

AN EXPLORATION OF THE IMPACT POSTMODERNISM HAS ON
COMPETITION IN SPORT

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to explore the impact that postmodernism has on competition in sport. Previous studies compartmentalized social thought and competition in sport. This study appreciates that the two are connected, and it is through this connectedness that the impact emerges. By describing, finding, and analyzing relationships through text as well as notating text iteratively, it was found through a postmodernist critical awareness to meta-narratives that sport is expressed in two main themes: (a) identity (b) and hierarchy/authority. Moreover, both of these themes are interrelated to social interaction. These findings indicate that social interpretation impacts the complex strains of society as a whole through means of cooperative-competition, a type of competition that is being exemplified through alternative sport.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

The importance of sport in society is illustrated with market research conducted by Plunkett Research, Ltd., which indicates that spectator sports (e.g. racetracks, sport teams and other spectator sport) brought \$31.4 billion in sports revenue in 2011. NASCAR alone generated a remarkable \$645.4 million in 2010 (Introduction to Sports Industry, n.d.). Those two figures, although substantial on their own, are only a small amount of the total dollars that spectator sport produces.¹ Thus, the prominent role of commercial sport is seen from local to international competitions.

In a similar vein, sport has the capacity to bring people, communities, and even nations together. For example, South Africa while under Apartheid, found its way of protesting through sport. Nelson Mandela assisted in healing South Africa's divided race-war through rugby.² Following Hurricane Katrina, Louisiana was brought encouragement through their professional football team's (New Orleans Saints) decision to remain in the wreckage and rebuild the Superdome. Both examples suggest that sport has a highly significant role in society.

Media shows us culture wars, civil rights actions, and gender issues in society. At the same time, sport has its own wars, its own "battlegrounds and values, sometimes positive, sometimes negative, the heroic and the shameful..."(Tagliabue, 2010), which suggests that sport is a dramatic societal representation. It is represented in three examples: (1.) 1954 Brown vs. Education, a case fighting for racial equality in schools;

¹ It is estimated total revenue is \$400-\$435 billion yearly (Introduction to Sports Industry,n.d.).

² For more information about Nelson Mandela and how Rugby assisted in racial unity please refer to <http://sportsillustrated.cnn.com/vault/article/magazine/MAG1143996/1/index.htm>

(2.) The Civil Rights Act of 1964, which changed minorities' rights in community accommodations; and (3.) Title IX in 1972 for sexual equality.

Each of these examples permeated throughout sport as well, fighting to bring notable change to team gender and team race (i.e. Jackie Robinson and the Brooklyn Dodgers). For these reasons, it has been noted that sport is a “microcosm” of society (Frey & Eitzen, 1991). Hence, sport is not isolated from the “broad political, economic, and cultural conditions in which it is embedded” (Sage, 1997, p.12).

A crucial insight of critical analyses, whether focused on feminist analysis, Marxist analysis, critical race theory, or queer theory, is that they explode forever the myth that sport is an innocent pastime that exists outside the realm of economic and political forces. (Birrell & McDonald, 2000, p. 5)

Sport cannot be of itself; it cannot survive on its own, it is entirely embedded within society and society's thoughts, for within sport human beings are the active agents, bringing their personal experiences in sport. Therefore, we must stop exploring sport and society separately, meld the two concepts together, and

No longer accept the status of an object of inquiry as a thing-in-itself. Any social, cultural, psychological, or pedagogical object of inquiry is inseparable from its context, the language used to describe it, its historical situatedness in a larger ongoing process, and the socially and culturally constructed interpretations of its meaning(s) as an entity in the world. (Kincheloe, 2001, p. 682)

To simply say that “sports are reflections of our society” does nothing to further the idea that sports are social constructions that have an impact on societies as a whole, through ways of organization and relationship (Coakley, 2007). This reveals that

although the same events occur in sport and society, their relationship is not a passive one. This active connection leads to a deeper understanding of sport from an appreciation for the social and cultural contexts as to which sport is created, maintained, and continually changed (Coakley, 2007; 2009). Thus, we cannot disconnect sport from society or from the thoughts that are used to construct societal interpretations. This active connection guides the remainder of this research. One social interpretation that has emerged is postmodernism.

Postmodernism

To understand what postmodernism *is*, we can look at what postmodernism is *not*. Postmodernism, simply, is *not* modernism (Vattimo, 1988). Although there is debate as to whether postmodernism is a break from modern habits and practices, therefore, rejecting other totalizing thought (Baudrillard & Witwer, 2000; Lyotard, 1984), or if it is simply a different way of employing modernity's themes and customs (Giddens, 1993; Gleyse, 1998 p. 244), one thing that is agreed is that postmodernism is not the same as modernism. The modern age was one that “was logically ordered, scientifically framed, Protestant in its values, commercial in its outlook” (Doll & Trueit, 2010 p. 581) with an ethos of totalizing and universalizing thought (Doll & Trueit, 2010, p. 584).

Postmodernists demonstrate dissimilarity through “music, art, fiction, film, drama, architecture, photography, literary criticism, geography, philosophy sociology, anthropology” (Rail, 1998, p. x). However, the term is usually not written in articles that maintain this perspective; the words describing its discipline are simply hues.³ It has been

³ By stating a stable definition or claiming a term of association, a postmodernist thinks they have succumbed to a meta-narrative in which an overarching truth was constructed for them. There is incredulity

noticed that the term is being used ubiquitously in contemporary writing, as well as having so many different definitions, meanings and associations, that postmodernism is nearly deemed empty (Postmodernism, 2006).

This is clearly illustrated in the following catchphrases and taglines that refer to postmodernism as “nostalgia for the present,’ ‘hysterical sublime,’ ‘radical indeterminacy,’ ‘hyperreality,’ ‘society of the spectacle,’ and ‘an incredulity toward meta-narratives’” (Postmodernism, 2006, para. 7), all showing the postmodernistic impetus to be many different things at the same time (Postmodernism, 2006). Therefore, the term can be considered inclusive, where all uses of the term must be considered in order for the term to be defined, as described below:

Postmodernism is at once a period, a movement, and the ex post facto portmanteau term for a vast concatenation of spirits, moods, or styles. There is both overlap and opposition between these different applications, but consideration of each in turn does nonetheless serve to bring something of this infuriating, fissiparous term into focus. (Postmodernism, 2006, para. 2)

It is through the “range of referents” (Postmodernism, 2006, para. 2) that refers to the avant-garde of postmodernism, which sometimes explains it to be contradictory. This causes contention as to the definition of the term. Postmodernism is in a paradoxical position where there is speculation if the same skepticism and reactions that postmodernism has for other interpretations can justify itself (Postmodernism, n.d). It is found that the deliberate definition is better defined in sentences and lifestyle rather than

toward the thought of claiming truth through historical dates and through label designation. This can sometimes cause contradictory confusion.

a sole quote. Although for the benefit of this study, and to tie in references to postmodernism throughout the study the glossary definition below of postmodernism (n.d.) showed itself to be an ample summary of the interpretation.

Postmodernism in large is a reaction to the assumed certainty of scientific, or objective, efforts to explain reality. In essence, it stems from a recognition that reality is not simply mirrored in human understanding of it, but rather, is constructed as the mind tries to understand its own particular and personal reality. For this reason, postmodernism is highly skeptical of explanations which claim to be valid for all groups, cultures, traditions, or races, and instead focuses on the relative truths of each person. In the postmodern understanding, interpretation is everything; reality only comes into being through our interpretations of what the world means to us individually. Postmodernism relies on concrete experience over abstract principles, knowing always that the outcome of one's own experience will necessarily be fallible and relative, rather than certain and universal. (Postmodernism, n.d.)

Modernism had its influence within order, and absolute truths and this is the frame with which sport has evolved (Fernandez-Balboa, 1997). We see this influence in some modern writers and their description of sport. "Hemingway depicted sport as an escape, of sorts, from the social world in which selfworth was measured with objective certainty" (Bresnan, 2009, p.2). Another example of sport's modernity has described sport as "tightly bound and rigidly ordered" (Messenger, 1981). Also as "an analogue to life as lived in the twentieth century...In its orderliness and balletic grace, sport isolates and

makes tolerable the condition of existence- it can even become, in its ritual purity, a secular equivalent to religion” (Cowart, 2002, p. 21).

Hence, in the framework of modernity order makes life tolerable, although conversely, postmodernism suggests the following:

We are confronting a universe marked by tremendous fluidity; it won't and cannot stand still. It is a universe where fragmentation, splintering and disappearance are the mirror images of appearance, emergence and coalescence. This is a universe where nothing is strictly determined. Its phenomena should be partly determinable via naturalistic analysis, including the phenomenon of men [and women] participating in the construction of the structures which shape their lives. (as cited in Corbin & Strauss, 2008, pp 5-6)

For a dramatic representation of the opposition between the suggested order within framed sport and the views of postmodernism, consider the fantastical allegory found in *Alice in Wonderland* (Carroll, 1988). In this allegory postmodernism represents the race, spear-headed by the Dodo bird, in which Alice finds herself. This “caucus” race was intended to get all participants dry, yet in doing so it references the dichotomy of modernism and postmodernism. Participants are moving wildly about in every which way, running randomly in circles, then, with no noted progress and with no conclusion the race is adjourned. In this race, everyone won a prize. This chaos accomplished in getting participants dry, yet it was unclear as to where to go, or what they were doing as they were doing it (Carroll, 1988). Carroll implies that this was political; it can also be assumed as the sometimes unclear direction and meaning in life itself. This implication shows us that through chaos of direction, lack of purpose, and other arbitrary twists, that

life ends up in the 'right' place even though there was no clear purpose. Order and the organization we see in sport today would have ensured a starting line, finishing line, and recognize those who pass over those lines first, length of race, track of race, record of race, and benefit of race, the race would have been televised and had sponsors' support, and so goes their discrepancies (Stephens & McCallum, 1998).

Thus, the contradictions between sport framed in modernity and the interpretation of postmodernism are clearly seen. In turn, the modern approach continues to influence the way people "view their bodies, exercise, and create and use movement-related knowledge" (Fernandez-Balboa, 1997, p. 8). Therefore, postmodernism and competition in sport vary in definition and influence, yet the entity that composes them both is the same. It is through the action of humans that both are constructed, therefore giving them a connectedness and active relationship.

