match (14); articles leading up to or following the Algeria match (12); articles leading up to or following the Ghana match (12); and non-match specific articles about the U.S. team or soccer in the United States in general (9).

Breakdown of the 73 articles by newspaper is as follows: *The New York Times* (35); *The Sunday Times* (20); *The Guardian* (10); and *Buenos Aires Herald* (8). A table of the article breakdown appears in Table 1 below:

Table 1: NUMBER OF ARTICLES ANALYZED BY NEWSPAPER AND CATEGORY

| | <i>New York Times</i> | <i>The Guardian</i> | <i>Buenos Aires Herald</i> | <i>The Sunday Times</i> | TOTAL |
|---------------|-----------------------|---------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|-------|
| Match results | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 16 |
| England | 3 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 10 |
| Slovenia | 9 | 0 | 2 | 3 | 14 |
| Algeria | 4 | 1 | 0 | 7 | 12 |
| Ghana | 8 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 12 |
| USA general | 7 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 9 |
| TOTAL | 35 | 10 | 8 | 20 | 73 |

While the United States, without question, has a presence in the sporting world, its presence and the quality thereof specifically in the sporting world is in question. The challenges of soccer in the United States and the United States in the global soccer world have been presented. How is the United States identity defined in the global culture of soccer?

Research Questions

- RQ1: How was the 2010 U.S. World Cup team portrayed in the *The New York Times*, *The Guardian*, the *Buenos-Aires Herald*, and *The Sunday Times*?
- RQ2: How were cultural values portrayed in the newspaper coverage of the 2010 U.S. World Cup team?
- RQ3: How were the issues of globalization portrayed in the newspaper coverage of the 2010 U.S. World Cup team?

CHAPTER 4

THEORY

Globalization to World Systems to Cultural Theory

Globalization refers to both “the compression of the world and the intensification of consciousness of the world as a whole” (Robertson, 1992, p.8; Lechner, 2000).

Globalization and the processes that embody it are not themselves new, though the term globalization and our ability to conceptualize it is fairly new. The term ‘globalization’ became common in academic and business settings in the late 1980s, but, according Roland Robertson, whose research is instrumental in the study of globalization, “the processes and actions to which the concept of globalization now refers have been proceeding, with some interruptions, for many centuries, but the main focus of the discussion of globalization is on relatively recent times” (Robertson, 1992, p.8).

Robertson (2002) uses a timeline or model of globalization development that “indicates the major constraining tendencies which have been operating in relatively recent history as far as world order and the compression of the world in our time are concerned” (p. 57). Within that model, he initially identifies five phases: 1) the Germinal Phase; 2) the Incipient Phase; 3) the Take-Off Phase; 4) the Struggle-for-Hegemony Phase; and 5) the Uncertainty Phase (pp.58-59). Giulianotti and Robertson (2009) discuss a sixth phase that Robertson has added in more recent literature, the Millennial Phase. Giulianotti and Robertson go on to apply Robertson’s phases of globalization to the history of soccer development.

Globalization is a framework for understanding the actors, processes, and interdependent relationships that comprise it. This framework is made up of “the growing network of interdependencies—political, economic, cultural, and social—that bind people together, for better and for worse” (Maguire, 2006, p. 436). Tomlinson (1999) uses the term ‘complex connectivity’ to describe how globalization “refers to the rapidly developing and ever-densening network of interconnections and interdependences that characterize modern social life” (p. 2). Giulianotti and Robertson (2009) reference Tomlinson but add, “connectivity is highly uneven and registers major socio-cultural differences and inequalities” (p. 135).

Connectivity is discussed in relation to transnationalism (Giulianotti and Robertson, 2009). Giulianotti and Robertson write that transnationalism, “reveals the processual aspects of globalization through exploration of the social interconnections and interweaving of individuals and groups across diverse geo-political terrains” (p. 134). Connectivity “captures the routinization of transnational communication, such as through transport and mediatization, as facilitated by technological developments” (p. 135). Giulianotti and Robertson observe that connectivity should be considered with its converse, “disconnectivity” (p. 136), which they say is commonplace particularly in places where “various political-economic crises, and are relatively incapable of establishing effective points for the transmission or reception of global flows” (p. 136). The concepts of transnationalism, connectivity, and disconnectivity applied to the sports world can be seen in Kuper and Szymanski’s (2009) findings,

But the main thing the top of our rankings demonstrates is the importance of wealth. Our efficiency table for sports bears a curious resemblance to another global ranking: the United Nations’ human development index. This measures life expectancy, literacy, education, and living standards to

rank the countries of the world according to their well-being. We found that a nation's well-being is highly correlated with its success in sports. (p. 264)

Connectivity within the world of global sport is harder to achieve for a country that has less economic and organizational support to put into athletics.

Various elements in recent history stemming from those interdependencies have contributed to an increased awareness of and interest in the presence and study of globalization. Elements including: “a global economy, a transnational cosmopolitan culture and a range of international social movements, a multitude of transnational or global economic and technological exchanges, communication networks, and migratory patterns characterize these interconnected world processes” that make up the globalization framework (Maguire, 2006, p. 436). Since 1875, these elements have resulted in “dramatically intensified relationships across societal boundaries” honing into the realization that “everyone must now reflexively respond to the common predicament of living in one world” (Lechner, 2000, Synopsis section, para. 2 & para. 3).

Globalization is multidimensional in that no one ‘interdependency’ is more relevant or important than another; indeed globalization necessitates the negotiation of all with all. Bielsa (2005) links the increasing discussion of globalization and what it is to three developments: 1) “the extreme mobility of capital,” 2) the fall in the cost and time needed to move commodities and people, and the overcoming of space as a crucial factor,” and 3) “the sharp acceleration in the means of global communication and the consolidation of a global media system” (p. 132). While those factors are important to globalization, Robertson (1992) calls for “analytical separation of the factors that have facilitated the shift towards a single world—for example the spread of capitalism,

Western imperialism and the development of the global media system—from the *general and global* agency structure (and/or culture) theme” (p. 55).

For example, Maguire (2006) proposes five cultural flows: people flow, technology flow, economic flow, media flow, and ideological flow; which represent how:

cultures communicate, compete, contrast, and conflict with each other in a more interdependent manner than was previously the case. This intermingling of, and status competition between, cultures occurs on a global scale and is patterned along a series of global flows that are marked by power balances, disjunctures, and civilizational struggles. (p. 437)

These five cultural flows are a good frame of how the four dimensions (Robertson, 1992)-individuals, national societies, world systems of societies, and humankind- negotiate identity. A larger purpose, as they pertain to conceptualizing globalization, is that these flows, together, represent “a flexible network of multidirectional movements of people, practices, customs, and ideas” which are shaped in relation to “a greater degree of interdependence, but also to an increased awareness of the notion of *one world*” (Maguire, p. 436).

These multidirectional movements and positioning of actors reflect a complex and sensitive framework. Within globalization, “a complex and shifting balance of power exists between several groups” (Maguire, 2006, p. 437). Lechner (2000) notes that a globalized world “is thus integrated but not harmonious, a single place but also diverse, a construct of shared consciousness but prone to fragmentation” (Synopsis section, para. 3). In consequence, globality, “consciousness of the (problem of) the world as a single place” (Robertson, 1992, p. 132) brings about the concern over “the cultural terms on which coexistence in a single place becomes possible (1992:132)” (Lechner, Analysis section, para. 1). Lechner concludes, “world culture denotes the multiple ways of

defining the global situation, conceived as responses to this shared predicament” (Analysis section, para. 1). Culture is thus an important element in the negotiation of identity, although globalization expands upon the term ‘culture’ to make clear that it has multiple layers.

Globalization provides a broader, more encompassing body of theoretical framework for understanding various relationships and processes than world-systems theory. World systems theory was developed in the writings of Immanuel Wallenstein, who postulated the former to explain historical changes in societies over time, including evolving modernities, and their impact on various societies (Halsall, 1997). For Wallerstein, world-systems theory better addresses the weaknesses of modernization theory concerning modernization and interactions between societies (Robertson, 1992). For Robertson, however, world-systems theory is not complete because “the term ‘world’ does not necessarily, in world-systems theory, apply to the entire *world*” (Robertson, 1992, p. 14). World-systems theory is more focused on economic structure as the centerpiece of culture rather than economics as interacting with culture. Robertson (1992) makes the argument that globalization is more complete:

In that regard it may be said again that globalization turns world-systems theory nearly on its head – by focusing, first, on *cultural* aspects of the world ‘system’ and, second, by systematic study of *internal* civilizational and societal attributes which shape orientations to the world as a whole and forms of participation of civilizations and societies in the global-human circumstance. (p. 133)

Examining how culture is conceptualized is thus an important facet of globalization.

World Culture Theory

Culture has complex and important meanings. Tomlinson (1999) writes, “culture can be understood as the order of life in which human beings construct meaning through

practices of symbolic representation” (p. 18). Tomlinson remarks that while distinguishing the economic from the political from the cultural is helpful in understanding the complexity of globalization, the three are not entirely separated; they coincide (p.18). Tomlinson explains how culture impacts globalization:

One way to think about the consequentiality of culture for globalization, then, is to grasp how culturally informed ‘local’ actions can have globalizing consequences....culture also matters for globalization in this sense: that it marks out a symbolic terrain of meaning-construction... (pp. 24, 27).

Likewise, globalization impacts culture:

Globalization therefore matters for culture in the sense that it brings the negotiation of cultural experience into the centre of strategies for intervention in the other realms of connectivity: the political, the environmental, the economic. (Tomlinson, pp.30-31)

World culture theory is a theoretical perspective within globalization. It is one frame or lens through which globalization is defined and discussed. Lechner (2000) identifies world culture theory as “a label for a particular interpretation of globalization that focuses on the way in which participants in the process become conscious of and give meaning to living in the world as single place” (Analysis section, para. 1). World culture theory looks at how increasing awareness of self in one world contributes to the negotiation of identities and, conversely, how the negotiation of identities shapes one’s awareness of and place in one world.

Globalization involves multiple varying levels interacting to create a globalized whole of smaller parts. Identities being negotiated are defined within four primary dimensions of the “global-human condition”: individuals, national societies (nation-states), world system of societies (relationships between national societies), and humankind (Robertson, 1992, p. 25, 131). Globalization does not represent the death of

smaller dimensions (individuals, nation-state) or ‘local’ identity in lieu of one global nation (Featherstone, 1990; Robertson, 1995). Rather than cultures defining themselves as an isolated unit, globalization is an arena where distinct cultures also have an identity in relation to their existences together in one world. What globalization does is include another dimension of consciousness (humankind), allowing for the global consciousness of one place that goes beyond relationships among nations. Thus, the four primary dimensions negotiate their identities with each other.

Rather than cultures defining themselves as an isolated unit, world culture theory/globalization is an arena where distinct cultures also have an identity in relation to their existences together in one world. Within globalization there is:

...a process whereby a series of cultural flows produce both: *firstly*, cultural homogeneity and cultural disorder, in linking together previously isolated pockets of relatively homogenous culture which in turn produces more complex images of the other as well as generating identity-reinforcing reactions; and also *secondly*, transnational cultures, which can be understood as genuine ‘third cultures’ which are oriented beyond national boundaries. (Featherstone, 1990, p. 6)

Third cultures—described by Featherstone as “conduits for all sorts of diverse cultural flows which cannot be merely understood as the product of bilateral exchanges between nation states,”—indicate a larger relationship is present that exists beyond interactions between states, representing how the varying masses are interconnected within one global environment (p.1).

While one perspective may deny the world is one, another perspective may acknowledge but seek to undo the oneness because the latter is perceived as a threat. Globalization includes that counteraction within its framework as deglobalization, “loosely speaking, attempts to undo the compression of the world—[which] should

remind us again that what we currently call globalization has been a very long, uneven, and complicated process” (Robertson, 1992, p. 10). Lechner (2000) includes ‘reglobalization’ along with deglobalization,

Globalization provokes reaction/resistance. Case in point: Islamic fundamentalism. While opposed to the form of globalization that produces a world of equal cultures, fundamentalism substitutes its own global vision. Fundamentalists attempt to define global fundamentals and operate in terms of globally diffused ideas (1992: 178, 166). (Analysis section, para. 11)

The structure of globalization through world culture theory, or how that structure can be understood and conceptualized, is complex. Lechner (2000) breaks down the structure into five levels based on Robertson’s research: relativization, emulation, glocalization, interpenetration, and contestation.

Relativization refers to how identities are negotiated in relation to other identities; the taking into consideration how a single identity is positioned relative to all others. Robertson (1992) writes that relativization as a term “is meant to indicate the ways in which, as globalization proceeds, challenges are increasingly presented to the stability of particular perspectives on, and collective and individual participation in, the overall globalization process” (p. 29). In his model, Robertson uses the term relativization to verbalize the processes between the four primary dimensions: Individual-society problematic (between individuals/selves and national societies); relativization of societies (between national societies and world system of societies); realpolitik-humanity problematic (between world system of societies and humankind); relativization of self-identities (between humankind and individuals/selves); relativization of societal reference (between individuals/selves and world system of societies); and relativization of citizenship (between national societies and humankind) (Robertson, p. 27). These

represent the various concerns brought to the negotiation of cultural identity with each of the four dimensions.

