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SPORT AND INTERGROUP COMMUNICATION

Fans, Rivalries, Communities, and Nations

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Serious sport is war minus the shooting

—George Orwell, 2000

Our starting point is in 1945 with George Orwell's aphorism and the highly contested nature of the response to it during the past seven decades. He argues:

I am always amazed when I hear people saying that sport creates goodwill between the nations, and that if only the common peoples of the world could meet one another at football or cricket, they would have no inclination to meet on the battlefield. Even if one didn't know from concrete examples (the 1936 Olympic Games, for instance) that international sporting contests lead to orgies of hatred, one could deduce it from general principles . . . Serious sport has nothing to do with fair play. It is bound up with hatred, jealousy, boastfulness, disregard of all rules and sadistic pleasure in witnessing violence: in other words it is war minus the shooting.

(Orwell, 2000, pp. 41–42)

Studies have shown that war analogies (e.g., coaches addressing their 'troops') are frequently invoked when describing sport coverage (e.g., Rowe, 2004); militarism linked to nationalism can be a feature of mega-sport events (Butterworth, 2014). But, beyond the invoking of war metaphors, it is important to also note that while Orwell only focused on how sport divides on an intergroup basis, others have also noted that sport may serve both to bridge as well as reinforce intergroup divides by breaking down stereotypes, increasing understanding, and confining battles to the playing fields rather than the battlefield (Goldberg, 2000, p. 63).

Indeed, it is difficult to watch sport and read media reports without failing to note the integral intergroup dynamics attending them. Historically, this was evident with the Berlin Olympics in 1936 being embroiled with anti-Semitic tactics by the German authorities wishing to establish Aryan superiority, through to Communist regimes (e.g., East Germany) aiming to highlight the virtues of their political system, to the many national embargos of the Olympics over decades, and to the role of Black athletes in the Civil Rights Movement. In parallel, we have clashes between players of rival teams (e.g., at hockey games, Goldschmied & Espindola, 2013), the use of ethnic slurs on the pitch in European soccer (Dunning, Murphy, Waddington, & Astrinak, 2002), the frequently-reported under-representations of ethnic minorities and women in coaching and managerial positions (Cunningham & Sagas, 2005), as well as the antics of Dennis Rodman in his appeal to so-called basketball diplomacy (Jackson, 2013).

A plethora of other instances exist across sport, including class elitism in private golf clubs and the 'coming out' of gay players in major American sports (e.g., soccer player Robbie Rogers and football player Michael Sam in 2013 and 2014, respectively). The Palio horse races in Siena (since 1665) are a classic example of different neighborhoods (*Contrada*) involved in intense competition, with the winning community celebrating for a week or more after. As many nations have their own distinctive foods, different cultures also have their own unique sports (e.g., Buzkashi in Afghanistan and Seprak Takraw in Indonesia). Some have had a major role in religious practices such as *Ullamalizli* stemming from the Mayans and still played in parts of Mexico; some even having their own World Cups (e.g., *Pesäpall* from Finland) and imperial powers such as Great Britain have introduced (or imposed) their national sports (e.g., cricket) into the cultural life of conquered nations.

The emerging group identity issue is encapsulated in Norman Tebbit's famous 'cricket test,' which derived from a question in an interview in the *Los Angeles Times*: "A large proportion of Britain's Asian population fail to pass the cricket test. Which side do they cheer for? It's an interesting test. Are you still harking back to where you came from or where you are?" (Rowe, 2012, p. 24). James (1963), in the context of his majestic memoir, *Beyond a Boundary*, noted the power of sport, and particularly cricket, to challenge all boundaries, but particularly the intergroup boundaries of race and class. More recently, O'Neill's (2008) novel, *Netherland*, celebrated how cricket provided grounding and hope to multiple groups of immigrants in post-9/11 America, incorporating cricket into the American Dream. Then there is Jacques Barzun's quote (inscribed in the Baseball Hall of Fame): "Whoever wants to know the heart and mind of America had better learn baseball" (Barzun, 1954, p. 159). No sport is seemingly immune from diverse intergroup conundrums and, beyond that, the Oscars in Hollywood and American political elections have been construed in terms of races, together with the social implications such sport metaphors invite (Lipsky, 1979).

