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**WORLD CUP OR WORLD WAR?**

**WAR METAPHORS IN NEWSPAPER COVERAGE OF THE 2010 WORLD CUP**

A Thesis in

Media Studies

by

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## ABSTRACT

By depicting violence and aggression as not only acceptable, but also exciting, rewarding and expected, both visual and print media have consistently employed militaristic metaphors in their coverage of and commentary on sports, particularly international soccer. Although the 2010 World Cup received more online coverage and viewership than any major sporting event in history, the event - and the militaristic overtones of its media coverage - has received little academic attention, even at a time when many of the tournament's participants are engaged in violent conflicts both domestically and abroad. To determine the extent of the explicit use of military terminology in the newspaper coverage of the 2010 World Cup, in what context they were used, and how these contexts reinforce traditional notions of hegemonic masculinity and nationalism, this research employed a preliminary content analysis of print newspaper coverage of the 2010 World Cup from *The New York Times*, *The Sunday Times* of South Africa and *The London Times* of Great Britain. While *The New York Times* exhibited the most use of explicit military terminology, militaristic metaphors existed in all three newspapers and, although these war metaphors were not as prevalent in number as expected, many were contextually linked to several major and recurring themes throughout the coverage of the three newspapers: the politicization of soccer, the ability of soccer to unite a given country's political factions and provide the country with a sense of national identity, and the success of a nation's soccer team as a global barometer of its geopolitical status.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES.....	v
Chapter Introduction.....	1
Chapter 2 Literature Review.....	5
Metaphors.....	5
Sports Metaphors in the Media.....	6
Sports Metaphors in War and Politics.....	8
War Metaphors in Soccer.....	9
Hegemony.....	10
Hegemonic Masculinity.....	11
Nationalism.....	14
Chapter 3 This Research.....	23
The Researcher.....	24
Context.....	25
United States.....	25
Great Britain.....	26
South Africa.....	27
Reflexivity and Reliability.....	28
Thematic Textual Analysis.....	29
Sample.....	30
Chapter 4 Results.....	33
Introduction.....	33
Content Analysis.....	33
Nation Unification.....	35
<i>The New York Times</i> .....	35
<i>The Sunday Times</i> .....	38
<i>The London Times</i> .....	39
Soccer and the Political World.....	41
<i>The New York Times</i> .....	41
<i>The Sunday Times</i> .....	44
<i>The London Times</i> .....	45
Chapter 5 Discussion.....	47
References.....	49

**LIST OF TABLES**

Table 1-1: Prevalence of War Terminology in Coverage of the 2010 World Cup.....	34
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## Chapter 1

### Introduction

Grammy-award winning comedian, actor and author George Carlin famously compared baseball and football in one of his most enduring routines:

In football the object is for the quarterback, also known as the field general, to be on target with his aerial assault, riddling the defense by hitting his receivers with deadly accuracy in spite of the blitz, even if he has to use shotgun. With short bullet passes and long bombs, he marches his troops into enemy territory, balancing this aerial assault with a sustained ground attack that punches holes in the forward wall of the enemy's defensive line. In baseball the object is to go home! And to be safe! – I hope I'll be safe at home!

War metaphors in sports, however, are hardly limited to comedy routines. In a July 27, 2010, game between the New York Mets and St. Louis Cardinals, St. Louis shortstop Brendan Ryan hit a routine ground ball to Mets third baseman David Wright, who gathered the ball and threw high and off-line, prompting a national Major League Baseball Network announcer to exclaim, "He threw over a hand grenade!" One week later on August 4, 2010, New York Yankees third basemen Alex Rodriguez hit the 600<sup>th</sup> home run of his career, becoming the seventh player in Major League history to hit 600 home runs. The blast caused Yankees radio announcer John Sterling to proudly yell, "It's an A-Bomb from A-Rod!"

On February 1, 2009, at Raymond James Stadium in Tampa, Florida, the Pittsburgh Steelers took on the Arizona Cardinals in Super Bowl XLIII. Commander of United States Central Command David H. Petraeus conducted the ceremonial coin toss flanked by twelve members of the U.S. Special Operations Command Honor Guard. Following the coin toss,

Petraeus posed for pictures with National Football League (NFL) Hall-of-Fame members Lynn Swann, Roger Craig and John Elway, along with NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell.

The partnership between the military and football's biggest game has been strong for the last 40 years. This seemingly unbreakable link has nowhere been more emphasized than through the media. The link between military references and sports is strengthened because metaphors are not limited to use by sports media, but are used by government and military officials and war journalists as well (Jansen & Sabo, 1994). Ultimately, society dominantly consumes and experiences sports through the media (Kellett, 2002).

Another example occurred in 2003, when University of Miami tight-end Kellen Winslow Jr. received national attention for comments attacking the officials and equating football with war after a 10-6 loss to the University of Tennessee. Winslow, when asked why he stood over and taunted an injured and shaken Tennessee player late in the game, responded with a metaphor commonly used in sporting arenas. "It's war," Winslow said. "They're out there to kill you, so I'm out there to kill them. We don't care about anybody but this U.<sup>1</sup> They're going after my legs. I'm going to come right back at them. I'm a fucking soldier" (Associated Press, 2003). After receiving much negative feedback, he later apologized, saying "I meant no disrespect to the men and women who have served, or are currently serving, in the armed forces. I cannot begin to imagine the magnitude of war or its consequences" (Associated Press, 2003). The Winslow incident, while bringing national attention to war metaphors in sports, was simply another manifestation of what has been occurring in sports for decades.

Because most academic attention regarding war metaphors in sports has focused on American professional football and baseball and is relatively dated, this study will analyze the

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<sup>1</sup> The University of Miami is commonly referred to as "the U."

war metaphors used in United States, British and South African media coverage of the 2010 World Cup, one of the most popular sporting events in the world. The FIFA<sup>2</sup> World Cup is a tournament of the world's national soccer teams held every four years since the inaugural tournament in 1930, and is the world's most watched sporting event. The format features a 32-team tournament competing over the course of one month. The 2010 World Cup took place in South Africa from June 11, 2010, to July 11, 2010, with Spain beating the Netherlands 1-0 to win the title.

Additionally, viewership of the World Cup in the United States has increased with every Cup. 78 million Americans watched the 2006 World Cup on ESPN/ABC and an additional 40 million watched on Univision,<sup>3</sup> an increase from the 70 million who watched the 2002 event on ESPN/ABC (Figueroa, 2010). Additionally, ESPN/ABC averaged a 2.1 rating for the 64 World Cup games, up 31 percent from a 1.6 during the 2006 Cup (Associated Press, 2010).

The 2010 World Cup, through the evolution of digital media, received more online coverage and viewership than any major sporting event in history (Coyle, 2010). Audiences watched nearly every match streamed live online at ESPN3.com or through "FLO TV," a mobile television device providing live coverage (Figueroa, 2010). Websites such as goal.com and others completely dedicated their content to World Cup coverage and provided viewers with highlights, player and team profiles, live updates and other features (Figueroa, 2010). Live streaming of 2010 World Cup games on ESPN3.com generated 7.4 million viewers, one of the largest online audiences in history (Coyle, 2010). Additionally, over 3.18 million total fans had attended the event, the third-highest attendance in World Cup history (Figueroa, 2010).

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<sup>2</sup> *Fédération Internationale de Football Association* (FIFA) is soccer's global governing body.

<sup>3</sup> Univision is the United States' largest Spanish-language network.



Despite this unparalleled worldwide popularity, the event - and the militaristic overtones of its media coverage - has received little academic attention, even at a time when many of the participating countries were involved in violent conflicts both domestically and abroad.

Many researchers (e.g. Arens, 1976; Guttman, 1978) have argued that soccer, especially at the international level, is analogous to warfare and structurally militaristic in its organization. Combined with the promotion of hegemonically masculine and nationalistic ideologies through the media, war metaphors can perpetuate social hierarchies and promote international aggression, making it imperative to track their prevalence and the context in which they are used in the media.

With this in mind, I sought to determine what war metaphors the media used in coverage of the 2010 World Cup, in what context they were used, and how these contexts reinforced or affected traditional notions of masculinity and nationalism. I also attempted to update the dated body of knowledge on war metaphors in coverage of World Cup soccer, an area understudied in the United States.

## Chapter 2

### Literature Review

#### Metaphors

Metaphors are essential to human thought and communication, extremely influential on conceptual understandings of human beings, and often unavoidable in language (Lule, 2004; Burke, 1945, 1950; Deetz, 1984; Ortony, 1993; Ricoeur, 1981). Because metaphorical concepts “structure what we perceive, how we get around in the world, and how we relate to other people” (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 3), the nature of human conception is fundamentally metaphorical.

Metaphors often serve as the only way for humans to comprehend complex concepts such as life, death, sickness, health, war and peace (Lule, 2004). Because our conceptual systems are central to the way we interact with the world, and these systems are largely metaphorical, our thoughts, experiences and interactions with others are hugely reliant on metaphors (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). Ricoeur (1981) argued that words become metaphorical in specific contexts when opposed to other words taken literally. Metaphors, through language, help to construct realities and can serve as guides for future understandings (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980).