The issue discovered during this research is that present research has a gap of "connectedness," and this particular research will assist in connecting postmodernism and competition in sport, as we have learned they are already embedded (Fernandez-Balboa, 1997). For there are many authors following competition in sport and postmodernism singularly and choosing to implement functionalist theory and conflict theory to explain and interpret the world (Coakley, 2009). I chose to follow the significant connectedness and stop dividing the concepts and scrutinizing *postmodernism* and *competition in sport* individually and take an Interpretivist approach and "pick up the pieces of what's left and paste them together as best [I] can" (Kincheloe, 2001, p. 681). By melding the terms together and understanding they cannot be of themselves (Fernandez-Balboa, 1997;

Kincheloe, 2001), my purpose emerges: to explore the impact that postmodernism has on competition in sport.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to explore the impact that postmodernism has on competition in sport. The focus of my research is to better understand the impacts (if any) that the social perspective of postmodernism has on competition in sport. I wanted to know the two phenomena's relationship. I did not want to proselytize one perspective, nor was my focus a comprehensive critique of weaknesses and strengths of postmodernism in regards to sport and its competition. This study was to be descriptive in nature summarizing the information content that was found for this purpose. As described further in chapter three methodologies, I place myself in a researcher-as-bricoleur position (Kincheloe, 200?). This positioning allowed me to reflect the information by looking for manifest and latent content within the collections (see chapter 3 iterative sampling) of literature. This positioning also provided an approach to continuously reflect new insights and new sample collections to illustrate on my concept map. However, as researcher-as-bricoleur, I understand that a researcher must be transparent and that my bias⁴ has position within this study (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 32). In conclusion, society and sport are embedded and it is my focus to understand their 'connectedness.'

⁴ Please refer to chapter 3 for more on my researcher bias position.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Themes and the correlating literature have laid the foundational background as well as the current state of knowledge. They have supplied commonly-used discourse, as well as made available criticism and assent of themes which has provided this study much utilized insight.

Research is already linking postmodernism to religious studies, ethnic studies, and ethic studies (Rail, 1998) indicating the range that postmodernism can encompass. While this reviewed research provided much needed background of the individual topics, it lacked a connection that is apparent between postmodernism as a societal interpretation and competition in sport.⁵ Therefore, this chapter is thematically organized. Out of the necessity of introduction, I have already referred to postmodernism briefly.

Meta-Narratives

Postmodernism started although lightly debated (Jameson, 1991), not unpredictably, around World War II and is still continuing (Lyotard, 1984; Fernandez-Balboa, 1997; Rail, 1998). This timing can be looked at as the crux of a change of outlook for many. During the time of Modernism, it was the upcoming scientific community that started answering questions that were for so long being asked. Now, that there were scientific answers to these questions, they were questioned no further. These now *truths* brought on personal fulfillment, along with religious freedoms that before were never had (Schwartz, 2006).

This complete understanding through truth was disrupted when came:

⁵ Please note, that many connections in previous literature has been made between the impact adult organized sport had on children and youth sport. Although insightful, and useful, by indicating a noticed issue correlating to this topic; that research did not connect specifically aspects of postmodernism and competition in sport.

Two world wars, empowered by the industrial revolution, shattered our visions of utopia, and one man's personal religious views brought about the genocide of six million Jews. Instead of answering the questions that caused our insecurity, science brought about the atomic and hydrogen bombs. The 'truths' and standards that promised security and utopia were perceived to be its undoing, and so the modern age failed to deliver. Consequently, post-modernists point to unquestionable and broad-sweeping truths as modernism's weakness. (Schwartz, 2006, para. 2)

With the emergence of the social thought that this 'utopia' was perhaps *not* coming, it led society to be skeptical of anything that claimed to be *the truth*. This skepticism of truths guided us into the new modernity-postmodernism. Postmodernism and the views conjoined want to destabilize ideas that spur from modernity (Ayelsworth, 2010). One of which is an overarching truth and answer for all (Postmodernism, 2006).

Lyotard, one of the philosophy's leading influencers, explains postmodernism as "incredulity toward meta-narratives" (Lyotard, 1984, p. xxiv) or a disbelief in a *truth* for all. Meta-narratives are what postmodernists oppose. They cause disbelief in an all-inclusive narrative for mankind, as well as a suggestion that there is no total absolute that will be applicable for all. For example, in communism, a socialist movement, there was a goal of creating common ownership, ultimately controlling situations for everyone in hopeful theory of diffusing the 'social class' distinction and causing tranquility. However, this 'solution' caused no tranquility, but tumultuous behavior from those involved (Communism, 1968). Meta-narratives are said to distort views of the surrounding world by claiming encompassing *truths*. Individuals in a society have their

own experience, and it is that particular story of experiences that guides them to understanding their surrounding world.

Competition

Some people have involved themselves in sport to help understand their surrounding world. The former National Football League (NFL) commissioner Paul Tagliabue stated that there are “dimensions” (Tagliabue, 2010) to sport and that it can mean something different to many different people. Examples of these “dimensions” are seen when an individual looks (a) into the founding of the word where it is learned that competition is a social process and (b) the two different segments of the term.

Competition has an early history with economics; it can be seen with the competing of products and businesses in hopes of gaining customer supremacy. It then meandered through other social sciences, e.g. biology and sociology. Some found that competition was “a war of each against all” (As cited in Vaughn & Diserens, 1938, p. 76). It is suggested that after the term had been applied by economists such as Malthus, it began to be applicable to leading biologist Darwin’s vocabulary as the “struggle for existence” and the well-regarded, ”survival of the fittest” (Park & Burgess, 1967). Extending from its “root” definition, it is found that the employment of this concept is nearly limitless; individuals can be in competition with themselves, others, the elements (i.e. rock-climbing) or animals (i.e. hunting). Although it would be cognitively beneficial, and fascinating, to understand the process of all of those facets, for this purpose, competition will be described as “a process through which success is measured by directly comparing the achievements of those who are performing the same physical

activity under standardized conditions and rules” (Coakley, 1994, p. 1). On the whole, this process is focused on defeating opponents.

With the definition in mind, the concept of competition is of much importance to this study. Competition has been utilized and “recognized as one of the four great forms of social interaction, or social process, viz., competition, conflict, accommodation, and assimilation” (Vaughn & Diserens, 1938, p. 76). In placing competition specifically in sport and daily lives, individuals are resting in hopes that competition will promote “excellence and enjoyment” not simply winning (Shields, 2009, p. 215). The connection between strife and victory through what General Douglas MacArthur refers to as “friendly strife” (Manchester, 1978, p. 123) is seen. It is through this strife in sport that opposing terms are seen, Cooperative-Competition and Conflict-Competition (Coakley, 2007; Shields, 2001).

E.C. Hayes has defined conflict-competition in hopes to divide the sometimes undistinguishable terms. When Hayes states “competition,” this indicates “cooperative-competition;” when he states “conflict,” that indicates “conflict-competition.”

Competition is a relation between activities which exists when the success of one activity limits or prevents the success of the other activity. Conflict is a relation between activities which exists when one activity impedes or destroys the other activity...In competition it is the result-the success-of one activity that affects the other. In competition the direct aim is the success of the actor; indirectly it may result in the failure of the competitor, but in conflict the direct result of the action of one person is to impede, prevent or destroy the act of another. (Katz & Schanck, 1938, p. 135)

Recognizing competition as a social interaction, we see that a competitive drive, whether with negative or positive intensity, is something that is learned through the “socialization” process (Coakley, 2007). This process refers to the interaction of human beings, where they learn who they are, how they are connected, and how they can change that world. Within the psychology of a human lies the capacity to be competitive; this is understood (Kildruff, Elfenbein & Staw, 2010). This interaction of socialization is a reflection of the social setting with which it is embedded. The socialization in our cultural context also influences our personal orientations in regard to competition, and once these orientations are founded, they tend to resist change (Coakley, 2007). For instance, competitive terms usually define success in capitalist countries. Within these countries, it is insisted on establishing superiority over others as seen in American baseball. The coaches’ disrespect toward the officials’ authority can be witnessed (Vogler & Schwartz, 1993) and there is an over-emphasis on the individual as “star” or Most Valuable Player (MVP) and their personal statistics.

Another example, somewhat contrary to that above, is that competitive behavior is less characteristic in people who lived in rural low-income areas. In these rural areas, especially where poverty is widespread, the residents are more likely to depend on cooperative relationships rather than competitive ones (Coakley, 2007). A shift of competitiveness is seen through cultural emphasis. For example, in Japanese society, much emphasis is placed on respect, unity, and cooperation. As a result of strong cultural expectations, Japanese baseball players are respectful to officials and personal statistics are sacrificed for the bettering of the team. Self-centered and combative ways are viewed as character flaws, so it is indicated that there is no fighting on the field with others

(Vogler & Schwartz, 1993). Please note, neither example came because people were genetically designed that way, it came from their social setting, as a socially experienced learned behavior (Coakley, 2007).

This leads us into further examination of the first segment of competition, cooperative-competition. The root meaning of competition is actually “to strive or seek with”⁶ (Shields, 2009). This indicates that the best competition that someone seeks is only found not from winning, but from striving for excellence and getting pushed to the limits of their capabilities (Shields, 2009). To illustrate, Chris Evert, a professional tennis player, was asked about her favorite match. Surprisingly, it was not the many that she won, but one that she lost. She recalls this one because both she and her opponent “were playing in top form, pushing each other to the max. The fact that she eventually lost was less important than having experienced that upward spiral of heightened focus, emotion, and performance. That is what true competition is all about” (Shields, 2009, p. 32).

In addition, there are continuing studies done by anthropologists that show games in different cultures that emphasize cooperation. This type of cooperation is considered *winning*, “outperforming the others are irrelevant to the outcome of the game” (Coakley, 2007, p11). We follow this model inside the pages of *Greek athletics and the genesis of sport*. Sansone (1992) wrote of The Jicarilla Apache Ceremonial Relay Race. This tribe resides in modern day northern New Mexico. It is noted, that this race event “means something” it is not about the competition in the world like we know, with winning and

⁶ “Competition comes from the Latin- *petere*, meaning, “to strive” or “to seek,” combined with the prefix, *com-*, meaning “with.” (Shields, 2009 p. 24)

losing (Sansone, 1992). Each “team” or side represents animals or vegetation; whatever represented side *wins*, that would be the greater source of nourishment for the following year. Understanding that competitions should “mean something” other than winning has been explored since the 1970s (Coakley, 2007).

Negative connotations of competition surround the phrases “struggle for existence” or “war of each against all.” This explains that in some views “war” and sport conjoin. This is especially harrowing when competition is seen as a social interaction (Vaughn & Diserens, 1938). Conflict within competition is something that sport *defaults* to, and researchers use this theology to rethink the “nature of true competition” (Shields, 2001, p. 24). Therefore, they take it away from the antagonistic warrior-esque implications, (Conflict-Competition) and ask people to question if there are truly *opponents* in sport or are there *enemies* (Shields, 2001, p. 30).

Local newspaper clippings can be found listing the horror stories of parents screaming and debasing their child, or an enraged coach aghast at a call of an official. Worse yet is the drive for a mother to plot the murder of her daughter’s competitor, and narcissistic parents brawling over scores of their youth’s sport just wanting to live (or imagine to live) through the success of their child (Rapalyea, 2009). Kohn (1986) explains this to us in his argument to stop sport contests all together because of the distortion of competition. Poignant still is the fact that whether this competition is whole and true, or distorted and warped, it is still considered competition in sport, it still affects society and especially those enveloped inside of it; this either entices or repels.