Emulation is the concept that globalization does not establish a singular, uni-culture so much as it makes known a common global space where identities are negotiated:

Although globalization does not create a common culture in which everyone holds the same beliefs and values, it does create a single arena in which all actors pursue their goals by deliberate comparison with others, using at least some common standards as yardsticks. (Lechner, 2000, Analysis section, para. 6)

World culture theory is not about viewing a vast global space where global oneness means being made up of a homogenous global group. Rather, it is about considering how the awareness of membership within a larger global body impacts local identity and vice-versa how local identity brings new meaning to a larger global body and identity.

Glocalization reinforces the concept that local and global are intertwined within the globalization framework and that globalization does not mean loss of local identities. It is simple to pit local against global as a dueling “polarity” where one puts down or resists the other (Robertson, 1995, p. 29). Local not only has a place in globalization but fundamentally impacts the processes within globalization. Specifically, “globalization—in the broadest sense, the compression of the world—has involved and increasingly involves the creation and incorporation of locality, processes which themselves largely shape, in turn, the compression of the world as a whole” (p. 40). With that in mind, “the universal ideas and processes involved in globalization necessarily are interpreted and absorbed differently according to the vantage point and history of particular groups” (Lechner, 2000, para. 7). Global and local interact and play off of one another.

Interpenetration is the expansion of universalism and particularism beyond their previously understood meanings. Writes Robertson (1992),

Rather than simply viewing the theme of universalism as having to do with the principles which can and should be applied to all, and that of particularism as referring to that which can and should be applied only 'locally,' I suggest that the two have become tied together as part of a globe-wide nexus.... The latter—the particularization of universalism—involves the idea of the universal being given global-human concreteness; while the former—the universalization of particularism—involves the extensive diffusion of the idea that there is virtually no limit to particularity, to uniqueness, to difference, and to otherness. (p. 102)

Within a global culture, local ideas shape the universal while universal ideas are infused and interpreted within the local.

Contestation embodies the conflict inherent within globalization. Globalization is a process where opposing environments interact: local and global, hegemony and heterogeneity, particularism and universalism, etc. The conflict concerns the formation of 'globe-oriented perspectives' that "espouse as a central aspect of its message or policy a concern with the patterning of the entire world" (Robertson, 1992, p. 79). The presence of this conflict confirms that global identity is in constant negotiation because that culture is not singularly defined by all in the same way.

The five elements are one way of organizing the complexity of globalization. What is clear, and what makes globalization such a complicated topic, is that global culture is always in a state of change. Lechner says that change is in part due to the "inherent dynamics of globalization. World culture theory portrays the process as ongoing and open-ended. All features of world culture, discussed above, entail continual change. Cultural conflict is the most common mechanism" (Analysis section, para. 10).

Globalization, because of its complexity, can be explored within various contexts and fields of study (Bashar, 2006). What is important to keep in mind is that a proper study concerning globalization “has to be made directly relevant to *the world* in which we live. It has to contribute to the understandings of how the global ‘system’ has been and continues to be *made*” (Robertson, 1992, p. 53). Sport, with its global mass appeal, media coverage, and its “balance of forces at work in intercultural exchanges [is] marked by a series of power networks; elimination struggles; and a mutual contest of cultural sameness, difference, and comingling between competing groups” is a valuable terrain for the study and understanding of globalization at work (Maguire, 2006, p. 442).

Globalization and Sport

Sport has a global presence and significance. Sport is one context where the negotiations of third identities are created in the globalization process. Sport is an arena that is relevant in the world because of 1) its popularity and 2) the study of sport can “contribute to the understandings of how the global system has been and continues to be made” (Robertson, 1990, p. 20). Mangan and Majumdar (2008), editors of the series *Sport and the Global Society*, write,

Sport seduces the teeming ‘global village’; it is the new opiate of the masses; it is one of the great modern experiences; its attraction astonishes only the recluse; its appeal spans the globe. Without exaggeration, sport is a mirror in which nations, communities, men and women now see themselves. That reflection is sometimes bright, sometimes dark, sometimes distorted, sometimes magnified. This metaphorical mirror is a source of mass exhilaration and depression, security and insecurity, pride and humiliation, bonding and alienation. (p. xiii)

The global presence of sport suggests that sport is important to negotiations of identity for individuals, national societies, world systems of societies, and humankind.

Rowe (2003) questions the whether globalization and sport have a genuine relationship. He argues that international mega-sporting events such as the Olympic Games and the football (soccer) World Cup are imagined, enacted, and

...so deeply dependent on the production of difference that it repudiates the possibility of comprehensive globalization while seeming to foreshadow its inevitable establishment....Sport's reliance on passionate national differentiation and celebrity is so thoroughgoing as to question its suitability as an exemplar of global culture. (pp. 282, 285)

Further, Rowe argues that despite the international presence of a sport from an organizational standpoint (via leagues and federations), the cultural aspects of sport and nationalism are such that consumers of international sport ultimately lean on national favoritism: "As might be expected of viewers of an international tournament, the emblems of nation were everywhere to the fore, and few seemed to take the opportunity to adopt a position of neutrality in the role of global cultural citizen" (p. 289). He observed from Australia, a country with no team in the 2002 World Cup, that

In the case of Australia, therefore, the *absence* of direct national representation opened up more diverse viewing spaces than would have been possible had the national team qualified, which would have immediately mobilized an intense, nationalist discourse. The nation, present or absent, is still crucial to the experience of the World Cup. The location, geopolitical position, history and demography of the nation will, in turn, condition responses to the event at the various points of intersection with global forces. (p.289)

Rowe's proposition is that the economic, rather than cultural aspects of sport suggest globalization at work and that other cultural avenues are better suited to explore globalization than sport.

Others disagree with Rowe (2003). Giulianotti and Robertson (2009) call to task prior use of sport in globalization-related research, "despite some recent important advances, mainstream social science and the specific field of global studies have rather

overlooked the significance of football and general sport to globalization processes” (p. xii).

Soccer specifically is a sport popularly paired with globalization studies (Foer, 2010; Giulianotti and Robertson 2007; Giulianotti and Robertson 2009). Giulianotti and Robertson (2009) describe soccer as: 1) “as a *metric*, football may be used to measure transnational, political, and social connectivity” 2) “as a *mirror*, football is used by different peoples as a global looking-glass, as a means of imagining and reflecting upon their appearance, statues, and identity, in relation to changing transnational audiences”; 3) “as a *motor*, football may be understood as accelerating particular global transformations. In the early twentieth century, for example, football advanced the participation of non-European societies, particularly South American nations, within the emerging international society. More routinely, new social relations are developed across participants at major international football fixtures and tournaments”; and 4) “as a *metaphor*, the ‘global game’ provides a bench-mark for comparing the transnational popularity of other cultural forms, while figuratively depicting the making of global consciousness (such as when images of a football and the earth are blended)” (p. xii)

Andrews and Ritzer (2007) not only argue that sport is an arena to examine globalization but also contend that global and local are polarized in a way that the ‘local’ is too often ‘privileged’, ‘romanticized’ and ‘fetishized’ (pp.136, 137). They propose that globalization literature fails to get to the processes that embody the global shaping, even ‘overwhelming,’ the local. Their solution is to replace the terms ‘global’ and ‘local’ with ‘glocal’ (from Robertson, 1995) and ‘grobal’, the latter which refers to the “global processes that overwhelm the local rather than neatly integrating the two” (p. 137). They

cite international sporting bodies, such as FIFA and the International Rugby Board, as examples of grobalization because only nations that abide by the terms and rules of those bodies can be included in the global sport community. Further, these global sport institutions are driven by inter-related processes of: 1) corporatization, 2) spectacularization, and 3) commodification; suggesting that “sport’s international infrastructure is beginning to reflect a high degree of global uniformity” (p. 140).

The concept of adding grobal to the globalization vocabulary is valuable to the literature because it defines the condition when the global indeed overwhelms the local. What is problematic according to Andrews and Ritzer (2007) is that the use of grobal and glocal as terms,

...implies the declining, or even disappearing, relevance of the local and the need to reconceptualize virtually everything we think of as global or glocal...our contention is that the *local* has been so affected by the *global*, that it has become, at all intents and purposes, *glocal*. (p. 137)

Their argument about the ‘disappearance’ of the local conflicts with researchers who, as discussed earlier, do not agree that globalization is the death or absence of the local.

Giulianotti and Robertson (2007) suggest globalization is neither of the extremes presented by Rowe or Andrews and Ritzer (2007). They agree that a polarization of global and local taken too far assumes either,

...globalization *a priori* involves the rejection or annihilation of ‘local’ cultures; [or] if national cultures are sustained, then it is contended that globalization has somehow been ‘repudiated’ (cf. Rowe 2003). Conversely, we argue that globalization has been the thematization of locality and nationality, by the global spread differentiation along local and national lines. (pp. 168-169)

The term glocalization (and its meaning)

...critically transcends the banal binary oppositions associated with globalization, and so registers the societal *co-presence* of sameness and

difference, and the intensified *interpenetration* of the local and the global, the universal and the particular, and homogeneity and heterogeneity... Globalization is a dichotomous term that encapsulates the empirically verifiable interdependency of homogenizing and heterogenizing trends in globalization *tout court*. In that sense, we may talk about the *duality of glocality*. Sports such as football provide some basic illustrations. (pp. 168, 169)

Giulianotti and Robertson then apply their concept of glocalization to football, identifying both the heterogeneous and homogenous aspects of soccer.

Soccer heterogeneity is exemplified by the cultural codes for football that vary from culture to culture and ‘technical and aesthetic’ differences such as styles of play (Giulianotti & Robertson, 2007, p. 169). Brazil and Italy, for example, both having a rich soccer history and touted reputation in the global soccer dialectic, typically show off very different styles of play.

Soccer homogeneity is exemplified,

...transnationally by isomorphic forms and institutional structures. For example, world sporting heterogeneity is reduced by football’s global spread and the correlated displacement of many local games. Football is contested according to universal rules, and its system of governance and administration [which] are internationally standardized. (Giulianotti & Robertson, 2007, p. 169)

Giulianotti and Robertson (2007) are able to take important aspects of Rowe’s (2003) and Andrews and Ritzer’s (2007) arguments but rectify the one-way-or-another polarity approach to the global and the local, writing,

The social aspects of football display the trends towards international homogenization and heterogenization. Among players, most cultures adhere to basic behavioral standards and ritual practices, such as handshakes after matches, respectfully observing anthems, and heeding the instruction of coaches. Greater cultural diversity is evidenced in terms of the levels of ‘acceptable’ aggression, responses to being challenged or fouled, and in relations with referees during play. (p. 170)

How the context of French and Algerian values are juxtaposed in media content following an incident during the 2006 World Cup final is a good example. Winterstein (2007) analyzes an incident during the match when France's national team captain Zinedine Zidane, who was born and grew up in France to parents who emigrated from Algeria, head butted Italian national player Marco Materazzi.

Winterstein (2007) examines how Zidane's identity is defined by the French and the Algerians based on their respective values. Zidane's 'hero' status was marred in the eyes and words of French fans and media because his actions were perceived as violent and detrimental to the team (Winterstein). Having received a red card, he was banned for the rest of the game, which France lost on penalty kicks. Algerian fans and media, on the other hand, celebrated Zidane for embodying the Algerian values of "le nif"—which refers to "self-esteem, pride, and honor, but more specifically to an ability to counter any challenge to prestige, consideration, or the moral integrity of one's self or family" (Winterstein, p. 16). Zidane's reaction to an insult from Materazzi, which Zidane refused to repeat (which was seen as keeping his personal battle personal), was seen by Algerians as justified: Zidane was provoked and not at fault. Algerians blamed "the system that allowed Materazzi to make such statements in the course of the game" (Winterstein, p. 16). Individual, national, and global identities and standards are all in play in this example of globalization.

Journalism and sport interact within a globalization framework. Boyle and Haynes (2009) discuss:

The nature of modern communications, allied with sport as a cultural form and the global nature of sport, often appears to offer the possibility of some form of shared global identity or collective moment. However, the reality that is often associated with these shared sporting moments and a

global cultural form is that they can also act as a vehicle for the expression of conflict, tension and a range of deeply rooted local identities. These tensions are often informed by economic, cultural and ethnic factors, and can often be reinforced by sports journalism as the sporting arena becomes a very public platform for the expression and range of identities.

Sports journalism and the discourses it generates as a result remain a fascinating case study in how global and local media interact in contemporary societies, as sport itself can be at times global and outward looking, and also local and intensely domestic in its concerns and outlook. (p. 171)

Winterstein's (2007) research provides ample discussion of the power of media in facilitating cultural dialogue and reinforcing cultural values. Examining how America is portrayed in the media likewise can give Americans added perspective on how other countries view the United States within a global sport culture.