In short, we live in a globalized, sport-saturated world (see Whannel, 2013) and when nationally-prized sports come into disrepute, an entire culture can come into question. Thus, the case of many Japanese Sumo wrestlers being publicly accused of cheating and, again, when *jukodas* (female national judo team) complained that their coach subjected them to humiliating verbal as well as physical abuse. We also note the discussions of national ‘disaster’ when national teams do poorly. A sense of national despair is often communicated by sport journalists after the USA’s loss in basketball to the Soviet Union in 1972 or, more recently, following Brazil’s thrashing at the hands of Germany in the 2014 World Cup. Victory brings the opposite emotions and celebrations as when, following the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968, the Czechs defeated the Soviets in the 1969 World Hockey championships (see acts of ‘BIRGing’ and ‘CORFing’ below). In the aftermath, “People were shouting, ‘[4]-3’ everywhere. What it meant was: ‘To hell with the Russians!’ You had to know it. It wasn’t a sports demonstration; it was a demonstration of national pride by over one hundred thousand people, and it went on for hours” (Skoug, 2012).

In communication and sport texts (e.g., Billings, Butterworth, & Turman, 2014) and journal issues (e.g., the inaugural special issue of *Communication and Sport* in 2013), different social groups such as gender and ethnicity are typically addressed in isolation. That said, there is a small array of treatises, notably Haridakis (2010, 2012), which have attempted to explore intergroup communication dynamics across various sports (see also Bryant & Cummins, 2010; and essays in Hugenberg, Haridakis, & Earnhardt, 2008). The major theoretical framework within these works has been social identity theory (SIT: e.g., Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

While there are many intergroup relationships inherent in sport, such as athletes–coaches, athletes–management, player rivalries, (see Kassing & Anderson, 2014), in this chapter we invoke the influential theoretical frame of SIT to focus mostly on fan rivalry. However, it is useful to consider the differences among spectators, fans, and supporters detailed by Giulianotti (2002). Spectators are simply consumers of the sport product; fans have a much stronger identification with the club but a relationship that is unidimensional. Supporters, on the other hand, not only see themselves as ‘members’ of the club, but also believe they have a reciprocal relationship (or parasocial interactions) with it. While personal circumstances and characteristics play an important role, fandom is fundamentally both a group as well as an intergroup phenomenon. Hence, to understand the interaction of relevant processes through the lens of the social psychology of intergroup relations and intergroup communication, we organize our discussion under two categories: social identification and the subsequent communication of that social identity. We conclude with some intergroup communication principles relating to sport as well as some empirical propositions.

Social Identification

SIT is a social cognitive theory of group processes, intergroup relations, and collective self-conception (e.g., Hogg, 2006; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). It defines groups cognitively as collections of individuals who share a common evaluative self-definition—a shared social identity. There is an emphasis on both the cognitive process of identifying with a group and on the various corollaries of belonging to a group. Having a specific social identity (such as practicing being a team fan) not only defines the self-concept, but also locates someone relative to other relevant people and other groups in society. A key concept characterizing fandom is loyalty—being more of a so-called ‘die-hard’ than a ‘fair weather’ fan (Wann & Branscombe, 1990). When fans become strongly identified with their team, many are willing to remain members even under conditions of high personal cost (e.g., big losses and league demotions), forgoing attractive alternatives for allying with another team. Even further, when the level of identification is high, the self may be gone and group identity can dominate who they are, illustrated by Steelers’ fans swaddling their babies in fan towels at birth, while others at the end of life feature coffins clothed in team colors (Van Vugt & Hart, 2004). An extreme example of how this group identity can dominate is found in Nick Hornby’s (1992) memoir *Fever Pitch*. Hornby transcribes his life and memory in terms of events, transitions, and achievements in connection to games and seasons of Arsenal Football Club. That the film was then also adapted for the United States by substituting the Boston Red Sox for Arsenal and still had the same identity dynamics, tellingly and vividly illustrates the power of the sport-identity phenomenon.

Some basic demographic and geographic identities are also fostered and reinforced by sport teams. In sport, teams are generally understood to have a fan base based on geographic location, which is most frequently associated with the city in which the team is based, but in cities with multiple teams the location of the stadium may also be an important factor. In Chicago, Cubs fans live on the North Side and White Sox fans live on the South Side. In other parts of the United States, baseball identification for many years was based not only on geographic location but also on radio coverage (Walker, 2015). Before the New York Giants and Brooklyn Dodgers moved to the West Coast for the 1958 season, much of the U.S. population west of the Mississippi rooted for the St. Louis Cardinals, whose broadcasts covered the west and southwest of the United States. In the American northeast, New England is split between Red Sox and Yankees fans following an old pattern of regional radio and subsequent television links to Boston and New York (Walker, 2015).