Illustrated through the aforementioned examples, competition is a social interaction, indicating that although the capability of competition is inside all humans, it

is personal social settings that will escalate it to what segment of competition it is, cooperative-competition or conflict-competition.

Sport ideally would have no conflicting spirit about it. Unfortunately, however, sport competition is laced both with conflict and cooperative competition. This however does not deter the numbers of willing participants from perusing sport. Figure 2.1 depicts a performance pyramid with a base that is comprised of athletes in youth sport and the apex that contains the few elite and professional athletes (Rosandich, 2002). The figure illustrates that the participant numbers continue to descend as it ascends toward the apex. According to calculated studies completed by the National Council Youth Sport (NCYS), there are approximately 44 million participants in the United States' between the ages of six and eighteen in sport. Throughout conflict competition, as well as the cooperative competition, there is a drive for sport and what youth feel it has to offer them.

By increasing the awareness of sport inside our society through means of media, and virtual worlds, children have become immensely interested to be involved. From an early age children want to become part of something that others deem pertinent, and sport just happens to entice (Coakley, 2007).

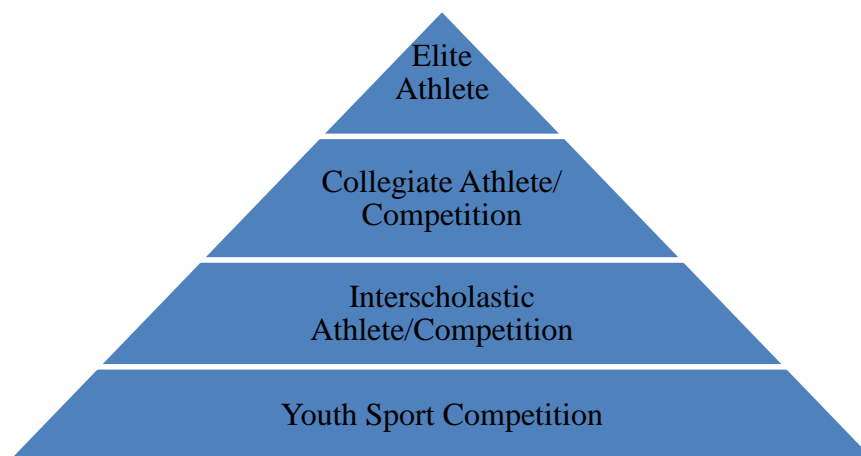


Figure 2.1

Hyper-Reality

Emphasis, it seems, is placed on a win-at-all cost type of attitude through virtual means and media. The camera celebrates the writhing pain and disheartened face of the athlete's determination to seek their own achievement. Thus, the following is seen:

The contemporary emphasis placed on competition and winning at all costs and the omnipresence of the sport media means that professional and elite sport have become mediated, and often celebrated, worlds of hurt and disability. The roaming television lens captures and replays the writhing athletic body in "super slo-mo," while commentators and well-known media personalities respond using discourses of approval and rationalization (Young, 2004, pp. 13-14).

As in the example above, the witnesses via virtual means are only seeing a part of the reality. They hear what the commentators are stating about the situation, so the perception is what the commentators and cameramen want to portray. To the postmodern follower watching the competition on the television, playing the sport on a gaming console, or sport media broadcasting, fantasy football teams or other indirect ways to listen, watch and 'be' a part of sport, are all seen as hyper-reality. Jean Baudrillard has found when images and signs are merely *based off* of a reality pass as *reality* it is called 'hyper-reality' (Baudrillard & Witwer, 2000).

Realities and *truths* are different for each individual; which is suggested because it is the reader who writes the text (Lyotard, 1984, 1988). It is the perception of a situation that provides legitimacy, perhaps more than the *real* situation. For example, consider the psychological practices of Carl Rogers: he stated that while looking at the social world there is a "multiplicity of positions." Rogers concluded that it was not about (as most

psychology was at that time) what the professional thought of their client's current situation; it was what the client thought about their own situation. This, although freeing for the client, brings controversy about the psychologist who is "offering no advice and in only offering acceptance was also demonstrating that there are no definitive answers to problems, only a multiplicity of possible answers" (Burnard, 1999, p. 244).

It seems like the adversary of too many questions is too many acceptable answers. Baudrillard clears this up for the postmodernist, by summarizing if the "Real is disappearing, it is not because of a lack of it-on the contrary, there is too much of it. It is the excess of reality that puts an end to reality..." (Baudrillard & Witwer, 2000, pp. 65-66). It is introduced that the world is filled with the virtual,

where everything that exists as idea, dream, fantasy, utopia will be eradicated because it will immediately be realized, operationalized. Nothing will survive as an idea or a concept. You will not even have time enough to imagine. Events, real events, will not even have time to take place. Everything will be preceded by its virtual realization. (Baudrillard, 2000, pp. 66-67)

This concept can be emphasized with regard to the 1994 World Cup. "Television revenues, sales from various commercial exploitations of related commodities, and sponsorship already count for far more than spectator income" (Redhead, 1998, p. 232). The world's largest soccer clubs (AC Milan, Barcelona, Manchester United) are continuing to proceed in such a direction where "live" audiences are not needed for these particular corporations to be successful (Redhead, 1998).

Conclusion

A solid foundation for each concept that this study deals with has been established from previous writers. Through their writings, it is learned that postmodernism started as a change of outlook from modernity, which placed emphasis on overarching truths inclusively imposed, called meta-narratives. These meta-narratives are discounted by postmodernists because of the presumable falsity of a blanket truth constructed for us all. Deconstruction is used as assistance to spot situations where truth is being forced on them. Competition has two differing facets within it, cooperative-competition and conflict-competition indicating that competition is a social process and gives this study direction with my goal of “connectedness.” Through this foundation, and a desire for knowledge through discovery, rather than the acceptance of tradition, postmodernism presents itself as something starkly different than the traditional, or modern, view of sport.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

I approached my research question using relational content analysis methodology. This approach was a valuable asset to my research because of insights that can be gained from studying communication through texts (Krippendorff, 1980). I drew much of my theoretical groundwork from an Interpretivist paradigm (Kincheloe, 2001). Interpretivist paradigms and postmodernism are similar in teaching there are many ways to knowledge and different ways of learning (Brustad, 1997). The methodologies in this study were carefully selected and preferred in hopes that the postmodernist interpretation being explored would be preserved in its raw form.

Traditionally, collection and analysis of data called for “objectivity,” which generally comes from the scientific method, or positivist paradigm (Brustad, 1997). To gain knowledge within that type of method, the researcher must analyze and measure through objective reality, and know that that reality is “out there” (Creswell, 2009). However, objectivity is viewed differently in an Interpretivist paradigm, to the extent that Corbin and Strauss state that they “know that objectivity in qualitative research is a myth” (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 32). To the Interpretivist,

The individual and society are inseparable units. From this, it follows that a complete understanding of one is not possible without a complete understanding of the other. Also, society is to be understood in terms of the individuals making it up, and the individuals are to be understood in terms of the societies of which they are members. (O’Donoghue, 2007. p.16)

Similarly, the researcher brings to the “research situation their particular paradigms, including perspectives, training, knowledge, and biases; these aspects of self

then become woven into all aspects of the research process” (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 32). This approach, to be clear, is not demeaning the importance of validity that comes from aiming at “objectivity,” rather, finding validity by using a different approach to collect and analyze data. This process sensitively immerses the researcher completely ‘inside’ the research, rather than standing “outside objectively” (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). However, these Interpretivist insights did not occur sporadically, or “haphazardly;” they happen rather to prepared minds “during interplay with the data” (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 32).

Throughout this study, I was continually delving past comfortable, traditional research of statistics and compartmentalized classifications through the interplay with data and paradigm (Denzin, 1978), and considering more uncomfortable and unpredictable findings through “connectedness.” This research method continued with placing me as the researcher-as-bricoleur and bringing those perceptions into this descriptive work, with a goal to understand more of the basis of the knowledge needed (Kincheloe, 2001).

Sample and Data Collection

This study began with a need to understand the terms involved in my research question: What is the impact that postmodernism has on competition in sport? First, I evaluated “postmodernism” as a keyword while searching through empirical research within the Liberty University Online Library’s database. I searched and read only books, academic journal articles, encyclopedia entries, and other academic theses and dissertations with that exact term in the title of the published work. This eliminated popular publications where misuse of the terms was more likely, which included some

newspaper articles, individual archives such as blogs, social sites, or other like sources. I limited the literature to the first ten documents under the constraints of “relevance” of the keyword search inside the Liberty Online Library’s database. To explore the topic, I had to discover a relationship in the literature that (a) influenced the perspective or (b) that asserted its significance by using empirical sources, and using the actual terms I was exploring or (c) referenced, or supported ideas from the prior two listed. I applied no other constraints to delimit my sample, such as historical date ranges or age of document.⁷ Secondly, I evaluated “competition in sport” as the keywords, while searching through the same types of research-based literature with which “postmodernism” was evaluated; by using literature that listed the words *competition* and *sport* as keywords in their titles.

After my initial collection of content, I continued with an iterative process (Bassett, 2010, p. 504). This explains how I designed this study through purposive iterative sampling. An iterative approach to sampling usually begins with small loops, and then moves into larger cycles of data collection. This type of sampling continued to meet the needs of my “research design, data requirements, and analysis methods in response to new information as it is collected” (Bassett, 2010, p. 504). The iterative sampling process that I followed is described below:

Iterative sampling is one example of an iterative process. Working back and forth between the research design and the initial data collection, adjustment can be made to the purposive sampling frame, followed by further data collection with

⁷ Having the term in the title content search, forced the age of the article to those after the term was introduced into academic discourse (approximately 1970’s, Lyotard, 1984), and society (approximately 1940’s-present).

another cycle of evaluation against the sampling frame, and further sampling adjustment and data collection as needed. Iterative sampling ensures that information-rich participants are included in the study. This process recognizes that rich information, purposefully focused on the collection of specific, rather than general, data related to the research topic, is necessary for reliable and valid qualitative research. (Bassett, 2010, p. 504)

As explained in the above quote, subsequent iterative cycles, unlike the initial cycle's confines of the keyword in the title, were based off of patterns and concepts and the relationship that were found in those subsequent texts (Le Navenec & Hirst, 2010). This provided focus on analyzing both the "manifest content" of a text as well as interpretations of its "latent content" (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004; Cohen & Crabtree, 2006). I explored the subsequent collections of literature and found themes, common discourse and new questions of mine regarding my topic. Both the initial and subsequent collections of literature were reflected and evaluated by use of a concept map. All collections of literature were open to be utilized within my findings.

In summary, an iterative sampling approach can sometimes be "mistakenly criticized as repeatedly changing the objectives of the study, and as lacking rigor, [although] an iterative approach is valuable for its sensitivity to the richness and variability of data and for ensuring data addresses the study's objectives" (Bassett, 2010, p. 505). Doing so provided an information rich and robust study that deepened my understanding of the literature by (a) systematically repeating the sampling process in the same manner multiple times as well as by (b) understanding my topic across varying settings and conditions. Therefore, having a goal to intently understand this study's topic,

I worked with iterative sampling (Bassett, 2010; Cohen & Crabtree, 2006; Glaser & Strauss; 1967).

