Making the Sport Consumer: A Genealogical Analysis of Sport Management Research Texts

Matthew I. (Matthew Ian) Horner
FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

MAKING THE SPORT CONSUMER:
A GENEALOGICAL ANALYSIS OF SPORT MANAGEMENT RESEARCH TEXTS

By
MATTHEW I. HORNER

A Dissertation submitted to the
Department of Sport Management
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

2016
Matthew I. Horner defended this dissertation on November 17, 2016.  
The members of the supervisory committee were:

Joshua I. Newman  
Professor Directing Dissertation

Jennifer M. Proffitt  
University Representative

Jeffrey D. James  
Committee Member

Michael D. Giardina  
Committee Member

The Graduate School has verified and approved the above-named committee members, and certifies that the dissertation has been approved in accordance with university requirements.
To my family; it is finished.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Tables ......................................................................................................................... vi
List of Figures ........................................................................................................................ v
Abstract ........................................................................................................................................ viii

**PROLOGUE: SPORT MANAGEMENT PAST AND PRESENT** ..................................................... 1

- A Past in Terms of the Present ............................................................................................... 1
- The Present ............................................................................................................................. 3
- A Field of Contradiction ............................................................................................................ 7
- The Current Project .................................................................................................................. 13

**1. RETHINKING SPORT CONSUMPTION** .............................................................................. 20

- Last Things First ..................................................................................................................... 20
- Marketing: A Technology of Capitalism .................................................................................. 21
- The Consumer Dialectic ........................................................................................................... 28
- The Road Ahead .................................................................................................................... 42

**2. KNOWING THE SPORT CONSUMER: TOWARD A GENEALOGICAL APPROACH** .... 46

- Context for a Genealogy ........................................................................................................... 46
- Expansion of Leisure Class Values .......................................................................................... 47
- From Conspicuous Consumption to Citizen-Consumer ......................................................... 50
- Marketing for a Consumer Society .......................................................................................... 52
- Approaches to the Study of Consumption ............................................................................. 53
- Retrenchment in the Social Sciences ....................................................................................... 56
- Contraction of Sport Management Research .......................................................................... 62
- Rendering Consumption with Discourse .................................................................................. 68
- Advanced Liberalism: The Enterprise Society and the Citizen-Consumer .............................. 69
- Professionalization of “Sport Management” ............................................................................ 72
- An Education in Sport Management ....................................................................................... 77
- Orthodoxy in Sport Management Research ............................................................................ 80

**3. PREPARATION FOR DESCENT** ....................................................................................... 84

- A History of the Present ......................................................................................................... 84
- Governmentality and Power ..................................................................................................... 92
- Asking Genealogical Questions .............................................................................................. 94
- Genealogical Mechanics: Operationalizing Foucauldian Discourse Analysis .......................... 98
- Selecting Texts ....................................................................................................................... 104
- Refining the Sample .............................................................................................................. 108

**4. THE SPORT CONSUMER RESEARCH CORPUS** ............................................................ 111
# Table of Contents

1. Theories, Methods, and Samples ........................................................................................................... 111
2. Summary .................................................................................................................................................... 123

5. LOCATING THE SPORT CONSUMER ................................................................................................. 127

   Defining the Sport Consumer................................................................................................................. 127
   Sport Consumer Needs and Making Subjects ......................................................................................... 128
   The Substance of Sport Consumption ................................................................................................. 145
   The Act of Sport Consumption ................................................................................................................ 150
3. Summary .................................................................................................................................................... 160

6. KNOWING THE SPORT CONSUMER ................................................................................................. 163

   Justifying Sport Consumer Research ..................................................................................................... 163
   Sport as Extraordinary ............................................................................................................................... 163
   The Problematic Sport Consumer ............................................................................................................ 166
   Positioning Sport Consumer Research ................................................................................................... 170
   How Authors Establish a Territory ............................................................................................................ 171
   How Authors Establish a Niche or Continue a Research Tradition ...................................................... 182
   How Authors Occupy a Niche .................................................................................................................... 191
4. Summary .................................................................................................................................................... 192

7. GOVERNING SPORT CONSUMER KNOWLEDGE ........................................................................... 194

   Governing Knowledge and Ways of Knowing ........................................................................................ 194
   Categorizing the Sport Consumer ............................................................................................................ 194
   Making Sport Consumer Subjects ............................................................................................................ 200
5. Summary .................................................................................................................................................... 235

8. CONCLUSION ....................................................................................................................................... 240

   Making the Sport Consumer ................................................................................................................... 240
   Business is “Bad” for Sport Consumer Research ................................................................................... 247
   Research Orthodoxy ................................................................................................................................. 251
   Omission by Design ................................................................................................................................. 253
   Transforming Sport Consumer Research ............................................................................................... 254

APPENDIX ................................................................................................................................................... 259

A. SAMPLE OF RESEARCH TEXTS ..................................................................................................... 259

References .................................................................................................................................................... 262

Biographical Sketch ....................................................................................................................................... 279
LIST OF TABLES

Table 4.1. Types of Studies........................................................................................................................... 113
Table 4.2. Theoretical Bases ........................................................................................................................ 114
Table 4.3. Directly Referenced Marketing/Social-Psychology Theories Cited More than Once.....115
Table 4.4. Setting/Context of the Study......................................................................................................116
Table 4.5. Research Design .........................................................................................................................117
Table 4.6. Dependent Variables................................................................................................................... 117
Table 4.7. Independent Variables................................................................................................................ 118
Table 4.8. Sampling Method .......................................................................................................................119
Table 4.9. Type of Sample............................................................................................................................ 119
Table 4.10. Country of Sampling............................................................................................................... 120
Table 4.11. Size of Sample........................................................................................................................... 121
Table 4.12. Response Rate............................................................................................................................ 121
Table 4.13. Primary Analysis Technique ............................................................................................... 122
Table 4.14. Comparison of Groups ............................................................................................................ 123
Table 6.1. Establishing a Territory .............................................................................................................. 172
Table 6.2. Establishing a Niche/Continuing a Research Tradition........................................................ 183
Table 6.3. Occupying an Established Niche............................................................................................... 191
Table A.1. Sample of Sport Consumer Research Texts (n=100) ........................................................... 259
# LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Sport Management and the Tri-part Model of Sponsorship</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Primitive Man as Biological Consumer</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Modern Man as Market Consumer</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>The Process of Consumption</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ABSTRACT

In this dissertation, I examine how a particular mode of thinking has come about—that is, how an increasingly number of sport management scholars have conceived of sport-based inter-/trans-actions as “consumption” and those who engage with sport thus as “consumers.” The question is important as the academic discipline seems to parallel the sport industry, contracting upon a version of sport that is overwhelmingly competitive, commercialized, professional, highly-spectacularized, and mass-consumed. Despite the isomorphic acceptance of market-based approaches to sport management, the field has rich practical, pedagogical, and theoretical roots in education, health, and recreation from which the present consumer-model stands as a radical departure. To resolve this ostensible contradiction, it is first necessary to understand how the present has come to be; thus, an analytic tool is needed to assay the present state of the field, evaluate its trajectory, and trace its effects.

Intellectuals have long debated the merits of sport. Many agree that sport can be beneficial when it is played (cf. Zeigler, 2007). However, when sport is engaged in other ways (i.e., spectating a competition, purchasing sport paraphernalia, or asserting allegiance to a team/player), the societal benefit is a bit more opaque, drawing proponents for its cultural and economic significance and critics who challenge sport’s highly spectacularized form, rampant commercialization, and flattening effect on society, for example. Despite this tension, much of the research published in the leading sport management journals is uncritical, adopting deductive-nomothetic approaches to inquiry that produce generalizable, managerially relevant findings with clear commercial implications (see Frisby, 2005; Newman, 2014; Zeigler, 2007). At the same time, idiographic research from alternate (post-modern) onto-epistemic paradigms has been marginalized, as has scholarly inquiry in the once vibrant educational tradition (ibid).
Adopting a Foucauldian perspective, I conducted a genealogical analysis of sport management research texts published in four leading journals—*Journal of Sport Management (JSM)*, *Sport Management Review (SMR)*, *European Sport Management Quarterly (ESMQ)*, and *Sport Marketing Quarterly (SMQ)*—to examine how scholarly discourse has inscribed the field over the last 30 years. I explored how a growing faction of sport management researchers, as expressed in scholarly texts, have come to conceive sport-based engagements as the meaningful consummation of autonomous consumer choice, while also defining what consumer outcomes are possible and acceptable. Ultimately, my aim was to deconstruct the operation of power within the field that exerts itself as a diffuse code of culture governing the production of truth and knowledge.

The epistemological premise for the current research project hinges on two genealogical concerns: 1) how particular versions of the sport consumer and sport consumption are made to appear true and solid; and 2) how, in sport management research discourse, certain ways of thinking about the sport consumer have become dominant over others. In pursuit of these aims, an alternate narrative of sport management research is proposed, one that recounts the historical conditions that have advanced the field towards “tautological inefficaciousness” (Newman, 2014, p. 607). Throughout this work, I demonstrate how a sport consumer knowledge culture has rendered sport engagements and identities in ways that bolster market-based approaches to how “sport” and “management” are theorized and practiced.
A Past in Terms of the Present

The ability to wonder, to question one’s existence, is an expressly human quality. To acquire wisdom, however, mankind’s reflex to wonder must be followed by a corresponding impulse to explain. Indeed, as man’s enlightenment and ravenous pursuit of dominion make plain, human inquisition is seldom satisfied with a marvel—whether something beautiful, unfamiliar, or horrifying has momentarily captivated one’s attention. Adam Smith (2010/1759) postulated in *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* that mankind’s propensity to wonder evokes an equally powerful desire to explain—a natural response to restore order in how we understand the universe and our place in it.

A popular topic of many scholarly and colloquial debates is the search of “origin”—to explain where a particular thing comes from. However, some historical narratives use contemporary ideas and perspectives to depict and interpret the past—a form of presentism that renders history in plainly contemporary terms. Such descriptions pervert the relationship between past and present, assuming the present is a linear result of historical events and, by virtue of the present being the latest version of things, naturally superior to what came before. Telling history in terms of the present, where historical “truths” are rendered via contemporary ways of thinking, unjustly privileges the present by fabricating a past to support it. Such renderings of the past are less “explanations” than they are “stories,” told in careful ways to justify particular versions of reality or the way things should be.

In the field of sport management—an applied academic discipline that has fought for its place in higher education for nearly three decades—this technique has been used to establish legitimacy by connecting contemporary managerial practices to ancient athletic spectacles (see, e.g.,
Mullin, Hardy, & Sutton, 2007; Pedersen & Thibault, 2014). Shortly after the founding of the North American Society for Sport Management (NASSM) and upon the occasion of the first issue of the *Journal of Sport Management (JSM)*, Parks and Olafson (1987) provided a description of the ancient Olympic Games to demonstrate that, although it was recently formalized as an academic discipline, “sport management” was by no means new. Parks and Olafson offer a reading of the past in terms of the present, providing a somewhat playful though distorted rendering of the origin of sport management:

The success of such an extravaganza relied in all likelihood upon the organizational skills of the individuals charged with planning and executing the games. Certainly there was today's equivalent of a general manager, or CEO, to whom all other personnel were responsible. Additionally, assistants who were knowledgeable in economics, accounting, and finance were indispensable if the event was to become profitable. The ‘business managers’ were responsible for obtaining financial support, purchasing equipment (and perhaps even the requisite beasts), furnishing entertainment and lodging for the VIPs, and generally being accountable for the large sums of money that were spent. Once the financial dimension was secured, there was the challenge of attracting sufficient numbers of contestants and spectators to the Games. Enter Herod's ‘marketing director’ armed with unique and unprecedented gimmicks to assure a full complement of participants as well as a full house of onlookers. (p. 1)

Contrary to this grandiose interpretation of history, “in all likelihood” these Games did not rely on a form of economics, accounting, or finance that in any way resemble their present form (they were not yet invented in 11 B.C.), nor were the Games conducted for fiduciary gain despite contemporary management’s myopic focus on profit. Patently absent from this rendering is any mention of the religious and political importance of the early Olympic Games (arguably the only reasons the Games
were organized), serving sacred and symbolic functions as a form of worship and tool to unify a divided Hellenic world (The Olympic Museum, 2013). Undoubtedly, sport has been a popular social practice for millennia and the field owes much to the history of sport; however, telling the history of the field in such terms renders the present knowable in terms of a manufactured legacy.

So, the historical narrative created by Parks and Olafson’s (1987) is misleading, but why? What does such an account achieve? Further, what effect have such renderings had on the pursuit of knowledge in the field, dictating what, how, and to whom research questions should be posed and answered?

The Present

Fast-forward 30 years from the time Parks and Olafson were revising Olympic history and we find another case, this one a practical example, that reveals how the field of sport management is positioned so as to mediate the relationship between sport and society. In October 2016, the Vatican hosted an invitation only, multi-faith sport conference christened “Sports at the Service of Humanity” for 150 of the world’s sport, government, and religious leaders.\(^1\) The conference was a response to Pope Francis’ vision that sport could be used as a vehicle for education and social change. Monsignor Sánchez de Toca Alameda, the Vatican’s Secretary of the Pontifical Council for Culture, explained: “The idea is to create a movement that brings in all religions and all countries…. We believe sports can be a powerful tool to make people grow” (Ourand, 2016, p. 41). The Aspire Group, Inc., an Atlanta-based sport marketing firm, was subcontracted to organize and promote the event.\(^2\) An advisory committee, comprised of 30 North American sport executives, was established

---

\(^1\) The story was on the front page of *Street & Smith’s Sports Business Journal* for the week of January 25-31, 2016.

\(^2\) The Aspire Group, Inc. is a global sport and entertainment marketing firm. They have served multiple clientele on three continents in sixteen different sports at all levels of competition. Forbes ranked Aspire as one of the top 10 organizations to work for in sports in 2015 (The Aspire Group, 2016).
and met weekly to provide strategic direction on an array of matters related to the event. Scott McCune, former Coke executive and member of the committee, pronounced:

    This is Pope Francis and what he stands for as he outlines his vision around helping those on the edges and those disadvantaged and those dislocated people. It’s very inspiring. To think about using sports as a vehicle to do that? To me, that’s the ultimate sports marketing project. (Ourand, 2016, p. 41)

Careful not to imbue McCune’s commentary with meaning that was not intended, his closing statement provides an interesting case to examine the function sport management, as a both professional practice and academic field composed of a variety of sub-disciplines including sport consumer research, serves as an intermediary negotiating encounters with sport.

    So, what is going on here? On the surface, it appears the expressed enthusiasm was linked to the opportunity for sport insiders to serve the public good on a grand scale. It was a chance to show the world that through sport—leveraging the endorsement value and distributive authority of the Catholic Church—people of all faiths and cultures could be peacefully united. From this viewpoint, the conference, the Catholic Church and its causes, and sport (as a socially useful developmental apparatus) were concurrently advanced.

    Upon closer examination, however, it is clear there are other things going on as well. The first task is to locate sport management (as broadly conceived above) relative to the Vatican’s initiative, sport, and society. Consider, for instance, what is implied in Pope Francis’ call to “tap into the worldwide popularity of sports” (Ourand, 2016, p. 41) to unite people in a peaceful, common existence. The Vatican sought to leverage the popular appeal of sport in hope of achieving large-scale health education and, ultimately, to inspire a sense of global communitas. Additionally, as benefactors of the event, the Vatican sought to attract people to the faith through their demonstrated benevolence and affiliation with sport; in other words, to evangelize through sport.
The rationale may have gone something like this: if people like sport and Catholicism supports sport, people will regard Catholicism more favorably.

The interpretation used above is common in the study sport sponsorship grounded in Heider’s (1958) balance theory—because people strive to maintain a sense of balance in their relationships, they generally resolve ancillary associations based upon their attitude towards the dominant affiliation. The process of relationship reconciliation is often diagrammed as a tri-part model, adapted to the present case in Figure 1:

![Figure 1. Sport Management and the Tri-Part Model of Sponsorship](image)

The relationship between the sponsor (the Vatican), the property (sport), and the customer (society) is important, but the positioning of sport management relative to the system as a whole is particularly interesting. The Vatican, one of the largest, most powerful, and wealthy global institutions could not (or decided it should not) design and implement the initiative on its own—on the contrary, the Vatican hired sport managers to do it for them. In this way, the case is evidence of sport management as a relevant practice and field of study on a grand scale. Furthermore, if viewed as an exemplar, the case makes it appear that it is actually necessary for sport managers to coordinate the relationship between sport, organizers, and society.
The case also reveals sport management’s growing internal contradiction. Notice there are in fact two approaches to sport management rendered in the case: one developmental and another unabashedly professional. That is, while Pope Francis’ conference sought to address the developmental and educational needs of marginalized youth, the managerial mechanism is overtly professional. Sport for development is the stated objective, but an expressly professional approach is advanced—one that underwrites, manages, promotes, and leverages sport for broad appeal. This is a subtle point, but an important one. The spectacularization of the pontiff’s initiative through professional management practices advances a version of sport that challenges the altruistic aims and self-effacing rhetoric of its organizers.4

The promotion of sport management as best-practice in this highly visible case infers that the administration of sport should be left to professionals and experts who “know better.” Through press coverage of the event, association with the Vatican, and acts of self-promotion, sport management stands to gain in recognition, acceptance, and legitimacy as a socially and culturally productive field.5 However, if we look to history, the role of professional sport management in the Vatican’s event should not be surprising at all. Throughout history, sport has been used as a tool to organize, entertain, and govern diverse populations. However, it is in regard to the present form of sport—in its highly commodified, mass-consumed, spectacular brilliance—that it is “extraordinary” for sport management professionals to be involved in such a grand act of humanity and benevolence. Because contemporary sport and the management thereof has distanced itself from the management of health and welfare for society at large, it must colonize instances of public service to

---

3 To finance the event the Vatican is selling rights to three title sponsors at a cost of $1.8 million each (Ourand, 2016).
4 Mr. McCune’s expressed surprise that sport can be used to service humanity presumably contradicts his competing belief that sport is a mechanism for generating commercial profit.
5 Of course there are possible negative consequences if the firm fails to deliver or other unforeseen negative events occur.
renew its humanistic appeal—in this regard, the “marketing” of sport management may be viewed as quite opportunistic.

**A Field of Contradiction**

Today, sport management is a substantive area of disciplinary research, a flourishing educational pathway, and a reputable professional practice. Earl Zeigler (1972), a widely celebrated and preeminent scholar in the field, suggests that these seemingly disparate traits are expressions of a single managerial field in which scholarly endeavor, professional preparation, and skilled practice are constitutive of each other. The field, though arguably still in its adolescence, has many qualities that support the edict that sport management is a viable site of academic inquiry and managerial praxis, including: a vibrant and variegated history, an abundance of allied educational programs, a proliferation of professional associations and societies, a steady increase in the pecuniary value of the sport industry, and an enduring cultural relevance among vast populations despite otherwise dividing political, ideological, and religious affiliations. Whether these qualities are the product of sport’s natural appeal or the consequence of astute management, it is clear that sport management has become a thriving field, exhibiting many of the same characteristics as other recognized disciplines in both the natural and human sciences.

Yet, sport management is by no means uncontested terrain. While sport management is expanding its presence on college campuses and continues to be a wellspring of economic activity, it also seems that the field suffers from a fundamental crisis of identity. The disquiet is focused on what sport management, at its core, should be about. That is, if sport must be administered or

---

6 These include the European Association for Sport Management (EASM), the National Association of Sport and Physical Education (NASPE), the North American Society for Sport Management (NASSM), the Society of Health and Physical Educators (SHAPE) [formerly the American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance (AAHPERD)], the Sport Management Association of Australia and New Zealand (SMAANZ), and the Sport Marketing Association (SMA), among others.
managed\textsuperscript{7} to realize its full potential, two essential questions must be posed: 1) how should sport be managed and 2) what should sport be managed for? Responses to these questions, which are definitively political, are major sources of consternation within the academy.

There are many definitions of sport management which range in substance and scope; however, most definitions fall into one of two categories: those that direct managerial practice towards the administration of sport in service of society and those that see sport management as a pecuniary enterprise organized for commercial, industrial, or professional purposes. The definitional chasm within the field is discernable in the following popular definitions: sport management is “management training for the administration of developmental physical activity” (Zeigler, 2007, p. 3) or “the study and practice of all people, activities, businesses, or organizations involved in producing, facilitating, promoting, or organizing any sport-related business or product” (Pitts & Stotlar, 2007, p. 4). The debate is essentially a constitutional dispute, waged between those who staunchly defend that sport must remain a “socially useful servant” of all people (Zeigler, 1987, p. 5) and others who maintain that the field was founded in response to a call for something completely different. The latter camp contends that to stand out as a distinct and necessary field, sport management must serve the unique needs of sport businesses and the sport industry (e.g., Chalip, 2006; Chelladurai, 1992; Shilbury & Rentschler, 2007) in areas such as sport marketing, sport enterprise financial structures, and sport industry career paths (Mullin, 1980).\textsuperscript{8}

\textsuperscript{7} Although the terms are not exact substitutes, the latter usage is the most popular. Interestingly, what to call what has become NASSM was a matter of dispute among the founders, primarily between North American scholars in the U.S. who advocated for ‘management’ and those in Canada who preferred the term “administration.” Although it is unknown if the decision was unanimous, the founders have stated that selection of the title “sport management” has by and large been a good thing for the field (NASSM Reflections of the Founders, 1998). Factors which have certainly benefitted sport management’s efforts to gain legitimacy include the fact that management is an established academic field, management has become a popular and celebrated profession, and most people have a general idea of what management entails.

\textsuperscript{8} The consternation housed in this debate can be traced to divergent understandings of the history of sport management. Zeigler (2007) explains that the field emerged as a result of developments in physical education and educational athletics (i.e., intramurals, high school and collegiate athletics, and other competitive/recreational extracurricular physical
The dividing issue at stake here is subtle, but vitally important to understand the internal strife at the heart of the discipline. On one hand, there are those who believe the definitional element of sport management is that it requires one to be physically active and in so doing, contributes to the general welfare of all people. And so, sport management is sport, in its myriad forms, administered for the benefit of society. Accordingly, sport is set apart by its very nature—not only is it a distinctive form of human expression, but it is actually required for the optimal functioning of human life.

Alternately, the opposing stance is primarily concerned with the study of management in a sport context. That is to say, there is something about sport that requires a different sort of management. The view holds that when management is applied to sport, although borrowing principles and theories from the general field of management, a different set of skills or expertise are required. In this case, sport is set apart not for its special role in society, but as an exceptional context to which managerial principles may be applied to achieve business objectives through the distribution of sport commodities to consumers.

Some view this debate as a tautological academic exercise, where critics needlessly create crises where none exist or draw attention to problems without offering plausible solutions (Stewart, 2014). However, there are those who reject the sway market-based approaches exert on the field, challenging the educational foundation to which sport management was moored (see, e.g., Frisby, 2005; Newman, 2014; Ziegler, 2007). Zeigler (2007), for instance, has taken a firm stance on the issue:

Accordingly, sport management evolved from preexisting physical education programs, responding to changes in the administration of a wide range of sport and physical activities with the objective of providing practitioners in primarily educational institutions (and tangentially in private or commercialized sport organizations) with a strong foundation of management theory. Alternately, the birth of sport management as a distinct field, separate both from its ties to physical education and the parent discipline of management, has been linked to the sport industry’s demand for professionally prepared sport administrators who, based on their training, can function in the unique environment of sport business (Mason, Higgins, & Wilkinson, 1981; NASSM History, 2016).
At this time I find myself disturbed about the direction being taken by the emerging profession of sport and physical activity management. The ‘glamour’ of highly competitive, gate-receipt sport is luring too many of our management students and young professionals. I believe strongly that our main concern should be with the management of programs of healthful sport and physical activity for ‘people of all ages be they in the normal, accelerated, or special populations.’ I say these things because I want to be certain that sport maintains itself as a beneficial force in society—that it contributes more ‘good’ than ‘evil.’ Right now I feel this is becoming a more difficult assertion to make and to prove. Sport management urgently needs substantive theory to support or refute current practice! (p. iv)

Zeigler and others contend that if we are uncomfortable with the way sport management is presently organized, practiced, or expressed, we should do something about it. That is, we do not have to accept the status quo because we, as constituents of the field, are authors of the field, capable of rendering a future that is different than the present (even if it means going backwards). This is an important point that cannot be overemphasized—sport management in its present form is significant and worthy of celebration, but it is not necessarily the form that must be unequivocally accepted by all.

As previously stated, my primary objective in this project is to examine the manner in which contemporary sport management scholarship renders the end user of sport. Whereas physical educators and sport administrators in educational settings tend to refer to their constituents as students, clients, customers, or patrons, the term “consumer” is widespread in sport management discourse, reducing numerous heterogeneous subjects to a single description of the multitude. I suspect this shift in terminology is not simply the result of an evolution of technical or colloquial jargon; thus, in this study I explore how such language has come about and how it has influenced the construction of knowledge in the field.
Understanding the shift towards a consumer model of sport management is important for several reasons. First, to be a consumer in a colloquial sense implies that one engages in financial transactions to acquire the goods and services he or she desires. Therefore, when sport management scholars think of sport constituents first and foremost as consumers, they render a version of sport accessible only through market exchange. Indeed, today many aspects of sport are governed by financial variables, including gate receipts, merchandise sales, licensing agreements, sponsorship fees, and broadcasting rights; but when did sport management become primarily about managing the bottom line? Lest we forget, the current market-based approach to sport management is a relatively recent development—an abrupt departure from the educational model through which sport-based engagements are approached from a wholly different perspective. However, as has been discussed the link between the past and present is often misunderstood.

Building on the transaction element, the use of the term consumer to describe sporting constituents also adroitly, though foundationally, transforms the role of sport in society. The lusory appeal of sport is still embraced and is a necessary factor for the transformation, but such a market-pursuant approach to sport management requires that sport is rendered as a commodity. The educational model is focused primarily on facilitating enriching sport engagements—the relation between sport, institutions, and management is ordered so that both sport and managers serve as intermediaries in a system focused on providing rewarding, healthy, and entertaining sporting experiences. On the other hand, the market-based model reconfigures this arrangement, transforming the sport manager (and scholar) into a technocratic intermediary who purports to know what the consumer wants in order to give it to him or her—and, in turn, generate commercial profit. In this case, sport, in its incalculable varieties, is rendered as a commodity (a fungible object of production offered for sale) and delivered to consumers through price-/knowledge-mediated market exchanges.
Moreover, to fully understand the effect of the shift towards a consumer-based sport management discipline, it is necessary to examine how the relationship between individuals and producers has also been altered. To do this, it is first important to acknowledge that the term has not always enjoyed such prominence. Aldridge (2003) explains that from the mid-15th Century until the early-20th Century, the ‘customer’ was the preferred terminology, referring to a continuous, personal relationship with the ‘supplier.’ The customer had needs that were freely chosen, and these needs were met by suppliers.

On the contrary, the neutral term ‘consumer’ was operationalized by bourgeois political economy, referencing an abstract entity that sits opposed to the producer in an impersonal market (Aldridge, 2003). There are two ways to look at this shift, each providing some explanatory insight. First, what changed in management necessitated a rendering of the ‘consumer?’ That is, how did changes within the practice of management shift the focus from developing relationships with clients to knowing how to segment and target vast consumer groups? Secondly, by rendering the ‘consumer,’ what sort of new management strategies are possible? While the ‘consumer’ in the former perspective may be seen as an accidental product of an evolving managerial field, the latter usage implies that the consumer translation was a deliberate scheme of management. If this is true, one might ask what is gained by thinking of existing and potential customers as consumers. Some have argued that this level of abstraction is reflective of producers’ desire to engineer consumer needs through marketing and advertising discourses, so that they can produce the things needed to satisfy them (Aldridge, 2003; Slack & Amis, 2004). Accordingly, the “sport consumer” is a blanket identity, absent of meaning, used for categorization and segmentation of “target markets” into “consumer groups.”

Transformation of individual customers into an abstracted consumer collective may not just be a semantic exercise after all—it may also be a calculated best-practice of modern managerial
praxis. Central to this reading of the present is a particular interpretation of what has been termed the “consumer attitude” (Bauman, 1990, p. 204)—a belief that life is a series of problems that are resolved through the solicitation of expert advice to inform the purchase of products, packaged as solutions. In this regard, the ‘good life’ is achieved by learning how to locate knowledge and objects that solve life’s problems and holding onto them once found (Aldridge, 2003).

Amidst this odd pairing of the consumer and expertise, the manager surfaces as both the shepherd of consumer sovereignty and benefactor of corporate vitality. Transitioning to a consumer-based model of sport management, therefore, refocuses the field towards a concern not for how can sport be effectively managed among diverse populations, but instead, how managers can exploit knowledge about consumers to leverage sport as a business enterprise. Again, this distinction is subtle, but profound. Organizing sport in such a way that directs access through market-based exchanges, though delivering the things that consumers purportedly need or want, alters both the character of sport and management by administering sport via professional management apparatuses.

**The Current Project**

In this dissertation, I am interested in the way ideas, when spoken or written by experts, take on characteristics of truth and structurate not only how things are known, but also the way in which they are known as true or false. In this way, when discourse is regarded as knowledge, it becomes a diffuse form of power⁹ that governs relations between people and objects by establishing what is

---

⁹ Conceptualizations of power generally fall into one of two categories: Hobbesian or Machiavellian. In a Hobbesian sense, power is conceived as a dominant ideology or the imposition of sovereign will over a subject. Accordingly, power mediates the structure-agency dialectic and is usually possessed by individuals; power is a zero-sum game where gains on one end imply losses at the other. Conversely, in the Machiavellian tradition, power exists in social mechanisms and is exerted via strategy and organization. The Foucauldian notion of power falls in the latter camp, where codes of morals, ethics, and culture define the field of possibility and assign value to all possible iterations. Foucault (1977a) argued that an important trait of power is that it is exercised rather than possessed. Power is “exercised” by drawing upon discourse that portrays a version of the world that permits one to behave as he or she desires (Ahl, 2002). Power, therefore, is an
possible and assigning value to likely outcomes. The French political historian and philosopher Michel Foucault—whose vast works examine the evolution of institutions, administrative systems, and social services such as schools, prisons, and mental hospitals—authored an approach to inquiry to understand how human beings have come to be interpreted as knowing subjects, and, at the same instant, objects of their own knowledge (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982). Foucault, observing a distinct change in how society was organized in the late 18th Century, departed from structuralist and hermeneutic phenomenological tactics to develop an alternate interpretive method to explore the way power, operating as knowledge through myriad discourses, advances particular ideological interests and logics of societal production over others. New systems of governance, surveillance, and assessment no longer required despotic coercion or violence from others, but were created and reproduced by people who learned to discipline themselves and behave in predictable ways.

Foucault uses the term “power/knowledge” to denote that power is constituted through accepted forms of knowledge, scientific understanding, and truth:

Truth is a thing of this world: it is produced only by virtue of multiple forms of constraint. And it induces regular effects of power. Each society has its regime of truth, its ‘general politics’ of truth: that is, the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true; the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements, the means by which each is sanctioned; the techniques and procedures accorded

---

10 Dreyfus and Rabinow (1982), adopting a Kantian interpretation, describe the dialectical existence of modern man as a “unique being who is totally involved in nature (his body), society (historical, economic, and political relations), and language (his mother tongue), and who at the same time finds a firm foundation for all of these involvements in his meaning-giving, organizing activity” (p. xix). This problematic, what Foucault (1970) called the analytic of the finitude, consists of those totalizing practices which not only produce man as object and subject but also preserve both in an “objectified, meaning-obsessed society” (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982, p. xxv).

11 Foucault attempted to move beyond structuralist analysis absent of meaning and the phenomenologist’s attempt to trace all meaning to a transcendental subject, looking instead to rule-governed transformations that inscribe the practices and operation of society (see Foucault, 1972, 1977a, 1977d).
value in the acquisition of truth; the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true. (Foucault, 1984, p. 72).

Foucault believed that these “regimes of truth” have roots in scientific discourse and are constantly reinforced by the education system, media, and political and economic ideologies. As a result, the “general politics” of truth can be viewed as a battle over “the ensemble of rules according to which the true and false are separated and specific effects of power are attached… a battle about the status of truth and the economic and political role it plays” (Foucault, 1984, p. 74).

To study the constitution of this novel form of power, Foucault developed a new analytical method which he called *genealogy*. Foucault used the genealogical method to explore how modern cultures normalize individuals, simultaneously transforming them into meaningful subjects and docile objects (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982). From this perspective, Foucault viewed the organizing forces of society as “bio-technico-power,” or simply “bio-power,” ordering all domains of activity under the guise of improving the welfare of society, and therefore, individuals. Correspondingly, Foucauldian genealogy attempts to uncover the operation of bio-power embedded in organizing strategies which, though no single person directs it and everyone is enmeshed in it, serves the sole purpose of increasing and ordering itself (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982).

Accordingly, the production of knowledge is the creation of domains where the exercise of true and false are made “at once ordered and pertinent” (Foucault, 1991, p. 79). Thinking of knowledge in this manner challenges passive conceptualizations of a “knowledge base” as separate from a “knowledge culture.”12 On the contrary, scientific inquiry should be viewed contextually as an extension of the cultural and political values circulating among a field, delineating acceptable from

---

12 Margaret Somers’ (1996) defines knowledge culture as: “A knowledge culture is constituted by the specific range of thinking, reasoning, and institutional practices possible in a given historical time and space…. a culture is not the “material” grounds underlying and “pressing upon” the “ideal” realm of ideas. Nor is it a single “hegemonic” set of beliefs or “truths.” Rather than any specific truths, a knowledge culture frames what can be conceived of as “true-or-false” (p. 54-55, emphasis in original).
deviant practices. Foucault argued that the relationship between subject and power is always personal and political (Hoffman, 2013); therefore, the creation and dissemination of scientific discourse must be viewed as a political act, constructing new and reinforcing old regimes of truth that serve as an apparatus of modern power (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982).

From this perspective, one that acknowledges the growing interdependency of truth, knowledge, power, and governance, questions about the present can be posed to understand how certain “stratums” of knowing and acting have become dominant to define the conduct of conduct (i.e., who is authorized to speak truths, how truths are spoken and enacted, and the costs of so doing; Rose, 1999). Therefore, the objective of a genealogist is to open up a space for critical thought. Rose writes:

> [A] critical attitude towards those things that are given to our present experience as if they were timeless, natural, unquestionable… It is a matter of introducing a kind of awkwardness into the fabric of one’s experience, of interrupting the fluency of the narratives that encode that experience and making them stutter…. The use of history here is to that untimely end—it is a matter of forming a connection or relation between a contemporary question and certain historical events, forming connections that vibrate or resonate, and hence introduce a difference, not only in the present, but also in the historical moments it connects up and deploys. (p. 20)

The genealogical perspective requires one to see the present in terms of truths, objects, and actions that were always the product of historical transformations and translations. Thus, to conduct a genealogy is to interpret interpretations and, in so doing, change our understanding of things, of life, of the present, and of oneself (Rose, 1999).

Adapting Foucault’s method to the study of how sport management scholarship has coalesced around the consumer model of sport behavior, the genealogist examines how knowledge
has been produced, expressed, and disseminated throughout the academy. As scientific discourses feed regimes of truth, they are inculpated in the operation of power in and beyond the academy, defining what is possible by empowering and constraining thought, knowledge, and action. The academic domain of sport management has three distinct areas of concentration: professional preparation, (inter)disciplinary scholarship, and service to the field, industry, and society. Each tenet is vital to the constitution of the whole; however, to understand how knowledge has emerged, evolved, expanded, and shaped the field, my attention in this project is devoted to an examination of how sport management research (as manifested in scholarly texts) has constructed the consuming subject over time.

A comparison of past and present accountings of the field, as the introductory vignettes elucidate, is useful to complicate what sport management has come to be about. Not many would disagree with the assertion that sport must be artfully managed to achieve particular outcomes. However, as sport is progressively driven to market-based exchanges governed by managers who provide both the products in demand and the knowledge needed to navigate market uncertainty, it is incumbent upon scholars to engage in open discussions about what outcomes are “desired” and what kind of management is best-suited to make them a reality.

In this project, I examined how a growing number of sport management researchers have come to conceive of sport-based inter-/trans-actions as the meaningful consummation of autonomous consumer choice, while also defining what consumer outcomes are possible and acceptable. To do this, I conducted a genealogical analysis of a sample of sport management research texts published in four leading journals—*Journal of Sport Management (JSM)*, *Sport Management Review (SMR)*, *European Sport Management Quarterly (ESMQ)*, and *Sport Marketing Quarterly (SMQ)*—to explore how scholarly discourse has inscribed the field over the last three decades. Academic publications were selected because they are the most enduring representation of scholarly endeavor,
with these peer-reviewed journal articles standing as a highly visible and prestigious expression of the field’s knowledge base.

Adopting a Foucauldian perspective, I set out to deconstruct the operation of power within the field that exerts itself as a diffuse code of culture governing the (re)production of truth and knowledge. The consumer-model may be viewed as particular “regime of truth”\(^{13}\) constituted within and circulated throughout the field, influencing the way scholars conceive sport engagements and how they should be administered, managed, and controlled. Thus, to understand how sport management researchers have created a sport consumer knowledge culture, I conducted a genealogical analysis to examine the content and interrelations of sport management research texts published in four of the field’s leading academic journals.\(^{14}\) This approach yielded important insights regarding the historical development and cumulative output of this area of inquiry that have since been overlooked or “taken as given.”

The epistemological premise for the current research hinges on two genealogical concerns. That is, how particular versions of the sport consumer and sport consumption are made to appear true and solid, and how sport management research discourse has legitimized certain ways of thinking about the sport consumer over others. By examining the most prestigious and visible articles relating to the sport consumer within the corpus of sport management research, three specific research questions were posed: 1) what is the sport consumer; 2) what makes the sport consumer unique and worthy of study; and 3) how has the research discourse legitimized certain ways of knowing and managing sport consumers? In pursuit of these aims, I offer an alternate

\(^{13}\) Foucault (1984) argued that truth and knowledge induce effects of power, and that in every society there are particular “regimes of truth” that act as its general politics which dictate what is acceptable and what may be regarded as true or false. According to this view, the consumer model is a kind of regime of truth which, when taken as given, orders acceptable ways of conducting sport management research.

\(^{14}\) *JSM, SMR, ESMQ,* and *SMQ* have been similarly regarded by Newman (2014), Shilbury (2011), and Shilbury & Rentschler (2007) as the core publication outlets for sport management research.
reading of sport management research that recounts the historical conditions that have led the field towards what some diagnose as “tautological inefficaciousness” (Newman, 2014, p. 607). Ultimately, my aim in this project is to challenge the present order of things within the field by showing how a sport consumer knowledge culture has come to be, rendering sport engagements and identities in ways that bolster a market-pursuant science altering how “sport” and “management” have been and continue to be theorized and practiced.
CHAPTER 1
RETHINKING SPORT CONSUMPTION

Last Things First

In this project, I examine how knowledge of sport consumption, and thus the sport consumer, is produced through scholarly discourse. To do this, I reoriented the typical research vector 180 degrees, examining research texts for how particular images of the sport consumer have come to appear “true,” and how the research discourse has legitimized certain ways of thinking about the sport consumer and sport consumption over others. By exploring how discourse subtly advances particular ways of thinking and how these ways of thinking become dominant, I aim to critically examine how the sport consumer has risen as a prominent object of sport management research.¹⁵

Marketing and its sub-discipline consumer behavior currently enjoy relative prominence in the field of sport management. Scholarship on physical education, pedagogy, and sport administration—at one time the pillars of research in the field—are increasingly difficult to find in the leading sport management journals. Yet today, it is twice as likely to come across a sport marketing or consumer research article as it was just a decade ago (Newman, 2014).

My interest is situated on a seemingly innocuous observation framed as a question: how has such a concentration on the sport consumer come to dominate a field with a historically diverse purview? I am less concerned with the veracity of claims contained in this body of research than I am with how a narrow focus on marketized sport has come about and in what ways it is instructive of the epistemological trajectory of sport scholarship (from authorship through the publication

¹⁵ See Bowers, Green, & Seifried’s (2014) Delphi study of the development of sport management research trends. These trends have been critiqued by several notable scholars including Frisby (2005) and Newman (2014).
process). In other words, is the prominence currently enjoyed by sport marketing and consumer research in sport management merely a reflection of contemporary values or is the proliferation of research discourse on the sport consumer in some ways shaping what is culturally valued through a vision of sport that is progressively *more* marketized, professional, and spectacular?

In the succeeding section, I examine how sport marketing and consumer research has become so prolific in the field of sport management, guided by the following questions and corresponding responses:

1. What is the goal of sport marketing? Sport marketing is the study of markets to influence *consumer demand*.

2. What is consumer demand? The aggregate effect of *consumer choice*.

3. What is consumer choice? The *autonomous* selection of a *commodity* for personal use.

A synthesis of these statements yields the following thesis: *sport marketing’s aim is to understand and influence autonomous consumer decisions to affect consumer demand*. By responding to this thesis, I advance an alternate epistemology of sport marketing and sport consumer research that elucidates the productive effect of such discourses on sensibilities and conduct of the field at large.

**Marketing: A Technology of Capitalism**

Worldwide, the sport industry was estimated by AT Kearney at $80 billion in 2014, causing the global management consulting firm to declare, “For a content industry wracked with uncertainty, sports is a beacon of hope” (Collignon & Sultan, 2014, p. 1). When sporting goods, health, and fitness spending were added to this figure, the sports industry generated as much as $700 billion annually, equating to 1% of the world’s GDP (Collignon & Sultan, 2014). Although inherently cyclical as most sports are tied to a defined season, year over year growth of the global sports market was 7% between 2009 and 2013, faster than GDP growth in nearly every other country (Collignon & Sultan, 2014). What factors can be attributed to this extraordinary growth?
David Harvey (2005, 2010, 2014) has argued in various fora, capital is committed to a compounding rate of growth. To wit, under capitalism there must be a path to economic growth or the flow of capital (i.e., finance capital) will stop and the economy will come to a screeching halt.

There are two routes to macroeconomic growth: grow the population or increase per capita output (Piketty, 2014). However, an increase in productivity is the only way to achieve a wholesale improvement of the standard of living; if economic growth is due to a population increase alone, it is merely a lateral move for the economy. On a microeconomic scale there may be winners and losers at any point along the growth continuum (negative-zero-positive) achieved by moving capital around, but this is only a temporary solution that real economic growth must overcome. Increased productivity is achieved two ways: 1) through innovation and technological improvement of the means of production or distribution and 2) a rise in consumer demand. The former has been widely discussed in many circles and is not of primary interest here. What I would like to turn the present discussion towards are the viable ways to increase demand.

The first way to increase demand is by accessing new markets—new markets equal new consumers. A similar tactic, especially when new markets prove elusive, is the exploitation of market inefficiencies. This is most commonly observed through the practice of offshoring, where labor, resources, and politico-juridical favor are obtained at high discounts. Via these methods, capital accumulation can be assured, at least for a time.

Marketing is another tool available to producers to affect consumer demand, although what marketing actually does and how it achieves its aims is widely debated. Slack and Amis (2004) argue, “Marketing techniques… are functionally necessary to the continuation of advanced capitalist economies because they provide the means by which individuals are persuaded to purchase goods” (p. 262). Consequently, as markets become saturated with products that satisfy every possible variety
of consumer need, businesses find inventive ways to create new (artificial) needs and steer demand to those products that compliment them through marketing. Slack and Amis continue, “These needs are induced by others whose job it is to suggest to us that our social status, our individuality and our self-identity will be incomplete unless we fulfill these needs” (p. 261).

To this effect, Hansen (1996) elucidates that when product improvements are no longer possible and every real need has been satiated, competition takes place on the plane of symbols and images. The contradiction here is that by marketing symbols and images, marketers appeal to consumers’ need for individuality through conformity in consumption preferences—what has been called an invitation to “join us and become unique” (Savan, 1994, p. 9). Thus, the marketer is a storyteller who replaces objective needs with socially constructed “myths” that encourage consumers to believe their personal identities are tied to and dependent upon the ownership and consumption of goods (see Belk, 1988; Buck-Morss, 1991; Fournier, 1998; Slack & Amis, 2004). It is in this way that saturated markets do not pose a direct threat to capitalist modes of production.

Not everyone agrees with this description of marketing practice. There are two basic camps when it comes to interpreting marketing’s role in society: marketing either responds to the needs of consumers or marketing shapes the needs of consumers. The first observes the necessity of professionally trained and capable managers to administer marketing processes that free consumers from the “burdensome task of construction… by providing what consumers would have constructed in the first place” (Firat & Dholakia, 2006, p. 150). Accordingly, marketing serves consumers by efficiently meeting their needs and realizing their desires, thus improving the quality of their lives. Marketing does not create need; the need is already there. The objective of marketing is to create an awareness that a need exists and to suggest ways to satisfy it (Solomon, 2013).