The cognitive process of social categorization causes people to define themselves and others as members of social groups as well as to perceive themselves and others in group prototypical terms. Group prototypes tend not only to

capture intragroup or within-group similarities, but also accentuate intergroup or between-group differences on relevant dimensions so as to mold their social identities distinctively (see Bernache-Assollant, Lacassagne, & Braddock, 2007). Together, these constructs and processes form the basis for one central assumption of SIT: obtaining and maintaining a favorable and well-defined social identity motivates behavior, as it does in emotionally protecting fans when their team is defeated (Lalonde, 1992) and/or their image tarnished (Hundley & Billings, 2010). The goal of both individuals and the collective (such as a sport team) is to strive for an evaluatively-positive distinctiveness, oftentimes manifest in terms of linguistic and/or communication differentiation (e.g., Giles, 1978) as discussed in the next section. Relatedly, Becker, Tausch, and Wagner (2011) found that participating in collective action brought self-directed positive affect while creating out-group-directed anger and contempt. In other words, doing something on behalf of, and communicating forcibly and visibly about, one's group helps people feel better about themselves *as individuals*.

Teams may also represent and reinforce existing social identities that casual spectators perceive as independent of them. In Glasgow, two football teams are also associated with particular religions. Glasgow Celtic is aligned with Catholics, and Glasgow Rangers are aligned with the Protestant Unionists. Foer (2004) notes that in the period from 1996 to 2003, eight deaths and hundreds of assaults in Glasgow were directly linked to the matches between them. Intergroup social comparison describes how groups and their members compare themselves on group prototypical dimensions to make the in-group seem not only distinctive from—but also evaluatively superior to—a relevant out-group. Rival sport fans (as well as players) aspire to enhance or reinforce their status in comparison with other teams in an arbitrarily-set system. They compete for a higher number of game attendees and seek resources such as bragging rights, number of members in a fan club, the size of waiting lists for season ticket holders, the quality and capacity of their stadium, market share, and profits.

Because people maintain multiple identities even beyond sport, the social identity that is significant is contingent upon circumstances the individual is experiencing, or how accessible that identity is in the individual's mind (Hogg, 2006). For those living in communities where teams and their fans are prevalent, involved, and socially available, the salience of sport may be especially high. From an SIT perspective, why at-risk youth become intense fans can be explained as a motivated response to two conditions: having an unfavorable identity such as lacking a shared family structure, or feeling uncertain about their identity as well as feeling anxious and marginalized (Hogg, 2014). Hence, strongly affiliating with a team can offer the sense of belongingness that family, school, and community may not always provide: a peer group of which they can be a part, a clear personal and social identity, increased autonomy from parents or guardians, a "path to manhood" if male (Messner, 2013), and the means by which to improve their social status (cf. Hogg, Siegel, & Hohman, 2011).

After all, many nations celebrate sport and its celebrities in old and new media (Billings & Hardin, 2015); hence, constructing a meaningful and validated identity by becoming a fan is deemed societally acceptable.

More specifically, turning to fandom reduces uncertainty by providing a better conception of one's social world along with a script for how one should behave and communicate (Hogg, Meehan, & Farquharson, 2010). In this way, individuals have to learn and be socialized into the norms, beliefs, values, and ways of behaving and communicating that are shared by other members of the group (Guimond, 2000). The more uncertain one is about their self-identity, the greater the probability that one will seek a group that is high in entitativity, where entitativity is that property of a group that makes it appear to have clear boundaries, internal homogeneity, tight social interaction, clear internal structure, common goals, and common fate (Campbell, 1958). Being a sport fan is a compelling example of highly entitative groups, especially fan groups with appealing organizational structures and their own media (e.g., fanzines or sport fans' magazines) that provide a distinctive and clearly defined social identity. Fanzines for British football clubs are the most well-known, but fans of the Chicago Black Hawks and St. Louis Blues hockey teams and the Boston Red Sox baseball team have also produced them (see, e.g., <http://yawkeywayreport.com/>). While entitativity refers to the structure of a group rather than the group's behaviors, the process of self-categorization reducing uncertainty through group identification with high entitativity groups readily accounts for much of the group's behavior. Self-categorization depersonalizes self-conception and self-conformity; it assigns group normative attributes—including communicative behaviors—to self and, thus, causes people to behave in line with the group's norms (e.g., Hogg & Giles, 2012; Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987).

