

MONSTERS & MACHINES: AN ASSESSMENT OF DEHUMANIZATION
IN HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL BROADCASTS

A Thesis
Presented to
the Graduate School of
Clemson University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Science
Parks, Recreation and Tourism Management

by
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May 2021

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ABSTRACT

Prior to this study, dehumanizing language, that which denies full humanness to others (Haslam, 2006), had been found to be present within collegiate and professional American Football broadcasts (Haslerig et al., 2019; Oates, 2007). In addition, high school games are also broadcasted, yet had remained unexplored. With dehumanization having links to negative effects for those exposed, and the presence of youth participants adding an extra complexity to this process, a need for assessment was presented.

The objective of this research was to determine if dehumanizing language was present within high school broadcasts in hopes of creating a preliminary understanding of the ways in which this phenomenon presents itself to the audience. Utilizing content analysis methods, four high school broadcasts from the fall of 2019 were assessed for dehumanization, and all four broadcasts were found to contain dehumanizing language. Counts, frequencies, and means of dehumanization in broadcasts were produced, with trends and patterns presented.

Along with this primary goal, this study aimed to uncover any differences between sources of high school football broadcasts. Games broadcasted by four categorically different production teams were used, including school/town, sport association, local media and major media. While differences between media levels were found, additional research was necessary to determine causal relationships. Results from this study provide implications for sport governing bodies, broadcasters, participants, and viewers.

Keywords: dehumanization, content analysis, sports broadcasting, youth sport

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This was definitely not the most typical path for a Master's thesis. There were a lot of times during this process where I contemplated giving up, and I know that without my support system of mentors, family, and friends, I probably would have. I would first like to thank Dr. Gwynn Powell, my committee chair, for not giving up on me. I had stopped going to school, I had moved away, but every so often she would reach out because she was reminded of me and my thesis idea. If not for these little check-ins, and support for me and my idea, I never would have re-enrolled, let alone finished. I'd also like to thank my other committee members, Dr. Skye Arthur-Banning and Dr. Erin Ash, for sticking with me through this process and providing me with ideas and feedback that have shaped this paper into what it has become.

I would like to thank my research assistants, William Logan and Samuel Goodman, for all of their help with intercoder reliability, as well as their feedback on the codebook and data collection process. They definitely left their imprint on this study.

I also couldn't have done this without the support of my family. I would like to thank my parents, John and Jean Middleton, and sister Melissa Durst, for their gnat-like persistence in asking me about my paper. I joke, but their relentless motivation to finish this process was very powerful. Lastly, I would like to thank those individuals who have provided assistance along the way, Nate Shipley and Michael Cope. Whether it was a question about statistics, a formatting issue, or I simply wanted to bounce an idea, thank you for your help.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background & Problem

“The big man plows his way up the gut. He is dragging bodies down the field. It looks like his knee hit someone in the coconut” (ABC News 4, 2018, 25:13). This is commentary from a 2018 South Carolina high school American Football broadcast. A running dialogue accompanies broadcasts and while it may help viewers navigate the gameplay, it also, as evidenced here, utilizes language that could be considered dehumanizing in the process. Defined broadly, dehumanization is the denial of full humanness to others (Haslam, 2006). There are a number of different domains in which dehumanization takes place: race, gender, disability, etc., but they all come back to the central idea that an individual or group is being denied their full humanness (Haslam, 2006). Research on dehumanization in sports broadcasts is limited but growing. Bias and stereotyping, two major factors that have been linked to dehumanization (Haslam & Loughnan, 2014; Goff et al., 2008), have been shown to take place across a range of different athletic broadcasts. In recent years, baseball (Arth & Billings, 2019; Ferrucci et al., 2016), basketball (Billings et al., 2002; Hallmark & Armstrong, 1999), and Olympic coverage (Eastman & Billings, 1999) have been shown to have bias and stereotyping present within their broadcasted commentary. American Football, however, appears to be the only sport garnering attention for its use of dehumanizing commentary during events. Haslerig et al. (2019) looked at how dehumanizing commentary was present during

college football broadcasts and Thomas Oates' (2007) article unpacked dehumanization during the National Football League's annual amateur draft. With this phenomenon known to be taking place within higher levels of American Football, it would make sense for it to be present within high school broadcasts as well. With this in mind, this study is aimed at analyzing commentary from high school American Football broadcasts for dehumanizing language, with the hopes of gaining a preliminary understanding of its presence.

Youth Rather Than Adults

For the most part, participants within high school football contests would be under the age of 18, the age at which legally and culturally one would start to be considered an adult. Based on these parameters, high school football players would still be considered children. Haslam et al. (2000) in their article on social categories, defined children as a group of individuals with characteristics that have innocence and a need for protection. Their status as such has led cultures to strive to protect children from harsh realities that adults are subjected to (Goff et al., 2014). Dehumanization has been shown to have a number of negative effects on stigmatized groups, including moral exclusions in which moral values and fairness do not apply to those parties (Costello & Hodson, 2014; Kelman, 1976; Opatow, 1990). If dehumanizing commentary were to be taking place during these high school football broadcasts, it would be an example of a society failing to protect its children. With this added youth development component, it can be argued that the language used in this setting should receive extra attention and scrutiny.

Not All Broadcasts Are Created Equal

Unlike professional and high-level¹ college games, the production value associated with high school broadcasts varies based on who is producing it. ESPN and Fox Sports One, the 1st and 3rd most viewed sports networks respectively, each broadcast multiple high school games during the football season (Ourland, 2018). Each year these two major sports media companies showcase historically strong programs as well as many state championships games. For games not on these major networks, YouTube, the most used video-sharing website in the world,² is the best platform to find broadcasted contests (Alexa.com, 2019b). Through searches using YouTube's extensive video library, this research has found that other sources of high school broadcasts fall into three separate categories. These include schools and towns affiliated with the teams, athletic associations that govern teams and leagues, and local news and media outlets. While other online prominent platforms, including the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) and Mascot Media, provide alternative sources for viewing high school contests, these sites rely on schools, athletic associations, and media outlets to upload content (Mascot Media, 2019; NFHS, 2019). Each of these separate media entities brings a different level of production value to the football broadcast. While they are all presenting the same product, commentators, levels of professionalism, and production budgets of each broadcast should be categorically different. This study sees these

¹ High-level in this scenario includes all Division I teams, both Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS) and Football Championship Subdivision (FCS), as all of these games are broadcasted in some form on major platforms—ESPN, CBS, Fox Sports, etc.

² YouTube is the second-most visited site on the Internet, only trailing Google in its number of visits (Alexa.com, 2019a).

differences as an opportunity to look deeper into dehumanizing commentary in broadcasts with a unique point of view.

Research Purpose & Objectives

This research was aimed at assessing high school football broadcasts for dehumanizing commentary in order to produce a preliminary understanding of its presence. With this assessment, media outlets, production teams, commentators, fans, coaches, parents, and players will have a better understanding of language used within these broadcasts. This sets up all parties involved to be better equipped to manufacture and experience these events with the best interests of the youth participants in mind. This leads into the first and most important question that this research aimed to investigate.

RQ 1. *Is dehumanizing language present in high school football broadcasts?*

If dehumanizing language was found to be occurring, this would lend itself to the other, more specific, aims of the study, including a quantitative breakdown of dehumanizing language use as well as an analysis of the ways in which this phenomenon presents itself within the broadcasts—the latter of which would be based on categorized types of dehumanization, which were established utilizing previous research and are presented in detail later in the study. Lastly, this research aimed to analyze how differences between levels of media, and their corresponding production value, affect this phenomenon.

RQ 2. *If dehumanizing language is being used, how frequently is this taking place?*

RQ 3. *What types of dehumanizing language are most prevalent? How is dehumanizing language most often presented to the audience?*

RQ 4. *Does the media level affect this outcome? Do certain media outlets use dehumanizing language more or less than other broadcasts?*

Summary

Previous research has shown dehumanization is present within higher levels of American Football broadcasts. High school broadcasts are worth investigating because they differ from college and professional contests due to the fact that the participants are children. Dehumanization has been shown to have negative effects on stigmatized groups, and its presence within these broadcasts would go against society's goal of protecting its children. Unlike collegiate and professional productions, these broadcasts vary greatly at this level, and it is important to see how the differences in production value affect dehumanizing language use in broadcasts. In the following chapters, previous literature on this topic will be examined. This will include an in-depth look at dehumanization, youth development with sport and dehumanization, as well as a closer look at the role media plays in this setting. This review of literature will be followed by a detailed explanation of this study's methodology, quantitative results of the study, and a discussion of the findings.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

In this chapter, dehumanization is defined, with a focus on the effects of dehumanization and how this process connects to the fields of youth development and broadcasted sports media. Utilizing previous research, this section should provide a strong rationale for the specific aims of the study.

A Deeper Look at Dehumanization

Earlier, dehumanization was defined by Nick Haslam as the denial of full humanness to others (2006, p. 252). In the same study, however, he worked to establish a more comprehensive model of dehumanization that integrated the various domains, psychological accounts, and senses in which it has been found to take place. His model of dehumanization sets the framework for how this study defines this phenomenon occurring in high school football broadcasts. Before looking at the model itself, it is important to look deeper at some of the domains and psychological accounts Haslam presents that are directly connected to this research.

Domains of Dehumanization

Domains presented by Haslam (2006) included ethnicity & race, gender & pornography, disability, medicine, technology, education, sport, stigma, and art. In regard to high school football broadcasts, the domains of ethnicity & race, medicine, technology,

and sport all have relevant connections. Within the domain of ethnicity & race, there is a common theme of comparing people to animals (Haslam, 2006). This is tied to racist descriptions where African people have been compared to apes, whereas other groups have been compared to animals such as dogs, pigs, rats, and insects (Haslam, 2006). Jahoda (1999) examined how these animalistic connections were used to show groups that lacked culture, self-restraint, moral sensibility, and cognitive capacity. While commentators might not make some of these associations, it is important to have this theme of animalistic comparisons in mind when assessing broadcasts. In terms of the domain of medicine, Haslam presented dehumanizing features that included a lack patient individuality and an emphasis on procedures performed on individuals whose agency and autonomy are neglected. Barnard (2001) described this form of dehumanization as “objectification” as well as “the denial of qualities associated with meaning, interest and compassion” (p. 98). With the violent nature of the game of football, these features could be present when commentators are discussing injuries and danger in play. The technology domain presents a form of dehumanization where humans are reduced to machines and computers (Haslam, 2006). Montagu and Matson (1983) explained that within this theme there is a robotic pursuit of efficiency with an automaton-like rigidity, with individuals portrayed as unemotional and apathetic (p. 10). Haslam explains that these mechanistic forms of dehumanization involve emotional distancing, as individuals are represented as cold, robotic, passive, and lacking in depth. Similarly tied to technology is the domain of sport, where Hoberman (1992) explained that dehumanization takes place as society strives to create perfect human engines. Within these last two overlapping domains, the

comparisons of individuals and athletes to machines and engines is something that could present itself within the assessment of high school football broadcasts. These domains are the first piece of Haslam's model of dehumanization, with the other being the psychological accounts of dehumanization.

Psychological Accounts of Dehumanization

Accounts of dehumanization presented by Haslam (2006) include delegitimization, moral exclusion & disengagement, values, and inhumanization. Delegitimization, analyzed in Bar-Tal's (2000) study, explained this account as having "extremely negative characteristics attributed to another group, with the purpose of excluding it from acceptable human groups and denying it humanness" (pp.121-122). Delegitimizing beliefs are found to have a negative valence, emotional activation in the form of contempt and fear, cultural support, and a rejection of the outgroup (Haslam et al., 2000). Dehumanization falls into one of the five delegitimizing belief categories, and this involves labeling a group as inhuman, which includes both sub-human and super-human references, including demons, monsters, and satans (Bar-Tal, 2000). Regarding moral exclusion and disengagement, Kelman (1976) saw dehumanization as denying a person their identity and their community. This process would result in a loss of compassion and moral emotions towards individuals or groups that can end in violence (Kelman, 1976). Opatow's (1990) study similarly argued that moral exclusion is the process in which people are placed "outside the boundary in which moral values, rules and considerations of fairness apply" (p. 1). Bandura (2002) added to this account in stating that the process of dehumanization is without empathetic distress for users if

victims are no longer seen as having feelings, hopes, and concerns but instead as sub-human objects. In terms of values, Struch and Schwartz (1989) argued that a group's values were an expression of humanity and that when an outgroup is perceived to have different values than an ingroup, there is a perceived lack of shared humanity. They explained that this process would often result in the outgroup's interests being disregarded and allow for dehumanization on this basis to take place (Struch & Schwartz, 1989). Lastly, infrahumanization, presented by Leyens et al. (2001), is the process in which people attribute uniquely human "secondary emotions" more with ingroups than outgroups. Within this process, primary emotions, the ones that Leyens et al. claim differentiate humans from animals, are not a source of divide between ingroups and outgroups. Their research argued that this creates a lack of familiarity, which can lead to dehumanization (Leyens et al., 2001). Infrahumanization, as a form of dehumanization, is presented more subtly, as it does not produce instances where people are likened to animals, nor does it take place in a context of cruelty or hatred (Haslam, 2006; White & Molina, 2016). In this research setting, this is important because it means that even comments made to praise and laud participants could still fall into a category of dehumanization. Each of these psychological accounts of dehumanization presented a more complete representation of the process of dehumanization. These psychological accounts, coupled with Haslam's domains, provided this study with the foundation for how to best define dehumanization within high school football broadcasts. With these pieces explained, Haslam's model of dehumanization can be examined.

Two Senses of Humanness

In order to determine what constitutes dehumanization, an understanding of humanness must be established. Haslam (2006) proposed that there are two distinct forms of humanness: uniquely human and human nature. Uniquely human characteristics are defined as the boundary separating humans from animals, whereas human nature is defined by characteristics that are typically and/or essentially human (Haslam, 2006). Haslam went on to state that human nature characteristics are what represent the “core” of a species. In a separate study, Haslam et al. (2005) found that uniquely human characteristics included refinement, civility, moral sensibility, rationality, and maturity, while human nature characteristics include cognitive openness, emotional responsiveness, agency/individuality, interpersonal warmth, and depth. Uniquely human characteristics are believed to be acquired, whereas human nature characteristics are rooted in a person.

Two Senses of Dehumanization

With two forms of humanness there are two corresponding forms of dehumanization presented by Haslam (2006). These contrast the characteristics of each type of humanness. This means that when someone is denied being uniquely human, it presents itself as coarse rather than refined, uncultured rather than civil, amoral and lacking self-restraint rather than having moral sensibility, irrational/instinctual rather than rational, and childlike rather than mature (Haslam, 2006). Haslam stated that when this takes place, humans will be perceived as animal-like/animalistic. Likewise, when human nature characteristics are denied, cognitive openness is replaced by rigidity, emotional responsiveness is replaced by inertness, agency/individuality is replaced by

passivity/fungibility, interpersonal warmth is replaced by coldness, and depth is replaced by superficiality (Haslam, 2006). These, combined, result in a mechanistic form of dehumanization (Haslam, 2006).

Characteristics of Dehumanization

Uniquely Human Characteristics: Civility, Refinement, Moral Sensibility Rationality/Logic, and Maturity

Animalistic Dehumanization: Lack of Culture, Coarseness, Amorality/Lack of Restraint, Irrationality/Instinct, and Childlikeness

Human Nature Characteristics: Emotional Responsiveness, Interpersonal Warmth, Cognitive Openness, Agency/Individuality, and Depth

Mechanistic Dehumanization: Inertness, Coldness, Rigidity, Passivity/Fungibility, and Superficiality

Adding to Haslam: Body Objectification & Pain

In addition to Haslam's (2006) model of dehumanization, other research in this area helped to create a more complete view of the phenomenon and one that can be applied to this research. Loughnan et al.'s (2010) study explained that the objectification of bodies is also a form of dehumanization. Loughnan et al. argue that focusing on the body, rather than the face, leads to a reduced perception of intellect, competency, moral status, and ability to feel pain. These components are not completely different from Haslam's work, as they build off of the idea that humans can be perceived as super-human. Similar to other forms of dehumanization, this has links to racial bias. Waytz et

al.'s (2015) study examined how white people tended to associate black people as “possessing supernatural, extrasensory, and magical qualities” (p. 358). In the same study, they looked at how these instances of super-humanizing bias were associated with a disregard for pain of these individuals (Waytz et al., 2015). Waytz et al. argued that this process assumes that those with super-human abilities felt less pain and that their pain is not recognized in the same way as ordinary humans. In the athletic, and typically violent, setting of football, these added dimensions of dehumanization were important to have in mind. With these additional pieces of dehumanization added, a definition was established.