Lakoff & Johnson (1980) provided an understanding of how metaphorical concepts can structure everyday mundane activities in the example of the concept ‘argument’ and the conceptual metaphor ‘argument as war:’

Your claims are *indefensible*.

He *attacked every weak point* in my argument.

His criticisms were *right on target*.

I *demolished* his argument.

I’ve never *won* an argument with him.

You disagree? Okay, *shoot*.

If you use that *strategy*, he'll *wipe you out*.

He *shot down* all of my arguments. (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 104)

In this example, “argument” is “partially structured, understood, performed and talked about in terms of ‘war’” (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 105), and the essence of metaphor, therefore, is “understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another” (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 105). Such metaphors are extremely powerful because they are so ingrained and common in communication that they often go unnoticed (Lakoff & Turner, 1989). Analyzing news coverage and commentary provides a way to understand metaphors and, consequently, the society in which they are prevalent (Lule, 2004).

### **Sports Metaphors and the Media**

An extremely common source of metaphors and way in which we understand our realities is the world of sports. R. Palmatier and H. Ray (1989) identified over 1,700 commonly-used sports metaphors from 100 sports, including “take the bull by the horns,” (bullfighting), “pull your weight,” (rowing), and “catch someone off guard,” (boxing). The sports/war metaphor was one of the most widely employed and recognized linguistic tools during the days of William Shakespeare (Segrave, 2000). Today, no institution has further used, and perhaps unknowingly perpetuated, the sports/war metaphor than the media, the dominant way the public consumes and experiences sports.

To understand the media’s use of war metaphors and reasons for it, it is helpful to identify the different types of metaphors used. Both visual and print media have consistently employed war metaphors and referenced military terminology and conflicts in their coverage and commentary on sports (Messner et al., 1999). Sports programming depicts violence and

aggression as exciting and rewarding, emphasizes that violence is an expected and accepted occurrence in sports, celebrates as heroes those who play through pain or “take one for the team,” continually replays violent collisions between players and promotes its events through the marketing of battles between two star athletes or teams (Messner et al., 1999). Messner et al. (1999) attributed this relationship between sports and violence partially to war references, noting that National Basketball Association (NBA) games, Major League Baseball (MLB) games, NFL games, wrestling matches, extreme sports and even episodes of *Sportscenter* repeatedly use terms like “battle,” “kill,” “ammunition,” “weapons,” “professional sniper”...and “shotgun” (Messner et al., 1999, p. 4). After analyzing several broadcasts from various sporting events, Messner et al. (1999) found that commentators most frequently used the references in NBA games (27 times), followed by NFL games (23 times), wrestling (15 times), *Sportscenter* (nine times), MLB games (six times), and extreme sports (three times).

Kellett (2002) demonstrated through analysis of text and images from the front pages of sports sections of two major Australian newspapers that a popular understanding of Australian Rules football interpreted the game as “football as war” in traditional and tabloid newspapers (Kellett, 2002). Kellett (2002) cited examples, including an April 26, 1997, edition of *The Herald Sun*, a popular Australian tabloid newspaper, featuring a large headline in capital letters reading “AT WAR” and a subheading reading “Pies pound Bombers,” (two competing Australian football teams) (Kellett, 2002). Other analyses echo this interpretation of Australian Rules football (e.g. McKay & Middlemiss, 1995; Trujillo, 1995; McKay, 1991).

Some researchers (e.g., Real, 1975) have argued that football specifically has a built-in military structural trait and is analogous to warfare. Football has been described as a chess game, a “crazy miniature war,” in which the object is not to annihilate the enemy, but to conquer

territory (Guttman, 1978, p. 121). Guttman (1978) described the yard-markers as mimicking the movements on a military map and red-zone defenses as players who defend their end zone “with the determination of men who stand between the ravaging foe and their homeland” (p. 121).

McKay & Middlemiss (1995) described the pregame show of a 1993 Australian Rules football game between the Queensland Maroons and the New South Wales (NSW) Blues in which the NSW coach gave a pep talk to his players: “win it for your mates and win it for your state,” and “take no prisoners” (p. 33). Another scene featured the Queensland coach telling his players: “Punch some holes in their defense...do some damage! If New South Wales wants a war, lets... give ‘em one!” (McKay & Middlemiss, 1995, p. 33).

### **Sports Metaphors in War and Politics**

Illustrating the prevalence of the sports/war metaphor, war journalists often use sports metaphors in their description of war. During the first Gulf War, television producers used the metaphor to promote their own stations in the race for ratings and audience shares (Jansen & Sabo, 1994). Jansen & Sabo (1994) cited CNN anchor Patrick Emory’s description of his television production as a Super Bowl: “Last night was about as close to a Super Bowl as you can get. It was as though we had Montana, Marino and Hostetler in together” (p 4). Likewise, NBC executive producer Steve Friedman, referring to himself as the “head coach,” described the efforts of his production staff: “Jack Chestnut...he’s our defensive coordinator. Cheryl Gould, our senior producer, talks to the correspondents in the Middle East. She’s our offensive coordinator...I send in the plays, Tom (Brokaw) is the quarterback...he makes the ultimate decision on the field and the field to us is the screen” (Jansen and Sabo, 1994, p. 4). Capuzzo (1991) quoted F-15E Eagles and F-16 Fighting Falcons returning from air missions in the Gulf:

“It was just like a big football game;” “It was a football game where the defense never showed up;” and “It was like a midget volleyball team taking on the San Francisco 49ers” (p. 3).

Government and military officials often use sports metaphors as well. President George H.W. Bush, amidst Gulf War I, called tactics by Saddam Hussein a diplomatic “stiff-arm” after the collapse of the Baker-Aziz talks (Capuzzo, 1991, p. 2). Bush used so many sports metaphors to describe the Gulf War that Merriam-Webster Dictionary editor-in-chief Fred Mish claimed the 41<sup>st</sup> President had “taken football words to war” (Capuzzo, 1991, p. 2). Lieutenant General Calvin A. H. Walker, second-in-command behind Norman Schwarzkopf in the First Gulf War, called himself “a football coach: I want everything I can possibly get and have at my side of the field when I get ready to go into the Super Bowl” (Herbeck, 2004, p. 128).

Also, use of sports metaphors by the military and politicians is not limited to the United States, as evidenced by newly elected Italian Prime Minister Berlusconi’s hope that he provide the Italian people with not only a good government, but “most of all a good team” (Semino & Masci, 1996, p. 255). Berlusconi also advised the Italian people to follow the example set by A.C. Milan players (Semino & Masci, 1996).

### **War Metaphors in Soccer**

Research on the language used in media coverage of soccer is somewhat limited (Broccias & Canepa, 2005). Broccias & Canepa (2005) analyzed 51 media reports of World Cup soccer matches played by England over the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and found war metaphors used in a “football is fighting” model represented by far the most prevalent metaphorical structure (p. 21). Similarly, coverage of German and English media reports of matches during the 1996 European Football Championships, through military metaphors and imagery, reflected social political currents of the time and often reinforced anti-European

sentiments (Maguire & Poulton, 1999). Maguire & Poulton (1999), in a complimentary study of the language of the 1996 European Football Championships, argued that England relied heavily on war metaphors in response to its declining international influence. German coverage featured comparatively less military terminology, “dismayed by the warmongering of the English press” (Maguire & Poulton, 1999, p. 20-21). Extending analysis to the coverage of the 2000 European Football Championships, Bishop & Jaworski (2003) argued that war metaphors helped formulate a sense of nationalism in the reinforcement of the “us vs. them” dichotomy (p. 246).

### **Hegemony**

Italian Antonio Gramsci coined the term “hegemony” to describe social dominance of certain classes over others through privileged use of societal institutions to institute and maintain social control (Gramsci, 1971; Lewis, 1992; Hardin et al., 2005b; Pederson, 2000). Through the media and other social institutions, including political parties and religious organizations, the hegemonic ruling group exerts its dominance by also gaining consent of the less dominant groups they are ruling (Gramsci, 1971; Pederson, 2000). Hegemonic dominance, however, is never absolute, with opposing groups and ideologies constantly challenging the dominance (Hardin et al., 2005b; Lewis, 1992; Pederson, 2000). Hegemony is, however, “resilient and adaptive, capable of co-opting alternative discourse into the dominant ideology,” and is more resistant to change in sports than other cultural institutions (Hardin & Shain, 2005, p. 805; Hargreaves, 2000).

By establishing a seemingly natural and common-sense set of societal norms and ideals, groups can maintain dominance and hegemony without coercion or force, even in capitalist societies, often becoming “a question of leadership rather than explicit domination and control” (Grossberg, 1984, p. 412; Gramsci, 1971; Hebdige, 2002; Miller, 1998, Donaldson, 1993). For

example, scholars have argued that the sports media have reinforced the hegemonic power of males within American society through non-coverage of women's sports or coverage that suggests athletic inferiority, thereby completing a "symbolic annihilation" of women and reinforcing male hegemony (Hardin & Shain, 2005; Tuchman, 1978).