If the group's norms prescribe antisocial and aggressive behaviors, as is evident among certain fans and even players (e.g., hockey), this process of self-categorization-based depersonalization can cause people to behave riskily, antisocially and aggressively (Reicher, Spears, & Postmes, 1995; regarding so-called 'soccer hooligans', see Frosdick & Marsh, 2005). Aggression can be one way to communicate team identity to other rivals and their communities, as acting violently can send the message that fans are capable of doing anything and best left alone, enhancing their reputation and status and commanding respect from in-group peers. Figuratively, Papachristos (2009) compared violence to a 'gift' demanding reciprocation if accepted, explaining that those who reciprocate violence would be able to maintain their reputation and honor. Yet as Haridakis (2010) stated, any "focus on negative issues should not detract from the positive ways in which the vast majority of sports fans and spectators use sports to connect with each other and use intergroup communication to satisfy their basic human needs for affiliation, belongingness, and self-esteem. . . . It is in good clean fun. More importantly, it is healthy" (pp. 259–260). Novelist Nick Hornby (1992) writes:

I have learned things from the game. Much of my knowledge of locations in Britain and Europe comes not from school, but from away games or the sports pages, and hooliganism has given me both a taste for sociology and a degree of fieldwork experience. I have learned the value of investing time and emotion in things I cannot control, and of belonging to a community whose aspirations I share completely and uncritically.

(p. 62)

Indeed, there are many, quite different, social functions for following a sport that make fandom alluring, and different typologies have been proposed for this (e.g., Bouchet, Bodet, Bernache-Assollant, & Kada, 2010).

As above, identity at the national level has also been fostered by sport. Duke and Crolley (1996, p. 4) have argued that an international football match perfectly illustrates the power of Anderson's (1991) notion of "imagined communities". Here, it is easy to confirm a national identity when eleven players are representing their country in a game against another country. They further argue that international football served to extend a sense of nationalism to the working class in the twentieth century. Czech hockey star Jaromir Jagr played on a number of National Hockey League teams yet always wore 68 as his number in honor of the 'Prague Spring' of 1968, reminding people of the invasion of Czechoslovakia by the Soviet Union (see Morreale, 2010).

Communicating Team Identity

We turn now, more specifically, to what intergroup messages are conveyed to fans, and how (across cultures and sports) they communicate their team identities to others. Clearly, one of the ways to exhibit an intergroup bias is the label for the very sport itself as indicated by the Lady Lakers or the Ladies Professional Golf Association (which functions to differentiate them from 'standard' men's teams), and also by the apparel athletes are encouraged/required to wear. In 2004, the president of the governing body of international soccer (FIFA) tried to persuade females to wear tighter shorts (Robinson & Clegg, 2015) and the Badminton World Federation decreed women must wear skirts or dresses to create a more "attractive presentation" (Longman, 2011). While these requests were reacted to with disdain, boxers from Poland and Romania donned skirts at the 2010 European Championships. In tandem, the name given to sport teams can be controversial. For example, Native Americans claim that referring to the Washington football team as the Redskins is grossly offensive. Similarly, Atlanta Braves fans performing the 'Tomahawk Chop' and cartoonish images conveyed by the Cleveland Indians can also be regarded as inflammatory; comparable controversy attends Coachella, a Californian high school's Arab mascot. Obviously, overt messages can be sent by the sight of male owners and coaches of women's teams to fans and spectators that can reinforce gender schemas.

The media also plays a major role in the proliferation of intergroup images. Stereotypes of age in the media were vividly portrayed by Atkinson and Herro's (2010) work on the tennis player, Andre Agassi, who was described as a "kid" at 24 but, four to five years later, as a member of the "geezer brigade", "ancient mariner", and "the wise ol gnome of tennis" at 29! Billings' (2008) analysis of Olympic TV coverage (1996–2006) found that male athletes receive the majority of airtime and female athletes were the target of twice as many comments about their physical appearance. Furthermore, male success was attributed to mental toughness and overcoming emotions, while a female counterpart's failure was attributed to succumbing to emotions (for notions of hypermasculinity and heteronormativity, see Bruce, 2013). Similarly, Hundley and Billings' (2010) media analysis of Tiger Woods' performances demonstrated that he was portrayed in similar ways to black athletes (e.g., lost concentration and lack of composure), but only when he was losing. Stone, Lynch, Sjomeling, and Darley (1999) demonstrated how these social stereotypes can have behavioral consequences to other situations beyond the immediacy of watching a game. They requested that black and white students attend a college basketball game and evaluate either black or white players afterwards. As predicted, white athletes were considered to have more basketball intelligence, while blacks were deemed more naturally athletic. Thereafter, these students asked to perform a completely separate golf task which was either framed as a test of 'sports intelligence' or 'natural ability'. So-called 'stereotype threat' emerged in that whites did worse under the latter condition—whereas blacks performed worse under the former.