Defining Dehumanization

Dehumanization has been presented as animalistic, mechanistic, body objectification and disregard for pain of individuals. These forms account for the diverse domains and senses in which this process takes place. Animalistic dehumanization denies uniquely human characteristics that separate humans from animals, mechanistic dehumanization denies human nature characteristics that comprise core humanness, body objectification denies perception of intellect, competency, moral status, as well as including a disregard for pain for those targeted.

Why Does This Matter? Effects of Dehumanization

With dehumanization defined, the presence of dehumanization in high school broadcasts is worth analyzing due to the effects that are associated with this phenomenon. From the viewpoint of those being dehumanized, dehumanization results from behaviors

that perpetrators enact toward targets and is located within forms of interpersonal treatment (“maltreatments”) (Bastian & Haslam, 2011). Maltreatments can be extreme; i.e., treating someone like an animal. Added to this, Goff et al. (2008) argued that when dehumanization takes place that there is a reduction, or even removal, of social protections from violence towards those targeted. Although labeled as extreme, this form of maltreatment has a link to American Football. Frederick et al. (2013) argued that rules of the game legitimize violence and that view of violent play involving participants is diffused. Essentially, they argued that participation in football removes normal protections from violence in audience perceptions (Frederick et al., 2013). More commonly, however, forms of maltreatment have the capacity to subtly undermine a victim’s sense of his or her own humanity (Bastian & Haslam, 2010). Dehumanization may also make people feel they are being disrespected or deemed unequal when their personhood is questioned or as if their identity or existence is not socially valuable (Bastian & Haslam, 2010; Honneth, 1992; Sapontzis, 1981). Being compared to animals removes uniquely human attributes and can lead to feelings of shame and contempt from others (Rozin et al., 2000), whereas being compared to machines removes human nature attributes and can lead to feelings that one’s identity is unimportant or that their identity has been denied (Bastian & Haslam, 2011).

Youth Specific Effects of Dehumanization

While Goff et al.’s (2014) study was concerned with the treatment of adolescent felons, they most likely would not be surprised at dehumanization being present in high school football broadcasts. Based on their research, the setting of high school football and

its corresponding broadcasts is a likely source of dehumanization. They argued that any context that allows for the possibility of children being considered adults would be susceptible to dehumanization. The reduction of humanness (dehumanization) denies their innocence and more closely aligns children with adults (Goff et al., 2014). This process can lead to children being perceived as older than they are and more like adults (Goff et al., 2014). In contexts where children are dehumanized, they may not receive basic protections, which makes them more likely to endure treatment reserved for adults (Goff et al., 2014). This is especially important in this high school football setting, as participants, because of either their size, physical abilities, or simply the age category they fall into, could have the lines between child and adult blurred. This concept of age in regard to participants is significant. Adolescents, those who are present in this study, are most affected by this process, as perceived childness and innocence is already waning (Goff et al., 2014). Adolescents are also at a time in their lives when they are attempting to understand their own identity (Schwartz et al., 2013). During this period, young people are developing a sense of themselves and begin to question who they are and what they should be (Schwartz et al., 2013). Understanding the effects of dehumanization was important to this study, as it helped legitimize the need for this assessment of high school broadcasts, specifically.

Does Positive Dehumanization Exist?

Apart from very rare cases, the commentary conveyed by broadcasters, even dehumanizing examples, would be presented in a positive manner. This begs the question: does positive dehumanization exist? This concept sounds like a bit of an

oxymoron but is a big question for this study. Dehumanization brings with it negative connotations, but what if the language used is supposed to serve as praise for the participants? Dehumanization research would argue that this process is actually the physiological account of dehumanization that was discussed earlier: *infracommunication*—this being the subtler form of dehumanization, where perceived familiar traits form ingroups and outgroups (Haslam et al., 2014; Leyens et al., 2001; White & Molina, 2016). Traits represent forms of humanness that, when seemingly not present in outgroups, leads to *infracommunication* (White & Molina, 2016). Earlier, it was presented how traits of humanness include the differences between humans & animals and humans & machines, but with *infracommunication*, there is a need to address more subtle distinctions. This includes perceptions of others, specifically their minds. Concerning mind perception, Gray et al. (2007) offered a dual model, along two dimensions: agency and experience. Agency was defined as having the capacity to think, do, and exhibit self-control, and experience was defined as the ability to feel emotions (Gray et al., 2007; Waytz et al., 2010). Examples from their model show how agency and experience differ amongst groups. Adult humans are perceived with high levels of both agency and experience, whereas robots have agency but little experience, and children have experience but little agency (Gray et al., 2007). The importance of mind perceptions to *infracommunication*, and this study, is that certain groups are seen as having lower levels due to physical appearance. An example of this is presented by Gray et al. (2011), in that a focus on the human body results in a reduced perception of agency and an increased perception of experience. Gray et al. (2011) argue that this focus on the body results in

these groups as being perceived as more animalistic. This process also aligns with the idea of body objectification that was outlined earlier as a form of dehumanization.

More closely connected to commentary, White & Molina (2016) conducted five studies assessing whether praise and admiration of athletes would lead to infrahumanization. Based on previous research (Gray et al., 2011; Loughnan & Haslam, 2007), White and Molina hypothesized that even positively valenced descriptions for participants (praise & admiration of athletes' bodies) would lead to infrahumanization through a decreased perception of agency. Their studies assessed perception of minds of athletes vs. debaters (members of a debate team), and athletes' mind perception with differing commentaries (praising body vs. praising mind) (White & Molina, 2016). Through their five different studies, they were able to eliminate other factors that could affect the decreased agency of athletes, and they were able to single out bodily praise and admiration as the reason for this outcome. Study #5 specifically focused on positively valenced descriptions of participants, and they found statistically significant results for athletes compared to the control group (White & Molina, 2016). Their study found that focusing on participants' bodies, even when utilizing positive commentary, led to infrahumanization (White & Molina, 2016). Their findings are crucial to this study because, as previously mentioned, broadcasted commentary is meant to praise and admire participants. With this, the idea of positive dehumanization can be ruled out and positively valenced comments that infrahumanize athletic participants can be considered for what they are: dehumanization.

Media Messages

It has been discussed why dehumanization and the effects of dehumanization matter to participants; however, with this study's focus on broadcasted commentary it is important to understand why this context specifically matters to the phenomenon of dehumanization. Similarly, it is necessary to better understand the broadcasting process, as well as the ways in which content is presented by media outlets and received by audiences.

Broadcasted games, including high school football contests, follow a systematic format. Hansen (1999) explained that sports broadcasting has two components: play-by-play and color commentary. He defined play-by-play as a description of the continuing action and color commentary as a narrative including both background information and analysis of the play (Hansen, 1999). Commentary takes place in real time with commentators reacting to and interpreting action within the game (Hansen, 1999). With this in mind, similar formatting should exist across all of the professional levels of media. Understanding this organization of content helped when assessing the differing broadcasts for dehumanizing commentary and better prepared the researcher for data collection and assessment.

Hansen (1999) went on to state that this process results in a narrative account of the game and that this narrative is formulated to meet the expectations of the anticipated audience. Along with meeting expectations, researchers have argued that media entities use their commentaries during broadcasted events to direct the focus of the audience to certain subjects and this process has been identified as agenda-setting (Hansen, 1999;

Haslerig et al., 2019; McCombs & Shaw, 1972). Building off of previous research, new levels of agenda setting were established in addition to the direction of focus, and these include framing and priming (Haslerig et al., 2019). Lewis and Weaver (2015) defined framing as the ways in which elements are presented in a broadcast, as well as the potential influence these frames have on audience perception of presented content. Framing deals with the selection of certain content that the producers of the broadcast believe will be most relevant for the audience viewing the media (Lewis & Weaver, 2015). Lewis and Weaver go on to state that framing is a necessary journalistic tool that helps audiences better receive content. Priming has been identified as a part of the agenda-setting process, in that commentaries prime the audience by associating attributes to subjects and objects through the use of paired selections, including descriptors, terminology, and images during the broadcast (Moy et al., 2016). Haslerig et al. (2019) argued that this process reinforces stereotypes for the viewing audience and that it can lead to certain characteristics being racialized for participants. In terms of framing, Kahneman and Tversky (1984) found that this process influences how audiences make decisions about information. They tested this theory by presenting identical information with positive and negative frames and found that judgments were affected by which frame participants were given (Kahneman & Tversky, 1984). Specific to media's framing of sports, recent studies have looked at how this process affects perceptions of athletes. Ash and Cranmer (2019) examined how frames of "brawn" and "brain" impacted perceptions of college athletes, in order to better understand the effects of racialized stereotypes in sports. Their findings suggested that media framing affects the perception

of the student-athlete in regard to their academic performance (Ash & Cramer, 2019). Similarly, Lewis and Weaver looked at how framing of media coverage affects the formation of attitudes towards athletes for the audience. This study focused framing of content for in-game performances as well as portrayals of players' personal lives (Lewis & Weaver, 2015). Scott et al. (2014) argued that broadcasters display bias within commentary of sporting events and that through their framed discourse storylines are built to preserve audience attention for the duration of the contest. Their study looked at commentary of National Basketball Association games, and they found that winning teams would gain praise for skill and creativity and that the losing teams' "star" would be focused on (Scott et al., 2014). Their findings align with something that Hansen (1999) highlighted, being that athletic competition results in either successes or failures and because of this plays and participants are subjected to either praise or criticism from commentators. Adding to this, Frederick et al. (2013) found that sports commentary affected viewer perceptions, attitudes, and even enjoyment in terms of justification for violence within broadcasts. Their research was based on the idea that the rules of the game, as well as media messages, legitimize violence to the point where concern for participants lessens (Frederick et al., 2013). Their results showed that commentators have the ability to alter audience perceptions of in-game action (Frederick et al., 2013). Simply put, media processes affect audience perceptions and attitudes towards content and this holds true with participants in sporting events. It is important to understand how the selection of certain subjects influences audiences and how agenda-setting, framing, and priming practices can potentially lead to dehumanization. Similar to the studies

presented, this research wanted to gain a better understanding of current practices with regard to dehumanization in broadcasts, with the hopes of potentially providing some future implications for media content.

Dangerous Play & Commentary

Sport participation, especially for youth, has a number of positive outcomes, including improved physical health and psychological benefits (Côté et al., 2007). Within this setting, youth participants can gain important life skills including discipline, leadership, and self-control (Côté et al., 2007). Sport participation can be very beneficial for participants and American Football is no exception. However, there is an added component to this particular athletic competition that can detract from the benefits, and that is the dangerous nature of play. American Football is a physical game, with contact between participants taking place during every single play. While safety measures including helmets and padding have made advancements over the years, there is still danger involved. More recently, the concern for participants has focused on head trauma, including concussions and chronic traumatic encephalopathy (CTE) (Harrison, 2014; Lakhan & Kirchgessner, 2012). There is a growing concern that sustaining head trauma, especially early in life, can have long-term effects (Lakhan & Kirchgessner, 2012). Recent data has shown that there is a greater risk of concussion for younger high school age participants, ages 14–16, than upper classmen, ages 17 & 18 (McDevitt, 2019). While varsity teams, those whose games are broadcasted, could have a majority of older participants, the danger remains for all, especially those falling into the younger category. This has become such a big issue that parents have become wary to allow their child to

play football and numbers for participation are the lowest they have been in 20 years (Cook, 2019; Findler, 2015).

Danger for participants is real. Commentary that praises big collisions and violent play within these contests is disregarding the danger in play. When watching a broadcast, this would be the moments where commentators use “ooh,” “ouch,” and “he’s going to feel that tomorrow,” to react to high impact plays within the game. This comes back to the idea that was presented earlier by Waytz et al. (2015), in that athletes are presented as superhuman, which allows for participants’ pain to be disregarded. This seems especially troublesome based on the age of the participants in this study. The presence of “oohs” and “ouches” in this setting would be a disregard for danger in play, a disregard for participant pain and, specific to this level of play, a disregard for children’s safety. This last product of broadcaster commentary, a disregard for children’s safety, would seem to contradict the idea that Goff et al. (2014) presented, in that societies strive to protect children from harsh experiences. Participants within these broadcasted contests are not professionals, they are not adults; however, in this setting they are being treated as such. This is a form of dehumanization. This is a reduction of humanness for children, in that they are having their innocence removed and perceived as older than they are (Goff et al., 2014). With the dangers that American Football poses to participants of bodily harm, head trauma, and risk for permanent damage, commentary that lauds violent collisions, especially in this youth setting, should be considered dehumanizing and an assessment of these broadcasts was warranted.

Differing Media Levels

Time-Warner, in partnership with Fox Sports, broadcasts games from the California Interscholastic Federation after signing a 15-year contract worth \$8.5 million (Koba, 2012). It was estimated that a high school broadcast by ESPN costs between \$65,000–\$70,000 to produce, including cameras, graphics, replays, and personnel (Sentell, 2019). These large entities differentiate themselves from the other sources of high school broadcasts in the fact that they can spend more on the product they produce. Included within the costs of production are the broadcasters/commentators associated with the broadcast. These major media broadcasters are professionals with training and experience in this setting and their expertise should be higher than that of the other three media levels that are producing high school football broadcasts. While this could not have an effect on the presence of dehumanizing language, it is likely that of the four media levels, major outlets would be the most concerned with the language used. Although the dehumanization in question is more of a bad practice by commentators rather than a fireable offense, there is a long list of sports broadcasters that have lost their job due to on-air comments (Cooley, 2010 Dedaj, 2019; Weintraub, 2006). Due to the history of firings, and the money involved with the broadcasts, it would make sense that media outlets and the commentators themselves would be more aware of the ramifications of offensive remarks on air. On the opposite side of the media spectrum are schools and towns that broadcast the games. These productions are almost always run by volunteers and sometimes even children from the schools themselves. Production budgets here should be quite limited and commentators are likely to be passionate volunteers

from the area. Again, this could have no effect on the presence of dehumanizing language, but the commentary could be drastically different based on the fact that an amateur is presenting the action to the audience. Sport associations also might utilize amateurs for their production; however, money associated with these broadcasts differs from that of a school or town-produced broadcast. Associations are a collection of teams rather than a single entity and generally control the media for all of the sports in a given area (AHSAA, 2019; OHSAA, 2019). These associations have dues, sponsorships, corporate partnerships and even fees for viewing games on their platforms (AHSAA, 2019; OHSAA, 2019a). This added revenue increases production values and allows for higher levels of professionalism and more experienced broadcasts/broadcasters. Lastly, local media would have professionals rather than amateurs and a higher budget than schools and towns for their broadcasts; however, it would not be on the level of the major media productions. It is also likely that these broadcasts would be concerned with the language used by broadcasters, as an on-air gaffe could lead to displeased viewers. With all of this in mind, the unique point of view of this study—dehumanization across media levels—can be examined.

Summary

In this chapter, previous research was highlighted that set the foundation on which this project would take place. Here, a definition of dehumanization, specific to the study, was generated. Building off of the work of Haslam (2006) and others, this definition took into account domains, senses, and characteristics of dehumanization, which produced animalistic and mechanistic forms of dehumanization. Utilizing other studies, the

definition expanded to also include body objectification and disregard of pain as forms of dehumanization. These two additions were necessary inclusions, as the research was dealing with broadcasted commentary from American Football games, a sport that has large, athletic participants and contains violent play.

