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An Exploratory Study of the Relationships Between Televised Sports Viewing Habits and Conformity to Masculine Norms

THOMAS C. JOHNSON AND EDWARD SCHIAPPA

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In this exploratory study the relationships between televised sports viewing habits and conformity to masculine norms were examined through a single panel survey. The amount and types of sports programming an individual watches in a usual week were assessed, along with attitudes about masculinity as measured by the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory. A group of 183 U.S. college students completed the survey. Findings indicated that there are significant correlations between televised sports viewing habits and conformity to masculine norms, and more violent sports (such as "Ultimate Fighting Championships") tend to be associated with a greater number of norms connected to Hegemonic Masculinity.

An important area of media effects scholarship for over three decades has been the relationship between media consumption and gender role attitudes. The premise of such research is that the mass media, especially television, are important socializing agents along with family, schools, and peers in terms of inculcating what Bem usefully calls "the lenses of gender" (1993). After decades of scholarship, it is clear that television plays an influential role in shaping attitudes about gender-appropriate roles and behaviors and that most, though certainly not all, of that influence tends to encourage traditional and even stereotypical beliefs and attitudes about sex and gender. A meta-

analysis of research on television programming and sex stereotyping by Herrett-Skjellum and Allen (1996) synthesized scholarship both on the content of television programming and its effects. What message is being provided?—"All content analyses illustrate the consistent finding that men are more often on TV, in higher-status roles as characters, and are represented as having greater power than women" (p. 171). Based on such analysis, "We may conclude that the content of the media incorporates a large number of sexual stereotypes" (p. 173). More recently, Oppliger (2007) conducted a meta-analysis involving 33 studies and over 12,000 participants. Twenty-five of the studies she analyzed involved children. She concludes, "As exposure to gender stereotyping increased, sex-typed behavior and sex-role stereotyped attitudes increased" (p. 16). Herrett-Skjellum and Allen (1996) report that "heavy" television viewers are twice as likely as other viewers to profess sex-specific stereotypical attitudes (p. 178). Moreover, Orlofsky, Cohen and Ramsden (1985) found that people with more traditional (stereotyped) sex role attitudes are more likely to have reported sex-typed interests and behaviors.

This exploratory study, examining the relationships between televised sports viewing habits and conformity to masculine norms through a single panel survey, contributes to this line of scholarship in two distinct ways. First, we focus on a particular genre of television viewing that has been theorized as being particularly influential for reinforcing traditionally masculine norms; namely, sports programming. Second, rather than treat masculinity as a unidimensional construct, we examine the association of sports television viewing with a number of attitudes assessed by the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory (Mahalik, Locke, Ludlow, Diemer, Scott, Gottfried & Freitas, 2003). "Masculinity" is an abstract concept whose meaning varies culturally and historically. For that reason it is important to operationalize masculinity in a manner that reflects dominant contemporary constructions, even while acknowledging that such dominant constructions are constantly being renegotiated.

Televised Sports and Cultivating Attitudes about Masculinity

Research informed by cultivation theory, originally articulated by Gerbner (1969, 1970), attempts to document the relationship between television viewing and specific attitudes. The premise of cultivation analysis is that those who spend more time “living” in the world of television are more likely to see the “real world” in terms of the images, values, portrayals, and ideologies that emerge through television viewing. The main query cultivation analysis attempts to answer is whether or not “those who spend more time with television are more likely to perceive social reality in ways that reflect the potential lessons of the television world (the ‘television answer’) rather than are those who watch less television but are otherwise comparable (in terms of important demographic characteristics) to the heavy viewers” (Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, Signorielli & Shanahan, 2002, p. 47). Cultivation research has shown that the amount of television viewing correlates positively with various perceptions of reality depicted heavily on television, including the number of people working in professional jobs such as doctors, lawyers, and business people (Buerkel-Rothfuss & Mayes, 1981), prevalence of violence and crime (Gerbner, Gross, Morgan & Signorielli, 1980; Shrum, 1996), pervasiveness of smoking (Shanahan, Scheufele, Yang & Hizi, 2004), the desirability of product consumption (O’Guinn & Shrum, 1997; Shrum, Wyer & O’Guinn, 1998), judgments about illegitimacy and single parenthood (Morgan, Leggett & Shanahan, 1999), and beliefs about marital problems and relationships (Segrin & Nabi, 2002; Shrum, 1999).