---

16 Slack and Amis (2004) also argue that saturated markets increase consumer choice and thereby bolster the appearance of freedom. Marketing’s response is to break up this equilibrium by driving demand to specific products linked to new and/or previously unknown needs or desires.
The other camp is suspicious of the claim that well-managed marketing makes life easier for the consumer, seeing it as an overreach into individual freedoms. This skepticism stems from the illogicality that marketers can effectively serve consumer interests when they are representatives of industry. Consequently, professionally managed marketing “for the consumer” is viewed as an illusion and claims to do so as false (Firat & Dholakia, 2006).

Additionally, the argument that marketing does not create need, but simply elevates consumer consciousness to see that a previously unidentified need is not being met, is viewed as patently untrue. That is, if a need is a “basic biological motive” (Solomon, 2013, p. 22), why does it take a marketer to bring it to the consumer’s attention? The answer to this question is that it is a “trick question”—it is not just about biological necessity. Marketing transforms socially constructed wants by emphasizing their importance and making them appear like needs.

To use a sport example, the “One Buffalo” marketing campaign by Pegula Sports and Entertainment (PSE) is an effort to provide “a link between Bills fans, Sabres fans, and the city of Buffalo” (One Buffalo, 2016). By PSE’s definition, there can only be “one” Buffalo where citizenship and fanship are inseparable. That is to say, if I am a citizen of Buffalo, PSE says I need to also be a fan of the Bills and Sabres. In this case, PSE’s marketing campaign is an attempt to create a consumer identity that does not necessarily exist. I can be a citizen of Buffalo or a fan of the Bills and/or Sabres, but I do not need to be both. Of course, anyone can choose not to abide by this definition, but they cannot always choose not to be exposed to it.

The opposition between these two camps can be partially addressed through the notion of value. Marx (1976/1867) argued that all commodities have two distinct features—a use-value and an exchange-value—which are always out of balance. A use-value means that an object can do something and is useful to human beings, while exchange-value implies that an object is worth something and can be exchanged on the market. Consumers are primarily concerned with use-values when they
take possession of an object and intend it for personal use. Producers, on the other hand, who have no intention of using their product, are principally concerned with exchange-value. The imbalance stems from the system of exchange (i.e., the market society) which subordinates use-value to exchange-value—if a product cannot be sold, it will not be produced (Jhally, 2006b). The exchange always comes first. Therefore, the marketer cannot promise to represent both the producer and consumer equally (or even “efficiently”)—marketing always favors the producer.

Secondly, in a market society there is a clear separation between objects and production. Because the social relations exteriorized in commodities are concealed through labor agreements, any meaning attached to an object is lost through industrial production. As a result, marketing and advertising are able to inject into this void imaginary and symbolic social relations of their own (Jhally, 2006a). This is especially true with a cultural commodity (such as most sport products), as its use-value is its meaning (Jhally, 2006b; Solomon, 2013). So then, there are two compelling arguments that marketing does not merely respond to existing consumer needs. Despite contrary claims, marketing must serve producers first and, in so doing, it inscribes commodities with meaning through symbols and images to shape the needs of consumers.

That is not to say all marketing practices are necessarily disinterested in consumers, unethical, or otherwise “bad.” My deduction simply demonstrates marketing’s significant role in the distribution chain to affect consumer demand through the technical and integrated administration of markets (Cochoy, 1998). My assertion dispels the myth that marketing is a passive instrument for the production, pricing, placement, or promotion of commodities as first described by McCarthy (1960) and Borden (1964). Certainly, there are marketing and consumer behavior researchers that choose to focus on the experiential side of consumption (see, among others, Canniford, 2005; Holbrook &

---

17 Jhally (2006a) characterizes a market society as a form of economic organization where citizens must access the marketplace to exchange value for the things they need to subsist. In a market society, citizens are divorced from the means of production and so the market is the sole determinant of value.
Hirschman, 1982; Holbrook, 2005, 2006; Jensen, Lindberg, & Ostergaard, 2015; Neville, 2010; Redden & Steiner, 2000), but the majority of marketing studies in the field of sport management appear to adopt a business orientation or managerial perspective.

To understand the motivation of marketing management, we need to first understand an important feature of consumption. Capitalism does not exist on the basis of prior markets, but is constantly reproduced through continuous exchange all along the resource chain. Therefore, it is not past consumption that is of direct interest to marketing and business managers, but rather knowledge of how consumers will behave in the future—managing and predicting future behaviors. Adapting Paolo Virno’s (2004) theorization of labor to the consumer, we know that when business people act as business people they are not humanists—the monetization of labor-time obscures (Marx called it alienation) the humanness embedded in commodities and exchange. Marketing managers are not all that interested in the person who the consumer is; rather, they are only indirectly concerned for the potential consumption that may be extracted through exchange. Thus, managerially relevant marketing is the study of consumers to produce consumers.

It has been argued that the profusion of managerially relevant research in the parent field of marketing is at least partly due to that fact nearly 90% of consumer researchers reside in business schools, where a scholar is likely to devote 99% of his or her attention to managers and the remaining 1% to consumers (Holbrook, 1995). Holbrook’s observation offers an interesting point of contrast with regard to sport marketing, not for the influence of business schools per se as many sport management programs have a similar organizational affiliation, but rather that the majority of sport marketing studies produced over the last three decades expressly focus on consumer variables (e.g., sociological and psychological determinants, motivation, and individual and social identity). Or perhaps Holbrook’s claim is true in other ways; though sport marketing research appears to focus on

\[18\] This is not to say that things have not changed since Holbrook (1995) postulated this claim.
the consumer, it is only those aspects which are managerially relevant that captivate the researcher’s gaze.

Sport marketing research achieves managerial relevance by using consumer knowledge to illuminate the purchase-decision process. By describing consumer motivations (e.g., Sloan, 1989; Trail & James, 2001), psychological involvement (e.g., Funk & James, 2001, 2006; Filo, Funk, & O’Brien, 2009), attendance variables (e.g., Cunningham & Kwon, 2003; Wakefield, 1995), and consumption outcomes (e.g., Cialdini, Borden, Thorne, Walker, Freeman, & Sloan, 1976; Dietz-Uhler & Murrell, 1999), sport marketing and consumer researchers have surrounded the purchase-decision on all fronts (without actually knowing what drives the decision to buy) to predict and influence consumption with the minimum amount of uncertainty. So then, what issues are at stake when research serves marketing managements’ essential concern for brand choice (Fennell, 1982)? Holbrook (1995) offers a rather comical, but effective football analogy for marketing management’s fixation on the purchase decision (herein, the “kick off”):

Specifically, the extreme managerial perspective resembles a theory of football that focuses primarily on the kickoff. Someone holding such a view notes that the game begins with a kick. Hey, so the kickoff must be really important. Then some things happen on the field that we don’t care about very much. Then, if all goes well, we get another kickoff. And so we proceed—from one kickoff to the next. (p. 153)

Not only is this a poor theory of football, but it is not a very good theory of the sport consumer either.

In what ways has marketing and consumer research in the field of sport management avoided this pitfall? Some claim that the field has not only failed to avoid it, but should embrace managerial relevance in all of its research (cf. Weese, 1995). Newman (2014) contends that sport management’s alignment with market and managerial imperatives cause scholars to mistake research
assumptions for commercial truths, where visions of sport as industry, athlete as commodity, team as brand, fan as consumer, and sport facilitator as manager are promulgated as verities throughout the field. Moreover, Frisby (2005) stated that the obsession with managerial relevance has fostered “a materialistic lifestyle that ties self-esteem to the possession and consumption of goods while contributing to social problems such as exploitation, pollution, and the widening gap between the haves and the have-nots” (p. 4).

In sum, marketing in general and sport marketing in particular is a culturally significant technology of capitalism worthy of critical scholarly attention—one which undoubtedly belongs in the field of sport management. However, if sport management scholarship, in part or whole, is given over to the marketplace of ideas and business (cf. Bowers et al., 2014), we must ask if there is “a contradiction between expecting the marketplace to provide genuine diversity while, at the same time, treating ideas as economic goods to be bought and sold” (Jhally, 2006b, p. 46).

The Consumer Dialectic

If the thesis that “marketing is a tool used to affect consumer demand” is accepted, it is reasonable to also examine the act and substance of consumption. That this to say, since I have arrived at the present view of sport consumer research by questioning taken for granted assumptions, it does not make good sense to me to accept at face value that consumer choice is simply the selection of one commodity over another—or one message over another. An ancillary objective of this project is to understand how sport marketing and consumer research has come to be so pervasive in the broader field of sport management. If I am at least partially correct in my general assessment of the aim of marketing, then sport consumer research is conducted to understand and direct the transformation of non-pecuniary sport fans and spectators into loyal sport consumers to grow the industry. So then, how is loyalty expressed? How and why do scholars and practitioners look to transform the non-monetary into money? The questions that drive my present
inquiry into consumption are two-fold. First, what are the inherent characteristics of a sport consumer and where do these characteristics come from? Secondly, what is gained or lost when one is directed to engage with sport through economic consumption when he or she had a preexisting nonfinancial relation (or no relation) to sport?

The term “consumer” has been used in both the natural and human sciences to describe a particular condition of being that is distinct from other natural states. The definitions complement each other in important ways, but should be dealt with individually before attempting to link them together to derive a universal understanding this increasingly common condition of being human.

In biology, there are three classes of organisms that exist in an ecological food chain, classified by the way they obtain the energy they need to survive: producers, consumers, and decomposers. Needs are defined exclusively by nature. Producers are called autotrophs (plants, algae, and some bacteria) because they can produce their own energy without the help of other living organisms. Autotrophs survive by converting light energy (normally the sun) into chemical energy. Consumers are called heterotrophs (animals) because they cannot produce their own energy and so must consume other living things (plants and other heterotrophs) to survive. There are three subclasses of consumers: herbivores that eat only plants (producers), carnivores that eat only animals (other consumers), and omnivores that eat both plants and animals (producers and consumers). Lastly, decomposers are a type of heterotroph (bacteria and fungi) that survive by breaking down dead or decaying organisms through decomposition.19

In modern marketing terms, the consumer is characterized as the end user in a distribution chain.20 Human needs are given by nature or the structure of human reality (Firat & Dholakia, 2016).

---

20 This definition is derived from the American Marketing Association (AMA) Common Language Marketing Dictionary (2016) and other more colloquial sources. The AMA definition of consumer states: “Traditionally, a consumer is the
2006). A consumer is the person who makes the decision to purchase an economic service or commodity (sometimes, but not necessarily the same person who actually buys the product) in a retail setting for personal use (not for manufacture or resale). Because the purchase-decision is subjective, the consumer’s decision to buy can be influenced by marketing and advertising efforts. Consumers usually buy things in small quantities and pay the highest price per unit of product. Individual consumers comprise consumer demand which is the primary motivation for producers to produce goods and services.

Combining these two characterizations of the consumer reveals the autonomy-dependence dialectic that defines the modern consumer state of being—consumers are more or less free to choose what to consume, but because they depend on consumption for their well-being, they are not free not to choose to consume. From the biological definition, we know that a consumer cannot make what it needs, and so it must seek things external to itself to satiate its desires. In this way, the consumer is a predator, actively seeking the objects it desires with avarice and obtaining what it needs either by force or through exchange. At the same time, however, a predator will perish if it is unable to obtain the provisions it requires. Thus, in a biological sense a consumer is both the agent of its subsistence and subject of its own desire. With regard to biological need, the consumer can never escape this dialectic.

Incorporating the marketing definition, a consumer is one who is free to choose among products supplied to a market by producers. This freedom, however, is limited to both budgetary constraints of the consumer and among those products that producers determine possess economic ultimate user or consumer of goods, ideas, and services. However, the term also is used to imply the buyer or decision maker as well as the ultimate consumer. A mother buying cereal for consumption by a small child is often called the consumer although she may not be the ultimate user.”

21 According to the modern view of marketing, any shaping of needs by human activity, including marketing, is a violation of truth or the true nature of needs. Marketing’s role is to liberate or realize these needs (Firat & Dholakia, 2006).
value. The degree of freedom at this stage is directly related to one’s purchasing power (i.e., the price of a product relative to one’s income and wealth). Furthermore, as the end user, the consumer supports the entire distribution chain including all producer surpluses (profit) and so pays the highest price for each unit of production. Furthermore, the consumer is often restricted from deriving value from the product for other than his or her own personal use and outside designated periods through legal disclaimers and fine print.

Neoclassical economists might disagree with this caricature, however, adding that every market exchange conducted between buyers and sellers (i.e., an exchange of money for a product) is a perfect economic calculation and so such concerns about a duped consumer or opportunities lost are fallacious. The premise of economic calculation is based upon the notion that money prices transmit information about all the transactions in an economy conducted with money (the common denominator for market exchange). Thus, for both buyers and sellers money prices indicate the most profitable area of investment, directing scarce resources to the most pressing exigencies.

In neoclassical consumer theory, the consumer is assumed to maximize his or her utility subject to his or her budgetary constraints. Neoclassical economics relies upon certain key assumptions to understand how scarce resources are allocated to achieve alternative ends. There are three central assumptions of neoclassical economics: 1) people have rational preferences between outcomes; 2) individuals maximize utility and firms maximize profits; and 3) people act independently on the basis of full and relevant information (Weintraub, 1985). These assumptions are viewed as self-evident truth statements to enable the mathematical calculability of consumer choice. Accordingly, consumer choice is the result of preferences (what a consumer thinks) and how a consumer acts based upon these preferences to maximize his or her utility. Consumer utility and firm profit maximization meet at a point of equilibrium where economic forces are in balance. Although equilibrium is a useful tool in economic theory, absolute balance in real markets is improbable. Equilibrium is elusive because consumer choice is invariably complex involving a host of interdependent factors including money prices and value assessments.

Economic calculation is most famously attributed to the Austrian economist Ludwig von Mises. Mises (1920) argued for the supremacy of economic calculation through monetary free market exchange because it permits accurate comparison of heterogeneous goods by consumers with incomplete information and unique preferences. Thus, prices signal to buyers and sellers the relative value of products (and their alternatives) enabling efficient, utility maximizing rational action.

Money is the common denominator for products entered into accountancy and exchanged in markets; money prices are therefore the exchange ratio between two goods (the product and money) at the instant of transaction. Prices are negotiated between buyers and sellers (although individual consumers seldom influence the price of a good or service) and once the transaction takes place, are regarded as historical facts. On the contrary, the determination of value is inherently subjective and contextual because there is no common standard of value. In this way, the study of markets is the study of exchange relationships—how need-satisfying products are allocated between producers and consumers.
With this in mind, the consumer, though governed by the innate predator-subject condition of being and intrinsic budgetary constraints, enters the market as a free-agent amidst logics of production that seek to direct action to those practices that yield returns for producers. Again, we should be mindful here that producers depend upon consumers for their demand—the market incentivizes producers to create products desired by consumers and provides a medium for the efficient assessment and exchange of value. Any surpluses collected by producers or consumers are theoretically transient as the price mechanism in free-markets acts as a knowledge surrogate for all transactions in an economy.

Market exchanges may indeed be freely-entered social contracts between buyers and sellers, but it is also the very action that binds consumers to the market by virtue of their consumer subject position. Here, we see the effect of an ensemble of paradoxes integral to capitalist production, what Harvey (2014) calls the contradictions of “social reproduction” and “freedom and domination.” Regarding the latter, Harvey states: “There is, plainly, a whale of a contradiction here. Freedom and domination go hand in hand. There is no such thing as freedom that does not in some way have to deal in the dark arts of domination” (p. 203). Although the market is pronounced as a perfect distributor of resources in an economy, it is also a useful tool to justify a paradoxical ideology of market-pursuant rational action.

Consumers in today’s market society are divorced from their land and the means of production and alienated from their labor; therefore, they must enter the “marketplace” to acquire goods and services to satiate their needs and desires dictated to them by nature and society (socially constructed needs). Recall that the biological consumer cannot produce what it needs on its own;

---

25 In non-market societies this was not the case. There were more direct connections between people and the goods they used in daily life. Most of the goods produced in non-market societies were made or cultivated by consumers themselves for their own consumption. Production relations were more transparent and so people had much more information about the world of goods. There was no need for marketing because meaning was already embedded in goods as a part of their production (Jhally, 2006a).
the same is true for citizens in a market society. Today’s market consumer must engage in market exchanges to obtain the things he or she desires or needs—markets (and money prices) are the primary tools to assess value and the medium through which consumption decisions are adjudicated. In this way, markets “interpellate” producers and consumers as subjects who, in turn, regard themselves as subject to the market. Interpellation, a term popularized by the French philosopher Louis Althusser (1972), is the process by which people recognize themselves as subjects through dialectical ideological and repressive apparatuses. In this way, the market consumer is transformed into a subject by a repressive market society which encompasses all the resources needed for his or her well-being and a popular ideology that views markets as perfect arbiters of value.

Like value, needs are not created in a vacuum—they have been described as socially constructed, and culture and politics can shape them as well. Savvy producers know this and inscribe the market with discourses that distort the perception of what is “need” and what is “want” to style consumer demand to ideal (profitable) proportions. Moreover, in the information age, the consumer is transformed into a commodity. The recording of consumer meta-data has created an industry of its own, influencing practices as disparate as national security and relationship marketing. In sport, highly-spectacularized mega-events act as massive consumer aggregators where revenues from ticket sales are dwarfed in comparison to sponsorship and media rights that seek to leverage the “watching-power” (Jhally, 2006c) of those in attendance and tuning-in via myriad forms of media. No longer can consumer exploitation be addressed in the singular—consumption of a commodity may have initially defined the consumer, but today’s consumer has become the most valuable commodity for innovative producer “omnivores” who capitalize on consumer demand (e.g., ticket sales) and the productive power of mass-consumption (e.g., sales of sponsorship and media rights).

Today more than ever, the consumer is positioned in an economic food chain where needs are being framed by a host of discourses. Freedom is located inside consumer choice, but it is a
contingent freedom constituted within, and constitutive of, the market. The consumer-subject is generally free to select among a vast assortment of commodities (subject to one’s budget constraints), but it has become exceedingly difficult to avoid the need to engage in market-based exchanges or shelter oneself from marketing discourses aimed at directing activity to the market. Generally speaking, in this dissertation I explore how sport consumer research mediates this process.

So, what can be gleaned from this discussion in context of sport consumption? For most, sport does not create urgent biological needs; however, sport is significant in other ways. Setting aside the economic value that arguably favors producers, sport presents discernable social, political, and cultural value to consumers. Regarding the latter, it has been argued that sport acts as a “dream factory” for the consuming masses (Powdermaker, 1950) and is well established alongside Hollywood as a major player in the culture industry (Andrews, 2006). Therefore, managing the marketing of sport necessitates an understanding of a wide range of consumer and contextual variables to articulate complimentary symbols and images that emphasis its social, political, and cultural significance and meaning.

Recall that the use-value of cultural commodities is the meaning derived through their possession or consummation. Whereas other commodities are stripped of their meaning through the alienating practices of capitalist production, sport retains some of its inherent meaning because it takes place almost exclusively in the public sphere. Therefore, sport consumer research has a multitude of symbols and images at its disposal, both real and imagined, on which to base its theoretical development and managerial relevance. Not all scholars agree with this assertion, however. For instance, Sandvoss (2003) argued that football has no pre-given meaning as the communication of the spectacle takes priority over participation and experience. In this view, some contend that there is a need to reconsider the meanings, experiences, and patterns of consumption.

26 On the contrary, the marketing of a soft-drink plays more to a consumer’s biological needs, for example.
adopted by contemporary sport fans (Crawford, 2004). An important piece of this project is to examine the imagery and symbolism advanced through sport consumer research discourses to explore how certain images become favored over others. Whether this imagery is grounded in some preexistent immanent meaning or is transcendentally fabricated is an ancillary concern.

**Why Research on Sport Management? Why Now?**

Sport is a particularly interesting setting to study consumption for several reasons. Plainly, there is something about sport that draws people in through diverse forms of engagements, and usually a single engagement alone is not enough to satisfy their interest. On the contrary, in many instances one’s first engagement with sport causes a cascade of attraction that never ends. Schilling and Mellor (2014) argue that for many, sport is a sacred phenomenon, even in absence of religious provenance:

> Here, while such phenomena may be explicitly secular, in the sense that they have no direct or indirect connection to religious commitments or communities, they nonetheless suggest elements of life set apart from the profane or mundane dimensions of workaday existence; elements evident in the fact that many people experience sporting ‘communion,’ ‘pilgrimages’ and ‘sacrifices’ as extraordinarily important. (p. 352)

---

27 Sport is actually a difficult thing to define, and when attempting to define it, it is necessary to first distinguish it from games. Bernard Suits’ (1978) conception of ‘lusory attitude,’ which according to him is necessary to understand the play of a game, is also helpful in advancing a definition of sport. A lusory attitude is essentially the acceptance, by a player, of the rules of a game to enable the ensuing experience of play. For example, a soccer player must accept the rules of soccer—to not use one’s hands, to stay onside and inbounds, etc.—to facilitate the game of soccer and enjoy the ludic experience derived from play. Accordingly, sport too, as a derivative of play, is a lusory endeavor. Connor (2011), forwarding a philosophy of sport, contends that what makes sport distinct from games is the involvement of the body, which has a tendency to tire out. Thus, sport is a game involving physical exercise (Connor, 2011). We should add, that sport is also something that can be watched, but, to derive a similar play-like experience, watchers must adopt a similar lusory attitude. Perhaps, this is what makes sport a uniquely human phenomenon—to exist it must have a distinct set of rules and then it must be played.
Although many are keen to applaud (or worship) sport as a sacred and defining element of modern society, Schilling and Mellor (2014) contend that this framing is based on strongly polarized conceptions of “the extraordinary and profane” (p. 352) and are thus likely to elicit contradictory reactions of conflict or accommodation.

The spectacularization and distributive power of modern media, coupled with sport’s broad appeal and elevation to the realm of the sacred, has undoubtedly contributed to the extraordinary growth of the sports industry especially over the last decade amidst global market volatility.28 With this in mind, one might question how academic research has accommodated the extraordinary increase in the economic and cultural significance of sport. To wit, how has the popularity of sport influenced the empirical material available to researchers and restrained the theoretical diversity used to explore the phenomena? That is to say, since the majority of sport research has been conducted during a period when sport has grown in popularity and significance, the material available to researchers has been coupled (and thus affected by) to this growth. Perhaps our understanding of the significance of sport is at least partly to do with its apparent ability to grow, attributed to both sport’s “natural” dominion over man and the capacity for marketing managers to effectively promote its most popular virtues.

On the other hand, if sport is stripped of its many modern encumbrances and reduced to its most basic form as play, an activity that is free, separate, uncertain, unproductive, and simultaneously engrossing and make-believe (Caillois, 1961; Huizinga, 1950), transforming sport engagements into pecuniary consumption is a bit uncanny. While these primitive play qualities in many ways endow sports with the very things required to elevate its social, cultural, and economic status, it is often marketed as a meaningful and serious activity that is anything but play. Thus, the marketing of

28 The value of the sports market will likely top $90 billion by 2017, almost double its 2005 valuation (Collignon & Sultan, 2012).
“play” as “sport” suggests there is something to be gained through the transformation—perhaps it is that *play is free* and *sport must be consumed*. Conceivably, we might reconcile the observed disparity between marketized sport and primitive play by examining the images and explanations of the sport consumer as conceived by sport researchers.

Although I am primarily concerned with renderings of the consumer produced by sport management researchers, they are not the only scholars who use consumer models and typologies to aid scholarly inquiry; critical/cultural studies have put forth their own sport consumer models, albeit for different aims. There are notable similarities with regard to the use of such models and typologies: both camps seek to understand who the consumer is and, in so doing, must adopt some form of scientific reductionism to construct the explanatory model. Likewise, there are notable differences, including the sources from which the models are constructed and to what ends the models will ultimately serve. For example, models are created by assimilating knowledge of a historical practice, accentuating general traits, or aggregating particular empirical phenomenon (Shiner, 1975). Often, the source material drives the purpose; a model may serve as a general representation, heuristic device, or empirical-statistical tool for measurement and codification (Shiner, 1975). The distinction between these sources and uses may be subtle, but what each affects through scientific inquiry varies greatly.

Stewart, Smith, and Nicholson (2003) explain why consumer typologies are useful from a marketing management perspective:

The desire to understand the consumption patterns of sport consumers has been a longstanding goal for sport marketers. This goal has often been framed by typologies that aim to reveal the motivations and behaviors upon which to base segmentation models of sport consumption. (p. 215)
Research conducted by sport consumer researchers following the logical positivist approach most likely produce consumer typologies that fall within the empirical-statistical category. These models are formed by assimilating empirical phenomena to make *measurements, explanations, generalizations,* and/or *predictions.*

In sport management, sport consumer researchers have predominantly favored social-psychological approaches and models where sport consumers have been conceived as highly or lowly identified (Branscombe & Wann, 1991; Wann, Melnick, Russel, & Pease, 2001), complex and idiosyncratic (Stewart et al., 2003), or psychologically involved along a continuum of awareness, attraction, attachment, and allegiance (Funk & James, 2001, 2006), for example. In addition to providing ways for marketers to segment and target particular consumers, these models and typologies have also been used to explain the cultural and economic significance of sport as a positive externality or consequence of sport’s social value in fulfilling one’s needs for belonging, self-esteem, self-actualization, and vicarious achievement (see, e.g., Branscombe & Wann, 1991; Funk & James, 2001, 2006; Heere & James, 2007; Madrigal, 2001; Wann, 2006a, 2006b; Wann & Branscombe, 1993).

Conversely, from a socio-cultural perspective, the sport consumer has been conceptualized along two structuralist dimensions: *power* (the consumer as dominated or dominant) and *subjectivity* (the rational consumer or expressive consumer) (Horne, 2006). Subsequently, four distinct consumer images approximate the quadrants defined by the dimensional intersections: the consumer as *victim* (Sandvoss, 2003), the consumer as *rational actor* (Crawford, 2004), the consumer as *dupe* (King, 2002), and the consumer as *communicator* (Giulianotti, 2002). Whereas these particular renderings may have been motivated by humanist/critical paradigmatic aims, the images serve a similar function to those produced on behalf of the marketing and advertising industry (Horne, 2006) as discussed above.
The images advanced through these typologies and conceptual models of sport consumers have been tremendously influential in the field, due in part to the extraordinary popularity and growth of sport consumer research as an area of sport management inquiry. For instance, more than half of the articles published in JSM between 2008 and 2012 can be classified as marketing or consumer behavior research (Brandon-Lai, Kim, & James, 2014). Upon closer examination, however, while calls for interdisciplinary collaboration and diverse perspectives abound (see Amis & Silk, 2005; Chalip, 1997; Frisby, 2005; Frisby, Reid, Millar, & Hoeber, 2005; Kerwin & Hoeber, 2015; Markula & Friend, 2005; Newman, 2014; Olafson 1990, 1995; Rinehart, 2005; Singer, 2005; Skinner & Edwards, 2005), the breadth of ideas circulated by sport management researchers appears to be contracting by way of self-citation and theoretical orthodoxy.

A similar trend was found among the last decade of publications in four sport management journals: JSM, ESMQ, SMR, and International Journal of Sport Marketing and Sponsorship (IJSMS) (Newman, 2014). In these journals, Newman discerned a proclivity for reductionist approaches, significant increases in sport marketing and sport consumer research, and rising instances of self-referential citation. Thus, in order to publish in these journals it appears that scholars were obliged to “become entrepreneurs of a self-referential science” (Newman, 2014, p. 609). In this regard, Newman’s radical vision of the field as sport without management might have similarly been cast as sport without marketing. That is to say, alike captains of industry who use marketing to sustain economic growth in saturated markets, sport marketing and sport consumer research seems to have ensured its

---

20 Newman (2014) found that nearly 95% of all articles published in the four leading sport management journals [Journal of Sport Management (JSM), European Sport Management Quarterly (ESMQ), International Journal of Sport Marketing and Sponsorship (IJSMS), and Sport Management Review (SMR)] between 2003 and 2012 adhered to what he calls a “deductive, nomothetic epistemological approach” or located within the positivistic paradigm. Marketing research increased from 19% of all articles published in 2003 to 37% in 2012. When paired with sponsorship research, the percentage of articles surpassed 40% over the period. In regard to self-citation, JSM, ESMQ, and IJSMS comprised 49% of citations in JSM (26% were self-referential). For an extended discussion of bibliometric citations see Shilbury (2007, 2011).
own growth by serving managerial sensibilities and constructing a self-referential knowledge base where the currency exchanged is knowledge about how the sport consumer is likely to behave.

Regarding the timing of this study, there are risks to shying away from such critiques of sport management inquiry. First, nothing lasts forever. The ethics and ecological concerns of market-driven research aside, the market-based approach to sport management is inherently vulnerable to market fluctuations and failures, macroeconomic turbulence, and unanticipated changes in governance or State activity. Simply because post-positivistic sport marketing and consumer research is trendy now, does not mean it will be the trend in the future. Moreover, the sport consumer, though sometimes characterized as dupes (King, 2002), may not always tolerate the exploitative practices of marketized sport, from ticket sales to public subsidies of sport stadiums to sponsorship clutter. Thus, the field may need to alter both its market focus and onto-epistemic homophily to adapt to an evolving sport landscape not undergirded by profit maximization schemes, requiring instead researcher creativity and imagination.

Secondly, the field of sport management is arguably still in its adolescence, yet to achieve an identity of its own. If scholars dig in here with sights firmly fixed on increasing the economic value of mass-consumed spectator sports, they also act to marginalize inquiry into the experiential, developmental, and critical aspects of sport management and administration. Moreover, as the field advances a model of sport subservient to the market, it also decreases the public’s chances for informal sport engagements and conceals many of the excesses (economic and ecological) already reaching critical mass in commercialized sport.

We should be mindful, however, that we are only able to critique this research orthodoxy now that the field is somewhat established and can tolerate a range of competing philosophical perspectives. Criticism should not seek to marginalize the decades of hard work by many to establish sport management as a viable and distinct field, during which certain lines had to be
drawn and compromises made. Perhaps though, now that the field can stand on its own, it is time to have honest discussions about what the field should look like, and for scholars to be bold enough to critique the work that has become generally associated with the study of sport management. That is to say, a field can be a place of common meaning systems (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Scott & Meyer, 1983) or a dynamic social arena rife with conflict, competition, and struggles for dominance (Bourdieu, 1971, 1984; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). I use the term “field” extensively throughout this project to refer both to the field of sport management (as a distinct educational pathway, professional practice, and area of research) and, adopting an expressly Foucauldian interpretation, the normalized codes of conduct among sport consumer researchers that govern the production of scientific knowledge. In this way, a field may be viewed as consisting of epistemological domains or knowledge cultures that create the boundaries and conditions for the creation of knowledge at a given time and place. What the field of sport management will look like in the future is up to what researchers do next. The first step towards this future is to assess where we are now, which necessitates a careful look into the past.

With this in mind, the four academic journals that I examined in this study—what I see as instructive representations of the epistemic tendencies of contemporary sport management scholarship—are ripe for review, analysis, and critique. My objective is to explore how particular knowledge cultures about sport consumption and consumer identities have come to be through (and as) sport management research. That is, as consumers and consumption activities have taken center stage in sport management research, researchers have also produced normative conceptualizations of consumption activities and idealized consumer forms. In many instances, the consumer has been presented as “new” or “modern,” denoting that the present version is somehow different than
previous iterations. Some may argue that images of the “new consumer” are simply a reflection of changing cultural values; however, I contend these images are also constructed by, and constitutive of, sport consumer research discourses that exert normative pressures that prevent otherwise competing or alternate portrayals.

The Road Ahead

To review, in this dissertation I propose to examine the emergence of a sport consumer knowledge culture constituted by, and constitutive of, academic discourses. It has been stated that knowledge cultures produce epistemological boundaries that condition (enable and limit) the emergence of particular truth and meaning claims about society (Somers, 1996). In this project, I interrogate these ways of thinking about truth and knowledge as well as the discourse, images, and symbols contained in four prominent sport management research journals.

To pursue the objectives of understanding how particular versions of the sport consumer have been made to appear solid as well as how the research discourse has legitimized certain ways of knowing over others, a particular analytical framework is required. This entails, first, outlining the necessary context and conceptual tools to appreciate how the consumer is rendered in sport management discourse. Second, also required is an understanding of the kind of discursive practices involved in the constitution of social science truths and knowledge. Third, identification of the various consumer images advanced by sport management discourses and the normative practices which constitute them as “ideals.” And lastly, an understanding of the interests these discourses seek to address (i.e., who stands to gain or lose).

To summarize, sport consumer researchers produce images of ideal consumers presented as an edifice of a marketing theology held captive by managerial relevance. This characterization echoes Horne’s (2006) depiction of sport marketing as that which seeks to understand who the sport

---

consumer is in order to influence and control his or her consumption behavior. Accordingly, specific consumer images are presented as idealizations grounded in empirical phenomena, though they invariably favor the researcher’s axiological biases or marketing’s epistemological rationality. In these studies, researchers attempt to locate sport fans, spectators, and consumers (the terms are often used interchangeably) in specific categories that fail to account for the differences in sport-based engagements and plurality of sport ‘consumer’ experiences.

Instead of debating the veracity of these renderings, I adopt a Foucauldian perspective to ask what purposes these consumer representations serve. To do this, it is first necessary to understand that all forms of human behavior are subject to modalities of governance (Foucault, 1981; Miller & Rose, 1990). Second, modern power is not achieved through discipline or repression, but rather by making human beings into subjects and instruments of governance. Foucault pioneered the theorization of modern power through his research on prison surveillance, school discipline, administrative systems, and the promotion of norms about bodily conduct. In so doing, he offered an alternative intelligibility of the sciences, particularly psychology, psychoanalysis, medicine, and criminology, and their power to define norms of behavior and deviance. By enacting a form of “bio-power,” bodies of knowledge subjugate physical bodies, making them behave in expected way. This modern form of power diverging, but does not completely supplant pre-modern power. Thus, disciplinary and bio-power together create a “discursive practice” which is constantly in flux, defining what is normal, acceptable, desirable, and deviant (Foucault, 1977a).

Foucault recognized, however, that modern power is not just negative and repressive, but can also be productive, rendering new forms of social action and resistance. Foucault (1977a) writes:

We must cease once and for all to describe the effects of power in negative terms: it ‘excludes’, it ‘represses’, it ‘censors’, it ‘abstracts’, it ‘masks’, it ‘conceals’. In fact power
produces; it produces reality; it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth. The
individual and the knowledge that may be gained of him belong to this production (p. 194)
Consequently, Foucault’s theoretical and methodological perspective has been widely used to
examine and critique how certain paradigms of knowledge and practice have been constituted as well
as how scientific discourses become imbued with power.

Thus, sport marketing and consumer research, specifically as I have characterized it above,
may be viewed as an apparatus of governance whereby images of the consumer are constructed
through discourses that serve the various interests of power (Horne, 2006; Miller & Rose, 1997). To
this end, my argument proceeds in the following manner. Chapter 2 begins with a description of the
political-economic constitution of the modern sport consumer. I then discuss how social science in
general and sport consumer research in particular has rendered the sport consumer as the object and
subject of academic inquiry and managerial practice. I conclude the chapter with an exposition of
what an alternate approach to studying the consumer might entail. Chapter 3 begins with an
explication of the metaphysical and theoretical premise of Foucault’s genealogical method that I
propose as an interpretive analytical tool to examine a selection of sport management research texts
pertaining to the sport consumer. I conclude the chapter with an explanation of the mechanics of
Foucauldian Discourse Analysis with specific consideration for selecting academic research articles
as the empirical material in this project. The remaining chapters walk through the discursive analysis
associated with each research question before closing with a discussion and interpretation of
findings, implications for the field, and directions for the future in the final chapter.

In the end, I hope my dissertation advances critical thinking about the ways normative and
idealized accounts of sport-based engagements are embedded within dominant ideologies and the
production of knowledge through scientific discourse. If I am successful, I will avoid adding yet
another layer of commentary that impedes the ability to detect the forces that structure our social
reality, and by sifting through the many layers of epistemological sedimentation, provide some clarity to our present condition.
CHAPTER 2
KNOWING THE SPORT CONSUMER:
TOWARD A GENEALOGICAL APPROACH

Context for a Genealogy

In this chapter, I provide the political-economic context and conceptual tools needed to discern the complex assemblage of discursive practices\(^{31}\) constituted within, and constitutive of, the sport consumer research knowledge base. Context, however useful in providing a “general sense” of a thing, does not have jurisdiction in a genealogy. As I will discuss later, the genealogical approach requires a knowledge of matters, but also the ability to bracket or decontextualize discourse from claims of truth and meaning to achieve a “pure description of discursive events” (Foucault, 1972, p. 27). I provide context then, in a similar manner to one conducting a genealogy of his or her “family-tree” might use knowledge of the past to imagine what his or her ancestors might have actually been like.

My contextual description transitions to a discussion of knowledge and science more generally, and how discourses have become involved in the governance and regulation of society. I close the chapter by identifying several ways to reexamine the sport consumer as a product of such discourses. I explicate these various avenues for inquiry to demonstrate how a genealogical analysis can assist in the understanding of a discursive phenomenon.

\(^{31}\) Foucault emphasized that a discourse is not only a group of statements, but also the practices that bring about those statements (Foucault, 1972). Foucault argued that the production of discourse in each society is controlled and redistributed by certain procedures (Ahl, 2002). These procedures include both efforts to exclude and include. By exclusion, Foucault observed that at any given period one cannot speak about everything. In turn, efforts are made to apply reason (and reject folly) to delineate that which is true from that which is false (i.e., what counts as knowledge). For Foucault, inclusion is the set of internal rules for the classification, ordering, and distribution of knowledge. Every knowledge culture applies rules for deciding what discourses are important and therefore, what gets reproduced and circulated.
Expansion of Leisure Class Values

Modern consumption, as the pinnacle of economic expression and chief instrument for the demonstration of social status, has a rather interesting history that began to take root in the 17th Century. The preeminent economic thinkers of the day saw a clear connection between thrift and prosperity. Mercantilists reigned supreme in this pre-industrial society where production (as opposed to consumption) was viewed as the pathway to international competitive advantage and in turn, the wealth of nations. Among the emerging merchant class, luxury consumption was overtly condemned despite the obvious hypocrisy of “ostentatious economic display and conspicuous waste” (Mason, 1998, p. 1) pervasive among the aristocracy and ruling elite.

In an overt rejection of Mercantilist prudence, Bernard Mandeville’s (1714) *The Fable of the Bees* attracted immediate attention for his passionate defense of conspicuous consumption. Mandeville argued that consumption of luxury goods on a grand scale was a competitive practice in itself. Mandeville insisted that people should be viewed not as they are, but as they appear to be. In this regard, luxury consumption is a strategic tactic to impress and influence others. Besides the benefits afforded through the “trickle down” effect of consumption, Mandeville believed that “consumption-as-emulation” encouraged people to work harder.

Although Mandeville’s rousing was largely rejected at the time, his writings influenced several other prominent economic theories including those espoused by Adam Smith in his famous text *The Wealth of Nations* (1976/1776). While hostile to Mandeville’s views of indulgent luxury consumption and its influence on the public good, Smith recognized that vanity (i.e., self-interest) had some economic merit. Smith thought that the purchase and possession of certain commodities beyond those required for subsistence were important determinants of social progress. So, while

---

32 Roger Mason’s (1998) work on the economics of conspicuous consumption is particularly useful in tracing the evolution of modern consumer practices.
vanity, the obsessive desire for the esteem and admiration of others, was opposed to the orthodox moral and religious beliefs of the day, Smith viewed the self-interest that motivates people to pursue the objects of their desire through exchange as instrumental to the efficient functioning of a market society.

Over the next century, economists shied away from serious commentaries on the morality of luxury expenditures and status-motived consumption until Thorstein Veblen’s The Theory of the Leisure Class (2007/1899) captured the public’s attention. Among other institutionalists, Veblen’s work stemmed from a perceived incapacity of existing economic theory to explain the complexities of modern economic life, complicated by the technological innovation and mechanization of production achieved during the Industrial Revolution. Veblen rejected classical economics’ passive treatment of man as a “lightning calculator” unaffected by his or her surroundings in favor of an image of man as an active contender within his or her environment who could influence both regimes of production and practices of consumption. To Veblen, an individual’s consumption was shaped as much by his or her need to secure status within society as the demands of basic subsistence. At the turn of the 20th Century, wealth was the primary indicator of economic success, where “the appearance of success had become more important than the substance” (Mason, 1998, p. 51, emphasis in original).

Veblen (2007/1899) offered two ways to achieve the ostentatious display of wealth: conspicuous leisure (the patent ability to waste time) and conspicuous consumption (the consumption of expensive and superfluous products). Moreover, he observed that with a general improvement in the quality of life of the general population, people had greater sums of discretionary income. Since individuals will do what they can to maintain or improve their status in society, although spending on essential goods and services will increase with rising income, so will expenditures on products whose sole purpose is to reflect one’s capacity for spending (i.e., the display of wealth). Here, Veblen
echoed Mandeville’s emulation thesis, stating, “Among the motives which lead men to accumulate wealth, the primacy, both in scope and intensity, therefore, continue to belong to this motive of pecuniary emulation” (2007/1899, p. 27). Thus, Veblen and his Institutionalist contemporaries provided a new formulation of value existing alongside Marx’s conception of use-value (consumer value) and exchange-value (producer value). In addition to these, Veblen offered _prestige value_, derived from the social consumption of goods, to explain his observations of market behavior and consumer demand (Keasbey, 1903).

Stalled by the massive engagements of the two World Wars, the expansion of consumer culture remained idle for much of the first half of the 20th Century until allied troops returned home victorious from the Second World War. Improved productivity in manufacturing and rising wages meant that people had more leisure time and money to consume things for other than purely utilitarian reasons. In turn, the first era of generalized conspicuous consumption was well-established by the 1950s—when producers fully acknowledged the marketing value of promoting products as symbols of social status (Mason, 1998).

In the 1970s and 1980s, traditional norms that governed relations among and between social classes began to erode, replaced by more informal mechanisms such as “lifestyle” and other patterns of consumption (Mason, 1998). The use of products as markers of social differences and status communicators ushered in new interpretations of consumption (e.g., Baudrillard, 2004/1970; Bourdieu, 1984) and greater preoccupation with style (e.g., Featherstone, 1991; Ewen, 1976). In this emerging age of consumption, consumers were free to assert their social status and choose their social memberships. Consumer trends, such as “conforming consumption” (i.e., the bandwagon effect; Hirschman, 1985) became serious economic phenomena capable of producing drastic changes in consumer demand in response to just a few fad or fashion leaders. These information cascades can trigger sharp changes in consumer demand, disruptions in production, and escalation
of market prices. In response to the market volatility these sporadic and unpredictable shifts in consumer demand could cause, now characteristic of contemporary consumption practices, marketers and advertisers needed to come up new strategies to drive consumers to their brands.

**From Conspicuous Consumption to Citizen-Consumers**

Featherstone (1991) remarked that debates about consumer culture have grown from trivial academic disputes to matters of public concern. Central to this debate is how shopping increasingly factors into everyday activities from the structuring of work and leisure time to civic participation and governance. Indeed, it has been argued that the particular mode of late-capitalism practiced among the industrialized countries today leaves individuals with few alternatives for civic participation—for citizens in an increasingly non-representative society, consuming (buycotting) or refusing to consume (boycotting) are some of the few ways one can participate in his or her own governance (Stolle, Hooghe, & Micheletti, 2005).

Consumption as a form of political participation, however, is nothing new. The poem “I Want to Be a Consumer” by Patrick Barrington, published in a 1934 issue of *Punch,*

33 This poem was found on the Mises Institute Website: https://mises.org/blog/i-want-be-consumer

...demonstrates how consumption was a trait of a dutiful citizen in the post-Depression U.S. social order. An excerpt from the poem is provided below.

“I want to be a Consumer
And do my duty well;
For that is the thing that is needed most,
I’ve heard Economists tell.
I’ve made up my mind,” the lad was heard,
As he lit a cigar, to say;
“I want to be a Consumer, Sir,
And I want to begin today.”

Though written over 80 years ago, the lad in this poem is as illustrative of an idealized Keynesian consumer as it is applicable to today’s citizen faced with the contraction of economics, politics, culture, and the public intellect into a flattened consumer society.

Calls for citizens to engage in consumption have been used more recently to overcome the fear and anxiety linked to acts of terror and growing uncertainty of global market volatility. In an oft-cited example, President George W. Bush, commenting on the post-9/11 War on Terror and the general state of the U.S. economy, instructed all Americans “to go shopping more” (President Bush’s News Conference Transcript, 2006). Similarly, Newman and Giardina (2011) surmised that to be a citizen in a liberal democracy⁴⁴ is first and foremost to be a “good” consumer of its goods, images, and experiences. Thus, in addition to paying taxes, it can be said that good citizens of the State engage in consumer activities to keep the circulation of capital flowing through the coffers of the global financial system. In turn, the citizen’s connection to the State is relaxed; citizenship is increasingly realized in a variety of private, corporate, and public practices relating to working and shopping (Rose, 1999).