### **Hegemonic Masculinity**

Numerous scholars have demonstrated the marginalization and sexualization of women in sports (Mason, 1992; Crane, 1999; Bruce, 1998). War metaphors can be used to promote a variety of ideological perspectives. Several studies (e.g. Jansen & Sabo, 1994) have concluded the use of war metaphors in the media construct and often reinforce ideas of masculine and Western cultural dominance. Hanke (1990) defined male hegemony as a term that "refers to the social ascendancy of a particular version or model of masculinity that, operating on, the terrain of 'common sense' and conventional morality, defines 'what it means to be a man'" (p. 232). Likewise, this masculinity becomes hegemonic when it is "culturally exalted and that its exaltation stabilizes a structure of dominance and oppression in the gender order as a whole" (Connell, 1990, p. 94).

Donaldson (1993) suggested that hegemony "involves persuasion of the greater part of the population, particularly through the media, and the organization of social institutions in ways that appear 'natural,' 'ordinary,' 'normal'" (p. 645), and masculine hegemony reinforces the idea of women as secondary to men. Common trends exist internationally among modern and traditional societies based upon distribution of gender roles (Hofstede, 2001; Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005). Men, in most societies, are traditionally supposed to be "assertive, competitive, and tough," and women to take care of children, household duties and the "tender roles" (Hofstede, 2005, p. 81). Importantly, through these often accepted roles and other social



institutions such as sports and the media, male hegemony is maintained in many cases without explicit control tactics by males toward females (Donaldson, 1993).

Scholars have identified “individualism, aggression, power, competitiveness, strength, stoicism, and protector” as traits of ideal masculinity (Beal, 1996, p. 205; Dworkin & Wachs, 2000). Likewise, feminine characteristics include “inferiority, weakness, incompetence, cooperation, passivity, timidity, and vulnerability” (Duncan, 2006, p. 231). Certain varieties of masculinity that do not fit into these categories, including effeminateness and homosexuality, are subordinated and further marginalized (Donaldson, 1993; Beal, 1996; Connell, 2005). These masculine traits become the ultimate standard in society because masculine traits are most desirable and “...guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and subordination of women” (Connell, 1995, p. 77; Duncan, 1990; Hardin et al., 2005b; Hargreaves, 1994; Vincent, 2004). Heterosexuality and homophobia also combine to form the “bedrock” of hegemonic masculinity (Donaldson, 1993, p. 645) while creating the ideal “that females will always be feminine while males will always be masculine” (Clasen, 2001, p. 37). The two social institutions perhaps most responsible for perpetuating these ideals, and in turn reinforcing male hegemony, are sports and the military (Kimmel & Messner, 1989). Likewise, hegemonic masculinity is founded in the ideal of a strong and brave hero that relies on muscular strength, a perfect outlet for male athletes (Connell, 1987; Hargreaves, 2000).

Hofstede (2005) ranked 50 countries and three regions on a “masculinity index,” rating countries based on a range from zero for the most feminine to 100 for the most masculine using similar traits. More masculine societies possessed more distinct gender roles and valued assertiveness, toughness and the pursuit of wealth and material possessions, while in feminine societies, gender roles overlapped and both males and females were concerned with modesty,

tenderness and the “quality of life” (Hofstede, 2005, p. 83). Based on Hofstede’s (2005) index, the United States scored 62, ranked 15<sup>th</sup> most masculine society in the world, while South Africa and Great Britain scored 63 and 66, respectively.

Scholars have cited sports as an outlet for the reinforcement of male hegemony (Artz & Murphy, 2000; Schell & Rodriguez, 2000). Hegemonic masculinity in the world of sports can create powerful and lasting cultural norms for young girls and boys, often pressuring girls to avoid sports or cheer from the sidelines and boys to aggressively compete in violent sports (Anderson, 2005; Adler & Adler, 1998; Miracle & Rees, 1994). Young boys are socialized as early as grade one to follow sports more avidly and exposed to gender-appropriate stereotypes in sports (Adler & Adler, 1998). Sports have been a central factor in the institutional creation and maintenance of male dominance in society and have allowed men to justify their social dominance through legal acts of aggression and violence (Adams, 2006).

Social constructions through various avenues allow some sports, such as football and hockey, to seem more masculine and others, including gymnastics, to earn more feminine reputations (Kinnick, 1998). The media, therefore, often “emphasize those sports which are seen as ‘sex appropriate’ for women” (Kinnick, 1998, p. 215), reinforcing notions of hegemonic masculinity (Kinnick, 1998; Tuggle & Owen, 1999; Adams, 2006).

Numerous scholars have argued the mass media and sports are two of the most powerful institutions in maintaining hegemonic masculinity (Harris & Clayton, 2002; Miloch et al., 2005). Others have contended that newspapers, specifically, often reinforce the status quo rather than push for social change by emphasizing and covering certain events and values and minimizing others (Boutilier & San Giovanni, 1983; Rintala and Birrell, 1984; Hardin et al., 2005b).

Trujillo (1995) argued that images of the male body created and disseminated through the media, those of instrument, weapon and object of gaze, work together to reinforce hegemonic masculinity. Football transforms the athletes into violent weapons and television presents the weapon-like bodies as objects of fascination and violence, securing dominance over women through this violence (Trujillo, 1995).

Staurowsky (2010) argued that the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, reinforced traditional representations of heroic and courageous masculinity in the United States, illustrated the link between hegemonic masculinity and sports and revealed “how deeply rooted hegemonic masculinity is in the largely all-male enclaves of the military, fraternal orders, and sports, where hegemonic masculinity has been preserved and protected” (Staurowsky, 2010, p. 66).

Additionally, Wakefield (1997) argued that the worlds of sports and war are both closely linked through masculinity by examining the entrance of sports into the military culture and argued that the military used sports metaphors to masculinize the military culture, an effect also experienced in sports through the use of war metaphors. Wartime can propel public interest in sports and sports can be used as a vehicle to advance war as well as peace through a mutual foundation in traditional masculine ideals (Wakefield, 1997).

### **Nationalism**

A significant amount of research has also analyzed the link between sports and nationalism. Like gender and masculinity, nationalism is a social construction that does not exist independently, but only in conjunction with gender, race and other constructions (Coles, 2002). Similar to masculinity, nationalism is expressed through sports and reinforced through the mass media, defining many nations both politically and through the sporting world. Nowhere is this

reinforcement more pronounced than in national sporting events, namely the Olympics and World Cup.

Researchers have defined nationalism as a loyalty to a particular nation with various characteristics (Van Evera, 1994; Balibar, 2004). Loyalty to a nation or ethnic group supersedes loyalty to family or even political ideologies (Van Evera, 1994). Nations have been defined as groups of people sharing common norms, culture, language and history, recognizing their distinctness (Jinxia, 2005).

Benedict Anderson (1993) argued that modern nations operating as a state or collection of people attempting to form a state, differ tremendously in size and makeup from the actual communities through which human beings identify themselves. Humans, therefore, express nationalism and pride for nation states through an “imagined community,” often manifested through a singular or multiple leaders (Anderson, 1993). Anderson (1993) defined a nation as “an imagined political community-and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign” (p. 6). The nation and community is “imagined” because members of even the smallest nation will never interact with, meet or even hear of most of their fellow members, “yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion” (p. 6).

International sports can serve as a clear and outward manifestation of membership in these imagined communities and a vehicle for nationalistic expression (Hobsbawm, 1990). Hobsbawm (1990) argued that early in the twentieth century, mass-scale sports transformed into “the unending succession of gladiatorial contests between persons and teams symbolizing state-nations” (p. 142) and “an expression of national struggle” (p. 143). Athletes represented not only their team but entire nation states and imagined communities. Before this transformation, international soccer matches, and to an extent the Olympic Games, attracted primarily the

middle-class and attempted to bridge international differences and symbolize international unity through a release of tensions (Hobsbawm, 1990). Hobsbawm (1990) argued that sports are an extremely effective medium for expressing nationalistic sentiments because all people can relate to young athletes “excelling at what practically every man wants, or at one time in life has wanted, to be good at” (p. 143). Athletes as well as fans can symbolize the nation itself through sports and the “imagined community of millions seems more real as a team of 11 named people” (p. 143). Although this may not be the reason many choose to participate in sports, most researchers agree that from perspectives of fans, the media and the public, sports function as identity-constructors (Goksøyr, 2010).

The representation of the imagined community through sports is very often exhibited through the media. The development of radio after World War I allowed larger parts of a nation to simultaneously participate in a sporting event without being at the arena (Goksøyr, 2010). Sports unifies cultures through “simultaneous participation and insight” and the linking of sports with national holidays, especially Thanksgiving Football and the Super Bowl in the United States, strengthens this bond through the television screen (Goksøyr, 2010, p. 280). This often appears in international soccer when a smaller, weaker soccer nation defeats a traditional powerhouse.