Evaluation and Reflection of Findings

Through the iterative process, as explained above, I evaluated and reflected the explored literature on a concept map. Doing so “involves the creation of a framework (or model) for the entire text” (as cited in Le Navenec & Hirst, 2010, p. 794). The concept map framework has “linkages” that dealt with many concepts found in my collections that network and connect. Linking concepts, through this type of framework, provided this study a representation that is more analogous to the way people think and discuss concepts (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Daley, 2004). Figure 3.1 is the preliminary example that was used in examining findings, followed by definitions of its key terms.

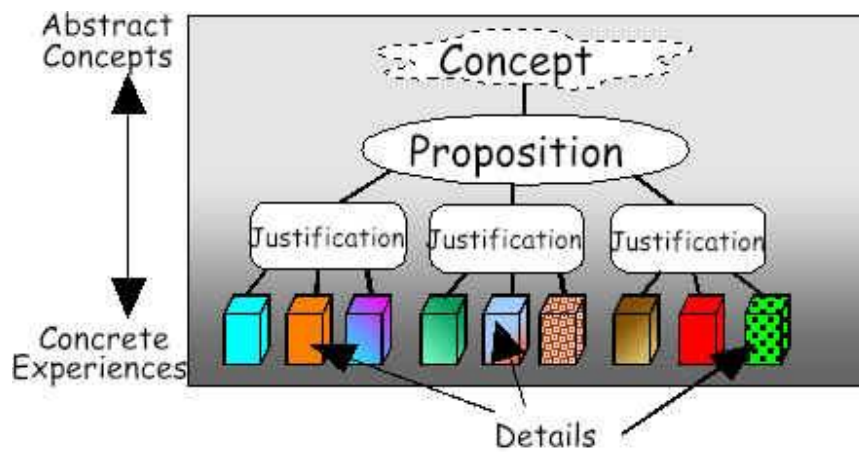


Figure 3.1 adapted from (Walther & Comingore, 2003)

Concept: vague difficult to define thoughts

Proposition: beliefs or value judgments about concept

Justification: support proposition statements moving toward specificity

Details: most specific level events that are observed or sensed. These details are the essential foundation of a person's communication. (Walther & Comingore, 2003)

My concept map lists themes, ideas, concepts, and common discourse that my collections of literature introduced. I continued adding to the map until findings emerged and I felt that information saturation was reached, where the information being found was the same as I already had explored and illustrated. I began researching this topic with two concept maps. Before I collected my initial sample, I drew one concept map with a nucleus of *postmodernism* with all found corresponding themes around it; another directly beside *postmodernism's* with a nucleus of *competition in sport*, with all corresponding themes surrounding it. Once information saturation was reached and all cycles of literature collection was accomplished, I was left with a raw data concept map. It was from this map that I was able to see all of my information in a non-linear form, as well as see my findings emerge.

The findings that emerged through the concept map were determined by the two phenomena's connectedness. Illustrating horizontal lines of conceptual connected themes (whether that connection is through opposing positions or similar positions), I was able to reflect and explore the themes. Through the connections, identity and authority/hierarchy emerged as main findings; other themes can be described within these two main themes.

Conclusion

I found that the most supportive methodologies were those that organized and guided findings in a connected manner. Without confining this study to one research discipline, it was able to comprehend interdisciplinary usage which allowed new insight

and provided a thicker understanding of the topic. In this qualitative study by using iterative sampling, I was able to cycle through processes of data collection, evaluation, and reflection and sampling adjustment. To collect my initial data, I used only empirical studies with the term in the title within the Liberty University's online library database, then, to evaluate and reflect the collection of data I used concept maps, which began a way to display, reduce and draw my findings (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

The purpose of my research was to explore the impact postmodernism has on competition in sport. It was found that postmodernism and competition in sport have two aspects of connectedness, *acceptance* and *awareness* which, through active relationships, manifest two impacts, (a) identity and (b) hierarchy/authority which both interrelate with social interaction and cooperative-competition. This interrelationship has encouraged the development of alternative sport.⁸

Acceptance and Awareness

“What is there, then, that can be esteemed true? Perhaps this only, that there is absolutely nothing certain” (Silk, Bush & Andrews, 2010, p. 109). Paradoxically that statement lays the foundation for the difference between modern interpretation and postmodern interpretation. Modernism, as defined earlier, promotes a truth for everyone, which has been challenged through postmodernist interpretation. Yet, it is through modernism’s theme of acceptability that the skeptics of postmodernism were able to interpret and bring awareness to society about the dangers of metanarratives that for so long have been accepted as truth. Each of the meta-narratives discussed in this study lends itself to help express the themes through which the impact that postmodernism has on competition in sport is explored. The previously-described literature is appearing again in this chapter as needed to assist with the iterative methodology that was implemented in this study.

⁸ This study chooses to make use of the term ‘alternative’ encompassing the other terms describing the same type of sport (i.e. extreme, action, adventure, and lifestyle). For they all are *alternatives* to organized modern sport.

Postmodernists began to question metanarratives first of all because language is unreliable in their view. The fluctuation of language is shown in a metaphor. When comparing language spoken, to a post card, there is an assumption that both will reach the specified destination. However, there were three different places the postcard could be received, it could (a) reach its specified destination (b) get lost or (c) arrive somewhere else. The assumption, as with the postcard, is that language will reach its posted destination, yet it too has the possibility of getting misunderstood or received elsewhere. This implies, that by being language, truth, is relative and contextual, “Because at its functional level all language is a system of difference, says Derrida, all language, even when spoken, is writing, and this truth is suppressed when meaning is taken as an origin, present and complete unto itself” (Aylesworth, 2010) thereby helping to form the postmodernist’s incredulity to meta-narratives.

How then, are meta-narratives detected in an individual’s life? The concept that postmodernists suggest for detection is “deconstruction.” Simply put, a “deconstructive reading, then, *does not assert or impose meaning, but marks out places where the function of the text works against its apparent meaning, or against the history of its interpretation*”(Emphasis added: Aylesworth, 2010, para. 5). Derrida, an influencer of postmodernism, found that it is not only written text that should be considered when deconstructing, all can be looked at the same way one would deconstruct a text (Derrida, 1976, p. 158). Text can include verbal situations, or physical situations, or tear down the falsities of a situation to find the constructed meaning (Aylesworth, 2010).

Lyotard critiques social meta-narratives stating that they are continually masking the constructedness of practices and beliefs that are unquestionably accepted from society. Foucault furthers and defines this theme of acceptability:

These pre-existing forms of continuity, all these syntheses that are accepted without question, must remain in suspense. They must not be rejected definitively of course, but the tranquility with which they are accepted must be disturbed; we must show that they do not come about of themselves, but are always the result of a construction, the rules of which must be known, and the justifications of which must be scrutinized: we must define in what conditions and in view of which analyses certain of them are legitimate; and we must indicate which of them can never be accepted in any circumstances. (Foucault, 2010, p. 25)

It is recognized as ‘constructed’ because one cannot assume that something linguistic is intrinsic or “of- itself” (Derrida, 1976; Lyotard, 1984). Who then, is the constructor of the surrounding meta-narratives in society? Postmodernism maintains that through critical awareness they are constructed by those in power or “the decision makers” (Lyotard, 1984, p. 6). For this doxa, if not debated or reflected is taken for granted it becomes “uncritically accepted as part of the daily life world” (von der Lippe, 1997, p. 28). Modernism encouraged these truths to be accepted as part of society; postmodernist influence began to bring awareness to society. It is through that awareness that the two main impacts were made manifest, those of identity and hierarchy/authority.

Identity

The first accepted meta-narrative in sport expresses itself through the axiom that sport “builds character.” Former President Gerald Ford agreed when he stated,

Outside of a national character and an educated society, there are few things more important to a society's growth and well-being than competitive athletics. If it is a cliché to say athletics builds character as well as muscle, then I subscribe to the cliché. (as cited in Coakley, 1994, para.1)

Youth sport claiming the privilege of "building character" in today's youth is contested (Coakley, 2007; Lines, 2001; Shields, 2001; Rapalyea, 2009). Some stand firm that "sports can provide a vital setting for learning how to respond to the challenges posed by all types of contest" (Shields & Bredemeir, 2009, p. 214), while other views project that the involvements in sport are simply "culturally sanctioned norms" (Lyotard, 1988) and that sport actually building youths' characters spurs from lay conversation and is usually founded by the projected "hero" status of an athlete (Rapalyea, 2009).

For example, when athletes have reached a heroic stature and demonstrate their physical abilities, viewers often conclude that their success on the field is grounded in admirable character traits applicable off the field. This is sometimes referred to as the "halo effect" (Coakley, 2009). This proverbial "halo" is placed on the athletes' head because people tend to use limited information about the athlete to make conclusions about their overall character. As in the example of Lou Gehrig, who gained quite the following of fans because of who he portrayed on field, "a talented athlete who embodied the characteristic of profound humility and possessed an incredible work ethic that earned him the nickname 'Iron Horse' during his professional baseball career" (Rapalyea, 2009, p. 7). Sport followers desperately want to believe that their favorite athletes who accomplish so much on field are simply great in all facets of their lives; this

makes it easier for idolization (Coakley, 2009). However this halo that is placed is not always appropriate.

According to Bandura (1986), youth mimic modeled behaviors of those within society. Behaviors that are expressed by athletes have increasing potential to be imitated, because of the esteem media places on sport (Coakley, 2009). Fred Engh, founder of National Alliance for Youth Sport (NAYS) and author of *Why Johnny Hates Sports*, states that “we are going to compete all of our lives, do we have to learn at age nine that it is OK to cheat? To play when injured? To taunt the other team?” (Smith, 2003, p.B6) There are negative examples of associated sport traits, rebuking the accepted argument that sport is actually building character. Some of these include drug use, cheating, violent behavior (both on-and off-field), sexual assaults, adultery, and parental irresponsibility. All of these examples are portraying what many that are resisting the terminology describe as “a lack of character” (Rapalyea, 2009, p. 9). The negativity that sport portrays gives a foundation for questioning the meta-narrative:

There is little, if any, valid evidence that participation in [organized] sport is an important or essential element in the socialization process, or that involvement in sport teaches or results in . . . character building, moral development, a competitive and/or cooperative orientation, good citizenship, or certain valued personality traits. (as quoted in Coakley, 2009, p. 15)

With so much seemingly strong evidence against sport building a positive character, why does society continue to accept this meta-narrative? First, it has been accepted because sport is organized in a way that selects people with certain characteristics. This means that people involved in sport become successful and use sport

as a setting to “nurture and display those traits” (Coakley, 2009, p. 15). Secondly, sports’ character building is supported by visible and articulate elite athletes. It is noted that this is a bias and distorted picture of what sport truly accomplishes for its participants, because the focus is on only the success stories. Lastly, it is because players are facing challenges through sport competition situations, where their behaviors are visible and easily evaluated. Coakley notes it is “not often we get to observe another person facing and responding to clearly defined challenges” (Coakley, 2009, p. 16). When society views athletes do it successfully it is assumed that they must have stronger characteristics than what others possess. This may not be correct however, for these traits could form from a myriad of different experiences that have been developed over years, rather than simply through an athletes’ participation in sport (Coakley, 2009).