Soccer's place in the American national identity and the United States' place within the global imagined community of soccer, likewise, call into discussion national and global terms and values. Darling-Wolf (2005) writes,

Historically, nations have symbolically negotiated their position as powerful—or at least visible—participants in international geopolitics through their involvement in sporting events. Fans' engagement in such events contributes to the creation of imagined communities B. Anderson (1983) considers essential to the development of cultural and national identity (see also MacClancy, 1996; Wenner, 1989). (p. 184)

American soccer's presence in the global soccer community is ambiguous because the United States has not embraced the world's game as other countries have. The reasons for this are explored in numerous studies (Markovits, 1988; Bairner, 2001; Sugden, 1994; Szymanski & Zimbalist, 2006). Soccer is not the national sport of every country, nor is it uniformly popular. Soccer holds higher favor in countries with economic ties to England (such as Germany, Italy, and South American countries) than in countries presently or formerly tied to Great Britain as colonies (Sugden, 1994; Kuper and Szymanski, 2009).

New Zealand, Australia, South Africa, India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, and the Caribbean islands have in common “the presence of cricket as the national sport, the marginal existence of soccer, and the existence of a second, rather obscure and somewhat modified English sport” (Markovits, 1988, p. 127).

Why people care more about American indifference to soccer than they do its position in other countries, according to Markovits, is the perception that “crudely put, the United States matters more in the world’s affairs...newsworthy issues in the United States, though, are of national, as well as international, importance” (p. 128). As one of the primary global political and economic leaders, the United States is expected, seemingly both internally and perhaps externally, to extend that same global presence in other arenas, including sport; hence its smaller presence in global soccer stands out.

Timing is an important factor in soccer’s place in American sport. The United States won independence from Great Britain in the late eighteenth century, a time when soccer was a blossoming activity for the upper class, but not as widely popular as it would be a century later. By the time soccer attained mass appeal in Britain, Britain’s influence on American culture was not the same and the United States had adopted new, nationally personalized sports (Markovits, 1988; Sugden, 1994).

Political independence from Britain allowed the United States to cultivate its own, different identity. America’s newness and independence was a source of American pride and shaped American rhetoric following the American Revolution, fostering a “‘special relationship’, marked by both admiration and rejection” that would flow into American sporting culture (Markovits, 1988, p. 130). Further, in the late-nineteenth century, influx of immigrants fueled nativist attitudes that sought to protect American identity from

disruption (Sugden, 1994). Similar to Kuper and Szymanski (2009), Sugden notes that soccer had become embraced more by the “unofficial Empire,” countries that were not directly part of the British Empire but interacted with the empire via trade (p. 225). By this point, though soccer had carried the identity of a gentlemanly sport, “because it was a simpler game and less culturally embedded than, for instance, rugby or cricket, soccer rapidly gained ground as a popular sport within the host community” (Sugden, p. 225). Within these “unofficial Empire” countries, working class people embraced soccer and brought it with them when they immigrated to America (Sugden).

In America, however, the combination of nativist attitudes and immigrants’ willingness (based on eagerness of some to identify themselves as American and because soccer had not yet become ‘culturally embedded’ in those countries for people to consider soccer a part of their tradition) and/or pressure to adopt American sporting culture, helped the growth of what became “America’s pastime,” baseball (Sugden). Baseball, like soccer, had roots in the elite class but was quickly embraced by the masses, not excluding the lower socio-economic and working classes (Bairner, 2001; Sugden, 1994). Soccer eventually made its appearance in American universities, but American football would become the sport of choice for the upper class elite, ensuring the ‘crowding out’ of soccer from a dominant place in American sport (Markovits, 1988).

Other social developments into the present day shape the current place of soccer in American soccer culture. The historically weak top-down, strong bottom-up state of soccer refers to the weak history of soccer as a professional, nationally organized sport but its popularity of participation at the youth and, to a lesser extent, collegiate playing level (Sugden, 1994). At the youth level, participants are primarily from the middle and

upper classes; in contrast with global countries where players often come from lower classes. In a way, from a social standpoint, soccer's journey from England to the United States has brought it full circle; originating among England elites and traveling to the suburban upper-and upper-middle classes of America. Those who grow up playing soccer in America are least likely to go on to play soccer professionally; inhibiting a "professional peak" (Sugden, p. 247). African-American youth (and African-Americans in general), who make up a significant portion of American urban populations have little interest in soccer (Sugden). As the Hispanic community increases in number, Hispanic children may drive urban interest in soccer; though this shift may come with other internal cultural clashes. Gender is another factor to consider. Sugden suggests that the failure of soccer to become a 'male preserve' coupled with the growing presence of women in American soccer and women's success in American soccer together create the perception "that men's soccer is a game for second-rate athletes who are unable to contend with the masculine rigours of the home grown variety of football" (Sugden, p. 248-249); a perception not at all shared in South America and Europe where footballers like Pelé, Diego Maradona, David Beckham, and Cristiano Ronaldo are celebrated as national cultural and global soccer icons. Time, politics, and social mores in America's development provide a sense of why soccer "remains outside the dominant value of American sport" (Bairner, 2001, p. 110).

These historical rationales of soccer development provide reasons to examine the frames and values used to establish an identity, particularly when the state is negotiating its position as part of a global sport. World culture theory is appropriate to use because,

...what we are concerned with is how globalization alters the context of meaning construction: how it affects people's sense of identity, the

experience of place and of the self in relation to place, how it impacts on shared understandings, values, desires, myths, hopes and fears that have developed around locally situated life. (Tomlinson, 1999, p. 20)

Soccer, as the world's game in theory or in action, is presently positioned as a global imagined community. Ironically, while the World Cup does, as Rowe (2003) suggests, exude a collection of nationalistic identities, nations seek soccer glory in order to be seen and accepted in the global culture of soccer and of sport. Countries compete to host the event because this signals a place on the global stage. South Africa's hosting of the 2010 World Cup embodies national and global tones. South Africa wants the world to pay attention, acknowledge, and visit it as part of the global family. From a national (and political) standpoint, South Africa seeks to demonstrate its growth as a nation from its divisive and temperamental past (and still in some cases, its present) and worthy of being considered global. Perhaps the issue at hand, as shown through the lens of sport, is that worthiness of being included in the global sporting whole has to be proven. This concept could be applied beyond sport, though this proposal remains within the context of sport.

CHAPTER 5

ANALYSIS

In this section, the content of the newspaper articles selected for analysis is explored. First, an explanation of how the articles were categorized will be provided. Next, the broad themes that stand out from the articles will be presented.

Categories

A total of 73 articles were selected from four newspapers: *The New York Times* (NYT), *The Guardian* (GDN), *Buenos Aires Herald* (BAH), and *The Sunday Times* (SUN). Appendix 1 is a list of all the articles included for analysis and can be found at the end of the document. The articles are listed by newspaper and chronologically.

Articles were allocated into six categories based on function, topic and content. For one category, news articles in which specific match outcomes are reported were designated as news articles. There are 16 news articles in this category, one for each match from each paper. For the purposes of discussion, these will be referred to as game day articles.

The other five categories are made up of feature stories, which expand into topics pertinent to the team, players, matches and culture. There is one category designated for each match, four total, (vs. England, vs. Slovenia, vs. Algeria, vs. Ghana), where those feature articles that are related to specific matches or opponents were assigned. The final category includes the articles that encompass American soccer in a more general context: the U.S. team's performance in general/the success and difficulties of the team, how the

team is being received by fans, popularity of soccer in the United States and soccer's place in American culture. These articles were designated into the category because rather than speaking specifically about a given match, they speak to a broader storyline about the state and progress of American soccer.

Feature articles from *NYT* and *GDN* include some articles that newspaper writers submitted on the official newspaper website blog, though the majority appeared in their respective print editions. For purposes of this research, those website entries are referred to as articles. No blog entries were found from the *BAH* or *SUN*.

The Newspapers

News or game day articles from *NYT* and *GDN* are longer and often provide more discussion or context, while game day articles from *BAH* and *SUN* are shorter and more succinct. Game day articles from the latter two contain no quotes, merely basic game summary. For the England and Algeria matches, the game day articles for *BAH* and *SUN* are identical save for a different headline and minor word changes. Feature articles in the same publications provide quotes and a bit more discussion.

NYT and *GDN* articles sometimes include more editorializing, the writer inserting his or her opinion concerning the topic. For *SUN*, this could be because several, though not all, of the articles are credited to Reuters, the wire service; to the South African Press Association (Sapa); to Agence France-Presse (AFP), the wire service; or, to both Sapa and AFP. Some *SUN* articles are credited to specific writers as well as to a wire service. None of the articles from *BAH* have bylines.

In the game day articles, *GDN* offers more quotes from players or coaches from the United States' opponent and more discussion about the opponent than those from

NYT. However, feature articles from *NYT* offer more quotes from and discussion about the Americans' opponents than the *NYT* game day articles.

Overall, the tone of the articles evolves to suggest the legitimacy of the United States national team in its own right, even though they also suggest the team still has a journey ahead to become on par with its European counterparts.

Overarching/Broad Themes

There are important broader themes that are shared in all the categories of articles. These themes are important because they stand out and are consistent topics of article content. As such, they merit their own discussion outside the context of specific article categories. These eight themes are: 1) Never Say Die/American Spirit; 2) Chance/Opportunity; 3) Falling Behind/Giving Up Early Goals; 4) Defense; 5) Scoring challenges/Offensive; 6) Reception of the Americans; 7) MLS; and 8) America and Soccer.

Never Say Die/American Spirit

Arguably no theme stands out more than that of the compete-hard-to-the-end/never-give-up spirit and can-do mentality that defines the American team throughout the 2010 World Cup coverage. Going into the first match versus England, coverage suggests the American players are going into the tournament thinking and believing they can be successful. Carlos Amato's article in *SUN* quotes forward Clint Dempsey, "'If we didn't believe we could [beat England], why would we be here? It would not be right if we didn't think we could do something special'" ("US Look for Soccer Supremacy"). This theme, however, became more of a discussion topic after the games began. During the first group match versus England, the comeback goal that tied the score was

considered to be a “fluke” or “gaffe” (Wilson, “England Miss Out on Fine Start as USA Benefit From Robert Green Gaffe”, *GDN*), something “gifted” (“Green Gaffe Gifts Draw to United States”, *BAH*) to the United States on a lapse by the English goalkeeper. *NYT* writer Jeré Longman suggests that while the American goal may have been luck, the Americans nonetheless deserved to draw with their opponent because they improved their play after giving up an early goal, “Even if the United States was a bit lucky, it earned the result” (“Hop, Skip, and a Tie”). Team spirit embodied more of the content and became more meaningful after the second and third group matches as the team demonstrated a tendency and ability to stay competitive and rally after falling behind.

After coming back to draw 2-2 with Slovenia, the spirit of the team appears more and more in the articles. Player Michael Bradley is quoted in *NYT* speaking about the essence of the team, ““The mentality of this team has always been that no matter what happens, we’re going to give everything we have and fight until the end,’ Bradley said” (“Coach’s Son Supplies Energy for U.S. Rally”). The *GDN* game day article for the Slovenia match by Sean Ingle includes a quote from Head Coach Bob Bradley, ““This team has shown that it keeps fighting to the end,’ added Bradley. ‘It’s a credit to the mentality of the players, that they are willing to fight for 90 minutes’” (“Landon Donovan Leads USA Fightback Against Slovenia”). The spirit of the American team was noticeable to Slovenia Head Coach Matjez Kek, quoted in *NYT*, “The U.S. team has character and has heart and strength, and that’s the quality all the big teams have” (Clarey, “Slovenes Hold U.S. in High Regard”).

The discussion of the American spirit that became considered key to the team’s competitiveness continued following the team’s winning the third and final group stage

match. When the United States scored the winning goal during injury time in the second half, spirit again helped to define the team's victory. One *SUN* reporter writes

Midfielder Michael Bradley said the team's "never say die" attitude is something that is at the core of their approach to the game.

"When you play you have to always believe. We had the commitment that until the referee blew the final whistle we were going to give everything we had—I think we did that," he told Reuters. (Evans, "No Motivation Needed for Americans")

This kind of spirit and how it is manifested comes to define the U.S. team; the stamp that defines their play as uniquely American. The American players are able to be something admirable even at times when their technical skill, while improved from prior World Cups, is not perfect. George Vecsey writes in *NYT*, "Nobody has ever called the Americans a powerhouse, but there is no hiding their heart, their ability to come storming back after their own slow starts" ("Two Outsiders, No Room for Both"). The *GDN* game day article for the Slovenia match quotes Landon Donovan,

"We started the match poorly," said Donovan. "We were tentative. We sat too deep. At half-time we spoke about believing we can do it. My guess is that there's not many teams that could have done what we did in the second half." (Ingle, "Landon Donovan Leads USA Fightback against Slovenia")

Donovan's words suggest that despite a disappointing start, the unique spirit the U.S. team possesses contributed to their comeback. *NYT* writer George Vecsey shares a conversation he had with Alexi Lalas, a member of the National Soccer Hall of Fame who played for the U.S. National Team in the 1994 World Cup and served as an analyst for ESPN during the 2010 World Cup, that adds context,

...I thought about something Alexi Lalas told me more than a decade ago when he was playing for Calcio Padova in the Italian Serie A. Some players on that weak team would give up if they fell a goal behind on the

road, Lallas said, but American athletes would never give up. (“A Foreign Game Looks Very American”)

Lallas’ perspective as shared by Vecsey provides context from an American who played in a foreign professional league. This particular kind of spirit, the never-say-die mentality, becomes something proudly claimed as uniquely American. Jeré Longman writes in *NYT* after the Americans’ comeback win versus Algeria, “But there is a particular spirit about this American team, a persistence and resilience that compel it to play on, a belief that unyielding commitment will bring a deserved reward even at times when skill and technique may not” (U.S. Advances with Dramatic Late Goal”).