After establishing this definition, the chapter focused on why this study should take place. This included explaining why the presence of dehumanization in this setting matters, as well as why it specifically matters with regard to youth participants. With there being adverse effects to dehumanization, as well as youth-specific effects, there was a good basis for research into this phenomenon. Adding to this reasoning was the power of media messages, as well as the dangers of playing American Football. Also, here the idea of positive dehumanization was ruled out, as even dehumanizing comments made as a compliment fall into a category of dehumanization called *infrahumanization*. Lastly, this study's unique variable, media level, was looked at and shown to have varying production values (professionals, equipment, money, etc.) that could potentially affect the presence of dehumanization. Altogether, the components of this section make the case that there is a need to analyze high school football broadcasts for the presence of dehumanizing language across varying media levels.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS

Overview

Quantitative content analysis methods, matching those employed by Billings et al. (2002) and Kaid and Wadsworth (1989), were used to analyze broadcasted commentary from four separate high school American Football games in the fall of 2019. Various online media sources were utilized to conduct this study, including YouTube, private association websites and major media outlets, in this case, ESPN rather than Fox Sports (decided by random selection process). Transcripts of the commentary from these games were then generated and assessed for dehumanization based on sub-categories established within this study.

Quantitative Content Analysis

Quantitative content analysis is a research method that allows for a range of different applications and this study felt that it was applicable for the goals of this research project as well. Riffe et al. (2019) defined quantitative content analysis as the systematic assignment of communication content to categories according to rules, and the analysis of relationships involving those categories using statistical methods (p. 3). In their book, Riffe et al. go on to explain the usual steps of this process. The preliminary procedures include drawing representative samples of content, training coders to use established category rules to measure differences with chosen content and creating intercoder reliability amongst coders to ensure agreement during this process (Riffe et al.,

2014). In regard to this particular study, this process included choosing high school broadcasts for selection, creating categories of dehumanizing language based on previously conducted studies and establishing reliability for the coder(s) who will take part in the process. Once these steps were completed, the desired data was collected and analyzed for patterns, characteristics and relationships pertinent to the goals of the study: dehumanizing language in high school football broadcasts (Riffe et al., 2014). With quantitative content analysis, it is important to follow these rules to ensure that the results are valid. This method has been used previously in areas similar to the goals of this study. This includes the aforementioned Billings et al. (2002) article, where they looked at differences between how women and men were represented by commentators in college basketball broadcasts. Other examples of content analysis being utilized include Haigh and Heresco (2010), who analyzed jokes by late night TV hosts for war-based content during America's involvement in the Iraq War, and Wilson et al.'s (2012) study that looked at how the TV show *Survivor* portrayed anti-social behavior.

Content Only Design

The particular method employed in this study was a content analysis only design. This meant that it only used established content variables to explore whether dehumanizing language was present within high school football broadcasts rather than using it in conjunction with other methods (Riffe et al., 2014). With its previous connections to similar subject matter and its replicable step-by-step process, this study believed that quantitative content analysis was the appropriate method choice to analyze the phenomenon of dehumanizing commentary within high school football broadcasts.

Population of Investigation

For games broadcasted on ESPN and Fox Sports, there are a definite number of games from which to make a convenience randomized selection. In this setting, the broadcasted games are a convenience sample as they are the only ones made accessible for potential analysis. The selection of the game itself was made randomly from their provided list of contests. Randomization of the sample allows for inferences and generalizations to be made about the population, whereas selective or convenient samples can result in sampling bias (Riffe et al., 2014). While a completely random selection cannot be made, the randomization of the convenience sample of games was aimed at increasing credibility for the study. During the 2019 season ESPN broadcasted games from a number of different states, including Ohio, Missouri, Maryland and Florida, whereas all of Fox Sports broadcasts included at least one team from the California Interscholastic Federation (ESPN, 2019; Koba, 2012; Prep Zone Stream, 2019). With the limited number of states represented, this selection was made first and corresponding games from that state were selected for the rest of the sample. For example, if this process produced an ESPN broadcast with two teams from Florida, then all games sampled would have been from the state of Florida. In order to avoid bias due to regionality and to attain a cleaner sample it was decided that all games in the sample would come from the same state. For games that were retrieved from YouTube, School/Town and Local Media Outlets parameters were set so that a finite list could be established. As previously mentioned, YouTube is the biggest video sharing platform on the Internet, and without setting limits for selection the population would have been

effectively infinite. The parameters for selection of these games included played in the fall of 2019, contained the full broadcast, and took place in same state as the major media selection. Lastly, Sport Associations, similar to major media, had a definitive number of games with which to make a convenience randomized selection. Utilizing this process allowed for categorical lists to be made that were used to randomly select games for analysis.

Unit of Investigation

This study employed the same unit of analysis as the Billings et al. (2002) study, which was a line of broadcast commentary. They identified this using Burnett's (1991) model, which defined this unit as a narrative account by commentators, either in a single sentence, or a series of uninterrupted sentences that evaluated athletic performance. Based on this definition, this study decided to use the term "commentary group" rather than line of broadcast commentary to avoid confusion, as transcripts also have transcript lines. With commentary groups being the unit of investigation, accurate transcript creation was necessary for all of the games in the sample.

Preliminary Transcript Creation

It was important for this study that transcripts were generated of game commentary in order to accurately analyze content for dehumanizing language. Without transcripts, the likelihood of coder error increases. Audio recordings of each contest were created and uploaded to Trint.com for transcript creation with subsequent edits of these transcripts taking place in order to ensure accuracy. With these, game commentary was

analyzed for dehumanizing content. These transcripts had each transcript line and commentary group numbered for easy identification by coders, with dehumanizing comments identified by the commentary group in which it took place in the corresponding codebook.

Category Construction

This study utilized the procedures laid out by Riffe et al. (2014) and conducted by Billings et al. (2002), but for category construction, this research relied on those presented by Haslerig et al. (2019). Haslerig et al.'s study, which analyzed dehumanizing language in college football broadcasts, aligned so closely with the goals of this research that utilizing its categories provided a strong basis to analyze dehumanizing commentary in high school broadcasts. In addition to having similar goals, their category construction also utilized Haslam's (2006) study to define and identify examples of dehumanizing commentary, which was earlier established as the most complete account of dehumanization. While Haslerig et al.'s study looked at dehumanizing commentary in a qualitative way, their category construction correlated and was replicable for this research. Haslerig et al. had three main categories for dehumanizing language in broadcasts: Non-Human, Body, & Injury. While the Haslerig et al. study relied on Haslam's articles (2006, 2011) to define and identify instances of dehumanization in their research, a mechanistic form was not present in their final categories. With Haslam's work being the basis for how this study is defining dehumanization, it was necessary to rename the category Non-Human, "Animalistic" while also adding a fourth category, "Mechanistic." The category of "Non-Human" could contain each of these forms of

dehumanization; however, based on Haslam's model (2006), there is a need to have a distinction between animalistic and mechanistic examples of dehumanization. This additional category allowed for a more complete categorization of the forms of dehumanization while taking into account previous research.

Categories and Sub-Categories

Non-Human Animalistic

Within this category, Haslerig et al. (2019) discussed all of the different examples of dehumanizing language where commentary portrayed players as non-human. This included comparisons, as well as the removal of human qualities. Animalistic comparisons were used, where commentators would refer to players as "workhorse," "bell-cow," and "runs like a deer" (Haslerig et al., 2019, p. 87). Also, present was the dichotomy of super-human and sub-human comparisons, where players were referred to as "immortal," and "possessing super human speed," as well as "beast" and "monster," respectively (Haslerig et al., 2019, pp. 87–89). Lastly, commentators were shown assessing participant demeanor, which took the form of: "he's playing angry," "he's a violent runner" (Haslerig et al., 2019, p. 89), which Haslerig et al. claim represented a removal of players' abilities to fully control their actions within the game. It is important to note that this was player-specific, and not aimed at the violent nature of the game, as examples of that would actually fall into a different category that will be explained later. With this in mind, this allowed for the creation of four sub-categories of Non-Human

Animalistic: *animalistic* comparisons, *super-human* comparisons, *sub-human* comparisons and *player specific violent* and/or *aggressive* commentary.

Non-Human Mechanistic

As established by Haslam (2006), mechanistic dehumanization denies human nature characteristics that comprise core humanness. When this form takes place, humans are removed of their properties that distinguish them from machines and automata (Haslam, 2006). Within the context of broadcasted football contests, this takes the form of commentators referring to players as machines and inanimate objects. A good example of this type would be former National Football League player Calvin Johnson's nickname "Megatron," which was a comparison to a fictional robot extraterrestrial. In this setting, likening players to machines or robots constituted its own sub-category. Likewise, comparisons to inanimate objects that are not machines also fall into this category and require an additional sub-category. Simply put, this would include any comparisons to non-machine inanimate objects; examples like "he's running into a brick wall," or as evidenced before, "his knee hit someone in the coconut." The category of Non-Human Mechanistic dehumanization allowed for the creation of two more sub-categories: *machine* comparisons and *inanimate object* comparisons.

Body

The final two categories, "Body" and "Injury," were based on the Loughnan et al. (2010) study, and expanded upon by Haslerig et al. (2019). In terms of body, Haslerig looked for commentary that dehumanized participants with its focus on the body rather

than the individual (2019). Included within this type of dehumanization was objectification of the body, where commentators would focus the attention of the audience on players' bodies and even specific body parts (Haslerig et al., 2019). Also highlighted within this category was an emphasis on strength, physicality and physical size of participants (Haslerig et al., 2019). This was seen as commentators implying that players rely on size and strength rather than strategy or skill for success (Haslerig et al., 2019). Lastly, commentary was found to portray players as interchangeable, and this could be seen in the form of commentary referring to players as "bodies," as in "get fresh bodies in there" (Haslerig et al., 2019). From these examples, three sub-categories were created: *body objectification*, *emphasis of participant size, strength and physicality* and use of *interchangeable language* in reference to players.

Injury

Football is a physical game and here, Haslerig et al. (2019) looked at dehumanization in terms of how commentators dealt with danger of play and players dealing with pain and injury. Haslerig et al. highlighted commentary for overlooking potential dangers in play, exemplified by "oohs" or "he's going to feel that tomorrow," when violent plays occurred (p. 94). This is the other part to the violent piece that was referenced earlier. Commentary celebrating potentially dangerous play falls into this category, as it aligns more closely with this injury-rooted theme of dehumanization. Along with disregarding danger, a second source of dehumanization was found to occur when players were in pain or injured. In these instances, players were lauded for their continued participation, with examples including "he personifies the toughness it takes to

play this game” and “he cleared his concussion protocol, good to go” (Haslerig et al., 2019). This research concluded that this mentality by commentators focused on their physical availability in regard to the game rather than any sort of concern for well-being (Haslerig et al., 2019.) With these in place, injury was broken down into two sub-categories: *disregard for danger in play* and instances of *playing through pain*.

Coding Procedures

With these categories in mind, links to dehumanization were made with the short excerpt from the introduction: “The big man plows his way up the gut. He is dragging bodies down the field. It looks like his knee hit someone in the coconut” (ABC 4 News, 2018, 25:13). As commentary groups can contain multiple sentences, it is possible for multiple instances of dehumanizing to take place within the same commentary group. There are references to a player’s size, there is an example of commentators speaking about interchangeable “bodies,” there is a comparison to an inanimate object, “coconut,” and there is also a disregard for danger to players. This brief example shows the general process that was conducted for each of the four games in the study. Coders analyzed transcripts and their commentary groups, documented each instance of dehumanizing language and identified which sub-categories were present within individual units of analysis.

Codebook Creation & Corresponding Spreadsheet

Along with transcripts, codebooks were established prior to conducting the study and these ensured that the coding process had defined procedures and responsibilities.

The codebook, and the corresponding data collection spreadsheet, was set up in a way so that all 11 sub-categories were assessed as being “present” or “not-present” within a commentary group. This accounted for instances where multiple sub-categories took place, as well as making the process more straightforward for coders. Within the spreadsheet, “present” was coded by the number “1” and “not present” was coded as the number “0”. At the end of data gathering, this made tallying totals for all of the different sub-categories very simple. The spreadsheet contained an attached table with formulas built in that automatically added “present” counts to their corresponding sub-category as they appeared.

Coder Reliability

Only one individual conducted the data gathering process; however, two research assistants were used to test the codebook and the collection process in order to gain intercoder reliability. When testing reliability, Riffe et al. (2014) suggested 10% of the entire study be examined. Using the transcripts, a total number of commentary groups from all game content was established and with this, assistants were able to test a randomly selected 10% portion of the total sample. Once conducted, the research study conducted a Holsti’s Coefficient (1969) to generate measurements of reliability for each category and sub-category. This scale ranges from 0.0 to 1.00 and the closer to 1.00 a measured item is, the more reliable it is considered. If certain sub-categories tested low

(<.50), then procedural instructions were modified and pre-tests were repeated until relative reliability (.80)³ was achieved (Billings et al., 2002; Riffe et al., 2014).

Analysis

A descriptive analysis was conducted with the collected data from the study, following in the practices of Billings et al. (2002), who showcased their analysis of college basketball commentary in a table divided by gender (their main variable) with each of their categories listed along with the number of times it occurred within a broadcast, including the percentage of each event compared to the entire sample. This study attempted to replicate this table with the four categories and 11 sub-categories of dehumanization represented, along with their corresponding number of occurrences and percentage of occurrences against the rest of the sample. The table by Billings et al. represents a descriptive statistic of counts, which Cooper et al. (2007) described as simply a tally of occurrences. This is different than a frequency or rate, which they define as the number of occurrences in a given amount of time (Cooper et al., 2007). It is the intention of this research to also utilize frequency tables in order to get a better understanding of this phenomenon, as well as to answer the research questions posed earlier.

³ Relative reliability of .80 was the goal for coder reliability, but the true reliability score fell short of this. This is explained further in the results sections.

Summary

Utilizing quantitative content analysis, this research study plans to analyze high school American Football broadcasts for dehumanizing language within commentary. The sample will include games broadcasted across four different production levels: school/town, athletic association, local media and major media outlets. Utilizing previous studies on dehumanizing commentary, categories have been constructed for use by coders to analyze these games after intercoder reliability is established. Using this method will hopefully provide a greater understanding to this phenomenon and advance research into the topic of dehumanizing commentary within American Football broadcasts.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Overview

This chapter summarizes the results of the study. This section includes both the pre-data collection logistics and the results from content analysis of the broadcasts. The former includes the selection of games and the results of the intercoder test for reliability, and the latter contains descriptive counts and frequencies for the entire sample, comprising both the categories and sub-categories of dehumanization. This chapter also includes a comparison of the four levels of media and their relationships to dehumanization and the established sub-categories and categories. Tables, figures, and formulas were utilized to present the findings of this study within this chapter.

Pre-Data Collection Logistics

Before data collection could take place, parameters needed to be established for the study. This started with the selection of games from a single state. Again, due to the major media outlets only broadcasting from a small collection of states, only one would be chosen for all games in the study. This single comparison was preferred over attempting to potentially compare different states and regions. After the games were selected, a test of coder reliability (Holsti Method) was set up to ensure that the methods of this research were reliable amongst different coders. The results from that test are included later in this section. Once these procedures were completed, the data collection process could begin.

Selection of Games

A complete list of available Major Media games was established, comprising both ESPN and Fox Sports. There were 58 high school football games broadcasted by Major Media outlets in the fall of 2019. With this list, each broadcast was then numbered, and, using a web-based random number generator, the selection was made. The randomly selected game was ESPN's broadcast of Archbishop Moeller vs. St. Edwards, a matchup between two schools from the state of Ohio. Utilizing this same method, selections from each of the other three media levels were made. For School/Town and Local Media, these Ohio-based lists were produced using a detailed YouTube search, and for Sport Association, the Ohio High School Athletic Association (OHSAA) and its catalogue of games was used. In all, there were 261 games that were available for analysis, based on the previously listed parameters (played in the fall of 2019, contain the full broadcast, and take place in same state as the major media selection). Each media level had a different number of broadcasts (Major Media – 58; Local Media – 21; Sport Association – 137; and School/Town – 45).