As I described in the preceding chapter, consumption is further accelerated by marketing practices that transform “wants” into “needs” in the mind of consumers (Horne, 2006). Adorno and Horkheimer (1977) argue that this transition happens even though consumers see through false needs and the consumption of products to satiate them. Adorno (1951/1999) more despairingly argued that the display of freedom of choice and freedom to choose may be all that is left of freedom. This statement may be interpreted one of two ways. First, in a market society nearly every

---

⁴⁴ This is an interpretation of Newman and Giardina’s (2011) “NASCAR Nation,” albeit a neoconservative “dreamland” is also instructive of the contemporary mode of U.S. democratic governance.
facet of life is open to the market, and so people govern themselves through exchange. Therefore, to participate in society is literally to choose between consumption alternatives. Secondly, it could be argued that citizens are increasingly subordinated to special interests on matters relating to their own governance, and so the only freedom they enjoy is that which is exercised in consumer choice concerning the things they personally consume.

Although it is unclear if the false compensations offered by consumer choice and consumer culture signal the loss of human authenticity (see Slater, 1997), it is apparent that consumption has moved to the forefront of civil society as an apparatus of governance, affecting how individuals think, act, and relate as citizens. However, if the technocratic intermediation of marketing and advertising strategies is imbricated in the operation of governance, compelling people to enter into market exchanges with public and private entities that are unnecessary, it is vital to understand how these practices work by advancing exaggerated images of citizen-consumers and ideal consumption behaviors.

Marketing for a Consumer Society

As market sensibilities have grown in importance in modern society, so have scholars’ attempts to study the exchange of value and distribution of resources that comprise the economy. Marketing, however, has not been an easy term to define (Hunt, 1976)—over the years there have been many variations offered from a range of theoretical and practical perspectives. As an extension of economics, marketing is distinct by focusing on the general idea of exchange (Kotler & Levy, 1969). Marketing theory is not so much interested in the market transaction per se, but rather the exchange of value, which coincidently results in a market transaction (Luck, 1969).

The first definition accepted by the American Marketing Association (AMA) in 1937 defined marketing as “business activities involved in the flow of goods and services from production to consumption” (American Marketing Association, 2016). However, this definition soon started to
show its age as societal processes of conception, promotion, exchange, and distribution grew in importance (Hunt, 2010a). Witnessing that the definition of marketing also steered academic research agendas, efforts were taken to expand the definition while at the same time limiting the scope to processes that only involved the exchange of value (Hunt, 1976). The current definition of marketing adopted by AMA in 2013 still clings to this principal: “Marketing is the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large” (American Marketing Association, 2016).

As many within the marketing discipline worked towards and debated the merits of establishing marketing as a science (see Arnould & Thompson, 2005; Hunt, 1976, 1991, 2010a), a new vein of interest focused primarily on consumption behavior began to grow in popularity. Tucker (1967) observed that marketing academics studied consumers as fishermen study fish, rather than how marine biologists might approach the task. For instance, the belief that consumer needs are innate rather than socially constructed or marketer influenced (Belk, 1995) likened marketer-consumer relations to angling where marketers attempt to “lure” and then “hook” consumers. Although consumer research was first seen as a way to improve mass-marketing campaigns and train better, theoretically informed marketing managers, new approaches to consumer research were gradually developed. The view that consumers are self-interested, need-filling automatons was displaced by psycho-social models of consumer behavior and post-modern perspectives that illuminate the social construction of consumer experiences (Belk, 1995; Clayton, 1986; Fennell, 1986; Hirschman, 1986; Holbrook, 1986).

**Approaches to the Study of Consumption**

Approaches to the study consumption and consumer culture have been categorized according to three theoretical perspectives: the “production of consumption” approach, the “modes
of consumption” approach, and the “pleasures of consumption” approach (Horne, 2006). The “production of consumption” perspective views the prominence of consumption arising from an expansion of the scope of production to include the commodification of culture and leisure activities. Instead of consumption as an escape from work, it is argued that amusement and leisure under late-capitalism is really the prolongation of work (Horkheimer & Adorno, 1977). In this regard, consumption activities become increasingly analogous to what happens at work and so are less fulfilling, predictable, and ultimately disappointing.

The production of consumption view has elicited several key criticisms such as being overly deterministic, ignoring contextual specificity, and underplaying human agency. That is, the perspective fails to acknowledge how consumption itself, despite being the contrivance of production, can be a site of political action and resistance to market-driven sensibilities. Featherstone (1991) argued that critiques of the production of consumption thesis fostered alternate perspectives including the “modes of consumption” and “consuming dreams, images, and pleasures” approach.

The “modes of consumption” approach holds that people use consumption for myriad reasons, including the construction of identities, formation of social bonds, and display of differences (Horne, 2006). Here, consumer tastes and style foreground consumption as a “stylization of life” (Featherstone, 1991) through which the markers of class and other social groupings take shape. The tension created between market imperatives and consumer agency is the primary point of interest for researchers adopting this approach, although scholars have more recently observed that class consumption patterns are eroding in favor of more individualized consumer behavior (Cova & Cova, 2009, 2012; Warde, 2002). Somewhat ironically, the rise of the “self-conscious” consumer has materialized so that the majority of the population engages with consumer culture in similar ways
(Horne, 2006), which, while blurring the old class distinctions, reproduces a somewhat homogenous consumer society.

Lastly, the “pleasures of consumption” approach was derived from media and cultural studies in which the positive moments of consumption are celebrated (Horne, 2006). The pleasure perspective holds that while there are negative aspects of consumer culture, there are also positive moments of popular creativity and democratic aesthetics. In this regard, there is a dialectical consumption framework in which false consciousness (stemming from the satiation of “wants” marketed as “needs”) is counterbalanced by the potential for creative consumer engagements (Buck-Morss, 1991). However, it is often the case that such play-like or carnivalesque qualities of consumption are only temporary and serve as additional targets for marketer manipulation to compel consumers to conform to the social status quo (Horne, 2006).

Despite the seemingly duplicitous cycle housed within the “consumption-as-pleasure” narrative, the study of consumption in this vein has been dominated by researchers who subscribe to possessive individualism (Saunders, 1990) and notions of the extended self (Belk, 1988, 2013; Tian & Belk, 2005). Such conceptualizations promoting the intrinsic value of consumption are thought to subsequently encourage work and economic productivity in a “work-and-spend” culture (Cross, 1993; Schor, 1998, 2007). This defense is echoed in theories of conspicuous consumption as discussed earlier, whereby the virtue of luxury expenditures—the demonstration of social prestige through the display of material wealth—lies in the desire to emulate success and the hard work required to achieve it. Emulation, it is argued, encourages productivity throughout the classes, leaving everyone better off.

Much of the recent sport marketing and consumer behavior literature (c.f., Filo et al., 2009; Funk & James, 2001, 2006; Wann, 2006a, 2006b; Trail & James, 2001) appears to at least indirectly subscribe to the consumption as pleasure perspective, where consumption activities are viewed as a
mechanism for social belonging, affirming self-esteem, and living vicariously, for example. However, there are significant drawbacks to this approach. Horne (2006) contends that researchers in this tradition overwhelmingly focus on the spectacular as opposed to more mundane activities, which may overemphasize the positive influence of consummative behavior. Not only is there an infatuation with the more fantastic elements of sport consumption, but the industry itself has enjoyed tremendous growth especially over the last decade, which may have caused researchers to accentuate the positive aspects of consumption activities.

Secondly, sport marketing and consumer researchers tend to focus on the market value and pleasure causing effects of sport consumption, potentially overlooking consumption activities that contribute to alienation, austerity, exploitation, and anxiety (Horne, 2006; Jhally, 2006a; Kellner, 2003; Maguire, 2005; Newman & Giardina, 2011). Lastly, uncritical approaches to consumer culture ignore systemic social injustices linked to production despite expanding commodification and decreasing consumer protections (Warde, 2002). In sum, research in the “consumption as pleasure” tradition tends to emphasize the positive features of sport consumption and understate the costs of consumer culture excesses.

Retrenchment in the Social Sciences

Consumption is driven by two broadly conceived motives: the first are wants arising from a state of deprivation and the second is behavioral knowledge (Witt, 2001). With regard to the former, the biological need (innate want) to breathe air, drink aqueous solutions, eat food of a certain quality, and ingest medicine to treat an illness are the most literal forms of consumption where the thing desired is directly consumed. For other wants, direct inputs are not available and so people seek out implements or tools to bring about the desired effect. For instance, to stay warm in the winter people need clothing; to sleep people need shelter or a bed—in both cases the tool helps satiate the want, but the tool is not literally consumed. In addition, tools can serve multiple wants
simultaneously, such as a television satiating one’s desire for cognitive arousal and social status (Witt, 2001).

An important characteristic of a tool is that consumption of the tool itself is not determined by the relative deprivation of the underlying want—there are “independent, cognitively conditioned motives which rest in the individual perception of the instrumental relationship between tools and wants” (Witt, 2001, p. 27). The ability to recognize and make use of a tool to satiate desire is dependent on one’s consumption knowledge. Mankind’s consumption behavior is characterized by intense use of tools, which is suggestive of the human cognitive capacity. Thus, subjective knowledge of consumption technology directly influences consumption behavior (Witt, 2001).

For the biological consumer, consumption knowledge plays an important role in his or her survival and reproduction (see Figure 2). Recall that mankind’s biological existence depends on the consumption of other things it cannot produce, which it obtains from nature. However, mankind’s consumption is mediated by consumption knowledge obtained through trial and error, prior experience, social norms (i.e., best practices), and folklore, for example. Thus, consumption knowledge exchanged between primitive men and women (particularly the knowledge passed between an individual and society in various forms of discourse) mediates the dyadic relationship between nature and the need to ensure mankind’s survival (life or death) and reproduction.

![Figure 2. Primitive Man as Biological Consumer](image.png)
On the other hand, when the biological consumer is crossed with the market consumer, the relationship between the individual, society, and knowledge is reconfigured (see Figure 3). The functional characteristics of the market consumer have been established (i.e., the consumer in the distribution chain, as an object of marketing, and constituent of consumer demand); however, the relationship between the market consumer and scientific discourses needs a bit more development. Stuart Hall’s (1992) description of discourse is helpful in understanding how knowledge is communicated and translated by society:

A discourse is a group of statements which provides a language for talking about—i.e., a way of representing—a particular kind of knowledge about a topic. When statements about a topic are made within a particular discourse, the discourse makes it possible to construct the topic in a certain way. It also limits the other ways in which the topic can be constructed…. Discourse is about the production of knowledge through language. But it is itself produced by a practice: ‘discursive practice’—the practice of producing meaning. Since all social practices entail meaning, all practices have a discursive aspect. So discourse enters into and influences all social practices… (p. 291)

Accordingly, knowledge about consumers and the exchange of value is transmitted as discourse. However, unlike the biological consumer’s use of consumption knowledge, marketing discourses do not only serve mankind’s innate interests for survival and reproduction. In a market society, the market is the primary mediator between production and consumption. Therefore, marketing discourses convey knowledge about consumers to facilitate predictable market exchanges. Thus, market knowledge mediates the relationship between producers and consumers, using knowledge about consumers and society to shape the market.
Logical positivism, which undergirds most of modern marketing, favors the accretion and collection of empirical material to explain, predict, and control social phenomena (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Lincoln, Lynham, & Guba, 2011; Markula & Silk, 2011). Through mass distributed surveys, psychometric assessments, and (quasi)experimental research, responses and observations of vast groups of consumers are aggregated under the auspice of objectivity to determine “average,” “ideal,” or “common” conditions correlated to particular outcomes of interest. The truth claims generated from this kind of research and transmitted as knowledge through an array of discourses often expresses itself as a kind of abstracted ideal (the right-side of Figure 3), which over time can become normalized to form institutional benchmarks upon which future knowledge is constructed.

A similar argument has been made in the area of science and technology studies. Feenberg (2010) highlights the “social rationality” of scientific principles and practices to generalize forms of thought and action in society at large. Feenberg states that social rationality depends on three main principles: 1) the exchange of equivalents, 2) classification and application of rules, and 3)

---

38 I am admittedly glossing over an entanglement with modernity. This topic has been discussed widely in critical/cultural studies, science and technology studies, and biopolitics with competing definitions, significance, and implications (see, e.g., Feenberg, 2010; Latour, 1993, 2005; St. Pierre, 2011). My use of the term “modern” is a temporal indicator as it marks a shift in thinking where mankind was no longer at the whim of nature, but through superior intellect has become the master of the natural world. Epistemologically, modern refers to an approach to science and knowledge based on the systematic categorization of empirical material to explain, predict, and control natural and social phenomena.
optimization of effort and calculation of results. Thus, modern social life “appears to mirror scientific and technical procedures” (p. 159) adhering to principles that look rational. Latour (1993) argues, however, that such rationality is plagued by contradiction:

Yes, the scientific facts are indeed constructed, but they cannot be reduced to the social dimension because this dimension is populated by objects mobilized to construct it. Yes, those objects are real but they look so much like social actors that they cannot be reduced to the reality ‘out there’ invented by the philosophers of science. (p. 6)

In other words, although social scientists use standards for rationality to confirm their findings, this kind of validation actually hides the fact that scientific truths are constructed by society and narrated through discourse—“they are too social and too narrated to be truly natural” (Latour, 1993, p. 6).

Regarding marketing and consumer studies, the idealization of consumption behaviors and consumer images are expressly human. In this way, Foucault’s decree that the body is a central feature of all power relations has been welcomed by sport researchers who have long maligned the omission of the body (Andrews, 1993; Hargreaves, 1987) and promulgation of distorted and disembodied prototypes (Cole & Hribar, 1995). Interestingly, while such idealizations function by appearing to represent natural phenomena in “average” or “common” conditions, some of these idealized prototypes based on statistical averages do not and could never exist in a natural form. For example, Rose and Ogas (2016) recently argued against group statistics in the design of public education programs because it is “not mathematically permissible to use assessment instruments based on group averages to evaluate individuals” because they “rely on irremediable conceptual fallacies that render such evaluations questionable or even meaningless” (p. 9).

Accordingly, idealizations generated from aggregations of social behaviors or phenomena are based on a faulty logic that common, average, or natural conditions can be extrapolated or statistically calculated from data. This commentary, if correct, should create a massive upheaval
within the social sciences that is exceedingly reliant on mass-administered survey data and advanced statistical transformations to generate knowledge about social reality. While I am not advocating for a wholesale exodus away from foundational methodologies here, we should be at least suspicious (in an inquisitive way) of the claims that social science can produce any sort of “social truth.”

The questions which I would like to pose are, first, in the empirical study of sport consumer behavior, which is by and large reliant on foundationalist onto-epistemic methodology and aggregated data, what kind of ideal forms (i.e., consumer images) are offered in the research and what function do these representations serve? Second, if the decisions of sport management professionals within and beyond the academy are informed by these ideals (as representations of truth or “true” meaning), what effect does this have on the “good” conduct of sport, relations between sport producers and consumers, between consumers and consumer groups, and on individual identities?

Furthermore, what happens when managerial relevance is added as a goal of social science? As a predominantly neopositivistic, managerially relevant discipline (Holbrook, 1995), marketing must attend to this powerful influence as well. Holbrook elaborates why marketing is so often pegged to managerial sensibilities:

Marketing managers want research that improves their job performance by increasing profits. Profits hinge on sales. Sales depend on market share. Market share results from purchasing behavior. And purchasing behavior reflects brand choices.

---

36 Ontologically speaking, foundationalism assumes that there is a real reality apart from human understanding which acts as an ultimate grounding for knowledge (i.e., a foundation) based upon empirical evidence (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Lincoln, Lynham, & Guba, 2011).

37 Another question could be added: What should one do if he or she cannot find themselves in the representations (from a researcher or consumer perspective)? That is, what responsibility do researchers have to consumers to provide representations that are not merely representations?
Hence, serving managers implies building buyer-behavior choice models. Q.E.D.

End of story. (p. 78)

However, the potential economic value of marketing, albeit a potent catalyst for scholarly interest, does not fully explain its power over the consumer. As Foucault (1977) elaborated, the body (in this case the consumer) is not only part of an elaborate network of economic relations, but also in a system of meticulously prepared and calculated subjection. Because the consumer is a symbol of productive capital that can be studied, the consumer is a target for marketing managers on two fronts—promoting need and influencing the sale. To recontextualize Foucault’s central tenet, what makes the consumer so interesting to marketing researchers is possibly that he or she represents “both a productive body and a subjected body” (p. 26, emphasis added).

In this regard, what is really at stake in consumer research is not the veracity or generalizability of consumer typologies and models of buyer-behavior, but how these discourses act to regulate and discipline others. Simultaneously the subject and object of marketing inquiry, the consumer exists within a complex system of production, regulation, and exploitation. At the same time, when sport scholars uncritically accept sport consumer discourses as truth, they unwittingly reproduce a knowledge culture that advances a science that produces social knowledge that may be a distortion of reality.

**Contraction of Sport Management Research**

My project is based on an understanding that social science research discourses influence the way people think about themselves and their relationship to society. I have suggested that some sport consumer researchers may be involved in a tautological science that advances a knowledge

---

38 My use of tautological can be interpreted two ways. The first is in regard to the self-referential trend within sport management research. Such a practice is ‘tautological’ in the sense that the production of knowledge is achieved by
culture that treats sport engagements as pecuniary consumption and concomitantly produces images of sport consumers that serve managerial interests. I argued that this arrangement can be characterized under two fundamental contradictions of capitalism: “social reproduction” and “freedom-domination” (Harvey, 2014).

At this point the contraction of marketing research is becoming clear, through the steady advancement of the market into the academic domain where science has a monopoly on knowledge, working on the consumer to differentiate, stratify, and segment it according to particular logics. Deleuze and Guattari (1983, 1987) describe this characteristic practice of global capitalism as coding, operating through a dynamic process of territorialization, deterritorialization, and reterritorialization. In this way, the consumer (as an idea and corporeal expression) is squeezed from all sides; it is at once a biological manner of existence, a mode of citizenship, and a site of market, scientific, and managerial subjectivity.

In sport marketing and consumer research, for instance, scholars study sport consumers and produce knowledge about their behavior through the aggregation and analysis of predominantly survey-based, self-reported empirical phenomena. This knowledge is circulated as expert discourses through publications in peer-reviewed journals or presentations at academic conferences. Whether any given text or discourse is absorbed or rejected by a knowledge culture is left to be seen. However, collectively these texts represent how an interpretive community thinks about sport markets and their consumer constituents. Consumer images are formed through psychometric

...
modeling, categorizations and typologies, and patterns and enunciations within the texts that advance particular ideas about who the sport consumer is and the meaning he or she derives through sport encounters.

There are multiple characterizations of consumer research emanating from a variety of ontological, epistemological, and axiological perspectives which range in emphasis from managerial relevance (e.g., Howard, 1963) to the role of hedonic responses to consumption experiences (e.g., Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982; Redden & Steiner, 2000). Avoiding an unnecessarily lengthy explication of the differences between these disparate viewpoints, Holbrook’s (1995) rather broad characterization of consumer research is useful in bridging the chasms between the various approaches. Holbrook’s definition has seven parts (provided in full below):

1. Consumer research studies consumer behavior.
2. Consumer behavior entails consumption.
3. Consumption involves the acquisition, usage, and disposition of products.
4. Products are goods, services, ideas, events, or any other entities that can be acquired, used, or disposed of in ways that potentially provide value.
5. Value is a type of experience that occurs for some living organism when a goal is attained, a need is fulfilled, or a want is satisfied.
6. Such an achievement, fulfillment, or satisfaction achieves consummation.

---

Morris Holbrook is a tenured faculty member at the Columbia Business School. As a student of John Howard, Holbrook was trained in marketing theory from a neopositivistic perspective of buyer behavior, which guided much of his early work. In the mid-1980s however, Holbrook began to actively research the experiential aspects of consumer behavior and the culture of consumption, and publically challenge the overwhelmingly positivistic approach to marketing in which he had been instructed and that dominated the field (Holbrook, 1995). Therefore, Holbrook’s insights into the history and evolution of marketing are particularly useful to understand the scope and tensions within the field. Holbrook’s current research includes consumption experiences, nostalgia, communication effects, semiotics, and hermeneutics in marketing, as well as symbolic consumption in works of art, interpretive methods, techniques of visual representation, and aspects of consumer responses to pop culture and entertainment.
7. The process of consummation is therefore the fundamental subject for consumer research. (p. 87-88; emphasis in original)

In sum, Holbrook contends that consumer research is primarily concerned with the study of consummation (i.e., the achievement of value), since satisfaction is the goal pursued when people consume.

Supported by the proliferation of consumer studies emanating from a fecund interest in buyer-behavior choice models (Holbrook, 1995), the “consumer” label as it is used today appears to communicate a general identity applicable to all people, all the time. This usage, however, is not related to my earlier discussion of the biological consumer; rather, the modern consumer seems to function because individuals are primarily recognizable by the things they buy—for many, there is little else to prove they actually exist. Beyond the fact that shopping is an activity that increasingly consumes the waking hours of most people, the consumer label is rarely given much critical thought. For example, sport fans, participants, and spectators are often hastily grouped under the umbrella “sport consumers” as opposed to other more personal or accurate identifiers (Wann et al., 2001). What interests contemporary usage of the term may serve aside, it appears that some of the usage is simply out of habit.

In the most elementary sense, consumption has a clear beginning and end (even if the period between consummation and a new desire to consume is infinitesimal)—it starts with an impulse to consume and culminates with satisfaction or resource depletion. Consumption then, what one does when he or she consumes, describes a conditional state animated by a stimuli and disappearing when the stimuli is removed. Accordingly, human consumption explicitly upholds the Cartesian distinction between the mind (inward consciousness) and the body (outward reality). That is, a consuming subject consumes a consumption object, satiating a desire and discerning meaning from the experience. Thus, positivistic researchers can claim to produce objective knowledge by accurately
representing outward objects through rigorous scientific introspection of inward subjects. However, as Richard Rorty (1979, 1982) argued in the correspondence theory of knowledge, the gap between subject and object is false because it seeks to attain an accurate reflection of an objective reality in the subjective consciousness (Holbrook, 1995). Although the post-Cartesian debate was by no means solved by Rorty’s theory, his insight illuminates the way social scientists often conflate the subject-object distinction.

Decades before Rorty, Horkheimer and Adorno (1947/2002) postulated that Enlightenment thinking failed to improve the human state of being and instead, ushered in a new kind of barbarism evident in the dialectic between mankind’s domination of nature and society. The authors trace Enlightenment back to the split between nature and humankind, as man pursued a God-like sovereignty over the natural world and his own existence in it. Now separated, man could view nature objectively, dispelling fear of unknown natural phenomena and discarding subjective properties once attributed to nature as myth. The systematic categorization that followed created a bourgeois science ruled by notions of equivalence. Horkheimer and Adorno write:

[The] number became enlightenment’s canon…. It makes dissimilar things comparable by reducing them to abstract quantities. For the Enlightenment, anything which cannot be resolved into numbers, and ultimately into one is illusion; modern positivism consigns it to poetry…. But the myths which fell victim to the Enlightenment were themselves its products. The scientific calculation of events annuls the account of them which thought had once given in myth. (p. 4-5)

However, there is a price to such calculation. As man is never truly separate from the nature he seeks to dominate, his calculable domination extends to the thinking subject itself. Accordingly, the subject and object are nullified—the abstract self is confronted with nothing but abstracted material which cancels each other out. Therefore, Horkheimer and Adorno conclude:
The reduction of thought to a mathematical apparatus condemns the world to be its own measure. What appears as the triumph of subjectivity, the subjection of all existing things to logical formalism, is bought with the obedient subordination of reason to what is immediately at hand (p. 20)

Similarly, today’s prolific use of the term “consumer” by social scientists also conflates the Cartesian distinction and contracts the dialectic upon itself. The consumer as both the object of study and managerial practice, identifiable by the things it consumes and what it does when it consumes them, reducing vast groups of meaning-making subjects into a single site of subjectivity and the source of surplus value. In this regard, the Cartesian distinction between subject and object no longer exists; the consumer is simultaneously the subject and object of consumer research and managerial praxis. In other words, consumer researchers seek to know the consumer—what motivates their behavior, what meaning they derive from consumption experiences, and what variables influence the probability of future consumption, for example—to generate theories and implications that advance the knowledge base or may be useful to managers. From one perspective, the consumer is the object of consumer research, standing between production and commercial profit; exploring how the consumer fits in the distribution chain to achieve managerial objectives objectifies him or her. On the other hand, within consumer research, the consumer is often depicted as a rational subject, making purchase decisions regarding consumption objects. Here the delineation is quite straightforward. Lastly, when consumer research is espoused as knowledge (in both academic and practical settings), the consumer is made subject to these discourses by being known, typified, or idealized in particular ways.

The distinction is subtle, but vitally important for describing the contemporary relations between people, between consumers and producers, and increasingly between citizens and the State. In a literal sense, consumption is something a body does; in an ontological sense, within a consumer
society consumption is something a body is. Consumption therefore is no longer a conditional state, but a condition to describe the state of being of a citizen in a market society.

Although it may seem to some that assigning such importance to a linguistic implement is an exaggeration of its significance, I believe that thinking of people as consumers first has had and continues to exert a significant impact on the management of sport in particular and society in general. Kjellberg and Helgesson (2006) contend that the economic and marketing sciences perform markets through normalized practices and representational images that shape exchange. While it is outside the scope of this project to trace the pathways through which a text or collection of texts perform material relations and realities, the examination of texts for claims of knowledge, truth, and meaning are well within purvey.

Rendering Consumption with Discourse

Not all discourses shape consumption knowledge and practices in the same way or to the same effect. The ensemble of discursive practices present in a particular setting or at a particular time establishes the roles consumers play in society, what consumption activities are acceptable or even possible, and what entities stand to gain and lose through consummative behavior and disparate relations of information and power. These discursive movements influence what knowledges cultures become dominant and provide “the raw materials” (Abend, 2008) from which they are made.

Working towards my specific line of genealogical inquiry, I identified four sources of discourse that provide additional context and offer multiple avenues for genealogical investigation of their discursive power. It must be said that these sources are themselves simplified representations of an infinitely complex discursive process. No existing practice, event, action, organization, or

---

41 Performativity has been a topic of interest in science and technology studies for some time. Here, Kjellberg and Helgesson (2006) describe performativity as “the import of economic ideas on the shaping of markets” (Callon, 1998; MacKenzie, 2003).
group fits neatly into any one category. These categories, therefore, are necessary, but not real. I briefly discuss each of these sources of consumer discourse below and provide a more thorough genealogical outline of the fourth in the next chapter.

**Advanced Liberalism: The Enterprise Society and the Citizen-Consumer**

The first abundant source of discursive influence undergirds the entire political-economic landscape of the late-19th through the early-21st Century, redefining the relationship between State governance, the economy, and the social relations of citizens. The aspect of advanced (or neo-) liberalism most relevant here is the link between the marketization of society and the concomitant establishment of the citizen-consumer, constituting a new form of “governmentality.” In this view, Rose (1999) suggests that freedom is not the opposite of government, but one of its key inventions and most important resources. Freedom, in this view, is an apparatus of governance which stimulates individuals to fulfill their national obligations not through public service and dependency, but by fulfilling themselves through autonomous, self-interested rational choice. Individuals are concurrently made accountable through the crafting of lifestyles according to widely disseminated “grammars of living” about what is means to be at once free and subject (Rose, 1999).

Understanding how these broader societal forces have had and continue to exert sway in the practice and study of sport is crucial, shaping the rationalities and sensibilities of actors at every level.

With the atrocities and devastation of the Second World War still close at hand, many political and economic thinkers started to question the rationale of the socialist State. It was the common belief that any central planning by a State government or political party would thrust the nation backwards towards the fascist and totalitarian ways of Nazism. Such a grotesque visage served as an effective propaganda tool to force upon the masses the ideals of liberalism as the only

---

42 This belief is best documented in *The Road to Serfdom* by F. A. Hayek (1944), which warned of a new form of despotism enacted in the name of liberalism. In this text, Hayek goes on to describe the optimal relationship between political and economic freedom.
path to true freedom. However, the *laissez-faire* approach and the natural propensity for markets to function efficiently as advocated by classical liberalism were familiar justifications for socialist interventions, and so a new model of liberalism was needed. Thus, it was argued that it was “incumbent on government to conduct a policy towards society such that it is possible for a market to exist and function” (Gordon, 1991, p. 41). A new set of ethical and cultural values had to be created, which would set individuals free from the bondage of industrial power over labor and give all people the freedom to shape their own lives. Over the next thirty-years, the entire political, economic, and social sphere was inscribed with “the ethos and structure of the enterprise form” (Gordon, 1991, p. 42).

In political-economic terms, *neoliberalism* refers to a global economic movement based upon the belief that only by freeing markets from the shackles of State manipulation—which is invariably misapplied, stifling the operation of the price mechanism to efficiently allocate resources throughout the economy—can citizens achieve freedom. This new form of liberalism was based upon the union of the classical economic theories of Adam Smith and David Ricardo and the re-appropriation of liberal theories by the Austrian and Chicago Schools of economics. Major contributions to the emergence of the neo-liberal form were made by Ludwig von Mises, Friedrich von Hayek, and Milton Friedman. The result was the opening-up of many sectors previously operated by the State for the public good to private corporations, individuals, families, and groups (Harvey, 2005, 2014).

State governments overhauled the principles of governance to revive a sense of individual responsibility while at the same time curtailing social welfare programs provided by the State. Thereby a new relationship was established between the State and its people where the former maintained the rule of law and infrastructure necessary for the latter to pursue their own well-being through personal responsibility and enterprise (Rose, 1999; Miller & Rose, 1990, 1997). All aspects of social behavior were reconceptualized according to economic principles, most famously
articulated in the theories on human capital investment and family economics by another Chicago School economist and Nobel laureate, Gary Becker (1962, 1981). Accordingly, all decisions (even ones previously out of economic purvey, such as child rearing, education, and marriage) could be made through an assessment of costs and benefits. With such pressure on the individual to simultaneously provide for their own subsistence and take the risks necessary to improve their standing, people began to turn to experts to reduce the uncertainty of their decisions.

The features of self-enterprise and expertise built into advanced liberalism are important to understand for the present project. Based on the supposition that people actively pursue their well-being by making (rational) choices, we might surmise that they are also active in their own governance (Rose, 1999). By being compelled though free to choose (remember, the possibilities for choice are limited), an individual is made subject to the expert knowledges he or she references to guide the decision as well as the consequences of that decision. This is freedom in the frame of advanced liberalism.

A defining feature of neoliberalism is that self-realization and freedom are achieved through individual action, converting one’s full potential into an economic activity. What this amounts to is the collective selling of society’s labor (in its myriad forms) on the market. Motivated through enterprise, producers and individuals alike have discovered many ways to slice labor-power to be sold on a host of fragmented markets (sometimes simultaneously). The entrepreneur of him or herself has become the model of the active citizen, “seeking to enhance and capitalize on existence itself through calculated acts and investments” (Rose, 1999, p. 164).

Commensurately, for modes of governance to adapt to the enterprise society it must create a host of technologies to penetrate new domains of consumption, public imagery, habitual behaviors,

43 O’Malley (1996) termed this condition “enterprising prudentialism” where citizens must simultaneous be an entrepreneur of the self and consumer of risk.
dispositions, social identities, and lifestyles (Rose, 1999). In this framework, people best meet their civic obligations by fulfilling themselves through acts of consumption and living a lifestyle in line with widely disseminated “grammars of living” (p. 166), which are not reliant on State action.

Many have viewed the shift towards free market sport as a natural evolution of the industry and symptomatic of the global expansion of economic activity to all corners of the globe (see, e.g., Ratten, 2010, 2011; Scully, 1995; Vrooman, 1995). Others have been more cautious and even critical of the transformative effects of neoliberal ideology shifting the focus of sport and physical activity away from health, recreation, and the public good in favor of logics of competition, violence, and wealth accumulation (see, e.g., Andrews, 2006; Coakley, 2006, 2011; Horne, 2006; Newman & Beissel, 2009; Newman & Giardina, 2010, 2011; Wilson & Hayhurst, 2009; Ziegler, 2007). However, much of this criticism has not made it into the majority of sport management research which continues to celebrate sport as a cultural and economically significant phenomenon.

**Professionalization of “Sport Management”**

In this section, I briefly discuss how elevating “management as an occupation” to professional status helped create the framework for modern manager-client relations and increased the manager’s dependence on expert knowledge. Setting aside for the moment the economic rationalities that undergird sport production and thereby managerial objectives, to understand a dominant knowledge culture that transforms sport spectators and fans into consumers requires an investigation of how the professionalization of sport management has exerted particular forces on and exaggerates the importance of marketing and consumer research.

Since industrialists started supplanting the landed gentry as the economic elite, businessmen and women have taken to modeling themselves after the learned professions, namely the practices of law, medicine, and the military, to establish themselves as a *bona fide* professional. Indeed, as Hughes
(1963) argued half a century ago, the status of “professional” and the associated dispositional accompaniment is a highly desirable and honorable rank. Generally speaking, a profession:

Delivers esoteric services—advice or action or both—to individuals, organizations or government; to whole classes or groups of people or to the public at large… The nature of the knowledge, substantive or theoretical, on which advice and action are based is not always clear; it is often a mixture of practical and theoretical knowledge. But it is part of the professional complex, and of the professional claim, that the practice should rest upon some branch of knowledge to which the professionals are privy by virtue of long study and by initiation and apprenticeship under masters already members of the profession. (Hughes, 1963, p. 655-656)

This assessment of the managerial practice is especially enlightening to my analysis. In general, professionals are employed to profess—that is, to know better than their clients. As Hughes elucidated, this feature of the professional—their elevated position in relation to the rest of society—is the “essence of the professional claim” (p. 656) and source of many matters of concern.

There has been much debate as to what constitutes a profession and not all occupations qualify. Scholars at the Harvard Business School offered four criteria for determining if an occupation is a profession (Khurana, Rakesh, & Penrice, 2005):

1. A common body of knowledge resting on a well-developed, widely accepted theoretical base;

2. A system for certifying that individuals possess such knowledge before being licensed or otherwise allowed to practice;

3. A commitment to use specialized knowledge for the public good, and a renunciation of the goal of profit-maximization, in return for professional autonomy and monopoly power;
4. A code of ethics, with provisions for monitoring individual compliance with the code and a system of sanctions for enforcing it.

It is readily apparent that when comparing management to the traditional professions of law and medicine along these criteria, professional managers do not fare so well (notwithstanding the lawyer or physician who cheats on their oaths to pursue other nefarious interests). The challenge, it seems, is for managers to maintain the public’s trust while at the same time ensuring a firm’s economic viability and meeting stakeholder expectations. However, for the present discussion it is not so important to dwell on the areas where management falls short as it is to understand how managers use knowledge, trust, and professional associations to defend their laudable positions in society.

In many respects, the professional’s advice is sacred in the view of the client. The professional is expected to behave in an objective manner when they profess about issues beyond the layperson’s reach or matters “subject to orthodoxy and sentiment that limit intellectual exploration” (Hughes, 1963, p. 656). Moreover, without the client’s trust, the professional’s claims lose their potency. Therefore, the professional must defend that his or her knowledge is of a special sort, not to be questioned by anyone other than another professional in the trade. As a result, many professionals seek protection from any unfortunate consequences of their actions, turning to professional associations and societies to shield them from attacks against their competency, ability, or efficacy. Indeed, in many cases only another professional can say when his or her colleague has made a mistake (Hughes, 1963).

Professional associations are worthy of a bit more attention as they serve other functions essential to the continued professional status afforded to certain occupations. To put it plainly, it pays to be a member of a professional association or society of tradespeople in more ways than one (Hughes, 1963). First, associations imply collective action (Abend, 2008)—any assault on a member’s credibility is an assault on the association. Therefore, the individual professional is
relieved of the obligation to prove their professional credentials to all people all time as the association does this under the umbrella of membership. Second, the association is the primary factor in determining the rules of the game (Hughes, 1963). These include professional certification and membership eligibility criteria, membership fees, continued education requirements, remedial training procedures, and disciplinary action, to name just a few of the tools professional associations use to exert their monopoly power and govern the members in their ranks. Thus, it can be argued that professional associations govern themselves through the willing participation of members who are fundamentally motivated by their own self-interest to join the association in the first place.

A similar reading may be applied to the primary professional association for sport management academics organized under the banner NASSM. As stated during NASSM’s constitution, “The purpose of the Society shall be to promote, stimulate, and encourage study, research, scholarly writing, and professional development in the area of sport management (broadly interpreted)” (Zeigler, 1987, p. 4, emphasis in original). Zeigler continued to point out that the founders of the Society wanted to enshrine the ideal that the organization should serve the evolving profession as a whole and not the specific interests of an individual, group, or university. At this early stage, Zeigler understood that it was imperative to encourage the Society to establish an approach that demonstrated the social utility of sport and the professionals charged with its effective administration. In this regard, a professional association, at least by design, is in a large way responsible for creating and upholding the “rules of the game” and instilling a code of ethics for the professionalization of the field.

Professionals and their professional associations are constituted within, and constituted by, their mastery of a particular knowledge base and their authority to profess about matters of public or private concern. Thus, the professional is equally dependent upon authority afforded by the mastery of knowledge and the power of knowledge to weigh on issues that are important to others. This is
key to understanding the status afforded to the professional today, one we will see again. Thus, knowledge that is relevant to professional practices is afforded privilege because it enables the achievement of a coveted social status that extends to the managerial vocations. Sport managers are not different in this regard. Sport management knowledge, whether achieved through education, vocational training, apprenticeship, athletic participation, consultancies, or academic research, is an invaluable tool for today’s sport managers who enjoy the status of “professionals,” even if they are not on quite the same footing as doctors and lawyers.

Earl Ziegler (2007), in his monograph, *An Encounter with Management in Physical Activity Education and Sport*, asked “On what basis, therefore, can sport and physical education (within the National Association for Sport and Physical Education of the United States) call itself a profession” (p. 2)? Although not providing a direct answer, Ziegler was keen to point out that there is considerable scientific evidence that properly administered physical activity can further people’s longevity and improve their quality of life. Thus, if we believe that this body of knowledge is correct, that physical activity is necessary for human life to flourish, then there should not be any opposition or delay in tailoring the training and education of professional sport managers in the areas of organizational administration and management competencies. Accordingly, professionalization of sport managerial practice to these ends is a benefit to society.

However, the direction sport management academic programs have taken, aligning themselves with contemporary spectacularized forms of competitive sport, has inserted a principal concern for ticket revenue, sponsorship contracts, and merchandise sales, for example, over issues relating to the general health and welfare of society. So then, the professional sport manager exists, but the archetype for future graduates of sport management programs is now more likely the director of marketing for a professional sports team than a community organizer of physical activity programs. And who can blame them with the current pay disparities between leadership positions in
private corporations and those in the public service sector—although graduates are more likely to find themselves in the latter (after a long internship which pays them in non-monetary “human capital”).

**An Education in Sport Management**

There have been many commentaries offered from within the academy on the history, substance, and direction of sport management as an academic discipline, field, or science—even the topic of what to call it seems to draw consternation from somewhere. What I discuss here are the ways the establishment of educational programs in sport management has helped further the professionalization of sport managerial practice and established the management of sport as an academic discipline worthy of its own scientific facts, methods, and theories.

Many of today’s sport management programs evolved from early courses in physical education that were quite prevalent at the turn of the 20th Century (Zeigler, 2007). In the first half of the 20th Century, most professional programs in physical education included general education courses, professional education courses required for state teacher certification, and courses on the theory and practice of physical education (Zeigler, 2009/1962). However, as competitive sports began to catch on as popular extra-curricular activities, especially at the high school level, it quickly became apparent that management of these activities was in short supply. In response, colleges started offering courses in the administration of organizations (Ziegler, 1951) and gradually phased out traditional physical education and athletic administration curricula. As competitive team and individual sports gained almost universal acceptance, intramural athletics witnessed an exponential expansion in scope and scale (Ziegler, 2007). The infrastructure necessary to support such growth was slow to keep up, as were the affiliated education, training, and research programs of higher education.

---

44 See Wiest and King-White (2013) for a more lengthy critique of sport management internships.
At the beginning of the 1960s, nearly 600 colleges and universities offered professional preparation for administration of physical education and athletics. However, it was not until 1966 that the first university-sponsored program geared towards employment in positions directly related to the management of sport in non-educational settings accepted students for enrollment at the Ohio University. Today, there are as many colleges and universities in North America alone which offer undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral programs in sport management or administration (Academic Programs, 2016).

As Newman (2014) argued, transformations in the general conduct of sport “have been both constituted by, and constitutive of, a shift in how sport is structured in, and by, the academy” (p. 606). Seeing similar trends in the field as Ziegler (2007), Newman (2014) asked “why” in the context of neoliberalism, universities have shifted away from physical education, sport studies, and even sport administration in favor of “sport management.” If genealogical inquiry can lend some insight into the causal mechanisms behind these changes and explain the diffusion of managerial sensibilities among the field, we need to alter Newman’s questions ever so slightly to ask “how” sport management has subjected itself or been subjected to practices that have fundamentally changed its character.

There are three ancillary lines of inquiry that are reasonable to follow here (although a case could be made for others, no doubt):

**Market Demand.** There are two stated reasons for the proliferation of sport management programs. First, the sport industry needed more managers. Second, universities sought to increase enrollment by adding a popular field of study (Masteralexis, Barr, & Hums, 2011). I offer a third source of market demand, even if the existence of such demand is most often identified by

---

45 A second master’s program was created at The University of Massachusetts, Amherst in 1971. Since then the sport management specialization has become a "success story". Today these programs have almost universally adopted the “sport management” nomenclature (Ziegler, 2007).
suppliers—the demand for a certain kind of research. Thus, to understand how sport management education programs have come to be in their present form, one would need to assess 1) the conditions of managerial necessity within the sport industry; 2) the financial pressures facing colleges and universities to find ways of increasing revenue by way of student enrollment; and 3) the intersection of sport managerial practice and the production of managerially relevant theories.

A Precondition to Professionalization. I covered this argument to some extent above, but this line of inquiry could more specifically explore the ways sport management education programs instill the necessary management principles in the next generation of sport managers and how the mere existence of such programs justify the professionalization of sport management in the public sphere (e.g., promotions such as “the CEO of XYZ Sport Co. is a graduate of the Department of Sport Management in the ABC School of Business”). Regarding the latter, the abundance of academic sport management programs not only promotes the social significance of the trade and utility of sport managers in the operation of sport organizations, but also protects the profession from abuses from within (since managers are presumably trained in best practices and business ethics) and accusations from outside which challenge its credibility because the practice is informed by scholarly knowledge. This argument echoes a concern voiced by Hunt (2010b), who warned that when an academic discipline aligns itself too closely to a profession, the “responsibilities framework” forces the field to be responsible to the profession.

Newman (2014) also pointed out that accreditation standards (e.g., NASSM/NASPE and COSMA—Commission on Sport Management Accreditation) have steered educational curricula to overwhelmingly adopt “technocratic core proficiencies” in accounting and finance, marketing, management, facility operations, legal aspects, and leadership at the expense of other more critically inclined courses. Taken together, the shift in curriculum has favored those technologies of control.

---


**A Scientific Basis for Sport Management.** The final line of inquiry discussed here is how, having been legitimized within the university, sport management was provided a space to establish itself as a viable academic discipline, not only worthy of producing a new breed of management professional, but also capable of laying a scientific foundation for the profession. Indeed, there was no radical departure from the physical education curriculum that proceeded sport management—a more accurate description of the scientization of sport management is an “evolution” where theories and ideas were borrowed, contorted, and merged from existing ones. For knowledge to be considered “new” it has to be qualitatively different from common-sense and possess a compliment of new scientific facts, methods, theories, and academic lessons to impart to its pupils. Sport management education programs have had to continually demonstrate to its students, the public, the university community, as well as the sport business community, that what it can contribute is unique, valuable, and relevant.

**Orthodoxy in Sport Management Research**

My genealogical descent into sport management research orthodoxy is the subject of later chapters, but for now I would like to provide a synthesis of what has been said thus far and how I approach the task that lies ahead. As has been argued, research in sport management has been trending towards a market-pursuant managerial praxis for some time. I see this trend as having been shaped by the neoliberal movement, professionalization of sport management occupations, and pressures of an expanding academic footprint in various ways. I would like to add to this list the “tautological inefficaciousness” of a “market-compliant science of sport management” that “provide concrete answers to questions that arise about industry and for industry” (Newman, 2014, p. 607-608). The argument holds that technocratic externalities (public and private agencies that financially
or administratively support higher education and stand to gain from research that reduces economic complexities and predicts market patterns) have infiltrated the academy and actively dictate what and how things are studied (see, e.g., Denzin, Lincoln, & Giardina, 2006; Giardina & Newman, 2011a, 2011b; Koro-Ljungberg & Barko, 2012).

University-based research is now increasingly designed as a corporate science seeking true and generalizable answers that stand on their own (Cheek, 2011; Christians, 2011; Cannella & Lincoln, 2011; Morse, 2006). Furthermore, though well-intended, preeminent scholars in the field may actually exacerbate the issue by directing scholars away from the “deadly sins of manuscript writing” and prescribing a formula that will improve the chances of publication (Trail & James, 2016). The authors (both prolific writers, peer-reviewers, and one, an associate journal editor) encourage aspiring scholars to adopt a praxeological theory-driven approach to research that pays homage to existing literature (both its contributions and limitations) and only once a knowledge gap is identified, cautiously sets out to study, report, and explain findings. Although the result of such advice may increase one’s chances of a journal publication, an unintended consequence may be more (and less) of the same. Bootstrapping research by saying what it must look like, what is must contain, and what procedures must be followed will certainly aggravate the orthodoxy observed by others and hinges the future success of the field on what scholars have already done over the last 30 years.