A compelling team identity may be reinforced through: (a) the names fans adopt for themselves (e.g., 'Cheeseheads' for Green Bay Packers fans, and 'America's Team' for the Dallas Cowboys [reinforcing the intergroup divide]), (b) the clothes members wear (team tunics with players' names), (c) team colors and scarves (e.g., the Steelers' 'Terrible Towels'), (d) the in-group company at games and beyond they keep, (e) the attitudes expressed during a game (Cikara, Botvinick, & Fiske, 2011); and (f) the activities/rituals they participate in (e.g., singing and chanting team slogans), all of which tend to be exclusionary in nature (Serazio, 2013). Music provides particular ways of communicating an in-group identity (see Giles, Hadja, & Hamilton, 2009). Liverpool soccer claims the song "You'll never walk alone" by Gerry and the Pacemakers while all the NFL and MLB teams have adopted different songs to celebrate the club (Chamernik, 2015a, 2015b). For example, the New York Yankees play Frank Sinatra's recording of "New York, New York" after every game while the San Francisco Giants play Tony Bennet's recording of "I Left My Heart in San Francisco" when they win. The Boston Red Sox play Neil Diamond's "Sweet Caroline" during the eighth inning of every game (Browne, 2013). To accentuate identity-related pride, fans also adorn themselves with tattoos that identify their particular team, marking their 'turf' or territory (e.g., with banners indicating, for example, 'You're in Our House'). The language fans use with each

other can also convey in-group solidarity. For instance, Love and Walker (2013) found that, in an English pub, sport fans sounded more American (by adopting the postvocal /r/) when talking about National Football League teams than when they were engaged about English Premier League soccer teams.

There is a growing literature examining communicative differences between, and the kinds of messages delivered by, highly, as opposed to lowly, identified fans. Cialdini et al. (1976) introduced the term 'BIRGing' (basking in reflected glory) as exemplified in highly vested college students wearing more team paraphernalia after their team had won, talking more to other fans using the 'we' referent, and seeking out media highlights of the game than less vested fans (End, Dietz-Uhler, Harrick, & Jacquemotte, 2002). Victory, thereby, can foster self-esteem for vested fans which can be construed as a personal success, activating the pleasure center in the brain (Cikara et al., 2011). Other strategies identified as characteristic of the highly-vested include 'blasting' (i.e., hostile and derogating messages) out-group fans (e.g., "we may have lost, but we're way better than their fans") as well as losses being attributed to uncontrollable external factors, such as out-group cheating and bad or biased officiating (see Bernache-Assollant, Laurin, Bouchet, Bodet, & Lacassagne, 2010). Other messages that distinguish between highly- and lowly-identified fans (see Wann & Grieve, 2005) include the former: attending more games, expressing more pregame anxiety, having more of an emotional experience during the game, trying to destabilize the opposing team and their fans, engaging in more hostile out-group-directed acts, being more loyal to sponsors and purchasing more team-related products, and posting more internet messages after victory and accessing the team's web page more often.

Epilogue: Towards an intergroup communication theory of sport

Meân and Halone (2010) argued that "sport is essentially *unnatural*, given that it is organized, enacted, and reproduced through language and other communicative practices in ways that echo and maintain particular cultural forms and their ideological underpinnings" (p. 254). With Billings (2010), we can see that the mix of nationality, ethnicity, and politics, together with other intergroup settings, can be a potentially "dangerous communication cocktail" (p. 105).

In this regard on the opening night of the inaugural NBC TV show *Late Night starring Jimmy Fallon* (February 17, 2014), Jimmy Fallon mentioned in his monologue that Russia had lost an Olympic hockey game to Norway. The outcome? Rapturous applause! (See the notion of *schadenfreude*, Cikara et al., 2011.) Despite significant advances in the last forty years, many hegemonic gender biases in reporting, naming, and attributing success and failure in discourse also still persist.