The second meta-narrative that supports the societal change in how identity is viewed is that of hegemony in sport. To some postmodern thinkers, competition in sport is something that can be considered hegemonic power (Foucault, 1995; Gruneau, 1983; Sansone, 1992). This dominance however, is not dominance through force, but through a dynamic that reaches into private and social realms of one’s life (Giddens, 1993). A noted dynamic of this type is the promotion of school sports (Sage, 1997). These interschool sport events were organized around ideas of modernity – power, obedience, and order that come from hierarchy – and possibly designed “to inculcate discipline and hard-working habits” (Sage, 1997, p. 22). These ideals are arguably the same values and beliefs of the capitalist workplace (Fernandez-Balboa, 1997; Gruneau, 1983; Shields, 1991). School sport introduction reflected the modernist ideology where success was based on skill and the “valorization of commercialism, and the presentation of a false

view of social progress, which emphasizes records and performance standards” (Sage, 1997, p. 24). This same idea is held by Gruneau (1983) in which he states,

Much of the organization and culture of modern sport seems to have been influenced by capitalist productive forces and relations. For example “amateur” sports at their highest levels have almost become monuments to such new sciences as biomechanics, exercise physiology, and sport psychology where market rationality is expressed in a mechanical quest for efficiency in human performance that is indentured to state and commercial sponsorship. Professional sports, meanwhile, have gone a great distance toward reducing the meaning of athletic contests to a simple dramatization of commodity relations. (Gruneau, 1983, p. 24)

Individuals are beginning to see that their bodies are being used as tools of production, and that through their acceptance, they are maximizing control of those in power. For example, “children from (the dominant) classes tend to engage in socially elite sporting activities which stress manners and deportment and hence facilitate the future acquisition of social and cultural capital” (Shilling, 1991, p. 656). Both Shilling and Gruneau state that the maintenance of capitalism comes from teaching children the successful manners of commodity. Additionally, it is warned that by actively engaging children in sport, it is showing and proving the cultural importance of their bodies and identities as the commodities (Shilling, 1991).

Identity and individuality exemplified as a commodity is seen in the mediatized Olympics. This media endeavor, however, is one of mutuality between sport and media:

The sports industry has become dependent upon the media; the media in turn derive their revenues for the purchase of sports broadcast rights from advertisers who wish to reach the audiences that watch sports. The other way in which sports can derive additional revenue is to sell themselves directly to advertisers. The 1984 Olympic Games in Los Angeles are the best example of this commercialization taken to extreme lengths. Sports are undoubtedly a very important and powerful cultural force in contemporary America—they give meaning to the lives of many people. That meaning, though, is mediated through the commodity form of culture. (VanWynsberghe & Ritchie, 1998, p. 375)

Television has a relationship, of sorts, with its viewers; the power of this relationship is that of ambiguity (Rail, 1998). By changing workers into consumers in the early 20th century, television advertising began selling ways of life, rather than products. Some speculate that resulted in a “culture itself is turned into an industry- its various products packaged and marketed like any commodity” (VanWynsberghe & Ritchie, 1998, p. 377). An example of this would be the Olympic rings which can “serve to remind people of their national identity and ‘common destiny’” (Sage 1997, p. 367) when recognized.

The Olympic rings operate as an open-ended signifier enabling their continued symbolic consumption as both affective cultural icon and linguistic item whose meaning emerges out of the links between products and people’s everyday lives. As a result the Olympic rings do not represent ideals inherent to the Games, but are the product of a carefully cultivated media endeavor. (VanWynsberghe & Ritchie, 1998, p. 367)

Realizing, like Baudrillard and Witwer (2000), that the effect of television is reducing objects to images and that those objects become both commodities and signs, a third meta-narrative is found, expressing the theme of identity, hyper-reality. Hyper-reality is a shift from subject to the hyper-real object. This postmodern perspective of reality is suggesting that hyper-reality is changing one's individuality and self-awareness. The hyper-real has no grounding in the wider reality; it is only in reference to itself. In other words, "the model replaces the real and the model to which we aspire is a simulation" (VanWynsberghe & Ritchie, 1998, p 374 see also: Baudrillard, 2000).

Whether an individual aspires to a simulation and places his or her identity as a commodity in the hyper-real, or one's identity is placed in accepted statements such as "sports builds character," this knowledge of self that is fleshed out through identity and character is understood to be "embodied knowledge" (Bain, 1997; Fernandez-Balboa, 1997). Individuals portray these to society by "ways of speaking and moving, ways of using and caring for and presenting [their] bodies" (Bain, 1997, p. 189). When one's identity is presented to society with certain actions, philosophies, and thoughts, it directly affects the surrounding society. This knowledge provides the magnitude of accepting meta-narratives within sport and how they affect identity. Postmodernism's influencers suggest constructing one's own local or mini-narratives which are always situational, provisional, contingent and temporary. They have no claim to universality, truth, reason, or stability (Ayelsworth, 2010).

Hierarchy/Authority

This leads us into hierarchy; it is proposed that hierarchies give us our identity, our role, and self-worth (Fernandez-Balboa, 1997). For instance, winner/loser,

man/woman, truth/false, object/subject. These are dichotomies where the first term is superior to and depends on the definition of the second (Derrida, 1976). This definition explains hierarchy, for instance taking the two examples, man/woman or winner/loser, each a binary opposite. When analyzed the way Derrida proclaims they should, one rules the other, (man over woman, winner over loser.) This indicates that by the way words are spoken there is a weight of authority and hierarchy. In turn, simply the ways that winner/loser is spoken in sport, titling the individual as a ‘winner’ and as the other individual a ‘loser.’ The weight of hierarchical words forces the individuals to find their identities within that same hierarchy (Aylesworth, 2010; Derrida, 1976; Fernandez-Balboa, 1997).

Furthermore, rather than simply speaking in hierarchical form, the older paradigm of modernity believed in inherent order of position, (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 51) because it was assumed that hierarchy would prove and ensure order. However, postmodernists presume *if* there are orders, they are not arranged in the fashion of hierarchy (higher to lower “class”) but side by side indicating the predominance of one to another is shifting and changing quickly.

The old conception of order was hierarchical... The emergent order is heterarchical... Heterarchy is a shift from the rule by one to several rules by some... a system of mutual constraints and influence. The whole system goes not where any one interest would take it. Rather than merely a compromise or average of all the interests, there is a movement that is unpredictable and different from those of the particular component interest. (Schwartz & Ogilvy, 1979, p. 13, as cited in Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 52)

The traditional hierarchical organization of sport restricts creativity and freedom. Gracey (2009) finds that youth sport was manipulated and forced by the adult organization behind it, sometimes actually cutting off the imagination and limiting what the children could learn because of the modern organization within sport. Gracey (2009) explains, that the only way the youth were able to have freedom and experience *their* experience, rather than an experience that was being forced on them through the modern organization of sport and sport competition, were through these small defiances. While observing youth basketball sport leagues Gracey noted the youth were

Denying the dominant discourse often with just small moves that did not draw too much disapproval. It allowed them to conform to adult expectations in the most obvious ways and yet they simultaneously pursued their own interest and desires- in small ways making their sport experience their own. (Gracey, 2009, p. 142)

As seen earlier, competition began in economics, and economics also gives us a view of citizenry in hierarchal relationships. Foucault (1995) connected economic productivity accomplished by compliant and healthy citizens, with effectiveness of labor. Sharing in the thought (Freire, 1970), society has subtle ways of schooling the body for “docility-utility” (Foucault, 1995). Docility utility can be summarized as social regulations of a body that “has worked to render the body compliant and productive” (Kirk, 1997 p. 62). These regulations in sport are suggested to transpire through (a) panopticon organization and gaze and (b) exercise prescription through the structure and application of hierarchy.

This docility of the body is being trained, and as believed by some, has been schooled through “drilling and exercising as codifications of corporeal power”

(Fernandez- Balboa, 1997, p. 44; Foucault, 1995). To exemplify, Foucault writes of a “panopticon,” this was used as a powerful discipline facility (Foucault, 1995). This particular design form utilized a tall tower in the center, from which one of authority could see into each incarcerated cell, therefore, causing visibility to ensure the facility’s functioning power. The visibility is what “inspires prisoners to discipline themselves- behaving within acceptable parameters” (Gracey, 2009, p. 31). This process of panopticon to Foucault represents the way that discipline works in the society presently, although sometimes, not in the physical sense of incarceration, but internally as “panopticon gaze.” “The gaze is successful when the observer is anonymous and need not even exist, as the *possibility* of being watched is internalized and the prisoners take over their own surveillance” (Gracey, 2009, p.31). It is also mentioned, that this type of discipline can become a widely used technique for power (Gracey, 2009). For example, in youth organized sport, adults are in good proximity to be the observers over the youth. The public has the right to come and “pass judgment via applause or comments” (Gracey, 2009, p.32) in the meantime the youth are acutely aware they are being watched. As in a panopticon prison, the youth athletes are internalizing the gaze and will continue to scrutinize their choices and guide their behaviors to act accordingly as to what is socially acceptable. This was seen in situations where the level of observation affected the honesty of the children. The more supervision, the more honesty from the children; the less supervision, the more dishonesty from the children (Hartshorne & May, 1928).

Consequently, these examples suggest that this is an aspect of social learning.

Youth take their behavioral cues as to what is acceptable and what is not from others they

are involved with or others that are observing. Within a social context, Lyotard (1988) writes this of acceptability to the postmodernist in terms of “not-presentable.”