Shanahan and Morgan provide a comprehensive overview of cultivation research in *Television and its Viewers: Cultivation Theory and Research* (1999). In their meta-analysis, they summarize nearly 6,000 separate findings from 97 study samples, involving tens of thousands of viewers, all published since 1976. Studying attitudes concerning everything from aging, minority groups,

abortion, legalization of marijuana, interracial marriage, crime rates, sex roles, to romance, Shanahan and Morgan document what they describe as the “cultivation differential”: the margin of difference in conceptions of reality between light and heavy viewers in the same demographic subgroups, across different variables and populations (see also Gerbner et al., 2002, p. 47). Shanahan and Morgan (1999) found that the average overall effect size for cultivation studies is $r = .10$. They indicate, “On average, cultivation studies (summing across all studies, all samples, all methods, all measures, and all dependent areas) have found a consistent, theoretically predicted relationship between exposure to television and beliefs about the world” (p. 125). With respect to sex-role attitudes and gender stereotypes, Oppliger (2007) found significant, positive correlations in her meta-analysis of research on television viewing and gender stereotyping. The average correlations in nonexperimental studies were similar to those reported in previous cultivation research ($r = .12$), with a higher average association in studies involving children ($r = .21$) than those with adults ($r = .096$).

Cultivation analysis would seem particularly appropriate for the genre of sports television, described as one of the most appealing forms of entertainment for males and young boys in the United States (Rinehart, 1998; Sabo & Jansen, 1998; Trujillo, 1994). In a content analysis of the sports programming that U.S. boys watch most, Messner, Dunbar and Hunt (2000) identified 10 recurrent themes concerning gender, race, aggression, violence, militarism, and commercialism. These themes are described as the “Televised Sports Manhood Formula” and include “white males are the voices of authority,” “sports is a man’s world,” “men are foregrounded in commercials,” “women are sexy props or prizes for men’s successful sport performances or consumption choices,” “whites are foregrounded in commercials,” “aggressive players get the prize; nice guys finish last,” “boys will be (violent) boys,” “give up your body for the team,”

“sports is war,” and “show some guts!” According to Messner, Dunbar, and Hunt, “the ‘Televised Sports Manhood Formula’ is a pedagogy through which boys are taught that paying the price, be it one’s bodily health or one’s money, gives one access to the privileges that have been historically linked to hegemonic masculinity—money, power, glory, and women” (p. 392).

Other media scholars also underscore the relationship between sports and masculine norms. While not all types of sports media emphasize dominance, power, and sex, there are types of sports media that promote such norms as keys to their messages (Bryant & Raney, 2000; Creedon, 1994; Messner, 1990; Miller, 1997; Rowe, 2004). While Duncan and Messner (1998) identified the ways in which women’s sports and men’s sports are differentially constructed by the media through the use of gendered textual conventions, others, such as Bryant, Zillmann, and Raney (1998) have studied sports spectatorship by taking an in-depth look at violence and the enjoyment of sports media. Bryson (1990) argues that, “Sport is a major arena in which physical force and toughness are woven into hegemonic masculinity and the resultant ideology (is) transmitted” (p. 173). Rose and Friedman (1997) explain this process in terms of television sports coverage:

There are many ways in which television sports constructs a uniquely masculine experience of spectatorship. On the one hand, TV sports are similar to soap opera in its distracted reception, its construction of a gendered viewing community, and many of its discursive strategies and textual effects. At the same time, the skills upon which it depends, and the values that it reifies, are distinctly masculine (p. 3).

In reference to aggressive forms of masculinity, or hyper-masculinity, Katz and Jhally (2002) assert in their documentary, *Tough Guise*, that the popular acceptance of antifeminist and even misogynistic voices within the media is a sign that the cultural changes wrought by feminism threaten the power of

certain groups of men. The perceived acceptance of such voices, and the idea that individuals possessing rarified aggressiveness are seen as "cultural icons or mythic images of masculinity," becomes even more relevant when we consider the role of television (Dworkin & Wachs, 2000, p. 49). While many sporting activities reward behavior traditionally coded as masculine, it is television that brings the messages of sports into a larger social realm where a game is no longer a game, as the above theorists note, but rather a spectacle where gender roles are reinforced by celebrating and rewarding "masculine" behavior. Therefore, televised sports can be seen as a source of cultivation.