Longman quotes Coach Bob Bradley in the same article,

“In soccer, you can’t always control a call or a bounce, but you can control what you are about as a team, how committed you are to giving everything in a game,” Bradley said. “I think that has become the special quality of this group.” (“U.S. Advances...”)

The spirit embodied by the team is deemed essential to its identity, character, and success.

Chance/Opportunity

Another theme that appears often in the newspaper content is chances or opportunities that the American team had during matches to be successful. There are times in the articles where the team is portrayed as embracing and benefiting from chances they had. Others contain content about the team missing chances and opportunities.

The concept of chance is even interwoven with that of the American spirit in that part of what defines the American team’s character is to forge on despite missed chances. Landon Donovan is quoted in *GDN* after the Americans defeated Algeria in the final

match in the group round and earned a spot in the round-of-16, ““Sometimes you have games like this when you have a lot of chances and they don’t go in. The only thing you can do is keep going”” (“Landon Donovan’s Last-Ditch Strike Puts US Top of Group”). Donovan suggests that missed opportunities happen but that what is special about the American team is that its players are persistent and will play to create new opportunities. Jeffrey Marcus cites American forward Jozy Altidore about the same idea and the same match in an *NYT* feature article, ““I had a great chance in the first half and I got too excited thinking, ‘I’m going to score in the World Cup,’” he said. ‘I’m just happy that I created another chance to win that game”” (“Altidore Absorbs Beating to Ensure U.S. Does Not”). Altidore’s comment is also noteworthy because it conveys a complex meaning of what ‘chance’ is, in that chance is not just random but can be made.

The idea of the team missing chances appears in various articles, particularly when addressing moments when the team underperformed. In Paul Wilson’s *GDN* game day article for the England match, Landon Donovan is quoted, ““We played a good match, created chances, but the result was not OK. We can play better”” (“England Miss Out on Fine Start as USA Benefit from Robert Green Gaffe”). In the *GDN* game day article for the Slovenia match, Sean Ingle writes about the American players, “Led by the immense Jozy Altidore they continued to press and missed several chances to equalize before Michael Bradley levelled the scores in the 82nd minute” (Landon Donovan Leads USA Fightback Against Slovenia”). Though the Americans pulled out a win against Algeria, there were chances to do even more. Jeré Longman writes in the *NYT* game day article for the Algeria match, “Chance after frantic chance the United States had Wednesday in its 1-0 victory over Algeria at the World Cup, each one more tempting and

frustrating than the other” (“U.S. Advances with Dramatic Late Goal”). And when the United States was knocked out of the tournament by Ghana, a similar message came across in Jeffrey Marcus’ *NYT* feature, “But numerous chances during the second half and 30 minutes of overtime lacked a final touch. And a goal early in overtime gave Ghana the victory” (“For U.S., Holes Come Too Early, Too Often”). An Associated Press feature in *NYT* quotes coach Bob Bradley, ““There’s a pretty empty feeling right now because I think coming out of the first round, we felt there was a real chance of doing something bigger,’ the day after a 2-1 overtime loss to Ghana eliminated the Americans in the World Cup’s second round” (“US Scatters, Pondering What Might Have Been”). Missed chances or opportunities are a part of sporting life for any team. The topic of missed chances throughout the coverage suggests the U.S. team could have been more than it was.

Chance or opportunity is also seen on a larger scale with the idea that with the 2010 World Cup, the U.S. team has an opportunity to influence the game of soccer in America for the better with a good performance. Landon Donovan speaks to this concept in *BAH* prior to the Americans’ opening match against England, ““ For us, every time we have an opportunity to play we have an opportunity to grow the sport and we realize that every four years that is magnified and multiplied”” (“United States Braced for Impact of England Clash”). The writer uses Donovan’s quote in context to show how performing well in the World Cup could significantly help strengthen American identity with the game by bringing the World Cup back to the United States,

A win against England would not only smooth their path into the second round, it could also boost the country’s bid to host the 2018 and 2022 World Cups and prove that the huge resources invested in growing the

game back home were bearing fruit. (“United States Braced for Impact of England Clash”)

Just as the team has and makes chances for success in individual games, the team has a larger opportunity in the 2010 World Cup itself as a chance to positively shape the perception of American soccer at home and abroad and the future relationship the United States has with soccer.

Falling Behind/Giving up Early Goals

A primary weakness for the American team, and arguably the Achilles’ Heel that sent the team home from the round-of-16, is their tendency to fall behind their opponent-- often early in the match. Jeffrey Marcus (*NYT*) speaks to this concern in his article “U.S. Team Focusing on Starting Strong,” published between the England and Slovenia matches. He quotes Carlos Bocanegra, “‘The funny thing is we talked about it,’ the United States’ captain, Carlos Bocanegra, said Tuesday. ‘Don’t concede early. But, man, that’s been our trademark lately, conceding early.’” (“U.S. Team Focusing on Starting Strong”). This quote suggests the American players are well aware that this is a problem for them. The tendency to fall behind makes a difference in the psychological and tactical management of the game for the Americans because they spend the majority of their playing minutes endeavoring to catch up. Even going into the World Cup, the American team had a reputation for falling behind as well as for making comebacks. Marcus points out, “The United States gave up the first goal in 7 of its 10 World Cup qualifiers last year, earning an unwanted reputation for having to play catch up. But the Americans came back to win or tie six of those games, often finding their rhythm and playing better when behind” (“U.S. Team Focusing on Starting Strong”).

The United States gave up the first goal in each of their World Cup matches except for Algeria. In addition, those first goals given up by the U.S. team came early. England scored in the fourth minute of its match against the United States. Slovenia scored its first goal in the 13th minute and again in the 42nd minute to take a 2-0 lead. In both games the United States came back to draw but giving up the early goals were noticed, nonetheless, as problematic. A *SUN* feature article prior to the Algeria match reaffirms that the players are aware of the problem,

But there is some US concern about playing well before their rivals score. “We seem to play better when we’re behind and that’s all got to change,” US goalkeeper Tim Howard said.

“For whatever reason we seem to be very resilient. With a little more luck and concentration we can get on the right side of the scoresheet early on.” (“Algeria in the Way of USA last 16 Place”)

Happily the Americans gave up no goals to Algeria and were able to move on to the next round thanks to Landon Donovan’s goal in injury time.

Despite the improvement during the Algeria match, an early goal given up to the opponent would be part of the American team’s downfall in the 2010 World Cup. Ghana scored in the fifth minute of the game although the Americans came back to draw and force overtime. The Americans however repeated their mistake by allowing Ghana to score in just the third minute of extra time (30 minutes, divided into two 15-minute periods, played if an elimination game ends in a draw after the 90 minutes of regular time) and could not score again, losing 2-1. Despite giving up the early goal, the U.S. team showed signs of playing stronger, keeping the game close, and potentially making the comeback. Paul Wilson (*GDN*) writes,

The USA were stunned, though they did not make the last 16 by falling apart at the first sign of adversity, and by the time Landon Donovan

equalised after an hour with a penalty stroked off a post their patient passing and probing was threatening to wear Ghana down. (“World Cup 2010: Ghana Take Direct Route Past USA into Last Eight”)

Nonetheless, the United States reached a point where a comeback was not going to carry the team any further. Paul Wilson (*GDN*) quotes U.S. goalkeeper Tim Howard after the match, “‘It was a bridge too far for us,’ Howard said. ‘We fought hard to come back once, but we couldn’t do it a second time. There are times you can keep coming up with magic moments’” (“Ghana Take Direct Route Past USA into Last Eight”). Jéré Longman’s article includes a similar comment from Coach Bob Bradley,

“Once again, we gave up an early goal,” Coach Bob Bradley said. “We put a lot into it to get back to 1-1. I felt at that point, we had a chance to finish the game. When you go down early in overtime, it’s a case where you’ve put yourself in that spot one too many times.” (“A Final Day of Chasing Ends the U.S. Run”).

Jeffrey Marcus quotes Landon Donovan in *NYT*, “‘The warning signs were there,’ Landon Donovan said. ‘Getting scored on early, and it came back to bite us’” (“For U.S., Holes Come Too Early, Too Often”).

Ultimately while the Americans are to be commended for their ability to stay competitive in matches to the end, the difficult truth is that the team was not able to implement solutions to its biggest problem and continued to play from behind. In a *NYT* feature story about forward Michael Bradley, Jeffrey Marcus makes a point about him and his father that can be expanded to the whole team,

Bradley and his father seem to be motivated by difficult situations. Throughout the tournament, they have referred to the team’s victory over Spain in last summer’s Confederations Cup as evidence that the Americans are capable of beating the best in the world.

That feeling is reinforced with each come-from-behind performance, including the Americans’ rally to tie England, 1-1, in their World Cup

opener. They came from behind in seven times during qualifying. But it is not a strategy. (“Coach’s Son Supplies Energy for U.S. Rally”)

Remaining motivated and having the drive to come back when behind, by itself, is not the weakness of the American team. The weakness is not playing to potential in order to get ahead and then having to rely on that adrenaline for every game. The American spirit of never giving up also applies in trying to play smart, get ahead, and stay ahead.

Defense

Coverage of the American team suggests that despite some moments of positive defensive play, overall the team’s defense was inconsistent and underperforming. Even before the World Cup began, defense was a question mark when analyzing the team.

American David Hirshey asks in an *NYT* article co-written with Englishman Roger Bennett prior to the England match,

And have you seen our defense lately? How can a country of nigh on 310 million people fail to produce four guys who can patrol an 18-by-44 yard rectangle of grass in front of our goal without channeling their inner Monty Python? (“A Divide as Wide as an Ocean”)

Hirshey and Bennett, who authored *The ESPN World Cup Companion*, wrote this feature in the style of a dialogue and sprinkle the piece with light sarcasm as they debate the potential and the ability of the American soccer team.

Defensive mistakes by the U.S. players allowed their opponents to score the early goals that frequently plagued the team. Jeré Longman (*NYT*) recounts how England scored its first goal in the fourth minute of the game,

After an England throw-in, midfielder Frank Lampard pushed the ball to forward Emile Heskey, who does not score often but provides value by making space for others.

He eluded Jay DeMerit and sliced a pass to Steven Gerrard, who knifed into the penalty area ahead of a momentarily inattentive Ricardo Clark.

That loss of concentration was costly. Gerrard sprinted free and pushed the ball into the net from 10 yards with the outside of his right foot, past the diving Howard. (“Hop, Skip and a Tie”)

Later in the same article, Longman recounts more about the defense, saying that the defense, while in question prior the start of the World Cup, improved after giving up the early goal,

Entering the match, the most urgent question for the United States was the sturdiness of its back line....It was a characteristic American effort, full of resolve instead of beauty, with defenders hustling, sliding, diving, heading away crosses, not giving Rooney many touches on the ball or space to operate. (“Hop, Skip and a Tie”)

The pattern continues into the next game with Slovenia and reoccurs in the round-of-16 with Ghana. Jeré Longman writes in his *NYT* game day articles for the Slovenia match, “Slovenia took a 2-0 lead on a counterattack in the 42nd minute when forward Zlatan Ljubijankic slipped behind an American defense that had been too tentative and disjointed” (“Stunning Rally, Shocking Call”).

Some coverage indicates that the American defense is sound, despite its mistakes, and improves over time. With the defense preventing any more English goals and the howler that got past English goalkeeper Robert Green for the United States equalizing goal, the Americans were able to draw with the heavily favored opponent. Ed Pilkington writes in a *GDN* feature after the England match, “...with players like Carlos Bocanegra and Landon Donovan the defense and midfield are proving solid” (“Horns Still Stay Silent for the Underdog USA”). When discussing the similarities between the American and Slovenian team in *NYT*, Jeffrey Marcus writes, “Slovenia, like the United States, is a physical, well-organized, defensive team that depends on the counterattack to score. Slovenia plays compact in the defensive third and tries to force mistakes, which can lead

to goals. Sound familiar?” (“United States Looks in the Mirror and Sees Slovenia”). In a *NYT* feature prior to the Ghana match, Jeff Z. Klein notes the defensive play in the Algeria match,

Despite trepidation from some American fans over Bornstein’s past errors, he and the rest of the defense performed well, sending home another one of the tournament’s six African teams. (“The Luck of the Draw Now Works for the U.S.”)