Postmodernism could be seen as that which within modernity, in its own manifestation, alleges not to be liable to being presented (i.e., is “not-presentable”); that which refuses to take part in the consolation of “good forms” i.e., of culturally sanctioned norms- that which denies to partake of the consensus of prevailing tastes which would allow it to experience the nostalgia of that which is impossible together; that which delves into and explores new modes of expressions, not for the purpose of enjoying them, but rather, to better get the message across, that there are things which are not-presentable. A postmodern artist or author is in the position of the philosopher: the text he drafts, the work of art he accomplishes, are not, as a matter of principle governed by pre-established rules, and they cannot be judged on the basis of a verdict putting them into such and such known category by which they might be pigeon holed. These rules and classificatory criteria are precisely that which the work of art or the text strives towards. (as cited in Gleyse, 1998, pp.250-251; see also Lyotard, 1988)

Foucault (1995) teaches that accepting this type of discipline and internalizing this social gaze results in a docile body, one that does not question or argue. This body simply accepts the power and surveillance that it is situated. This can be seen in some exceptional cases of elite athletes. Former NFL player Merlin Olsen states that “the athlete doesn’t have to grow up because the coach lives his life for him.” He continues on, “the sad thing is [that] it actually benefits the team to keep the player naïve and dependent.” Chris Evert (Mill) has made a similar conclusion with her experiences in

tennis. Stating that because of the luxury elite athletes are getting, it takes them “longer to grow up than other people” (Coakley, 2009, p. 15). Psychologists are tending to agree with Olsen and Evert. Dorcas Susan Butt, a former elite tennis player in Canada, now a clinical psychologist stated the following:

The social behavior expected of an athlete resembles in many ways that expected of a young, ill, or irresponsible person. Athletes are rewarded to an extreme for good behavior (winning) and punished (often inconsistently) for misbehavior. The athlete is not expected to appreciate and internalize the reason for rules and regulations; he functions under a system of fines and penalties levied against him that force him, like a child, to behave. (as quoted in Coakley, 2009, p.15)

It is noted that the power that sport discipline gaze brings is not necessarily that of force but brings its domination through normalization (Foucault, 1995). This is a greatly utilized source of power, through creating homogeneity. “The perpetual penalty that traverses all points and supervises every instant in the disciplinary institutions compares, differentiates, hierarchizes, homogenizes, excludes. In short, it normalizes” (Foucault, 1995 p. 183). For example,

To compete with someone . . . you must agree to run on the same track, to do what he is doing, to follow the same set of rules. The only way you'll differentiate yourself is by doing precisely the same thing, slightly faster or better. Thus, though performance may improve, the chances are that you will become increasingly like the person with whom you compete. (as quoted in Coakley, 2007, p. 14)

To attain normalized, docile bodies that will continue to unquestionably accept meta-narratives, constructors are prescribing elements that have the tendency toward oppression, which is the second meta-narrative expressing the theme of hierarchy/authority. The relationship of oppressor and oppressed is sustained by (a) exercise prescription and sport implementation and (b) the expectation of hierarchy in sport. The relationship through which oppression occurs is examined here:

One of the basic elements of the relationships between the oppressor and oppressed is prescription. Every prescription represents the imposition of one man's choice upon another, transforming the consciousness of the man prescribed to into one that conforms with the prescriber's consciousness. Thus the behavior of the oppressed is a prescribed behavior following as it does the guidelines of the oppressor. (Freire, 1970, p. 46)

Prescription is used to manipulate power over others, stifling their personal or local narrative and forcing a meta-narrative. As explained below,

Any situation in which A objectively exploits B or hinders his [sic] pursuit of self-affirmation it interferes with man's ontological and historical vocation to be more fully human. (Freire, 1970, p. 55)

In regard to sport, each rule, each verbal authoritative command from coach to athletes, each government induced limitation on competition is an imposition of one choice above that of another (Freire, 1970). For example, "Through hierarchical observation... a coach can implement additional workouts for the unfit, skill sessions for the unskilled, and punishing drills for the tardy" (Markula & Pringle, 2006, p. 41). It is through this control of activity, "scheduling the events and efforts, establishing the

rhythm of movement, establishing the correct body movements how to handle the ball correctly, constantly correcting the movements and ball-handling” (Gracey, 2009, p. 35) of athletes that sport and its authority figures create the docile body (Foucault, 1995).

Paul Brown, a coach in the NFL, states how he accomplished this very clearly:

I never left anything to the players’ imagination: I laid out exactly what I expected from them, how I expected them to act on and off the field and what we expected to accomplish...Our team had training rules, too, and we enforced them even though they were grown men. (Coakley, 1994, p. 7)

Social Interaction

As seen above, postmodernism impacts competition by allowing us to redefine our individual identity and reestablish a place within society. Previous writers have established that competition is considered one of the four social interactions (Vaughn & Diserens, 1938, p. 76). Whether that interaction is between teams or individuals, it involves an active relationship inside of society. It has been too long accepted that the sole definition of competition is conflict-competition or an orientation of “winning-at-all-costs.” Cooperative-competition invites its participants to compete *with* not *against* the opponents.

“Physical education can liberate and oppress, inspire and disillusion, encourage and alienate, and be a source of satisfaction and achievement as well as of disappointment and failure” (Tinning, 1997, p. 105). As seen by Tinning (1997), inside the structure of sport, presently, there is an allowance for both types of competition; although, both are described as one “competition.” It seems many writers find that organized sport is perceived as conflict-competition (Coakley, 2009; Fernandez-Balboa,

1997; Rail, 1998; Shields, 2001). This perceived attitude can be seen in the following examples: Mary Decker Slaney, a world famous middle-distance runner, described her orientation of sport competition as follows:

From the time I started running, I won. . . . To me, that was the only place to finish. I wasn't like some kids who would finish second and say, 'I ran a good time.' Good time, heck. I want to win. I'll do anything I have to, to win. (As quoted in Coakley, 2009, p. 4)

Another example, George Allen, a former professional football coach, states, "One of the greatest things in life is winning. If you can live with yourself and lose, I don't know how you can be happy" (as quoted in Coakley, 2009, p. 4). An additional coach emphasized his attitude by saying "Defeat is worse than death because you have to live with defeat" (as quoted in Coakley, 2009, p. 4). Conflict-competition in the United-States is supported by comments such as these where victory is only seen when the opponents have been overcome. These comments also indicate why "competition in sport" is perceived solely as conflict-competition without awareness of cooperative-competition.

When the conflict-competition character of an athlete is evaluated, it is noted that their success is measured through outperforming others and demonstrating their superior abilities. When competition is viewed in relevance to others, all one has to do to succeed is be better than everyone else. This does not mean, however, that everyone else was competing at an excellent level, or that even the *winner* competed with excellence – they were simply *better* than everyone else competing (Coakley, 2009). On the contrary, attitude from an athlete with the focus on cooperative-competition shows when they

master new skills and achieve new levels, it is personal excellence that is beneficial to them. Why the difference? It has been suggested that both competitors are interested in success and achievement, yet they think about them differently, or rather their awareness of them is different (Shields & Bredemeir, 2009). It is best shown with a compared list. See figure 4.1 below.

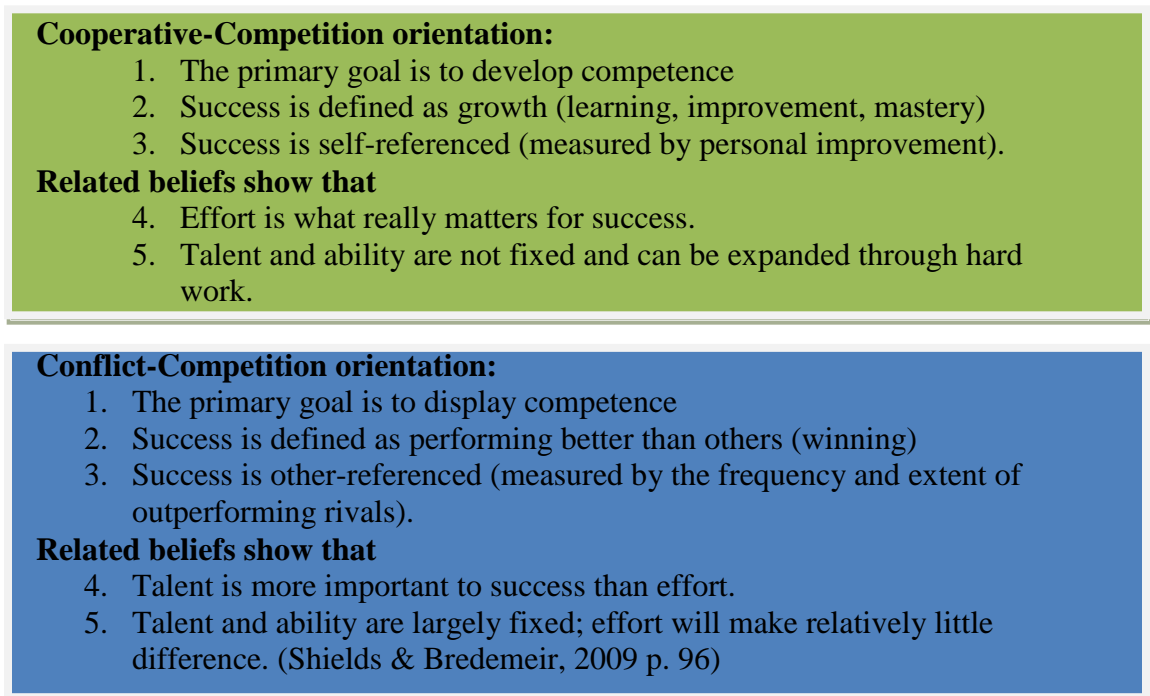


Figure 4.1

Notice that cooperative-competition is a balanced competition, it “balances seriousness with play, intrinsic motivations with extrinsic motivations, and outcome orientation with process orientation” (Shields & Bredemeir, 2009, p. 25). This balance once toppled, becomes what has been established as conflict-competition. To maintain this fragile balance is one of commitment by the participants. Resistance to conflict-competition will only be fleshed out by the athletes if there is a deep respect for “the game, officials, themselves and their opponents” (Shields & Bredemeir, 2009, p. 94). It is

through cooperative-competition that “excellence and enjoyment” (Shields & Bredemeir, 2009, p. 221) are able to show through conflict-competition.

By sport society accepting the “winning at all costs” type of competition, it is easily rationalized as to why some have decided it best to eradicate competition (Kohn, 1986). Others, however, have decided to confront this acceptance and begin to be critically aware of what the word truly is: conflict-competition or “de-competition” (Shields & Bredemeir, 2009). Postmodernism suggests that sport leads to a more just society by creating “educational environments that empower individuals to create meaningful lives” (Bain, 1997, p. 189). This is the same type of competition that sport sociologists are supporting (Coakley, 2007; Shields & Bredemeir, 2009): sport that will teach excellence and enjoyment and that will lead to a social interpretation that will continue to guide human behavior toward bettering themselves, rather than simply “winning.” When sport is viewed within cooperative-competitive philosophies, alternative sport is the implementation.

Alternative Sport

The force of the influence of modernity and the acceptance of meta-narratives can be seen in the most implemented organized youth sports: soccer, baseball, basketball, and football (Coakley, 2007). Although, these are the highly implemented sports, it does not ensure, however, that these four sports are the only ones that all youth *fit* into. Different personalities, different skill sets, and different people are all trying to fit inside the mold of these four sports. This shows another example of a meta-narrative dismissing the differing experiences that assist in building a society (Coakley, 2009). If youth want to compete in sport, they must be able to engage in one of them; if they cannot, then they

are tagged not athletic or they simply cannot hack it (Coakley, 2007; Coakley, 2009; Gracey, 2009).

With each passing generation, the next began to understand that adult organized sport was forcing their bodies into some predesigned mold into which they did not fit, a meta-narrative that they began to question. Around the same time that postmodern writers were referencing and influencing the social world, alternative sport was starting (Coakley, 2007). They emerged as “new games” or “cooperative games” in the 1960s and 1970s and began being considered *extreme* after X-Games was implemented on television in 1995 (extremesports, 2013, para. 3).