The outcome of such research orthodoxy and associated heavy-handed positivism has been characterized as a festishization of knowledge and sacrifice of real scholarly discoveries for epistemological control (Koro-Ljungberg & Barko, 2012). However, there are clear benefits to adopting research nomotheticism where market sensibilities demand definitive answers to complex

---

47 Newman (2014) provides a thorough description of the state of nomotheticism in the sport management discipline, “My use of the term nomothetic is evoked here to point to the type of highly structured research that is meant to be replicated and controlled, and that focuses on generating statistical data with a view to explaining and generalizing causal
economic, social, and cultural phenomena. Besides the obvious value provided by an additional line on one’s curriculum vitae, securing a lucrative consulting contract, and extending the “knowledge base,” we should also concede that another effect is an additional layer of interpretation piled onto the empirical world (Newman, 2014). The interpretations rendered by a field dominated by logical positivism and deductive methodologies demystify natural phenomena by creating statistically significant models and typologies. However, when researchers produce such renderings, conforming the complex and uncertain to the calculable and useful, they risk creating categories and typologies (though statistically significant) that bear no resemblance the real-world. Indeed, when a researcher says that his or her aim is to “complicate” something, the thing may actually become less complicated when the goal is to ascribe incontrovertible “truths” to things that are otherwise mobile, plural, or contingent. Horkheimer and Adorno (1947/2002) write: “Under the leveling rule of abstraction, which makes everything in nature repeatable, and of industry, for which abstraction prepared the way, the liberated finally themselves become the ‘herd’” (p. 10). Horkheimer and Adorno go on to suggest that this is the outcome of enlightenment; in seeking to free mankind from his innate fear of that which he does not understand, mankind has made himself subject in his own dominion—domination by discursive practices which he spoke into existence.

The pursuit of a knowable market-pursuant consumer subject, where particular truths are advanced and others are invariably left behind, demands a sort of “interpellative” oppression. By rendering the social world calculable, scholars create an apparatuses of governance constructed of knowledge of the masses but which acts by subduing individuals by the many. In turn, the consumer is both rendered knowable and subjugated—known to itself and the collective as such. The purpose of this project is to stand outside the manufacturing of such truth claims and the interpellative relationships; such data are often used for the purposes of categorizing, testing, modeling, or projecting behavioral outcomes” (p. 607-608).
processes to observe how patterns of emergence and change have shaped a sport consumer knowledge culture over time.
CHAPTER 3

PREPARATION FOR DESCENT

A History of the Present

History of ‘the past’ is interesting, of course, but it should help one understand the present and also give some insight looking to the future. (Ziegler, 2007, p. 31)

In the preceding discussion, I reviewed the three most common approaches to the study of consumer practices, considering how each attempts to illuminate the study of consumption in its own unique way. I also described several ways the consumer is rendered through (and as) discourse, providing several pathways for genealogical inquiry. I now explicate the metaphysical and theoretical basis of Foucault’s genealogical method and conclude the chapter with a description of how to conduct Foucauldian Discourse Analysis in general.

The case I have made thus far for understanding how research discourses have the potential to construct particular kinds of knowledge about the sport consumer should make it clear that I cannot approach this project with old theories. Conversely, I am in need of a different epistemological technique, one that sits orthogonal to the discursive practices of the field, to examine how the present has come to be. Let me clarify, I have not looked at the present order of things and felt compelled to find a time or place nor identify a first-speaker who set in motion the processes and forces that led to the current moment. On the contrary, Foucault (1977c) contends that such a linear reading of history in search of timeless secrets is hopelessly ineffective.

So then, my selected approach is one that explains the present as a product of historical conjunctures, assemblages, and fissures (i.e., a “history of the present”; Foucault, 1977c, p. 154). What I endeavor to do is conduct a genealogy of the sport consumer-consumption dialectic as
constituted within the academy. A genealogy is a philosophical, historical technique by which the researcher questions commonly understood beliefs by attempting to account for the scope, breadth, and totality of the constitution of knowledge, discourse, or ideology during particular time period. In a genealogy, a researcher may even attempt to look past the ideologies or discursive practices under scrutiny to observe the conditions of their emergence, institutionalization, and possibility, and how they create and/or transform subject positions. A key task of a genealogist is the deconstruction of truth, and how the creation of truth through discourse is linked to the operation of power and consideration of interest.

The genealogical method rejects a reading of history as a linear progression of events. Rather, as Nietzsche argued, in a genealogy history is viewed as nonlinear, riddled with accidents, violence, and clashes of will. Thus, at the beginning there is not an inviolable identity, but disparity. It is the task of the genealogist to unearth the disparities, ruptures, and shifts that reveal the rules of formation and technologies of power to “dispel the chimeras of the origin” (Foucault, 1977c, p. 144). As opposed to a search for origins, a genealogist seeks to identify accidents and breaks in history that signifies new ways of knowing and being.

It cannot be overstated that the goal of using a genealogical method is not to reach a final point where everything falls into place. With a view of history as a complex assemblage of disparate processes, events, and actors, indeed, how could the present be anything but an equally complex and temporary condition? However, not all answers to intellectual questions adopt this view—at the end of many scientific problems, including those with social actors, the issue is resolved and a solution is found. The desire to find the solution is a popular pursuit. In most sport marketing and consumer research, the consumer is portrayed as a fixed entity, and the researcher looks to what motivated consumption or what outcomes are achieved. In this project, I do the opposite. I look at this body
of knowledge to observe how the consumer has been rendered by researches and then examine what is affected by these specific renderings.

Most modern accounts of the evolution of science and governance fail to account for the ruptures, mutations, and revolutionary forces of history that have radically shaped the present. By contrast, at the end of genealogy things are still in flux, there is no final point at which things come to rest; the lineages do not stop. That is to say, the genealogical researcher is not interested in elegant endings (Abend, 2008).

In the last twenty years of his life, Michel Foucault worked “to create a history of the different modes by which, in our culture, human beings are made subjects” (1982a, p. 208). He concerned himself with three primary sources of objectification that transform human beings into subjects. The source with which he was most concerned late in his life was the way in which human beings turn themselves into subjects. Admitting that the subject was the general theme of his research, he became quite involved with the question of power. It is in regard to the question of power that the genealogical approach—derived from the Nietzschean concept Herkunft or descent (Foucault, 1977c)—relieved some of Foucault’s frustrations with the archaeology of knowledge, supplanting genealogy as his favored analytical tool.48

The genealogical approach has often been characterized as a theory and method, but it is best described as an “orientation to theorizing practices” (White, 2003, p. 31). That is, genealogy is a tool

48 Foucault’s archaeology is solely interested in serious speech acts (which form discursive formations—the autonomous system of serious speech acts in which the act was spoken) and the transformations, sometimes slow and others sudden, discursive formations undergo. The archaeological method avoids interpretation of internal conditions or rules that govern the meaning and understanding of speech acts, focusing only on what was actually said and how it connects to the discursive formation. Studying discursive formations requires a “double reduction” whereby the researcher brackets both truth and meaning claims of the speech acts under study. Double reduction is what allows for the “pure description” of discursive events. In Foucault’s (1972) words, “This analysis of statements, then, is a historical analysis, but one that avoids all interpretation: it does not question things said as to what they are hiding, what they were ‘really’ saying, in spite of themselves, the unspoken element that they contain…; but, on the contrary, it questions them as to their mode of existence,… what it means for them to have appeared when and where they did—they and no others” (p. 109).
to understand how practices, discursive and nondiscursive, structure the order of things and our ability to perceive their functioning. Like Foucault and other genealogical researchers, my project is based upon a certain understanding that the language of social science theory infers a host of idealizations about social life, and in so doing, reifies practices by separating them from their historical contexts (White, 2003). Foucault argued that to study the relations of power and the objectification of subjects, a new tool was needed—one that did not assume prior objectification. That is, a theory cannot be used to explain power because the theory itself, in an attempt to grasp a total picture of social workings, must objectify the conditions that make objectification possible (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982, p. 99). In this way, a theory, which exists as discourse, posits the world as a picture or representation, but is itself involved in what it posits.

Put a bit differently, a theory, which seeks to explain the “black box” between what is known and what is expected, objectifies the conditions under which phenomena occur to explain a relation. In the social sciences, which contract the object and subject into one, power lies within the ability to describe this relation and so, theory cannot be used to interrogate power because it is an implement of power. Through the epistemological reorientation required by the genealogical approach, questioning the very nature of things commonly taken as given, the researcher is provided with a tool to understand the historical conditions of the present and operations of power. Approached from this perspective, a genealogy can be used to “bring to light power relations, locate their position, find out their point of application and the methods used” (Foucault, 1982a, p. 211).

Foucault concentrated his efforts on those cultural practices where power and knowledge cross, studying:

[T]hose doubtful sciences thoroughly enmeshed in cultural practices, which in spite of their orthodoxies show no sign of becoming normal sciences; study them with a
method which reveals that truth itself is a central component of modern power.

(Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982, p. 120)

The resulting pragmatically oriented, historical interpretation situates practices in relation to a discursive field that Foucault understood as a dispositif. The term has been troublesome for those studying Foucault’s method as it has no satisfactory English equivalent, but which has been translated as “apparatus” or “grid of intelligibility” to convey a pragmatic concern that concepts be used as tools to aid analysis and not as ends in themselves (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982). A grid of intelligibility is both the historical method used by the historian and the structure of the cultural practices under examination, acting as an apparatus to constitute and organize subjects. The dispositif then, is heterogeneous, incorporating “discourses, institutions, architectural arrangements, regulations, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements, philosophic propositions, morality, philanthropy, etc.” (Foucault, 1980a, p. 194). The goal of this analysis is to merge a set of flexible relationships into a “single apparatus” or grid of intelligibility where power and knowledge coalesce “to isolate a specific historical problem” (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982, p. 121).

Foucault clearly delineates mundane identity statements and everyday speech acts from those that take place in a different context where truth and falsity have serious social consequences—what Dreyfus and Rabinow (1982) term serious speech acts. Generally speaking, serious speech is what experts say when they are speaking as experts. However, what makes some speech act serious and others mere statements often comes down to validation procedures and the community in which the statement is uttered. What makes serious speech acts important, what gives them the power to define things as true or false, is that they are relatively rare and appear to make sense. Therefore, serious speech acts achieve a sort of sacredness:

---

49 Gilles Deleuze (1992) characterized dispositif as a “multilinear ensemble” (p. 159) composed of heterogeneous, yet entangled lines of fracture and of sedimentation. These lines exist in tensile, yet potentially dynamic relations with one another.
Statements are not, like the air we breathe, an infinite transparency; but things that
are transmitted and preserved, that have value, and which one tries to appropriate;
…things that are duplicated not only by copy or translation, but by exegesis,
commentary, and the internal proliferation of meaning. (Foucault, 1972, p. 120)

Foucault is then interested in identifying the various types of serious speech and their
connection to other forms of speech—what he calls discursive formations, and the transformations
these formations undergo. In this way, Foucault focuses on what is actually said and how it
articulates with the discursive formation—“the relatively autonomous system of serious speech acts
in which it was produced” (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982, p. 49). In a discursive formation, the rules
governing the system of discourse are actually the ways statements are related. Concerning the rules
of discourse, Foucault (1972) added:

A statement belongs to a discursive formation as a sentence belongs to a text, and a
proposition to a deductive whole. But whereas the regularity of a sentence is defined
by the laws of a language (langue), and that of a proposition by the laws of logic, the
regularity of statements is defined by the discursive formation itself. The fact of its
belonging to a discursive formation and the laws that govern it are one and the same
thing. (p. 116)

To evaluate discursive formations, it is necessary to bracket or set aside all truth and
meaning claims to remain neutral as to whether a statement is in fact true or even if it makes sense.
Unlike phenomenologists like Husserl and Merleau-Ponty, Foucault’s genealogy necessitates that
one not take serious speech acts seriously at all, remaining neutral in regard to claims of truth and the

---

50 The archaeologist must simultaneously be within and outside of the discourses he or she studies. That is, the
researcher must share the meaningfulness of the statements and immediately suspend it. Without an understanding of
the issues to which the authors of serious speech acts are speaking, the researcher will not know when things said are
utterances or in fact serious speech (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982).
possibility for truth claims to be contained in the acts of speech (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982). That is, the genealogist withholds judgment as to the veracity of discourse on two levels: 1) that what is claimed as truth to actually be truth and 2) that what is said to actually be true. Adopting such a stance allows the research to approach the pure description of discursive events.

When challenged if, by adopting such a detached viewpoint we could even identify the speech acts of a discursive formation, Foucault provided that we can count on the seriousness of the authors of the actual discourse to select what is taken seriously at any given period. Thus, a genealogy is designed to study those serious discourses that are preserved and rarified by a community—say, for example, the archives of a peer-reviewed academic journal. Accordingly, Foucauldian genealogy is epistemologically and ontologically concerned with how we come to know something as a “thing” and with the nature of “thing-as-being.”

To conduct a genealogy one must select a field of discourse as his or her “raw data”—a selection of serious speech acts occurring during a given period. In the post-structuralist paradigm, language is not simply representation; as discourse, language constructs how the natural and social world is known, encountered, and reproduced. Accordingly, discourse is expressly constitutive (Ahl, 2002), bounding and making possible both how one can describe and imagine his or her social reality. Similarly, discourse has been described by scholars as “a system of statements, which construct an object” (Parker, 1992, p. 5) or “a set of meanings, metaphors, representations, images, stories, statements and so on that in some way together produce a particular version of events” (Burr 1995, p. 48). Consequently, discourse is viewed as a non-neutral speech act. As Haraway (1989) adeptly surmised, discourses are not just “social products,” they also produce “social effects.... They are modes of power” (p. 289).

The discourses of the natural and human sciences have had a major hand in constructing knowledge about the world and society. Haraway (1989) claimed that scientific discourses have been
“powerful actors in an age of bio-politics, in which the management of the efficiencies of bodies is a major constructive practice…. discourses both bound and generate conditions of daily life for millions” (p. 289). Discourses portray objects and subjects in particular and deliberate ways, espousing them as truth and knowledge. In other words, discourse makes claims about reality—what something “really” is or should be. Consequently, a discourse analysis seeks to reveal how discourses are embedded in power relations and their political effects. As Burr (1995) explains:

   To understand the power inequalities in society properly, we need to examine how discursive practices serve to create and uphold particular forms of social life. If some people can be said to be more powerful than others, then we need to examine the discourses and representations that uphold these inequalities. (p. 62-63)

In discourse analysis, the scholar seeks to understand how discourses have been used as social technologies to map boundaries between nature and society—the goal, however, is to bring about some form of transformation via social action. Therefore, a genealogy that retells the history of a discursive practice, rejecting normative stories of origination, can be a form of social action. In Haraway’s (1989) words, “To contest for origin stories is a form of social action” (p. 289).

As a field of discourse, the texts used in genealogical analyses are pre-selected by the original curators of the discourse. Applying their own rubric for classification, the curators have already decided what is serious. What is needed, however, is a technique to systematically order the discourse for analysis. This is easier said than done—discourse is constantly being added to and changing as a result of transformations, mutations, and substitutions of what is considered new and veracious knowledge.
Governmentality and Power

A genealogy is an analytical method that transforms that which is given or assumed into a question,\(^{51}\) enabling a historical analysis that challenges a view of the present as the culmination of a series of unbroken events (White, 2003). In turn, three domains of genealogy are possible as “historical ontologies of ourselves”: 1) an investigation of the truth through which we constitute ourselves as subjects of knowledge; 2) an examination of the field of power through which we become subjects that act on others; and 3) an interrogation of the ethics through which we fashion ourselves as ethical beings (Foucault, 1982b, p. 237). The present study falls in the first category, posing the question of how renderings of the sport consumer have become normalized in the field, creating new subject positions in relation to knowledge.

Discursive formations are always organized in relation to power, rendered intelligible through its effectivity. In this way, power is productive in that it constitutes a human being as subject\(^{52}\) (Foucault, 1982a, p. 208). In his later work, Foucault’s conceptualization of power gave way to the notion of “governmentality,” also conceived as the “conduct of conduct.” Foucault explains that the exercise of power guides all possible conduct and orders all possible outcomes. Power in this sense is not a physical confrontation between two rivals, but rather how the conduct of individuals is directed by defining and constraining the field of possible action.

In disciplinary terms, power and knowledge exist in relation to each other—power is the condition for knowledge and knowledge produces power (White, 2003). In this regard, power is exercised to transform the body through techniques of modification and correction such as hierarchical observation, normalizing judgment, and the partitioning of social space (Foucault, 1982b, p. 237).

\(^{51}\) The genealogical method takes these things which appear stable in the present and asks how they came to be?
\(^{52}\) Foucault discussed the double-meaning of the word *subject* in French. To be subject to someone else by control and dependence, *and* tied to processes of identification where one acquires a knowledge of one’s self (Foucault, 1982a, p. 212).
On the other hand, when power is conceived as a method of government, calculated modes of action structure the possible field of action of others (Foucault, 1982a). That is, governmental power governs the self through the government of others, defining the field of possible or sanctioned activity.

An important element of governmentality is freedom (Foucault, 1982a). In modern forms of government, power is exercised over free subjects—indeed, governance only works insofar as people are free. Foucault is clear on this point: “By this we mean individual or collective subjects who are faced with a field of possibilities in which several ways of behaving, several reactions and diverse comportments may be realized” (1982a, p. 221). However, freedom and power are diametrically opposed—freedom is a precondition and permanent support for power, but disappears everywhere power is exercised. In this way, power in governance is different than power in discipline in that there is no face-to-face confrontation between freewill and domination. In light of this, Foucault characterizes the relationship between freedom and governance as an *agonism*—“a relationship which is at the same time reciprocal incitation and struggle” (1982a, p. 222).

Governmentality signifies the ensemble of discursive practices that enable one to be recognized as a competent member of society (Foucault, 1994, p. 7). Collectively, these practices generate knowledge and produce mutually-referential truth claims and form accounts of social life (Foucault, 1970, 1972). For example, medical discourse produce truths about the care of sick bodies and the constitution of healthy ones, legal discourse produce truths about criminality and lawful behavior, and as we shall see, consumer research discourse produces truths about consumption and consumers.

In sum, Foucault argues that the goal of a genealogical analysis of governance, knowledge, and power is “to see how men govern (themselves and others) by the production of truth” where the production of truth means “not the production of true utterances, but the establishment of
domains in which the practice of true and false can be made at once ordered and pertinent” (Foucault, 1991, p. 79). In this regard, practices portray modes of conduct in regard to particular “games” of truth—an arena or field where truth is contested as an object of discourse (White, 2003). Therefore, the art of governance is an agonistic process that entails a “versatile equilibrium, with complementarity and conflicts between techniques which assure coercion and process through which the self is constructed or modified by himself” (Foucault, 1993, p. 203-204).

Foucault’s onto-epistemological orientation is especially useful in this project. Genealogy provides a way of analyzing how discursive practices enact a form of governance that shapes the possibilities of human thinking and human action. When these practices coalesce in a particular field, they create a grid of intelligibility upon which knowledge claims are both constituted and made intelligible through the myriad ways practices act on and are acted through self-governing subjects. In turn, the genealogical approach facilitates examination of the conditions of emergence of a knowledge culture (accepted modalities of thought and behavior), and an exploration of how subjects come to tell truths about themselves and others (White, 2003).

In a related genealogy of scientific research, Skålén, Fellesson, and Fougère (2006) reasoned that people govern themselves and others “toward what they believe to be the truth, toward the right way to be” (p. 3). Behavioral norms which circulate throughout society as “truths” are often products of the social sciences, prescribing how people should constitute themselves within certain contexts (Foucault, 1977a). In this way, there is a clear linkage between power and knowledge, practices of the self and the governance of others, housed in the totality of discursive formations of which academic texts are at least partially constitutive.

**Asking Genealogical Questions**

Two fundamental assumptions are built into genealogical questions. The first is that it is unlikely a single person sets into motion events that change the social landscape—a society does
with its full endowment of productive, communicative, and distributive technologies. Despite the significance and meaning that our society attribute to celebrities (e.g., Beyoncé or Tom Brady), politicians (e.g., George W. Bush or Bernie Sanders), and spectacular events (e.g., Woodstock or the “Miracle on Ice”), social things do not appear from nowhere, nor do they occur privately. There is no “Eureka!” moment had by some singular actor that shapes history alone—the avant-garde are still shaped by the moving and plural forces of history and the present. Social things grow out of and build upon things, ideas, concepts, problems, institutions, practices, and networks that already exist (Abend, 2008). It is the genealogist’s job to unearth and explain “how” these things, ideas, and institutions come into being—to map the conditions upon which they surface and the political and ideological machinations from which that coming into being is made meaningful.

The second assumption, which is partially couched in the first, is that social things come into being through process. As a single actor does not produce a social thing on his or her own, neither does it occur spontaneously. There are two connected issues regarding process, however, which should be discussed here: emergence and change (Abend, 2008). That is, it is all too easy to casually talk about how things are “new” or “different” without considering the forces of their emergence and change.

Regarding emergence, although it is logical to say that something did not exist until it was thought, uttered, written down, or acted out, it is impractical to attribute the thing to the first thinker/speaker/writer/actor or identify the precise time it was done. We know that it must be logically true that a thing first happened at some point to someone, but it is practically impossible to define such a time or actor. Also, clutching these “first movers” too tightly obfuscates the network of precursors involved in the phenomena’s coming-into-being. Therefore, though logical, it is both impractical and unreasonable to discuss such concrete origins, or the shifts of sufficient magnitude that bring about change. In sum, we know that things do emerge and change over time, but it is not
the genealogist’s job to pin them down. On the contrary, genealogy focuses on the social lineages and processes themselves, finding more value in the network of historical relations than singular events or casual relations.

In the current study, the type of question posed is instrumentally important. A traditional historical approach is likely to begin with two basic questions, for example: “why is there such a thing as sport consumer research”; and “why are sport consumers the object of study”? The interrogative article “why” serves two important functions. First, it orients the inquiry towards a historical perspective and second, it acknowledges that the reply is likely to produce multiple causal or functional explanations (Cummins, 1975).

Genealogical questions, on the other hand, are posed for different purpose altogether. In a genealogy, a specific kind of historical narrative is sought with the aim of figuring out where a particular social thing comes from (Williams, 2002). However, the “thing” is not an unalienable truth, but rather “the secret that [things] have no essence or that their essence was fabricated in a piecemeal fashion form alien forms” (Foucault, 1977c, p. 142). Thus, in a genealogy the question cannot ask “why” a social thing is a certain way because social things are not certain. Rather, a genealogical question asks “how” a particular social thing came to be the way it is and not something else?

Genealogy is an approach whereby social practices are examined in their relations to history, discourses, bodies, and power (Markula & Silk, 2011). To do this, genealogical researchers must identify numerous discourses, paying equal attention to enunciations, concealments, and contradictions to understand how knowledge (what is said) is linked to power (who is speaking). In this project, a genealogist asks what power lies in sport consumer research discourse and how that

---

53 “A genealogy is a narrative that tries to explain a cultural phenomenon by describing a way in which it came about, or could have come about, or might be imagined to have come about.” (Williams, 2002, p. 20).
power is exercised. Whereas a traditional historical approach may locate a singular source of power or origin of knowledge, a genealogical rendering views power as relational, existing between all social actors (i.e., no one is immune). In sum, a genealogist asks what knowledges dominate particular fields, where did they come from, and how they became dominant (Markula & Silk, 2011).

Similar to family tree, one’s ancestral heritage is often found to be more complicated and fragmented (or altogether forgotten) than what was earlier believed. Thus, a genealogy as it is used here is neither an authoritarian lineage springing forth from some static origin nor is it an imaginary allusion connecting seemingly abstract and unrelated texts. Instead, a genealogy is a historical narrative that is inscribed with blind-spots and additional lines to explore (Compton, 2013), producing a rich and complex history of the circumstances and events of things present. In a genealogy, more lines can always be added, reconsidered, revised, or expanded, and so numerous possibilities for its rewriting always remain possible.

Eventually, the genealogical researcher must attribute or disclaim responsibility for particular discourses and elucidate their contributions. The inquiry should identify what subject positions—the categories and types of people or activities that are possible or prohibited—that are on offer (e.g., who is the ideal subject or audience) that people can adopt for themselves or others (Parker, 2004). The researcher must demonstrate how discourses support institutions and reproduce or obfuscate relations of power. Ultimately, genealogy is a political methodology where the researcher is required to take a moral stance to evaluate the gains and losses at the various points of subjectivity.

In this project I do not portend to conduct the genealogy of sport consumer discourses, but instead a genealogy of a particular discursive formation. So, what are my genealogical questions? As previously stated, the epistemological premise for the current research hinges on two genealogical concerns: 1) how particular versions of the sport consumer and sport consumption are made to appear true and solid; and 2) how, in sport management research discourse, certain ways of thinking
about the sport consumer have become dominant over others. By examining the most prestigious and visible articles relating to the sport consumer within a corpus of sport management research texts, three specific research questions were formulated: 1) what is the sport consumer; 2) what makes the sport consumer unique and worthy of study; and 3) how has the research discourse legitimized certain ways of knowing and managing sport consumers. The tactics used to illuminate these questions are explained in next section detailing the operationalization of genealogical analysis.

**Genealogical Mechanics: Operationalizing Foucauldian Discourse Analysis**

Like other versions of discourse analysis, in genealogy the issues of critique, ideology, and power (and their interchange) are central concerns (Flick, 2009), with an additional, acute focus on the role of knowledge in structurating power relations. Although it is necessary to understand the onto-epistemological assumptions of Foucault’s genealogical method, understanding his interpretive analytics does not necessarily tell you how to conduct Foucauldian Discourse Analysis. Foucault’s method is based upon a linguistic approach that views language as an integral element of material social practices (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999). These social practices are viewed dialectically, with expressly structural and agentic elements. Fairclough (2006) explains that CDA “oscillates between a focus on structure and a focus on action—between a focus on shifts in the social structuring of semiotic diversity (orders of discourse), and a focus on the productive semiotic work which goes on in particular texts and interactions” (p. 124). In this way, CDA focuses in part on how ideology operates thru the Gramscian notion of “hegemony,” ultimately affecting the production of societal discourses. A prime difference exists between Gramscian and Foucauldian accountings of how power inequalities are formed and exercised (Pringle, 2005), underscoring the theoretical incommensurability between FDA and CDA. The Gramscian notion of power acknowledges hierarchical power relations that allow ruling classes to establish and maintain control over subordinates (Pringle, 2005). This understanding circumvents the overly reductionist Marxist conceptualizations of power which hinge on economic modes of production and social class structures, arguing that hegemony works through “the ability of the rulers to convince the ruled on the legitimacy of their system of beliefs” (Pringle, 2005, p. 259). On the contrary, though Foucault did not totally reject the disciplinary power of state apparatuses, he challenged the idea that power was traceable to binary divisions between rulers and the ruled. “Foucault correspondingly asserted that influential groups do not arrive at their position because they have power, but they become influential because of the contingent workings and, at times, tactical usages of discourses” (p. 260). To Foucault, discourses should be understood as empowering and restrictive perceptions of reality, shaping our understanding of ourselves and others. In turn, Foucault’s observed a shift away from the centrality of sovereign rule “toward more complex technologies of power aimed at individuals… and populations” (p. 260), challenging Enlightenment values of objective truth, freedom, and rationality (Pringle, 2005). In this way, FDA is a valuable tool for exploring how discourses inscribed in scientific texts structurate fields of knowledge and construct diffuse modes of subjectivity.
derived this powerful tool for illuminating the grid of intelligibility that structurates and governs social relations after years of deliberation and finding himself at several dead ends.\textsuperscript{55}

Hall (1992) traced the power of discourse to its ability to articulate knowledge about a topic—concurrently giving a topic meaning and limiting the possibility for other interpretations. Discourse \textit{actually} constructs the objects that occupy our reality, our dreams, and our nightmares by simultaneously allowing and constraining the possibility for understanding the objects themselves. Put a bit differently, discourse enables and limits what can be said, by whom, where, and when, including ourselves. We think of ourselves through the complex matrix of knowledge, evidence, truth, meaning, and images produced by and communicated through discourse, and act according to what is expected in return. Ultimately, we construct our own subjectivity (and identity) by adopting subject positions that make sense according to discourses that construct and obscure our own ability to make sense of our existence.

Discourses that tend to become dominant are those that privilege versions of reality that validate entrenched power relations and social structures. That is, discourses germinate from and become increasingly intertwined with institutional practices that organize, govern, and administer social life. For example, Markula and Silk (2011) contend that everyone who talks or writes about sport participates in his or her own way in the circulation of knowledge about the field. What a genealogist seeks to identify are the dominant \textit{“codes of culture”} or \textit{“ways of knowing”} about sport in the field and especially, \textit{how} they have become so important (Markula & Silk, 2011).

In genealogical analysis, there are no assumptions about which discourses are inherently \textit{“good”} or \textit{“bad;”} the goal is to observe how discourses are used to structure particular power relations between individuals or groups. Therefore, the genealogical researcher is not quick to pass

\textsuperscript{55}Dreyfus and Rabinow (1982) remind us, that at the end of \textit{The Archaeology of Knowledge} (1972), when Foucault considers the possibility that archaeology may not be the \textit{“stable and autonomous discipline”} (p. 99-100) he was looking for, he hints that it might be \textit{“taken up later elsewhere, in a different way, at a higher level, or using different methods”} (p. 208).
judgment; rather he or she is a shepherd for demonstrating how discourses are used to structure an understanding of society.

All discourses leave a trail that the genealogist seeks to uncover; whatever form of discourse is used (or not used in instances of omission) a genealogical researcher can observe the way it exerts its power on society. Thus, all social practices can be understood through discursive deconstruction. In a genealogical project, discourse is the object of this study. In this case, a sample of sport management research texts published in four of the field’s preeminent journals comprised the discursive selection.

Foucault offered four descriptive categories to facilitate the analysis of discursive formations: objects, subjects, concepts, and strategies (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982). Markula and Silk (2011) explain that these categories help to decipher discourses that manifest as verbal performances (Foucault, 1972). Identification of these qualities is necessary to discern acts of serious speech from informal commentary or inconsequential utterances, and understand how they are linked to a particular knowledge culture. Therefore, genealogical inquiry begins with a distanciation or free association (Parker, 2004) with regard to truth and meaning claims, and proceeds with an identification of objects, subjects, concepts, and strategies housed in discursive formations. Identification and systematization of these discursive components are operationalized in Foucauldian Discourse Analysis in a six-step methodology (Markula & Pringle, 2006; Markula & Silk, 2011; Parker, 2004). When this methodology is followed faithfully, it entails a detailed and exceedingly complex historical analysis. The method may be applied to a broad discursive category or to a limited sampling of texts (Markula & Silk, 2011).

The six steps of Foucauldian Discourse Analysis are provided below as a composite of the collaborative works by Markula and Pringle (2006), Markula and Silk (2011), and Parker (2004):
1. Systematic itemization of the objects and subjects of analysis. Objects are the specific topics that the researcher wants to examine or to which certain texts refer (often marked by nouns). Subjects are usually the characters, persona, or role positions specified in a text. Sometimes objects and subjects are one and the same.

2. Locate enunciations. Enunciations are the sources or places where the objects and/or subjects are talked about; this may be a particular sample of texts or a specific part of a text. The researcher should pay attention to the enunciations that are required and those that are concealed or omitted. Identify who is speaking, their relative position of power, and the effect of the enunciation.

3. Examine what concepts are developed in the texts, or how objects are talked about.

4. Investigate how concepts are organized into individualized groups of statements or coherent logics. The focus of this step is to examine how concepts form meaningful theoretical formations.

5. Examine how individual statements link to the general domains of statements and other discourses that structure the fields under investigation. Sometimes these statements coalesce within a specific social context. Examine the relationship between statements, discourses, and context to identify patterns located in relation of ideology, power, and institutions.

6. Connect these discourses to power relations that define the field. This final stage of analysis explores the operation of power through the transmission and transformation of discourse.

Although these steps are fairly prescriptive, the researcher must rely on her or his own interpretive skills and cultural knowledge to identify the strategies and connections between discursive practices and power. It is imperative to look for direct and indirect references, as well as contradictory
constructions of objects and events. Basic questions to guide the interpretative analysis are “what” conditions gave rise to the discourse, “how” are the constructions being used, and “who” stands to gain or lose from the particular subject position (Parker, 2004).

Similarly, Dean (2010) amended Foucault’s genealogical technique to the analysis of ethical self-governance, proposing four aspects of investigation: ontology (what is acted upon—the substance of governance), aesthetics (how the substance is governed—the work of governance), deontology (who we become when we are governed in such a manner—the mode of subjectification), and teleology (why we govern or are governed—the goal of governmental practices). To understand the potential contribution of Dean’s (2010) methodology it must be examined more closely and in context.

Marketing has been defined as the science of exchange relationships (see Hunt, 1991). In the field of sport management, however, marketing research is characterized as having strong managerial relevance, with many studies focusing on the social-psychological traits of sport consumers. Focusing on the “governed or ethical substance” (Dean, 2010, p. 26, emphasis in original), in sport consumer research this could be “what” scholars seek to know about the sport consumer—the object of managerial knowledge.

Sport consumer research seldom stops at knowing consumers as they are—researchers also hypothesize, test, and validate how consumers are made, retained, and may be further cultivated or leveraged. In this manner, research governs sport consumers through various technologies of knowledge and practice. Therefore, the “governing or ethical work” (Dean, 2010, p. 26, emphasis in original) may be the research technologies used to collect, interpret, and know certain qualities of the sport consumer. Accordingly, one may ask “how” do approaches to sport consumer research enable and limit what is known and what can be known about sport consumers.
Subjectivity is created when power is exercised, through direct and diffuse means, to govern the behavior of others and/or the self—what Dean (2010) calls “our mode of subjectification” (p. 26). In sport consumer research, consumers are made subject to research practices and findings that propose novel ways of influencing consumer behavior and attitudes (Miller & O’Leary, 1987). Researchers are also made subject to those practices of the field deemed legitimate, both enabling and constraining the knowledge base. Thus, a question of “who” do sport consumers become when they are researched this way (or “who” does the researcher become when he or she studies the sport consumer this way) may be levied.

Finally, Dean’s (2010) teleological aspect of analysis concerns the objectives of governance—“the telos of governmental or ethical practices” (p. 27, emphasis in original). In context, we might ask “why” sport consumer research discourse creates the subject positions it does or “why” it governs the way it does. In genealogical terms, this stage of the analysis links the creation of knowledge to the interests of power. In other words, if we follow the discourse to its logical or espoused conclusion, what reality is created and whose sensibilities prevail?

Incorporating elements of the genealogical techniques described above and adapting them to this particular selection of texts, the following specific research questions and analytic techniques are proposed. First, the question “what is the sport consumer” was countered by probing the research discourse for the needs, substances, and behaviors of sport consumption to survey definitional acceptance among the field. Second, the question “what makes the sport consumer unique and worthy of study” was examined by investigating how scholars have posed and solved problems, and exploring the ontological and epistemological assumptions contained therein. Third, “how has the research discourse legitimized certain ways of knowing and managing sport consumers” asks what social categories and research/management strategies have been made actionable by the discourse. After the initial selection of research texts these questions and their subcomponents guided
subsequent readings of the discourse, to first refine the sample and then conduct thematic analysis (ordering), interpretation (writing), and assemblage (rewriting) of the genealogical narrative.

**Selecting Texts**

When selecting texts, there are two implicit assumptions: the more visible and prestigious the better because normative pressures are stronger when texts are seen and respected (Abend, 2008). This echoes Foucault’s own insistence that utterances or common language are not all that important to genealogy; on the other hand, serious texts are those best suited for genealogical inquiry. Visible and prestigious texts are not only more likely to inform what one ought to or is expected to say or do, but they are also more likely to contain that which is already inscribed in society. Therefore, by incorporating such texts into my analysis, I am more likely to find those discursive formations that make up the grid of intelligibility and identify their institutional connections to the exercise of power. It is unlikely, however, to find such things in private, informal, or mundane texts, although as Foucault has argued, these too are subject to the self-disciplining forces of governmentality. The challenge is to identify what sources of data qualify as visible and prestigious and scrutinize the texts within these sources as equally prominent as well as relevant to the present study.

Regarding the sources of discourse, I propose to examine four of the field’s leading journals: *JSM, SMR, ESMQ, SMQ*. The journals that comprise this list are not the only journals in which sport management scholars publish, but they are generally recognized as the most prestigious outlets among the core journals of the field (see Newman, 2014; Shilbury, 2011; Shilbury & Rentschler, 2007) and, since all publish sport management (and sport marketing as a subcomponent of management) research, are likely to contain the discourse of interest in this study. *JSM, SMR, and*

---

56 The precursor to *ESMQ* was the *European Journal for Sport Management (EJSM)*, which ran from 1994-2000. For the purpose of this analysis, unless noted otherwise, I use *ESMQ* to refer to both iterations of the journal.
*ESMQ* are currently listed (*SMQ* is not listed) in the Social Sciences Citation Index (SSCI), regarded as the most relevant and best known index relating to management and marketing research (Shilbury, 2011), which is accessed via the Institute for Scientific Information (ISI) Web of Knowledge Journal Citation Reports (JCR).57

One of the metrics provided by the JCR is the journal impact factor, which, as of the latest report published in 2015, was 0.684 (annual) and 1.516 (5-year) for *JSM*, 1.193 (annual) for *SMR*, and 1.019 (annual) and 1.290 (5-year) for *ESMQ*.58 A primary point of criticism of the impact factor is that highly cited individual publications, though representing only a small portion of a journal, can drastically alter the impact factor. Thus, a journal with a small number of highly cited publications and many other publications that are uncited may obtain an impact factor that is on par with another journal that consistently publishes articles that are well-regarded within the discipline.

An alternate metric used to rank a journal or an author’s relative prominence in a field is the h-index developed by Hirsch (2005). The h-index for a journal is the largest number ‘h’ such that ‘h’ articles have at least ‘h’ citations.59 For example, an h-index of 20 means there are 20 articles that have 20 citations or more. This metric alleviates some of the concerns with the impact factor because it discounts the disproportionate weight of highly cited articles and articles that have not yet been cited (Web of Science, 2016). The h-index is available through several sources, such as the Web of Science, SCImago Journal & Country Rank, and Google Scholar, although there is some variation.

---

57 The SSCI is an interdisciplinary citation index developed by ISI and acquired by Thomson Reuters. The SSCI is a citation database of 3,000 of the world’s leading social sciences journals and accessed via subscription to the ISI Web of Knowledge. The SSCI provides bibliographic and citation information used to identify the most highly cited publications, journals, and authors (Web of Science, 2016).

58 The impact factor is a measure of the frequency with which the "average article" in a journal has been cited in a particular year or period. The annual impact factor is calculated by dividing the number of current year citations to the source items published in that journal during the previous two-years. The five-year impact factor is calculated by combining the statistical data available from consecutive years.

59 For instance, Web of Science and SCImago do not report an h-index for SMQ. Furthermore, h-index values vary by source due to different timespans, some seemingly arbitrary, used to calculate the metric. For example, Google Scholar only uses the last full five years of publications and Web of Science timespans vary by journal, making comparison between publications difficult.
as to how the index is calculated and not all journals are reported (or are reported inconsistently).\textsuperscript{60}

Notwithstanding the variation between reported values, the four journals included in this project have the highest h-index scores of the journals in which sport management scholars most often publish (Journals Serving the Community of Sport Management Scholarship, 2014).

Having located the sources of discourse, it is now necessary to identify the texts best-suited for genealogical analysis. Depending on the search criteria, an exhaustive examination of these four journals would include over 3,000 published research articles. While some genealogies take many years to painstakingly review tens of thousands of historical documents, I possess limited resources, time, and energy to conduct the present analysis. Therefore, some sort of systematic sampling of the most visible, prestigious, and relevant texts within these sources is necessary to define and limit the scope of inquiry.

The h-index is not only a valuable tool to evaluate journals relative to others, but it is also useful to identify what articles within a publication are the highest cited, and therefore, most prominent. For example, if a journal’s h-index is 20, the 20 articles which the h-index is based on will likely provide a sense of what the journal is about, what disciplinary areas and authors publish in the journal, and what ontological, epistemological, and methodological perspectives are most common. Thus, if an h-index can be calculated consistently across journals, it may be used to locate some of a field’s most prominent articles, identify what topics are most indicative of scholarly endeavor, and explore the influence of prevailing knowledge cultures.

As mentioned, Google Scholar is the only database in which all four journals to be analyzed are included; however, the h-index is limited to the last full five years of publications. In a genealogy,\textsuperscript{60} For instance, Web of Science and SCImago do not report an h-index for SMQ. Furthermore, h-index values vary by source due to different timespans, some seemingly arbitrary, used to calculate the metric. For example, Google Scholar only uses the last full five years of publications and Web of Science timespans vary by journal, making comparison between publications difficult.
the qualities of emergence and change are especially significant and so, delineation of an arbitrary timespan restricting what articles are included in the analysis may obfuscate these important phenomena. Therefore, a new h-index, one that considers the full history of each publication, must be calculated. Fortunately, Google Scholar is also a useful tool to compare citation counts. Though these counts are imperfect, since all publications and citation metrics are provided by a single search tool, at least the analysis is consistent. Moreover, although citation counts are important in selecting what articles will be included in the analysis, once the articles are selected, the counts do not impact the subsequent interpretive analysis.

The method I used to calculate each journal’s h-index is fairly straightforward. First, using the advanced search feature of Google Scholar, I queried all articles from each publication and sorted by relevance (1,690 JSM articles, 623 SMR articles, 459 ESMQ/EJSM articles, and 644 SMQ articles). The “sort by relevance” feature generally organized the search by citation count, although there were some deviations. I then scrolled through the search results looking for the point at which the highest cited number of articles equaled the number of citations. For example, for JSM there were 80 articles with at least 78 citations resulting in an h-index of 78 (there were multiple articles with 78 citations). I repeated this method for each journal to derive the following h-indexes: JSM (78), SMR (49), ESMQ (39), and SMQ (66) (there were a total of 243 articles from all four publications). Therefore, the sample of texts used in this study were those articles with at least the number of citations equal to the calculated h-indices for each journal (and which met a second, subjective assessment of relevance).

---

61 JSM was established in 1987, SMR in 1998, ESMQ in 2001 (EJSM was established in 1994), and SMQ in 1992. All journals continue to publish articles today.
62 There were 243 total articles retrieved from the h-index calculation (80 JSM, 51 SMR, 67 SMQ, and 45 ESMQ).
63 As a comparison, in Mallen et al.’s (2011) published study they reduced an initial sample of 4,639 articles from 21 different journals to just 17 articles to be used in their content analysis.
64 Citation analysis is an uncertain science and there is some debate about what citations actually infer. Shilbury (2011) observed that citation analyses have been conducted throughout academic communities to assess the impact of scholars,
Like other bibliometric analyses recently conducted by sport management researchers (see Mallen, Stevens, & Adams, 2011; Shilbury, 2011), the sampling for this study involved two steps: one objective and the other subjective. The objective step was just described. The second step was operationalized as successive readings guided by a keyword search. Since the field of sport management includes a variety of topics and domains, not every article in the sample was relevant to an investigation of sport consumer knowledge. Thus, in the second step I manually surveyed each article for relevant content—a type of “human coding.” A key advantage to human coding, over techniques such as electronic keyword searches, is that the former accounts for linguistic anomalies where some words may have multiple meanings or can be interpreted differently (Stemler, 2001). Thus, each article was reviewed for substance, selecting only those articles relating to the management of end-user transactions, consumer or consumption related variables, and/or market-based consummative behavior (broadly conceived).

**Refining the Sample**

Not all articles from the original sample of 243 research texts were relevant to this study. As the primary research objective was to analyze research discourse concerning the sport consumer, the original sample was reduced to just those articles containing germane discourse. To refine the sample, the following systematic procedure was followed. All 243 articles in the original sample were subjected to an initial reading guided by a keyword search for the terms “consumer,” “consume,” “consumption,” and “consummation.” Articles not containing any of these keywords and, upon initial reading, were determined did not to possess the targeted discourse were removed from the journals, institutions, and the theoretical developments in a field. There are, of course, notable weaknesses to such indices, which include self-citation, negative citations (citing to disprove), “halo effects” (citing preeminent scholars), and the effect of research trends and fads (Xiao & Smith, 2008). Nevertheless, citations have been and continue to be used as an indicator of general article quality—“citation analysis has remained a useful and legitimate tool in tracking the paths of knowledge across researchers and publications” (Xiao & Smith, 2008, p. 66). My analysis does not attempt to interpret why a particular article is more cited than others (what is said inside the article is what is important); my use of citations is simply as a criteria for text selection.
sample. At this stage the sample was reduced to 120 articles (note: four additional articles from \( SMQ \) met the criteria for inclusion in the sample, but a copy of the articles could not be found). At this point a second reading of the sampled articles was conducted looking specifically for discourse relating to knowledge about the sport consumer that also elucidated the research questions. After this second reading, 20 articles were removed, resulting in a final sample of 100 research articles. The final sample list is provided in Table A.1 (see Appendix) annotating the journal, year, author(s), number of Google citations (as of March 10, 2016), and general type/subtype (i.e., genre) of research article. This sample of research texts, as a partial representation of the sport consumer research corpus, comprised the empirical material for the analysis of discourse chronicled in the succeeding chapters.