Intercoder Reliability

Here, the study's sub-categories of dehumanization and coding procedures were tested for intercoder reliability. This was conducted by testing a randomly selected, 10% portion of the sample. By establishing commentary group as the unit of investigation, this study was able to determine that the entire sample contained 1,658 commentary groups; therefore, a random cluster of 166 would be used as the sample. Two research assistants were enlisted to aid in this process. Before testing the sample, the research assistants were

given a 1-hour explanation of the study, sub-categories and coding procedures. Within this hour, the research assistants practiced this process with an example passage from a broadcast not associated with the study. During this initial practice portion, feedback was encouraged from assistant coders to help with clarity of sub-categories and coding procedures. All comments were taken into account and minor adjustments were made to reflect this feedback in the codebook. After this training, both the assistants and the researcher analyzed the sample for instances of dehumanizing commentary within the 166 commentary groups.

Testing for Reliability

Once all three coders had analyzed the sample and filled out the corresponding workbook, the Holsti Method (1969) was conducted to test for intercoder reliability across the 11 sub-categories of dehumanization. The formula for this coefficient is fairly simple and calculations were done by hand.

$$\boxed{\text{Coefficient of reliability} = \frac{2(C1,C2)}{N1+N2} \text{ (Holsti, 1969)}} \quad (1)$$

Within this equation, C1 and C2 represent the number of agreed upon coding decisions by the coders (2) and N1 and N2 are the number of total coding decisions made by the coders. This equation, as can be seen, is set up in its simplest form for only two coders when this research utilized three. In order to gain reliability for three coders only slight variations needed to be made to the equation.

$$\text{Coefficient of reliability} = \frac{3 (C1,C2,C3)}{N1+N2+N3} \quad (2)$$

Each sub-category was tested for reliability and the average of all of these outcomes produced the coefficient of reliability. After an initial test of reliability was conducted, the coefficient of reliability was too low to proceed. A second 1-hour training session was scheduled with both assistants. In this second session, clarifications were made, the codebook was updated and practice transcripts were analyzed. The sample was then analyzed for a second time by all three parties and for a second time the reliability was too low to proceed. Training measures were repeated again, and after three attempts at testing for reliability the sub-categories of dehumanization produced an overall reliability coefficient of .76. This is lower than was hoped for, but still an acceptable level of reliability. Once testing began, and trends started to emerge, this outcome was somewhat expected by the researcher. First and foremost, this study was trying to determine if dehumanization was happening and with these 11 sub-categories there was a chance that certain types of dehumanization would not occur as often as others. Looking at the tested portion, and later with the full sample, certain sub-categories had low frequency rates, which meant that if any of the coders missed an instance of dehumanization it would drastically affect the reliability. Take for instance the sub-category Super-Human, where two coders agreed on two instances of super-human dehumanization while the third coder only agreed on one. With so few cases occurring,

that one miss by the coder decreased the reliability of this sub-category to .60. Fortunately, for this study, when frequencies of dehumanization were higher, so was the reliability amongst coders. Individual reliabilities for each sub-category were as follows: animalistic (.75), sub-human (.86), super human (.60), violent/aggressive commentary (.87), machine (.69), inanimate object (.75), body objectification (.60), emphasis on strength/size/physicality (.71), interchangeable language (.86), disregard for danger in play (.75), playing through pain (.90). With intercoder reliability established, the results of the study, as well as the answers to the research questions can be explored.

Results of the Study

This next section presents the data collected from the content analysis of high school football broadcasts for dehumanization. The findings here correlate to the previously laid out research questions, which focus on the presence of dehumanization in broadcasts, as well as the frequency of instances, types of dehumanization and the effect of media source on this phenomenon. Each research question, and its subsequent data, is presented individually, with tables, charts and figures helping to highlight the findings.

RQ 1. *Is dehumanizing language present in high school football broadcasts?*

After analyzing 1,658 commentary groups, which equated to 9 hours and 20 minutes of broadcasted commentary across four separate games, this research found 437 instances of dehumanization, spread across the 11 sub-categories. The first set of descriptive statistics presented are shown in Table 4.1, which looks at this phenomenon as a whole, with subsequent tables helping to investigate the specific aims of Research

Questions 2–4. Within this table, each sub-category and major category (Non-Human Animalistic, Non-Human Mechanistic, Body and Injury) are listed in the rows, with columns representing their total number of instances of dehumanization, percentage of instances against their major category and their percentages against the total of the sample. This table utilizes descriptive data of counts.

Table 4.1

Instances of Dehumanizing Commentary within All Broadcasts

Instances of Dehumanizing Commentary within All Broadcasts	Total	Percentage of Category	Percentage of Total
Non-Human Animalistic	89	100%	20.37%
Animalistic <i>Animal comparisons like “bell-cow,” “work horse”</i>	16	17.98%	3.66%
Sub-Human <i>Ex. “beast,” “freak,” “monster”</i>	14	15.73%	3.20%
Super Human <i>Ex. “Superman,” “can move mountains”</i>	3	3.37%	0.69%
Violent/Aggressive <i>Player specific: “violent runner,” “he’s a bad man”</i>	56	62.92%	12.81%
Non-Human Mechanistic	93	100%	21.28%
Machine <i>Participant references to robots, cars, or anything else mechanical</i>	51	54.84%	11.67%
Inanimate Object <i>Player comparisons to other non-living, non-machine objects, e.g., “coconut”</i>	42	45.16%	9.61%

Instances of Dehumanizing Commentary within All Broadcasts	Total	Percentage of Category	Percentage of Total
Body	137	100%	31.53%
Body Objectification <i>Commentary focusing on players' bodies and body parts</i>	20	14.60%	4.58%
Emphasis on Size, Strength & Physicality <i>Ex. "big man," "he's just too strong"</i>	70	51.09%	16.02%
Interchangeable Language <i>Language that denies individuality, i.e., "get fresh bodies in there"</i>	47	34.31%	10.76%
Injury	118	100%	27.00%
Disregard for Danger in Play <i>Commentary such as "That's going to hurt tomorrow" or "Ooh, big hit"</i>	90	76.27%	20.59%
Playing Through Pain <i>Broadcasters lauding/condemning participants' pain/injury</i>	28	23.73%	6.41%
Total of All Categories	437	100%	100%

Counts of instances of dehumanization within the sub-categories were as follows: animalistic 16; sub-human, 14; super human, 3; violent and or aggressive commentary, 56; machine, 51; inanimate object, 42; body objectification, 20; emphasis on size, strength & physicality, 70; interchangeable language, 47; disregard for danger in play, 90; and playing through pain, 28. Across the major categories, instances of dehumanization were distributed: Non-Human Animalistic, 89; Non-Human Mechanistic, 93; Body, 137; and Injury, 118. Percentage of category and percentage of total sample

were both included within this table to highlight themes amongst the sub-categories. When looking just at the category level, this second data column alerts the viewer to which of the sub-categories were the prevailing source(s) of dehumanization within their category. In this case, player specific violent/aggressive commentary led the Non-Human Animalistic category with 62.92% of the instances; emphasis on size, strength and physicality tallied the most in the Body category with 51.09%; disregard for danger in play had the majority in Injury with 76.27% of instances; and machine had a slight edge over inanimate object, 54.84% and 45.16%, respectively, for the Non-Human Mechanistic category. Unsurprisingly, these sub-categories also had larger percentages of the total sample, with disregard for danger in play recording the largest share at 20.59% of all instances. This final column also presents each category's percentage of the total, which helps to paint a better representation of the overall distribution of dehumanization. These percentages were as follows: Non-Human Animalistic 20.37%, Non-Human Mechanistic 21.28%, Body 31.35%, and Injury 27.00%.

RQ 2. *If dehumanizing language is being used, how frequently is this taking place?*

While the first research question dealt with counts, this second question looks at how frequently instances of dehumanization occur within a game; therefore, this section will be looking at descriptive statistics that helped to produce frequencies of the sample as a whole. As a reminder, Cooper et al. (2007) defined frequency as the number of occurrences in a given amount of time. Within the 1,658 investigated commentary

groups, there were 437 instances of dehumanization and 9 hours and 20 minutes (560 minutes) of total game footage.

Concerning frequency for instances of dehumanization, this study had to look at the number of instances of dehumanization over the time period in question. In this case, that was done with the total number of instances, 437, over time, 560 minutes. This process began by dividing the number of instances by the length of time. This was followed by converting this decimal number from the previous step into minutes. Next, 60 (the number of minutes in an hour) was divided by this number to produce a final decimal that was then converted back into time, which produced the frequency. By using this equation, it was found that on average an instance of dehumanizing language would take place once every 77 seconds (1:17) of a broadcast.

<p>1) $437/560 = .7803$ 2) $.7803 \text{ hr} \times 60 \text{ mins} = 46.82$ 3) $60/46.82 = 1.282 \text{ min}$ 4) $1.282 \text{ min} = 1 \text{ min} + .282 \text{ min}$ <i>*only the decimal needed to be converted to time</i> $.282 \text{ min} \times 60 \text{ s} = 16.92 \text{ seconds} \sim 17 \text{ seconds}$ $= 1:17 (77 \text{ seconds})$</p>	(3)
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RQ 3. *What types of dehumanizing language are most prevalent? How is dehumanizing language most often presented to the audience?*

This third research question required both counts and frequencies to be produced for all sub-categories and categories. The counts for each were highlighted previously in

Table 4.1; however, Table 4.2 was constructed from this to highlight prevalence amongst the sub-categories.

Table 4.2

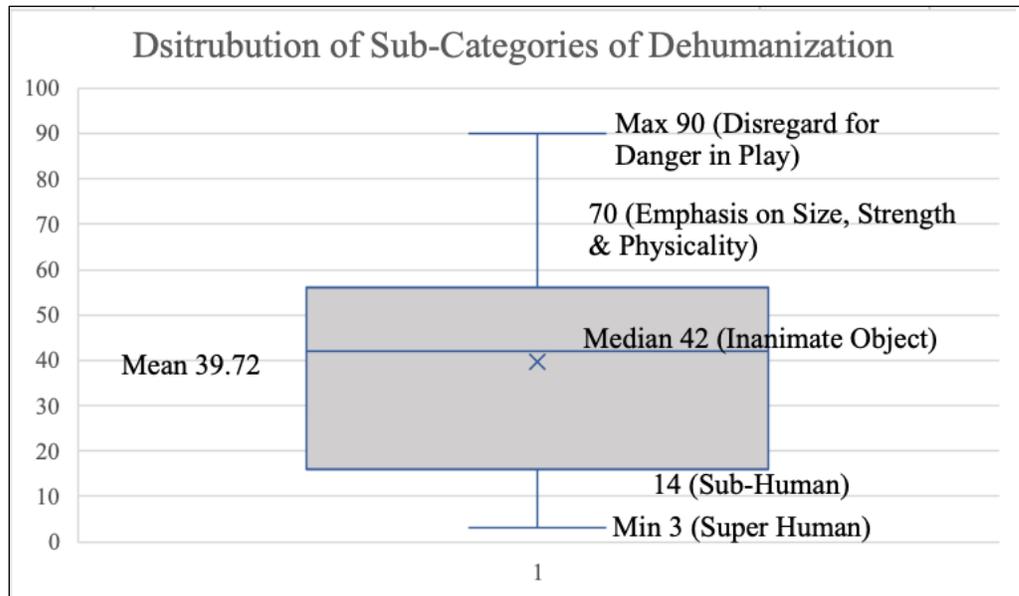
Prevalence of Sub-Categories within Total Sample

Sub-Category	# of Instances of Dehumanization
Disregard for Danger in Play	90
Emphasis on Size, Strength & Physicality	70
Violent/Aggressive	56
Machine	51
Interchangeable Language	47
Inanimate Object	42
Playing Through Pain	28
Body Objectification	20
Animalistic	16
Sub-Human	14
Super-Human	3

In Table 4.2, the sub-categories are listed in descending order of instances of dehumanization. This table helps to show the distribution of dehumanization and prevalence of certain sub-categories. The sub-categories' instances of dehumanization had a mean of 39.72 and ranged from 3 (superhuman) to 90 (disregard for danger in play). Figure 4.1 shows this distribution through the use of a box and whisker plot.

Figure 4.1

Distribution of Sub-Categories of Dehumanization



This figure displays the distribution differently than simply listing the counts. The gray section represents the middle 50% of the sub-categories. Here, this represents animalistic, 16; body objectification, 20; playing through pain, 28; inanimate object, 42; interchangeable language, 47; machine, 51; and violent/aggressive commentary, 56. Within this box-plot, the maximum sub-category, disregard for danger in play, is distanced from the middle 50% of the sub-categories and noticeably further away than the minimum sub-category, superhuman. This visual representation of the distribution of dehumanization amongst sub-categories aids in the analysis of the data, as it shows which sub-categories fall outside the norm (superhuman; sub-human; emphasis on size, strength and physicality; and disregard for danger in play). Not listed within Table 4. or Figure 4.1 were the totals for categories. Prevalence within these, listed from greatest to

least, were as follows: Body, 137; Injury, 118; Non-Human Mechanistic, 93; and Non-Human Animalistic, 89.

While Table 4.2 and Figure 4.1 represent the findings for the entire sample, the expected counts of instances of dehumanization for an individual game can be found by dividing these totals by 4. This is represented in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3

Expected Counts for Sub-Categories within an Individual Game

Sub-Category	Expected Instances of Dehumanization
Disregard for Danger in Play	22.5
Emphasis on Size, Strength & Physicality	17.5
Violent/Aggressive	14
Machine	12.75
Interchangeable Language	11.75
Inanimate Object	10.5
Playing Through Pain	7
Body Objectification	5
Animalistic	4
Sub-Human	3.5
Super-Human	0.75

Assessing this table, expected instances for sub-categories were presented for a single game from this sample. Here, single game averages were as follows: disregard for danger in play, 22.5; emphasis on size, strength and physicality, 17.5; violent and/or aggressive commentary, 14; machine, 12.75; interchangeable language, 11.75; inanimate

object, 10.5; playing thought pain, 7; body objectification, 5; animalistic, 4; sub-human, 3.5; and super human, 0.75. From this data, this means that disregard for danger in play would be heard on average 23 times during a broadcast, whereas an instance of super human dehumanization would take place less than once per game. The same can be done with categories, and the means of those were as follows: Body, 34.25; Injury, 29.50; Non-Human Mechanistic, 23.25; and Non-Human Animalistic, 22.25. While this table helps to show prevalence of dehumanization using counts and means, it does not characterize frequencies for the sub-categories and categories in question. Frequencies for each sub-category and category were produced using the same formula from Research Question #2 and can be seen in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4*Frequency of Sub-Categories & Categories of Dehumanization in sample*

Sub-Category/Category	Frequency of Instance (min:sec)	Frequency of Instance (seconds)
Non-Human Animalistic Total	6:18	378
Animalistic	34:58	2,098
Sub-Human	40:00	2,400
Super Human	185:11	11,111
Violent/Aggressive	10:00	600
Non-Human Mechanistic Total	6:01	361
Machine	10:59	659
Inanimate Object	13:20	800
Body Total	4:05	245
Body Objectification	28:01	1,681
Emphasis on Size, Strength & Physicality	8:00	640
Interchangeable Language	11:55	715
Injury Total	4:45	285
Disregard for Danger in Play	6:13	373
Playing Through Pain	20:00	1200

These frequencies represent the amount of time between instances of each type of dehumanization. Take for instance animalistic dehumanization; this sub-category would be heard every 34 minutes and 58 seconds based on the number of instances from the sample over the length of time in which they occurred. This table of frequencies helps to show how prevalent each of the sub-categories and categories are, while at the same time presenting the findings in relation to time. The tables within this section look at the data from a quantitative standpoint, but in order to really analyze how dehumanization is

presented to audiences, specific examples need to be evaluated. This somewhat qualitative assessment will be explored later within the discussion section.

RQ 4. *Does the media level affect this outcome? Do certain media outlets use dehumanizing language more or less than other broadcasts?*

This research question explored the independent variable in the study: media level. To answer this question, counts and frequencies for each of the individual games were produced. Similar to previous sections, these descriptive statistics helped to present the data in an interpretable manner. The first set of statistics can be seen in Table 4.. This looks at the data from an overall perspective by comparing commentary groups, commentary groups containing dehumanization, instances of dehumanization, and the percentages that go along with these relationships between items.