Boyle & Haynes (2000) argued that because sports perpetuate nationalistic ideals internationally, nations are ranked in superiority, often in terms of their political importance and influence. Countries, therefore, particularly through the Olympics and World Cup, use sports to elevate their political importance and prestige internationally (Bairner, 1996; Billings & Tambosi, 2004). These international events are “defined in terms of local and national identification” and political competition is “the core of the global sport phenomenon”

(Stevenson, 2002, p. 215). Sports have increasingly become linked with politics and can serve as a representation of the geopolitical landscape, “constituting an important display of political authority and even figuring into the most quotidian political matters” (Markovits & Rensmann, 2010). Numerous twentieth century regimes used sports to further political causes, including Adolf Hitler’s extensive use of propaganda during the 1936 Berlin Olympics, and Benito Mussolini’s use of Italy’s second World Cup title to further Fascist Italy’s political ideals (Worden, 2008). International sports are often seen as a “cheap and harmless substitute for war,” especially as many interpret the outcome of the games to reveal the true political strength or weakness of a nation (Taylor, 1986, p. 37). International sports often promote negatives feelings and thoughts toward other nations and offer them an opportunity to demonstrate superiority when an era of nuclear weapons has made traditional warfare impractical (Taylor, 1986).

Even politicians in liberal democracies have harnessed the power of sports, again helping sports to become an important way to express national identity. Tony Blair, former British prime minister, halted an important cabinet meeting upon learning of the news of David Beckham’s broken foot and Gerhard Schroder, former German prime minister, also scheduled cabinet meetings so they would not interfere with Germany’s World Cup games in 1996 (Markovits & Rensmann, 2010). Theodore Roosevelt, after watching a University of Pennsylvania vs. Swarthmore College football game, instituted reforms leading to the National Collegiate Athletic Association. The sitting president has thrown out the first pitch of the MLB season since 1910, and champions of all the major sports visit the White House soon after victory (Markovits & Rensmann, 2010). Clearly, sports have entered the geopolitical scene and “steadily increased their presence and importance in political life in the contemporary world” (Markovits & Rensmann, 2010, p. 13).

Through this increased presence, most dramatically through the World Cup and the development of FIFA, which has “provided a platform for national pride and prestige,” sports have become an important way for people to establish and express their national identity (Markovits & Rensmann, 2010; Tomlinson & Young, 2006, p. 1). Soccer, particularly through the World Cup, has been critical to the formation of nation-states and national identity since 1930, when competition among nations became regularized (Bairner, 2001). Scholars have cited Austria’s 3-2 victory over Germany in the 1978 World Cup, a symbolic victory that still did not allow Austria to advance in the tournament, as “the greatest moment in the shared collective memory of Austria’s soccer history” and crucial to the establishment of Austria’s independent postwar identity (Markovits & Rensmann, 2010, p. 72). Likewise, West Germany’s 1954 World Cup championship aided the creation of the Federal Republic’s postwar identity and was a huge step towards the “normalization,” “Westernization,” and “Europeanization” of Germany and helped the nation move past its destructive actions during World War I and World War II (Markovits & Rensmann, 2010, p. 72).

In South Africa, specifically, sports have played an important role in establishing national unity and identity (Nauright, 1997). The success of the 1995 South African rugby national team at the Rugby World Cup, also hosted by South Africa, illustrates the power of sport (Nauright, 1997). Rugby in South Africa had long been played amid ethnic and racial divisions (Goksøyr, 2010). In addition, the public image of South African rugby had been connected to Boer masculinity, limiting nationalist sentiments and national identity to the dominant white minority in the nation (Goksøyr, 2010). The World Cup victory by the South African Springbok team in its home nation allowed Nelson Mandela, the formerly accused terrorist detainee, dressed in a springbok jersey, to hand the cup to the team captain (Booth, 1998). The springbok logo

symbolized and had been closely associated with white Boer rugby, which allowed Mandela to seize “a symbol of white South Africa in a white sport and turned the victory into a sensational event for the whole, united South Africa” (Goksøyr, 2010, p. 282).

Allison (2000) argued that reactions to international sporting events are largely the same throughout the world and that people use sports to create and maintain a sense of identity through the athletes: “But whether we are talking about nationalism or patriotism or the development and expression of national identity...it is clear that a national dimension is an important part of sport” (p. 345).

A prevalent theme stressing the nationalistic values in the sports/war metaphor is the “us vs. them” dichotomy. “They,” the foreigners, are culturally different from “us” (Jhally, 1989). Especially prevalent in international World Cup soccer, metaphors further separate “us” by the creation of a false sense of “nation.” The “us versus them” dichotomy often relates to “good versus evil” internationally through these sporting events (Stempel, 2006). Rivalries, especially between national teams, have been “perfect for reconstructing traditional stereotypes of ‘the other’” (Goksøyr, 2010, p. 285). The arch rivalry in European sporting circles between Germany and France and England, mainly stemming from World War II, often results in numerous political stereotypes (Crolley & Hand, 2006). Likewise, the Netherlands, having been invaded by Germany in two wars, caused Germany to operate as the metaphorical “other” in sporting circles for the Netherlands (Crolley & Hand, 2006). Not surprisingly, a Dutch victory in a Netherlands vs. Germany match in the 1988 World Cup, called the “greatest grudge match in European football,” brought an unmatched and unprecedented amount of public reaction and celebration in the Netherlands (Crolley & Hand, 2006, p. 8). Links between sports coverage of soccer and



nationalism through war metaphors and stereotypes is consistent with other analyses (e.g. Alabarces et al., 2001).

The idea of nationalism has been linked by researchers to an ideology of American exceptionalism (e.g. Markovits & Hellerman, 2001). This notion, often reinforced through soccer, suggests a worldview that America holds a special and unique place in the world, set aside from all other nations for various reasons (Markovits & Hellerman, 2001). Sports, more so than other phenomena, symbolize the “moral value” of a particular people or culture (Goksøyr, 2010, p. 283). Likewise, national sports often symbolize “our greatness, our uniqueness,” whether it is Gaelic, American or Indonesian” (Goksøyr, 2010, p. 283). While many aspects of culture have become globalized, including food, clothing and others, an important pocket of popular culture around the world to remain resistant to this “Americanization” is the world of sports. Describing America’s sports world as a “hegemonic sports culture,” Markovits & Hellerman (2001) argued that football, baseball, basketball, hockey, and arguably other sports, overshadow soccer, keeping America unique (p. 265). This “soccer exceptionalism” in America has remained a staple of sporting culture in the nation for over one hundred years (Markovits & Hellerman, 2001, p. 266). Sporting cultures typically are defined by those sports that people follow as spectators, not what they participate in as athletes (Markovits & Hellerman, 2001; Brown, 2005). Therefore, although having solid levels of participation, especially at the youth level, soccer is simply not a sport Americans follow and watch on a regular basis (Brown, 2005). The 2003 World Series gathered a 13.9 television rating, the 2003 NBA Finals a 6.5 and the Super Bowl a 41.3, while the 2003 Major League Soccer Cup Final only garnered a 0.6 (Brown, 2005).

The notion of American exceptionalism has kept soccer well below the “‘Big Three’ that traditionally define American sports in the hierarchy of American sporting culture. This, however, is far from the case in the sporting culture of Europe. While the “‘Big Three” dominate American sporting culture, many Europeans view American sports as “‘inferior,” “‘easy,” “‘awkward,” and “‘strange” and believe soccer is more masculine and a superior sport, thus placing it well ahead of other sports in European sporting culture (Markovits & Hellerman, 2001).

This “‘hegemonic sports culture” in America began in the latter half of the nineteenth century, solidified in the 1930s, and eventually became an important feature of American life (Free & Hughson, 2006). Scholars have also argued that soccer in American culture is marginalized in the four years separating the World Cup tournaments, leading to the “‘Olympianization” of soccer in America (Markovits & Rensmann, 2010). Echoing this point, New York-based soccer expert and journalist David Birnbaum argued that “‘there is soccer in America and then there is the World Cup. The two are totally different entities in the eyes of the American public, even the sports-loving and sports-following public” (Markovits & Rensmann, 2010, p. 122). The World Cup greatly overshadows the domestic Major League Soccer, revealing that Americans have not demonstrated demand for soccer on an everyday basis (Markovits & Rensmann, 2010). What matters to Americans in the American hegemonic sports culture in the Big Three sports are domestic events, namely the Super Bowl, World Series and NBA Finals (Markovits & Rensmann, 2010).

The American sporting culture’s major sports do not lend themselves to international competition (Bairner, 2001). At the highest levels of American sports, cities compete against other domestic cities so “‘it is the foreigners with their commitment to universal sports such as

soccer who are consumed by issues surrounding nationality and national identity (Bairner, 2001, p. 91). While patriotism is clearly shown in American sporting culture, it is expressed through domestic rivalries rather than through international competition (Bairner, 2001). These notions of nationalism and masculinity within American and European sporting cultures can be further analyzed through the war metaphors employed by the sports media in the 2010 World Cup.

## Chapter 3

### This Research

Review of existing research has indicated that use of war metaphors is extremely prevalent in coverage of sports, including soccer. While nationalism can be an expression of sporting cultures in America and Europe, this nationalism is expressed differently. Geographically separated by oceans, Americans, through American exceptionalism and a hegemonic sports culture that places football, basketball, baseball, hockey and other sports ahead of soccer, express their nationalism inwardly through events unique to America, including the World Series, NBA Finals and Super Bowl. Soccer's place in the global sporting culture and European sporting culture is well ahead of any other sports and allows Europeans to express nationalism outwardly, the culmination of which is the World Cup. Likewise, within the American sporting culture, soccer is seen as a more feminine sport, unlike the European culture where soccer is the ultimate masculine and aggressive sport. While Americans watched the 2010 World Cup in record numbers and hosted the extremely successful 2004 World Cup, the sport as a whole has not taken a foothold in American sporting culture. I proposed to determine through this theoretical framework to analyze the war metaphors employed in the 2010 World Cup by the sports media and their resulting implications on traditional notions of nationalism and masculinity from their use or non-use:

**RQ1:** How prevalent were war metaphors in newspaper coverage of the 2010 World Cup?

**RQ2:** In what context were the metaphors used and how did these contexts reinforce traditional notions of masculinity and nationalism?