The final sample included 100 articles with the following break-down and percentage of the original h-index listing (38/57\% \( SMQ \), 33/41\% \( JSM \), 22/43\% \( SMR \), and 7/16\% \( ESMQ \)). Of note, 83 of the research articles in the final sample were published during the period 2001-2011 when all journals were publishing articles, albeit with varying rates of publication which explains some of the difference in journal representation. The articles also clearly cluster in the decade of the 2000s. Thus, authorship, editorship, and topical interests are likely, at least in part, reflective of certain temporal factors relating to this period. The influence of these temporal elements, which may include particular schools of instruction, editorial regimes, and “state of the science,” are all elements which feed into the “sport consumer knowledge culture” that is the focal point of this study.

There are certain limitations of this sort of sampling that should be acknowledged. First, such a systematic approach may be critiqued for not being “Foucauldian.” Indeed, Foucault did not expressly limit the scope of texts included in his detailed historical studies, but rather targeted selected discourses he viewed as constitutive of modern power. However, as scholars have formalized his theoretical perspective into a methodology, textual sampling may be operationalized
to include a large array of texts or conversely, a more focused selection related to a particular phenomenon (Markula & Silk, 2011).

Second, I used the systematic procedure described above to “sample” the sport consumer research knowledge base—to both create a sample of research articles that was partially representative of the content and orient the study towards those texts that have been most influential in shaping sport consumer research thought. The h-index criteria produced a listing of the most highly cited texts without regard to subject-matter; the subsequent refinement of the sample simply partitioned those texts that do not contain mention of consumer-related language from those that do. Thus, the final sample of articles used in this genealogical study is a partial, though purposeful selection of research texts on the sport consumer, taken from some of the most prominent scholarly discourse produced by the field over the last 30 years. The scope of inclusion could have been more broad or more narrow, though I believe the criteria used strikes an acceptable balance of diversity, relevance, and prominence. Including or excluding other sampling criteria may have distorted this tenuous balance.

As a final limitation, I must acknowledge that the sample does not include recent articles that may indicate current or pending shifts in the field. Similarly, the sample does not include those articles of the past that may have shifted inquiry in other directions, but for whatever reason were not widely cited. This is a limitation housed within the theoretical underpinnings of the genealogical method—while other discourses exist, only those that are particularly serious (highly cited articles in prominent journals) are likely to exert power over systems of thought and influence practices of governance.
CHAPTER 4
THE SPORT CONSUMER RESEARCH CORPUS

Theories, Methods, and Samples

In this chapter, I provide an overview of the selection of articles. The objective of this part of the project was to provide an encompassing representation of the corpus of research texts on the sport consumer. While there are a number of techniques I could have used, it was my aim to make this part of the project to highly descriptive. To do this, I adopted Ahl’s (2002) summative approach using tables of aggregate information about each article to depict and assess the development of consumer research in the field. To conduct a holistic analysis of the research texts, I grouped the articles from each journal into a single body of research discourse and approached it as a representation of a sport consumer knowledge culture within the field of sport management. To populate the tables, I assimilated notes taken during successive readings of the texts; I collected information regarding various elements of the research articles including the type of study, theoretical bases, research design, analysis techniques, sample characteristics, independent and dependent variables, and the setting and context of the study. This stage of analysis brings to the fore the overwhelmingly cross-sectional and descriptive character of sport consumer research, and also supports allegations of theoretical and epistemological orthodoxy alluded to earlier. I move through each element in turn and provide an analysis of findings. I conclude this descriptive section with a short summary to illustrate how knowledge about the sport consumer is epistemologically bounded by the research discourse. This discussion dovetails into the succeeding analysis of discourse that is more directly focused on explicating the issues raised in the preceding chapters.

Types of Studies. Table 4.1 shows the distribution of conceptual and empirical studies. I categorized articles as conceptual or empirical based upon the source of knowledge identified by the
author(s), either explicitly or implied. In conceptual articles, knowledge claims are derived from theory or beliefs, as opposed to empirical studies that seek to provide evidence for knowledge claims based upon actual experience (for example, a survey of consumer attitudes). In this sample of the most highly cited research texts in four of the field’s most revered journals (the sampling period included the first issue of each journal to the present day), it would be expected that there would be a relatively high number of conceptual or theoretical articles reflecting the need of pioneering authors to “map the territory” (Ahl, 2002). However, as the table shows, only 18% of articles were classified as “conceptual” with the remaining 82% falling into the empirical category. Of the empirical articles, roughly 95% were classified as exploratory or descriptive studies and the remaining 5% were classified as causal or experimental studies (in addition, of the empirical articles, 11 (13%) involved the development of a new scale).

A descriptive study is one in which the author(s) describe what is going on or what exists (Trochim & Donnelly, 2008). In quantitative research, descriptive studies use a variety of research instruments (surveys, questionnaires, interview guides, etc.) to provide a quantitative or numeric description of trends, attitudes, or opinions of a population by studying a sample of that population (Cresswell, 2009). Descriptive studies can be both longitudinal and cross-sectional—usually with the nomothetic objective of generalizing from the sample to the greater population (ibid). In addition, descriptive studies are exploratory when there are few or no prior studies about a research problem to reference or predict the outcome. In exploratory studies the goal is usually to gain preliminary insights and familiarity with the research problem, paving the way for future in-depth analysis.

On the other hand, an experimental study is used to determine if a specific treatment influences or causes an outcome, usually involving a control group and a treatment group (Cresswell, 2009). There are two commonly ascribed experimental research designs—true experiments and quasi-experiments. True experimental designs use random assignment of subjects while quasi-
experiments allow for nonrandomized assignment (Cresswell, 2009). Both experimental and quasi-experimental designs were grouped in the “experimental” category for this analysis.

There could be several acceptable explanations for the observed distribution of articles in regard to any of the descriptive grouping variables used; these may include the subjective elements of the sampling criteria, unidentified issues with the Google citation index, evolving needs of the field, and so on. However, these metrics (and those that follow) should be viewed as contextual descriptions of the sample (recalling they are not just any articles, but some of the most highly cited texts in the field), intended to provide both a sense of the kinds of the articles reviewed in this study as well as the kind of research published in the field.

Table 4.1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study Type</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conceptual/Review</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empirical</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>82.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Descriptive/Exploratory</td>
<td>(78)</td>
<td>(95.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental/Causal</td>
<td>(4)</td>
<td>(4.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scale Development</td>
<td>(11)</td>
<td>(13.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Theory Bases.** Table 4.2 shows the results of a thematic analysis of theoretical bases used in the sample of research articles, divided into two periods that roughly split the sample in half. By periodizing the sample descriptives (which I do several times), I was able to look for changes that may have occurred over time. The theoretical categories are based upon the field from which the primary theoretical base is drawn. Often, authors failed to expressly indicate a theory base, and instead, referenced findings of prior studies as the basis for the current work. In these cases, the article was grouped in the “prior study/model testing” category. To be placed in one of the next six categories, the author(s) made an explicit reference to a theory linked to a specific field (i.e., marketing, social-psychology, economics, sociology, organizational theory, or corporate social
responsibility). Articles without an explicit theoretical base, relying upon the rhetorical effort of the author alone as justification for the current work, were categorized in the final “no theory” category.

To begin with reference to the periodization, it appears authors of the older sample of articles relied upon the work of previous studies more often, and incorporated fewer social-psychological theories into their research than the more recent group of authors. As expected, the majority of articles in the sample contained a reference to a marketing and/or social-psychology theory as the conceptual base. Together, these articles comprised 67% of the sample. Very few authors failed to referenced theory at all; however, it was not uncommon for scholars to avoid direct reference to a known theory and instead use prior research within the field or testing of a previously proposed model to justify the current study. Indeed, 22% of articles fell into this category, primarily referencing prior sport marketing/consumer behavior studies. Whether or not the earlier study was based on a recognized theory was not routinely discussed.

Table 4.2. Theoretical Bases

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theory Base</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prior Study/Model Testing</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>29.1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>50.9</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social-Psychology</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociology</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational Theory</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSR</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Theory</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With specific attention to those articles with direct reference to a marketing and/or social-psychology theory, there were fifty-five instances where a specific named theory was cited more than once (as indicated in Table 4.3). These theories were grouped into eight categories including service marketing theory, brand equity theory, social identity/identity theory, attitude/affect theory, fan
motivation theory, sponsorship theory, the psychological continuum model, and the theory of planned behavior. The most notable takeaway from this table is that 55% of the sampled articles referenced the same group of theoretical bases. When coupled with the observation from Table 4.2—that 22% of the articles cited other articles produced by the field—77% of the sampled articles could be considered “self-referential” and/or as citing the same pool of marketing and social-psychology theories.

Table 4.3. 
Directly Referenced Marketing/Social-Psychology Theories Cited More than Once

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theory</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Citation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Service Marketing</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>19.0</td>
<td>Bitner, 1990, 1992; Bitner &amp; Hubbert, 1994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Brady &amp; Cronin, 2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Oliver, 1980, 1997; Rust &amp; Oliver, 1994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Parasuraman, Zeithaml, &amp; Berry, 1985, 1988, 1994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Zeithaml, Parasuraman, &amp; Berry, 1985</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand Equity</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>Aaker, 1991</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Keller, 1993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Identity/Identity Theory</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>Tajfel &amp; Turner, 1979, 1986; Hogg &amp; Terry, 2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Stryker, 1980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude/Affect</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>Bright &amp; Manfredo, 1995; Bright, 1997</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Fazio, Powell, &amp; Herr, 1983</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Fiske, 1982</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Kelman, 1958, 1961</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Zillman, Bryant, &amp; Zapolsky, 1989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fan Motivation</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>Sloan, 1989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychological Continuum Model</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>Funk &amp; James, 2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planned Behavior</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>Ajzen, 1985, 1991; Ajzen &amp; Fishbein, 1980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>55</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. 6 other marketing/social-psychology theories were directly referenced as a theoretical base, but cited only once: Involvement (Allport, 1943, 1945; Sherif & Cantril, 1947); Heirachy of Effects (Barry, 1987); Means-End Chain Theory (Claeys & Vanden, 1995); Adaptation Theory (Helson, 1964); Motivation (Herzberg, 1966); Source Credibility Theory (Ohanian, 1991)

The PCM (Funk & James, 2001, 2006) is regarded as a “theory base” for two reasons. First, it is a unifying framework for how people form psychological connections with sport objects. It is theory-like in that it explains the complex process by which people form and strengthen mental associations. Second, due to its explanatory power and origin within the field, it has become a popular foundation for scholarship on fan behavior. Scholars have struggled to operationalize the PCM, but it has nonetheless served the field as a prominent theoretical base.
Research Setting and Context. Table 4.4 shows the distribution of primary settings and contexts from which the research of the various sampled articles was based. Again, I temporally split the sample to look for significant changes in research contexts. This descriptive feature is necessary to examine what types of sport scholars believe are most relevant to the field. Here the temporal element is rather inconclusive with minor changes across year groups and a rather consistent popularity of professional and collegiate sports for attracting scholarly attention. The categories of professional and college sports account for a total of 61% of the sampled articles. Of note, only 10% of the articles selected a sporting context involving an all-female activity, giving a sense of the kinds of sport engagements most popularly “consumed” and/or those sorts of sport products most interesting to sport consumer researchers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pro Sports (w=2)*</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Sport (w=4)</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>23.6</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rec/Fitness Club</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olympics</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MPSE (w=1)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sport Tourism</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Sport</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Leisure/Sport</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*w=sample includes an all-female sport.

Research Design and Variable Selection. As Table 4.5 shows, cross-sectional survey-based research has been favored by the field, accounting for over 68% of the sampled articles. There were no longitudinal studies, although several authors claimed that they were necessary and would contribute immensely to the field. Longitudinal studies, though elusive in many other disciplines as well, are generally more difficult to conduct and consume more resources along the way.
Additionally, only eight studies (roughly 9% of the empirical articles) used some sort of qualitative research methodology (i.e., interviews, ethnographic methods, and mixed-methods), although most appear to subscribe to post-positivism/foundationalism with only a couple exceptions.

Table 4.5.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Design</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cross-sectional</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>68.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Longitudinal</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case Study</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scale Development</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obs/Ethnographic</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Data</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed-Method</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>82</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Table includes empirical articles only.

Table 4.6 and 4.7 depict the range of dependent and independent variables used in the selection of texts. An attempt at periodization was again used, although the only notable difference may be a slight increase in studies with dependent variables related to brand equity or brand image.

Table 4.6.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intention/Motivation</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>36.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prior Consumption</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction/Quality</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>15.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand Equity/Image</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loyalty/Commitment</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identification</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude/Affect</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Points of Attachment</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word-of-Mouth</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motives</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>50</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Also, as Table 4.7 indicates there may have been a similar increase in independent variables related to involvement, motives, identification, and brand image, and a reduction in articles using demographics as independent variables.

Table 4.7.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Independent Variable</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction/Quality</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>16.4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement*</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motives/Constraints</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>16.4</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identification</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brand Image/Associations</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sponsor Recall/Recognition</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude/Affect</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11.9</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Points of Attachment</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prior Consumption</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demographics</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11.9</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sport/Division Type</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotions/Media</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winning/Performance</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Incl. psychological connection/emotional attachment.

**Sampling.** Table 4.8 through 4.12 are all related to the samples and sampling methods used in the selection of research articles. Beginning with the sampling method researchers used to build their samples, Table 4.8 reveals that the majority of studies used a random and/or stratified random sampling method, representing nearly 55% of the selected articles. The randomness of the stratified/systematic samples could be questioned as many descriptions of the sampling methods involved a myriad of subjective techniques to “stratify” the sample (I took the authors at their word that the sample was indeed “random”). Nearly 25% of the samples were “convenience” samples, the majority of which were comprised of students.
Table 4.8.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sampling Method</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Convenience</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>24.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stratified/Systematic</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>44.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Random</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purposive</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Census</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Data</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insufficient Info</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>81</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. Table includes empirical articles only; excluded 1 article using case study analysis.*

Table 4.9 shows the types of respondents included in the samples. As expected, the majority of samples were comprised of spectators (45.7%) and participants (7.4%). Not expected, however, was the number of student samples used among this group of prestigious research articles, at almost 26% of the selection. While students may be an important consumer group, it seems that on some occasions the convenience of surveying students outweighed the perceived importance of finding a representative sample of the broader (or targeted) consumer population.

Table 4.9.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Sample</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spectators/Fans</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>45.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>25.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Club Members</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managers/Executives</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other*</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>81</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. Table includes empirical articles only; excluded 1 article using case study analysis.*

*Other=secondary data, sport consumer at-large, unknown, etc.*
Table 4.10 consists of the sample country of origin identified in the research texts. Though appearing in two international and two domestic journals, most of the studies drew from U.S. samples (76.5% of texts). On several occasions researchers used samples comprised of respondents from two or more countries. In these cases, part of the sample was from the U.S. and the other from another country (AUS/NZ, Japan). To avoid double-counting, the country other than the U.S. was logged since the goal of the description was to show the range of countries sampled.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>US</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>76.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUS/NZ</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korea</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>81</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. The table includes empirical articles only. I also excluded one article using case study analysis. In addition, there were three studies that used respondents from multiple countries; in these cases, only the non-US country was recorded to show the diversity of sampling without double-counting.

Tables 4.11 and 4.12 contain information pertaining to the size of the sample and rate of response as reported by the authors. As can been seen in Table 4.11, the distribution of sample sizes is fairly even with the most common sample size of 201-300 respondents. Often, sample size is determined not by the number of surveys administered or rate of response, but by the requirements of the statistical method used in analysis. For some statistical techniques (e.g., structure equation modeling) there is a minimum acceptable sample size dictated by the complexity of the model. Thus, the spike observed in Table 4.11 may be in part a result of popular statistical techniques and convention in model structure. For all statistical analyses, the greater the sample size the better,
assuming the data meets the various assumptions of the chosen statistical technique; however, obtaining large samples can be extremely time-consuming and costly.

Table 4.11.
Size of Sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample Size</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Sample Size</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-100</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>701-800</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>101-200</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>801-900</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>201-300</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>901-1000</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>301-400</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>1001-1500</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>401-500</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>1501-2000</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>501-600</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>2001+</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>601-700</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>28</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Table includes empirical articles only; excluded 1 article using case study analysis.

Referencing Table 4.12, of the studies containing a response rate (42% did not), there seem to be two peaks in the rate of response: in roughly 20% of the articles a response rate between 26-50% was reported and a similarly sized group reported a response rate between 76-100%. The higher response rates appear to have been generated using an intercept/systematic sampling method while the lower response rates were found in studies using mail surveys and/or attempted to collect large swaths of the target population.

Table 4.12.
Response Rate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response Rate</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-25%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-50%</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>19.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51-75%</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>76%-100%</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>23.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Reported</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>42.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Table includes empirical articles only; excluded 1 article using case study analysis.

**Analysis Technique and Comparison of Groups.** Table 4.13 shows the distribution of analysis techniques encountered in the sampled articles. Overwhelmingly, linear regression and
structure equation modeling dominate the research corpus as the preferred technique of analysis, present in over 88% of the articles (combined total). Just under 4% of the articles used some form of descriptive statistical analysis as the primary technique, including correlation analysis and \( t \)-tests. Linear regression and the various forms of analysis of (co)variance and ordinary least squares were grouped in the same category. The same was done with factor analysis and structure equation modeling as there is much overlap and similar foundations among the two families of statistical analyses. Also, only five incidences of qualitative analysis were found, although eight articles subscribed to some form of qualitative research design. This was explained by the three articles using a mixed-methods approach, since all adopted a quantitative/statistical approach for the analysis of data.

Table 4.13.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Analysis Technique</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Descriptives (incl. bivariate correlations, ( t )-test)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linear Regression (incl. ANOVA, OLS)</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>26.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factor Analysis/SEM</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>30.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cluster Analysis</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEM &amp; Linear Regression</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>30.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualitative</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>82</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. Table includes empirical articles only.*

Finally, a great deal can be discerned from the examination of how comparisons are made and justified. Table 4.14 shows the various comparisons that were made in the sampled articles. Gender was the primary point of comparison, present in nearly 25% of the articles, with other demographic variables adding another 10%. These comparisons were sometimes made as exploratory diversions, but most often researchers were searching for specific clefts to segment consumer groups. Segmentation strategies will be discussed more later on, but the basic premise is that marketing communications are thought to be more effective if they can be tailored to specific
groups of consumers that may display unique motives and attitudes about a product. Thus, marketing communications are more successful if a marketer possesses an intimate understanding of the needs of the consumer segment and can tailor the communication based upon that knowledge. Since gender is thought by many to be a marker for dispositional, affective, and attitudinal difference, it is often the first factor to be compared in marketing research. Other comparisons are annotated in the table, with 42% of the articles containing no mention of comparison.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groups Compared</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>24.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Demographic Variables</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement/Interest</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sport/League Type</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fan Groups</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prior Attendance</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No use of comparisons</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>42.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>81</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Table includes empirical articles only; excluded 1 article using case study analysis.

Summary

By combining the descriptions of the sampled texts provided above, trends within the research corpus start to become visible. Such a synthesis undeniably implies a bit of generalization. Although the knowledge base appears to exhibit symptoms of orthodoxy, I do not suggest it is monolithic. As the preceding examination reveals and the subsequent analyses will support, the research conducted on sport consumers is more indicative of a mosaic—a conglomerate of interrelated texts that draw and build on each other to create and reproduce knowledge about a family of related topics. However, if a sport consumer knowledge culture does indeed exist, it is likely to reveal itself through aggregation, which is the general analytical tool adopted in this study.
So then, what do these descriptions show? To reiterate, it is important to acknowledge that the texts are not just any texts—they are “serious,” selected for their prestige and visibility. In other words, what the authors wrote in these manuscripts has mattered a great deal—to other scholars, practitioners, students, and the field at large. This said, the results of the descriptive analysis portray an image of the sport consumer epistemologically forged and bounded by the research discourse.

First, research on the sport consumer is overwhelmingly descriptive. While many authors attempt to model behavior and infer causality, the cross-sectional design and psychometric instruments preferred by scholars (as opposed to experimental research design, for example) can only describe the attitudes, perceptions, and opinions held by a sample of the population. Although statistical techniques are useful to describe correlations between variables, significant differences between groups, and goodness-of-fit for conceptual models, they are not always suited to prove causality. Even the best fitting model can be replaced by a better fitting one—one with better data or better specification of factors. Furthermore, limits of the survey instrument (from design to operationalization) and samples that are not truly random or representative limit the efficacy of descriptive studies. Moreover, when samples are conveniently located (e.g., students) at the expense of randomness and representativeness, the quality standard moves further beyond reach.

Supporting Newman’s (2014) suspicion, the results of this descriptive analysis also indicate that this research corpus exhibits strong theoretical orthodoxy and a high incidence of self-reference. It is unknown what the balance of theoretical plasticity and interdisciplinary citation should be, but for such a nascent field, it seems that the frequencies of these two traits are rather low. Other descriptives expose what kind of sport and type of consumer behavior is most valued by the field. Spectatorship of U.S. male professional and collegiate sport tops the list, while purchase intentions and its derivatives (i.e., behavioral loyalty, past consumption, satisfaction, and brand equity) most frequently capture scholarly attention.
To conclude, it seems the sport consumer (both the object and subject of knowledge) is stuck in an epistemic quagmire—made knowable by questionnaires that collect quantitative data about her perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors so that she can be categorized and subjected to managerial manipulation. Although sport consumer researchers appear to value *causes*, lacking measures of actual behavior, it must create the conditions and contexts of hypothetical consumption experiences and thus, it can only *describe*. In turn, cause and effect relationships in popular sporting contexts are calculated with support from a regular cast of theories and models recycled by the knowledge community. Furthermore, although sport participation has clear benefits, overwhelmingly scholars are more interested when it is watched—particularly elite, competitive, and male versions of sport that are easily commodified and mass-distributed. Although popular culture may have elevated the status of professional spectator sports, sport consumer researchers are not forced to overlook other types of sport engagements nor defer them to other fields. The choices that scholars make about what to study are as much indicative of individual tastes as they are influenced by prevailing knowledge cultures within the field or academe in general (one’s tastes are likely affected by these normalizing practices as well). For example, the values of authors, journal editors, department chairs, and the imperatives of academic promotion and tenure likely influence what is published, by whom, and in what context.

Concluding this chapter, in the spirit of Enlightenment we should ask in what ways does the advance of thought represented by these texts liberate people from uncertainty and deliver them as masters of their own destiny? Not seeing a clear answer to this question, we can pose it again with a biopolitical cant. Instead, how does research conducted by sport consumer researchers serve the purposes of a bourgeois economy and entrepreneurs of the self (and others)? That is to say, what does this body of research reveal about management’s desire to understand and control human nature when it produces mechanisms that transform leisure activity into exploitable capital? Is
Enlightenment in contemporary sport management the pursuit of knowledge to liberate and elevate the human condition or the production of knowledge to subjugate and control?

In the remaining chapters, I examined the research corpus in greater detail, continuing to develop this genealogical narrative and exploring how the sport consumer has been rendered knowable by research discourse. In the next chapter, I inspect how the sport consumer has been defined—considering the underlying needs, substances, and acts of consumption, before interrogating the epistemological boundaries of the sport consumer knowledge culture in the final chapters.
Defining the Sport Consumer

In this chapter, I begin to analyze the discursive mosaic with the objective of uncovering and assembling how scholars have defined the sport consumer. Thus, it is not my description of the sport consumer that populates the succeeding pages, but rather descriptions offered by sport consumer researchers which I assembled and magnified through discursive analysis. Although it was rare to find an explicit definition of the sport consumer in the texts, many scholars did provide a partial scaffolding—descriptions of certain characteristics, qualities, and behaviors that when assembled, form a visage of the object of inquiry. However, the conspicuous absence of explicit definitions of the sport consumer and sport consumption does not mean there is nothing to be found. On the contrary, these omissions also help to elucidate the politics and sensibilities within the field.

While exploring the texts for definitional elements of the sport consumer, I looked for several different kinds of descriptions guided by a basic understanding of the process of consumption outlined in Figure 4 (below). First, I searched for the various needs and desires assigned to the sport consumer—the impulse that motivates one to “consume” a sport object. As a part of this step, I also probed the discourse for the determinants of need. Because a consumer cannot produce the things it needs or desires, it is made subject to the consuming practices it adopts in the pursuit of fulfillment. Thus, what determines one’s need also makes one subject—an important element in understanding how the research discourse interpellates the consumer subject and governs their behavior. Second, I looked for descriptions of the substances of consumption; that is, what sport consumers “consume” when they consume sport. Accounts of this substance were somewhat elusive, with many scholars focusing on the benefits or post-consumption value as the quality of
consumption that truly matters to consumers. Last, I investigated the discourse for the acts of consumption—how sport is consumed. In this step, I looked for descriptions of consumer behavior and how consumers choose between consumption alternatives. Together, by assembling the needs, determinants, substances, and acts of sport consumption, I aimed to understand the ontological premise by which scholars purport to know the sport consumer.

![Figure 4. The Process of Consumption](image)

**Sport Consumer Needs and Making Subjects**

As postulated earlier, consumption in its myriad forms is a behavioral response to address some *a priori* need or desire. This attribution holds for the consumption of all forms of products—goods and services. In marketing jargon, consumer “needs” are often viewed as intrinsic motives (Funk & James, 2004)—the individual factors that drive consumption. From a marketing perspective, understanding these motives can help managers design, manufacture, and deliver products that consumers want or need, and, ultimately, make the production process more efficient and profitable.

At this stage of analysis, I am specifically looking for how sport consumers are defined by their needs, determinants, substances, and the acts of consumption, as well as how the discourse
illuminates consumer subjectivity. How needs make subject is an important issue in this project, as identifying, calculating, predicting, and manipulating the needs and motives of consumers is one of the primary objectives of marketing management. In this way, needs may be both an instance of subjectivity (vulnerability) and an implement of social control. Consider the following excerpt from Funk and James (2004):

Dispositional needs represent psychological needs, personality traits and individual attributes. They represent the catalysts that are thought to motivate people to develop psychological connections with sport objects (e.g., sport, team or athlete) that allow for the expression of their own characteristics, traits and self-concepts. In sport-related research these characteristics are generally termed ‘motivational factors’, contributing to spectator and fan attendance. Sport scholars have identified various dispositional characteristics that reflect intrinsic motives or needs such as vicarious achievement, aesthetics, drama, need for social interaction, escape or diversion, entertainment, gambling, suspense, group affiliation, physical attraction, and self-esteem enhancement (e.g., Funk et al., 2002; Sloan, 1989; Trail & James, 2001; Wann, 1995). Individuals may be motivated to form a psychological connection with a sport team and engage in particular behaviours in order to satisfy various dispositional needs. (Funk & James, 2004, p. 8)

The quote from Funk and James covers a lot of ground and is a useful example to demonstrate the kind of genealogical analysis adopted in this study. First, by applying a dispositional approach the authors imply that there are innate “motivational factors” (unmet needs, lack, vulnerabilities, etc.) linked to one’s inherent “psychological needs,” “personality traits,” or “individual attributes.” Moreover, by finding fulfillment in the connections (psychological: intangible) one makes with “sport objects” he or she can become whole, expressive of their own traits and sense of self. Taking this statement at face-value, suspending for a moment the possibility that other non-sport products
may be capable of satiating the same consumer needs, the sport consumer is simultaneously elevated and made subject to the psychological connections provided by sport. According to this rationale, individual characteristics, traits, and self-concept indeed become known, but only in reference to sport objects. Furthermore, the myriad needs identified by the authors do not lie dormant once satiated, but act as “catalysts” that impact future attendance (consumption) of sport, implying an enduring subject position.

Consumer needs and motives have been a prolific area of study in sport consumer research. When the underlying consumer needs are satiated by the outcome or after-use benefit of consumption of the sport product, consumption itself (i.e., participating or spectating) can be viewed as a problem-solving strategy. For example, the sport participant’s needs have been theorized as follows:

Consumers buy a service to solve their problems (Gronroos, 1990). In other words, the focus of the purchase is on the after-use benefits and outcomes, not the service itself…. Sport consumers often have a certain level of expectation about the outcome of sport participation. However, as the needs of sport consumers are often varied and difficult to predict, the sport product is more elusive than most realized. For example, physical fitness, risk-taking, stress reduction, affiliation, social facilitation, self-esteem, achievement, skill mastery, aesthetics, and self-actualization are all potential motivation factors for the sport participant. (Ko & Pastore, 2004, p. 162)

These descriptions infer that needs and motives are “elusive,” requiring “hypotheses” to map their existence and overcome the challenge of prediction. The needs of the sport spectator are theorized a bit differently. Trail, Robinson, Dick, and Gillentine (2003) write:
Motives for spectator and fan behavior have been hypothesized to exist because of social and psychological needs of the individual (Trail, Anderson, & Fink, 2000). One way that these needs can be fulfilled is through behavior relevant to consumption of sport. (p. 218)

Participant needs are thought to vary from those of the spectator on the degree of corporeality. However, while the participant may revel in the physical prowess achieved through fitness activities, both the participant and spectator are thought to fulfill social and/or psychological needs as well.

Other descriptions elicit various theories to build a framework for sport consumption:

While Maslow’s human needs hierarchy provided the basis framework for organizing constructs related to sport consumption… The four dimensions of spectatorship were referred to as mental well-being, social, basic sport, and personal needs. (McDonald, Milne, & Hong, 2002, p. 109)

Further, to know the sport consumer, scholars have theorized the social element of sport spectatorship as fulfilling the need for affiliation.

Melnick (1993) provides one of the more compelling discussions of this phenomenon in his theory of sport spectating. In noting the positive relationship between urbanisation and American spectator sports, Melnick suggests that people satisfy their social needs in public places (e.g., sports stadiums and sports arenas) with relative strangers. From this perspective, attendance at a sport event satisfies not only entertainment needs, but also social needs—needs for affiliation with others. (Cunningham & Kwon, 2003, p. 130)

Clearly, sport consumption has been theorized in relation to need fulfillment. The sport participant is thought to engage with sport to attend to a mix of mental and physical needs relating to well-being, fitness, (eu)stress, sociability, achievement, aesthetics, and self-actualization. On the other hand, the sport spectator’s needs appear to be more social and/or psychological, linked to mental
well-being, individuality, affiliation, entertainment, information, and escape. Taken together, sport consumer behavior may be regarded as discretionary (a choice), compulsory (obligatory), or autonomous (veiled, indirect) leisure consumption that fulfills the innate needs of consumers. That is, sport consumption may be both a problem-solving strategy to attend to unmet or directed needs and at other times, a leisure activity that happens to fulfill a need as an ancillary benefit.

Furthermore, sport consumers may seek opportunities to consume outside traditional channels and/or in opposition to mainstream behavior. While falling outside the “norm” or considered “novel” forms of consumption, these consumption behaviors have similarly been linked to underlying consumer needs: “[Online] sport consumers have a need to gain up-to-date information regarding sport teams, players, products, and current trends of sport business” (Hur, Ko, & Valacich, 2007, p. 525). Also, some consuming behavior has been labeled “rebellious” or indicative of a sport subculture: “Both of the proposed consumer/fan behavioral phenomena relate to felt needs for individuality. These somewhat rebellious fans are engaging in behaviors that would tend to be going against more popular, and more generally accepted, fan behaviors” (Campbell, Aiken, & Kent, 2004, p. 155).

As the preceding descriptive tables indicate, sport consumer motive research has enjoyed relative prominence in the field, encouraged no doubt by scholars attempting to appeal to managerial sensibilities. Kim, Greenwell, Andrew, Lee, and Mahony (2008) write: “Sport fans and spectators watch or attend sporting events for different reasons, and identifying their motivations is critical to understanding and satisfying these consumers” (p. 111). There is still some debate, however, over the uniqueness of sport and sport fans when conducting this sort of research. The antithetical arguments in the following passages demonstrate this discord. Trail, Robinson, Dick, and Gillentine (2003) write: “The distinction between fans and spectators is important to sport marketing practitioners as well. They must recognize that they may have two distinct groups
attending games, and therefore should consciously attempt to meet their wants and needs” (p. 226). For others, sport consumption is not so dissimilar from other forms of leisure consumption: “The needs of sport fans are similar to those sought by consumers for a range of other discretionary leisure products like the cinema, the art gallery and the theatre” (Smith & Stewart, 2010, p. 10).

Taken together, it is unclear what sport marketers should do. Either fans and spectators are unique (from each other and from other types of consumers), requiring specific marketing strategies to know and cater to their needs, or sport fans are just like other enthusiastic patrons of leisure activities and products. Interestingly, the effort by scholars to isolate and identify consumer motives has led to a proliferation of studies seeking to locate additional factors that motivate sport consumption in a given context. For example, the following passage argues for the distinction between “group affiliation” motives and “family” motives, making the case that the family is a unique kind of group:

The family motive is similar to the group affiliation motive. However, rather than involving a desire to be with others, the family motive involves the consumption of sport because it provides an opportunity to spend time with family members… this motive is particularly common among sport fans that have children and/or are married… sport fans with high levels of family motivation may prefer to consume nonaggressive sports rather than aggressive sports because they did not want to expose their children to the violent actions found in aggressive sports. (Wann, Grieve, Zapalac, & Pease, 2008, p. 7)

From this passage, one may discern that the family motive is salient among fans of nonaggressive sport who have children or are married. Fans without children or a spouse (regardless of existing relationships with other “family” members) may not experience this motive to any significant degree. Conversely, the group affiliation motive may be particularly strong among this affiliation-seeking market segment with a concomitant preference for aggressive sports. This example
demonstrates how scholars create categories, some seemingly arbitrary, in order to make scientific (causal) inferences and predictions backed by prior research, modeling, and empirical testing.

The consumption of sport products, however, may not be as unique as some scholars propose. Smith and Stewart (2010) provide a counter-argument that sport consumption, based upon the needs identified by motives researchers, may have more in common with other non-sporting forms of leisure consumption than is commonly ascribed:

At the same time, these needs can be met by a range of consumption experiences that have little to do with sport. Shoppers who salivate over a $1000 Gucci handbag have much in common with sport consumers, since they too are prepared to pay good money to secure some vicarious identification and reflected status. Neither are shoppers necessarily any less superficial, ephemeral or irrational than their sporting counterparts. (Smith & Stewart, 2010, p. 4)

Yet, sport consumption continues to captivate the attention of scholars who seek to understand via deduction why consumers do what they do. The praxeology of marketing that extends to the study of the sport consumer compels scholars to deduce that behavior is the result of some underlying need—in this case, a need for sport. In turn, theoretically sound and empirically supported management principles are required to help producers give consumers what they want.

Consequently, the needs of participants and spectators (broadly conceived) define them both as “consumers” and “consumer subjects,” subordinate to the attributes, benefits, and post-consumption outcomes of derived from sport products. Where these needs come from, who defines them as needs, and what products are promoted to satisfy them is the topic of the next section.

**Determinants of Need.** While some researchers investigate the underlying dispositional or innate needs of the consumer, others have indicated that consumer needs and desires are often contingent, influenced by the actions of managers and maneuvers of industry. In some cases,
consumer needs are viewed as metrics of quality and product specifications. Accordingly, consumer needs are translated into quality assessments:

Quality as conformance to specifications has been very strongly advocated by quality gurus such as Crosby (1985, 1989), Deming (1986), Feigenbaum (1991), and Juran (1989). In this perspective, consumer needs and desires are translated into clear specifications for the product as quality is judged by the extent to which these specifications are met. In other words, quality is conformance to specifications. (Chelladurai & Chang, 2000, p. 9)

Who exactly does the “judging” is a matter of perspective. Chelladurai and Chang (2000), referencing the typology created by Øvretveit (1991), demonstrate that service quality may or may not be determined with reference to consumer needs:

Øvretveit (1991) proposed the following three types of quality in human services to parallel the three sets of evaluators—clients, service providers, and managers. *Client quality* refers to what consumers want from the service, individually and as a population. That is, quality is meeting or exceeding customer expectation. *Professional quality* verifies whether the service meets customer needs as defined by professionals, and whether it correctly carries out techniques and procedures that are believed necessary and appropriate to meet consumer needs without much weight given to client preferences. This is consistent with the view that quality is conforming to specifications except that the specifications are set by professionals and professional organisations. Finally, *management quality* is concerned with the most efficient and productive use of resources to meet consumer needs within limits and directives set by higher authorities. The ideas of efficiency and productivity reflect management’s view of quality. (Chelladurai & Chang, 2000, p. 14)

This excerpt demonstrates the range of definitions of “quality” that invariably influence the production and delivery of products to satiate consumer needs. While consumers judge products
against their own set of criteria and expectations, whether these quality assessments are of interest to producers is uncertain as professional standards and/or managerial imperatives may be preferred measures of quality. That is to say, perceptions of quality and satisfaction, though important to the consumer, may not be the sort of calculation scholars (and managers) prefer as indicators of success.

Moreover, when considering the sport product, much attention has been given to the distinction of core verses periphery products. In sport, it is often argued that the sport competition is the core product and everything else is ancillary. Fullerton and Merz (2008) offer a simplified accounting of the sport product:

The spectator sports product can be viewed from two perspectives. First is the sale of access to events; that access may legitimately be viewed as the product. Second is the reality that access has no value without the competition on the field of play. Thus, whether audiences are live or media-based, it is the game or event that represents the product in the spectator sports market. (p. 93)

However, scholars contend that peripheral or ancillary element of the sport product must not be trivialized as increased competition for the leisure consumer and slender profit margins demand that sport managers produce revenue from all available sources. Green (2001) comments on the strategy of “augmentation” in sport event management which targets consumer needs not addressed by the core product:

In the jargon of marketing, it has become common to think beyond the ‘actual product’ (i.e., the sport competition itself). Event organisers have begun to ‘augment’ the product through a variety of add-on activities and services…. Events are still advertised primarily as hedonic consumption. Although, in some instances, the inclusion of opportunities to learn (as, for example, with running clinics for marathoners), to achieve (for example, by undertaking the challenges of participating in an event), or to socialise (as, for example, with the myriad
parties and festivals now associated with many events) are sometimes pitched in need fulfilment terms, these elements are nonetheless typically secondary to the hedonic opportunities afforded by attendance. The inclusion of event augmentations represents a tacit recognition by organisers that persons who attend are making a choice about the way they will invest their leisure time. (p. 2)

Green demonstrates that consumption of sport is more complicated than the need-consumption dichotomy discussed earlier, stemming both from management’s attempt to augment the “actual product” to fulfill other unmet needs and the many choices consumers have to “invest” their time. The use of the term “invest” is an interesting authorial move. Consumption and investment are commonly used to describe two disparate activities; consumption is most often attributed to the present, while investment is the delay of present consumption in order to consume in the future. While Green may not intend to imply that event augmentations are used to encourage immediate consumption of a sport product when the consumer would otherwise prefer to postpone leisure consumption until some later date, consumer choice may be influenced by various qualities of the core and peripheral products as well as temporal elements related urgency, proximity, and centrality.

Lastly, scholars have identified that various market segments may experience need differently or have different motives altogether, ultimately impacting leisure consumption. For example, a common segmentation made by sport researchers is to categorize consumers according to gender. Consider for instance the following selection from Robinson and Trail (2005):

If motives differ by type of sport event attended or by gender, it would indicate that the social or psychological needs associated with the two factors might differ. This would imply, for example, that either males and females have innately different motives or that society implicitly or explicitly teaches males and females to have different motives. It would also imply that some motives might be more relevant in some sports than in others, for example,
the aesthetic qualities of figure skating versus boxing. On the other hand, if motives for
attendance do not differ by either gender or sport, this could indicate that basic social and
psychological needs are not inherently different in men and women, and that needs met do
not differ depending on sport preference. (p. 59)

The authors, discussing both the impact of the type of sport and gender differences, highlight how
needs are thought to differ in various segments of the sport market. These needs may be
dispositional or psychological, or be influenced by social or environmental factors. Consequently,
consumption may be determined by needs that are innate (predetermined), socialized (norms), or
designated (chosen) by the sport consumer. Thus, despite the preponderance of deductive-
nomothetic research, it would appear that the study of sport consumption favors idiographic
research methods to understand the unique features of consumers and discrete consumer groups.
On the other hand, sport consumer researchers segment populations of consumers just enough to
make valid generalizations.

**Intangibility and Simultaneity of the Sport Product.** Sport products come in a
superfluity of forms, from sporting goods merchandise to spectator sport to online sports betting.
Increasingly, though, as sport production has expanded to the service sector, products assume
characteristics of intangibility and simultaneity (Chelladurai & Chang, 2000; Ko & Pastore, 2004).
The characteristics of sport services, some have argued, alter the entire production-consumption
life-cycle. Chelladurai and Chang (2000) write: “Services differ from manufactured goods in terms of
how they are produced, consumed, and evaluated. More specifically, services are intangible,
heterogeneous, and they are produced and consumed simultaneously” (p. 2). Others describe in
greater detail features of the sport product which are unique. Kim and Kim (1995) explain:

A service is any act or performance one party can offer to another that is essentially
intangible and does not result in the ownership of anything. Sport centers engage in a
business that is primarily based on the provision of services.... Services are intangible; they cannot be seen before they are purchased. They are also inseparable; they are produced and consumed at the same time. In addition, they are perishable; they cannot be stored. Finally, they are variable; they depend on a number of factors (e.g., the skills, training, personality, mindset, and energy of the service provider; the needs, attitudes, prior experience, skill, and personality of the service purchaser; and fluctuation in demand) that determine the customers' quality of experience during production and delivery of the service. (p. 209, emphasis in original)

Specifically regarding the quality of intangibility, scholars argue that this feature of sport services requires special theoretical, methodological, and practical considerations. The following passage highlights the intangible character of sport products:

Conceptualizing brand equity as consisting of perceived quality, brand awareness, brand associations, and brand loyalty is appropriate for the sport context due to the highly intangible nature of the business. Like a traditional product, sport satisfies some basic wants or needs for its consumer—the spectator (either in person or through the media). However, the needs that sport satisfies are affiliation, health, entertainment, self-expression, and sociability, to name a few. These needs are less tangible... the sport product is elusive by nature, measuring its value rest on consumers’ perceptions of the product. (Gladden, Milne, & Sutton, 1998, p. 4-5)

Simply because spectator sport is service-like in substance and delivery has caused some to apply theoretical explanations that link intangibility to popular managerial concepts such as brand equity and brand image:

It has been well documented that spectator sport is a service product and therefore the core product (i.e., the game or event) is an intangible, subjective, and unpredictable occurrence. In
view of the fact that sport services hold specific characteristics that pose challenges to brand management, recollections of the brand will have a significant impact on the attitudes and behaviors of consumers. (Ross, 2007, p. 16)

Other explanations become somewhat obtuse as intangibility is intertwined with subjectivity, subjective assessments, and determinants of quality and satisfaction.

In other words, because of the intangible properties of services, it is practically hopeless for the consumer to scrutinize and appraise them accurately before purchase…. Nevertheless, consumer assessment of services will be less objective because it is based to a great extent on subjectivity. As a result, consumer perceptions are formed through those elements that they actually experience in the course of the service delivery and, of course, on the perceived service outcome. (Ross, 2006, p. 26-27)

Though the intangibility of sport services seems to be fairly well-accepted in the field, consumption of sport products is not necessarily completely immaterial. Donavan, Carlson, and Zimmerman (2005) connect the satisfaction of material needs to the consumption of intangible products:

A material need is defined as ‘the need to collect and possess material goods’ (Mowen, 2000). However, it has been suggested that materialism goes further than simply seeking tangible items. It is not what is consumed, but rather how one consumes that defines materialism (Holt, 1995). Individuals may seek highly prestigious items such as a Rolex watch or the experience of attending the Super Bowl. In this reasoning, the seeking of tangible or intangible items describes materialism. Relationships may also illustrate a form of materialism. Under Holt's (1995) perspective, seeking social interactions through group membership is materialistic. Accordingly, the materialistic predisposition will lead to a need for affiliation. (p. 35).
Gladden et al. (1998) argue that sport products are similar to traditional products because they satisfy the wants and needs of consumers. However, scholars contend that a key difference lies in the fact that the core product (the game, competition, uncertainty, etc.), the ancillary services, and the needs of the consumer are all intangible.

In spectator sport, for example, the stadium, the field, the players, the referees, and the crowd are all tangible. However, the core product is what is created when the stadium, field, players, and referees (and the crowd some argue) come together when the sport is played. Thus, what makes the core product intangible is that spectators do not actually consume anything tangible when they watch a sport contest. The uncertainty of outcome, display of athleticism, and excitement of the crowd are all intangible. The spectator pays for the right to witness a sport event, and if the sport event is all that is consumed, he or she has nothing to show for it. In this way, spectatorship differs from other more primitive consumptive acts such as eating that are unequivocally tangible—food is consumed and directly satisfies the motive of hunger stemming from a biological need for nourishment. Thus, the core product of sport may have tangible elements, but it delivers intangible value to the consumer.