Table 4.5

Overview of Dehumanization among Media Levels

Item	School/Town	Sport Association	Local Media	Major Media
# of Commentary Groups	452	289	492	425
# of Commentary Groups Containing Dehumanizing Commentary	60	46	74	85
# of Instances of Dehumanizing Commentary	90	74	156	122
% of Commentary Groups Containing Dehumanizing Commentary	13.27%	15.92%	15.04%	20.00%
% of Instances of Dehumanizing Commentary vs. # of Commentary Groups	19.91%	25.61%	31.71%	28.71%
Game Length (mins/secs)	128 mins 14 seconds	148 mins 38 seconds	123 mins 25 seconds	141 mins 47 seconds
Game Length (Decimal)	128.23	148.63	123.42	141.78
Frequency (f=n/t) of Dehumanizing Language Occurrences (seconds)	Dehumanization occurs once every 96 seconds (1:36)	Dehumanization occurs once every 124 seconds (2:04)	Dehumanization occurs once every 48 seconds	Dehumanization occurs once every 70 seconds (1:10)

There was a sizable range in commentary groups within the sample, as Sport Association had only 289 commentary groups, while the other three media levels all had at least 425 units of investigation (School/Town, 452; Local Media, 492; Major Media, 425). This was not due to length of the broadcast; as can be seen in the final row of the table, the Sport Association broadcast was actually the longest included within the sample. This outcome was most likely due to the fact that this game only had one commentator, a characteristic of all regular season games available from the Ohio High School Athletic Association, the sport association used for this study. This was seen as a minor limitation within the study and it will be addressed more in the discussion section. Continuing with the analysis of this table, commentary groups containing dehumanization was led by Major Media (ESPN broadcast) with 85, followed by Local Media, 74; School/Town, 60 and Sport Association, with 46. Instances of dehumanizing commentary had a slightly different distribution, with Local Media tallying the most with 156, followed by Major Media, 122; School/Town, 90 and Sport Association, 74.

Two percentages are present within the table; the first was percentage of commentary groups containing dehumanizing commentary. This percentage explored the same relationship as formula (3) from earlier, commentary groups containing dehumanizing commentary divided by the total number of commentary groups. As a reminder, it was found that 17.55% of commentary groups contained dehumanization across the entire sample. In terms of media levels, the percentages all fell fairly close to that number, with School/Town, 13.27%; Sport Association, 15.92%; Local Media, 15.04%; and Major Media, 20.00%. The second percentage within the table looked at

instances of dehumanizing commentary versus the number of commentary groups within a broadcast. This percentage took into account commentary groups' ability to contain more than one instance of dehumanizing commentary. As can be seen from the table, this showed a different proportion than the previous percentage and one that better helps to show the distribution of dehumanizing commentary. Whereas Major Media had the highest total in the previous category, Local Media led media levels with 31.71%, followed by Major Media, 28.71%; Sport Association, 25.61%; and School/Town, 19.91%. Lastly, frequencies of instances of dehumanization were produced for each of the four media levels, with dehumanization taking place once every 96 seconds for School/Town, every 124 seconds for Sport Association, every 48 seconds for Local Media, and every 70 seconds for Major Media.

Totals of dehumanization across media levels were explored in Table 4.5, but it is also important to look at the distribution within individual sub-categories and categories from the sample. Table 4.6 presents this distribution and gives insight into how the different media levels exhibited dehumanization within their broadcasts.

Table 4.6*Counts for Sub-Categories & Categories Across Media Levels*

Sub-Categories and Categories	School/Town (S/T)	Sport Association (SA)	Local Media (LM)	Major Media (MM)
Non-Human Animalistic Total	16	13	34	31
Animalistic	3	2	8	8
Sub-Human	3	2	4	5
Super Human	1	1	1	0
Violent/Aggressive	9	8	21	18
Non-Human Mechanistic Total	8	20	35	30
Machine	5	10	16	20
Inanimate Object	3	10	19	10
Body Total	28	14	54	41
Body Objectification	0	1	7	12
Emphasis on Size, Strength & Physicality	21	4	26	19
Interchangeable Language	7	9	21	10
Injury Total	38	27	33	20
Disregard for Danger in Play	30	23	26	11
Playing Through Pain	8	4	7	9
Total of All Categories	90	74	156	122

This is a table of counts for instances of dehumanization for the sub-categories and categories among the different media levels. Each column represents a media level and each row represents the total for sub-categories and categories within these media levels. As can be seen from the table, the media levels varied in their distributions of sub-

categories and categories. Instances of dehumanization within the sub-categories and across the media levels ranged from 0-30 within a given broadcast. As has been presented in previous results and tables, certain sub-categories did not have high frequency rates, and this can be seen across media levels within the sub-categories of animalistic, S/T 3, SA 2, LM 8, MM 8; sub-human, S/T 3, SA, 2, LM 4, MM 5, superhuman, S/T 1, SA 1, LM 1, MM 0; body objectification S/T 0, SA 1, LM 7, MM 12; and playing through pain S/T 8, SA 4, LM 7, MM 9. Even with these lower frequency sub-categories, there are noticeable differences in instances of dehumanization among the media levels. With regards to the sub-category body objectification, School/Town and Sport Association accounted for 1 instance total, whereas Major Media alone had 12. These sorts of disparities across media levels are important when considering this final research question.

For the more prevalent sub-categories, their distributions across media levels were as follows: inanimate object S/T 3, SA 10, LM 19, MM 10; interchangeable language S/T 7, SA 9, LM 21, MM 10; machine S/T 5, SA 10, LM 16, MM 20; violent or aggressive S/T 9, SA 8, LM 21, MM 18; emphasis on size, strength & physicality S/T 21, SA 4, LM 26, MM 19; disregard for danger in play S/T 30, SA 23, LM 26, MM 11. This second grouping of sub-categories were listed in order from least to greatest instances of dehumanization. The final sub-category listed, disregard for danger in play, was the only sub-category that contained 10+ instances in each of the four broadcasts. The 30 instances within the School/Town broadcast was the highest total for all sub-categories across all games. As for categories, the distribution across media levels broke down like

this: Non-Human Animalistic S/T 16, SA 13, LM 34, MM 31; Non-Human Mechanistic S/T 8, SA 20, LM 35, MM 30; Body S/T 28, SA 14, LM 54, MM 41; Injury S/T 38, SA 27, LM 33, MM 20. There are large disparities here too, as categories ranged from relatively low counts, 13 (SA Non-Human Animalistic), 8 (S/T Non-Human Mechanistic), 14 (SA Body), 11 (MM Injury) to significantly higher totals, 34 (LM Non-Human Animalistic, 35 (LM Non-Human Mechanistic), 54 (LM Body), 38 (S/T Injury).

From this table, sub-categories and categories with the lowest and highest totals can be identified across media levels. The School/Town broadcast had the lowest totals for three sub-categories, machine (5), inanimate object (3), body objectification (0), as well as one category, Non-Human Mechanistic (8). It also had the highest total for one sub-category, disregard for danger in play (30) and one category, Injury (38). The Sport Association broadcast had the lowest total for five sub-categories, animalistic (2), sub-human (2), violent/aggressive commentary (8), emphasis on size strength and physicality (4), playing through pain (4), in addition to one category, Body (14). Sport Association did not contain the highest count in any of the sub-categories or categories within the study. Local Media did not contain the lowest count in any category or sub-category; however, they had the highest number (or tied for the highest number) in five sub-categories, animalistic (8, tie with MM), violent or aggressive commentary (21), inanimate object (19), emphasis on size, strength and physicality (26), interchangeable language (21), and three categories, Non-Human Animalistic (34), Non-Human Mechanistic (35) and Body (54). Lastly, Major Media had the lowest counts in two sub-categories, superhuman (0) and disregard for danger in play (11), as well as one category,

Injury (20). The Major Media broadcast also had the highest number of instances in three sub-categories, animalistic (8, tie with LM), sub-human (5) and machine (20).

Summary

In this section, the results of the data were presented. This included the process for selection of games, the test for intercoder reliability, as well as the results for the four research questions of the study. Dehumanization was found in high school broadcasts within each of the games sampled. Counts and frequencies were produced to show how frequently this is taking place in games, with this study finding a mean of 109.25 instances of dehumanization per game in this sample. Sub-categories and categories of dehumanization were assessed for prevalence and it was found that the Injury sub-category disregard for danger in play had the most occurrences with 90; however, Body led categories with 137 instances of dehumanization. Lastly, media levels were assessed for dehumanization and within this sample of games Local Media had the most instances of dehumanization with 156, followed by Major Media (122), School/Town (90) and Sport Association (74). Tables, figures and formulas were used to help present this data and the counts and frequencies produced should aid this research when addressing the results in the discussion section.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

Overview

This chapter discusses the results section, with an eye towards both the process and the outcomes from conducting the study. This section summarizes the results of analyzing high school football broadcasts for dehumanization and examines the outcomes for the four research questions. In addition to this discussion, this chapter will also include concluding statements about the research study, as well as application for the findings, study limitations and directions for potential future research.

Discussion of Research Questions

RQ 1. *Is dehumanizing language present in high school football broadcasts?*

General Overview of Results

Based on previous research of dehumanization in football broadcasts (Haslerig et al., 2019, Oates, 2007) it was assumed by this study that dehumanization would also take place in high school broadcasts. After assessing the findings of this research, it is safe to say this assumption was correct. Occurring 437 times over the course of four broadcasts, with a mean of 109.25 instances per contest, dehumanization was present within high school football broadcasts in this sample. The findings from this study show that dehumanization was not just taking place, it was occurring quite often throughout these broadcasts. The data provide a quantitative representation of dehumanization in high

school football broadcasts. This new perspective on the phenomenon is considered by the researcher to be the most impactful aspect of the study. It builds upon previous research that analyzed dehumanization in sport, while hopefully opening the door for future research opportunities in this area.

Sub-Categories and Categories

All sub-categories and categories of dehumanization, established by this study and built off of previous works such as Haslam (2006), Haslerig et al. (2019), Waytz et al. (2015) and others, were found to be present within the sample. While some of the sub-categories (superhuman, sub-human) did not occur frequently, their inclusion in the study is legitimized by their occasional occurrences and their ties to previously established dehumanization research. Bandura (2002), Bar-Tal (2000), and Haslerig et al, would surely argue that sub-human dehumanization has its place in this study, as even the most infrequent use of “Beast” or “Monster” in regard to a player would get their attention. Likewise, Waytz et al. would not have been able to overlook any examples of supernatural or extrasensory comparisons within the broadcasts. With their strong ties to dehumanization, sub-human and superhuman needed to be included within the sub-categories and analyzed for their presence within these high school football broadcasts. With all of the sub-categories occurring within the sample, this meant that all of the categories were present as well. As a reminder, the counts for each category were as follows: Non-Human Animalistic, 89; Non-Human Mechanistic, 93; Body, 137; and Injury, 118. Unlike with certain sub-categories, the totals for each of these do not require validation. This outcome can most likely be attributed to having a strong definition of

dehumanization, which was built upon the work of Haslam and others. Along with this definition, the preliminary category construction that Haslerig et al. previously established was crucial to the procedures conducted within this study.

Flexibility of Commentary Groups

As mentioned, the unit of investigation, commentary groups, allowed for multiple instances of dehumanization to take place within the same unit. Out of the 437 commentary groups that contained dehumanization, 105, or about one quarter (24.02%), had two or more instances of dehumanization within a commentary group. The highest count for a single commentary group across the sample was 5, and it took place in the Local Media broadcast. To highlight how commentary groups can contain multiple instances of dehumanization, a passage from the Local Media broadcast is presented.

As McCarty inside the 15. Boy, he just kind of goes (engine noises) back and forth, kind of rumbles at times when he goes downfield. You see the burst when he works diagonally, sometimes a little bit of a churning action. That time he carried defenders and got a gain of about three on the play. (The C.W. Columbus, 2019, 1:20:02)

While this passage only contains four instances, this commentary group stood out among all 1,658 units investigated, as it was jam-packed with overt dehumanization. There were multiple examples of machine dehumanization, with the broadcaster's use of engine noises, similar to a car revving up and also referring to a "churning action" as a descriptor for the player in question. Add to this the usage of the word rumbles, which falls into the violent/aggressive sub-category, as it implies the player is out of control with their movements. Lastly, "carried defenders" was considered to be an emphasis on size, strength and physicality, as the act of carrying defenders implies both strength and

physical play. With a commentary group's flexibility—same speaker, one uninterrupted thought—it allowed for passages like this to check a lot of dehumanization boxes. What's interesting about this specific commentary group is that this was not a touchdown or a violent tackle, it was a 3-yard gain. This really speaks to the idea that dehumanization can happen on any play or during any moment in the game.

Trying to be Funny

Idioms were frequent sources of dehumanization. Commentators would often use sayings or phrases within broadcasts that contained dehumanizing themes. Examples of these included referring to a player as “chomping at the bit,” in reference to a losing team's best player on the sidelines, as well as continually saying “back at the controls again,” any time a quarterback entered the field of play (ESPN, 2019, 23:31; ESPN, 2019 39:31). The first example exhibited violent/aggressive player specific commentary, while the second instance displayed machine dehumanization. What is especially noteworthy about these idioms is that commentators would use lots of them and lots of the same ones over and over. If the commentator in this matchup, which this was the Major Media broadcast by ESPN, had just broken out of these phrases, there is a good chance that it would have decreased the number of dehumanizing instances in the broadcast.

Similarly, attempts at humor also led to occurrences of dehumanization. One example that sticks out was when an undersized defender attempted to stop the ball carrier for the offensive team. “And that's where you get a little bit of youth and an undersized linebacker in Max Lee. Only a 165-pound freshman. And look at this, McCarty just delivers the blow and is able to drag Lee with him. And watch, now Max

Lee does a pretty good job at getting there and he's just hanging on for dear life," (The C. W. Columbus, 2019, 39:09). Although this was a potentially dangerous play for the defender, the delivery of this passage was given in a jovial manner. This was especially true of the last part of the excerpt "hanging on for dear life," which was said in jest. Attempts at humor are aimed at entertainment, as the broadcasters are speaking off of the cuff and trying to have fun with the commentary. However, this practice, at least within this sample of games, was also routinely connected to instances of dehumanization.

***RQ 2.** If dehumanizing language is being used, how frequently is this taking place?*

Why RQ 2?

This question was the most specific of the four research objectives. Whereas the other questions explored big, broad topics and comparisons, RQ 2 had a definite question in mind, how frequently is dehumanization taking place in high school football broadcasts? While specific, and answerable with a numeric value, this question was not any less important than others in the study. This is especially true as there was no better place to circle back to the "why" of this study, which was why does dehumanization in high school broadcasts matter?

Average Game

To begin to answer this question, an "average game" (within this sample) was produced. Utilizing a rounding standard of $>.50$, the means for a broadcast were established as having 415 commentary groups, 73 commentary groups containing

dehumanizing language, 109 instances of dehumanizing language and a run time of 2 hours 20 minutes (140 minutes). These means were then used to find that 17.55% of commentary groups contained dehumanizing language and dehumanizing language took place on average, once every 1 minute 17 seconds (77 seconds). Previously established by Cooper et al. (2007), frequency was defined as the number of occurrences in a given time. In terms of frequency, two of these statistics answered this research question, average number of dehumanizing instances per game (109 in 140 minutes) and average amount of time between instances of dehumanization (1 every 77 seconds). It is worth noting that these are not two separate frequencies, they are simply two different ways of saying the same thing and, when calculated, they produce the same result. In addition to providing a resolution to the research question, these frequencies present easily interpretable statistics that need very little context of the study to understand. Even a casual observer of this data would comprehend what one instance of dehumanization every 77 seconds meant.

Touchdowns vs. Dehumanization

To put these numbers into perspective, there were 30 touchdowns scored over the course of the four broadcasts. Using equation (4) from earlier, this resulted in one touchdown every 18 minutes and 40 seconds (1,120 seconds) throughout the broadcasts. With a simple calculation ($1,120s / 77s$) it was found that instances of dehumanization occurred on average 14.54 times for every touchdown scored. Touchdowns being scored is dependent on the teams, but altogether these were not low scoring games. There were 203 points scored across the four broadcasts, with a mean of 50.75 points and 7.5

touchdowns per game. Even with all these points scored, dehumanization occurred almost 15 times more frequently throughout the sample. Of course, these events are not exactly equivalent, but it is worth looking at how one of football's favorite features matched up with instances of dehumanization. Even before comparing it to touchdowns, the regularity to which dehumanizing language took place was notable. Frequency of dehumanization actually resulted in an unexpected complication with the data collection process, and it was this development that reaffirmed to the researcher why studying this phenomenon matters.