Despite this improvement, the problem returned at the following match. Ghana scored an early goal when “Midfielder Ricardo Clark coughed up the ball to Ghana’s Kwadwo Asamoah in the middle of the field, and Kevin-Prince Boateng scooped it up on his left foot, ran by two American defenders and shot low and hard past Howard” (Marcus, “For U.S., Holes Come Too Early, Too Often,” *NYT*). The American defenders are shown to have been outplayed by their opponent. Longman revisits the concern after the 2-1 loss to Ghana,

And then there is the exasperating question about why this team gave up so many early goals—in the fourth minute to England, the 13th minute to Slovenia, the fifth to Ghana. Was it a natural caution emanating from a circumspect coach? Nerves? No one seemed to have a good answer. But it was clear that small mistakes on defense had huge consequences. (“A Final Day of Chasing Ends the U.S. Run”)

The Associated Press article featured in *NYT* draws a similar conclusion, finding that the defense must be addressed for the next American World Cup team,

Even if Bradley returns, the defense needs a complete overhaul, a process that will start to unfold between August and next year’s CONCACAF Gold Cup. New players will be tested by 2012, when qualifying starts for the 2014 World Cup in Brazil.

Oguchi Onyewu showed he hasn’t fully regained mobility following knee surgery last October. Jay DeMerit and captain Carlos Bocanegra were a step late at key moments, leaving the openings that led to goals. (“US Scatters, Pondering What Might Have Been”).

Defensive mistakes, despite the hard effort and improvement over the span of matches, ultimately hurt the team.

The defensive highlight is American goalkeeper Tim Howard, shown to be a positive impact on his team. Ed Pilkington writes in *GDN* after the England match, “Tim Howard in goal has already achieved hero status across the States after his performance on Saturday” (“Horns Still Stay Silent for the Underdog USA”). Jeré Longman similarly wrote in *NYT*, “The Americans also received steadfast goalkeeping from Tim Howard, who was as resolute with bruised ribs as Green was stunningly yielding” (“Hop, Skip and a Tie”). Equally telling is that articles contain less frequent criticism of Howard compared with other players on offense and defense. Howard did have his bad moments, usually cited in conjunction with the mistakes of the rest of the other players. Jeré Longman recounts in *NYT* how Slovenia scored its first goal,

Yet the Americans again made things hard on themselves by falling behind, this time by two goals instead of one. In the 13th minute, Bradley was caught upfield and neither Torres nor Jay DeMerit nor Oguchi Onyewu provided enough cover.

Left with far too much space, midfielder Valter Birsa put Slovenia ahead, 1-0, with a blast from 25 yards. Goalkeeper Tim Howard was left flatfooted and perhaps had been shielded. (“Stunning Rally, Shocking Call”)

Longman notes that in the Ghana match, when Ghana scored its first goal, “Boateng turned the furiously backpedaling Jay DeMerit around in the tattered American defense and fired a hard, low shot from the top of the penalty area. Howard was caught off his line and slow to react” (“A Final Day of Chasing Ends the U.S. Run”). He quotes Howard in *NYT* after the loss to Ghana,

“Overall, defensively, goalkeeping as well, we need to make teams work a lot harder for goals,” said Howard, who did not have his best night on

Saturday. “At this level, when guys get inside you and in the heart of the D and in the heart of the penalty spot, you’re asking for trouble. You can see that happened too many times.” (“A Final Day of Chasing Ends the U.S. Run”)

Howard acknowledges both he and his teammates can improve in their defensive play.

Scoring Challenges/Offensive

Offense and scoring difficulties are also part of the U.S. team’s performance at the 2010 World Cup. For example, even though the United States was considered the underdog in their match against England, the offense did not take advantage of opportunities to win. Paul Wilson writes of the match’s first half in *GDN*,

Not too much harm came of it at first, the only real worry for Green was a Landon Donovan cross that a better touch from Jozy Altidore or any contact from Clint Dempsey might have turned into a goal, although a timely interception by Ledley King was necessary a few moments later to prevent Altidore’s pass from reaching Robbie Findley.

...but if the USA were not producing too much to trouble the opposition defence, then neither were England. (“England Miss Out on Fine Start as USA Benefit from Robert Green Gaffe”)

Ed Pilkington expands on this in *GDN*, “But there are question marks surrounding the strikers—Jozy Altidore, Edson Buddle, Robbie Findley and Herculez Gomez—and their ability to score” (“Horns Still Stay Silent for the Underdog USA”). Jeffrey Marcus writes in *NYT* that in order to win their remaining matches and move on to the next round, “That would require the Americans to be more aggressive and more assertive on offense than they were against England” (“United States Looks in the Mirror and Sees Slovenia”). The team’s success for the remainder of the World Cup is thought to be significantly impacted by the ability to produce more effective offensive attacks and scoring.

The team’s offensive had shining and near-shining moments all along. Even during the England match, there were signs of life, “Instead of taking control, England

drifted into a spell of unconvincing play and the US players, sparked by the lively Dempsey and Landon Donovan, enjoyed the most possession” (“Green Gaffe Gifts Draw to United States,” *BAH*). Jeffrey Marcus describes Michael Bradley’s goal that tied the United States 2-2 with Slovenia, “It came in stirring fashion, with Bradley crashing into the penalty area after Jozy Altidore headed down a long pass from Landon Donovan, who had scored in the 48th minute to cut Slovenia’s lead to 2-1” (“Coach’s Son Supplies Energy for U.S. Rally”). By far the most memorable scoring moment was the winning goal scored in added time (also referred to as injury time or stoppage time) versus Algeria because of how and when it happened.

Jeré Longman describes the play in his *NYT* game day article,

Then, a minute into added time, goalkeeper Tim Howard repelled a shot by Algeria’s Rafik Saïfi and hurled the ball upfield to Donovan on the right flank. Donovan dribbled 30 yards, or 40, and pushed the ball ahead to Jozy Altidore, hesitating a moment to see whether Altidore would take a shot or cross the ball or pull it back to him.

As Donovan looked on, Altidore sent the ball into the penalty area for Clint Dempsey, whose afternoon had been one of opportunity and toil and frustration...

...Dempsey got a foot on Altidore’s pass, then tumbled over the goalkeeper, and the ball popped free, 7 yards from goal. Donovan accelerated as everything around him seemed to slow down, he said, and he punched the ball into an empty net. (U.S. Advances with Late Dramatic Goal”)

This moment, as discussed later, could be considered the defining moment of glory for the 2010 U.S. national team.

Landon Donovan’s name stands out with the articles’ content for his 2010 performance in the face of overcoming various challenges. Donovan’s performance in the 2010 World Cup shapes his image with even more success than he already enjoyed.

Despite his talent in Major League Soccer and his loan to EPL team Everton, Donovan's resume at the World Cup was not perfect,

An emerging young star, Donovan played with blithe exuberance at the 2002 World Cup as the United States reached the quarterfinals. In 2006, he was expected to be a leader, but he found the expectation burdensome, playing poorly as the Americans exited in the first round. He has said that he felt worn down, asking himself at one point: "Why am I doing this? This is just too much?" (Longman, "U.S. Advances with Dramatic Late Goal", *NYT*)

In addition to those challenges on the pitch, Donovan has faced personal challenges. His divorce from his wife in 2009 is something Donovan had to contend with (Longman; Holton, "Tearful Donovan Ends Four Years of Hurt," *SUN*). 2010 is a different World Cup with a different Landon Donovan. "He has seemed invigorated and renewed at this World Cup, scoring a defiant goal and providing an assist against Slovenia, then delivering the winning moment against Algeria," Longman writes. Even in the final match with Ghana, Donovan is seen as the go-to player to help the team make something happen: "It was again Donovan who brought them back, converting a penalty kick in the 62nd minute after Clint Dempsey was brought down in the penalty area" (Marcus, "For U.S., Holes Come Too Early, Too Often," *NYT*). The result is he becomes the leader and face of the American team that defines pride and excellence for the team by embodying experiences many Americans can empathize with: struggle, frustration, hard work, and perseverance.

Other players garnered some media attention for their offensive roles. Midfielder Michael Bradley stood out in the Slovenia match for his "emotional and aggressive play" and game-tying goal: teammate Tim Howard said of Bradley, "'I think he did a good job in the second half of being that example. I could see Mikey taking risks, getting himself

beyond” (Marcus, “Coach’s Son Supplies Energy for U.S. Rally,” *NYT*). One article described Bradley as “one of the best young players in the tournament” (Associated Press, “US Scatters, Pondering What Might Have Been,” *NYT*). Jozy Altidore had his own World Cup comeback narrative of a different kind. He injured his ankle prior to the World Cup (Marx, “Altidore Back in Training, *SUN*) but was able to play in all the matches. He also missed practice the day before the Algeria match with stomach pains (“US Worry About Strikers Before Key Match,” *SUN*). Altidore stood out in the Algeria match in particular. Jeffrey Marcus writes Altidore was “the most dangerous offensive player not to score, and he was the lynchpin of the play that yielded the winning goal” (“Altidore Absorbs Beating to Ensure U.S. Does Not,” *NYT*).

Nonetheless, neither Altidore nor any of the other forwards contributed a goal, shedding light on one needed improvement to the future U.S. National team. One article describes the forward position of the team as “barren” for the reason that none of the forwards scored a goal (Associated Press, “US Scatters, Pondering What Might Have Been,” *NYT*). Coach Bradley acknowledges the concern, “‘Anyone who follows games around the world would know that that’s still the greatest challenge in the game—to be someone who can consistently score goals,’ Bradley said. ‘So it’s an area where we do need improvement’” (Associated Press).

Reception of the Americans

What opponents say about the American players can influence the global reputation of the U.S. national team. The American players are mostly praised by their opponents. Coach Matjez Kek is quoted in *NYT*,

“I know how strong the U.S. team is, and I know it is not a coincidence that they are as high in the FIFA rankings as they are and that they

actually played brilliantly at the Confederations Cup last year. The U.S. team has character and has heat and strength, and that's the quality all the big teams have." (Clarey, "Slovenes Hold U.S. in High Regard")

Slovenian defender Marko Suler has similar words, "I think the Americans are going to be a very difficult opponent. The national team has made quite some big successes and good results" (Clarey, "Slovenes Hold U.S. in High Regard"). George Vecsey reports that Algeria's coach, Rabah Saâdane, "praised the Americans as a good squad that had learned to play in South Africa, in this stadium at approximately a mile high, in last year's Confederations Cup" ("Two Outsiders, but No Room for Both", *NYT*). The U.S. team and South Africa seem to have been good to and for one another.

The American team also engenders great support from South Africans, who have an affinity for the United States and learned to love this tight-knit group of soccer up-starts during their surprising run in the Confederations Cup last summer.

The players may not be as recognizable as the European stars who play in the world's popular leagues broadcast on TV around Africa, but they are more accessible. The team held an open practice in Pretoria and invited more than 350 youths from local education programs to attend. The players spent as much time signing autographs and taking photos as they did training.

The United States Embassy has begun community outreach programs to bolster the team's profile here, and U.S. Soccer officials have engaged in personal diplomacy, handing out lapel pins bearing the African word "ubuntu" which means togetherness. (Marcus, "U.S. Team Cheered From the Stands and the States" *NYT*).

In addition to having respect from their opponents for their playing abilities, the team participates in creating good will outside of matches. The U.S. Soccer Federation and the U.S. team recognize a larger global purpose to a United States presence in the World Cup. The team is shown to represent the United States on a larger scale diplomatically as guests of South Africa, not only as team in a

tournament but also as a group that opens itself to interacting and embracing the people of their host nation. The team embodies a positive image, one that offers a counter to labels of American isolationism and egotism, and one of interaction and dialogue with other countries.

MLS

Major League Soccer (MLS), the professional soccer league of the United States, is portrayed as less highly regarded than its European counterparts, as capable of losing American talent to overseas clubs, yet also as a promising foundation for the future of American soccer.

Compared with the established professional leagues of Europe, MLS is considered to be an upstart that loses the best American talent to clubs overseas. David Hirshey (*NYT*) writes, “Yes, but many of our players come from Major League Soccer, which is to quality soccer what ‘The Real Housewives of New Jersey’ is to ‘King Lear’” (“A Divide as Wide as an Ocean”). While it is true the majority of American professional soccer players play in MLS, many of the more talented players go abroad to play. *NYT*’s Andrew Keh reports that nine of the 23 players on the American national team “played at least part time last season in England, including the team’s two best players Landon Donovan and Clint Dempsey” (“Saturday’s Matchups: South Korea vs. Greece, Argentina vs. Nigeria and United States vs. England”). This number includes both players officially contracted with English clubs, like Tim Howard, as well as players on loan, like Donovan. Assuming the best of American talent is selected to represent the American team, the majority of America’s best players in 2010 were not playing in the United States. This scenario has both positive and negative impacts for American soccer

as a whole. For the good, American players are exposed to the style of play, coaching and team camaraderie of clubs around the world; and, vice-versa, other countries can be exposed to American players and see that the United States can and does produce legitimate soccer talent. The challenge, however, is that this situation reinforces the perception that MLS is so inferior that even its own players do not want to be there.