Alternative sport, as some might contend, is not the correct term (action sport, adventure sport, extreme sport) and however academically advantageous it would be to categorize and dissect the definitions of those terms, for this study, there are simply two; alternative sport and traditional sport. Traditional sport is considered the ‘mainstream’ sports, and alternative sport includes sports that reject traditional structure (Coakley, 2007).

While not exclusive for youth, there is a younger demographic of alternative sport. In spite of this, these sports are rarely authorized by schools. Some challenge (Morris, 1998) however, as to the distinction between traditional and alternative sport. This distinction perhaps could have as much to do with marketing as with the level of adrenaline needed for the sport (Rinehart & Syndor, 2003). The increased interest in alternative sport could be attributed to the issues within organized sport being exclusive, structured and performance oriented. While these same attributes may possibly be

adopted into alternative sport when assessing performance, currently, alternative sport athletes' performances are evaluated with more 'subjective' and 'aesthetic' criteria (the intention to perform stunts) (Lee, 2004; Morris, 1998).

Traditional sport athletes are usually competing under controlled circumstances. While it is somewhat possible for alternative sport to create the same type of controlled circumstances, the athletes are frequently competing with variables that cannot be held constant. The characteristics of this sport is "player-controlled" (Coakley, 2007, p.121) and places emphasis on "individual creativity" (extremesports, 2013, para. 2). The individuals involved in alternative sport work on their specific sport skills more in solitary and with no coach, rather than in traditional sport. The active youth desired to express their bodies' spontaneity and "to the surprise of many adults, young people in these action sports have developed skills without coaches, physical educators, and parents telling them how to do things correctly" (Coakley, 2001, p. 9).

However much a reaction alternative sport is to traditional sport, there is a critical perspective to its alternative ways. One perspective is that alternative sport will *become* traditional sport, "people will always seek novel ways to use their bodies and once those become mainstream, a new distraction will be discovered, invented or appropriated" (Joseph, 2010 para. 2). Joseph (2010) explains that "[t]he structures, spaces, and communities surrounding alternative sport rely on mainstream sport for their definition" (Joseph, 2010 para. 2). Additionally, most alternative sport athletes want sponsors and financial support as seen in traditional sport athletes. Mark Bryant, the editor in chief of Outside magazine, has been covering alternative sport for 20 years and finds that "the

fact is, when you're loaded down with that many logos, you aren't really alternative..." (as cited in Morris, 1998). It is proposed that the importance of 'image' and sponsorships of alternative sport is driven by the media. Media corporation Entertainment and Sports Programming Network (ESPN) changed 'extreme' to "X" in 1996 in fear "that some-day 'extreme' would be...outdated..." (Rinehart & Syndor, 2003 p. 4).

Conclusion

In reaction to the significance of identity, it is suggested that postmodernism is asking the human movement profession to stop accepting and begin being critically aware:

Postmodernism is suggesting that we stop assuming that there is a single universal truth about what it means to have a healthy body, an attractive body; a skilled body... The practical question for the profession is how to create educational environments that empower individuals to create meaningful lives and a just society. (Bain, 1997, p. 189)

It has been previously accepted that conflict-competition is the only type of competition. Although, it is recognized as the dominant type of competition, it is not the only type. Postmodern awareness brought attention to cooperative-competition in its dormancy, before it was known, to create meaningful lives through competition. This allows the competitor to both gain a new sense of identity and also maintain social interactions, and understand their own individual place within a society.

The importance of understanding the constructed meta-narratives in sport is because of the further impacts that they have on society as a whole. It is through the combination of reflection and observations of society that personal interpretations of

society are understood. The interpretation of social life continues to guide individuals' behavior, albeit predictions could be poorly developed or even misinterpreted. Each of the findings discussed in this chapter provides a different area where postmodern awareness allowed understanding of how society relates to sport ideals. The meta-narratives that are accepted in sport express themselves through themes of identity and hierarchy/authority which are explored to find the interrelation to social interaction and the impact of cooperative-competition (figure 4.2). Now that society's acceptance of meta-narratives has brought a postmodernistic awareness, what happens next?

In short, postmodernism promotes freedom. This freedom is the freedom to perceive as having an individual experience which sport must begin to acknowledge: to free the oppressed, to free the disciplined bodies, to free knowledge of portraying oneself, and to free individuals from hegemony. "To delineate ideological and political markers to enable readers to see the [human movement] profession, not in a vacuum, but as a political movement of sorts; a diverse collection of communities; and a forum for acceptance, equality, and freedom" (Fernandez-Balboa, 1997, p. 7). Bain summarizes this simply:

- 1) The profession of physical education is grounded in modernity
- 2) Modernity has failed
- 3) Western society is moving into a postmodern period that challenges basic principles of modernity
- 4) To address the failures of modernity and to survive and thrive in the postmodern period, the profession of human movement needs to change

5) The redefinition of the profession in the postmodern period needs to have a critical, emancipator emphasis. (Bain, 1997, p. 185)

Through the journey from modernist thinking and acceptance of meta-narratives, to the awareness of postmodernism to those narratives, and the exploration of individual experience based on local narratives, it is found that postmodernism introduced society to additional freedom. This additional freedom results in cooperative-competition being a tool toward alternative sport, assisting in exploring an individual's identity, view of society's and sport's hierarchies, and social interactions with an emancipative understanding.

However, with the proposed additional freedom from postmodernism there are three main critiques of postmodernism. First point of critique which is quasi-ironic is the suggestion that postmodernism will become normalized. This perspective finds that postmodernism "aesthetics will eventually become entirely conventional and provide the foundation" (Epstein, 1998) for a new type of aesthetic and perspective. Critics of the interpretation encourage postmodernists to take heed of their foreboding. For perhaps such as 'extreme' was with ESPN, as is 'postmodernism' and its followers; it will become outdated and conventional. Where what once was original and 'new' will be turned into a cliché and an inadequate reaction (Epstein, 1998).

Second point of critique is that of intellectual sloppiness. Postmodernism contenders find confusion and numerous ubiquitous behaviors and explanations that little is actually determined or explained. Alan Sokal a physicist and self-proclaimed leftist, and feminist (Sokal 1996, p. 5) was disturbed by this apparent decline of intellectual standards, hence he tried an experiment.

“Would a leading North American journal of cultural studies---whose editorial collective includes such luminaries as Fredric Jameson and Andrew Ross--- publish an article liberally salted with nonsense if (a) it sounded good and (b) it flattered the editors’ ideological preconceptions?” (Sokal 1996, p. 1)

The answer was yes. His experimental article (the entire story known now as the *Sokal Affair*) that was awash, unbeknownst to the editors, with “nonsense” (Sokal 1996, p.1) was published in *Social Text*.⁹ What was more surprising to Sokal, than the article being published, was “how readily they accepted my implication that the search for the truth in science must be subordinated to a political agenda, and how oblivious they were to the article’s overall illogic.” Sokal suggests that since the article was not consulted by another physicist (or even an undergraduate physics or math major could have realized it was a spoof he said (Sokal 1996 p.5) suggests that postmodernism is a well-established genre where discourse, knowledge and rhetoric of the real world are ‘superfluous’ (Sokal, 1996 p. 4). Given that this article was accepted and published, however nonsensical it was, it has changed the position of leftists most specifically, but minds of academia more generally, toward intellectual laziness in the science world (Sokal, 1996). This ‘laziness’ Sokal argued was the factor that helped the acknowledgement of his article. It had competent sources¹⁰, and satisfied the editors’ academic suppositions (Sokal, 1996 p. 4). Sokal was concerned about the proliferation of “nonsense and sloppy thinking” (Sokal 1996 p. 4) of which he constitutes postmodernism. The argument delineated, is that

⁹ This article is titled “Transgressing the Boundaries: Toward a Transformative Hermeneutics of Quantum Gravity”

¹⁰ Sokal states he understands the ethical issues involved in his hoax. The sources were publicly available and were footnoted, they were real and the quotes are accurate and not invented (Sokal 1996, p.5).

postmodernism is contending facts and evidence and concealing them through obscure pretentious language.

Third point of critique is postmodern perspective on absolute truth. Sokal and other concurring thinkers are finding that postmodernism is providing little to analytical and empirical knowledge. This critique advises that believing reality as a social construct provides that truth, knowledge and rationality are voluntarily surrendered (Postrel & Feser, 2000).

“We have a certain perspective on the world, we have a certain position in society that we occupy, we have a certain set of interests that we articulate, and it’s only in relation to these perspectives that we can have knowledge of reality. So the argument goes, because all knowledge is perspectival there is no such thinking as objective knowledge—you can’t really know things about the real world or about things as they are in themselves.” (Postrel & Feser, 2000 p. 1)

Dr. Ravi Zacharias has a Biblical worldview; this perspective finds that there are absolute truths. These claims state that the application of postmodernism is stretched beyond recognition (Dawkins, 1998; Postrel & Feser, 2000). Zacharias suggests that the *idea* of postmodernism is that of antiquity, it was found in the Garden of Eden, when Adam and Eve questioned God’s verbal authority of which fruit they could consume. It is understood that when the reader ‘writes the text’ it replaces the authority from author to reader. Perhaps, this demonstrates “there are no definitive answers to problems, only a multiplicity of possible answers” (Burnard, 1999, p.244). Baudrillard states that there is too much reality not from a lack-of, but from the excess of (mentioning the reality that is

portrayed via the media-hyper reality) and the excess is causing an end to absolute reality¹¹. With all knowledge and discourse being deemed true or real, how will society epistemologically find a position in the environment if there are too many answers? It is argued that, “if we don’t have something by which to measure it with it is really not worth anything, it is something that we conjure up” (Zacharias, 2010) to Christianity that authority and absolute is God. Postmodernism’s stretch repositions authority, placing authority as oneself, making reality and truth relative.

In conclusion some would even go as far as saying that postmodernism in itself considered a meta-narrative (Coakley, 2007; Dawkins, 1998; Denison, 1998).

“Postmodernism denies there is truth, while insisting that its own claims are true. It rejects all authority but its own. It insists that words and propositions have no certain meaning, while using words and proposition to convey the meaning of postmodernism (and to attempt to overthrow the meaning of everything else.) Postmodernism is absurdity masquerading as enlightened intellectualism. It is anarchy parading as liberal society. It is disorder and confusion vaunting itself as New Order.” (Willis, 2007 para.1-2

¹¹ Please see page 22 of this thesis for more information.