Dehumanization Fatigue

Each individual game was analyzed for dehumanization three times. This number was not established prior to data collection, but early in the process it became clear that there was the potential to miss instances of dehumanization. Along with multiple readings, sometimes taking a break or reading one of the other transcripts helped to uncover some of the more subtle examples of dehumanization within the text. Reading through the same voices for extended periods of time seemed to have the effect of desensitizing the analyzer to some dehumanization. With this effect, instances of dehumanization from early in a transcript that jumped off of the page started to seem less and less like dehumanization the more they were used by commentators. Based on previous research, this was not a unique outcome. Soral et al. (2018) studied the effects of frequent exposure to hate speech on prejudice to minorities. Using a model of desensitization, they argued that increased exposure to aggressive materials reduced negative reactions to those types of words, thoughts and images (Soral et al., 2018).

Essentially, increased exposure led to individuals ignoring their apprehensions over time towards aggressive language (Soral et al., 2018). While it cannot be confirmed that this is what happened here, this potential explanation would have far-reaching effects for this study.

Desensitizing Sub-Categories

Although included in the results section corresponding to RQ 3, it actually makes more sense to discuss what desensitization means for the results from Table 4.3 here in RQ 2. The figures in this table represented the means of the sub-categories on a per game basis. With desensitization being a potential outcome for viewers, these sub-category numbers start to have more meaning. Within this study's sample of games, dehumanization was shown to be present in high school football broadcasts. This meant that there was increased exposure to dehumanizing language for viewers. Increased exposure, as explained by Soral et al. (2018), can desensitize those exposed to certain words, thoughts and images, leading to decreased levels of negative reactions to ideas presented. Now, Soral et al. dealt with desensitization in relation to hate speech; however, the idea of desensitization from exposure to words and language should not necessarily be exclusive to just hate speech. It is also worth thinking about it in regard to this study. Take for instance the most prevalent sub-category from the sample, disregard for danger in play. Looking at Table 4.2, this type of dehumanization occurred around 23 times during a single broadcast. With desensitization in mind, the more times this type of dehumanization occurs, the more likely the viewer is to ignore, or potentially even accept the dehumanizing language. In this case, that would mean that potential dangers for the

participants are overlooked or even disregarded by viewers. A similar idea was supported earlier by Frederick et al. (2013), when they argued that media messages legitimize violence in football to the point viewers' concern for participants lessen. While this sub-category was the most predominant, this process would work similarly for all 11 types of dehumanization presented in this study. This means that viewers would also be more inclined to believe that participant's size was more important than strategy or skill (emphasis on size, strength & physicality), and that participants do not have full control over their actions and emotions during games (violent and or aggressive commentary) (Haslerig et al., 2019). Combine this with all of the other types of dehumanization presented in a game and it is not hard to see why this research matters.

RQ 3. *What types of dehumanizing language are most prevalent? How is dehumanizing language most often presented to the audience?*

Quantitative Feel

While the majority of this study concentrated on quantitative outcomes, this research question focused on the language that was presented to the audience. This meant that each time dehumanization took place, not only was a tally made, but also a brief written account of the instance was taken. This process led to a qualitative component to the results that was similar to how the Haslerig et al. (2019) study was conducted. The counts, frequencies and data are all important to this study, but to see the language used is important in understanding more specifically how dehumanization is presented within high school football broadcasts. To answer this research question, each sub-category's

instances were examined for themes and trends. This section also contains examples from the games in this sample.

Surprising Results (Highs and Lows)

It was not long into the data collection portion of the study before it was realized that the results were not going to be as expected. As previously mentioned, instances of dehumanization from the sub-categories of sub-human (14 instances) and superhuman (3 instances) did not occur very often. With this paper entitled “Monsters and Machines,” this research study was based on the idea that commentators were referring to players as “beasts” and “freaks” (an example of sub-human dehumanization) when, at least within this sample, this was not the case. However, at least it appears “Machines” inclusion within the title was a bit more warranted, and that will be discussed later in this section. Other surprises that can be seen from Table 4.1 were the high totals for the sub-categories disregard for danger in play and emphasis on size, strength and physicality. Their presence wasn’t surprising, as it was assumed that all sub-categories would be present within the sample; however, it was the regularity with which they took place that made them stand out, 90 instances for disregard for danger in play, and 70 for emphasis on size strength and physicality. In regard to disregard for danger in play, there were a lot of “oohs” and “ouches” within the broadcasts. Football is a physical sport, but so many times a big collision in the game would result in short auditory phrases that showed limited concern for player well-being. As for emphasis on size, strength and physicality, quite frequently you would hear that a player is just “too strong” or “too big” to be stopped. These really did seem to take out the possibility that skill was the reason for

certain instances of success by players in the games and instead it was their physical attributes that took over. For both of these sub-categories, these were the types of things this study was specifically looking for based on the previous research within this area.

Stuck in the Middle

Based upon Figure 4.1 (box plot of sub-categories), all remaining sub-categories fell within the middle 50% of the sample. This figure was based upon the range of all sub-categories (3–90) as well as a mean of 39.72 instances. However, with such a large range between the other seven sources of dehumanization (17–56) it made more sense to clump similar totals together. This led to a “middle group” containing inanimate object (42 instances); interchangeable language (47); machine (51); and violent/aggressive commentary (56). When necessary, context for broadcaster commentary will be included in parenthesis.

Starting with violent/aggressive player specific commentary, examples of this sub-category included “teams are fighting for a w,” “he’s rudely greeted,” (participant is tackled) and “Ruff, living up to his name.” Within these examples, commentary assessed participants’ demeanor and, based on their dehumanizing language, indicated that participants were not fully in control of their actions (Haslerig et al., 2019). Within this sub-category of dehumanization there is a removal of uniquely human characteristics including moral sensibility and rationality (Haslam, 2006). As mentioned, the denial of UH characteristics leads to animalistic dehumanization, hence this sub-category’s inclusion within the category of Non-Human Animalistic.

Moving on to the sub-category of machine, this included a lot of player comparisons to machines, lasers, guns, trains, etc., but also activations of machines. This additional component had a weird feel to it because it was almost as if participants started as humans but then when they did something noteworthy, they transitioned to machine. This can be seen with examples such as “he stepped on the gas,” “he can really turn it on” (speed reference) and “he is submarined down on that one” (participant is tackled by “submarine-like” opponent). The activation element was an interesting development, as it presented step-by-step dehumanization.

Next, interchangeable language took place any time player identity was denied by broadcast commentary that emphasized interchangeability. Earlier, examples of this from Haslerig et al. (2019) focused on the use of the word “body” or “bodies,” but commentators in this sample really expanded this idea with word choices when referring to individuals and groups of participants. Instances included “the pile starts to move” (referring to a group of players around the ball), “tackle by committee,” and “he’s met by a wave of Cavaliers” (multiple participants helped make a defensive stop). The term body(ies) did come up during the process, but the most interesting revelation for this sub-category was definitely the ways in which commentators denied participant individuality through a myriad of interchangeable references.

The last sub-category in this middle group was inanimate object, and this one was all over the place. This sub-category has a wide net, as any comparison to something that isn’t a human, animal or machine falls in here. It is a pretty random collection, as can be seen from instances that include references to players as a “brick wall” (defensive

player), “bowling ball” (ball carrier), and “ground chuck” (player’s first name was Chuck). Some of these examples like “bowling ball” can be argued are aimed at imagery, but for a lot of these instances, it comes back to the idea that commentators are using a phrase or trying to be funny. Whatever their reasoning, the possibilities for this sub-category are endless.

On the Lower End

The remaining sub-categories included: playing through pain (28 instances), body objectification (20 instances) and animalistic (17 instances). The biggest wild card of all of the sub-categories was definitely playing through pain, as it was dependent on injuries taking place. While other sub-categories can happen at any time, playing through pain is almost always connected to an injury taking place. Occasionally there are instances where participants are lauded for overcoming a physical play or their physical availability is questioned, but the majority of these occurrences require an injury to take place. When injuries occurred, commentators tended to play the role of medical professional, as they would normally give their opinion as to what might be injured (ankle, foot, shoulder, etc.), as well as whether or not it might be serious. Here, the phrase “dinged up” was used quite often when the broadcaster did not think the injury was significant. As a reminder, Haslerig et al. (2019) argued that this focus by commentators on availability to participate was in place of concern for well-being. Their breakdown of this type of dehumanization was a fine line to negotiate within the broadcasts, as praise for players returning to the game would occasionally take place but there were also examples of commentators showing genuine concern for the participant’s well-being.

A different type of praise in reference to players was the sub-category of body objectification. Similarly, to sub-human, however, the results did not match anticipated outcomes. It was assumed, based on previous research—Haslerig et al. (2019) and Loughnan et al. (2010)—that body objectification would be big source of dehumanization. Focusing on the body and body parts in a game that requires athletic and physical skill seemed like they would be naturally connected. However, with only 20 instances across the four broadcasts, this was not the case. It is worth noting that this outcome could be due to the small sample size of this study, a drawback that is discussed further in the limitations section, or it could also be due to the age of participants. Previous studies worked with older individuals, all of which were at least college-age. Here, however, it is feasible that commentators could have felt uncomfortable speaking about high school age participant's bodies. Without conducting further research, the reasoning for this outcome will stay unknown. As for examples, most of the instances dealt with focusing on body parts of participants or a player's physique in general, "he looks like an athlete," "good lower body," "just look at him, good frame."

The last of the 11 sub-categories, animalistic, was similar to the sub-category of machine in a lot of ways, except in frequency of occurrence. While animalistic instances did not occur as often, there was a similar theme in that some examples had an activation/actions component. Instead of just references to players as "workhorse" and "bell cow," which there were instances of, there were also "he trotted to the sidelines" (player left field), "he's taking the reins" (new player entered game), "they corralled the runner." This sub-category turned into something bigger than simply animal

comparisons, which helped because those did not occur often. In the examples above, the use of the word “trot” is most closely connected to an action by horse, similarly “taking the reins” the player is taking action by controlling his team, again a horse reference and lastly, by corralling the runner, the defense is utilizing a strategy most noticeable used for containing cattle. It was surprising that more instances of animalistic dehumanization did not occur, but it was more surprising how these variations presented themselves.

RQ 4. *Does the media level affect this outcome? Do certain media outlets use dehumanizing language more or less than other broadcasts?*

Setting the Scene

Before getting into the results and differences between the media levels, it is important to get a sense of the features of each game. Included within

Table 5.1, each game was broken down by media level, participating teams, division of each team, final score of game w/winner noted and potential announcer bias, i.e., home/away/impartial.

Table 5.1*Overview of Media Level Games in Sample*

Media Level	School/Town	Sport Association	Local Media	Major Media
Teams	Edgewood (D-4) at Mt. Healthy (D-3)	Lancaster (D-1) at Reynoldsburg (D-1)	Logan (D-2) at Chillicothe (D-3)	Archbishop Moeller (D-1) at St. Edwards (D-1)
Score	41-21 Mt. Healthy	55-20 Reynoldsburg	18-7 Logan	34-7 St. Edward
Bias	Home Announcers from Mt. Healthy	Impartial	Impartial	Impartial

As can be seen above, there was a range in level of play, as teams represented four different divisions from the state of Ohio. Here, Division 1 is the highest division. This is worth noting as division organization varies, with some states' best divisions being designated with higher numbers. Other items of note included, 3 out of 4 games in the sample were not close, as School/Town, Sport Association and Major Media were all 20+ point outcomes. Lastly, 3 out of 4 games also had unbiased or impartial announcers, with only the School/Town broadcast using local announcers for the game. All other games in the sample contained commentators unaffiliated with either school.

Not included with the table were any differences in visual components of the broadcasts. While this study focused on video content, it was mostly concerned with language used by commentators. This meant that once the transcripts were produced, visual stimuli from the broadcasts were essentially disregarded. Although some

contextual notes from the broadcasts were included within transcripts, effects from media tools such as priming and framing, which previous research emphasized (Lewis & Weaver, 2015; Moy et al., 2016; Haslerig et al., 2019), were minimized.

A Lack of Significance

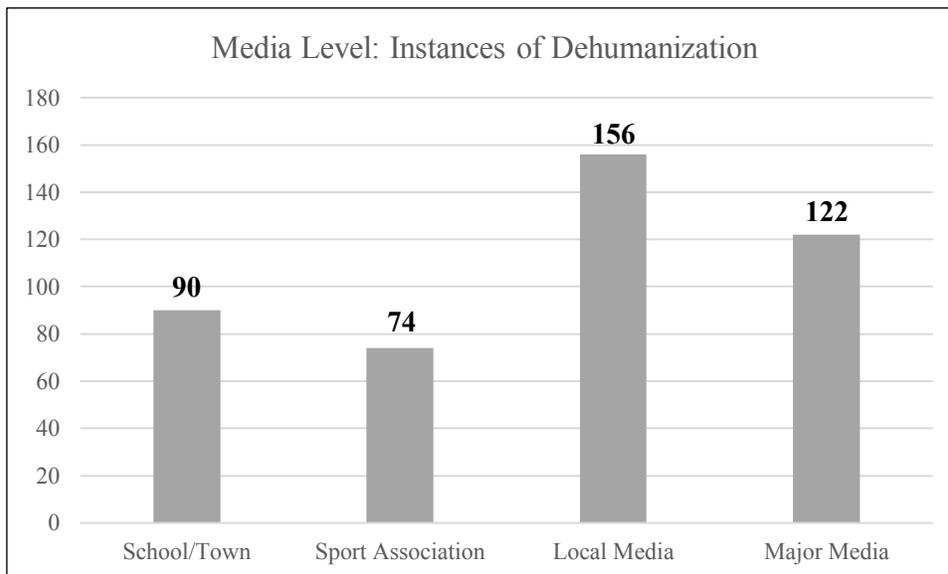
This was not an experiment. It was a preliminary assessment of dehumanizing language within high school football broadcasts. It was aimed at identifying dehumanization, with the added component of comparing differing media sources that broadcast these games at a superficial level. Although an independent variable was presented, this research study did contain a hypothesis, which also meant there was no power analysis, nor a test of significance used within this study. While a test of significance would have been a welcome addition, the sample size did not provide a large enough base to compare the media levels in that manner. Instead, media sources were compared against each other at a basic level. That being said, looking back, a null hypothesis of “no differences between media levels,” could have worked in this setting. In addition, while not so much a hypothesis as it was an assumption, it was also expected, prior to conducting the study, that the higher the levels of media, with their training, additional resources and expensive contracts, would be less likely to dehumanize participants. At least from the results from this sample, both of these “hypotheses” could have been rejected. And while statistical differences could not be produced, the data from assessing this research question still provided interesting takeaways.

Assessing Media Levels

There were two tables present within the results section for RQ 4; however, a new visual aid, Figure 5.1, was created to complement these assessments of the media levels. Figure 5.1 took a piece of Table 4. and magnified it. Presented here is a bar graph of each media with their corresponding number of instances of dehumanization.

Figure 5.1

Media Level and their Instances of Dehumanization



Seen here, as well as in the previous results section, the Local Media broadcast contained the most instances of dehumanization with 156. As a reminder, the mean for instances in an individual broadcast was 109.25. With only four numbers contributing to that mean, Local Media's variation to that figure is not overly alarming. However, its statistical relationship towards the other media sources was a bit more noteworthy. Local

Media's instances of dehumanization were 1.3x the amount of Major Media, 1.7x the amount of School/Town and 2.1x the amount of Sport Association. The Local Media broadcast had a considerable amount of dehumanizing language compared to the other media levels. That's not to say that others didn't, but when building examples for RQ 3, the first place to look was always the notes section from the Local Media broadcast. Not only did it have the most examples, but the instances tended to be right in line with the study's descriptors for the sub-categories of dehumanization.