### **The Researcher**

Qualitative research seeks to understand and interpret phenomena in settings such as a “real world setting (where) the researcher does not attempt to manipulate the phenomenon of interest” (Patton, 2001, p. 39). Broadly defined, qualitative research involves “any kind of research that produces findings not arrived at by means of statistical procedures or other means of quantification” (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 17). Unlike quantitative researchers, qualitative researchers seek “illumination, understanding, and extrapolation” in similar situations (Golafshani, 2003, p. 600). Both qualitative and quantitative researchers must test and demonstrate credibility in their studies, but while quantitative credibility depends on the instruments, in qualitative research, “the researcher is the instrument” (Patton, 2001, p. 14).

Therefore, through qualitative research and textual analysis, the role of the researcher cannot be discounted as an influence on the ways the stories are read and analyzed. The researcher is the “conduit through which all information flows” and total objectivity often cannot be completely obtained and is often not completely desirable (Lichtman, 2006, p. 121). Through the senses of the researcher, interpretation and meaning is formulated from available data. I am a twenty-three year-old Caucasian male pursuing a master’s degree in media studies in the College of Communications at Penn State University, where I also received a bachelor’s degree in journalism in 2009. I am not a fan, but a casual observer of soccer, and watched several matches of the 2010 World Cup, including parts of the final between Spain and the Netherlands. I am a fan of many other sports including baseball, hockey, football and basketball and follow each on nearly a daily basis. I also competed in basketball through middle school and in baseball collegiately through a club team at Penn State. I am a resident of the United States and was born and currently live in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

## **Context**

In qualitative research, human activity must be understood in terms of context, which is often “central to most forms of qualitative inquiry” (Hammersley, 2008, p. 122). Traditionally a complex concept with many variations, researchers have utilized many different interpretations of contextual awareness, including emphasis on both micro and macro contexts (Hammersley, 2008). For example, macro interpretations of context insist that local situations cannot understand and interpret a situation without placing it within the larger national or global processes (Schegloff, 1997). Despite the numerous interpretations, scholars agree that contextual awareness is essential to any qualitative research endeavor and “provides an angle of vision that informs and influences” research findings (Dixson, 2008, p. 3). Reviewing and understanding the political context of the host nations of the three sample newspapers can provide important insights when analyzing their coverage of the World Cup.

### **United States**

The most consequential contextual factor for this research is the War on Terror, an ongoing international military campaign in response to the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks that killed nearly 3,000 people. The campaign was initially led by forces from the United States, United Kingdom and Afghanistan but later expanded to include, among others, Australia, Canada, Denmark, France, Italy, Netherlands, New Zealand, and Norway, for a total of 33,000 troops in 2006 (Buhmiller, 2010). In the years leading up to the 2010 World Cup, international support of the War on Terror has significantly waned among both citizens and government officials. While the campaign enjoyed majority support in Britain, France, Germany, Japan, India and Russia shortly after its 2002 initiation, only Russia still saw majority support just four years later. Likewise, less than one fifth of the populations in Spain, China, Turkey, Egypt and Jordan

supported the war in 2006. Nevertheless, by June 2010, the U.S. continued to fight wars on two major fronts, with 92,000 troops in Iraq and 94,000 in Afghanistan (Buhmiller, 2010). Less than three weeks prior to the start of the 2010 World Cup, the number of American troops in Afghanistan surpassed the number in Iraq for the first time since the ousting of Saddam Hussein in 2003, as President Barack Obama intensified America's battle against insurgents in the nation while swiftly reducing the number of troops in Iraq (Farmer, 2010).

Also occurring less than two months prior to the start of the 2010 World Cup, Arizona enacted a strict and extremely controversial immigration law that allowed law enforcement to detain anyone suspected of being in the country illegally and made it a crime to not have immigration documents in public, resulting in state and national protests (Archibald, 2010).

### **Great Britain**

Syed (2010) posits that although some English soccer fans may have more in common with the fans of their opponents than each other, fanatical support for the national soccer team is about identity, not similarity. Fans of the English team do not want it to win the World Cup "because of its inherent merit, but because it symbolizes the prestige of our clan. Us against them" (Syed, 2010, para. 1). Unlike traditional warfare, which is often conducted over land or power, football in Great Britain "is an invented world in which superiority confers prestige on a grand scale not because kicking a pig's bladder into a net has any intrinsic merit, but because it has become the accepted forum for national crowing. It is important because we think it is important" (Syed, 2010, para. 2) In addition, just as the game itself is likened to organized warfare through militaristic metaphor, the lack of recent international soccer success for Great Britain is often attributed to the lack of competitiveness and killer instinct of the country's citizens, whether or not they have ever touched a soccer ball (Syed, 2010).

During the time of the 2010 World Cup, British troops made up the second largest contingent, behind the United States, of the coalition force in Afghanistan, with about 9,500 troops stationed mainly in the Helmand region, double that of third-largest, Germany, which has about 4,500 currently deployed troops. Additionally, Britain has committed over \$1.1 billion in reconstruction aid to Afghanistan over the next four years, again the second-largest commitment behind the United States. Prior to withdrawing its forces from Iraq and ending its involvement in July 2009, Britain operated as the main military partner of the United States in Operation Iraqi Freedom. Since 2006, although the number of British casualties in Afghanistan and Iraq has increased precipitously, public support has generally remained low but steady.

### **South Africa**

For South African locals, the World Cup was seen as an opportunity to not only discredit stereotypes of Africa as a land of diseases and political chaos, but also to “showcase its culture, pride and progress since the dark days of apartheid” (Owens, 2010, para. 12).

After President FW de Klerk revealed the release of Nelson Mandela in 1990, South Africa began dismantling the apartheid system, with the first democratic election in which all races could vote held in April 1994 (Booth, 1998). The African National Congress won these 1994 elections and established the Government of National Unity under President Nelson Mandela. Since then, South Africa’s post-apartheid government has attempted, with measurable success, to peacefully transition the nation to a democratic system, although gender discrimination and HIV/AIDS remained serious problems in 2010, and South African society remained “scarred by deep racial and economic divisions” (Webb, 2010, para. 5). Removal from the political isolation of the apartheid government, South Africa became active in promoting the political rebirth of Africa as well as peaceful resolutions of African conflicts (Booth, 1998). The



nation successfully aided in the peaceful easing of political crises on the African continent, including in Burundi, the Congo, Sudan, Zimbabwe and Comoros and the nation at the time of the 2010 World Cup was seen as “a peacemaker, a keen multilateralist and a spokesperson for Africa and the developing world” (Jordaan, 2010). South Africa spent upwards of \$5 billion on infrastructure improvements in preparation for the 2010 World Cup, which is expected to add 0.5 percent to the nation’s 2010 Gross Domestic Product growth (Jordaan, 2010).

Additionally, unlike in Great Britain and the United States, the increased attention on South Africa may serve to not only showcase its social and political progress in 16 years as a democratic nation, but also illuminate internal “economic gaps that South Africa's empowerment programs and a growing economy have failed to close” (Owens, 2010, para. 39).

### **Reflexivity and Reliability**

Researchers have defined reflexivity in many ways, but the term is usually associated with a “critical reflection of the practice and process of research and the role of the researcher” (Lichtman, 2006, p. 121). The term often involves a process of self-examination governed by the thoughts, interpretations and actions of the researcher (Russell & Kelly, 2002). Macbeth (2001) regarded reflexivity as a “signal topic” in qualitative research and argued that it is a “deconstructive” process to self-analyze one’s own interpretations and possible biases toward a text or image (p. 35). Using diaries to record thoughts and reflecting on assumptions and belief systems are ways to be reflexive in self-examinations (Macbeth, 2001). The researcher must be aware of his biases and sensitive to his prior history and its bearings on interpretations (Lichtman, 2006; Nightingale & Cromby, 1999). Lichtman (2006) advocated the importance of self-reflection and awareness, arguing that reflexivity helps the researcher “sort through biases and think about how they affect various aspects of the research, especially interpretation of

meanings” (p. 122). Disclosure of background, ethnicity and other factors by the researcher promotes “authentic dialogue,” allows the reader to develop an understanding of the beliefs of the researcher and their possible effect on the interpretations (Lichtman, 2006). Although it is never possible to fully remove oneself from the research or fully understand the motivations leading to particular worldviews, the research therefore is “open to critical evaluation and reconsideration, and is, ultimately, flexible to the ongoing dynamics of individual and group development and change” (Finley, 2008, p. 99).