In reference to specific content leading to a specific type of effect, Scharrer's work provides evidence that television exposure contributes to hypermasculinity (2001; 2005). In the 2001 study, Scharrer used neo-associationism and priming effects to examine the impact of television dramas on hypermasculine audience members. Scharrer found "that those exposed to a violent and hypermasculine television program had a larger increase in reports of aggression and hostility compared to those exposed to a nonviolent, hypermasculine television program" (p. 159). In the 2005 study, Scharrer tested the role of hypermasculinity and trait aggression in predicting aggressive responses following exposure to violent television stimuli. Accordingly, "Those who were exposed to a television stimulus that contained hypermasculine male characters (*The Sopranos*) reported higher estimates in their self-reports of their own hypermasculine tendencies after exposure compared to before" (p. 372).

While Scharrer has shown a causal link between televised violence and reports of aggression and hostility, such is not the case with televised sports. Crabb and Goldstein (1991) have hypothesized a causal link between viewing televised sports and increased acceptance of aggression, but we are aware of no empirical work exploring the relationships between televised sports viewing habits and attitudes about masculinity. There have

been related studies on sport spectatorship. Goldstein and Arms (1971) reported that viewing athletic events held an association with increased arousal, excitement, and enjoyment. According to Gunter (2006), "No evidence has emerged to demonstrate that cathartic experiences follow exposure to violent sports events" (p. 359). Interestingly, in a study linking domestic violence and televised athletic events, Sabo, Gray and Moore (2000) report that women outwardly noted their male partners' fascination with the aggressive action, physical contact, hitting and injuries displayed in televised sport. According to Sabo & Jansen (1998), this study, "Lends credence to theoretical arguments that sports media can inform and inflame the social construction of violent masculinity" (p. 208).

More recently, Raney and Depalma (2006) investigated the relationship between the levels and contexts of sports violence and viewer enjoyment, mood, and perceptions of violence. To evaluate they differentiated between "violent" and "nonviolent" play and "unscripted sports violence" (e.g. football, boxing, hockey) and "scripted sports violence," most notably, professional wrestling. Their findings indicated that "viewers enjoyed the violent play more than the nonviolent, enjoyed the unscripted violent play more than the scripted, and found the scripted violent play to be less suspenseful and more violent than the unscripted play" (p. 321). Their research is similar to the work of Sargent, Zillmann and Weaver (1998), who found that men tend to enjoy sports that are more violent, dangerous, and aggressive such as football and soccer while women tended to enjoy stylistic sports such as figure skating and tennis. These findings are similar to those detailed by Bryant, Comisky and Zillmann (1981) and Zillmann (1995) in prior studies.

The research question motivating this study is much more narrowly focused. As researchers, we aim to answer the following research question: What are the relationships between televised sports viewing habits and conformity to masculine norms?

Hypotheses

Grouping all televised sports programming into one category would be problematic because the ways in which the respective competitive contests are played out differ on a number of levels. From the rugged octagon of Ultimate Fighting Championship events to the lush fairways of Professional Golf Association events, the differences vary not just in venue, but, more saliently, in terms of physicality, level of violence, and chance of injury or death. The messages in televised sport vary from sport to sport and the type of individuals who watch a certain type of televised sport also differ, which in turn can be associated with different attitudes about specific aspects of masculinity.

Given the differences from one televised sport to the next, it is vital to recognize which sports possess a higher degree of violence, and which types of televised sports capitalize on varying degrees of exploitation for the purpose of marketing and selling their product. For the following predictions, 'total televised sports consumption' consists of all categories of televised sports.

'Violent televised sports consumption' consists of viewing Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC) matches, professional boxing matches, and professional wrestling matches. We operationalized violent televised sports consumption in this manner because in these sports the explicit goal is to cause physical harm to your opponent. While we recognize that professional wrestling is sports entertainment and a form of "scripted violent play" (Raney & Depalma, 2006), its inclusion in the violent televised sports consumption category is justifiable due to its implicit violence and prevalence in popular culture (Tamborini, Skalski, Lachlan, Westerman, Davis & Smith, 2005). Additionally, viewers might understand that professional wrestling is staged, but, as Raney and Depalma (2006) noted, "We know little about whether that knowledge is activated during actual viewing" and "it is quite possible that such knowledge is willfully suspended during viewing" (p. 333).