The intangibility of ancillary products is not absolute, however. Although scholars describe the “sportscape” and associated service elements as intangible because consumers do not take any part of the product with them and they are often consumed as they are rendered, not all ancillary products are the same. For example, encounters with customer service personnel are intangible, while concessionaries are not. Furthermore, half-time events are consumed and produced simultaneously while other promotional activities such as giveaways are tangible and enduring. In other words, even ancillary service elements of sport products may vary in their intangibility and simultaneity.
Secondly, regarding the intangible qualities of the needs satisfied by sport products, a similar logic is followed. Consider, for a moment, the biological need for water. The need can be observed through histological examination of tissue, but thirst as the complimentary motive cannot be measured in a purely tangible or objective way. Thus, even tangible needs have intangible qualities which become particularly evident when attempting to make a valid assessment. In sum, what makes sport products intangible may be the combination of the elusive quality of the core product, the simultaneity of service production and consumption, the underlying needs motivating one to consume, and the efforts to calculate derived value. In this way, the intangibility of the sport product is bounded by certain epistemological assumptions—how we know and delineate producers from consumers as well as how we calculate the value delivered and derived. By conceiving the sport product as intangible and the consumer as the proprietor of value, methodological techniques to assess the subjective experiences and perspectives are favored. Furthermore, when these epistemological suppositions are coupled with praxeology, viewing sport consumption as the intentional expression of consumer choice, it is not surprising to find research designs that attempt to correlate psychographic variables with behavioral intentions.

Regarding “simultaneity” many scholars contend that the simultaneous production and consumption of sport makes it particularly intriguing and challenging to study. Like the feature of intangibility, simultaneity is primarily associated with sport services (as opposed to sporting goods and other merchandise). However, what scholars view as “simultaneous” about the production and consumption of sport products varies. The succeeding quotes illuminate this disparity. Lee, Kim, Ko, and Sagas (2011) write: “Thus, services are inherently variable and lack consistency. Lastly, simultaneity means the production of the services occur at the same time as consumption. Thus, a customer cannot judge the quality of the product prior to using it” (p. 55-56). Here, simultaneity implies that a service is rendered (produced) at the moment it is consumed. An example of this kind
of simultaneity may be observed during the production of a half-time show at a college football game—as soon as the show is produced, the spectator consumes it. Similar account is provided by Ko and Pastore (2004): “Thus, marketers and managers now focus on the process of service production and consumption as it governs consumer behavior in the service industry where services are produced and consumed simultaneously” (p. 158-159). Further still, the next example describes with greater fidelity, the “inseparability” of sport services:

The letter S in SHIP indicates the simultaneity of production and consumption, sometimes also called inseparability (Rust, Zahorik, & Keiningham, 1996). It refers to the near impossibility of producing a supply of services. For example, while a L.A. Lakers basketball game is being played, the spectators in the Staples Center are concurrently consuming the event (i.e., watching the game). As a result, customers are generally in immediate contact with one or more representatives of the organization during the use of a service (Carlzon, 1987). This means that when using a service, customers are direct observers of the service delivery process, and this service delivery process is a fundamental part of the usage situation. (Ross, 2006, p. 26)

The preceding examples imply that there is an inseparable temporal element to the production and consumption of sport services. That is, as soon as a service is rendered, it is consumed—hence, the production and consumption of sport service is simultaneous. This sort of simultaneity has obvious implications for researchers seeking to understand not only the exchange of sport products, but how consumers evaluate the encounter.

Others have conceived simultaneity a bit differently. Ross (2007) explains how consumers often help produce the sport product, “Customers are quite often actively involved in helping to create the service product” (p. 16). Similarly, some scholars attribute simultaneity to the contact between service providers and service consumers:
Since sport consumers actively participate in service production and consumption, a high level of contact among customers exists during service delivery. This is true, especially in high contact sport services (e.g., soccer clubs and martial arts classes in recreational sport facilities). In sum, the importance of physical environment cannot be overemphasized in service delivery, because in most of the sport service, the customer should be present and participate in the service production and consumption. (Ko & Pastore, 2004, p. 164-165)

These passages reveal a different sort of simultaneity than the temporal element described earlier. The production and consumption of sport services is simultaneous because the consumer is actively involved in the production of the service, not only as a consumer, but as a co-producer of the product or “prosumer” (Kotler, 1986; Ritzer, 2010, 2011; Ritzer & Jurgenson, 2010; Toffler, 1980). For example, in live-sport spectatorship the spectator-consumer (prosumer) consumes the core product (the game) as well as the stadium environment (other spectators) simultaneously. Delineating on-field from off-field activities may appear obvious, but where exactly do we draw the line? Spectators respond to players and players respond to spectators in a circular pattern—production and consumption happen throughout the cycle. Thus, spectators consume on-field developments and the stadium atmosphere they help create. In this way, though the core product may be produced by an army of athletes, coaches, marketers, and administrators, the spectator-consumer helps produce the product they consume. Simultaneity is present in sport participation as well; indeed, the simultaneous production and consumption in participation is quite clear (e.g., a game is played, an exerciser exercises, etc.). Similar to other service products, participant-consumers

---

66 The term “prosumer” has been used widely in the fields of management, marketing, sociology, and consumer culture theory to describe consumers in the post-industrial age. In most cases, the prosumer construct is applied to the consumption and production of media associated with the rise of user-created content during the dot-com era. Although the blurring of roles of producers and consumers is most often conceived in terms of media technology, it is a useful concept to examine the role of the sport consumer in the production of contemporary sport events, branding and image management, and the circulation of information.
must be present to consume—a service cannot be fully rendered unless the consumer is present to act as recipient.

The Substance of Sport Consumption

At this point in the discursive analysis of sport consumer research texts, the sport consumer can be understood as one who 1) possesses some underlying need or desire and 2) is motivated to engage with a sport product to satiate a need or produce some derivative benefit that fulfills a desire. The sport product has both tangible and intangible qualities and those who consume it are often also involved with its production. The discourse also reveals elements of the substance of consumption—that which is consumed or derived from consumption (or perceptions about that which is consumed). Scholarly accounts of the substance of consumption can be grouped into consumption “objects” and consumption “benefits.” Although consumption objects appear fairly straightforward, these objects are rarely directly consumed and instead present the consumer with symbolic and other ancillary value. A partial accounting of consumable sport objects is provided in the following excerpts. Drayer, Shapiro, Dwyer, Morse, and White (2010) write: “As participants consumed televised games, sports news shows, sports tickers, or NFL-related websites, they gathered information about their teams and made assessments about their favorite team and fantasy team(s)” (p. 137). In the preceding quote the games, shows, tickets, and websites are the objects of consumption, though the need for information leads us to believe that these objects may have been consumed as tools to elicit the benefit of increased knowledge about a favorite team. Additionally, scholars have proposed that consumption objects should be viewed from a symbolic perspective, emphasizing their holistic value and connections to sport brands. Beccarini and Ferrand (2006), referencing Holt (1997), argue that “the ‘objects’ consumed should be taken from a symbolic perspective, which relates to its brand associations, such as image” (p. 4).
In the same way, sport tourism researchers have sought to understand what part of the tourist experience is “consumed” when service delivery may span the entire trip—indeed, the duration from departure to arrival can be classified as experiential consumption. Shonk and Chelladurai (2008) comment on this element of sport tourism: “it is a major challenge to maintain superior service in tourism because the tourist is consuming a combination of fundamentally independent services in a continuous chain from the time they leave home until they return” (p. 590). Research on sport tourism has presented many unique features and challenges to researchers looking for a better understanding of why people travel to consume sport. Emphasizing the difficulty of studying sport consumption in tourism contexts, the object of consumption has been traced to interactions with service providers, attendance and participation at sporting events, communities visited, and interactions with other travelers.

Finally, linking the proceeding discussion of simultaneity and prosumption to the substance of consumption, Seo and Green (2008) show how the Internet provides a space for the creation and exchange of sport information: “According to this definition, sport Internet provides an online space in which sport-related narratives are produced and exchanged” (p. 85). The Internet has been a fruitful setting to explore sport consumer behavior. The relative anonymity, ease of access, and abundance of information and points of interaction provided by online forums allow consumers to access official and unofficial communications from their favorite sport entities as well as start anew or add to narratives already in place. The online sport consumer, like the live-sports spectator who is a component of the stadium environment, can directly contribute to the same sport product they consume.

**The Benefits of Sport Consumption.** Moving beyond the objects of consumption discussion, scholars have described the endearing features (Funk & James, 2004) or benefits of consumption as the substance that matters to sport consumers. Funk and James explain:
Endearing features refer to attractive characteristics found in sport settings that highlight the significance and value of a sport object for satisfying dispositional needs. The features include, but are not limited to, performance outcomes, wholesome environment, geographic proximity, experiential risk, and quality of service. (p. 7)

Endearing features are those qualities of the sport product that consumers find useful, attractive, convenient, alluring, or desirable. Interestingly, Funk and James continue to link these features to dispositional needs. As I suggested earlier, consumers are made subject by their need to consume; thus, linking endearing features to dispositional needs propagates the assumption that consumers require something about sport that other products cannot fulfill. If we alter the passage above to say something akin to “spectators enjoy sport events more when their team wins” (admittedly, this does not sound very scientific) consumer needs are deemphasized and a more agentic discussion of consumer behavior can ensue. Nevertheless, the passage (taken from a prominent, visible, and serious text) codifies the sport consumer as subject, prostrate to the endearing features of sport objects.

Another thread of research has focused on the benefits or value derived through the consumption of sport products. Benefits of consumption are diverse, providing personal value to the consumer and creating brand value to the producer. Bauer, Stokburger-Sauer, and Exler (2008) provide a useful example:

Marketing research has shown that consumers do not buy product features and attributes but rather bundles of benefits (e.g., Lancaster, 1966). Benefits are the personal value and meaning that consumers attach to the brand’s attributes… The brand’s benefits depend on the individual consumer’s needs and personal values as represented by attributes of the product or service. (p. 212)
As Bauer et al. explain, from the consumer’s perspective benefits may be grouped into three categories: functional, symbolic, and experiential. For participatory consumption, functional benefit may be central, although that does not preclude other symbolic or experiential benefits. Although even functional benefits may be intangible or elusive until well-after the consumption experience is over. Ko and Pastore (2004) explain: “Consumers usually experience physical change (e.g., an increased fitness level and/or performance and skill level) following the consumption of the activity. In other words, they experience the tangible benefits after consumption” (p. 164).

For the sport spectator, however, functional needs are not as relevant. Instead, symbolic and experiential needs met with corresponding benefits better explain sport spectator behavior.

Functional benefits are benefits motivating the search for products that solve consumption-related problems. They correspond to a brand’s capacity for functional, utilitarian, or physical performance. Symbolic benefits derive from products that fulfill internally generated needs for self-enhancement, role position, group membership, or ego identification. Experiential benefits are obtained from products that provide sensory and emotional pleasure, variety, or cognitive stimulation. Spectators at sport events typically seek to meet their experiential and symbolic needs rather than their functional needs, because sport spectatorship is not related to solving consumption-related problems. (Bauer, Stokburger-Sauer, & Exler, 2008, p. 212)

The preceding excerpt is somewhat confounding considering the discourse previously reviewed. Sport spectatorship according to Bauer et al. provides spectators with various symbolic and experiential benefits that satisfy corresponding symbolic and experiential needs, yet the behavior is “not related to solving consumption-related problems.” Indeed, it would be difficult to prove that spectatorship results in a measurable change in one’s performance following Bauer et al.’s definition of “functional benefits.” While not functional in a biological or physical sense, perhaps the authors
are attempting to make an “intangibility” argument. Put differently, although sport spectators do not consume sport to elicit a performance benefit, they do consume sport for the symbolic and/or experiential benefits related to psychological and other sensory needs.

Additionally, scholars have compared the direct (in-person) consumption of sport to indirect consumption. Indirect consumption has been defined as engaging with a sport product through various forms of media technologies. An example is provided below:

This team sport product can be consumed by people in-person in a stadium or arena, through the various forms of media available today (television, radio, and the Internet) and after it is staged as people read newspaper accounts and watch highlights of their favorite team’s games…. Consuming team sport events provides virtually no tangible benefits. Rather, the benefits associated with sport are much more intangible. (Gladden & Funk, 2002, p. 56)

This passage indicates that the contemporary sport product is diffuse, designed for mass-distribution via networks of producer-consumers. Given its elusive substance, the sport product does not easily provide tangible benefits to users; the benefits are again perceived to be intangible. Similarly, researchers have compared attendees with non-attendees to better understand the benefits derived from direct consumption.

The experience gained from direct consumption of the live sport product was evident as individuals who had attended at least one game perceived receiving benefits of socialization, performance, excitement, esteem, and diversion from attendance more than individuals who had not attended a prior game. This level of knowledge reflects the realization that a specific sport consumption activity provides opportunities to satisfy needs and acquire benefits. (Funk, Filo, Beaton, & Pritchard, 2009, p. 134)
The authors argue that respondents who attended at least one game in-person prior to the study reported more benefits from the games than those who were aware of the team but had not attended a game in-person. Funk et al. argue that the difference in perceived benefits between the two consumer groups indicates that live-consumption of the sport event “provides opportunities to satisfy needs and acquire benefits.” The statistical analysis used in this comparison indicated a statistically significant difference in group means. It is unclear, however, if the difference was caused by the attendance variable. Still, sport consumer behaviors are commonly attributed with producing benefits for consumers that satisfy a host of underlying needs and desires.

The Act of Sport Consumption

Completing the picture of the sport consumer is the consummative act—what the sport consumer does when he or she consumes sport. While the act of sport consumption may seem self-evident—e.g., sport spectating as leisure participation (Kim & Trail, 2010)—the corpus of research discourse continues to portray a fragmented image of the sport consumer. There are, of course, instances of description that are more straightforward than others, which is a logical place to start. Ross, James, and Vargas (2006), while describing the factors of the Team Brand Association Scale, define the consumption experience as “the concessionary aspects and social interaction related to a particular team—eating specific foods, consuming beverages, going to games with friends, etc.” (p. 275). This definition includes the functional consumption of concessionaires (cf. Bauer et al., 2008) and social interaction of attending a live-sport event. Other attempts to describe the sport consumption experience have elicited the so-called “sport consumption paradigm”:

To effectively update our current understanding of the contemporary sports fan… we must first revisit the sport consumption paradigm (Madrigal, 1995; Matsuoka, Chelladurai, & Harada, 2003) in which cognitive and affective processes (identification and loyalty) lead to direct and indirect consumer responses (consumption behavior)….
consumption research has categorized sport consumption into participation in competitive, nature related, and fitness activities as well as spectatorship in the form of event attendance, television viewership, and reading of sport publications. (Bee & Kahle, 2006, p. 130)

Alike other passages previously reviewed, Bee and Kahle delineate between participatory and spectator sport consumption. While participation requires physical activity, spectatorship appears to simply involve one’s presence and captive attention. However, such definitions do not fully acknowledge the role of the sport consumer in the production and consumption of the sport product.

As was touched on above, the consumption of a sport product in some cases may be motivated by post-consumption outcomes. In this case, the consumption may span the purchase, consummative act, and a delayed consumption benefit. Such is the case in recreational and fitness sport, as the following passage describes:

> It should be noted that the evaluation of the service product itself (e.g., fitness programs within a university recreational sport) and of the outcome of service consumption (e.g., physical change) are two different aspects in the consumption process of sport services. Thus, it is necessary to separate program quality from outcome quality as one of consumers’ evaluation criteria of service. (Ko & Pastore, 2004, p. 163)

Conversely, it could be argued that the consumption act in this case is still the moment the product is consumed and the outcome is the satiation of the underlying desire or need. This raises an interesting point not addressed in the literature reviewed; that is, do consumers of a sport product engage in consumption behavior prior to actually consuming the core product (e.g., when anticipating one’s attendance to a game against a major rival)? Similarly, do sport consumers continue to consume a sport product after the core product has been exhausted, as in the case of the fitness consumer who marvels at his or her physique after a workout?
In a similar vein, although scholarly use of the “consumer” moniker has been somewhat disorderly, there have been deliberate efforts to delineate buying from consuming. For example:

Purchasing and consuming team-licensed merchandise has the potential to create or fortify a sense of belongingness between an individual and the respective sport team with which the individual wants to be associated and believes to be salient to his or her identity. (Kwon, Trail, & James, 2007, p. 544)

By separating the purchase of a sport product from its consumption, scholars suggest that there is more to consumption than merely the sale and possession of goods and service rights. Indeed, as has been suggested earlier, consumption fundamentally involves the “using up” or “destruction” of a resource to satiate a desire. Buying then is not consumption, but the procedure followed to secure the right to consume an object in which the market is the arbitrator of value. In this view, buying is separate from consumption because the agreement of a consumer to pay the market price (i.e., to buy a product) is a calculated exchange of value which implies that the producer and consumer are both better off.

Bee and Kale (2006) contend that “new and immersive activities and technologies are continually altering the sport consumption landscape” (p. 132). Accordingly, it is often assumed that today’s sport consumer has a wide range of consumption options that sport consumers of the past did not. While researchers may have once accurately captured sport consumer activities by simply counting the number of events attended or watched, today’s researchers look at different metrics to achieve the same epistemological consensus. Bee and Kahle continue to argue that to assess the contemporary sport fan one should examine the quantity of resources used during sport engagements that span both time and space.

Due to these technological advances, the contemporary sports fan has a variety of consumption opportunities that did not previously exist. Therefore, with regard to this
study, sport consumption is defined as the amount of time and/or money spent participating, spectating, following, or interacting with sport. (p. 130-131)

Additionally, other scholars have noted that not all forms of participation or spectating are the same and require special consideration. For instance, Bauer et al. (2008) contend, “Watching games on television is a substitute for attendance at the stadium. The fan does one or the other at any one time, but not both. (p. 217). Similarly, Bee and Kahle (2006) provide a fantasy football example: “Fantasy football participants now consume the NFL through fantasy league participation in addition to traditional team-based consumption methods. The most significant increases in consumption were specific to media consumption” (p. 135). Consumption choices abound for the contemporary sport consumer (with ample resources). These choices include either-or, both, how, when, or not to consume (though research on the latter is sparse). The topic of choice will be discussed in short-order.

With consideration to the service dominant quality of contemporary sport consumables, the consumption experience is expressly social. This includes both interactions with other consumers as well as service suppliers. Bodet (2006) notes that the consumption of sport services should be viewed relationally: “Service consumption is a process that implies an interaction between a supplier and a customer, considered by nature as an interpersonal relation” (p. 153). Furthermore, fan interaction has been identified both as a motive for sport consumption and an element of the consummative act. Seo and Green (2008) explain:

Much of the appeal of sport Web sites comes from the passion of sport fans who need their daily fix of information…. In the sport context, people often want to express their opinions and talk about their favorite teams and players with other fans. Some fans interact at games, some at communal television viewings (in a home or sports bar), and others via talk radio. The Internet can provide another place for fan interaction. (p. 84)
In other contexts, interaction is more direct. Ko and Pastore explain that in recreational sport settings, consumers can actually affect one another: “In the recreational sport industry, however, the level of interaction among sport consumers is relatively high and customers affect each other” (p. 161). Not only do consumers interact, but they may do so in ways that alter their consumption experience. Some scholars have proposed that the social element of sport consumption shapes the sports encounter towards normative or socially accepted practices. The following passage touches on the normative pressures of sport consumer behavior:

Spectators tend to have higher involvement than many other consumers. For example, stress and stimulation-seeking do not motivate a majority of product consumption, although there certainly are exceptions, as automobiles may be for some people…. ‘only sports provide the means to create and experience those stresses in socially acceptable ways’. (Robinson, Trail, & Kwon, 2004, p. 170)

For some, sport spectating may provide consumers with the opportunity to do and say things that would not normally be socially acceptable. Adapting Huizinga’s (1950) definition of play to the modern sport event, sport events may serve as a break from “real” or “ordinary” life where different social norms prevail. Therefore, the sport spectator consumption experience may involve stress and stimulation-seeking behavior that is not “ordinary,” yet shaped by unique normative pressures supplied by the sport event.

While there have been attempts to define the act of sport consumption outright, others have approached the consumptive act a bit more delicately seeking to capture the essence of sport consumption. Many scholars acknowledge the frivolity of leisure consumption, but some are reluctant to ignore the perceived symbolic importance of sport. Green (2001) writes: “The act of attending or participating encompasses a set of meanings for the attendee and the participant. As important as fun and excitement may be, the kinds of personal meanings that an event provides may
be no less important” (p. 3). Others look beyond the field to explain sport consumer behavior where alternative explanations and examples are particular useful. For example, Beccarini and Ferrand (2006) reference Holbrook and Hirschman (1982) to redefine the consumption experience: “Emotions have the potential to drive the consumption experience, which is viewed as a ‘phenomenon directed toward the pursuit of fantasies, feelings and fun’” (p. 4). Sometimes overlooked, the sport consumption experience is described here as a joyous one. Needs may still motivate the search for satisfaction, but the consumption experience may involve what some would label “frivolous” benefits of fantasy, stimulation, and amusement.

The entertainment value of sport consumption has also been explored as a distinct quality of some sport products. As a form of leisure consumption, sport consumers have alternatives to consider when seeking an entertainment product. In sport, however, it is thought that the uncertainty element of sport contests makes the sport product particularly unique. For instance, when discussing the entertainment value of professional wrestling, the scripted element of the “contest” distinguishes it from other forms of sport competitions and introduces a coping mechanism for the consumer who finds the outcome unfavorable.

That is, the consumption of professional wrestling appears to be quite similar (with the exception of the level of violence) to other entertainment endeavors such as the theater or the opera… Like these other entertainment options, if one does not like the ending (i.e., outcome), he or she can simply rationalize by noting that it was predetermined, a coping strategy that is not available to fans of other sports. (Wann, Grieve, Zapalac, & Pease, 2008, p. 16)

Consumption of sport contests that are unscripted, however, may require and elicit different coping strategies, especially among consumers that have high degrees of psychological involvement.
**Consumer Choice.** To conclude this stage of analysis and begin to shift attention to the normative research practices of the field, some attention to the notion of consumer choice is probably warranted. Some scholars simply point to consumer needs and rational choice as the determinants of consumer decision-making; however, others contend that consumer choice is far from a foregone conclusion, with many opportunities to affect consumer behavior. Stewart and Smith’s (2010) assessment of consumer choice, though a bit disheartening, demonstrates the malleability of consumer decision-making:

More options not only lead to positive consumer reactions because of the value placed on choice, but more options also makes it increasingly difficult for consumers to make up their minds, leaving them confused and indecisive…. As a result, people still eat to obesity, smoke cigarettes despite the health warnings, consume alcohol and binge-drink excessively, buy uncomfortable sport-cars, ride dangerous motorbikes, pay exorbitant prices for imported shoes and cosmetics, and watch reality television when they could quite easily do something real themselves. (Smith & Stewart, 2010, p. 4)

Smith and Stewart, in their examination of the special features of sport, do not provide the assessment of choice to justify the modern consumer is a lost cause to be left to his or her consumption whims, but rather to identify the ideal mechanism that will build powerful and enduring relationships between consumers and the products they consume. In other words, a goal of marketing is to eliminate the exercise of consumer choice; therefore, competitive advantage is achieved when consumers prefer a single product so much so that they do not care about other consumption alternatives.

Other scholars, however, are more formal in their diagnosis of consumer choice, eliciting notions of brand awareness and associations as the foundation for consumption decisions. For instance, Ross (2007) cites Aaker (1996) in describing the decision to consume a product: “From a
consumer’s perspective, the thoughts that come to mind when a service is encountered are often the same information used to make consumption decisions” (p. 16). While brand or product information certainly figures into consumer decision-making somewhere, others argue that leisure consumption involves trade-offs or the consideration of opportunity costs. Downward and Rascuite’s (2010) study on the economic demand for sport and leisure consumption is fairly clear on this point:

In this respect the participation decision can be understood as an individual choice to commit goods and time to the ‘production’ and then consumption of sport directly, or to the acquisition of personal consumption capital, or social capital that then underpins sports participation. (p. 197)

Other explanations of the decision to consume sport products include more subjective elements, including affiliation or identification motives, for example. Thus, the decision to consume a sport product may not be directly determined by product characteristics or quality, but rather the identity the consumer can express through consumption of the sport product. A following passage from Funk and James (2004) explores this possibility: “Even the selection of a participatory sport (e.g., triathlon) can provide individuals with an identity that expresses important characteristics and traits (physically fit, disciplined, unique) that help shape attitudes towards leisure activities” (p. 11).

In this regard, choice is not necessary determined by the sport product alone, but ancillary features that may also include individual and normative attitudes toward the activity, brand, or user-groups, for example. Moreover, the ancillary features may be linked to the product itself, where the core product and peripheral product together influence consumer choice. Such is thought to be the case in the highly service oriented business of live-sport events.

Where once it was thought that a winning team was the most direct pathway to directing consumer choice, scholars have proposed that the “sportscape” (Melnick, 1993) may be just as
important in the consumer decision-making process. For instance, Maheson and Baade (2006) write: “The NFL understands that it is competing for the sports entertainment dollar, and the League believes that stadiums factor prominently into consumer decisions relating to leisure spending” (p. 354). Support for the importance of peripheral products in consumer choice is provided by the fact that many elements of the sport product are beyond the scope of managerial control. While a manager cannot normally affect the outcome of the game, change the weather, or protect a star-player from injury, he or she may be able to improve the viewing environment, customer service, and concessions, for example.

Managerial implications are present in nearly every article reviewed. In some of the texts, researchers offer explanations about how managers and marketers can exercise a degree of control over consumer choice. For instance, Fullerton and Merz (2008) contend: “The amalgamation of marketing through sport and the marketing of sport provided the foundation for Gray and McEvoy's broad-based definition: ‘the anticipation, management, and satisfaction of consumers' wants and needs through the application of marketing principles and practices’” (p. 91, emphasis in original). The authors suggest that a holistic marketing strategy should be involved in every step of the consumption process, from identification to the satisfaction of needs. In this respect, consumer choice is removed from the equation altogether. Below is another excerpt that highlights the social influence of preferences and behaviors:

For example, ‘heterodox economic’ approaches draw upon Scitovsky (1976) and Earl (1983, 1986) to explore the psychological foundations of consumer choice in sport, emphasizing learning by doing and habits. Presented as post-Keynesian consumer analysis (see, for example, Lavoie, 1994), it also draws upon the studies of leisure by Veblen (1925) and Galbraith (1958) and, by implication, the sociological work of Bourdieu (1984, 1988, 1991) that individual preferences and behaviours are shaped by social values. This sociological
work is also widely and directly drawn upon. The predictions of such theories are that prior experience in sports activities is likely to raise participation in any specific activity, and that social interactions, or lifestyles, will also affect participation along with access to income and the presence of social and economic constraints or capital. (Downward & Rascuite, 2010, p. 192)

Though Downward and Rascuite’s economic analysis is not a consumer study per se, they do illuminate how consumer choice is not always the outcome of reason and individual preference. The subjective and contextual determinants of consumer choice are the point of entré for marketing praxeology. Marketing seeks to create preferences for certain products that, though there may be elements of logic and rationality, are fundamentally driven by emotion, perspective, and context. An unanswered question remains, however, if enduring preferences really exist or are actually a conglomeration of awareness, beliefs, needs, and urgency under the constant barrage of the social world.

Much research has been conducted on the influence of fandom, involvement, and loyalty on consumer behavior. These researchers, who often select purchase intention as the dependent variable, have generally proposed a positive correlation between involvement and purchase intention and offer encouragement for sport managers to foster such traits among their constituencies. Fans, once attached to a sport product, have trouble saying “no.” Dees, Bennett, and Villegas (2008) contend: “Fans that are highly attached to or involved with their sports team often have difficulty distancing themselves from their favorite group or event” (p. 82). Further still, others have pointed out that fans will even ignore information that they find contradictory or distasteful, reaffirming their loyalty to a brand or team. Walker and Kent (2009) write: “It should be noted that sport fans (like most individuals) will tend seek out positive information about elements that they endorse and may be dismissive of information that is contradictory to existing positive feelings” (p. 759). The
basis for such assessments of consumer behavior lies in the belief that consumer choice is not a purely rational decision, but rather a highly emotional one:

Taking emotions into account allows a better understanding of the consumer decision-making process as emotion represents a primary source of human motivation influencing the thought process (Westbrook & Oliver, 1991). According to this model, consumers are emotionally, symbolically and rationally driven as depending on the circumstances they use a rational and/or an emotional assessment to establish satisfaction. (Beccarini & Ferrand, 2006, p. 4)

If the sport consumer is emotionally and symbolically motivated, by infusing the sport product with meaning and symbolism, it is possible for the sport manager to influence consumer choice. If consumer choice is solely rational, however, sport managers are limited to changing the perceived value of their product. However, as researchers have argued, sport consumption is a highly emotional and symbolic human activity motivated by a host of human needs and desires. In this case, the sport manager—who understands the needs of the consumer, manipulates needs when necessary, and tailors the sport product to satiate aggregate consumer demand and keep individual consumers coming back for more—can remain gainfully employed as long as their sport product provides meaning and symbolic significance to their consumers.

Summary

Tying together the analysis of discourse up to this point—laying the discussion of sport consumer needs and motives, the sport product, consumable substances, and consumption behaviors upon each other, the sport consumer stands as a rather equivocal concept. Scholars have identified the sport consumer by her consumption behaviors—and they have attempted to map her needs and motives to better understand and predict the behaviors that capture the managerial gaze. Scholarly usage of the “sport consumer” moniker is common nowadays; however, between the
quasi-intangibility of the sport product, simultaneity of production and consumption, and vague understanding of the substance of consumption, knowledge about the sport consumer seems to be tenuous, reliant upon a host of taken-for-granted assumptions.\textsuperscript{67} These assumptions direct the study of sport consumption into the mind of the consumer, mapping psychographic variables to desirable behavioral outcomes (namely, purchase intentions). That is not to say that all research on the sport consumer has been done in vain; rather, the research discourse examined up to this point indicates that despite the ontological and epistemological challenges of defining and studying the sport consumer, a “sport consumer knowledge base” has been and continues to be produced and circulated.

To this genealogist, a knowledge base that tolerates such a range of shallow conceptualizations of its primary research subject (i.e., the characteristics and qualities that constitute the sport consumer) is less a solid foundation than one riddled with voids and chasms. Why have tepid definitions of the sport consumer been taken at face value without the arduous but necessary task of wrestling with the politics and consequences of adopting such assumptions? Perhaps, as Smith and Stewart (2010) were quoted earlier, the sport consumer is “no more irrationally optimistic than any other kind of consumer” (p. 4), and thus, does not deserve special consideration. However, this would be to take Smith and Stewart’s words out of context. For they do not argue that sport consumers are inconsequential at all; instead, they contend that “sport consumption is not so much the exception as the exemplar of contemporary consumer behaviour” (Smith & Stewart, 2010, p. 4). At this juncture I am compelled to ask why such an omission—why the passive, yet nearly universal acceptance of such an inchoate definition of the sport consumer?

\textsuperscript{67} For instance, the implicit assumptions that defining sport “consumption” or what makes a sport customer a “consumer” is unnecessary, that sport satiates needs that other products do not, that sport products require unique managerial techniques due to their intangible and simultaneous qualities, that people consume sport as a problem solving strategy to achieve some post-consumption benefit, and that the study of sport consumption is the study of consumer choice (i.e., the decision to buy).
In the Foucauldian tradition, one might view the omission of such a dialogue as omission by design; however, the genealogist knows that omissions can speak just as loud as words. Perhaps then, it is possible that such a scholarly dispute has failed to occur because it simply does not matter to sport consumer researchers. By accepting the sport consumer as given—or rather as an exemplar of the sport constituency (i.e., consumers as buyers)—researchers have succeeded in advancing a knowledge culture that looks for causes, with the goal of providing accurate predictions about how to manage, elicit, and promote desirable consumer action. From this vantage point, the corporate values and managerial sensibilities to which sport consumer researchers appeal are made quite clear.

A plausible retort comes from neoclassical and Austrian consumer theory which views consumers as mere purchasers of goods faced with choices among consumption alternatives. Consumers in an unimpeded market are believed to be their own sovereign—free to engage or not to engage in transactions using knowledge transmitted by the price mechanism. The “consumer” is but one of many different categories of being or modes of action—a consumer in one instance may be a capitalist in the next (or an entrepreneur, producer, or laborer). Thus, the prolific attention paid to the “consumer” may be both an artifact of the current consumer culture (i.e., consumerism) and an indication of the dominant market-based logic of contemporary (sport) management. However, despite the “hailing” of the consumer subject into an enduring subjugated position by management researchers, the consumer is viewed by economists as a natural and transient mode of action.
CHAPTER 6
KNOWING THE SPORT CONSUMER

Justifying Sport Consumer Research

In this chapter, I move beyond the macro-description of texts and consumer definitions pursued in the preceding chapters to more closely examine the question, “what makes the sport consumer unique and worthy of study?” Some may see the distinctiveness of sport as self-evident, but I reject this seemingly banal assumption in order to explore how sport consumer researchers have justified their research. By examining the discursive mosaic for how scholars frame and substantiate their research endeavors (for example, how they pose and solve research problems), we can examine what they think is most important to know and what kind of inquiry will make it knowable. In other words, in this chapter I explore how scholars reason their research is important to the field and in so doing subsume certain epistemological assumptions that bound the creation, dissemination, and reproduction of knowledge in the field.

Sport as Extraordinary

Many sport scholars were undoubtedly drawn to the field due to a pre-existing or extraordinary interest in sport, and so rationalizing the importance of academic inquiry in sporting contexts is unproblematic. A common approach to justifying sport as a viable and salient research topic is to describe its economic significance, usually by rattling off a list of staggering figures, and then explaining how the financial viability of sport is under threat. Though a bit lengthy, the following excerpt from Kim and Trail (2010) is an exemplar of this popular rhetorical technique:

The sport industry is the one of the largest industries in the United States, estimated at $441.1 billion (Plunkett, 2008). Spectator sport is a major part of this sport industry worth $28 billion and it is estimated that U.S. consumers spend almost $17.1 billion dollars a year
on tickets to sporting events (Plunkett, 2008). Ticket sales are critical to the success of professional sport organizations as they typically comprise anywhere from 20% to 50% of the total revenue stream for Major League Baseball, the National Football League, the National Basketball League, and the National Hockey League… Sport organizations are craving high attendance not only for the ticket revenue but also for the revenue from the sale of on-site game day concessions, merchandising, and parking, which was $11.9 billion a year in the U.S. according to Plunkett (2008). However, competition for attracting spectators has intensified. The growth of new leagues has expanded the total number of professional teams at all levels to over 600 and multiple teams are competing for the spectators’ financial resources in many local spectator sport markets. Moreover, professional sport organizations are facing several challenges such as increasing costs, falling attendance, and declining ratings. (p. 190-191)

Cases such as these are often used to prove that modern sport is big business. Sport management scholars use these sorts of examples as evidence that the field is simultaneously viable and under attack (by competing leisure industries, looming economic crises, or an increasingly skeptical consumer, for example), requiring professional management strategies and decisive action. The preceding vignette adopts this common argument, suggesting that the economic affluence of professional sport is simultaneously vast, at risk, and worth defending. We are told that sport has been so successful at duplicating itself that it is now a threat to itself, spreading a finite number of consumers across a growing number of consumption alternatives. In turn, sport organizations are faced with a smaller piece of the market. Sport managers, therefore, need a better understanding of their constituencies and innovative marketing technologies to attract the discerning consumer dollar.

Descriptions of the distinctive qualities of sporting phenomena extend beyond economics, though the level of “distinction” is sometimes contested as well. Some argue that what makes sport...
unique is its resistance to commodification; in other words, its enduring authenticity. Hinch and Hingham (2005) write: “Uncertainty of outcomes, the role of athletic display, the kinesthetic nature of sport activities, and the tendency for strong engagements in sport represent some of the key characteristics of sport that protect cultural authenticity” (p. 254). Others point to the passion sport supporters, particularly among the most devout fans, in describing how it is distinct from other social activities. This genre of justification tends to offer anecdotal “evidence” that other non-sport products are incapable of generating the same emotional response among users.

Spectator sport is a unique experience. Millions cry, cheer, dance, and sing for their favorite sports team. Although there are other strong brand communities (Harley Davidson, Apple, Jeep), no other generates the type of passion that is characteristic of spectator sports. (Heere & James, 2007a, p. 332)

Such claims are effective because images of fanatic sport supporters are prolific in mass-media and, more perplexingly, are exceedingly difficult to disprove.

Further still, some scholars have identified how sport places unique demands on its constituents, confounding conventional approaches to researching the consumer. Gladden, Irwin, and Sutton (2001) observe that in some cases loyalty to a sport product (e.g., personal seat licenses) cannot be approached with the same conceptual tools used to understand traditional products: “Yet, professional team sport is one of the only business environments in which customers are forced to pay for the right to be loyal” (p. 312). Still, others observe that sport may not be all that different from other human phenomena. Sport, as Chalip (1992) argues, is one among a family of “expressive activities.”

Sport is only one of many human expressive activities. Other genres of expressive activity include festival, ritual, spectacle, and game. Each genre provides its own enjoyments and
purposes. However, the genres are not mutually exclusive; it is possible to embed one or more within another to broaden the range of possible enjoyments and purposes. (p. 92)

According to Chalip, sport must be understood as a polysemic structure, possessing layers upon layers of meaning and thus, capable of eliciting a multitude of emotions, images, and behaviors. Though these descriptions may disagree on the specifics, they generally serve to emphasize the significance of sport and, in turn, position the field as a distinct and legitimate area of inquiry.

**The Problematic Sport Consumer**

To target the sport consumer as the object of research is to render her problematic and subject her to a theorization, modeling, and analysis. In many cases research begins with a compelling question—the problem to be illuminated through systematic investigation. The research texts selected in this study contain a host of questions that, when viewed together, indicate which qualities of the consumer have been deemed most important by the field. A frequent line of questioning is one that establishes the significance of the area of inquiry, as if to stimulate a preemptive response to the question “why sport?” Indeed, questions that problematize the popularity of sport and physical activity abound, as do corresponding statements lauding the cultural, political, and economic significance of contemporary sport. Some of these questions have been directed to mass-spectating behavior, as the quote from Wakefield and Sloan (1995) demonstrates: “Why do millions of spectators flock to stadiums to see high school, college, and professional teams play football on any given autumn weekend in the United States? Is it just to see the two teams play?” (p. 153). We can assume that Wakefield and Sloan do not believe a simple “yes, end of story” will suffice. Rather, such a question is a deliberate rhetorical move to establish the importance and complexity of the research domain. Let us consider another more recent example: “Can we imagine the type of passion one sees at a World Cup soccer game, or a Yankees-Red Sox playoff game, exhibited by devotees of Harley Davidson or Coke? We suggest not” (Babiak &
Wolfe, 2009, p. 722). The foregoing quote suggests that because sport evokes a special kind of passion among some of its consumers, it deserves special attention. Whether or not sport elicits truly unique responses from its constituents is rarely validated, however. Yet such tactics are commonly used by sport scholars to justify the research context and signal their pending contribution to the knowledge base.

Some scholars, on the other hand, ask questions that steer analyses away from the core sport product to ancillary or supporting elements. In so doing, the significance of sport as a unique and important cultural phenomenon is rarely questioned, though many scholars emphasize that the tertiary features of sporting encounters are just as important. Moreover, while it is argued that managers struggle or have limited avenues to affect the quality or performance of the core product (e.g., the sport team or event), it is believed that they can exert some control over the periphery. Ancillary features of the sport product may include such items as stadium design, concessions, customer service, and promotions, for example. In other words, by expanding the conceptualization of the sport product to include core and periphery elements, the field of sport management is defined and also enlarged. A popular research area is the “sportscape,” what Melnick (1993) attributes to the rising need of modern “urban dwellers” to create spaces for socialization:

Related to the issues of the quality of life in urban settings and the loneliness problem that can and often does attend city living, the following question begs to be addressed: How do urban dwellers cope with their existential reality? From a sociological perspective, one is compelled to ask, have cities created specific urban structures for the exchange of intimacies among strangers? (p. 46)

Therefore, the study of sport is made to appear relevant and legitimate for its uniqueness, cultural significance, and the functions it serves in contemporary society.
Additional questions, directed more precisely at how sport is consumed, serve to parse out niches and specific targets of study within the field. These kinds of questions do two things. First, on a micro-level they are rhetorical tools used to justify an individual work. They identify or in some cases create a gap in the knowledge base and then show how the research plans to fill it. Second, in macro-terms the questions establish thresholds for “legitimate” research—a range in which “good” research should fall. To better understand this point, we can revisit what is meant by calling something a “field” in the first place. A “field” implies a degree of homogeneity, though what exactly is uniform or standard about any given field may vary. In sport management, I propose that the questions which researchers ask illuminate the things which the field has determined are important to study. In other words, when these research questions are viewed in aggregate, they define and govern the boundaries and content of the field. Turning again to the texts selected in this study, a sampling of some of the more recent questions relating to the sport consumer or consumption include (listed in chronological order):

- Would demographic characteristics (e.g., age, gender, education, or income level) account for any variation in psychological connection to the team?... are the reasons (factors) that influenced the decision to purchase season tickets similar or different among groups (based on level of psychological connection)? (James, Kolbe, & Trail, 2002, p. 216-217)

- If quality of the service is improved, to what extent can prices be increased to pay for the improvements in quality and yet still retain positive perceptions of value? Is there an absolute threshold of price beyond which value perceptions decline, irrespective of quality? (Murray & Howat, 2002, p. 38)

- What psychological needs are satisfied through sport participation and spectatorship, and what motivations drive consumers to participate in or watch a particular sport, given the vast number of options in the marketplace? (McDonald, Milne, & Hong, 2002, p. 109)
• So the question might not be, "Which health club is the good one?", but "If being a member of a health club is a good decision?" (Alexandris, Zahariadis, Tsoorbatzoudis, & Grouios, 2004, p. 47)

• What are those associations to which fans seek to identify beyond the action on the field? What differences are there, if any, across different fan groups in their development of social identity to a team? How does this identification translate, if at all, to brand equity? (Boyle & Magnusson, 2007, p. 498)

• Why do sport consumers search for information and purchase sport-related products through the Internet?... What concerns do consumers have when shopping for sport-related products through the Internet? (Hur, Ko, & Valacich, 2007, p. 522-523)

• Will participants who display higher levels of goodwill toward event sponsors demonstrate stronger purchase intentions than participants with lower levels of goodwill? (Dees, Bennett, & Villegas, 2008, p. 82)

• So the question becomes one of how a marketer of sports products can use its target marketing, product, promotion, pricing, and distribution strategies to influence purchase behavior. How can they get consumers to purchase more of their sports products? (Fullerton & Merz, 2008, p. 98)

• How and to what degree do motivational patterns differ with respect to the consumption of different sports as well as among different types of sports? (Wann, Grieve, Zapalac, & Pease, 2008, p. 9)

Although this subsample of questions is by no means exhaustive, by reviewing them together we can learn what researchers think is worth knowing about the sport consumer. First and foremost, researchers seem to be primarily interested in the purchase—not the things that sport consumers do when they consume sport or the markers that identify them as consumers, but rather
what causes a sport consumer to buy a product. Researchers may study “motivation,” “psychological connection,” “identification,” “service quality,” and “satisfaction,” but usually only as it relates to buying. The study of sport consumption, though lauded for its symbolic, cultural, and political significance, appears to boil down to understanding how to reproduce autonomous financial transactions.

Admittedly, the preceding statement is overly reductive, though worth complicating. The praxeology of marketing aside, is the purchase really what makes the sport consumer interesting? Is the decision to buy what makes the sport consumer problematic and worth studying? What governs sport consumer research so as to make it appear that good scholarship is that which is focused on what makes people buy things and making accurate predictions about what they will buy next? In my view, the praxeology of marketing is precisely why such sensibilities prevail. However, the discourse is too one-sided to infer that the well-being of all stakeholders is represented equitably in sport consumer research. Indeed, sport fans are at times exceedingly passionate, but designing consumer research to provide insights into how managers can manipulate consumer behavior in favor of producers effectively takes consumer passion hostage. In other words, evoking Althusser’s (1972) concept of interpellation, the consumer is first made subject and then bombarded with ideological narratives that are designed to convince individuals that the subject position is an immanent and natural quality of the modern state of being. Interestingly, none of this is discussed in the discourse; the sport consumer researchers have avoided any serious entanglement with the politics of their research and instead been all too eager to recycle the dominant sport consumer model.

**Positioning Sport Consumer Research**

Although there is no universal protocol to which researchers must subscribe to describe the importance of their work, most authors do follow a general flow in developing their arguments. The most common practice is to use the introduction section of an article to establish context, frame the
research question(s), and make the case that such a study is important; the author then uses the rest of the manuscript to do what he or she promised to do or explain why the findings do not match what was hypothesized. Swales (1990) contends there are three broad techniques or rhetorical moves for defending the importance of research. First, claiming that the current study is central to the field or area of research, or conversely criticizing the field, and thereby establishing a territory. Second, making a counter-claim or raising a previously unasked question to identify a gap in the knowledge base, thereby establishing a niche or continuing a research tradition. Lastly, authors may prefer to occupy an established niche by replicating previous research findings or presenting new findings to increase what is known about particular research phenomena. From first to last, the techniques require declining rhetorical effort, knowledge claims, and increasing explicitness. In other words, authors using the first move must “stake their claim” while those using the latter move more simply “show” how their research contributes to knowledge in the stated area. Predominantly, the research texts reviewed in this study implemented techniques from the first two categories, although most authors utilized more than one rhetoric move to position their work as important and legitimate.