But sport can also foster a healthy, balanced sense of personal esteem, oft-becoming an instrument of international cooperation, social activism, civil rights,

and social change, through a more enlightened positioning of nation, gender, race, age, and disability. This is illustratively manifest each April, when all major league ballplayers wear number 42 to both honor Jackie Robinson and reinforce the continuing struggle for civil rights. Sport may also signal the development of new national relationships as with the ‘ping pong diplomacy’ leading to the reestablishment of US-PRC relationships in 1971.

We have not, of course, detailed all of the intricacies of sport from an intergroup communication lens. Indeed, we have characterized ‘fans’ somewhat homogeneously, acknowledging that there can be many contrasting subgroups having their own distinctive identities and communicative practices. Bernache-Assollant et al. (2010) studied the Olympique de Marseille soccer team and its eight fan groups. The oldest and elitist—the Commando Ultra—comprised largely middle-class fans who differentiated themselves from immigrants. They had a well-equipped organizational infrastructure—even a corporate culture—and would promote their jackets, caps, etc., to anyone. Another group—the South Winner—was created by high school students and was younger, more working class (often from immigrant families), and was more cosmopolitan. In addition, they were more antiauthority, fiercely Marseillaise (sometimes refusing a French identification) and out-group confrontational at games. Their logos depicted the city harbor and cathedral, and were only sold to their own fans. At the other extreme are transnational supraorganizations: Red Star Belgrade has two friend clubs, namely Olympiacos (Greece) and Spartak Moscow (Russia), and the three are dubbed collectively the ‘Orthodox Brothers’. Intergroup theories, such as the common group identity model (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000), could have explanatory value of communicative practices.

So whither next? Haridakis (2012) outlined features of what an intergroup communication theory of sport might resemble. Nonetheless, it would be prudent to at least consider whether we can forge an intergroup model that can adequately deal with *all* sport, although theories of sport in general do exist (Crone, 1999). After all, sports vary on many dimensions and debate even exists around whether any given sport qualifies to be called one, such as ESPN-televised poker, competitive eating, and musical chairs (which has its own World Federation, rules, World Cup, and world records). Nonetheless, we contend that there are sufficient intergroup communalities, as discussed above, that encourage us towards proposing an intergroup model of fandom, and towards that end we offer the following five (empirically testable) principles.

PRINCIPLE A: The more fans identify with their team, the more they will:

- frequently engage in, and create, historical narratives and everyday discourse on team and sport topics;
- in pre-, during, and post-games blast and craft intergroup accounts of, and attributions about, relative team performances (e.g., in-group favoritism

and out-group derogation, image protectic) that will maintain or enhance a positive identity (even in the face of losses);

- adorn prototypical dress styles and purchase team paraphernalia for the workplace and home;
- be vested in (ever-changing) team-related communication technology and social media (see Hardin, 2014);
- cumulatively foster empowerment and, hence, in-group pride and self-esteem.

PRINCIPLE B: The lower the number of *other* nonsporting (as well as other competing sport) identities fans possess and the lower the statuses of these as well as the intragroup prestige within them (e.g., work status), the more PRINCIPLE A will be endorsed (see Giles & Johnson, 1981).

PRINCIPLE C: The more fans' other nonsporting identities overlap with a sport identity (e.g., age- and ethnicity-related sports), the more PRINCIPLE A will be endorsed.

PRINCIPLE D: The more fans perceive their team's and sport's 'relative group vitality' to be low (e.g., decreasing fan base, inadequate sport facilities and media access), legitimate, and stable (Giles & Johnson, 1981), the more they will seek fandom or other social identities elsewhere (Bernache-Assollant et al., 2010).

PRINCIPLE E: The more fans perceive their team's and sport's relative group vitality to be strong (e.g., increasing numbers, media attention), the more they will be semiotically-creative, contribute to fanzines, message boards, and the like, and compete via aggressive collective action with out-groups (especially those with local and/or historical rivalries).

Finally, it has been our goal to make the intergroup perspective accessible and analytically emancipating for understanding fan behavior. A next goal will be to develop the theoretical framework herein to be parsimoniously inclusive of other relevant sport entities, including parents, coaches, and administrators, and to explore other intergroup theoretical positions (see Taylor, King, & Osborne, 2010). With complex issues of globalization (Rowe, 2012) and super leagues evident, new medical and technological advances both for athletes and the sport, social media use proliferating, and sporting events including new sports increasing, and so on and so forth, we will need to continually refine and elaborate our studies and theoretical frames. How these multidimensional and numerous changes will affect the very nature of intergroup communication is an exciting prospect to witness in the future as is the issue raised by Gantz (2013) of how a team identity for a fan may be meaningfully different across the lifespan.

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