'Mainstream televised sports consumption' consists of viewing National Hockey League (NHL) games, Major League Base-

ball (MLB) games, National Basketball Association (NBA) games, and National Football League (NFL) games. They are the pillars of team play in American sports, their marriages to the television industry are historic, and their presence is seemingly continual on television due to demand from groups affiliated with teams from each respective league or association. While professional soccer matches were considered for inclusion in this category, soccer does not possess the level of interest in the United States the other sports currently hold (Delgado, 1997).

Thus, we predicted:

- H₁: Higher levels of total televised sports consumption are associated with a higher conformity to masculine norms.
- H₂: Higher levels of violent televised sports consumption are associated with a higher conformity to masculine norms.
- H₃: Individuals who view mainstream televised sports possess a higher conformity to masculine norms than individuals who do not view mainstream sports

Methodology

Participants and Procedures

Participants consisted of 183 (116 females, 65 males, 2 other) college students between the ages of 18 and 43 ($M = 22.03$, $SD = 2.99$) enrolled in one of three separate undergraduate communication studies courses at a major public university in the Midwestern United States. This study, like most done with undergraduate students, over-represents women compared to men. Participants were asked to complete the International Review Board-approved Sports Viewing and Personality Inventory in class for extra course credit.

Instrumentation

Participants were asked to rate how frequently they viewed sports on television in the given time frames. For example, par-

ticipants were asked to report how often they watch National Football League games; 1 = 0x per week, 2 = 1x per 2 weeks, 3 = 1x per week, or 4 = 2x per week. While context and environment should not be seen as inconsequential, the choice was made to assess frequency as opposed to amount of viewing time for three reasons. First, we believe that past memories can be summarized more accurately in terms of frequency than viewing time. Second, sports events have different durations. Thus, frequency is easier to compare across sports than viewing time as a measure of interest. Third, other studies utilizing cultivation analysis have successfully used frequency as a measure (Schiappa, Gregg & Hewes, 2004).

Participants were asked to rate televised viewing frequency for the following 12 types of sports: sports news programs, extreme sports events, Professional Golf Association (PGA) events, National Football League (NFL) games, professional automobile races, Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC) matches, professional boxing matches, National Basketball Association (NBA) games, professional soccer matches, Major League Baseball (MLB) games, professional wrestling matches, and National Hockey League (NHL) games. Given the proliferation of sports programming on network television, cable television, and pay-per-view, it was difficult to omit popular programming such as NCAA football and NCAA men's basketball, but including NCAA sports would complicate an already complex set of measures. They were omitted in part, because of our concern over which NCAA sports to include, and we were unsure how the inclusion of less visible sports would influence the study. In addition, the variety of "fan loyalty" relationships a sample of undergraduate students has with NCAA sports is potentially problematic. Ultimately, we decided that focusing on professional sports, as well as sports news programs, was the most pragmatic approach to sports viewing.

Participants were asked to consider their actions and beliefs on 72 items concerning attitudes about masculinity on Likert-

type scales configured as 1 = Strongly Agree, 2 = Agree, 3 = Disagree, or 4 = Strongly Disagree. Shortened versions of established instruments (Herek, 1988; Mahalik, Locke, Ludlow, Diemer, Scott, Gottfried & Freitas, 2003) were used to keep the number of survey items manageable; in all cases, we chose the items that factor analyses have indicated load the highest.

Of the 72 total items, we selected 66 items from The Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory (CMNI), developed by Mahalik, Locke, Ludlow, Diemer, Scott, Gottfried and Freitas (2003). The inventory consists of 11 subscales: 5 items measured Winning (e.g. "The best feeling in the world comes from winning"), 7 items measured Emotional Control (e.g. "I never share my feelings"), 5 items measured Risk-Taking (e.g. "I take risks"), 8 items measured Violence (e.g. "I am willing to get into a physical fight if necessary"), 9 items measured Power Over Women (e.g. "In general, I control the women in my life"), 4 items measured Dominance (e.g. "I should be in charge"), 7 items measured Playboy (e.g. "Emotional involvement should be avoided when having sex"), 6 items measured Self-Reliance (e.g. "I hate asking for help"), 5 items measured Primacy of Work (e.g. "My work is the most important part of my life"), 4 items measured Disdain for Homosexuality (e.g. "I make sure people think I am heterosexual"), and 6 items measured Pursuit of Status (e.g. "It feels good to be important"). These respective items were chosen because they loaded the highest in factor analysis by Mahalik, et al., and it would keep the survey instrument at a manageable length.