The variance in reputations between the European leagues and MLS also influences MLS' prospective market. Americans are accustomed to having the world's best football and baseball teams in the United States but accept that the best soccer is abroad. Carlos Amato writes, "The US is now home to more than 90 million soccer fans. However, the national team and the MLS clubs cannot claim the allegiance of all the soccer fans in the land, who tend to support clubs and national teams across the globe ("US Look for Soccer Supremacy," *SUN*). Amato also brings up the changing demographics in the United States, quoting Sunil Gulati, the president of the United States Soccer Federation, as saying the Hispanic community is helping the state of soccer. Amato cites the various demographic backgrounds of the U.S. team as diverse, "featuring players of Hispanic, African and Caribbean immigrant backgrounds" ("US Look for Soccer Supremacy," *SUN*). Immigrant players are signing on with American teams, but immigrant fans still root for teams in their home countries.

While popularity and reputation of MLS is not ideal, the American professional league may be underestimated by observers and fans. *GDN* writer Jed Dawson writes that MLS has been successful in shaping present and future players for the American team. First, MLS shines a light on the best American soccer talent, indeed making the best of the best more visible to the clubs of Europe who then seek to recruit them. Dawson

writes, “By giving American players a place to play professionally, MLS would in turn serve as a springboard to the world at large” (“Thank the MLS for the Rise of USA and Landon Donovan”). Dawson points out that before joining EPL’s Manchester United, U.S. players Tim Howard and Clint Dempsey honed their craft and made names for themselves in MLS. Again, there are benefits to American players going abroad, playing as American ambassadors while improving themselves and using those skills to represent the United States in global tournaments. Dawson explains why MLS should not be considered strictly as a stepping stone to bigger and better clubs abroad

The league wasn’t merely a launching pad. In the case of Donovan, it was more of a lifeboat. Donovan had bypassed the MLS experience altogether to play in Germany. Thrown into the deep end, he found it difficult to keep his head above water. Thankfully, he had a Fifa-recognised league back in the States waiting to take him in. In MLS, he had a chance to mature as a player and as a man; rather than disappear into history as curio, the American would-be striker who had a cup of coffee in the Bundesliga. (“Thank the MLS...”)

Indeed, Donovan was praised throughout the tournament and described in one article as “the best American player” and “the undisputed star of the U.S. team” (Associated Press, “US Scatters, Wondering What Might Have Been,” *NYT*).

Another important purpose of MLS that Dawson points out is that it serves as a beacon for American youth. MLS gives young soccer players a professional league as a goal to aspire for; keeping them motivated, while simultaneously introducing the sport to youngsters who otherwise may never have tried it. Dawson writes,

Major League Soccer would also operate as a destination for explosive young talent. Gifted athletes such as Jozy Altidore might have turned to other sports without MLS, just as many skilled teenagers did in the wilderness years. If you can make a living through your athletic ability, trying to prove yourself overseas becomes a serious life gamble. Being embraced by a professional league in your home country transforms that gamble into a project. (“Thank the MLS...”)

Just as students in school can be more efficient in different means of learning, such as visual learners or audio learners; MLS can be a practical and productive means for American soccer talent to thrive.

The articles indicate that MLS has challengers and supporters. MLS is not perfect and must continue to vie for the attention not only of soccer players but soccer fans as well. Even Dawson is up front, “MLS has a lot of work to do...however, the foundation for success has been laid-” (“Thank the MLS for the Rise of USA and Landon Donovan,” *GDN*). The reputation of American soccer, at home and across the world, can be enhanced not only by American players who act as ambassadors abroad, but also by an MLS that grows and promotes itself as a professional league.

America and Soccer

Within the content of the newspaper articles covering the 2010 World Cup is a complex message about the state of soccer in the United States and Americans’ relationship with soccer.

Because international tournaments put all teams in the global spotlight, the perceived quality of the American soccer team is used to gauge of the quality and strength of soccer as a sport in the United States and American soccer as a whole. The U.S. National team came into the 2010 World Cup with media coverage indicating the team is worthy of respect. Even for a soccer superpower such as England, article content journalists warned that the American team is not to be taken lightly “because England’s weary superstars are in serious danger of getting yanked by the USA on Saturday night...US coach Bob Bradley’s troops are no longer a middleweight power in world football, as they proved with a memorable semifinal victory over Spain” (Amato, “US

Look for Soccer Supremacy,” *SUN*). The perspective is echoed in *GDN*: “They stand 14th in Fifa’s rankings - and 60 years on from ‘The Miracle on Grass’ England have no cause for complacency tonight” (“Meet Tonight’s Opponents USA”). The more the team accomplishes on the international stage, the more enhanced and improved its reputation becomes in international media. The United States Soccer Federation and its president Sunil Gulati are confident that its efforts are, according to Gulati, showing results that indicate “the gap between the standards of US soccer and the game’s European and South American centres is closing” (Amato, “US Look for Soccer Supremacy,” *SUN*). *NYT*’s David Hirshey writes, “we are now at a legitimate point where it is conceivable that we can hold our own against a world-class team” (“A Divide as Wide as an Ocean”). But enhanced reputation brings higher expectations. Hirshey says, “This is our best World Cup team ever but it’s also the first time in which the team has no excuses not to advance” (“A Divide...”). It is an important media milestone that the U.S. national team received positive coverage going into the 2010 World Cup both in the international papers and in the *NYT*.

On the other hand, the coverage also suggests that perhaps enthusiasm and praise are overshadowing the fact that despite American soccer’s improvement, it still has a ways to go. While Sunil Gulati sees a narrowing quality gap between the United States and foreign leagues, David Hirshey says the gap is still there and still wide. He writes, “I’m not saying the United States hasn’t made considerable progress over the last 10 years, it has. I am saying that the talent divide is – if you’re not looking through officially sanctioned United States Soccer Federation binoculars – as wide as the Atlantic” (“A Divide as Wide as an Ocean”, *NYT*). While the team achieved its goal of advancing to the

next round, losing to Ghana showed the team not reaching its full potential. *NYT*'s Jeffrey Marcus quotes Landon Donovan before the Ghana match, "'It's not a massive failure if we don't win Saturday,' Landon Donovan said. 'But there is such a massive opportunity to do something so much more special'" ("For the United States, Mission Accomplished; Now What?"). The difficulties the team encountered in the World Cup were discussed earlier in the section. Donovan's quote suggests that the performance of the team in the World Cup is not just about the then and now of success in the World Cup, but also about what that success means in the larger narrative of American soccer and its place in the world. The team's performance simultaneously displayed progress made and progress needed to make American soccer worthy of note on the international stage.

The relationship between soccer and the American people is discussed in the articles. Some articles explicitly mention Americans' preference for other sports. Paul Harris writes in *GDN*,

The failure of Americans to fall in love with soccer is as old a story as the World Cup itself and the social reasons are the same as ever. Americans love their own sports. The "big four" of American football, baseball, basketball and ice hockey are faster, more intricate and higher scoring than football, with the tendency to create single moments of high drama and a strong aversion to anything that resembles a nil-nil draw. ("For One Night, in One New York Bar, Soccer Seemed America's Game").

Harris' passage summarizes Americans' sporting taste, for one, isolationist: a preference for "their own sports" while lacking interest in a sport that is deemed to be somebody else's; "an exotic, foreign beast" ("For One Night..."). His passage also suggests that Americans favor different qualities in their sports: Americans want more scoring, more action and more strategy. It is interesting that Harris says American sports are faster, indeed it could be argued soccer is faster because the play clock never stops except at

halftime. American sports have self-contained periods of play (quarters, innings and periods) and even within those periods, teams can stop the clock to strategize or substitute players. While soccer has two halves, time within those halves does not stop. Harris may mean that American sports may seem faster because of the perception of more action. Serge Schmemmann writes in NYT, “Like many a Yank before me, I have tried to explain to my European friends that Americans actually know soccer quite well, that many of us played it in school and college, but that, well, we just don’t find it quite as exciting as, say, what we call football” (“Savoring Victory on Rival Turf”). Schmemmann notes that American youth embrace playing the sport but this does not translate into watching or supporting a professional team or league the way it does for baseball, football and basketball. Americans and the global others have different takes on what is considered to be exciting or entertaining.

On the other hand, there is evidence that Americans are not completely devoid of passion for soccer. Ed Pilkington writes, “It would be wrong to imply that this country is indifferent to the World Cup,” (“Horns Still Stay Silent for the Underdog USA”). Television networks ESPN and ABC heavily marketed the World Cup and the viewership results suggest the effort was not in vain. Lawrence Donegan reports in GDN that ESPN committed \$100 million and 200 employees to bring 2010 World Cup coverage to the American public (“The US Takes the World Cup to its Heart but Will this Dalliance Last?”). Richard Sandomir reports that the effort is paying off in ratings, “Through Wednesday, an average of 2.6 million viewers per game were watching the World Cup on ESPN, ESPN2 and ABC, up from 1.8 million four years ago” (“U.S. Game Draws Big Numbers for ESPN”). He also reports that 12.9 million viewers watched the United

States versus England match on ABC. 17.1 million Americans in total are reported to have watched the England match (this number includes the 12.9 who watched on ABC plus the number who watched on Univision, which had the Spanish language network rights to the World Cup in the United States) (“US v Ghana Match Draws Record TV Audience,” *SUN*). In comparison, 19.4 million Americans (counting both ABC and Univision) watched the United States play Ghana (“US v Ghana...”, *SUN*). Writers also noted that these numbers are small compared with 106 million Americans who watched the 2010 Super Bowl (Harris, “For One Night, in One New York Bar, Soccer Seemed America’s Game”, *GDN*; “US v Ghana...”, *SUN*). While these numbers confirm America’s preference for football, the soccer numbers are nonetheless noteworthy. Stephen Master, Vice President of Sports at Nielsen, is quoted in *SUN* ““This record viewership proves that soccer is as popular as it has ever been in the United States”” (“US v Ghana...”). Jeffrey Marcus reports, “In the United States, the team’s World Cup games have drawn record television ratings and have captured the popular attention in a way that soccer never has” (“U.S. Team Cheered From the Stands and the States”, *NYT*). Statistically, at least, American interest in soccer is increasing.

Qualitative examples of American fan support are also evident in the coverage. The U.S. team is shown to enjoy a loyal following of fans at the World Cup. Jeffery Marcus writes, “the Americans have been buoyed by a large and vocal traveling contingent that rivals the most loyal European or South American fans” (“U.S. Team Cheered From the Stands and the States,” *NYT*). He quotes head coach Bob Bradley, ““It’s not often you see them lining up on the road before the game, all dressed up and chanting and banging on the bus,’ Coach Bob Bradley said after the Americans beat

Algeria, 1-0, on Wednesday. “That was a really special moment for the team” (“U.S. Team Cheered...” *NYT*). But there is more than spirit at work: “powerful forces are changing American attitudes towards football and none of them is Landon Donovan’s right foot” (Donegan, “The US Takes the World Cup to its Heart but Will this Dalliance Last?”, *GDN*). Former President of the United States Bill Clinton, known for his efforts in Africa, is an advocate for American soccer. During the World Cup, not only did he visit the team at the World Cup, but he was the honorary chair of the U.S. Soccer Federation’s committee seeking to bring either the 2018 or 2022 World Cup to the United States (Donegan, “The US Takes the World Cup...”, *GDN*; “Bill Clinton to Attend US-Algeria Match”, *SUN*). Donegan also refers to ESPN’s investment in covering the World Cup as one of those “powerful forces.”

The all important question is whether the momentum of American soccer enthusiasm earned in the 2010 World Cup will continue. There are questions about what the optimistic results of the American run at the 2010 World Cup really mean. Some might say the interest is temporary or short-lived because the interest is more in the World Cup than in American soccer. Paul Harris writes, “the bubble of football popularity soon deflates” (“For One Night, in One New York Bar, Soccer Seemed America’s Game” *GDN*). Roger Bennett writes, prior to the first match with England, “The real victory for American soccer will be won off the field: this tournament will be remembered as one in which America’s traditional deep-seated suspicion of all things soccer finally evaporated” (“A Divide as Wide as an Ocean”, *NYT*). So, where will United States-soccer relationship go? Lawrence Donegan asks this question in *GDN*,

The answer is that a nation has become gripped by the stylistically limited but undeniably dogged efforts of Bradley’s squad and their progress into

tomorrow's match against Ghana for a place in the quarter-finals. Where will it end? The most obvious answer is that it depends on tomorrow's result. Victory for the USA and the interest will continue, and intensify. Defeat for the USA, and a pivotal moment beckons for the world's most popular game and its age-old quest to "make it" in the world's most lucrative sports market. ("The US Takes the World Cup to its Heart but Will this Dalliance Last?"")

The United States lost to Ghana but the question of what can bond Americans with soccer is still valid and will continue to be pondered by the U.S. Soccer Federation, television networks and sports marketing professionals seeking to create an experience, an identity that can make the bond happen.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

In this thesis, framing and world culture theory are lenses by which the content of four international online newspapers is examined through textual analysis. Framing, world culture theory, and textual analysis fit well together because they lend themselves to the exploration and discussion of identity and how identity is important within the communication field.