Continuing Assessment with Table 4. & Table 4.

Jumping out of order, Table 4. had some interesting results. This table explored just how each of the media levels achieved their dehumanization totals across the 11 sub-categories. This table was great for identifying trends within the media levels. All of the media levels contained at least one category or sub-category in which they had the most instances, and all of the media levels except Local had one category or sub-category in which they had the fewest. School/Town had pretty low totals in just about everything other than emphasis on size, strength & physicality (21) and disregard for danger in play (30). Those two sub-categories combined for more than half of the 90 instances within their broadcast. Overall, the media level of School/Town's assessment was really surprising. As mentioned, it was assumed that the higher levels of media would be less likely to dehumanize participants. With volunteer commentators, it was kind of a mystery with what to expect. One potential reason for this outcome could have been broadcaster's relationships to players. Whereas the other media levels would have been unfamiliar with players, these volunteers could have had personal connections to the teams that

potentially affected word choice and thus, instances of dehumanization. Similarly, Sport Association had relatively low numbers across the table, tallying the fewest number of instances in five sub-categories and two categories. Sport Association also had the lowest number of total instances among the four media levels, but this came with the caveat of only having one commentator, a production feature that was unique to this broadcast. Continuing on, Local Media's distribution was on the higher end across all of the sub-categories and categories. The Local broadcast led media levels in four sub-categories and three out of four categories. In addition, the areas where Local Media accumulated a small number of instances were those with established low-frequency (superhuman, sub-human, body objectification) or were event dependent (playing through pain). This broadcast was also most guilty of idiom use/attempts at humor, which was referenced earlier in RQ 1, as one of the main sources of dehumanization within these broadcasts. Lastly, Major Media had a similar, albeit slightly lower, distribution to Local Media. The presumed least dehumanizing broadcast contained 122 instances of dehumanization and led all media levels in the sub-categories of animalistic and machine. They did however have the fewest number of instances in two sub-categories (superhuman and disregard for danger in play) and one category (Injury). Major Media had zero instances of superhuman dehumanization, which would have been a bigger deal had there been more than three instances total in the entire sample. The other areas where Major Media avoided using dehumanizing commentary, however, were noteworthy, and they actually might suggest that the assumption presented earlier wasn't entirely off base. Major Media had the fewest instances of dehumanization for the sub-category disregard for danger in

play with 20. As previously mentioned, this was the most prevalent type of dehumanization present within this study. They also had the fewest instances for the entire category of Injury with 20. While media level didn't seem to have an effect in any of the other categories, the experience, training and production value for Major Media seemed to make an impact in regard to Injury. These results could be tied to a growing concern for participants' well-being concerning CTE or other bodily trauma (Harrison, 2014; Lakhan & Kirchgessner, 2012). Major Media production teams could also be concerned within high school games due to a greater risk of concussion for younger participants (McDevitt, 2019). To provide some context for these results, compare Major Media's percentage of each category's total number of instances. Major Media contained at least 30% of all instances of dehumanization across the other three categories (NHA – 34.8%, NHM – 32.3%, Body – 30%); however, they only made up 16.9% of all instances within Injury. Within this category, they essentially cut their instances in half. While further research will be needed to validate these preliminary results, it really appeared like Major Media commentators were aware that safety concerns were paramount.

Getting back to Table 4., there were additional pieces worth discussing. As mentioned, Sport Association only had one commentator during the broadcast. This factor led to long stanzas and a reduced number of commentary groups. It also led to the creation of an unplanned statistic: percentage of dehumanizing commentary vs. number of commentary groups. The hope for this statistic was to reduce the effect of commentary group totals on the data, the effect of which can be seen in the statistic, percentage of commentary groups containing dehumanizing commentary. There, all four of the media

level percentages were so similar that it didn't seem representative of the results. Without this statistic, Table 4. could potentially paint the picture that the media levels weren't that different at all. As mentioned, Sport Association also happened to have the fewest instances of dehumanization. With this outcome, the question was raised: was the presence of a solo commentator the cause for fewer instances?

Play-By-Play vs. Color Commentator

Based on this sample's results, it would appear likely that only having one announcer within the Sport Association broadcast affected the counts of dehumanization. Being on their own meant that this commentator had to serve dual roles. As presented by Hansen (1999), sports broadcasting has two components: play-by-play and color commentary. These roles were split across the other media levels, with one person generally handling the majority of play-by-play, while the other did the color commentary. As a reminder, Hansen defined play-by-play as description of the action and color commentary as a narrative of the game, including both background information and analysis of play. This last aspect of the color commentator role was really important for this study. Within these analyses there was a lot a freedom for discourse and language. While not documented, it felt as if the color commentary was more frequently the source of dehumanizing language. It would actually make for interesting follow up to compare dehumanization between the play-by-play person and the color commentator. With all of that being said, by having to juggle two roles, the commentator for the Sport Association's broadcast may have had fewer opportunities to make analyzations during play. If this were the case, it could have affected the amount of dehumanization present.

Does Media Level Affect Dehumanization in High School Football Broadcasts?

This study was much too small to make any sort of assertions or claims, but even if this study were to be conducted on a larger scale it would be surprising if any sort of correlation between media level and dehumanization were to be found. While there could be some potential with Major Media and the category of Injury, for the most part it appeared that the results are more dependent on the personalities calling the game. It seems to matter more that there is a “jokester” present, than what media source said jokester works for. Again, a larger sample could potentially uncover a strong relationship between these variables but based on this preliminary investigation it would be surprising.

Conclusion

Dehumanizing language had presented itself in other, higher levels of American Football broadcasts (Oates, 2007; Haslerig et al., 2019). High school broadcasts contained a unique aspect in that children are the participants. Dehumanization had been shown to have negative effects on those who experienced it (Bastian & Haslam, 2011; Haslerig et al., 2019; Honneth, 1992; Rozin et al., 2000; Sapontzis, 1981). It has been argued that cultures strive to protect children, those with innocence and a need for protection, from harsh realities of the world (Goff et al., 2014; Haslam et al., 2000). This meant that if dehumanization were to be occurring in these broadcasts that society was failing to protect its children. With this in mind, this researcher set out to investigate the presence of dehumanization within these broadcasts. In addition, an independent variable

of media level was planned to be explored, as these games were broadcast by a number of different parties.

Building off of previous dehumanization research (Haslam, 2006; Haslerig et al., 2019; Loughnan et al., 2010; Waytz et al., 2015) four categories and 11 sub-categories of dehumanization were established to analyze high school broadcasts. With these in place, quantitative content analysis data collection procedures began. By analyzing broadcasts from the differing media levels (School/Town, Sport Association, Local Media & Major Media), it was hoped that the presence of dehumanizing language could be assessed, while at the same time comparing the media sources.

Dehumanization was found to be present in all broadcasts and across all media levels within the sample. All sub-categories and categories established within this study were found to be present. Counts and frequencies of dehumanization within the broadcasts were produced to emphasize themes and trends. These trends provided surprises, as outcomes for sub-categories did not match pre-data collection assumptions. Examples of dehumanization, such as referring to participants as “beast” or “freak,” gave way to instances of commentators reacting to a large collision with “ooh, that’s going to hurt tomorrow”.

In addition to consequences for participants, exposure to increased amounts of dehumanization for viewers was addressed. This process of desensitizing the viewer with certain language was shown to have negative effects on the viewer’s perception of participants (Frederick et al., 2013, Soral et al., 2018). As for the independent variable, media level, a small sample size curtailed any sort of correlation procedures or tests of

significance. While this limited the potential impacts of this study, it provided a preliminary comparison that identified trends amongst the media levels and paved the way for potential future research ideas.

The findings from this study also appear to support previous research by Haslerig et al (2019), as similar examples were found to be present within broadcasts. Some instances even used the exact same wording. Animal comparisons like “workhorse,” and “bell-cow,” were similarly represented in both studies, as well as, other types of dehumanization including, violent/aggressive player specific commentary, emphasis on size, strength & physicality and interchangeable language. Not all themes matched up between the Haslerig et al. study, as, based on their findings, it was assumed that body objectification, playing through pain and superhuman instances would be more prevalent. For example, the established sub-category superhuman, which only occurred three times within this entire sample, received a significant amount of attention within the Haslerig paper. This is not to say that instances of superhuman dehumanization are not occurring in football broadcasts, however it does represent different findings from the two studies.

Application of Findings

General Application for Research

With previous research looking at dehumanization in broadcasting from a qualitative standpoint, this study’s quantitative method should provide added support to the ongoing research of this topic. Quantitative procedures, when done correctly, have the ability to study large groups and make inferences about the larger population (Holton &

Burnett, 2005). While limited by the size of the sample (four games), the quantitative data collection procedures from this study have the ability to be replicated on a larger scale to hopefully better understand the presence of dehumanization in athletic broadcasts.

Youth Participants & Viewers

Youth participants are most likely not the predominant viewers of their broadcasts. There is a very good chance they've never experienced the dehumanization that is presented here. In fact, it might even be worth researching how the athletes themselves feel about the dehumanizing commentary, as it could be really interesting to see their reactions to being dehumanized. With that being said, the desire to protect these youth participants would most likely still be a goal for those associated (Goff et al., 2014). For viewers of these broadcasts, awareness is key. Understanding that dehumanization is occurring and that it has effects for those targeted should be important to viewers (Bastian & Haslam, 2011). More importantly, however, is that their own perception of the participants can be affected through exposure to dehumanization (Soral et al., 2018). Hopefully, this research study can alert a least a couple of viewers to this process.

Implications for NHSF, NCAA, & Commentators

This study is just a small piece in what will hopefully bring change to the way broadcasts are conducted. While dehumanization has been shown to be present, a lot of the examples within this sample are still going to be seen as complimentary. There is still need for further research into this phenomenon to determine what is and isn't acceptable

language towards participants in a broadcast. Those that make these decisions, organizations and companies, such as the National High School Federation, the National Collegiate Athletic Association and media outlets will need to understand that there is a spectrum of dehumanization. There are the overt examples such as “beast” and “freak,” which most viewers would pick up on, but there are also other, more subtle examples that require education into why certain language is dehumanizing and potentially unacceptable within broadcasts. Further research could help to legitimize this data and give these organizations and media groups something to think about during these productions. Likewise, the more awareness for broadcasters the better. It is doubtful these individuals are intentionally using language that dehumanizes participants and it would be interesting to see how they might change their word choice in accordance with these, and potential future, findings.

Preliminary Recommendations for Broadcasts

While being able to truly determine acceptable language will most likely require further research, there are some preliminary suggestions that can be produced from this research. General guidelines for broadcasted language should include focusing on the participant first. This should help limit dehumanization, as a denial of humanness will be less likely to occur. Similarly, highlighting the humanness characteristics that Haslam outlined, such as rationality, logic, maturity, agency and depth when speaking about participants could serve as replacement material for dehumanizing language (2006). With these new practices in mind, examples of dehumanization from the sample can be reworked with new, humanizing, language.

Based on the results from this sample, the areas where dehumanization is being overlooked the most are in the sub-categories of disregard for danger in play and emphasis on size strength & physicality. These two sub-categories combined for 36.6% (160/437) of all instances of dehumanization within this sample, and concentrating on these sources would go a long way in reducing the amount of dehumanization taking place in broadcasts. In terms of the sub-category of disregard for danger in play, it really comes down to respecting the dangers of the game for participants. Regarding examples from this sub-category of dehumanization, replacement would build on the idea that there are dangers in the game. This could include showing concern for participants, as well as alluding to what physical play could mean in terms of rehabilitation. Take for example the statement, “ooh that’s going to hurt tomorrow”, as mentioned, this is an example of dehumanization, as it overlooks potential dangers for participants. In replacement, the goal would be to focus on the player, the danger and potential outcomes. Alternatives to this could include alluding to the dangers, as in “what a massive collision, hopefully the trainers check the players out after that one,” but really the possibilities are endless, as long as dangers to participants are respected.

Similarly, concerning examples that emphasis size strength and physicality, the key would be focusing on the participant’s agency in regard to these attributes. While being large isn’t completely within their control, utilizing their size and being a strong and physical player is. Instead of saying “he’s too big,” or “he’s too strong,” commentators could give credit to the time and effort of the participants. Examples of this could include “he’s clearly been putting in more time in the weight room,” or “that

physical play is a testament to his hard work in the offseason”. Again, the possibilities are limitless when the content is framed as humanizing rather than dehumanizing, and this process can be applied to all of the sub-categories within this study. While dehumanization will never be entirely removed, there is always room for improvement in the way language is used in regard to others, and hopefully this study can provide some insight for future broadcasts.

Study Limitations

Sample Size

First and foremost, this study was limited by the size of the sample. This was an initial assessment of this phenomenon and not an experiment, but the small sample size limited what can be said from the results. In order to be able to draw conclusions about the population (American high school football broadcasts) the sample would have needed to be much larger. There were 261 broadcasts available just for the state of Ohio. This means that around 1.5% of the Ohio population was represented in this study. With Ohio having a large number of broadcasted games, it is safe to say that if all states were included that the number of broadcasts would reach well into the thousands. The sample size was too small to draw conclusions about Ohio and much too small to start looking at the entire population as a whole. This wasn't the only area where the sample size affected the outcome of the study. Simply having four games, one from each media level, did not allow this research to conduct a means comparison to test for statistical differences across the independent variable of media level. While the results show that there are differences

between the four levels, a means test could have really shown just how different they were from each other.

The process of taking game commentary and turning it into a complete transcript was time-consuming, especially for a single researcher. Although they poke holes in the legitimacy of this study, all of the limitations presented create strong jumping off points for future research. A larger sample size, one that captured more of the population, wasn't possible in this study, but that doesn't mean it won't be possible for a future research team with greater resources.

Source Limitations

Another limitation to this study was that the Sport Association broadcast only contained one announcer. As previously mentioned, this was the format for all of the broadcasts from regular season contests on OHSSA. All of the other media levels contained two commentators, set up with one play-by-play person and one color-commentator. The Sport Association broadcaster blended these roles as needed throughout their telecast. This led to longer commentary groups, which also meant there were fewer. This was due to the fact that there was no one else present to interject or interrupt lines of commentary, which was one of the main indicators that a new commentary group had started. When establishing commentary groups within the Sport Association broadcast, it was really important to pay attention to changes of subject, as this was the chief indicator between commentary groups.

The decreased number of commentary groups had an effect on the results, as Sport Association had the fewest number of groups containing dehumanizing language

by a sizable margin (14 fewer than any other media level). It was also due to this limitation that the instances of dehumanizing commentary vs. commentary groups (both # and %) had to be presented in Table 4.. It was necessary to take into account the fact that Sport Association had fewer commentary groups but still had a substantial amount of dehumanizing language compared to the other media levels.

Ideally, all of the broadcasts would have contained two broadcasters and around the same number of commentary groups, but this was not achieved in this study. It is worth noting that playoff games from OHSSA contained two commentators. However, a playoff game, with added energy and emotion from commentators, was deemed to be potentially more different than regular season broadcasts with only one commentator.

Sub-Categories and Subjectivity

Basing the sub-categories on previous research seemed like an objective base with which to form the study. However, it was found that these sub-categories only seemed objective to those who had studied dehumanization. During the intercoder test of reliability, where outsiders to the research assisted, it became clear that the sub-categories left a bit more to be interpreted than first perceived. What seemed to be so clearly dehumanization based on Haslam (2006), Haslerig et al, (2019), Loughnan et al, (2010) and others, took some explaining/convincing for research assistants to make these same connections. While everyone eventually got on the same page and reliability was found, it presented a substantial limitation to the study. What's presented here are not the sub-categories of dehumanization, they are the sub-categories of dehumanization for this specific research. The research assistants came in with their own feelings and opinions

towards football and dehumanization and it wasn't until they looked at this relationship through the specific view of this research that they were able to make the same associations. There is a definite specificity to the methods and procedures of this study and because of this necessary outside perspective this limitation was discovered. Fortunately, these perspectives helped to produce a future research idea.