The validity of the CMNI, which was developed and validated with an undergraduate sample, recently has received qualification (Smiler, 2006). In the study, Smiler used a convenience sample of 688 adults (mean age = 31.16, $SD = 15.07$) divided into four groups (undergraduates, younger adults, middle-aged adults, older adults) and found greater numbers of significant correlations among the undergraduate subsample (both men and women) than among the other subsamples. Smiler hypoth-

esized that “these results might be developmental in nature and reflect sample differences in life stage and life experience (e.g., fatherhood, marital status)” (p. 774). According to Smiler, generalizations among male groups, thus, “can be made with caution” (p. 767). Though the CMNI has been infrequently used with a mixed-gender sample, it is feasible to survey men and women because masculinity is not a unidimensional construct exclusive to males.

Results from Mahalik et al. (2003) indicated strong internal consistency for all items: Disdain for Homosexuality ($n = 752$, $\alpha = .90$), Self-Reliance ($\alpha = .85$), Violence ($\alpha = .84$), Winning ($\alpha = .88$), Emotional Control ($\alpha = .91$), Risk-Taking ($\alpha = .82$), Power over Women ($\alpha = .87$), Dominance ($\alpha = .73$), Playboy ($\alpha = .88$), Primacy of Work ($\alpha = .76$), Pursuit of Status ($\alpha = .72$). Mahalik et al. (2003) also report studies indicating convergent validity with other measures of masculine norms, including the Brannon Masculinity Scale (Brannon & Juni, 1984), the Gender Role Conflict Scale (O’Neil et al., 1986), and the Masculine Gender Role Stress Scale (Eisler & Skidmore, 1987); in another study Mahalik et al. (2003) found that nine of the eleven subscales yielded significantly different results in the predicted direction between male and female subjects.

In this study, Cronbach’s α s were similar to those found earlier: Disdain for Homosexuality ($\alpha = .79$), Self-Reliance ($\alpha = .84$), Violence ($\alpha = .81$), Winning ($\alpha = .80$), Emotional Control ($\alpha = .88$), Risk-Taking ($\alpha = .72$), Power Over Women ($\alpha = .84$), Dominance ($\alpha = .68$), Playboy ($\alpha = .78$), Primacy of Work ($\alpha = .76$), Pursuit of Status ($\alpha = .73$).

The remaining 6 items formed the twelfth subscale, Attitudes Toward Gay Men (e.g. “The idea of male homosexuals marriages seems ridiculous to me”), a measure of sexual prejudice concerning homosexual men that is part of Herek’s (1988) Attitudes Towards Lesbians and Gay Men (ATLG) instrument. Disdain for Homosexuality, a Mahalik et al. (2003) subscale, is more relevant to personal identity and societal perceptions (e.g. “I try to avoid

being perceived as gay”), whereas the ATG (Herek, 1988) is more about attitudes toward gay men as a group (e.g. “I think male homosexuals are disgusting”). Convergent validity is supported by several studies conducted by Herek and colleagues showing that the ATG is consistently correlated with other theoretically-relevant constructs. Higher levels of prejudice correlate significantly with high religiosity, lack of contact with homosexuals, adherence to traditional sex-role attitudes, belief in a traditional family ideology, and high levels of dogmatism (Herek, 1987, 1988, 1994; Herek & Capitano, 1996; Herek & Glunt, 1993). For the Attitudes Toward Gay Men, the Cronbach’s α for Herek’s study (1988) was lower (pre-test $\alpha = .81$, post-test $\alpha = .82$) than in this study ($\alpha = .91$).

Participants provided basic demographic information in the last section of the instrument.

Results

H_1 predicted that higher levels of televised sports consumption are associated with a higher conformity to masculine norms. H_2 predicted that higher levels of *violent* televised sports consumption are associated with a higher conformity to masculine norms. As defined earlier, the *violent* televised sports consisted of Ultimate Fighting Championship matches, professional boxing matches, and professional wrestling matches.

To test H_1 , a Spearman’s correlation analysis was conducted for the 12 types of televised sports across each of the 12 subscales. As reflected in Tables 1–3, there were a number of significant correlations ($p < .05$) between televised sports consumption and conformity to masculine norms.