Coverage of the United States (U.S.) national men's soccer team during the 2010 World Cup has been analyzed using four international English-language newspapers: *The New York Times* (NYT) from the United States, *The Guardian* (GDN) from England, *Buenos Aires Herald* (BAH) from Argentina, and *The Sunday Times* (SUN) from South Africa. Articles from these four papers are used to derive and highlight an international perspective on how the team is framed.

The majority of the articles analyzed are from NYT, which is not surprising because it is an American newspaper writing to American readers about an American team. Articles in NYT tend to be longer and to provide more details and discussion in match articles and in topical subjects in feature articles. The second highest number of articles comes from South Africa's SUN. This is not surprising because South Africa is the host country; two of the four games in which the United States played were against African countries; and the coverage suggests that the U.S. team has made a positive connection with the South African community via its active visibility and accessibility.

Past and present political and economic connections between the United States and the African continent are also suggested in article content, which could play a factor in the South African interest in the American team. *GDN* coverage includes match articles for all four of the American matches and features leading up to the team's match versus England, however the number of articles about the United States sharply declines after the England match. England being a country with a proud soccer tradition and passionate fan base, *GDN* focuses more on the English national team than any other team. The *BAH* has match articles for each U.S. match, summarizing the results succinctly without quotes or much elaboration beyond the basics. It also has on average one feature story about the U.S. team per match, providing slightly longer content and some context about why the next match is important.

The themes identified in the analysis section are: 1) Never Say Die/American Spirit; 2) Chance/Opportunity; 3) Falling Behind/Giving Up Early Goals; 4) Defense; 5) Scoring challenges/Offensive; 6) Reception of the Americans; 7) MLS; and 8) America and Soccer. These themes serve as frames; central concepts that organize the article content and shape how the U.S. men's national team is portrayed.

Put together, the frames show that in 2010, the men's national team is in an adolescent phase in that it embodies an idealistic aura that speaks to positive values of hard work, progress, and the potential for success. At the same time, the team suffers from awkward growing pains in the form of missed opportunities and uphill climbs, often of its own making, because of made technical mistakes. While not the most talented group of players to take the pitch, the American players are not the loveable losers either because they show themselves capable of winning and producing awe-inspiring moments

that appeal to those who watch. One good example is Landon Donovan's late match-winning goal to defeat Algeria in the team's final group stage meeting, which garnered significant attention from multiple papers (Fallon, "Landon Donovan's Last-Ditch Strike Puts US Top of Group," *GDN*; "Mighty Donovan Scores on Aggregate to Clinch US Pass to Knockout Phase," *BAH*; Holton & Reuters, "Tearful Donovan Ends Four Years of Hurt," *SUN*) . Countries with the most economic prosperity (i.e. those that can pour more resources into sport development) usually dominate the game (Kuper & Syzmanski, 2009), however, the United States to date has been the devil's advocate to the notion.

The composition of American sporting culture is reaffirming and changing as the identity of the U.S. national men's team evolves over time. What is also important is the role of media coverage in the evolving identity of the team. At first framed as a team that arguably did not earn its outcome with England due to sub par British offensive play and the own goal allowed by the British goalkeeper (Wilson, "England Miss Out on Fine Start as USA Benefit From Robert Green Gaffe," *GDN*; "Green Gaffe Gifts Draw to United States," *BAH*). As it continues through the tournament, however, the U.S. team comes to be praised for its persistence and psychological stamina despite challenges faced throughout its matches that threaten its success. Over time, instead of being framed strictly based on what it lacks or cannot do, the U.S. team is being framed as shaping its own identity in a unique way by embodying attitudes and values that are recognizable and appreciated in American culture: hard work, perseverance, no quitting, and belief in self. When the Americans win, also to an extent when they draw, they are shown to do so using these qualities that are juxtaposed with examples of European teams who in times of challenge would not embody the same spirit. The team is framed as one that embodies

qualities that woven together stand out as uniquely American. In soccer culture, no longer is the U.S. team a team that lacks but a team that has, even if it does not have everything.

A unique American identity is not contradictory to global soccer culture. Various styles of play and tradition that vary from country to country are openly praised because it diversifies the game and gets people talking (often about which way is best). An American soccer identity infused with American ideals is beneficial because it attracts attention from American sport consumers who may feel a disconnect with soccer and brings the American team into American sport discussion. When these ideals contribute to an improved soccer product, they can be appreciated internationally as well because the American team is included more frequently and more seriously within global soccer discussion. What needs improvement is American technical skill and style of play, which needs to evolve and improve to match the praised American positive attitude, work ethic, and mental stamina.

The mores that are attributed to the U.S. team are seen in coverage from all four newspapers, suggesting that the connection of the team with these values is not limited to American media. In this way, the 2010 World Cup is a meaningful “media event” for the U.S. team and American soccer in general because a globally unified understanding of the team is made and is positive. Americans who consume the coverage are able to make an identifiable link with American values and soccer; while non-Americans who consume the coverage see these values as a positive effort on the Americans’ part to be a meaningful contributor to the global game. These attributed values do not come across in the coverage as negative for the reason of being American; indeed the values are seen as a virtue in that they are means to an end of enhancing a global event. American success in

soccer via these ideals changes the dynamic of global soccer because the American team is not a team that is disinterested and disengaged with the desire, competitiveness, and passion that embodies soccer culture around the world.

The frames also show a team that, when it does not play its best game, often gets in its own way by creating its own mistakes and simultaneously failing to create enough scoring opportunities: missed chances. In this sense, the coverage suggests the team's performance reaffirms what earlier coverage discussed in the gap in technical skill between American soccer and the best of its foreign counterparts (Hirshey & Bennett, "A Divide as Wide as an Ocean," *NYT*). The defensive errors that allowed opponents to score first and early in all but one of the matches, combined with no goals made by the forwards, resulted in a variety of mistakes and missed chances (Marcus, "For U.S., Holes Come Too Early, Too Often," *NYT*). The article content overall suggests that the U.S. team simultaneously achieves its primary goal in advancing beyond group stage, yet also disappoints because the outcomes of mistakes and missed chances leave the reader questioning 'what if' (Associated Press, "US Scatters Wondering What Might Have Been," *NYT*). Rather than being decidedly defeated by the opponent, more so American players come across as defeating themselves.

Not all coverage of the team's skill, however, is negative. The U.S. men's team possesses two "star" players, midfielder Landon Donovan and goalkeeper Tim Howard, who make iconic plays at key moments and provide leadership. Such players provide material for media content and suggest a team that has direction, leadership, and a solid foundation from which to build around.

While the foundation is solid and shows promise, the walls of the house need to be sturdy as well; meaning that more talent is needed to assure a solid team both in scope (more consistent talent at all 11 positions) and depth (talent of reserves as well as starters). The 2010 U.S. men's World Cup team exemplifies how one or two players can be difference makers, however cannot be team makers.

Through the lenses of framing and world culture theory, this study shows that media events, such as the World Cup, are places for identity negotiation and change. The articles give evidence that the combination of performance and media attention together shape how a World Cup team's sense of self and perception by other teams and countries is formed. Specifically, this study finds that America's relationship with soccer, particularly professional soccer, is not guaranteed to be static forever as acrimonious. Nor is the relationship guaranteed to be permanently changed in the positive direction. The ideal goal of being a formidable opponent in tournament after tournament is not earned in one World Cup, thus the 2010 World Cup is one step in the process. What the analyzed articles of the U.S. national men's team during the 2010 World Cup show is that in this chapter in American national soccer, an American presence in international coverage not only is present but in many ways is positive.

Within the lens of world culture theory, the coverage of the 2010 U.S. men's national team suggests that the team is contributing to the consciousness of American presence in a global arena: soccer. The United States, through evolving coverage that highlights the character of the team playing, is creating a positive space for American coexistence in the global game. During the long stretch of time when the United States was not talented enough to qualify for the World Cup, its identity was that of a loser;

non-existent and irrelevant in the soccer world. International press coverage in 2010 suggests that the American attitude is to train for and earn a new identity as that of a competitor; a team that will not be out-spirited, will not quit, and will not resign to loss until the final whistle is blown. Rather than be indifferent to or pretend that the soccer world is irrelevant-American soccer culture is seen in 2010 as making a concerted effort to make its way into global soccer consciousness.

The 2010 World Cup coverage indicates that particular American values embodied by the team are not a detrimental addition to the global soccer culture. The dominance of the United States in various arenas (political, economic, sporting, etc.) sometimes brings with it concerns about Americanization or elimination of anything that does not fit or conform; the elimination of diversity. In 2010, mores of perseverance, hard work, and refusal to quit are appreciated because it provides a better quality of product and reflects an effort by the United States to be an active participant in a global event. The context of these team values is highlighted in the texts. Despite occasional lapses in technical play, the values still become strongly linked with the team. The U.S. team is further respected for its active presence in the community in the host country, embodying a larger purpose than simply playing soccer, representing the United States in multiple layers of cultural exchange. Time, politics, and social mores in America's development contributed to shape soccer as being outside the desirable values of American sport. The same three also are contributing to the shaping of soccer as being within desirable values of American sport while not denying the global nature of the event itself.

The articles are not all uniform in optimism in terms of the potential for American embracement of the national team to last in a meaningful and consistent way or

whether MLS can be taken seriously as a professional soccer league (Harris, “For One Night, in One New York bar, Soccer Seemed America’s Game,” *GDN*); however the absence of uniformity one way or another is evidence of the negotiation in process. Rather than universal dismissal of MLS, there is content that gives a nod to the importance of an American professional league in promoting participation and talent development in the United States (Dawson, “Thank the MLS for the Rise of USA and Landon Donovan,” *GDN*). Broadcasting investment in marketing the team, the events of the matches and performances of the players; and media coverage of the team increase the ways for Americans to consume and embrace the U.S. national team.

In the simplest of terms, what is to be taken away from 2010 World Cup is that there is room in the global soccer community for the United States and there is room for professional soccer in American sporting tradition. The extent to which and how the two interact and come together will continue to evolve over time and will be interesting to observe.

Utilizing textual analysis and world culture theory as the methodological and theoretical framework respectively, one can gain a sense of perceptions about the United States’ place in the soccer world by looking at how the team is portrayed and the values attributed to the team within the content. Utilizing world culture theory, one can learn about the United States’ identity and perception in a global context within the realm of a specific sport, soccer. Soccer is examined because of the enthusiasm for soccer that exists all over the world to varying degrees.

The first research question asked:

RQ1: How was the 2010 U.S. World Cup team portrayed in *The New York Times*, *The Guardian*, *Buenos Aires Herald*, and *The Sunday Times*?

Early on, the U.S men's team was portrayed as lucky. A fortunate draw put them into a first round group that maximized the team's chances to win. A team's potential during a World Cup competition is determined by talent on the team and the luck of the draw. The U.S. team's group draw was deemed to be favorable. This drawing, in conjunction with the team's accomplishments meant that the United States had ideal conditions to progress relatively far, if they played well. The articles indicate that satisfaction in qualifying for the World Cup is no longer enough and success becomes redefined at minimum as advancing out of group.

As the tournament progresses, the U.S. team image changes from being a team handed its outcomes by the other team's performance to a team that makes its own opportunities (though does not always see those opportunities fulfilled) and earns its outcomes. In the first group match against England, while the team is given some credit for staying competitive enough not to lose outright, England goalkeeper Robert Green's mistake resulting in an own-goal, the only goal of the game for the United States, is reported to be the worst of a game of unsatisfactory play by England. In a game where neither side played well, criticism focused more on England, suggesting that as the better team England ought to have played better than it did. The mistakes made by the United States seem normalized or consistent with expectations of not playing well. The United States went into the game as the underdog and the post-game coverage suggests that a draw with England is pretty much the equivalent of a win for the United States, reaffirming an association of the United States with inferior quality soccer and lower expectations.

Against Slovenia and Algeria, the U.S. team is considered the favorite. While both games are competitive and the Americans made their share of mistakes, the articles about those matches as well as the later round-of-16 loss to Ghana put more weight on U.S. performance as the determining factor. In the Slovenia match, the Americans are framed to continue with various mistakes but play a better game. Attention is put on the referee's reverse goal call and the complaint made by the Americans that the referee never made clear the basis for the penalty. Most coverage regarded the call as unfair and praised the U.S. team for maintaining competitiveness and coming back despite falling behind early. A similar rhetoric follows the Algeria match, although the focus shifts even more in the Americans' favor because their comeback in that match resulted in a win needed to advance out of the group and fulfill expectations. Mistakes and missed opportunities are still pointed out concerning the Americans' play but their team character becomes a significant factor in defining their style of play.