Future Research

Fan Scale and Dehumanization

Continuing with the idea people have their own relationship towards football, there is the potential to assess dehumanization in relation to different levels of fandom. The research assistants that took part in this study included a casual fan, who would watch their alma mater and the Super Bowl, and an anti-football fan, who saw the game as violent and did not watch any football. By establishing a fan scale, perhaps five or six different levels ranging from anti-football to super fanatic, dehumanization could be analyzed from each of these different perspectives. One potential idea would subject randomly selected participants to experience samples of broadcasts containing either no dehumanization, some dehumanization or a lot of dehumanization. Afterwards, participants would answer a brief survey asking them different questions about the video, including level of enjoyment, how they would categorize their relationship towards football and potentially a question where they assess the language used in the video. This research would hopefully uncover some information regarding desensitization, as super fans would have had more exposure than casual or anti-football fans, as well as providing

an initial look at the likability of dehumanizing broadcasts. This would be an experiment, rather than an assessment, and it has the potential to produce some really interesting data.

Monsters and Machines 2.0

With the limitations of this study identified, the most logical future research would expand upon the methods conducted here by increasing the number of games within the sample to get a better representation of the population. Increasing the sample size also increases confidence in generalizations from the study that apply to the population (Watt & van den Berg, 2002). It would be the same methods and the same variable (media level) but there would be a much bigger sample. The new sample would be not just big enough to generalize about Ohio, but also all high school football in America. With more resources available (additional researchers, time, money), the scope of dehumanization in broadcasts could be better understood. Depending on the results of such a study, and with this study's initial assessment in mind, it would be interesting to see how a larger sample with similar results might impact high school football broadcasts or football broadcasts in general.

Same Study, Different Variables

Media level is only one variable that could affect the presence of dehumanization in high school football broadcasts, but there are others out there that could be interesting and potentially produce statistically significant results.

Table 5.1 actually inspired this list, as announcer bias and competitiveness of game (blowout vs. close game) were included within that overview. Announcer bias would potentially compare presence of dehumanizing language between biased announcers and impartial announcers. The best way to do this would be to compare different broadcasts of the same game; however, multiple broadcasts are quite rare. Potentially with bigger games (playoffs, rivalry games, championships, etc.), multiple broadcasts would be produced and this would allow for analysis. An ideal scenario would include one broadcast from each team, as well as an impartial third party. Were this to happen, bias could be assessed against a control (impartial commentator), with the added element of a winning broadcast and a losing broadcast. It would be really interesting to see how the outcome of the game affects announcer language.

This would be so interesting in fact, that it deserves its own study. None of the games in this sample were particularly close and it really felt like this affected the commentary. This is especially true, as the only somewhat close game, the Local Media broadcast, contained the most dehumanization. During all of these broadcasts, however, commentators would seemingly get bored and discuss all sorts of random topics not associated with the game. Occasionally, this development would lead to instances of dehumanization, but for the most part these rambles were not focused on the players and were devoid of any real content. In addition, during these low-action points was the time where broadcasts would switch from the commentators to an on-field reporter who spoke to the principal, band director or star player's mom. These led to large stretches of commentary groups that didn't contain dehumanization. It begged the question, if the

game were close, would they have cut to the band director? There would be a simple setup for this study, assess an equal number of close games and blowouts and compare the dehumanization present.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

Sample of Transcript Layout: Logan at Chillicothe (Local Media)

[01:11:47] They picked up seven, first and ten. Snowden and Duncan to the top, Scales is going to join them. Benson looking, going long downfield, throwing it up in the pass is caught. **(1) * Commentary Group**

[01:12:00] What a catch. Inside the 10-yard line. Count it. As it's snared on the play by the guy that is the homecoming king in Cortland Duncan. **(2)**

[01:12:09] By the way, the queen is Caitlin Mauger. But all hail the king, Cortland, just a sophomore football player. And watch him high point this ball. He's able to go up, get his hands on it. And a terrific job by the sophomore, 6'3, 200 pounds. **(3)**

[01:12:27] There showing him as a senior, I thought I read sophomore, nope #10, excuse me senior, I had him in the sophomore class. **(4)**

[01:12:34] Gain of 28. First and goal from the 8-yard line. Benson, on the delay 10, 5, 2, 1, Touchdown. The Cavs are on the board. No flags this time. It's now 12-6 with 6:35 left to go in the third. **(5)**

[01:12:51] And what did we say about Logan playing fourth quarters too? Right, now you got another Reynolds Roofing touchdown (Sponsor). **(6)**

[01:12:57] Did they bus in another group of offensive players, Randy? This isn't even close to the offense that we saw in the first half of play and again Chillicothe came out with a vengeance and got the ball into the end zone twice. One called back. That one's going to count for sure, and they're going to go for the extra point to make it a five-point game. **(7)**

[01:13:16] A battle of soccer kickers. **(8)**

[01:13:18] Here is Jacob Coughlin. Benson holds the snap, the kick it is up. Count it. We've got a ball game, 6:35 left to go. 12-7. Logan leads but Chillicothe is coming back. And you are watching week number five of Honda's Thursday Night Lights presented by Columbus State Community College right here on the C W Columbus. **(9)**

[01:13:48] It's time again for the Aspen Dental Smile cam, Aspen Dental has offices in Lancaster, Pickerington and several other central high locations, Schedule a new patient appointment at Aspen Dental dot com, Aspen Dental simply easier. Thank you to Aspen Dental for their support. **(10)**

Appendix B

Codebook for Data Collection

Codebook: Dehumanization in High School Football Broadcasts

Preliminary Steps: **Just for Adam**

Gather Materials: Individual game transcript, Excel spreadsheet for logging data, listening device (preferably a computer)

Game Notes: Prior to viewing, note complete length of broadcast, date of game, location of game, teams participating

Identify Media Level (Game Source)

- 1 = Major Media
 - 2 = Local Media
 - 3 = Sport Association
 - 4 = School/Town
-

Dehumanization is the denial of full humanness to others. This presents itself in the setting of high school football broadcasts in 4 categorical forms: Non-Human Animalistic, Non-Human Mechanistic, Body and Injury.

Categories of Dehumanization

Non-Human Animalistic: This type of dehumanization involves the removal of human qualities. This takes the form of animal comparisons, sub-human comparisons like “beast” and “freak”, super-human comparisons like “super-hero” “super-speed” as well as player specific violent/aggressive commentary i.e., “he’s a violent runner” and “he’s playing angry”.

Non-Human Mechanistic: This process denies human nature characteristics that comprise core humanness. Within this form, humans are removed of their properties that distinguish them from machines and automata. This type of dehumanization is presented in two forms: mechanistic comparisons, which could include robots, machines, cars, etc., and inanimate object comparisons, which would account for all non-machine inanimate object comparisons, e.g., “he’s running into a brick wall,” or “his knee hit someone in the coconut”.

Body: Commentary that dehumanizes participants with a focus on the body rather than the individual. Within in this category dehumanization is presented to the audience by objectification of the body including specific body parts, commentators placing an

emphasis on strength, physicality and physical size of participants as well as commentary portraying players as interchangeable, which can be seen in the form of commentary referring to players as “bodies” as in, “get fresh bodies in there”.

Injury: This form of dehumanization presents itself when commentators discuss/disregard danger of play and how they speak about players dealing with pain and injury. Examples of the sub-category danger of play include “oohs” or “he’s going to feel that tomorrow,” when violent plays occur. The second type, participants in pain/injured can be identified by examples such as “he personifies the toughness it takes to play this game” and “he cleared his concussion protocol, good to go”.

Unit of Analysis = Comment. This is defined as the narrative account employed by the broadcast commentator, **whether in a single sentence or in a series of sentences**, to evaluate the athletic performance of an athlete in an athletic event. The end of a comment is marked by a **change of subject or change of speaker**.

Directions for Game Analysis

- Once preliminary procedures have been conducted, and the game source has been identified, analysis can begin.
- Read the transcript and analyze each comment group for dehumanizing language. These are designated by the **bold** next to each individual comment.
- If you feel context is necessary for certain sections, the game’s broadcast can be played. The corresponding time in the broadcast can be found before each comment group *I found it was hard to analyze and listen at the same time, but some sections may require context for dehumanization identification.
- When dehumanization takes place, stop analysis and follow the steps listed below to fill out the accompanying spreadsheet.
- Once completed continue analysis and repeat process as needed.

Step 1. Comment Group (Commentary Group)

With each instance of dehumanization identify the comment group in which it takes place. This is the **bold number** that follows each grouping.

Step 2. *Multiple Select: Dehumanization Sub-Category Identification

Here you will identify all sub-categories of dehumanization that take place within a comment group. Mark “**1**” for yes/present and “**0**” for no/not-present. Some comment groups will have multiple instances of dehumanization present.

Non-Human Animalistic (Sub-Categories 1-4)

Animalistic (any comparison of participants to an animal(s))

Coded: *Animalistic*

1 = Yes

0 = No

Sub-Human (references to players as freaks, beast, monster, insects)

Coded: *Sub-human*

1 = Yes

0 = No

Super-Human (super speed, Superman, can move mountains)

Coded: *Super Human*

1 = Yes

0 = No

Violent/Aggressive Commentary (player specific: violent runner, “he’s a bad man”)

Coded: *Violent/Aggressive*

1 = Yes

0 = No

Non-Human Mechanistic (Sub-Categories 5 & 6)

Machines coded: Machines (participant references to robots, cars, or anything else mechanical)

Coded: *Machines*

1 = Yes

0 = No

Inanimate Objects (player comparisons to other to non-living, non-machine objects “coconut”)

Coded: *Inanimate Object*

1 = Yes

0 = No

Body (Sub-Categories 7-9)

Body Objectification (commentary on players bodies and body parts)

Coded: *Body Objectification*

1 = Yes

0 = No

Emphasis on Strength, Size & Physicality (e.g., “big man” “he’s manhandling them”)

Coded: *Emphasis SSP*

1 = Yes

0 = No

Interchangeable (language that denies individuality: “get fresh bodies in there”)

Coded: *Interchangeable*

1 = Yes

0 = No

Injury (Sub-Categories 10 & 11)

Disregard for Danger in Play (commentary such as “That’s going to hurt tomorrow”)

Coded: *Disregard for Danger*

1 = Yes

0 = No

Playing through Pain (broadcasters lauding/condemning participants pain/injury)

Coded: *Injury Pain*

1 = Yes

0 = No

Example for Coding

You see something that appears to be dehumanization.

[01:12:27] The big man plows his way up the gut. He is dragging bodies down the field. It looks like his knee hit someone in the coconut. (7)

Follow the steps and enter data into workbook

Step 1. Commentary group – 7

Step 2. Identify sub-categories of dehumanization present

Animalistic – 0

Subhuman – 0

Superhuman – 0

Violent/Aggressive Commentary – **1 (“plows his way”)**

Machines – 0

Inanimate Object – **1 (use of coconut rather than head)**

Body Objectification – 0

Emphasis on Size/Strength/Physicality – **1 (“big man”)**

Interchangeable – **1 (“dragging bodies”, the use of bodies rather than using a word like “players”)**

Disregard for Danger in play – **1 (“dragging bodies”; disregarding a knee to the head as dangerous)**

Playing through pain – 0

Step 3. Special (Notes)

Brief description of language used as a reminder to researcher. Especially important for overt examples for the discussion section.

Once completed, continue analysis of transcript and repeat process as necessary.

Appendix C

Sample of Data Collection Workbook

Dehumanization High School Football Broadcasts					
GAME SOURCE - SCHOOL/TOWN					
		1 = Yes/Present	0 = No/Not Present		
	Commentary Group	Animalistic	Sub Human	Super Human	Violent or Aggressive
ex.	23	0	0	0	1
1	37	0	0	0	0
2	52	0	0	1	0
3	54	0	0	0	0
4	68	0	1	0	0
5	70	0	0	0	0
6	81	0	0	0	1
7	82	0	0	0	0
8	86	0	0	0	0
9	92	0	0	0	0
10	105	0	0	0	0
11	108	0	0	0	1
12	109	0	0	0	0
13	118	0	0	0	1
14	x	0	0	0	0
15	134	0	0	0	1
16	136	0	0	0	1
17	137	0	0	0	0
18	138	0	0	0	0
19	139	0	0	0	0
20	163	0	0	0	0

Machines	Inanimate Object	Body Objectification	Emphasis on Size/Strength/Physicality	Interchangeable Language
0	1	0	1	1
0	0	0	1	0
0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	1	0
0	0	0	0	0
1	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	1
0	0	0	1	0
0	0	0	2	0
0	0	0	1	0
1	1	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	1
0	0	0	1	1
1	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	1	0

Disregard for Danger in Play	Playing Through Pain	Total Each Comment	Special
1	0	5	*
0	0	1	goodness grief, size refernece
0	0	1	blasts by defenders
0	0	1	referred to someone as small
0	0	1	did the grunt work
0	0	1	steps on the gas
1	0	3	he breaks the defender
0	0	1	small but quick
0	0	2	big and strong
0	0	1	really strong
1	0	3	Bang, it was a brick wall
1	0	3	he breaks the defender
0	0	2	another really short quick guy
0	0	2	he blew that play up
0	0	0	NA
1	0	2	driving into defenders
1	0	2	drives into defenders
1	0	1	that was quite the collision
1	0	1	Pow
1	0	1	Boom
0	0	1	He's got a little bit of height

Appendix D

Major Media Game Selection

	Random # Generation (random.org)	MAJOR MEDIA
1	55	Lee vs. Liberty MO ESPN
2	43	Liberty vs. St. Joes's MO ESPN
3	42	Mandarin vs. Sandalwood FL ESPN
4	14	Parkview vs. Madison LA ESPN
5	15	Staley vs. St. Joes MO ESPN
6	30	Raytown vs. Kearney MO ESPN
7	54	Parkhill vs. Liberty MO ESPN
8	9	Archbishop Moeller vs. St. Edward OH ESPN
9	35	Mission Viejo vs. Santa Margarita CA FOX
10	48	Oaks Christian vs. Chaminade
11	6	Downey vs. Corona
12	39	Sierra Canyon at Westlake
13	34	Rancho Cucamonga vs. Roosevelt
14	10	Centennial vs. Mater Dei
15	21	Paraclete vs. Chaminade
16	49	Grace Bretheren vs. Oaks Christian
17	47	Capistrano Valley vs. San Juan Hills
18	25	Serra vs. Calabassas
19	32	Bishop Amat vs. J Serra
20	45	Notre Dame vs. Moorepark
21	33	Rancho Cucamonga vs. Norco
22	4	Long Beach Poly vs. Serra
23	11	Oaks Christian vs. Alemany
24	3	Orange Lutheran vs. Vista Murrieta
25	41	Centennial vs. Long Beach Poly
26	50	St. Mary's vs. Mission Viejo
27	56	Santa Barbara vs. Pacifica
28	1	Calabassas vs. J Serra
29	28	Servite vs. Notre Dame (Sherman Oaks)
30	31	Serra vs. Cathedral

31	18	Narbonne vs. Lawndale
32	12	Valencia vs. Calabasas
33	37	Upland vs. Mission Viejo
34	36	St. John Bosco vs. Servite
35	7	Bishop Amat vs. Alemany
36	27	Bishop Diego vs. Grace Brethren
37	46	Muir vs. Burroughs (Burbank)
38	53	Tesoro vs. San Clemente
39	20	Notre Dame (Sherman Oaks) vs. Serra
40	5	St. John Bosco vs. J Serra
41	19	Oak Hills vs. Burroughs (Ridgecrest)
42	26	Servite vs. Mater Dei
43	58	Lawndale vs. Culver City
44	57	St. Francis vs. Crespi
45	23	Newbury Park vs. Calabasas
46	2	Bishop Amat vs. Serra (Gardena)
47	40	Kaiser vs. Summit
48	24	Norco vs. Centennial
49	13	Sierra Canyon vs. Grace Brethren
50	8	Corona Del Mar vs. Newport Harbour
51	52	San Clemente vs. Mission Viejo
52	22	Calabasas vs. Oaks Christian
53	29	Mater Dei vs. St. John Bosco
54	44	Los Alamitos at Corona Del Mar
55	17	J Serra at Mater Dei
56	38	Rancho Cucamonga vs. Upland
57	51	Cathedral vs. St. Francis
58	16	Grace Bretheren vs. Camarillo

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