H_2 predicted that higher levels of violent televised sports consumption are associated with a higher conformity to masculine norms, while H_3 predicted that individuals who view mainstream televised sports report a higher conformity to masculine norms than individuals who do not view mainstream sports. Sports

TABLE 1: Correlations of masculine norms scales and violent televised sports

MASCULINE NORMS	ULTIMATE	PROFESSIONAL	PROFESSIONAL
	FIGHTING CHAMPIONSHIP MATCHES	BOXING MATCHES	WRESTLING MATCHES
Winning	.37***	.31***	.07
Emotional Control	.31***	.42***	.05
Risk-Taking	.10	.09	-.06
Violence	.30***	.30***	.04
Power Over Women	.38***	.39***	.18*
Dominance	.10	.11	.08
Playboy	.32***	.42***	.17*
Self-Reliance	.27***	.19*	.13
Primacy of Work	.10	.13	.11
Disdain for Homosexuality	.19*	.16*	-.02
Pursuit of Status	-.03	-.15	-.20
Attitudes Toward Gay Men	.30***	.36***	.14

*** $p < .001$

** $p < .01$

* $p < .05$

were categorized as mainstream sports based on their high level of coverage on television. To test H_3 , a t -test compared the means of individuals who view mainstream sports ($n = 141$) with the means of individuals who do not view mainstream sports ($n = 27$). Again, a lower mean score indicated *higher* conformity to masculine norms. Overall, there was a significant difference between the two groups. Individuals who view mainstream sports scored lower ($M = 2.65$, $SD = 0.28$) on the conformity scale than

TABLE 2: Correlations of masculine norms scales and mainstream televised sports

	NATIONAL HOCKEY LEAGUE GAMES	MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL GAMES	NATIONAL BASKETBALL ASSOC. GAMES	NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE GAMES
MASCULINE NORMS				
Winning	.13	.26***	.33***	.28***
Emotional Control	.10	.13	.30***	.30***
Risk-Taking	.14	.13	.15	.13
Violence	.13	.12	.18*	.22**
Power Over Women	.18*	.22**	.31***	.40***
Dominance	.04	.06	.06	.09
Playboy	.26***	.19*	.33***	.32***
Self-Reliance	.11	.09	.19*	.10
Primacy of Work	-.01	-.12	-.05	-.02
Disdain for Homosexuality	.08	.12	-.17*	.19*
Pursuit of Status	-.04	.03	-.09	-.04
Attitudes Toward Gay Men	.10	.18*	.28***	.24***

*** $p < .001$

** $p < .01$

* $p < .05$

did individuals who do not view mainstream sports ($M = 2.85$, $SD = 0.21$), $t(166) = 3.58$, $p < .01$.

In order to ascertain the relative influence of biological sex and televised sports consumption on masculine norms, regression analyses were conducted. The predictor variables included in this model were (in order of entry into model) sex, $t(164) = 4.40$, $p < .001$ and televised sports consumption, $t(166) = 4.50$, $p < .001$. Sex was coded 0 (female) and 1 (male) while televised sports

TABLE 3: Correlations of masculine norms scales and “other” televised sports

MASCULINE NORMS	PROF.				
	SPORTS NEWS PROGRAMS	GOLF ASSOC. EVENTS	PROF. AUTOMOBILE RACES	PROF. SOCCER MATCHES	EXTREME SPORTS EVENTS
Winning	.35***	.31***	.11	.14	.17*
Emotional Control	.32***	.31***	.24**	.24**	.27***
Risk-Taking	.15	.02	.10	.12	.15
Violence	.26***	.18*	.13	.12	.26***
Power Over Women	.46***	.37***	.24**	.07	.27***
Dominance	.09	.11	.02	.06	-.01
Playboy	.38***	.31***	.15	.26***	.26***
Self-Reliance	.18*	.22**	.20**	.14	.15
Primacy of Work	.02	.03	.07	-.03	.09
Disdain for Homosexuality	.20**	.18*	.06	.06	.13
Pursuit of Status	-.13	-.09	-.14	-.08	-.10
Attitudes Toward Gay Men	.35***	.26***	.18*	.09	.27***

*** $p < .001$

** $p < .01$

* $p < .05$

consumption was operationalized by taking the average of all scores for televised sports consumption items ($M = 1.65$, $SD = 0.55$, $n = 12$, $\alpha = .85$). For sex, the regression yielded $R^2 = .244$, while for televised sports consumption, $R^2 = .084$. The overall R^2 for the model is .33. The prediction equation, including all entered variables, is $MNorms = 3.217 - 0.188 (Sex) - 0.014 (SMC)$. While the amount of variance in masculine norms is explained in a more potent manner via the sex variable, the relative influ-

ence of televised sports consumption is substantial, particularly considering that Shanahan and Morgan (1999) performed a meta-analysis of cultivation research and found that the average overall effect size for cultivation studies is $r = .10$ ($R^2 = .10$).