How Authors Establish a Territory

As might be expected, many authors in this sample of prestigious journal articles attempted to position (rather successfully as it turns out) the text as central to the field. In some cases this was done by describing the significance of sport management research to contemporary forms of sporting practice as well as providing vivid descriptions of how the field is at risk. In this way, authors simultaneously celebrated the social, cultural, and economic significance of sport and foreshadowed its pending doom if sport managers do not “do” something to combat the identified threat. On the other hand, some authors established the importance of the work by criticizing the field, describing the extant literature as deficient, inconsistent, or lacking validity. Table 4.15 below describes the various tactics used by scholars in the sample of texts to “establish a territory.”
Managerial Implications. The most common technique used by scholars was to describe the importance of the research to managerial practice. How the research was made to appear relevant to management varied, with some authors making clear connections and others taking a more circuitous route. In some instances, the implications for managers were quite explicit:

The marketing implications of these results are clear. It is important for potential sponsors to link with those events that have identified fans, since they hold the most promising business opportunities. This requires collecting marketing research data from different sport events and profiling the sport consumers. (Alexandris, Tasousi, & James, 2007, p. 138)

Further, not only were managerial implications implied, but many authors actually provide instructions about how the newly acquired insights should be used. For example, James, Kolbe, and

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 6.1. Establishing a Territory</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Managerial Implications</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alexandris, Dimitriadis, &amp; Kasiara, 2001 Funk &amp; James, 2001 Kwon, Trail, &amp; Anderson, 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bee &amp; Kahle, 2006 Gwinner &amp; Bennett, 2008 Murray &amp; Howat, 2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casper, Gray, &amp; Stellino, 2007 James, Kolbe, &amp; Trail, 2002 Ross, 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cunningham &amp; Kwon, 2003 Kinney &amp; McDaniel, 1996 Ross, James, &amp; Vargas, 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dees, Bennett, &amp; Villegas, 2008 Ko &amp; Pastore, 2005 Tsuji, Bennett, &amp; Zhang, 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donavan, Carlson, &amp; Zimmerman, 2005 Koo, Quartersman, &amp; Flynn, 2006 Yoshida &amp; James, 2010</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Increased Competition</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bee &amp; Kahle, 2006 Shonk &amp; Chelladurai, 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funk, Beaton, &amp; Pritchard, 2009 van Leeuwen, Quick, &amp; Daniel, 2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heere &amp; James, 2007a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hill &amp; Green, 2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James, Kolbe, &amp; Trail, 2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kim &amp; Kim, 1995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ko &amp; Pastore, 2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lee, Kim, &amp; Sagas, 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robinson, 2006</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Existing Literature is Inconsistent or Deficient</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alexandris, Zahariadis, Tsorbatzoulis, &amp; Wakefield, Blodgett, &amp; Sloan, 1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grouios, 2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funk &amp; James, 2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funk, Beaton, &amp; Pritchard, 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funk, Haugvedt, &amp; Howard, 2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heere &amp; James, 2007a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kwon &amp; Armstrong, 2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kwon, Trail, &amp; James, 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murray &amp; Howat, 2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>van Leeuwen, Quick, &amp; Daniel, 2002</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Trail (2002) write: “This necessitates that sport teams attract, develop, and maintain a relationship with a substantial number of sport consumers. Focusing on developing a base of loyal sport consumers would certainly help a team achieve its financial objectives” (p. 215).

In other cases, authors took some time to explain how the research improved managerial effectiveness or marketing efficiency. Cunningham and Kwon (2003) contend that understanding the factors that influence consumption will improve the effectiveness of marketing communications: “It is expected that understanding factors that affect the consumption of sport will improve the efficiency of marketing communication between service providers and consumers, and, for that matter, possibly influence the entire marketing program of a sport organization” (p. 127). So then, by knowing what affects consumption, it may be possible for managers to more efficiently (more easily and inexpensively) communicate with consumers, presumably by telling them what they want or need to know.

While some authors maintained that an improved understanding was the primary benefit of the research, others attempted to give managers tools to influence or manipulate consumer cognition, affect, and behavior. As the two excerpts below explain, the goal of some researchers is to provide “managerial levers” or a “framework” from which to “manage.” Funk and James (2001), while describing the usefulness of the Psychological Continuum Model (PCM), write: “Managerial levers developed through relationship marketing could be implemented to foster incremental movement up the PCM” (p. 143). Additionally, Gladden, Milne, and Sutton (1998) explain that by knowing what comes before and after brand equity formation, sport managers can “begin managing” it effectively:

In this section we relate the antecedents and consequences to the brand equity structure in order to provide the sport manager with a framework from which to begin managing brand
equity. Such knowledge will allow the sport manager to manipulate the antecedents based on the component of equity that they wish to enhance. (p. 10)

Similarly, Bauer, Stokburger-Sauer, and Exler (2008) target “consumers’ knowledge structures” as “dimensions” that managers can control: “Second, compared with other models, it fosters more useful insight into the dimensions of consumers’ knowledge structures that determine brand equity—dimensions that club managers can at least partly control” (p. 209). Accordingly, these dimensions are elements of the brand that consumers use to form attitudes and beliefs about the brand. So then, by knowing what elements are salient and meaningful to consumers, managers can cater these elements to evoke particular cognitive responses among consumers of the product.

Moreover, authors like Green (2001) proposed a connection between an improved understanding of the diverse elements of sporting practice and more effective managerial control using underutilized or previously overlooked research techniques:

This work suggests that market research for events will benefit by incorporating ethnographic elements. Marketers may find that their understandings of a sport’s subculture or range of subcultural expressions are under-elaborated or stereotypical…. The utility of subculture and identity as marketing levers may depend on the quality of ethnographic insight that organisers and marketers are willing to obtain. (p. 16)

Though an outlier in the discourse reviewed, Green infers that the efficacy of marketing through subculture and identity is reliant upon the “willingness” of marketers to obtain “quality” (ostensibly opposed to “quantity”) ethnographic insight.

Conversely, other authors present their work as redeemers for previous marketing research gone awry, warning that earlier models do not easily translate into something practicing managers can actually use. In these instances, the stated objective of the research was to derive a more simplified tool that balanced parsimony with analytical rigor. As Kwon, Trail, and Anderson (2005)
explain, “there is a tradeoff between comprehensiveness and parsimony” (p. 257). Casper, Gray and Stellino (2007) appear to agree, through with a more transparent practical cant: “The heuristic models are complex and do not lend themselves well to applied sport marketing strategies and tactics” (p. 254). On the other hand, although some research findings were not as solid as the author had hoped, admitting the limitations and providing a disclaimer about the dubious validity of the study preceded a lengthy description of results. Alexandris, Dimitriadis, and Kasiara (2001) write: “These scales need improvement. Subsequently, the results that will be reported about these scales should be considered with caution” (p. 287). What kind of “caution” the authors hope to instill is not made expressly clear. The authors go on to say that the scales are “controversial” because scholars do not agree on the dimensionality and contextual meaning of service quality, yet the scale is described as “satisfactory” given the study is “exploratory.” So then, sometimes what authors claim is central about their research is also what makes it tenuous. What should we make of research that claims to be important to the field, but provides tenuous findings? Should it be replicated and (in)validated? Should it be ignored? Or, should it be sliced to create a new niche for another scholar to make their own novel (and similarly tenuous) findings?

**Something Managers Can Control.** Another oft cited rationalization dictating the centrality of research is the focus by authors on facets of the sport product that managers can actually control. Such a claim is usually made upon describing those elements of the sport product that are out of reach of management or considered “ambient” conditions. As an applied field, however, scholars commonly attempt to link the study to elements that can be leveraged by managers. Indeed, as McDonald and Rascher (2000) contend, “For marketers, it is important to classify these variables as either controllable or uncontrollable” (p. 9). Although much credit is afforded to sport for is distinctiveness as an area of study, it is not the game itself that scholars seek
to manage, but rather other aspects of the “sport experience” that are more susceptible to manipulation.

Sport managers are not able to control the outcome of the events and therefore need to use strategies focused on other aspects of the sport experience in order to effectively manage the brand. In simple terms, although the game or event is important, sport executives must manage those elements that can be more closely controlled in order to develop strong brand equity. (Ross, 2006, p. 23)

Along these lines, some authors draw a clear distinction between the things which can and cannot be controlled by managers. For example, Tsuji, Bennett, and Zhang (2007) draw a line between the “core” product and “peripheral” or “ancillary” services:

Actual games, or the core service, are often uncontrollable by the event managers, while peripheral service qualities can be adjusted according to the consumers’ needs. In the context of sport, it seems more appropriate to differentiate the dimensions of service quality based on this distinction. (p. 201)

Similarly, Yoshida and James (2010) contend that the unpredictability of sport competitions precludes managerial control:

The core product, a sport competition between the two teams, is unpredictable and beyond managerial control. Ancillary services, on the other hand, include factors such as stadium employees, facility layout, accessibility, seating comfort, and information signs which can be influenced through managerial control…. sportscape focuses only on two dimensions, (1) space/functions and (2) signs, symbols, and artifacts, because these two dimensions are under the control of the team management while ambient conditions are difficult to control in the context of sport, specifically for outdoor settings. (p. 341-342)
The reader may find the core/ancillary distinction somewhat ironic for several reasons. First, acknowledging that sport management grew out of a need to produce trained sport professionals to administer sport in educational and elite settings, the outcome of the game was very much something early managers (aka administrators) sought to control. Second, the legitimacy of sport management research is often linked to a need to understand sport constituents who are more passionate and fanatical than others—a trait frequently linked to the inherent uncertainty and suspenseful nature of sport (i.e., the outcome of the game or “core” product). Thus, when scholars study consumers, they often study aspects of the consumer that are either unrelated or tangentially related to what made the research interesting or relevant in the first place. That is to say, scholars often bracket the (core) sport product from the consumption of ancillary aspects of the service experience. This raises an interesting question. Is the uniqueness of sport that which makes sport consumption worth scholarly investigation or that the more banal elements of the customer service experience can be translated into meaningful managerial praxis?

In the end, however, management is not an element of the product that consumers find endearing. Rather, when performed to perfection is an invisible force that optimizes the consumers experience with and around the sport product. Bauer, Stokburger-Sauer, and Exler (2008) explain: “We exclude ‘management’ from product-related attributes because, from the consumer’s perspective, management does not contribute to the team performance in the way that coaches, stars, and other players do” (p. 210).

There have been notable holdouts, however; some scholars are not ready to accept that their control of the core product is completely severed. Matsuoka, Chelladurai, and Harada (2003) contend: “While sport managers and coaches cannot control the results of games, they might be able to increase the quality of play by their team in terms of motivation, effort, perseverance, and teamwork” (p. 251). Thus, though the level of control may not be the same over core and ancillary
product elements, managers may still seek to influence the product in many ways. While the number of producers involved in the production of the sport product is vast and the scope of management has grown to include on and off-field activities, the manager is still presented as an integral part of the sport product.

**Competition.** Another rhetorical technique used by authors to establish a territory is to draw attention to the increasing competitiveness of the sport industry. Today’s sport organizations, having benefited from decades of economic growth and cultural prominence, must now compete for the consumer’s dollar like never before. The sport industry has been so flooded by new franchises and consumption alternatives that even the most storied sport brands cannot be complacent in securing market share. For instance, in their study of Korean sport centers, Kim and Kim (1995) suggested that “competition for customers is imminent” (p. 208), and encouraged sport firms to assess the quality of their products. Along these lines, scholars express the significance of sport consumer research as a double-barreled argument, presenting sport as an unrivaled icon of popular culture that is under attack from all sides. These attacks stem from more consumption alternatives, a more discerning consumer who spends less and has higher expectations, and a populous that has grown weary of the encroachment of commercial imperatives into all spheres of life. Sport consumer researchers have acknowledged this precarious position and used the competition argument as leverage to justify academic inquiry into the matter. The following excerpts highlight how authors have used this tactic as a rhetorical move to legitimize their research. Ko and Pastore (2004) write: “Sport organizations face a new era of global competition. Within the saturated market of sport industries, the success of a sport organization may depend on the degree to which the organization can satisfy their customers with quality service” (p. 159). Scholars have argued that to combat the rising tide of competition, sport firms must more effectively attract, develop, and retain loyal consumers who are reluctant to switch brands. Bee and Kahle (2006) describe how such
consumers are a “competitive advantage” for firms: “Sports consumers that exhibit sports-loyal behaviors, such as repeat purchasing and continued attendance, are the key to a sports organization's success. These consumers offer sports organizations a competitive advantage that can be realized through relationship marketing efforts” (p. 104). Bee and Kahle traced the competition problem into the psyche of consumers, claiming that consumers too need assistance to sort through the chaos of the market uncertainty.

The decision-making process becomes more efficient, search costs decline, and cognitive consistency in decisions can increase. Relationship marketing also reduces the complexity of the buying situation and the amount of resources required for information processing. Additionally, if consumers are engaged in a relationship with a firm or an organization, they are likely to be familiar with the products and services offered, which reduces risk, tension, and the likelihood of cognitive dissonance. (p. 103-104)

Accordingly, sport managers achieve competitive advantage and simultaneously reach out to consumers by forming relationships through strategic marketing communications that simplify the purchase decision and reduce stress. Through this sort of rhetorical effort, sport consumer research is made to appear necessary, both for its managerial efficacy and value to society.

Conversely, other scholars propose that product differentiation is the key to achieving a competitive advantage. Differentiation, however, is achieved not in transforming the core product, but rather in the array of ancillary services that contribute to the service experience:

Marketers have recognised that a winning team is no guarantee of a full stadium. There has been a quantum shift in marketing strategies over the past few decades, with teams and franchises moving from a product orientation focused on providing quality sport, to a service orientation focused on providing a quality entertainment experience. (Hill & Green, 2000, p. 146)
Such an argument is consistent with the earlier discussion about providing managers with tools or levers in areas they can actually control. In other words, research in areas that does not translate into language managers can easily understand or cannot be made actionable is not “good” research. Furthermore, if this research knowledge does not improve a firm’s competitive position, it may get lost in the noise.

**Existing Literature is Deficient.** Another common technique which authors use to describe how their work contributes to the field is by criticizing the field. There are several ways scholars can do this. First, authors can claim that previous research has failed to sufficiently conceptualize the phenomenon under study. For instance, van Leeuwen, Quick, and Daniel (2002) contend that the extant literature does not fully account for the inimitability of the sport product:

> It could be argued studies of sport spectator satisfaction that fail to account for the uniqueness of the spectator sport product (i.e., sport-specific social identification and the win/lose phenomenon) provide the sport manager with only partial understanding of what contributes to satisfaction with the spectator sport service. Such studies are likely to produce distorted results, skewed by game or season outcome, as well as by the level of team, club or even university identification. The reliance on such results has the propensity to lead to poorly informed marketing strategies. (p. 120)

In another example, Kwon, Trail, and James (2007) postulate that theorizations of the sport fan may unintentionally ignore facets of the decision-making process if scholars rely too heavily on popular psycho-social paradigms:

> Sport managers would want to recognize that even highly identified sport fans calculate a cost:benefit ratio when purchasing licensed apparel. Such a finding would indicate that sport teams should not rely solely on fostering team identification in an effort to increase the sale of licensed merchandise. (p. 541)
By failing to account for key variables, research that seeks to chart a cause and effect and/or make predictions may overlook confounding variables that would otherwise result in alternative findings, dissimilar implications, and counter-claims.

Ultimately, faulty conceptualizations not only result in poorly designed research, but incomplete renderings of the sport product also pollute the recommendations offered to practitioners. Furthermore, the desire of academic researchers to appeal to managerial sensibilities has led to the creation of a seemingly endless supply of instruments measuring the same constructs, sometimes obfuscating the very objective scholars set out to achieve in the first place. Funk, Filo, Beaton, and Pritchard (2009) explain:

In order to make predictions, academic demands have led to the proliferation of instruments and constructs to capture a wide variety of motives, but these tools have limited ability to explain game attendance; and practitioners demand shorter scales to increase efficiency. (p. 126)

While the race to make efficacious recommendations to practitioners continues, it seems that well-intending scholars may have actually made things worse by providing instruments that are difficult to operationalize and fail to measure what they say they do.

Using a related strategy, some scholars refrain from critiquing the field and instead point the finger at practitioners. Though a peculiar accusation from an unabashedly applied field, academicians use the perceived inadequacies of managers as a point of entrée to suggest interventions that will optimize organizational strategy. For example, Heere and James (2007a) contend that practitioners may have “forgotten their roots” and thus fail to capitalize on the strength of community:

The notion that a sports team represents a community (or communities) is not new and will hardly surprise anyone in the academic field of sport management. It seems that some professional teams might have forgotten their roots and the reason for their ability to grow
throughout the 20th Century, however. Many teams were founded, in part, as a result of
their representation of a larger group (e.g., church, school, nation, city, university). Especially
throughout the second part of the 20th Century, which is characterized by the
commercialization of sport, it seems that sports teams have become strangers to their
original communities. (p. 333)

It is an awkward move, however, to criticize the same field of practice treated as the gold standard
against which research is judged worthy or lacking. Nevertheless, such techniques are used by
scholars to establish a territory for their research.

How Authors Establish a Niche or Continue a Research Tradition

The second rhetorical technique characterized by Swales (1990) is to “establish a niche” in
which the research is the first of its kind or continues a research tradition by applying proven or
accepted principles in a new setting or context. This literary move requires less rhetorical effort than
“establishing a territory;” however, targeted effort is nonetheless required and, has been stated
previously, in many cases scholars use this technique in combination with the former. Swales (1990)
gave several examples of how this technique may be operationalized, such as by making a counter-
claim or raising a previously unasked question to identify a gap in the knowledge base. However, this
rhetorical technique may take other forms. In the sample of texts examined in this study, the most
popular method for establishing a niche was to claim that existing knowledge was limited in a given
context or to propose to study a novel element of an established research area. Another popular
technique was to claim that scholars and/or practitioners require a more thorough understanding
than existing research allows. In this case, authors proposed to carry forward a recognized line of
inquiry into uncharted territory or in a more complete or complex capacity. A third technique was to
call for empirical validation or evidence to justify or disprove a theoretical presentiment. Additional
rhetorical techniques included an expressed desire to synthesize a diverse body of knowledge under
a unifying conceptualization and provide an alternative explanation of previously studied or accepted phenomena.

### Limited Existing Research in Context

By far the most popular rhetorical technique used to establish a niche was to claim that the existing literature did not adequately address a particular context or to propose to study a previously unexplored area. The following excerpts, each a bit different in character and form, are exemplary examples of this kind of rhetorical move:

#### Table 6.2.

**Establishing a Niche/Continuing a Research Tradition**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Limited Existing Research in Context/New Area of Research</th>
<th>A More Thorough Understanding is Needed</th>
<th>Need for Empirical Validation</th>
<th>Need a Unifying Conceptualization/Theoretical Framework</th>
<th>Advances the Knowledge-Base/Fills a Gap in the Literature</th>
<th>Extension of Previous Work</th>
<th>Offers an Alternative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bodet, 2006</td>
<td>Greenwell, Fink, &amp; Pastore, 2002b</td>
<td>Green, 2001</td>
<td>Funk &amp; James, 2006</td>
<td>Koo, Quarterman, &amp; Flynn, 2006</td>
<td>Koo, Quarterman, &amp; Flynn, 2006</td>
<td>Koo, Quarterman, &amp; Flynn, 2006</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Limited Existing Research in Context.** By far the most popular rhetorical technique used to establish a niche was to claim that the existing literature did not adequately address a particular context or to propose to study a previously unexplored area. The following excerpts, each a bit different in character and form, are exemplary examples of this kind of rhetorical move:
• The investigation of the behavioural consequences of perceived service quality has been widely neglected in the sport and recreation literature. (Alexandris, Dimitriadis, & Kasiara, 2001, p. 284)

• There has been substantial work in other contexts demonstrating that identity plays a pivotal role in consumption. (Green, 2001, p. 5)

• To date, no sport research has examined the direct relationship between the (dis)confirmation of expectancies and consumption intentions. (Trail, Anderson, & Fink, 2005, p. 101)

• The scarcity of research in this area should be addressed in order to further our knowledge of what customers expect of sport organisations, how they assess service quality and how providers can influence the vicious cycle of expectations that the industry is in danger of facing. (Robinson, 2009, p. 81)

• Little attention has been paid to the influence of gender on their service quality perceptions and satisfaction with few exceptions. (Lee, Kim, Ko, & Sagas, 2011, p. 55)

Each of these statements serves to position the respective study at hand study in relation to previous attempts that have either paid “little attention” or “neglected” phenomena, did not focus on the targeted “context,” failed to examine a legitimate “relationship,” or the existing research was altogether “scarce.”

The same technique, though approached from the opposite direction, is to propose a new area of research and then imply that the extant literature is limited. This move can be quite subtle, moving the reader from passive acknowledgement that earlier findings were incomplete to acceptance of the newly proposed area of inquiry. Tsuji, Bennet, and Zhang (2007) accomplish this in several lines of text, pointing to espoused problems with an existing research instrument and then indicating what kind of instrument is necessary: “In spite of its popularity among researchers, some
scholars have suggested that the scale is too general to cover all industries…. In order to assess the service quality of an organization, a systematic and valid instrument is essential” (p. 200). Similarly, scholars may affect the same rhetorical move by emphasizing an element of a theoretical postulate and then leveraging it to explain that previous research may have missed a key point. Ross, James, and Vargas (2006) used a widely cited theory to refocus the measurement of brand associations on consumer perceptions:

Given that brand associations are the consumers’ thoughts when thinking of a brand (Aaker, 1996), it is therefore the consumer’s thoughts that are being targeted. Hence, constructs and items assessing brand associations developed by the researcher might not accurately represent the thoughts of sport consumers. Such measures would assess a consumer’s evaluation of what the researcher believes are team brand associations. (p. 264-265)

Four years earlier, however, Gladden and Funk (2002) operationalized brand associations with respect to consumer perceptions: “As such, we operationalize brand associations as those categories of product attributes, product benefits, and attitudes toward a product that may exist in consumers’ minds and impact their evaluation of brands” (p. 56). As these excerpts reveal, the rhetorical effort used by scholars to justify their work is often done relative to other scholars, the field, industry, and the contributions they promise to make. These rhetorical moves demonstrate how scholars jockey for position and compete for attention to present their research as relevant and veracious.

**A More Thorough Understanding is Needed.** A similar, but distinct rationale authors give to justify their work is to claim that a more thorough understanding is necessary, whether to advance academic inquiry or practical understanding, or both. Accordingly, authors using this technique seek to “advance” inquiry, improve “underdeveloped” understandings, inspire “future research,” and speed-up “slow” researchers. The examples below elucidate this technique:
Because of the limitations of the experimental design, future research should concentrate on more naturalistic viewing environments. Also, more demographic groups should be studied, along with more product categories…. As such, all results should be considered tentative and used as a starting point for future efforts in this under-researched, yet rapidly growing, form of marketing communication. (Kinney & McDaniel, 1996, p. 259)

Due to the relative ease of measuring behavior and self-reports of behavior, the attitudinal component of fan loyalty has remained underdeveloped and largely ignored. (Funk & James, 2001, p. 135)

Unfortunately, sport branding researchers have been slow to acknowledge the impact of service-oriented marketing and the unique characteristics of team sport in understanding and developing sport brand equity. (Ross, 2006, p. 25)

Because sport marketing research has advanced with little understanding of the overlap between a core product and ancillary services with game or service-specific satisfaction. (Yoshida & James, 2010, p. 339)

Although authors rarely used this technique in isolation, there is some implied merit to simply achieving a more thorough understanding of research phenomena. Like the preceding technique in which existing research is described as limited, this rhetorical move uses the extant literature as an explicit point of departure to establish the legitimacy of the current work.

**Empirical Validation is Needed.** A third alternative authors in the sample used to position their work so as to establish a niche was to call for empirical validation or promise to provide evidence to codify a theoretical suspicion or validate an unfounded claim. Several examples of this technique are provided below:
• Further, reliable and valid measures of these stadium factors drawn from spectator surveys are presented to enable stadium managers to assess spectators' perceived quality of stadium features. (Wakefield & Sloan, 1995, p. 154)

• To date, no empirically tested model has proposed explanatory and predictive relationships among fan/spectator motives and behavior variables. In addition, no psychometrically sound scales exist to measure these cognitive, affective, and behavioral constructs. (Trail, Fink, Anderson, 2003, p. 8)

• This study was intended to serve as a foundation that relates to the issue of sport sponsorship effectiveness as a strategic marketing tool, and to provide evidence of the efficacy of consumers' perceptions of brand/sport event image fit in shaping consumer based brand equity. (Koo, Quarterman, & Flynn, 2006, p. 80-81)

• Sport marketers and researchers believe that a strong brand helps sport organizations to insulate themselves from potentially detrimental financial effects of losses… Empirical support for the assumed positive economic consequences of strong brands in team sport is rare so far, however. (Bauer, Stokburger-Sauer, & Exler, 2008, p. 208)

Collectively, these rhetorical moves suggest that evidence equates to knowledge and, by promising to provide evidence or empirical testing, that which is previously unknown can become known or verified. In this category of rhetorical rationalizations, a theoretical or practical postulate has already been provided—authors use the existence of prior work as a foundation upon which to base empirical testing.

**A Unifying Conceptualization is Needed.** An additional rhetorical technique is to call for a unifying conceptualization to assimilate a disparate body of research. Sometimes such an effort is made to unite and direct the field towards a common objective, while at other times the attempt
appears more functional. Funk and James’ (2001) Psychological Continuum Model (PCM) is presented as an explicit attempt to provide “order” in a field described as “chaotic.”

This paper seeks to bring some order to the chaos by building a model of fan psychology that is grounded in the research literature and that differentiates spectators from fans…. The model represents a cognitive approach that places existing fan behaviour theory and research under one conceptual umbrella. (p. 120-121)

By assimilating a diverse body of research under a single “conceptual umbrella,” the authors not only organize decades of research in fan behavior, but also offer the PCM as an easily accessible distillation of relevant sport consumer knowledge. In the years since, the PCM has been one of the most widely-cited model produced by the field.

On the other hand, Ko and Pastore (2005) take a functional approach, suggesting that by totalizing post-consumption outcomes, a more complete understanding of the sport consumer can be achieved: “In this construct, a sport consumer’s post-consumption of intangible evidence (e.g., various psychological benefits such as confidence, self-esteem, and stress release) can be totaled and analyzed” (p. 86-87). Accordingly, functional justifications for holistic understandings seek to advance the knowledge base through aggregation. Bee and Kahle (2006) follow suit in the excerpt below:

In contrast, broader approaches attempt to understand consumers better and go beyond the current transaction and superficial repeat purchasing techniques to develop meaningful and beneficial relationships that are proactive, enduring, and interactive. Consumers are viewed as lifetime customers, and an effort is made to thoroughly understand consumer wants, desires, and values. (p. 103)

Other scholars seek to bridge previously “stove-piped” conceptualizations—divisions that should never have been made in the first place. For instance, Heere and James (2007b) aim to reconcile and
update understandings of the “fan” and the “team” by linking the concepts under a single theoretical framework:

However, if we make the statement that a sports team and its fans are nothing more than a particular form of group (Heere & James, In Press), we may apply the general definition of social identity and explain team identity as: ‘That part of an individual's self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership of a social group [team] together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership’ (Tajfel, 1978, p. 63). In this view, a fan may be regarded as more than a consumer of a product. A fan may be thought of as a member of a special group, even as a member of a sports organisation. (p. 66)

Whether scholars seek to bring order to a disparate field of inquiry or argue for holistic measures of consumer behavior, unification has been a popular rhetorical strategy to argue for the epistemological contributions of sport consumer research.

**Advances or Fills a Gap in the Knowledge base.** Another tool used to establish a niche is to indicate a gap in the knowledge base. In the sample of research texts, scholars identified gaps relating to previously unstudied contexts, between popular research variables, or, more generally, in the desire to expand the field’s theoretical footprint. Several examples of this rhetorical technique are provided below:

- It is apparent that there is a gap between the current conceptualizations of service quality in recreational sport/fitness programs and those from the general service marketing literature…. The intent of the proposed model is also to advance the knowledge base of service quality within the fields of sport management and marketing. (Ko & Pastore, 2004, p. 159)
• However, little is known about the relationships among satisfaction with the event, loyalty, and repurchase intentions in the context of spectator sport. The present study was an attempt to partially fill this void (Matsuoka, Chelladurai, & Harada, 2003, p. 245).

• The current study seeks to fill this gap in knowledge by examining sport consumers at women’s college basketball games. In particular, there is a need to use emotional attachment for classifying sport customers in order to develop specified marketing strategies. (Koo & Hardin, 2008, p. 31).

The “gap” strategy is a popular technique used in many areas of academic research. Using this technique, it is not the research problem that necessarily guides inquiry, but rather the opportunity to provide a more thorough understanding of a concept to “complete” the knowledge base. Therefore, when scholars use the “gap” strategy, they imply that knowing more is always better than knowing less. Thus, research questions may be targeted to fill voids, answers to which are attributed as advancements in the knowledge base.

**Extension of Previous Work or Alternative Explanation.** The last two tools scholars used to establish a niche or continue a research tradition was simply to extend previous research or offer an alternative explanation of a common topic of study. Such work can proceed as an application of a theoretical framework or conversely, a reconceptualization of a phenomenon. Mahony and Moorman (1999) take the former approach in the following excerpt: “Since the goal of this study is theory application and no attempt will be made to estimate means or effect sizes for a larger population, the use of homogeneous respondents was preferred” (p. 51-52). Heere and James (2007a), on the other hand, offer an alternate explanation of the sport fan that seeks to attach broader external group identities to the popularly ascribed “fan as consumer” model. “We propose to shift the focus from fans as consumers to fans as community members” (p. 322). Yet, alternative
explanations are sometimes difficult to disentangle from codified theorizations that have become accepted in the field. Heere and James continue:

This article does not advocate abandoning the perspective of fans as consumers of a sport service. Rather, it attempts to emphasize an alternative view on the unique bond of fans and sports teams around the world and proposes that managers implement marketing strategies that are focused more on the strengthening of not only the team identity but also the external group identities that will provide a team with extra points of attachment to its fans. The proposed model offers sport managers an opportunity to learn more about fans than their motives for watching or attending games. Even from a consumer perspective, fans could hardly be regarded as standard consumers. (p. 332)

By establishing a niche, researchers rely upon previous work to legitimize their research, yet are still able to set it apart, sometimes by only a few degrees, as unique and novel in its contribution to the field.

**How Authors Occupy a Niche**

The final category of rhetorical techniques which authors can use to justify the importance of their work is to position the text to occupy an established research niche. Here researchers may replicate previous findings, increase what is known about a particular research phenomenon, or provide a platform for future systematic study of a particular phenomenon. The texts which adopted some form of these techniques are listed in Table 6.3 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 6.3.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Occupying an Established Niche</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outlines Purpose(s) of Study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides a Platform for Systematic Study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unique Research Opportunity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As noted earlier, there is little rhetorical effort required to occupy an established research niche, and so, the examples of this technique are difficult to find. Instead, authors simply present their research findings and/or the analytical tools used to conduct the study. Some authors, however, do occasionally signpost to guide the reader towards the intended purpose of the study. For example, Funk and James (2001) are instructive about how the PCM contributes to the study of sport spectatorship: “The resulting model—called the Psychological Continuum Model (PCM)—is intended to provide researchers with a platform for the systematic study of sport spectators and sport fans” (p. 120). The importance of this kind of research is presumed to be self-evident—implied in the lack of rhetorical effort—because it falls within a legitimate area of study, has found something significant about a phenomenon people care about, and/or follows rigorous analytical procedures.

Summary

In sum, researchers expend a significant degree of rhetorical effort to pose questions, position their work as legitimate, and reason why their findings are important to the field. Most authors either sought to establish a research territory or create a new research niche (an endeavor in which they were successful given the selective criteria for inclusion in this study). How authors achieved this, however, is notable. Time and time again, authors set out by establishing the significance of sport as an unrivaled phenomenon of popular culture. Using economic figures, specific (predominantly North American) examples of widely celebrated sporting spectacles, and anecdotal evidence, authors positioned sport, and research on the sport consumer, as culturally, socially, and economically relevant. In some cases, the context was new or an extension of extant research, requiring further attention to validate theoretical frameworks in new settings. Here, the old justified the new, embracing a growth mentality that more is always better.

Quickly though, scholars transitioned to how the sport industry is at risk or continued growth is uncertain. Though unsettling, this sort of “bait and switch” is effective, as risk is difficult
to prove. What emerges is an effective rhetorical strategy that positions the text as important, though it is uncertain if what the author(s) present as findings would mitigate the risk or threat identified at the outset. Ultimately, the net effect of these attempts to establish a territory or create a niche is a knowledge base that is largely homogeneous, predominantly drawing from each other or a small bank of interdisciplinary theories, with only a narrow gap of separation between them.
CHAPTER 7
GOVERNING SPORT CONSUMER KNOWLEDGE

Governing Knowledge and Ways of Knowing

The epistemological foundation of this study centers on two genealogical concerns. Namely, how particular versions of the sport consumer and sport consumption are made to appear true and solid, and how, in sport management research discourse, certain ways of theorizing and studying the sport consumer have become dominant over others. By examining a corpus of prestigious research texts relating to the sport consumer, three targeted questions were asked. The first, “what is the sport consumer” explored the research discourse for the needs, substances, and behaviors of sport consumption. The second, “what makes the sport consumer unique and worthy of study” probed the discourse for how scholars problematized and proposed solutions to know the sport consumer better. The final question, which I interrogate in this chapter, “how the research discourse has legitimized certain ways of knowing and managing sport consumers” specifically asks what social categories and research/management strategies are made actionable through discourse. Thus, as I close this genealogical examination of a particularly influential sport management knowledge culture, I explore how the texts themselves frame the production of knowledge by making possible and constraining what can be known about sport consumers. I begin this chapter by investigating how scholars have segmented and categorized the sport consumer, and then more closely examine the research aims and knowledge claims of the most popular renderings of the sport consumer.

Categorizing the Sport Consumer

Segmentation is an essential tool used by sport managers to target marketing efforts. Kwon and Armstrong (2004) explain, “One of the most critical aspects of sport marketing is to segment the market of sport consumers into smaller homogeneous groups for which specific marketing
strategies may be developed (p. 101). Moreover, as scholars have approached the field with an “industry-based” perspective (Heere & James, 2007b), research on sport consumption has increasingly involved examination of segmentation variables and effective segmentation strategies. Consumer demographics have been a popular segmentation variable, although sport consumer researchers have expanded segmentation analyses to include other behavioral and psychographic factors as well. Following the discovery of significant differences between consumer groups, novel marketing strategies have been proposed to target these distinct groups of consumers. Chalip (1992) proposed that “in order to develop and apply segment appropriate narratives, genres, and symbols, it is necessary to determine the kinds of narratives, genres, and symbols (and the attendant interpretations) preferred by different groups” (p. 95). In other words, efforts to identify distinct market segments necessitate further study to determine how best to communicate and influence these disparate consumer groups to achieve organizational objectives.

As stated, segmentation analyses have included both demographic and psychographic variables. Greenwell, Fink, and Pastore (2002a) explain the difference between these two approaches:

The key to identifying these customer segments is to pinpoint variables that characterize groups with different perceptions of the elements of the service experience. Two of the most popular ways to segment customers are by using demographic and psychographic data… Psychographic data provides information on how customers think and feel, which provides an understanding of why customers behave the way they do…. Demographic variables of age, household income, family size, and gender have an influence on perceptions of the service experience. (p. 234)

Demographic variables, however, are more commonly used to differentiate segments of sport consumers because they are “readily available” (presumably because scholars believe demographics
are easily measured), and there is a strong functional link between demographics and behavior. Greenwell, Fink, and Pastore (2002a) continue, “Demographic variables merit further study because marketers commonly use them to segment markets; they are standard and readily available; and marketers believe that consumer behaviors are highly related to these variables” (p. 234).

Researchers use myriad demographic variables; however, some are more common than others. The most frequently encountered segmentation variable in the sample of texts was gender. Unsurprisingly, the texts predominantly reference gender in terms of gender differences—how males and females react differently to marketing communications. While gender equity and equality has become a popular topic in other fields, the issue of gender in this sample of texts primarily approached gender as a managerial lever to segment consumer groups and improve the bottom line. The following excerpts demonstrate how gender has been conceptualized as a segmentation tool:

- The emergence of women’s professional sport leagues and the expanding market of women as consumers (of both men’s and women’s sport products) has created a need for sport managers and sport marketers to gain a better understanding of their consumers. (Funk, Ridinger, & Moorman, 2003, p. 2)

- Sport marketers need to be aware that female and male spectators should be approached differently. Future researchers may wish to investigate how these motivational differences can best be utilized. (Swanson, Gwinner, Larson, & Janda, 2003, p. 161)

- There is considerable speculation that women’s teams should be marketed differently from men’s teams, but little has been done to examine empirically whether this would be an effective marketing strategy. This area of study is critical to both managers and marketers because gender is often used to segment markets in other areas of consumption (Robinson & Trail, 2005, p. 59-60)
Event organizers should consider gender difference and suggest market segmentation along gender lines. (Funk, Toohey, & Bruun, 2007, p. 243)

Not all scholars agree that segmentation along gender lines is worthwhile. The lack of research and explained variance undermines the ability to make conclusions regarding the influence of gender on the consumption of sport products. The following excerpt from Swanson, Gwinner, Larson, and Janda (2003) explains:

Initially, it seems logical to expect gender-related differences may exist in relation to spectator motivations and resulting behavior intentions. … Women sport fans can represent a significant percentage of event attendees, yet there is little research that examines possible gender differences that may be useful in better targeting the female market. (p. 154)

Robinson, Trail, and Kwon (2004) similarly argue that segmentation based upon socio-demographic variables is not worth the effort: “Segmenting sport spectator motivations based on socio-demographic differences may not be worthwhile for marketers because of the small amount of variance explained by the independent variables” (p. 170).

Other demographic and behavioral variables have been explored by researchers as well. Finding significant differences among consumer groups has turned into an active area of research for sport consumer scholars. Viewing segmentation as a universally desirable organizational strategy, simply finding significant differences between consumer groups may be seen as an advance in the sport consumer knowledge base. The following examples demonstrate the various efforts by scholars to segment sport consumers:

- These findings suggest that segmenting spectators according to their levels of sport activity involvement (centrality) can facilitate desired sponsorship outcomes. (Alexandris, Tasousi, & James, 2007, p. 138)
• In terms of this study, it means that marketing strategies that are culturally specific are useful for international active sport tourist segments. (Funk, Toohey, & Bruun, 2007, p. 243)

• In a somewhat controversial target marketing strategy, the WNBA's Los Angeles Sparks made an overt effort to target the gay and lesbian segment and supported that initiative by staging a pep rally at an area bar that is frequented by gay and lesbian consumers. Less controversial in nature, MLB has targeted the Hispanic segment while the NBA has tried to capitalize on the emergence of Yao Ming by targeting the Chinese-speaking segment of the sports market. (Fullerton & Merz, 2008, p. 99)

Presumably, what makes demographic variables so prolific is that they are easy to measure and differences are easy to calculate. What exactly constitutes a demographic difference, however, is not entirely objective, requiring the researcher to make assumptions about how people are “different” and upon what basis they should be “categorized.” Despite the inherent uncertainty in calculating demographic differences, sport consumer researchers continue to make inferences about how these differences can assist managers to better understand, communicate, and control their constituents.

A second area of segmentation analysis is in the area of psychographic differences. The incorporation of psychographic segmentation variables is, at least in part, due to the inability of some researchers to find clear relationships between demographics and desired outcomes. Beaton, Funk, Ridinger, and Jordan (2011) contend, “Rather than segmenting a market based on demographics, event directors should focus on meeting needs and wants of potential participants based on the levels of psychological connection illustrated in the PCM” (p. 137). Consumer psychographics generally refer to consumer perceptions, attitudes, beliefs, and motives. Researchers measure psychographic variables primarily through self-report surveys, asking subjects to respond to statements developed by the researcher which are thought to align with particular factors. By finding significant differences between groups of consumers who fall within particular thresholds of
psychographic involvement, researchers may claim that a consumer segment exists. These categories of consumers, in turn, may respond differently to marketing efforts. Thus, psychographic variables corresponding to distinct consumer groups may help tailor marketing strategies and create narratives that target each group more effectively. The following excerpts describe how scholars approach segmentation from a psychographic perspective:

- Further, because different fans consume sport due to different motives, motives could be utilized as a segmentation variable to better target fans. … To entice fans with different motives, sport marketers could conduct market research to determine the motives most applicable to their sport and develop suitable marketing campaigns based upon the results. (Trail, Fink, & Anderson, 2003, p. 16)

- This research indicates that spectators and fans may be different segments… These findings are significant for both theorists and practitioners. For theorists, the labeling of those who attend games must be more scientific. (Trail, Robinson, Dick, & Gillentine, 2003, p. 226)

- From a marketing perspective, this distinction between a fan and a spectator may be crucial. When marketing to fans, one is preaching to the choir…. Good marketing plans focus on and accentuate this connection. However, the same plans will not work well for those who merely spectate and have no identification with the team. If there is no connection, then marketers must devise a different strategy. (Trail, Robinson, Dick, & Gillentine, 2003, p. 218)

- Spectator and fan motivation can also be used as an effective psychographic segmentation method that can result in more effective marketing campaigns. A comprehensive marketing model that includes motivation and other important spectator and fan variables, such as identification or loyalty, can be very useful in marketing a team or sport. (Wann, Grieve, Zapalac, & Pease, 2008, p. 7-8)
Sport-specific motives can then be employed by the sport marketer as a method of segmentation…. to tailor their promotional methods and marketing strategies to motivations that are prevalent in a particular sport. (Wann, Grieve, Zapalac, & Pease, 2008, p. 17)

Sport consumer research discourse acts upon the consumer by categorizing respondents into groups that can be more effectively targeted by marketers. Although segmentation may resemble idiographic research seeking to understand the complexity and richness of sport consumption phenomena, it is a categorization tool used to break the consumer base into homogeneous groups that behave in a relatively similar fashion. In other words, segmentation analysis is an effort to divide and conquer. Market segmentation analyses make differences known and establish (or disprove) significant relationships to other variables of interest. These differences are arguably brought into existence by the researcher who builds the research instrument, defines the grouping criteria, and finds significant difference amidst statistical uncertainty (i.e., explained variance or effect size). Once the difference is justified, the researcher then offers the consumer segments to practitioners as targets to be subjected to various marketing strategies.

Making Sport Consumer Subjects

In this section, I examine what researchers seek to make known about the sport consumer. The following discussion is organized according to the development of the sport consumer as “customer,” “fan,” “brand equity,” and “buyer” loosely aligned with the most popular dependent variables found in the sample of texts: satisfaction, involvement/identification (broadly conceived), brand equity, and purchase intention. I move through each conceptualization in turn, examining what the author seeks to make known, why it is important to be known, how the author seeks to make the unknown knowable, and the impact of knowing the sport consumer in such a manner.