Acceptance (Modernism)

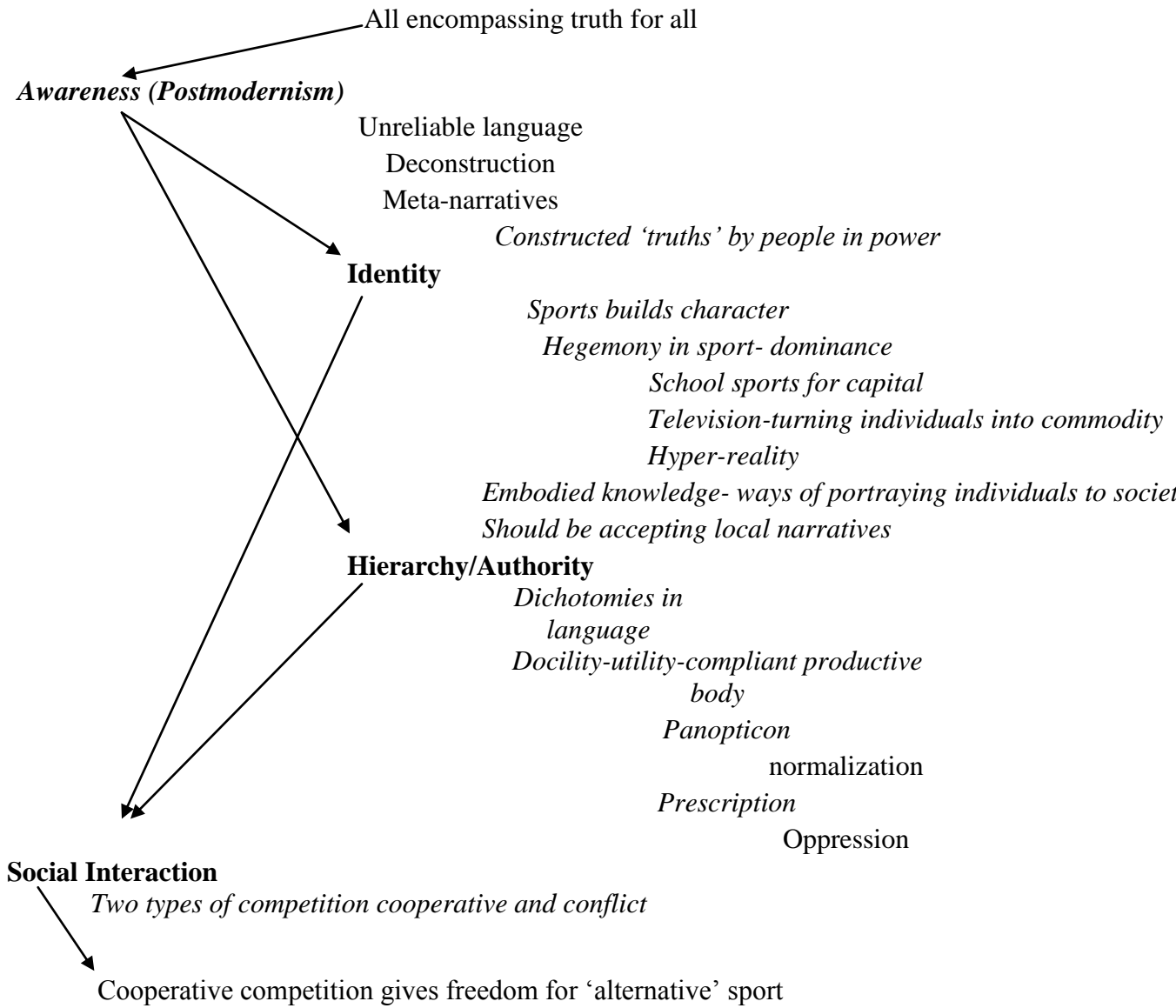


Figure 4.2

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION AND FURTHER STUDY

Postmodernism as a social interpretation is regarded as something compartmentally different than competition in sport. Simply stating that sports is a reflection of society indicates that they have a passive relationship (Coakley, 2007). The impact that one has on the other did not emerge until the themes were actively connected. It was through a connectedness of theme and an epistemological influence from an interpretivist paradigm that the impacts were found. By means of relational content analysis, I studied many different influencers and studies about postmodernism and competition in sport. Through an iterative cycle, I was able to collect content, reflect on the collections and explore findings, and start the cycle again. To exemplify the findings non-linearly, they were illustrated on a concept map (figure 4.2).

Discussion

Postmodernism brought awareness to modernism's acceptance of overarching truths for all. Through that awareness, meta-narratives were expressed in sport and this study explored them and found themes of (a) identity and (b) hierarchy, each of which were explored and are interrelated to social interaction or competition. Through postmodernism's awareness, two types of competition were discovered and it is through the cooperative-competition type that alternative sport emerges.

Awareness of acceptability guided society to make clear their experiences in the social world. They challenge the status quo, that some believe sport preserves, that comes in statements like "winning at all costs" and "sports builds character." It challenges what is considered a "healthy" or "athletic" body, and encourages bodies to discontinue simplistic rulings that assume a society's needs are the same (Tinning, 1997).

Postmodernism, however, is interpreting society as too complex to have totality statements about its individuals. Social life is truly experienced with freedom by the recognition of differences and contradictions (Coakley, 2009).

Postmodernism is bringing awareness to oppressive situations where modernity is still being supported through totality statements that are meant to encompass all of society, for example the four most implemented youth sports that youth are invited to play which were discussed earlier. Postmodernists support a “multiplicity of theoretical standpoints (Peters, 2001, p. 7). Postmodernism accepts individuals’ local-narratives, and to some in society, sport is an empowering narrative.

The interpretation of postmodernism in society as a whole discusses society and the things embedded within it, with complexities and sometimes internal contradictions that no general rule or rules can explain. To give meaning to experiences, postmodernism understands society through changing relationships and fluctuation. The awareness of postmodernism wants to know how sport will be a site for questioning and changing dominant meta-narratives in society, thereby, bringing freedom to individuals (Coakley, 2001; 2007; Rail, 1998).

Limitations of the Study

There were strengths and weaknesses in each choice that was implemented in this study. I will indicate their limitations through the main strengths that were chosen for the context and framework of this study. The first limitation was found in methodological choice of relational content analysis. Text and language is often misunderstood and varied (Derrida, 1976). This indicates that postmodern interpretation understands the content to change when the reader is changed. Purely descriptive methodology indicates

that although a relationship between texts emerged, it cannot, on its own, attempt to explain the origin of that relationship. Consequently, for the search of epistemological understanding of knowledge as well as the depth of knowledge of the relationship between themes and to continue to respect the complexity and connectedness of society and competition in sport, relational content analysis was chosen.

The following perceived weakness of this study is my position as “researcher-as-bricoleur.” This term came from the respect of the complexities of the social world which I utilized because of the complexities of postmodernism; although, critiques find that bricolage can sometimes lead the researcher into “attempting to know so much, the bricoleur not only knows nothing well but also goes crazy in the misguided process” (Kincheloe, 2001, p. 681). To completely understand the foundations and the contexts of text can be viewed as a strength as well, conversely having such a liberal base allows this study to be possibly viewed as devoid of foundation and allows room for error. In this regard, I respect the position of the critiques, understanding first hand that this type of research frame (or sometimes lack thereof) can be frustrating and seem circular with no progress. Yet, it was through those intersecting contexts that I began to understand that knowledge is not a thing in itself and that neither is postmodernism, society, or competition in sport. This led to the findings of connectedness and ultimately to the explored impact postmodernism has on competition in sport.

Lastly, a limitation could be a lack of a sole use of a discipline. Although, the term *interdisciplinary* (utilizing more than one discipline) as Kincheloe lists (2001, p.

681) comes with its own critiques, it was partly utilized inside the model of this study.¹² Researching phenomena such as postmodernism and utilizing simply one discipline or work within the boundaries of a single theory (i.e. functionalist, conflict, critical, feminist, interactionist theories) could help to reduce the sample and findings into more manageable segment sizes¹³ for the researcher. Although, this could be seen as quantitative it would ensure a certain direction the researcher could guide rather than be led.

Recommendations for Future Research

There is a multiplicity of directions this study could have taken during this research because of the avant-garde of postmodernism and the breadth of literature that includes anything related to sport and competition. The first recommendation of future researchers is to continue to see the “connectedness” between sport studies and societal impacts. There are nearly unsurpassed opportunities to study society through proxy of sport. The social structure that is found within sport cannot be found in other situations. Namely in “group dynamics, goal attainments, subcultures, behavioral processes, social bonding, structured inequality, socialization and organizational networks” (Frey & Eitzen, 1991, p. 504) all of which listed will provide a deeper understanding of knowledge, thereby guiding how an individual’s experiences shape interpretations about societal issues.

¹² By not confining to one discipline, this study was lead iteratively through cycles having the freedom to find sources within many different disciplines therefore providing a more rich understanding of the phenomena.

¹³ To respect the flexibility and contradiction that postmodernism interprets society I saw limitation in a single approach of knowledge production (Kincheloe, 2001; Levi-Strauss, 1966).

A second recommendation is to start where this study ended: alternative sport. An interesting facet could be to hypothesize alternative sport as a direct impact of postmodernism, and use quantitative data and methods to help prove or disprove that hypothesis.

A third recommendation for further study is to expand on ideas of hyper-reality (Baudrillard & Witwer, 2000) and how it is seen inside mediatized sporting events,¹⁴ and indirect sports. I believe this would lead to interesting findings.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study's purpose was to explore the impact that postmodernism has on competition in sport. This aspiration can best be expressed by what Geertz (1973) explains as a "thick description." A "thick description is an approach for exploring and discovering the meanings embedded in the language and actions of social actors. Because meanings are attached to the actors being described, the process is both descriptive and interpretive" (as quoted in Fischer, 2003, p. 151; see also Geertz, 1973). Employing the process to gain descriptive and interpretive findings, this study was led through iterative cycles to explore and describe the impacts that postmodernism has on competition in sport.

Through "explication upon explications" and the descriptive goals of this study (Geertz, 1973) there were two principal themes (identity and hierarchy/authority) which were explored to find the impact that postmodernism has on competition in sport. These themes began to be explored by the recognition that competition in sport and

¹⁴ For more information on a virtual hyper-real case, please refer to Manti Te'o
<http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/compost/wp/2013/02/01/ronaiah-tuiasosopo-on-dr-phil-manti-teo-and-the-m-butterfly-effect/>

postmodernism should not continue to be studied as having a passive relationship (Coakley, 2007). It was through the acceptance of modern ideas that eventually brought awareness from postmodernism that the status quo was not further applicable. This was manifested through changes in how individual's view identity and hierarchy/authority. Each impact is interrelated to social interaction which is fundamental in cooperative-competition, this cooperative-competition in society allows the freedom to view individual identity and apply our individual experiences.

In final thoughts, Strauss explains his interpretation of the social world as “the nature of human responses creates conditions that impact upon, restrict, limit, and contribute toward restructuring the variety of action/interaction that can be noted in societies” (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 6). During the duration of this study, it began to be appreciated that individual's interpretations construct social worlds and affect society as a whole. When society begins to view social perceptions as connected and constructed, it empowers individuals to change and restructure modern framed phenomena, such as sport, into something that incorporates complexity, fluctuation, and contradictions for individuals, (Freire, 1970; Heidegger, 1977) thereby promoting freedom.

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