The Ghana match brings the reality of the American team's mistakes back to earth because despite effort and coming back again to tie the game, the Americans ultimately lose. The team repeatedly fell behind by giving up early goals, having defensive lapses, and not scoring often enough, particularly a problem for the team forwards, bringing back into focus the idea that skill as well as heart is needed to win consistently. Quotes from members of the team in the articles suggest the team is aware of the primary mistakes they make; "the warning signs were there" as Donavan puts it (Marcus, "For U.S., Holes Come Too Early, Too Often," *NYT*). Ultimately, however, the U.S. team is eliminated because it could not satisfactorily adjust and find solutions on the field. Post-Ghana

match coverage confirms that there are technical aspects that the United States must address in the future to improve the quality of the team.

All in all, the team is framed in the beginning as staying within its known identity of poor play and undeserved outcomes. Despite its mistakes, the team carves out a new identity for itself in the Slovenia and Algeria matches that evokes positive American values and shows progress and potential. While the team satisfies the minimum expectation by advancing out of group, the type of play and mistakes suggest that Americans back home as well as the team are left wondering if perhaps more could have been achieved; a bittersweet continuation of American identity on the World Cup stage to be expanded upon again in four years time.

The second question asked:

RQ2: How were cultural values portrayed in the newspaper coverage of the 2010 U.S. World Cup team?

The U.S. cultural value that most stands out is that of never quitting/playing to the end. The notion of hard work, commitment, and belief that success can be achieved (though is not guaranteed) through hard work and commitment is a notion audible in American rhetoric.

American children are taught to appreciate the ideals of working hard and achieving “the American Dream,” which is archetypally symbolized by individuals who have little and work their way up the socio-economic ladder. The American Dream represents an ideal about American culture that is supposed to counter the more socially rigid cultures of Western Europe and others. Ironically consistent with one aspect of globalization, the American Dream says that one’s identity, who one is, is not set in stone. The Dream is that with effort and good choices, a person can be more, achieve

more. The American Dream, of course, typically is an ideal and shows the potential of positive change. The obverse is that people who fall from high places often are portrayed as individuals who did not work hard or who made poor choices. In that sense, there is room in American culture for one's identity to change for the worse; not necessarily because the American Dream is inhibiting, but because one failed to fully embody the ideals that the American Dream represents.

In the coverage, character is valued in American players whose stories rest not only on hard work but also on overcoming obstacles or mistakes. As the team progresses through the tournament, the articles praise players for persevering despite mistakes made on the field, in the past or during the World Cup matches. Landon Donovan scored three important goals, one of two against Slovenia and the only American goal in the Algeria and Ghana games. His game-winning goal to win in injury time against Algeria resulted in coverage identifying him as a clutch player, a player who carries the team, and a leader. The articles often covered his 2010 World Cup outing as a redemption of his poor performance during the 2006 World Cup. He is portrayed as someone who, through his hard work and choices, matured as a person and a player.

While the values of the American spirit -no quitting, perseverance, and belief in self- are appreciated as being American, where these values aid the American identity within the global soccer community is that the team is shown not only to value winning, but also valuing the achievement of good quality soccer abilities. This desire for and equally (if not more so) important demonstration of technical improvement serves as a contrast to an identity of American indifference to the required skill of soccer.

The breadth of American fans' support for the team –now and in the future- is debated in the coverage. But the depth and intensity of those who do care is framed as vibrant, active, and supportive. Early in the World Cup, American fans and their interest is downplayed as non-existent or short-lived, on one hand, yet filled with hope based on the team's positive accomplishments the previous year. As the tournament progresses, American support is covered more and more descriptively as the team advances through the group stage and moves on to the next round. Fans of the American team are described as cheering the team outside the team bus in South Africa while American fans back home are using social media to cheer for the team (Marcus, "U.S. Team Cheered from the Stands and the States," *NYT*). Coverage suggests that the U.S. match ratings on ESPN/ABC are good and considered a success for the team as well as for ESPN and ABC, given the investment in marketing the matches ("Sandomir, "U.S. Game Draws Big Numbers for ESPN," *NYT*; Sapa-AFP, "US v Ghana match Draws Record TV Audience," *SUN*). The outcome of the team's success is certainly a factor in the spirit of American fans and coverage of the American fans. Articles after the team's exit from the tournament bring forth questions about how Americans embrace soccer. How Americans embrace the national soccer team as well as how they embrace organized professional soccer at home is something that will need to be observed over time.

The American pursuit of hard work and perseverance through challenges is appreciated and infused into its sporting culture rhetoric when American athletes demonstrate those qualities. Americans take pride not only in working hard but in excelling, particularly in the realm of athletic competition. Soccer, as a sport, has encountered an uphill climb in American sport consciousness. There are several factors

that have shaped how Americans view soccer. There is the perception of soccer as unappealing because it is not an American sport. The slow embracement of individuals to play soccer and to develop professional leagues until the late twentieth century has played a role in postponing commitment to training for a professional and global stage. American teams have until recently been seriously underdeveloped relative to a number of their counterparts around the world. These teams could not reach the World Cup and thus there was no access or global stage to attract American consumer attention. The lack of results, if anything, reinforced American dislike for soccer, further putting off would-be American fans. As a result, the United States has had, and some would say still has, a gap to fill to maintain a lasting reputation as a soccer nation. One could say that like the 2010 American World Cup team, soccer is coming from behind and must seek a comeback to remain viable. Ironically, there is a sense that American spirit, pride and values of individualism are behind why soccer is not as popular in the United States (soccer not being an “American” sport) but are also behind the positive coverage of the American team mentality that quitting is not an option. This suggests, with the national team as an exemplar, that Americans’ view of soccer can change and be refocused in a more positive way in the long run. If soccer in America can be organized and marketed in a way that incorporates traditional American values with the global persona of the game, then Americans may be more open to gravitating to the sport.

The third question asked was:

RQ3: How were the issues of globalization portrayed in the newspaper coverage of the 2010 U.S. World Cup team?

Globalization and world culture theory identify and analyze the awareness of some sort of oneness with the rest of world, the oneness all countries have in common in existing

within the same single sphere. This concept applies in various arenas (cultural, economic, political, etc.) that are interconnected and interrelated (Tomlinson, 1999). In this thesis, globalization is narrowed down into global consciousness and oneness as a sporting world. Soccer, while the most broadly played and consumed sport globally, is not as popular within the United States. The United States produces enough players to form a national team, though historically the national team did not perform well enough to qualify for many international tournaments until the 1990s. The national team is in a difficult place within the American psyche of sport because Americans traditionally do not expect success, though they demand or wish for success simply because fans want their teams to be the best.

Earlier in this chapter, the proposition is made that the same spirit or values underlie both the support for the U.S. national team and traditional distaste for the sport of soccer. The fusion of American values with the values that make the sport popular around the world can bring a bigger American consciousness to soccer at the professional competitive level. This means recognizing the local and the global, or the glocal and the grobal, interacting with one another.

There are practices that while on the surface are presently used as evidence of soccer's lower status in American soccer culture, may represent the seedlings of soccer identity growing stronger. In one particular article, *GDN* writer Ed Pilkington expresses his dismay with American media using baseball analogies to draw create connection and understanding with American consumers ("Horns Still Stay Silent for Underdog USA"). He argues that soccer should be appreciated in its own right, not through the context of another sport. While his assessment about the value of soccer in its own right is valuable,

what Pilkington might be missing is that analogies, that could be useful now to facilitate understanding and sustain interest, may be unnecessary later on; perhaps like training wheels. Further, to condemn Americans' appreciation for sports they enjoy comes across as hypocritical while pointing out how they put down and do not appreciate soccer. To challenge one side to be open-minded while not reciprocating inhibits the communication and negotiating process. Soccer took a different path in much of the rest of the world than it did in the United States, so it is not unreasonable to consider that the way Americans have learned about soccer has been different and how they will continue to learn about soccer may need a different approach. Just as teachers have strategies for students who learn through better though different methods (audio, visual, tactile) and managers have different approaches to a given match depending on the players at his or her disposal; with effective methods and communication, Americans, like their national team, have the potential to develop over time.

The increasing access to foreign soccer matches through American media and from teams traveling to the United States to compete with MLS teams might be considered as evidence that American professional soccer (MLS) is not capable of sustaining interest. Ironically, the history of soccer, even in Europe, indicates that popularity of club soccer spread because the best teams in various countries would travel and compete with each other. Foreign teams benefit in traveling to the United States because they can acquire American attention and perhaps make more deals in the future with American media to cover their teams. Players representing American teams, meanwhile, benefit from competitive play with other teams other than every four years at the World Cup and the Olympics. Those players good enough to play professionally but

not good enough for the national team get experience in the sport that they otherwise might not have.

Also important to consider is that while MLS is noted, in the negative sense, often for inferior play, the opportunities for foreign teams to travel to the United States would be slimmer without MLS. As mentioned earlier in this conclusion, article coverage during the 2010 World Cup offered both sides of the debate over the value of MLS. Just as the U.S. national team has become more successful with more appearances in the World Cup, the opportunity for teams in the American professional league to engage with foreign teams, as well as fan and organizational support for internal matches within the league, are valuable to MLS becoming something better.

The soccer world has potential to develop and learn from growing American presence within that world. Similarly, American sport and culture can benefit from embracing a sport that, while it cannot be claimed like territory as American, can be a global game and still allow room for an American style. This supports Giulianotti and Robertson's (2009) explanation of how the global does not completely eliminate the local in globalization interactions. Countries where soccer has flourished have developed unique styles of play that stand out on their own yet are appreciated by the soccer world as contributing to make the beautiful game beautiful: Brazil, Italy, Netherlands, etc. Similarly, an American approach to consuming, appreciating, and playing the sport can be developed that will not take over or Americanize the whole of the sport in a hostile takeover, but provide a new color to the painting.

Maximizing the opportunities of soccer requires being open minded and applying intelligent marketing and organization. In the short run some MLS players are reinforcing

soccer culture, that exists in other countries as well, of moving outside the country for competitive opportunities. The initial shock for a country that has successful competitive leagues in other sports, but cannot keep decent soccer players, certainly exists.

Alternatively, those players, such as Tim Howard, can learn skills and bring them back to better serve the U.S. national team, create effective coaching opportunities for those players after their playing days are over or produce better coaching at home in the United States. The coverage of the U.S. national team during the 2010 World Cup suggests that opportunities and challenges are what people make of them.

What the 2010 World Cup coverage of the national team shows is that positive American values embodied by and recognizable within the team and improved technical skill have a positive impact on how the team is covered.

Future research can delve into American attitudes toward soccer in general as well as professional soccer in the United States through focus groups or surveys. Broader research comparing and contrasting newspaper coverage of the U.S. national team during different World Cups can offer a look at how coverage of the team is changing and how the identity of the U.S. team and the United States within the soccer community has evolved and is evolving. Coverage of the national men's team during the 2010 World Cup can be analyzed alongside coverage of the U.S. national women's team in the 2011 Women's World Cup to examine how values may be similar or different in framing the teams. Sport management and marketing research could benefit by examining the impact of globalization and media coverage on the U.S. national team and analyzing how that knowledge might contribute to the development of new business strategies for MLS to increase its appeal to Americans.

In summary, the 2010 World Cup is one chapter in the U.S. national men's soccer team's journey in shaping its identity in the global soccer world. Within globalization, identity is always in a state of change and negotiation. The men's and women's national teams, as the country's representatives in international soccer, are and will continue to be an important factor, though not the only factor, in the development of soccer in the United States and respect from the global soccer community.

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APPENDIX A: LIST OF NEWSPAPER ARTICLES ANALYZED
(by paper, in chronological order)

The New York Times

Marcus, J. (2010, June 8). Winning strategy? Start with survive and advance. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com>

Longman, J. (2010, June 9). Group C: Early anticipation for Americans. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com>

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Keh, A. (2010, June 11). Saturday's matchups: South korea vs. greece, argentina vs. nigeria and united states vs. england. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com>

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- Vecsey, G. (2010, June 22). Two outsiders, but no room for both. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com>
- Longman, J. (2010, June 23). U.S. advances with dramatic late goal. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com>
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- Klein, J. Z. (2010, June 24). The luck of the draw now works for the u.s. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com>
- Sandomir, R. (2010, June 24). U.S. game draws big numbers for espn. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com>
- Vecsey, G. (2010, June 24). A diplomatic traveling supporter of the u.s. team sees the big picture. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com>
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Wilson, P. (2010, June 27). World cup 2010: Ghana take direct route past usa into last eight. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <http://www.guardian.co.uk>

Buenos Aires Herald

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Green gaffe gifts draw to united states. (2010, June 13). *Buenos Aires Herald*. Retrieved from <http://www.buenosairesherald.com>

Bring on the americans, slovenia say. (2010, June 14). *Buenos Aires Herald*. Retrieved from <http://www.buenosairesherald.com>

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US readies to face slovenia in defining match. (2010, June 18). *Buenos Aires Herald*. Retrieved from <http://www.buenosairesherald.com>

Mighty Donovan scores on aggregate to clinch us pass to knockout phase. (2010, June 23). *Buenos Aires Herald*. Retrieved from <http://www.buenosairesherald.com>

Gyan sends Ghana into quarter-finals. (2010, June 26). *Buenos Aires Herald*. Retrieved from <http://www.buenosairesherald.com>

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