In ensuring reliability in qualitative research, “examination of trustworthiness” is essential (Golafshani, 2003, p. 601). In a qualitative study, reliability is often understood as “trustworthiness, rigor and quality” (Golafshani, 2003, p. 604). I expected to find relatively widespread use of war metaphors in the coverage of the 2010 World Cup and maintained trustworthiness when analyzing the articles.

### **Thematic Textual Analysis**

In this study, I employed the method of textual analysis, a replicable process that enables the researcher to qualitatively preserve the thoroughness of quantitative content analyses (Braun & Clarke, 2006), draw and understand connections between particular texts and society (Altheide, 1996) and make inferences to societal themes evident in those texts (Thompson, 1987). Because “to study ideology, in some part and in some way, is to study language in the social world” (Thompson, 1987, p. 513), it analyzed the language of a particular text, which Eskes et al. (1998) defined as “ideas found within language itself and specific words and phrases used to communicate these ideas” (p. 323). Furthermore, Thompson (1987) rooted his discussion of textual analysis in a study of discourse and language and noted that language is an important communicative way for us to create and recreate relationships. Eskes et al. (1998) noted that

language encompasses both “ideas found within language itself and specific words and phrases used to communicate these ideas” and also is the source of “dominant ideas about the social world,” including masculinity and nationalism (p. 323). Studying the ideology of global sport through the use of war metaphors in the coverage of its events will both shed light on the prevalence of these metaphors and allow for further, exploratory extrapolation to related ideological notions such as masculinity and nationalism, a contextual awareness advised by Thompson (1987) and Fairclough (1995). Textually analyzing the metaphorical language in the print coverage of the World Cup can therefore provide important insights into dominant ideologies. Following Fairclough’s (1995) assertion that “a text is traditionally understood to be a piece of written language,” (p. 4) I textually analyzed print coverage of the 2010 World Cup by major high-circulation newspapers.

### Sample

I analyzed the print newspaper coverage of the 2010 World Cup from *The New York Times*, an American publication, as well as *The Sunday Times* of South Africa and *The London Times* of Great Britain. *The New York Times* provided a representative sample of American newspaper coverage during the period in question. Analysis of *The Sunday Times* helped to elucidate the use of metaphors by the host nation of the 2010 World Cup, South Africa, and coverage from *The London Times* provided perspective from a Western but non-American perspective.

*The New York Times*, an American daily broadsheet newspaper published in New York City since 1851, is the largest metropolitan daily newspaper in the United States and the third largest newspaper overall. With a circulation of over 950,000 daily and over 1,300,000 on Sundays, *The New York Times* has won 104 Pulitzer Prizes, most of any news organization.

Distributed daily around the world, *The New York Times* is extremely influential internationally and enjoys a reputation of a generally reliable source of news. The newspaper, resulting in part from this reputation of reliability and prestige, sets the agenda of many American and international publications and has become known as “America’s paper of record” (Eastman & Billings, 2000). Two daily editions of the newspapers are printed daily, the Northeast Edition and the National Edition (Editor & Publisher, International Yearbook, 2004). I utilized only the National Edition since one of the objectives of the study was to analyze national newspaper coverage in the three different countries.

*The London Times*, also known as *The Times of London* and *The Times*, is headquartered in London and has a circulation of just over 500,000. A daily national newspaper published in Britain since 1785 and owned by Rupert Murdoch’s News Corporation, *The London Times* has traditionally been considered a moderate to conservative-leaning publication. Published in broadsheet format from 1785-2004, *The London Times* switched to compact size in 2004 to appeal to younger readers and those using public transportation. *The London Times* has a large readership among well-educated business people and, although its critics argue that its overtly opinionated editorials detract from its non-partisanship and objectivity, *The London Times* is generally considered to hold high journalistic standards (Eastman & Billings, 2000, p. 192).

Founded in 1906, *The Sunday Times* of South Africa is the largest weekly broadsheet national newspaper in South Africa with a weekly circulation of over 500,000 and weekly readership topping three million. More so than *The New York Times* or *The London Times*, *The Sunday Times* is known for its uncompromising “fourth estate” stance toward the South African government. Throughout its history, *The Sunday Times* has created controversy by, most recently, breaking the story of accusations of rape against former African National Congress

leader Jacob Zuma and publishing several controversial editorials and cartoons over which Zuma sued the paper.

I used stories gathered from the NewsBank database, a prominent publisher of news and historical documents which currently makes 350 newspapers with 150 million articles available in its online database. I gathered each story from page one of the sports section of the newspaper. Using one story from the front page of the sports section helped to capture uniformity in the analysis. If a story about the World Cup did not appear on the front page on a given day, I used the story closest to the front page. I limited the sample to one news story each day and analyzed coverage from June 11, 2010 to July 11, 2010, the time period of the 2010 World Cup, a total of 90 news stories. The average word length of *The New York Times* stories was roughly 300 words. The stories from *The London Times* averaged approximately 350 words. *The Sunday Times*' stories were on average the shortest of the three papers, with an average word length of 290 words. The coverage featured mostly commentaries and feature stories, heavily focused on pre- and post-game analysis, rather than traditional game stories.

## Chapter 4

### Results

In this study, I intended to determine how widely *The New York Times*, *The Sunday Times* and *The London Times* employed war metaphors and military language during the 2010 World Cup, a time period of June 11, 2010 to July, 11, 2010. Secondly, I analyzed the context of the war metaphors and their implications on the reinforcement or rejection of traditional notions of hegemonic masculinity and nationalism. To determine the extent of explicit use of military terminology in the three newspapers, I first conducted a preliminary content analysis of each sample story from June 11, 2010 to July 11, 2010.

#### Content Analysis

**RQ1:** How prevalent were war metaphors in newspaper coverage of the 2010 World Cup?

Results from the preliminary content analysis, seen in Table 1, revealed that the three publications used the word “attack” most often and *The New York Times* consistently employed the most explicit military terminology. However, the content analysis yielded not nearly as many war metaphors as I intended to find. Although these war metaphors were not as prevalent in number, many were contextually linked to themes throughout the coverage of the three newspapers. While *The New York Times* exhibited the most use of explicit military terminology, militaristic metaphors existed in all three newspapers and, although these war metaphors were not as prevalent in number as expected, many were contextually linked to several major and recurring themes throughout the coverage of the three newspapers: the politicization of soccer, the ability of soccer to unite a given country’s political factions and provide the country with a

Paper	<i>The New York Times</i>	<i>The Sunday Times</i>	<i>The London Times</i>
Attack	24	16	9
Clash	1	7	1
Fight/Fought	5	8	0
Battle	1	2	3
Kill	2	1	1
War	7	0	3
Fired	7	0	0

sense of national identity, and the success of a nation's soccer team as a global barometer of its geopolitical status.

Examples include a June, 25, 2010, article from *The London Times* which labeled the Japanese team as “alert, crisp in attack and resolute in defense” (Eason, 2010, June 25, para. 8), a June, 13, 2010, article from *The New York Times* which described “the strategy by Argentina...to swarm into attacks that threatened to overrun Nigeria” (Hughes, 2010, para. 18), and a July, 4, 2010 article from *The Sunday Times* headlined “Dunga’s Waterloo at the Battle of Nelson” (Selebi & Kay, 2010, para. 1).

**RQ2:** In what context were the metaphors used and how do these contexts reinforce traditional notions of hegemonic masculinity and nationalism?

War metaphors in the coverage did not explicitly express nationalistic sentiments, but they were often used in relation to the world political scene. While *The New York Times* exhibited the most use of explicit military terminology, additional metaphors existed in all three newspapers. Analysis of the sample revealed two major and recurring themes: (a) The World

Cup's role of unifying the country through the soccer team, reinforcing the "imagined community" ideal; and (b) The increased relationship between politics and soccer, resulting in a tendency to politicize soccer games.

### **Nation Unification**

Coverage employing this thematic interpretation stressed the ability of soccer to unite an entire nation. Fans viewed these players as uniquely representative of their nationality and identified with them in their successes or failures. The coverage consistently alluded to the teams' representative qualities of the nation as a whole and the collective joy or anguish of the entire nation.

#### ***The New York Times***

A June 17, 2010, a *The New York Times* story detailed the lineup possibilities of the French national team, suggesting that Thierry Henry could be the "last link to the 1998 World Cup team: a team that succeeded in silencing the skeptics, uniting the country in victory" (Clarey, 2010, para. 17). Thematically, this description suggests that the 1998 French World Cup team, through success in soccer, united the country. A headline on the first story of the tournament revealed "Mexico's Coach Feeds Passion of Nation," and a later headline read, "A Continent's Hopes are Swatted Away." A separate story posited that this victory and Uruguay's victory over South Korea also "helped extinguish the hopes of two other continents" (Hughes, 2010, July 6, para. 6). Players described as being "on national duty," were often described as national heroes, or in some cases, national villains.