Discussion

This study is an exploration of the relationships between televised sports viewing habits and conformity to masculine norms. Attitudes were broken into 12 subscales: Winning, Emotional Control, Risk-Taking, Violence, Power Over Women, Dominance, Playboy, Self-Reliance, Primacy of Work, Disdain for Homosexuality, Pursuit of Status, and Attitudes Toward Gay Men. While the study is arguably limited, it is important to the sports media field because it does support those who have called for additional research on the relationships between the consumption of televised sports and gender norms. Furthermore, this study provides support for theories set forth at the outset of the article.

The results of several different analyses merge to suggest that certain types of televised sports and the consumption of them correlate with varying scales of attitudes about masculinity. A number of significant associations between televised sports viewing habits and attitudes about masculinity were found. This study produced three key findings. First, there is a certain hypermasculine persona with which televised sports viewing seems to be associated. Second, these associations are clustered in meaningful ways. Third, it would appear that the associations are very specific, to specific sports, and further work needs to be done to understand why. Amongst these findings, it is key to recognize that above and beyond biological sex, it is sports viewing associated with these masculine norms.

Intriguing findings regarding heavy viewers of UFC matches and professional boxing matches were found. While the frequency of heavy viewers was low in comparison to other televised

sports types, the individuals who watch UFC and professional boxing matches have very similar qualities and characteristics. Both televised sports types correlated significantly with Winning, Emotional Control, Violence, Power Over Women, Playboy, Self-Reliance, Disdain for Homosexuality, and sexual prejudice. Curiously, professional wrestling matches only correlated significantly with Power Over Women and Playboy. The latter correlations might be the result of the misogynistic feel of professional wrestling matches, but how can the differences between results among violent televised sports be explained? For example, why should Violence be related to UFC and boxing viewing but not wrestling viewing? Perhaps it is because wrestling is “scripted sports violence” while UFC and boxing is “unscripted sports violence” (Raney & Depalma, 2006). In reference to sports violence, Katz (2003) noted, “What is being sold is not just ‘violence,’ but rather a glamorized form of violent masculinity” (p. 357). Based on a review of empirical investigations, Bryant (1989) concluded, “Most avid sports fans seem to enjoy extremely rough, even violent televised sporting events, so long as dispositional factors are aligned correctly, the viewers’ moral judgment is not violated, and “macho” personality factors prevail” (p. 288).

While viewers’ motivations for watching and enjoying the “violent masculinity” of UFC and boxing matches might be emotional, cognitive, or behavioral and social, the goals of participants in UFC and boxing matches are quite clear. The goals are to either prevail via knockout or technical knockout, or to create such a high degree of pain on an opponent that they give up, submit, or in the case of UFC, “tap out.” These are our nation’s one-on-one, man-on-man gladiatorial contests, cultural theaters of mediated sport where the explicit goal is to inflict maximum pain, and to injure one’s opponent in the pursuit of victory. The masculine norms associated with these televised sports present a glimpse of the type of spectator who watches these sports on

television, as well as the gendered textual conventions of both UFC and boxing matches.

Beyond sports news programs, NBA games and NFL games (categorized as 'mainstream televised sports' in this study) possessed the highest frequencies of sports viewing on television among the 12 televised sports types in the study. The findings of relationships between viewing NBA and NFL games, and Winning, Emotional Control, Violence, Power Over Women, Playboy, Disdain for Homosexuality, and sexual prejudice, are significant, and thus, noteworthy. This level of viewership and the identical relationships with particular masculine norms deserves investigation. We cannot provide exact explanations for these relationships, but putting these findings into context/perspective by theorizing why we found what we found can bring greater clarity to said findings.