Numerous *The New York Times* stories also displayed the theme of the unification of the continent of Africa through this World Cup. A June 12, 2010, story previewing Bafana Bafana's<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Bafana Bafana is a common name for the South African national team.



opening match against Brazil claimed the South African players had become “larger-than-life figures” and quoted South African president Jacob Zuma as saying, “This is an African World Cup. The time for Africa has come, it has arrived” (Rhoden, 2010, para. 2). Zuma, as also illustrated in other stories, suggested that this World Cup had the power to unite Africa, both politically and figuratively, through the success of any African soccer team, not just South Africa. A story three days later, on June 20, 2010, metaphorically illustrated the hope of a unified Africa through its representative soccer teams: “Ghana still has a fighting chance to move on to the elimination rounds, but Ivory Coast -- on paper the team that affords Africa its greatest hope - - has a daunting challenge in Johannesburg on Sunday, against Brazil. There is a possibility that all the African teams could be wiped out in the first round” (Hughes, 2010, June 20, para. 7). Other stories, notably a June 22, 2010, story, further suggested that because a Swede who does not speak any indigenous African language coached the Ivory Coast, another Swede coached Nigeria and a Frenchman and Brazilian coached Cameroon and South Africa, respectively, the hopes of Africa still cannot be fulfilled.

Because of these non-native African coaches, they “are still not entirely Africa’s teams,” and even despite success, could not fully unify the nation (Clarey, 2010, June 22, para. 1). As the United States advanced and played Ghana in the “knockout round” of the tournament, *The New York Times* continued to emphasize the importance of the event to African unification. One story suggested that a Ghanaian victory would show that a “sub-Saharan nation with black leadership could pull off a mega-event” and be a huge psychological and political catalyst (Rhoden, 2010, June 27, para. 13). The match, therefore, was not “about patriotism, but about continuing the push to keep this important giant on the right track” (Rhoden, 2010, June 27, para. 16). Likewise, after the elimination of Cameroon, a story described a sign in the audience that read, ‘We Are

Africa United Now,' meaning that South Africans, aware that their own team is likely to become a non-playing host, are ready to get behind any other team from their continent" (Hughes, 2010, June 20, para. 5). The Cameroonian team also apologized for "letting Africa down" (Hughes, 2010, June 20, para. 22).

In another description, Uruguayan Luis Suarez's purposeful hand ball to save a goal for Uruguay "broke the heart of Africa," whose last hope as a nation ended with Uruguay's defeat of Ghana (Vecsey, 2010, July 3, para. 1). After Ghana's loss, the story read,

Ghana had the support of Nelson Mandela, the former president, now 91, who sent a letter to the Ghanaian federation saying that the entire continent wished success to the last African team. The South African team became the first host not to make it out of the first round, so all around Africa people became honorary Ghanaians after Ghana ousted the United States, fair and square, last Saturday. (Vecsey, 2010, July 3, para. 4)

The story continued to echo this sentiment, arguing that "Africa is done," and "all of Africa is gone" (Vecsey, 2010, July 3, para. 5).

*The New York Times*, while stressing this theme in international coverage, also employed it in coverage of the American team. The American victory over Algeria was described as a momentous event in American soccer history, not because "it put that foreign sport over the top," but "because it felt like a sporting event that could unify America for a few screaming moments" (Vecsey, 2010, June 24, para. 9). The article continued by suggested that these American players, by "doing something recognizable, Jordan thumping his chest, taking the court for the last shot; Jeter clapping his hands upon getting to second base, summoning something from within," represented the American people as a whole (Vecsey, 2010, June 24, para. 10). While exhibiting

this theme, *The New York Times* employed the second political theme significantly more frequently.

### ***The Sunday Times***

South African coverage may be reflective of a similar process, but revealed somewhat differently. South Africa utilized its hosting of the World Cup as an expression of nationalism and a call for a united Africa. While *The New York Times* heavily appealed to the American political and military dominance, the much less politically influential South Africa appealed mostly to a unification theme. While the United States expressed nationalism on an international stage in a sport in which it has traditionally been unsuccessful, South Africa used its position on the sporting world stage to call for inward unity. By being seen as a leader in a united, more peaceful Africa, South Africa can eventually gain more political influence and respect internationally.

Also, through references to the World Cup in South Africa helping to unite the African continent, *The Sunday Times* coverage often exhibited the national unification theme. A June 13, 2010, story described Soccer City Stadium as “our nation’s pride and joy,” stressing its symbolic role as the home of a unified Africa during this World Cup (Molefe, 2010, June 13, para. 9). The same story, focusing on Bafana’s national team, quoted a player’s desire to “make the country proud” through success in the tournament (Molefe, 2010, June 13, para. 16). Another story on Bafana urged the team, “Come on Bafana, give the nation something to be proud of, other than being wonderful hosts” (Abrahams, 2010, June 22, para. 24). Several days later, a story blatantly suggested that “national pride” and “status” were on the line for Africa during this tournament, and the six African teams were the continent’s best chance to gain respect as a unified continent (Alfred, 2010, June 15, para. 5).

### *The London Times*

By focusing on England's struggles in the tournament and its negative effect on British morale, *The London Times* displayed a nation unification theme through the establishment of national identity. A June 11, 2010, story, on the first day of the tournament, described American goalkeeper Tim Howard's expectation that all of America will stop their daily routines to watch America's match with England: "The shoppers on Manhattan's Fifth Avenue, cattle-hands in the Midwest and Californian surfers will stop what they are doing to cheer on Bob Bradley's rather anonymous bunch of would-be national heroes" (Hughes, 2010, June 11, para. 2). While admitting that soccer is a "minority" sport in the United States, the story suggested that success through soccer can unite the Americans. The same story quoted Howard, who suggested that the "country's going to stop" as one to watch the Americans compete internationally (Hughes, 2010, June 11, para. 5).

One day later, another story demonstrated how important the English soccer team was to the nation and its quest for their first World Cup in over four decades:

For Fabio Capello and his players, a journey that began with a few faltering steps on a training pitch next to the M25 starts to get serious this evening in the rarefied air of Rustenburg, the base camp for their latest assault on a summit that has proved beyond England for the past 44 years. The time for talking - the phony war, the propaganda battle, that interminable build-up - is over and the time for action is upon us. (Kay, 2010, June 12, para. 1)

Later in the World Cup, after England's embarrassing early exit, the unification theme continued as a June 30, 2010, story claimed that the team did not "forewarn us about the calamity that was about to be visited on the nation" (Syed, 2010, June 30, para. 11). By stressing

that the English loss was a calamity to the entire nation suggested that the English gain a sense of national identity through the soccer team. Another story, headlined, “As Fabio Capello fiddles with the team formation, so a nation’s hopes burn,” suggested that English player Wayne Rooney relished in the thought of how the entire nation would feel with a victory (Barclay, 2010, June 14, para. 1). Similarly, another article, talking about the Algerian national team, asked whether the World Cup will “enhance the reputation of the nation and its team or harm it,” clearly connecting the team’s success with national reputation (Dart, 2010, June 18, para. 4). Had the team beaten Slovenia, “the entire country would have seen itself as world champions” (Dart, 2010, June 18, para. 9).

A June 19, 2010, story profiling New Zealand’s soccer team suggested that the personalities of the New Zealand players were representative of the entire nation, quoting a player as saying, “We’re a pretty laid back nation,” and continually expressing how this helps them on the field and in their personal lives at home in New Zealand (Butler, 2010, June 19, para 6). A similar story about the German national team expressed a sentiment suggesting the team is representative of Germany as a whole, and “it’s not in the German mentality to get complacent” (Ballack, 2010, June 16, para. 10).

A July 10, 2010, story, profiling the Spanish national team prior to its final match against the Netherlands, discussed soccer’s ability to overcome racial divisions in Spain and unite the country, helping to “overcome a lack of national identity that has dogged Spain in the past” (Keeley, 2010, July 10, para. 10). Likewise, Spanish success “brought out Spanish flags like never before since the [Spanish] Civil War” (Keeley, 2010, July 10, para. 11). By emphasizing the uniting power of the World Cup and underscoring its global appeal in not only England, but

also many other participant nations as well, *The London Times*, either knowingly or unknowingly, perpetuated the theme of nation unification.

### **Soccer and the Political World**

The second major theme involved the relationship between the quality of a nation's soccer team and that country's political standing and reputation. Often, coverage under this theme linked politics and soccer and, by accentuating a nation's ability to enhance or harm political reputations and fuel nationalistic and patriotic tendencies, tended to politicize soccer by describing the game in terms of past political engagements. Just as the United States' coverage was reflective of the nation's involvement in war, it also revealed ways in which the nation expresses nationalism and its ties to masculinity. While soccer is more associated with women and girls in the United States – the U.S. women's soccer team has won two Women's World Cups and three Olympic Gold Medals - *The New York Times* tended to politicize and militarize the coverage much more so than the newspapers in England and South Africa, where soccer is viewed as more masculine and more associated with men and boys.

#### ***The New York Times***

Often through assertions about other countries, the diplomatic geopolitical world can be seen through the lens of soccer. Looking through this lens, coverage of the World Cup continually linked soccer teams with their country's political power and importance on the world diplomatic stage and professed the sport's power to alleviate social ills.

A June 21, 2010, article, describing the disintegration of the French team after several disagreements between players and coaches, posited that because of the turmoil, the "power of Europe is diminished" (Hughes, 2010, June 21, para. 27). Likewise, a story from the first day of the tournament profiling the Mexican national team quoted Mexican federation president Justino

Campean as suggesting that, as “Mexico faced a dire economy during a global recession, a swine flu epidemic, and escalating and brutal drug wars,” it would be “devastating” to the country not to have qualified for the World Cup (Rhoden, 2010, June 11, para. 11). A story previewing the United States match with Slovenia suggested that the match was uncommon, with “no historic symbolism,” following an emotional draw with England, its formal colonial owner (Rhoden, 2010, June 14, para. 6).

Likewise, a June 16, 2010, story about Brazil’s victory over North Korea continually referred to the political climate in North Korea, called the victory a “cold win,” and, alluding to the secretive and military nature of the North Korean state, described 100 North Korean fans that “cheered in a regimented fashion, wearing identical red jackets, hats and soccer scarves” (Longman, 2010, June 16, para. 1). The story also cited a state-run Chinese news report that stated that 1,000 Chinese had been recruited by the North Korean government to identify themselves as Korean and act as “surrogate North Korean cheerleaders” (Longman, 2010, June 16, para. 21). Citing a tense political relationship between North and South Korea, the story revealed that South Korea did not provide free television coverage to North Korea in response to the country’s sinking of a South Korean warship that killed 46 sailors, and suggested that North Korea’s coach answered “frostily” when asked if he was following the South Korean team (Longman, 2010, June 16, para. 25). A similar article referenced artist renditions of the North Korean team that portrayed each player with a determined, mechanical look, where “individualism is not particularly encouraged” (Marcus, 2010, July 11, para. 23).

Similarly, a story about the Algerian national team prior to its match against the United States profiled the effect of a 1990s civil war and 1950s war for independence on the Algerian

tendency to play like “11 warriors on the field, ready to fight until the end without letting down our guard to try to honor our country” (Clarey, 2010, June 23, para. 6).

Additionally, a particularly telling June 25, 2010, story carefully described former President Bill Clinton’s analysis of the American performance in the World Cup:

Clinton noted, however, that the United States always had to ‘prove we are worthy,’ not only as a soccer nation but as a superpower.’ How do people feel about us, despite that Arizona law and our Afghanistan policy?’ he said, not being critical but noting that the immigration law in Arizona and the ongoing war in Afghanistan rub some people, some nations, the wrong way. He also noted that he had seen a ‘Free Gaza’ sign in the crowd on Wednesday...Clinton thought the worldwide sight of Tim Howard repelling the shots, and Michael Bradley tracking down opponents all over the field, and Clint Dempsey throwing himself toward the goal would only improve the standing of the United States in the world. (Vecsey, 2010, June 25, para. 13)

By appealing to the political and militaristic superiority of the United States and militarizing the coverage of the 2010 World Cup, *The New York Times* reflected self-consciousness about the femininity of soccer. This potential international inferiority was combated by linking soccer to something traditionally much more masculine, and an area in which the United States has been traditionally dominant: war.

Additionally, masculinizing soccer allowed the United States to express its nationalism on an international stage through its soccer team, shifting focus away from the inward expression during the major domestic sports. The surprising success of the American team sped up this process. By appealing to notions of masculinity and militarism to overcome intolerance for femininity in American sport, notions of hegemonic masculinity were subtly reinforced.



America's struggling to succeed in the world's most popular game could be metaphorically, and perhaps subconsciously, comparable to the country's declining economic dominance and international influence. Also, newspapers themselves are undergoing a metaphorically similar decline with the proliferation and influence of new media. The use of military metaphors in *The New York Times* may reflect hegemonically masculine attempts to maintain superiority on any or all of these levels.

### ***The Sunday Times***

In the days leading up to the World Cup, a story from *The Sunday Times* described North Korea as possibly the "least cared for" team, largely based on political reputation and the country's communist roots and ties to terrorist activities (Alfred, 2010, June 15, para. 2). But despite this reputation, success in the World Cup would "glorify them" (Alfred, 2010, June 15, para. 5). However, this reference to North Korea was one of the few overt and prominent war metaphors used by *The Sunday Times*. The lack of militaristic metaphors is most likely due to the fact that, despite its history of racial tension, "South Africa is one of the few places in the world where the threat of religious extremism is not part of everyday life" (Mulugeta, 2010, para. 2). Mulugeta (2010) argued that the country's unique history, diverse population, favorable stance toward the Palestinian struggle and high esteem in which the world holds former President Nelson Mandela have served to buffer South Africa from the War on Terror. Any one of these reasons, and likely all of them, are to some degree responsible for the relative lack of war metaphors used in *The Sunday Times*' coverage of the 2010 World Cup.

Additionally, at the time of the 2010 World Cup, South Africa had an unemployment rate of 27 percent, the world's highest gap between rich and poor and a population that earns an average of 400 dollars per month and suffers from malnutrition, crime and disease on a large

scale (Owens, 2010). Although the government invested nearly 4.5 billion dollars into infrastructure improvements in preparation for the Cup, many South African citizens questioned whether the funding should instead be used to better the lives of the nation's poor and sick. The lack of overt war metaphors in *The Sunday Times* could be due to the unwillingness of the South African media to shed any part of a global World Cup spotlight on the nation's considerable domestic unrest.

Similarly, given the “very high levels of xenophobia that characterize contemporary South Africa” (Jacobs, 2007, p. 860), the media's coverage may be, “in a nation that often sees itself in terms of black and white, rich and poor” (Owens, 2010, para. 51), reflective of many South Africans' reluctance to remain politically isolated.

### ***The London Times***

Coverage from *The London Times* also exhibited a political theme, relating soccer to the geopolitical world scene. After England's departure, a story previewing the matchup between Germany and Spain indicated that the match brought on a “haze of geopolitical confusion” and made it virtually impossible for the English to decide which “nation-state to get behind” (Syed, 2010, July 7, para. 1).

Later coverage of the Algerian national team overtly acknowledged that “football was a vehicle to promote Algerian nationalism during the war of independence with France in the Fifties and Sixties” and described a 1982 Algerian victory as follows:

It is partly colonial legacy, partly coaching strategy. On the night that France beat Ireland last November, Algeria overcame the hated Egypt 1-0 in a play-off in Sudan to reach their first World Cup finals for 24 years. When the team returned to Algiers, up to one million people thronged the capital's streets to hail their heroes and the president welcomed the squad to his palace. Some said they had not seen such jubilation since

independence was declared on July 5, 1962 - a date that lends its name to the national stadium, an imposing bowl tucked away in the hills of western Algiers. (Dart, 2010, June 18, para. 3)

## Chapter 5

### Discussion

Although this study had several limitations, including a sample limited to the front page of the sports section and only one story on each of the days of the World Cup, it nevertheless provided important information about the links between sports, the media, nationalism and masculinity. Because the World Cup is a global event centered on the world's most popular sport, war metaphors in the World Cup, and especially one hosted by one of the world's most politically and culturally diverse nations, could serve as a rhetorical tool to compare countries that are, in many ways, incomparable. However, the participants in the World Cup cannot be considered independent of contextual factors. The surprisingly low and less-than-expected number of war metaphors employed by American, British and South African newspapers could be a product of a limited sample or it could reflect a journalistic effort to reduce such inflammatory rhetoric at a time when many of the participants are engaged in or on the brink of war. Either way, several results are worth mentioning. While coverage from all three countries revealed two predominant themes, the coverage emphasized the themes differently, contextually revealing nationalistic and masculine tendencies. *The New York Times* coverage focused heavily on the political theme, while *The Sunday Times* stressed the nation unification theme and *The London Times* employed both to a similar degree.

*The New York Times* coverage of the 2010 World Cup employed definitively more war metaphors and thematic nationalistic interpretations than *The London Times* and *The Sunday Times*. The World Cup, and its coverage, occurred as upwards of 200,000 American troops fought in Afghanistan and Iraq and, although the other nations may be involved in the conflict, the collective mind of America unquestionably focused more on war than the other two nations.

Furthermore, by appealing to the traditionally masculine endeavor of war, an endeavor the United States has been historically dominant, unlike soccer, *The New York Times* coverage may reveal self-consciousness about the feminine perception of soccer in America and further reinforce hegemonic masculinity through sports and the media in America.

Additionally, *The Sunday Times*' coverage was more characteristic of the nation unification theme, specifically the World Cup's role in uniting Africa as a continent. Because South Africa has been involved in preventing and peacefully resolving disputes throughout Africa since the dissolution of apartheid, the coverage may be reflective of this desire to move away from apartheid violence and toward a leadership role in a more peaceful Africa. Further still, *The Sunday Times* produced considerably less coverage falling under the political thematic interpretation. This may also be reflective of the nation's desire to move away from its political isolation during the apartheid era. By using soccer as vehicle of expression for a unified Africa and in turn a stage for increased political prestige and influence, nationalistic sentiments are furthered, despite a lack of explicit war metaphors. *The London Times* coverage employed considerably fewer war metaphors, again reflective of Great Britain's recent withdrawal of troops from Iraq and gradual troop withdrawal in Afghanistan.

Ultimately, journalists are human. Despite claims to objectivity, failing to acknowledge the influence of contextual factors in coverage of the 2010 World Cup would be failing to fully understand the social, cultural and political implications of one of the world's most visible events and, most consequentially, the nationalistic and hegemonic motivations of its obsessive fans.

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