The masculine norms that correlate with NBA and NFL games are intriguing because both of these leagues sell the grandeur of power, the allure of sex, and a survival of the fittest mentality in their television broadcasts. It is part of their gendered textual conventions, or to put it another way, their "Televised Sports Manhood Formulas" (Messner, Dunbar, & Hunt, 2000). Messner, Dunbar, and Hunt, as well as Sabo and Jansen (1992, 1998), argued that portrayals of masculinity in sports media glorify violence, dominance, physical and emotional strength, heterosexuality, seductive power, and whiteness. According to Burstyn (1999), "The gendered textual conventions of sports media are secured by an unstated but strongly implied subtext that positions portrayals of the sexes within a relational framework in which men are dominant, masculine, and valued, while women are subordinate, feminine, and devalued" (p. 179). However, sex and gender are not coterminous. Men are not "essentially" masculine; women are not "essentially" feminine. While essentialism might be decreasing, televised sports might be reinforcing masculine norms associated with androcentrism, a cultural norm that valorizes masculine norms available for enactment by

either biological sex (Bem, 1993; Schiappa, 2008). Furthermore, as mentioned at the outset of this article, Shanahan and Morgan (1999) “have found a consistent, theoretically predicted relationship between exposure to television and beliefs about the world” (p. 125). In the case of NBA and NFL games on television, both forms of a gendered cultural practice and spectacle targeting the masculinity market, the masculine norms of Winning, Emotional Control, Violence, Power Over Women, Playboy, Disdain for Homosexuality, and sexual prejudice are celebrated via highly stylized, gendered textual conventions that ultimately express and reinforce hypermasculine notions of manhood. At the same time, feminine norms, potentially in the form of alternative masculinities, are portrayed androcentrically.

Interestingly, there was not a single significant correlation between any of the 12 types of televised sports and Dominance, Risk-Taking, Primacy of Work, or Pursuit of Status. The life stage of undergraduate student subjects might have contributed to the lack of relationship between televised sports and Primacy of Work or Pursuit of Status, but the lack of relationship between televised sports and Dominance or Risk-Taking is a bit surprising for the very same reason. While life stage of student subjects is possibly elucidating, could it also be more simply that televised sports viewing does not reinforce these specific norms outlined by Mahalik et al. (2003) as masculine norms? Both are possibilities, but we cannot answer this question without additional research. Ultimately, this study does not support the belief that these particular masculine norms are reinforced by televised sports viewing.

Collectively, these data are mutually reinforcing. Does the fact that an individual consumes televised sports mean they are cultivated to possess attitudes about masculinity that are based on hypermasculine behavior? Or, conversely, does the fact that an individual conforms to masculine norms mean they consume more of, as well as specific types of televised sports? Neither of these questions can be answered definitively based on this study,

but the fact that significant correlations exist between the two is evidence of meaningful relationships between television viewing behavior and attitudes. More specifically, this exploratory study offers evidence that there are relationships between televised sports viewing habits and conformity to masculine norms. It also reinforces the core assumption of gender studies in the 20th and 21st century: gender norms are not biologically determined. Although we cannot assume causality, our findings strongly suggest that televised sports viewing plays a role in developing and reinforcing traditional male-typed behavior.

There are certainly limitations to the study that should be kept in mind when interpreting results. First, the subjects consisted of 183 college students. Of those 183 subjects, 65 were male, 116 were female, and 2 were categorized as "other." Ideally, there would be a more even ratio of males to females in this study. With that said, it is important to keep in mind that masculinity is not a unidimensional construct exclusive to males. Indeed, the advantage of the CMNI is that it is a multi-dimensional approach, and as our results indicate, the norms are not tied to biological sex.

The second limitation of this study is it does not bring the idea of viewing televised sport as a positive pleasure into consideration. There is no doubt televised sport can have an influence on the human spirit. Recognizing the joys, frustrations, and pains people experience when viewing is not to be overlooked, and having a better understanding of this might bring light to the affective potential of televised sport.

Third, a correlational analysis cannot produce causal proof of a link between televised sports viewing and greater conformity to masculine norms, but the results are consistent with the theory and empirical findings associated with cultivation theory. Furthermore, the masculine norms most often described by theorists as typifying the privileges of "hegemonic masculinity" and hypermasculinity were the very norms found significantly associated with viewing particular televised sports. Thus, at the

very least, such findings warrant further empirical exploration of the role of televised sports in cultivating and reinforcing stereotypical masculine norms.

Finally, the underlying causal mechanism for why watching specific sports will lead to specific effects deserves more controlled study. While filling a need in the sports media field for a greater understanding of the relationships between the consumption of televised sports and gender norms, this study suggests some of the directions that further research should pursue.

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