The Sport Consumer as “Customer.” A major area of study has examined perceptions of service quality and satisfaction. Satisfaction research often adopts the theoretical principles of
relationship marketing, viewing the end-user as a partner in exchange. That is, while some marketing research attempts to trace the link between antecedents and behavioral outcomes, relationship marketing in this genre of inquiry is primarily concerned with perceptions of service quality, and how expectations, quality, and value interact to affect satisfaction. Quality and satisfaction are the primary objectives which, if sufficiently and efficiently achieved, will likely result in favorable organizational outcomes. The link between satisfaction and profitability is equivocal; although the generation of revenue is a corporate necessity, relationship marketers view customer contentment with the product as an equally important managerial objective. Greenwell, Fink, and Pastore (2002, SMR) emphasize the tenuous correlation between satisfaction and profit: “The link between customer satisfaction and economic profitability, however, has been difficult to empirically validate in cross-sectional studies” (p. 132). The objectives sought by researchers in this category generally relate to the measurement of service quality and satisfaction, and mapping construct dimensionality. The texts in which authors adopted service quality and/or satisfaction as the dependent variable are described below in terms of what the author(s) sought to make known:

- Identification of service quality attributes and the impact on satisfaction (Bodet, 2006; Greenwell, Fink, & Pastore, 2002b)
- Development of a model of satisfaction in various contexts (Beccarini & Ferrand, 2006; van Leeuwen, Quick, & Daniel, 2002)
- Creation of an instrument to assess service quality in context (Kim & Kim, 1995)
- Creation and influence of consumer expectations (Robinson, 2006)
The rationale authors give as to why satisfaction research is important varies. Some researchers state that customer satisfaction is a functional imperative and aim to replicate and extend inquiry into new contexts. For instance:

From a managerial perspective, there have been limited efforts to empirically investigate the concept of customer satisfaction within sport organisations…. The replication of this methodology in a sport service context is an answer to the observations establishing a service attributes classification for health club managers who want to enhance customer satisfaction to produce favourable outcomes for the organisation. (Bodet, 2006, p. 158)

Indeed, satisfying customers is not a purely altruistic aim; researchers understand that favorable organizational outcomes are closely related. For some authors, research mapping consumer satisfaction paves the way for future studies exploring the link to behavioral outcomes. Greenwell, Fink and Pastore (2002b) write:

The first item of future research, therefore, would be to fully develop the list of factors that predict customer satisfaction in a spectator sport environment…. The present study assumes customer satisfaction is important because it leads to behavioural intentions and profitability. Future study should provide empirical evidence of the links among perceptions of the physical facility and customer satisfaction and profitability, as there is a need for more study concerning which service investments may achieve the greatest results (Zeithaml, 2000). Empirical evidence should allow managers to view improvements in the physical facility as investments with quantifiable returns and give managers a clearer understanding of which components of the service experience have the largest impact on customer satisfaction and profitability. (p. 143-145)

Some justifications of the importance of knowing how customers are satisfied appear tautological.
Sport organisations are better positioned to reap the positive outcomes associated with having a largely satisfied customer base if they have an understanding of those factors that contribute to their customers’ satisfaction. (van Leeuwen, Quick, & Daniel, 2002, p. 101) In other words, sport organizations can better satisfy their customers if they know how their customers are satisfied. The contribution of such research is dubious. A more thorough understanding of the factors that contribute to satisfaction may help researchers theorize how satisfaction is achieved; however, whether or not organizations are better positioned by such theories and empirical validation is unclear.

Customer perceptions of service quality and satisfaction are determined by both internal and external factors. Customer perceptions are held internally by the customer; the service, on the other hand, is rendered by the producer. Therefore, perceptions of service quality and satisfaction are the outcome of an exchange relationship between the consumer and producer. Chelladurai and Chang (2000) contend, “Consumer services are likely to be governed exclusively by managerial specification” (p. 10); however, “it is the consumers who know the quality of a service as they experience it” (p. 10). Therefore, to know if customers are satisfied, researchers we must ask them. Additionally, to assess a service, researchers must know how it is specified and then ask consumer to judge its quality.

Researchers who render the sport consumer as “customer” often provide both practical and academic implications for doing so. First, by making known how consumers perceive service quality and if they are or are not satisfied, producers can presumably improve the quality of their operations. Chelladurai and Chang (2000) write:

It is expected that the framework developed in this paper will help practising managers to improve the quality of their operations. While it is important for sport managers to view the totality of their operations, it is also necessary for them to break their operations into smaller
discrete and distinct elements, as suggested in this paper. Such conscious efforts at dissecting their operations will show the flow of service activities and the interrelationships among them. (p. 19)

Additionally, Ko and Pastore (2004) contend that assessments of service quality can be used to evaluate firm performance and tailor daily operations:

Overall, the proposed model of service quality may provide strategic concepts to management professionals for the evaluation of organizational performance and assist in preparing effective marketing and management strategies for the improvement of the daily operation of sport organizations. In addition, the model may assist in understanding the decision-making process of sport and leisure participants. (p. 165)

As Ko and Pastore indicate, an additional benefit of such research is an understanding of how consumers interpret various elements of the service encounter and subsequently, make decisions. Chelladurai and Chang (2000) explain, “These contextual and interactional elements of a service constitute the “added value” (p. 3). Therefore, by mapping and measuring the impact of various components of service quality, producers can better determine what attributes influence consumer perceptions and behaviors. In turn, customer satisfaction may be viewed as a competitive advantage when it translates into consumer loyalty. Ko and Pastore (2005) explain: “The efforts to improve service quality may increase customer satisfaction and the level of consumer loyalty, and it can provide an opportunity for sport leaders to stay competitive in a current saturated market environment” (p. 95). Beccarini and Ferrand (2006) add that loyalty may result in an increased tolerance of the consumer to absorb rising prices and poor performance:

The capacity of a club to offer the right services according to fan involvement may induce greater loyalty. The direct consequence of this may lead to practical advantages for the club, such as greater tolerance for raising ticket prices and for sports results. (p. 17)
In summary, the sport consumer as “customer” invites the consuming subject to enter into a relationship with the producer. The producer provides a product, the customer consumes it and makes quality assessments, and the researcher provides a feedback mechanism back to the producer who uses the information to improve the quality of the product. Ultimately, satisfied customers become loyal consumers, improving a firm’s competitive advantage and leading to favorable organizational outcomes.

The Sport Consumer as “Fan.” Over the last 30 years, sport consumer researchers have made a concerted attempt to understand the process by which sport consumers become sport fans (of sport in general or a single sport, player, team, franchise, activity, or event). In this section, I explore how the sport fan has been conceptualized by a family of allied lines of inquiry which seek to make known how consumers become psychologically and emotionally involved, attached, connected, identified, loyal, and allegiant. I am admittedly lumping together a varied body of research with an assortment of keywords; however, while I understand that to varying degrees scholars have attempted to make certain distinctions between these constructs, in my view there is enough theoretical overlap to treat them as a single discursive category under the term “fan.”

Most scholars have described the development of fanship (the focus of fan interest) and fandom (connection with other fans) (Reysen & Branscombe, 2010) as a process, though the extent to which the process itself has been examined falls well short of attempts to link desirable organizational outcomes to supposed levels of involvement. In general, the study of fandom begins with an observation that sport consumer displays an unparalleled level of passion and in so doing, behaves in a manner that is irrational, illogical, or unpredictable. Often, descriptions of the prototypical fan are followed close behind by reports that the viability of the sport industry is at risk (as we have seen, this is not the only instance of framing sport research as “vital yet under attack”). By enacting these consecutive rhetorical moves (i.e., passion and risk), the sport fan is positioned as
a legitimate object of inquiry. The sport fan is often juxtaposed with other types of consumers, those with lower levels of passion and those who consume other leisure products, elevating the sport fan as the exemplar consuming subject. In this way, the sport fan is presented as an intriguing, psychologically and emotional involved, at times compulsive, and, perhaps most importantly, predictable research subject. We might add that sport researchers are likely fans themselves. Ultimately, research in this area of inquiry seeks to describe how sport fans become involved, attached, connected, and identified in relation to their propensity to become devoted, passionate, loyal, and/or allegiant consumers of a sport product.

In competitive markets, a loyal customer base is viewed as a competitive advantage. Accordingly, sport consumer researchers have described allegiant sport consumers as a “strategic business goal” (Funk & James, 2006, p. 208). This is because allegiant or loyal consumers are believed to be less susceptible to competitors’ advertising and more likely to engage in repurchase behaviors. Consumer loyalty has been conceived in myriad ways, but is most often regarded in terms of fan behavior. Bauer, Stokburger-Sauer, and Exler (2008) provide a useful example of how the loyalty construct may be applied in the team sport context:

By transferring the loyalty concept to fan behavior, the following activities constitute past loyal behavior in the team sport context: attending the favorite club’s games live in the stadium, watching the favorite club’s games on television, consuming other club-related media, purchasing club merchandise, wearing the colors or logo of the favorite club, and trying to convince others that the favorite club should be supported. (p. 207-208)

Understanding consumer loyalty has necessitated examination of the underlying processes of psychological and emotional attachment. Koo and Hardin (2008) describe how marketing efforts can be targeted to increase the attachment of sport consumers:
Marketing efforts can be made to increase emotional attachment levels for those with low attachment (spectators), and efforts can be made to make sure those with high attachments levels (fans) are having their needs met. One objective for markets is to turn a spectator into a fan. (p. 41)

Koo and Hardin emphasize that the primary goal of sport marketers is to create fans. In this view, loyalty is not simply repetitive purchasing behavior, but rather an enduring psychological and/or emotional affiliation for a product. By conceiving consumer loyalty in such a manner, researchers infer there is a link between psychological preferences and consumer behavior. In turn, scholars encourage sport organizations to find effective ways to increase the emotional and symbolic significance of their products and/or brand among the consuming public. As has been discussed, however, economists are divided on the role of preferences, seeing them as independent of action or, at best, a historical fact. Either way, the link between preferences and future behavior is tenuous.

Moving beyond preferences, scholars have proposed the key to consumer loyalty is internalization. Bee and Kahle (2006) are direct on how firms should go about the task of codifying such relations with consumers:

Sports organizations should strive to move consumers from levels of compliance and identification to internalization. In practical terms this means that sports organizations need to go deeper and move the consumer from a transactional exchange based on rewards to a relational interaction focused on mutual exchange and shared values. (p. 109)

In an effort to go deeper, researchers have theorized how involvement with a sport object is internalized, whereby the sport object becomes an extension of one’s self-concept. Identification is thought to stem for an individual’s need for affiliation, social interaction, or self-esteem enhancement, resulting in one’s sense-of-self becoming interconnected with the culture, value,
Experiences with the team occur as a result of fulfilling unmet needs such as escape and hedonic pleasure (i.e., entertainment). The catalysts at the initial stage may come from the individual, seeking entertainment, or from the influence of others as when parents take children to games, or when an individual is invited to attend a game with a friend….

Catalysts for movement may be an individual’s desire to belong or to fit in.… A defining characteristic of the identification stage is the formation of a distinct and exclusive preference (i.e., positive affect) for a sport team. The distinct preference may satisfy a number of needs, including a need for affiliation and/or social interaction. This is the stage at which a sport identity first emerges…. Optimal internalisation occurs when an individual fully integrates the target team within self. The individual no longer merely prefers the team, but by making it a part of self, the team becomes an extension of the individual…. Catalysts for integration of a team into self may be a need for affiliation unfulfilled by fan group membership, or a need for self-esteem enhancement. The underlying needs may be present but not consciously recognised. An individual chooses to internalise a sport team because particular attributes of the team are compatible with other aspects of self, and the team is regarded as representative of an individual’s values and beliefs. (p. 10-11)

Understanding how sport consumers become fans who are psychological involved with a team or other sport product and communicating to managers how such knowledge can enhance the loyalty of sport consumers has been a principle project of sport consumer researchers for the last few decades. In the sample of texts examined in this project, scholars have examined the creation and behavior of sport fandom from the following perspectives:
• How attitudinal properties relate to commitment to a sports team (Funk, Haugtvedt, & Howard, 2000)

• Development of a conceptual framework to distinguish between levels of psychological connection (Funk & James, 2001)

• The value of subculture and identity as targets of marketing communications (Green, 2001)

• The effect of psychological connection on the decision to purchase season tickets (James, Kolbe, & Trail, 2002)

• Sport tourism as a nostalgic group (identity) travel experience (Fairley, 2003)

• Development of a model to better understand internalization of a team into the self-concept (Funk & James, 2004)

• Development of a scale to assess consumers’ psychological attachment to a team (Kwon & Armstrong, 2004)

• How spectators identify differently based on personality traits (Donavan, Carlson, & Zimmerman, 2005)

• Development of a parsimonious model of the relationship between points of attachment and cognitive, affective, conative, and behavioral loyalty (Kwon, Trail, & Anderson, 2005)

• Development of a framework for how consumer relationships are formed and should be maintained (Bee & Kahle, 2006)

• Verification of a model of how consumer attraction develops to allegiance over time (Funk & James, 2006)

• Examination of the role of external group identities on the creation of team identity (Heere & James, 2007a)

• Team identification as a multidimensional construct (Heere & James, 2007b)
• How sport consumers’ emotional attachment may be a used as a strategic marketing tool (Koo & Hardin, 2008)

The study of psychological involvement and the associated behavioral consequences in sport settings has evolved from primitive origins into the systematic study of a consumer’s intimate relationship with a sport object. Funk, Haugtvedt, and Howard (2000) explicate the process of researching the psychosocial qualities of sport consumer behavior:

A systematic study of a sport spectator's or a fan’s relationship with a sports team, league or event should incorporate aggregate measures probing the subjectivity and cognitive components of the attitude (e.g., importance, knowledge). Future studies could incorporate multivariate designs that consider an attitude’s underlying structure in attempts to achieve greater insight into the consequences of that attitude…. Utilising this framework, future studies—both qualitative and quantitative—can systematically determine what accounts for individuals placing importance on particular team-related activities and behaviours. (p. 137-138)

Research in this area has faced distinction challenges, however. Linking psychographic variables to actual or intended behavior has proved problematic in many cases. Funk and James (2004) write:

Typically, these studies gauge an individual’s feelings or affect towards a sport object by summarising respondents’ scores on Likert scales and subsequently comparing this measure to reported behaviour or intent. Researchers have found, however, that there was variability in the extent to which measuring evaluative responses served as a useful predictor of psychological or behavioural variables. (p. 5)

In other words, it is not the accurate accounting of a sport consumer’s psychological involvement that is the issue (indeed, measuring involvement is apparently fairly straight-forward), but rather how to link involvement to variables that matter to managers. Other scholars have explored how
identification with a sport product may be translated into identification with a brand which may increase consumer satisfaction and lead to positive organizational outcomes. van Leeuwen, Quick, and Daniel (2002) write: “That consumers identify with products is broadly acknowledged. Less acknowledged, however, is the extent to which consumers identify with the organisations that produce and sell products” (p. 109). Heere and James (2007b) explore this issue a bit more thoroughly to provide insight into how assessment of team identity may be refined. By measuring group identity in more general terms, the authors propose that the link between team identity, an individual’s other identities, and consumer behavior may be more reliably examined.

A reliable and valid instrument to measure team identity as a multidimensional construct is important for studying the influence of team identity on consumer behaviour, and also for examining multi-group settings (Heere & James, in press). By developing an instrument that can be applied in many different group settings, researchers will be able to examine the influence of a particular group identity on the individual's other identities. In order to do so, it is important to develop generic items that are not team specific, and are grounded within the broader field of social psychology. (p. 87)

The definitional limits of team identity have been challenged as well. By broadening the conceptualization of team identity to include other external group identities, the distinction between the “team” and the “fan” is blurred.

The notion of team identification should be broadened so that fans are thought of as part of a sports organization. This would mean that fans are not merely consumers who desire a service, or even ‘prosumers’ who have crossed the blurry line of consuming and producing (Toffler, 1980). They are members of an organization who are committed to its existence. (Heere & James, 2007a, p. 323)
Such creative theoretical extensions are rare, however. Heere and James (2007) exercise restraint, leaving conventional notions of what it means to be sport consumer intact, and instead translate their novel theorization into another opportunity for marketing managers to capitalize on free affiliations.

A better understanding of the external identities a team can represent would provide opportunities for a sports team to position itself in the minds of potential consumers in an effort to attract new fans. Such understanding would also provide important information for strengthening connections with existing fans…. The fact that a sports team is representative of the community is not a given and is a relationship that sports teams should continuously work to develop. (p. 332-333)

Although it is becoming increasingly clear that the study of consumer behavior is underpinned by a desire to make it managerially relevant, clearly articulating how such knowledge can be applied in managerial practice is not a given. Kwon and Armstrong (2004) explain:

Contributing to sport marketers’ underutilization of psychosocial information as a basis for devising marketing strategies is the difficulty and complexity of ascertaining a psychosocial understanding of sport consumption. This study sought to fill this void in sport marketing research by offering dimensions of psychosocial attachment by which sport consumers may be segmented. (p. 102)

Research into the psychosocial aspects of sport consumer behavior has been used to justify changes to the sport consumption experience, craft strategic marketing communications, and segment sport consumers according to their level of involvement. Regarding the latter, scholars frequently argue that psychological involvement is an effective variable to segment sport consumers, as the following excerpts show.
• Psychological connection to the team would seem to be a useful segmentation tool for sports marketers. (James, Kolbe, & Trail, 2002, p. 222)

• Comparing gender of the sport team and type of sport is certainly warranted to provide a full understanding of the necessity and sufficiency issue. The attachment process may be different for various sports or spectators. (Funk & James, 2006, p. 210)

• Consumption patterns may vary as a function of consumers’ level on the PCM; responses to marketing communications or promotions may vary as a function of consumers’ level on the PCM. (Funk & James, 2001, p. 142)

Researchers generally believe that consumers who are more involved respond differently to marketing tactics than consumers with less psychological involvement. Thus, scholars argue that segmentation according to level of involvement will lead to more effective marketing communications that translate into favorable organizational outcomes.

Research on consumer loyalty and psychological attachment has developed in a somewhat haphazard manner, prompting several scholars to make efforts to restore order. In turn, integrative models have been proposed in hope of consolidating research efforts:

The PCM is an integrative model in that thinking, feeling and doing are important elements in developing a psychological connection to a sport object…. This extends our understanding beyond behavioural change by characterising the formation of the psychological connection and the factors that influence a connection that is persistent and resistant to change. (Funk & James, 2001, p. 124)

Research on identification, on the other hand, has emphasized the social element of sport consumption. Identification is an outcome, generally perceived to be a positive consumer trait; however, social exchange and bonding with others may be the underlying motivation which acts as a catalyst for sport consumption. Fairley (2003) writes: “The findings here suggest that identification...
with the team may be neither necessary nor sufficient to generate fan support, but that social bonding with other fans is sufficient to generate support and team-related consumption” (p. 299). Donavan, Carlson, and Zimmerman (2005) concur, stating:

These findings have important implications for managers in terms of designing promotional campaigns that will help consumers to easily identify with a team…. The results suggest that individuals who are most likely to identify with a team are those who are most likely to seek out and enjoy social exchanges. (p. 40)

In general, inquiry in this area has led to further development of models of consumer allegiance that aim to illuminate the complex process by which consumers develop allegiance and form relationships with a sport object. Funk and James (2006) explain:

Unfortunately, human development is quite complex and the development of allegiance continues to intrigue scholars and practitioners…. The current study provides direction for clarifying the formation of allegiance by deconstructing the complexity of the individual-object relationship. It is our expectation that this study will provide the impetus for additional research seeking to more fully understand the formation of and meaning of consumer allegiance in sport. (p. 211)

However, it is not by illuminating the passion of sport fans that “knowledge” has advanced in this area. Rather, scholars have sought to deconstruct and reduce the complexity of the “individual-object relationship” with the objective of providing managerial levers to “manipulate” how consumers engage with products, form attitudes, and make purchase decisions. Kwon and Armstrong (2002) elucidate the effort to make research managerially actionable:

Sport marketers are continuously trying to find ways of manipulating or modifying factors within their control to facilitate the marketing exchange with consumers…. Since research (i.e., Sutton et al., 1997) has identified a number of strategies that marketers may employ to
foster consumer identification with their sport teams, actionable marketing strategies may be
designed to increase identification, thereby increasing the likelihood of impulsive sport
purchases. (p. 161)

In seeking a better understanding, I am compelled to ask what kind of explanation is possible
through deconstructive approaches that seek to be practically relevant to business. To wit, by
deconstruction do we not really mean reduction? If this is true, can we really reduce the complexity
of a truly complicated phenomenon? I propose that reduction, though at times necessary, most
often results in a reduced understanding (albeit an understanding that may be acted upon). If this is
the goal of deconstruction, I am compelled to ask “what are politics of deconstruction?” It would
seem, that such reductive technologies are aimed more at locating operative managerial levers than
they are at understanding consumption experiences.

**The Sport Consumer as “Brand Equity.”** In the early 1990s, scholars in marketing
management championed the concept of brand equity in response to a shift in managerial
concentration away from production in favor of creating value by strategically positioning the
“brand” to increase perceived quality, awareness, associations, and loyalty (Aaker, 1991). The
approach spread to other disciplines, finding support in sport management (particularly in the sub-
disciplines of sport marketing and sport consumer research) as a useful theoretical framework to
study the sport product, which scholars have described as intangible, multidimensional, and
consequently, difficult to control and manage. The concept of brand equity provided academicians
with a novel construct to reexamine the sport product and rethink what is important about sport
consumer behavior in creating value for sport organizations. Scholars postulated that sport teams, in
producing long-term value for stakeholders, would increasingly be viewed in the new millennium as
“brands” and managed accordingly (Gladden & Funk, 2002; Gladden, Irwin, & Sutton, 2001). Boyle
and Magnussen (2007) further explain:
Brand equity has become a central construct for understanding purchase preferences, as well as overall consumer loyalty. Keller (1993) defines brand equity in terms of “marketing effects uniquely attributable to the brand” (p. 1). This perspective considers the leverage a brand has in the marketplace relative to other purchase choices. At high levels of equity, a brand’s effect is considered relevant, if not dominant, when a markedly lower preference for the product choice would be evidenced in the absence of a brand’s attributes. (p. 500)

To influence consumer purchase decisions, scholars argue that managers need to understand what components of the brand are strong and which ones are not, so that they can build better relationships with customers by “soliciting, listening, and responding to consumer needs” (Gladden, Irwin, & Sutton, 2001, p. 309). However, these customer relationships are not ends in themselves, but rather tools to control “the consumption environment;” that is, “controlling and enhancing consumer interactions with the brand” (p. 310).

There is much consensus that brand equity is crucial to effective strategic management; however, brand equity has proven to be notoriously difficult to measure, quantity, and operationalize. In the sample of texts reviewed in this study, scholars sought to advance knowledge of sport brands in the following manner:

- Examination of sponsorship as a brand equity building strategy (Kinney & McDaniel, 1996)
- Development of a conceptual framework for brand equity (Gladden, Milne, & Sutton, 1998)
- Examination of brand equity as a strategic management tool to increase long-term franchise value (Gladden, Irwin, & Sutton, 2001)
- Creation of a model of brand associations contributing to sport brand equity (Gladden & Funk, 2002)
- Development of a conceptual framework for spectator-based brand equity (Ross, 2006)
• Development of an instrument to measure team-based brand associations (Ross, James, & Vargas, 2006)

• Exploration of the link between social identity and brand equity (Boyle & Magnussen, 2007)

• Examination of brand associations as tool to segment sport consumers (Ross, 2007)

• Creation of a model and measure of brand image and its relationship to brand loyalty (Bauer, Stokburger-Sauer, & Exler, 2008)

Brand equity is thought to be a salient line of inquiry in sport due to its strong service orientation. Scholars believe the service experience is directly related to the creation of brand equity. Ross (2006) clarifies:

The strong reliance on service provision and managing customer perceptions in the sport marketing sphere necessitates a different perspective with regards to sport branding. That is, the experience of consumers takes on an increased importance in the creation of brand equity. As such, research seeking to increase our understanding of sport team brand equity must include and acknowledge the significance of the actual customer experience in creating and shaping this equity for a sport organization. (Ross, 2006, p. 27)

Consumer experiences are thus the headwaters of brand equity, the substance which scholars seek to understand, and the lever managers seek to control. Thus, facets of the consumer experience are believed to have direct links to components of brand equity. Understanding the relationship between experiences and brand equity is the objective of this area of research, and knowledge is the basis for manipulation. Gladden, Milne, and Sutton (1998) explain, “Sport managers need to understand the components of brand equity as such components can provide the basis for managerial manipulation to enhance brand equity” (p. 2). In other words, brand equity (images of the brand created via consumption experiences and stored in one’s memory) drives consumer
preferences. Bauer, Stokburger-Sauer, and Exler (2008) elucidate in terms of how consumers develop preferences for a particular sport club:

One promising strategy for sport marketers to drive sport consumers’ preferences and loyalty is to build strong, positive, and unique consumer beliefs about the club—in other words, to construct a strong brand image. Given its highly competitive nature, branding can play an important role by influencing fan preferences and perceptions regarding the club and by differentiating it from competing clubs and other leisure activities. (p. 205-206)

Ultimately, if sport managers know how experiences influence the memories, thoughts, associations, and beliefs that consumers hold regarding a particular sport brand, marketing activities can be precisely controlled “to create favorable brand images and to reinforce the positive brand associations” (Ross, James, & Vargas, 2006, p. 262).

Treating brand equity as a strategic management goal, scholars have sought to provide causal evidence of what antecedents lead to favorable organizational outcomes. Ross (2006) argues that structural modeling of the relationships between components of brand equity will help scholars better understand how brand loyalty is formed.

Applied to data on attitudes, perceptions, and actual behavior, structural equation modeling can be used to specify and test alternative causal hypotheses. By examining the relationships through structural models, sport executives would be able to better understand the direct and indirect effects of the brand equity components on such outcomes as brand loyalty. (p. 34)

Further still, Ross contends that scholars should develop a brand equity-based valuation system to measure the strength of a firm’s brand in the marketplace.

Sport brand equity research would benefit significantly if an indexing system were formulated to assign a specific value to organizations’ equity strength. The importance of
recognizing negative brand equity illustrates the need to create a valuation technique. The damaging effects of negative levels of brand equity are clearly important in determining strategies for organizations, and future research could examine this impact on consequences of brand equity through the development of a value system. (p. 35)

All consumers, however, are not the same. Scholars have acknowledged that different types of consumers may develop different sorts of brand associations, and, in turn, these associations may influence attitudes and behaviors in disparate ways. Ross (2007) explores how cluster analysis may be used as a segmentation tool to order consumers into groups that are easier to understand and manage.

All sport fans are not the same. Quite to the contrary, fans often differ in demographic characteristics, values, lifestyles, and product usage. One additional characteristic in which fans differ is in their perceptions about a sport brand. Specifically, sport fans will frequently hold different representations of a brand. One way in which to better understand these differences to properly meet the needs and wants of the consumer is through segmentation identification. Once the larger market for a sport product or service is divided into more manageable groups of consumers, a full investigation into the perceptual differences can take place…. Given that sport consumers are often actively involved in creating the service product (cheering, interacting socially, etc.) (Lovelock, 1996), each consumer experience is quite varied. By examining brand associations through the use of such segmentation strategies as cluster analysis, managers can have greater control over the equity of their sport brand. The image of a product or service is thought of as being a critical component of brand equity, and managing this equity is critical to the long-term success of a brand in that it has the ability to enhance brand loyalty among customers. (p. 22)
The study of sport brand equity may therefore be described as the study of the relationship between consumer attitudes, perceptions, and behaviors to understand how consumer preferences are formed, thereby producing predictable, loyal, and governable consumers. Hence, a firm’s ability to achieve such outcomes among its constituents (i.e., influencing the thoughts and behaviors of consumers) is an indication of the strength of the brand.

Gladden and Funk (2002) describe the thoughts consumers have about a sport object as “brand associations.” Brand associations are the building blocks of brand equity, and thus understanding what associations consumers form is a crucial step for understanding how brand equity is achieved. However, the multifarious nature of the sport product confounds the study of sport brand associations. Boyle and Magnussen (2007) explore the relationship between brand equity and social identity, contemplating the role of identification on the selection of brand associations and ultimately the formation of brand equity.

Unlike consumers of other products, sports fans hold a vexing challenge for those who would market to them. If winning were to equate with quality, and, in turn fan (brand) loyalty, then marketing would be solely focused on placing a winning team on the field of play, assuming such a situation was tenable. Consumer decision making under this scenario would be viewed as the logical connection between team success and brand loyalty. Yet, it is likely that emotions have a strong influence on fan loyalty, influenced by more than a team’s won–loss record…. Therefore, what are those associations to which fans seek to identify beyond the action on the field? What differences are there, if any, across different fan groups in their development of social identity to a team? How does this identification translate, if at all, to brand equity? (p. 498)

The enduring attachment some sport consumers form with a sport product not only creates a competitive advantage for sport organizations, but presents real long-term value via consumer
loyalty. Indeed, “the attachment of fans and their pronounced loyalty propensity is the most important asset of a team-sport organization” (Bauer, Stokburger-Sauer, & Exler, 2008, p. 222). Moreover, through proper evaluation of brand equity, researchers argue that managers can more effectively retain and attraction customers.

The ability to properly assess the creation of equity for a team brand gives sport managers the capacity to more effectively reach and serve existing customers, as well as attract new patrons…. With the exception of market-induced antecedents, managers can manipulate portions of the brand equity framework (marketing mix and customer experience) in hopes of creating additional awareness and encouraging positive images for the brand. (Ross, 2006, p. 34)

Sport firms, however, are not immune from defections of consumers who fail to develop strong preferences for a sport product and do not otherwise view consumption in terms of a relationship with the producer. Sport brand management has sought to expand the boundaries of brands and, at the same time, ensure that consumers remain loyal.

Sport managers will employ brand management practices through two broad strategies: the acquisition of assets to enhance competitive position and the building of customer relationships to ensure long-term loyalty. … The second strategy addresses what is increasingly becoming a serious problem in major professional sport—the defection of the “average fan.” By focusing on building customer relationships, teams will seek to regain and retain brand equity in the minds of the individual fan. (Gladden, Irwin, & Sutton, 2001, p. 313).

The extent to which these tactics are compatible, however, is tenuous. Brand equity, it seems, may evoke contradictory management strategies. Finding value in enduring favorable consumer perceptions, scholars have sought to understand how such perceptions are formed and made
recommendations to practitioners about how to cultivate loyal consumers. The problem arises, however, when brand equity is viewed not as a stock of value, but rather a means to grow long-term value. In turn, efforts to manipulate the thoughts, attitudes, and beliefs of consumers to increase brand equity may pollute the substance from which brand equity is created in the first place. Brand equity may be a useful framework to conceptualize the attitudes, associations, and value consumers have about a sport object, but its operationalization as a management tool is still problematic. Making sport consumers out to be stocks and vehicles for long-term brand equity blurs the subject-object distinction by confusing the creation of positive memories with a platform to exploit firm value.

The Sport Consumer as “Buyer.” Studies targeting the intent to purchase a sport product were the most prolific in the sample of texts examined in this study. The reduction of consumer behavior to “buyer behavior” is common among marketing research that claims to be managerially relevant. In the applied field of sport management, researchers seek to identify antecedents of purchase behavior in an effort to predict future purchases. Studies of actual purchase behavior, however, are conspicuously absent from the research corpus. Instead, researchers explore past behavior (e.g., prior attendance or participation) and/or intention to consume in the future. The study of purchase intention facilitates the sort of predictive calculus needed to make practical recommendations. Behavioral intentions have been described “as a customer’s favorable intentions to (1) recommend the team to other customers, (2) attend the team’s future sporting events, and (3) remain loyal to the team” (Yoshida & James, 2010, p. 344).

What to make of consumer intentions, however, is unclear as the link between intention and actual behavior is ambiguous. As researchers have increasingly turned to psychosocial conceptualizations and adopted methodological techniques to probe consumer perceptions, behavioral intention is presented as a feasible alternative to actual behavior. Thus, scholars have
defended the use of behavioral intention as the most appropriate and proximate determinant of actual behavior. Matsuoka, Chelladurai, and Harada (2003) explain:

The present research was based on the assumption that an individual’s intention to perform a behavior is the immediate determinant of the actual behavior (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). That is, respondents’ intention to attend games was assumed to translate into actual attendance at games. However, the link between intention to attend and actual attendance seems tenuous…. Thus, it is critical that a strong association between intention to attend games and actual attendance be empirically established before making any strong recommendations to practitioners. (p. 251)

Unfortunately, most studies make no attempt to empirically validate the relationship between intention and actual behavior. Accordingly, studies that aim to provide empirical support for behavioral consequences of consumer perceptions are hamstrunged by this equivocal dependent variable. Though some authors argue that their empirical contributions are sound, substituting behavioral intention for actual behavior is untenable. For example, Alexandris, Dimitriadis, and Kasiara (2001) empirically investigate the behavioral consequences of service quality perceptions, although they rely upon behavioral intentions to assess consumer retention and future purchases.

Considering the theoretical and practical value of research on the behavioural consequences of perceived service quality, and the limited published research in sport settings, the present study aims to empirically investigate the behavioural consequences of perceived service quality. (p. 284-285)

Therefore, conclusions about actual behavioral consequences must assume that intentions are markers for actual behavior.
Researchers in the sample of texts generally sought to codify the link between antecedents and behavioral intentions. The list below is an accounting of those texts that attempt to make known the factors that influence the purchase of sport products (via-à-vis intentions):

- Awareness/attitude toward the sponsor; perceived goodwill (Alexandris, Tasousi, & James, 2007; Dees, Bennett, & Villegas, 2008; Irwin, Lachowetz, Cornwell, & Clark, 2003; Miloch & Lambrecht, 2006)
- Perceptions of CRM/CSR and team identification (Roy & Graeff, 2003; Walker & Kent, 2009)
- Perceptions of event/sponsor fit (Gwinner & Bennett, 2008; Koo, Quarterman, & Flynn, 2006)
- Psychological commitment (and perceived threats, Mahony & Moorman, 1999; Casper, Gray, & Stellino, 2007)
- Team loyalty and service quality (Hill & Green, 2000)
- Perceptions of value, service quality, and satisfaction (Murray & Howat, 2002)
- Positive attitude and significant others (Cunningham & Kwon, 2003)
- Motives (Trail, Fink, & Anderson, 2003)
- Image transfer and brand evaluations (Xing & Chalip, 2006)
- Perceptions of value and team identification (Kwon, Trail, & James, 2007)
• Levels of involvement (Beaton, Funk, Ridinger, & Jordan, 2011)

The justification scholars give for studying purchase intention are primarily tied to a conceptualization of the consumer as “buyer” and therefore primary contributor to firm revenue. In this way, marketing scholars aim to identify the antecedents to a consumer’s purchase decision in order to understand, model, predict purchase behavior. Indeed, researchers who study this facet of consumer behavior have been quite clear on why purchase intention is important, as the following sample of excerpts demonstrate:

• Marketing managers have, therefore, focused on creating a positive attitude toward their product or service in an attempt to increase the number of purchases by consumers (a positive behaviour). (Mahony & Moorman, 1999, p. 43)

• Understanding why people choose to attend games and events is an important part of the sport marketer’s job. (Cunningham & Kwon, 2003, p. 139)

• When studying consumer behaviors in a large-scale sporting event, it is important to analyze purchase intentions, because a primary goal of sports marketers is to create customer satisfaction, develop loyal fan bases, and generate repeat purchases. (Dees, Bennett, & Villegas, 2008, p. 83)

Purchase intention is regarded as a positive behavioral outcome with broad practical application in sport settings in terms of ticket purchases, game attendance, sport/event participation, the purchase or renewal of club memberships, and purchasing other sport-related products. Lee, Kim, Ko, and Sagas (2011) examine the link between service quality and repurchase intention, incorporating one’s previous experience with a sport product with the intention to purchase it in the future.

Although a substantial amount of research regarding the concept of repurchase intention can be found in the marketing literature, little attention has been paid to the concept of repurchase intention in the sport industry. Since repeat purchasing is essential to a continued
stream of profitability, it is necessary to identify what sociodemographic variables, including
gender effects on service quality, customer satisfaction, and repurchase intention. (p. 56)

When studying intention, scholars are not measuring actual behavior, but rather the
intention to engage in the behavior in the future. In other words, when researchers ask respondents
about their intentions, they are manufacturing consumer choice to include the decision criteria,
context, exigencies, and urgency of the decision. There is nothing that prevents the consumer from
changing his or her mind in the future. Furthermore, if intentions are used to reveal preferences,
these too may be viewed as an artifice, manufactured during the study for the study. Thus, the extent
to which intention predicts actual behavior is unclear. Moreover, Mahony and Moorman (1999)
acknowledge that it is unreasonable to assume that all respondents will follow through on their
stated intentions:

It should be emphasised that actual behaviour was not measured, and the current study
measured only intentions to behave. Although Holman (1956) found that the relationship
between intention to attend sport events and actual attendance was very high for sport fans
\((r=.80)\), it would be unreasonable to assume that all respondents would follow through on
their intentions. (p. 62)

Scholars use behavioral intention as a dependent variable for several reasons. First, it is difficult to
study actual consumption behavior and trace a path to its antecedents. Intention forces the purchase
decision upon the consumer in an attempt to link the decision to isolated antecedents selected for
their face and theoretical validity. Further, while it is possible that the respondent may actually
intend to engage in the purchase behavior, it is also possible that simply asking the question “do you
intend...” forces intention (and its proposed antecedents) into existence under artificial or contrived
conditions. Thus, behavioral intention must be regarded in light of the underlying assumptions of
selecting it as a dependent variable.
Scholars have proposed a range of variables to consider in the study of purchase intention. From surveys to sampling, scholars have sought to strengthen the study of behavioral intention by making the research design appear more rigorous and theoretically sound. The following examples outline efforts by researchers to justify the study of buyer behavior:

- The survey approach recommended here to assess facility quality is useful for diagnosing problem areas from the consumer's perspective… An alternate method of facility assessment might include comparisons of dimensions with other facilities that spectators appear to prefer. (Wakefield, Blodgett, & Sloan, 1996, p. 29)

- Since longitudinal research has not been done, little is known about the origins of psychological commitment. (Mahony & Moorman, 1999, p. 59)

- A closer look at the sportscape variables suggests the importance of idiographic factors in determining which elements of the sportscape have an impact on future attendance intentions. (Hill & Green, 2000, p. 158)

- The ability of service quality scales to predict customers' behavioural intentions can be used as a criterion of construct validity. Using more powerful statistical techniques, such as confirmatory factor analysis (to test the factor structure) and structural equation modelling (to test theoretical models) could also help towards this direction. (Alexandris, Dimitriadis, & Kasiara, 2001, p. 295)

- One shortcoming of many studies related to this topic is the lack of a theoretical framework to guide the research questions or hypotheses (Cunningham & Kwon, 2003, p. 128)

- Future research should include a sample of sport consumers from the general population to assess the mediating role of perceived value. A general sample would also allow for further assessment of the extent to which sport consumers are price sensitive. (Kwon, Trail, & James, 2007, p. 552)
The preceding excerpts show that research on purchase intention may wrestle with the epistemological limitations of consumer perspectives, the origins of psychographic antecedents, ancillary aspects of the sport product, appropriate statistical techniques, proper application of theory, and how to derive a truly representative sample; yet, the objective pursued is still a tenuous prediction of an isolated behavioral variable. Even when scholars acknowledge the inherent limitation of behavioral intentions, they often cave and reason how intention research contributes both to theory and practice. In this way, the mind of the consumer is contested terrain which the marketer seeks to claim for him or herself.

The implications that researchers offer loosely fall into two categories. In the first, scholars aim to better understand the consumer and what causes them to engage in particular behavior. This research generally seeks to advance the knowledge base and/or direct future research. In the second category, scholars make explicit recommendations to managers. While such practical implications are common in the field, it is somewhat surprising that scholars present their findings as solid despite acknowledgment of the underlying limitations of the dependent variable. The following excerpt from Yoshida and James (2010) is particularly illustrative:

At a minimum, the current study offers new ideas to advance our knowledge of customer satisfaction and the antecedents of game and service satisfaction. The proposed model also serves to advance the study of sport marketing by examining the impact of numerous constructs on sport consumer behavior. This is particularly important in relation to the complexity of the decision-making process. The ideas merit further research and are promising with respect to formulating an explanation of what factors contribute most to sport consumer behaviors. The proposed model and recommendations for future research provide numerous opportunities to continue advancing our knowledge of sport consumers.

(Yoshida & James, 2010, p. 356-357)
The authors describe how the research “advances” knowledge of customer satisfaction and how satisfaction impacts consumer behavior. In other words, advances are made by understanding what causes consumers to behave as they do. Consider the following excerpts from other texts in light of this proposition:

- It is clear that attitudes toward teams play a significant role in fan behaviour. Further examination of that relationship promises to advance our understandings of sport fans. In so doing, it can enhance the formulation of marketing strategies for sport teams. (Mahony & Moorman, 1999, p. 63)

- It also provides a sound theoretical foundation for research and produces a viable vehicle for researchers to examine loyalty behavior of sport spectating… Furthermore, it provides a framework for marketers and managers to better understand their fans and spectators. (Trail, Anderson, & Fink, 2005, p. 110)

- The results of this study provide both theoretical and practical contributions to the literature on the relationships among service quality, satisfaction and behavioral intentions. It also adds to the extant literature on action sports. (Tsuji, Bennett, & Zhang, 2007, p. 207)

This genre of research seeks to add to the literature by codifying relationships between independent and dependent variables. However, as has been discussed, intention is a troubling dependent variable. The prolific use of intention as a dependent variable demonstrates the desire of researchers to make practical recommendations to sport managers focused on sales, and what kind of knowledge is valued by sport consumer researchers. Behavioral intention may not be a “good” variable, but it may be a “necessary” variable because it is easily translated to practice.

Other findings are presented as preliminary evidence to establish a baseline for future research, such as the exploration of novel contexts and the refinement instruments and research techniques. The succeeding excerpts describe this popular approach:
• Future research that uses this instrument across a variety of different sportscape settings will likely result in further refinements of the scales and add to the validity of the salient factors. (Wakefield, Blodgett, & Sloan, 1996, p. 29-30)

• The study showed that the theory of planned behaviour is a useful framework for studying fan behaviour, as it explained over 65% of variance in intent. The use of a theoretical framework was quite useful in predicting spectator attendance intentions. Future researchers should (a) also seek to use established theories to understand fan behaviour or (b) develop theories specific to the sport domain. (Cunningham & Kwon, 2003, p. 142)

• The current study provided evidence that attitude toward the sport event, sport activity involvement, and beliefs about sponsorship have value in predicting sponsorship outcomes… The results should be validated by studies conducted in different settings and sports. (Alexandris, Tasousi, & James, 2007, p. 138)

• It might be that the perceived quality of merchandise based on the brand image of the merchandiser has a stronger effect on purchase intentions than perceived value alone. Future research should examine the role of perceived quality (based on brand image) and perceived value. (Kwon, Trail, & James, 2007, p. 552)

• Additional analyses should look more closely at demographic differences on the perception of service quality and its influence on satisfaction and future behavioral intentions among action sports consumers. (Tsuji, Bennett, & Zhang, 2007, p. 207)

Future research is therefore linked to the present (and past) through efforts to verify models and conceptual frameworks proposed by others, existing research technologies and instruments, and more generally the “calls” made by prior researchers to conduct research in a given area. In this way, the researcher is kind of prospector, staking claims in the production of present and future knowledge. The legacy of an author lives on through citations and recycling of conceptual
frameworks attributed to their pioneering efforts—which in sport consumer research are often attributable to a small selection of theoretical bases and previous research in the field.

Scholars studying behavioral intention often link the impact of their research to managerial practice. Here, the value of the research is its ability to inform managerial decision making, guide strategic marketing communications, and ultimately influence the actual purchase of consumer products. In sum, a better understanding of intention is thought to produce more accurate predictions. Murray and Howat write: “A clearer understanding of how to produce satisfied customers in a sports or leisure context will help managers to better predict the return or repatronage of customers” (p. 26).

What scholars seek to understand about the consumer varies. Some researchers examine the impact of consumer lifestyles on purchase decisions. Miloch and Lambrecht (2006) explain: “Future research should examine the role of the consumer's lifestyle as it relates to sponsorship awareness as well as how the consumer's lifestyle influences purchase decisions, brand image of the sponsor, and brand loyalty to the sponsor” (p. 153). Others consider ways to influence fanatical loyalty. Some propose that bigger fans equate to greater purchases. Dees, Bennett, and Villegas (2008) write: “If these avid sport consumers can be convinced that their support of the sponsors makes them a "bigger" fan of the team, then greater purchasing behaviors may be possible” (p. 87). In general, however, the dominant research logic attempts to link a deeper understanding of the consumer with favorable organizational outcomes. Murry and Howat (2002) connect surveys of perceived consumer value, improvements in service quality, and financial performance to profitability.

These findings suggest that managers of sports and leisure centres should modify existing survey or feedback instruments to obtain more detailed information relating to what influences their customers’ perceptions of value…. Improving clarity in these areas will contribute further to an understanding of customer behaviour in sports and leisure centres,
with the ultimate aim of assisting managers to be better able to serve their customers and provide a quality experience. This in turn should result in managers improving their financial performance and, ultimately, their organisational profitability. (p. 39-40)

Marketers have a variety of tools to influence consumer behavior, some of which may be grouped under the umbrella of marketing communications. By leveraging research to elucidate the motivations, attitudes, and beliefs of the sport consumer, marketing managers can craft strategic (and targeted) communications that appeal to particular consumer values and stimulate increased consumption. However, formal communications are not always well-received by consumers who increasingly associate advertising and promotions with the interests of the corporate elite. Thus, scholars encourage marketers to develop contextually informed communication strategies. For example:

Sport marketers can be caught in a terrible catch-22 if they are not careful. Typically, marketing campaigns put a positive spin on every season in an attempt to sell tickets. Marketers must be careful not to build up expectations unrealistically high for a team that probably will not be successful. If this happens, the backlash from ticket purchasers can be severe because of the negative disconfirmation of expectancies. When a team is not expected to be successful on the field or court, it would behoove marketers to focus on aspects of the team that are not tied to winning. This may include other entertainment at the venue rather than the primary product (the game). If the focus is on the social aspects of being at the game and interacting with others, or escaping from the daily grind for a game and fireworks (etc.), then the expectations for wins may not be as great, reducing the level of negative disconfirmation. Thus the negative mood after a loss may not have as deleterious an effect on future purchases or attendance. Managers and marketers must understand their fans and spectators well. (Trail, Anderson, & Fink, 2005, p. 110)
Additionally, word-of-mouth and other forms of grass-roots communications are increasingly promoted as a viable alternative to formal marketing communications, because consumers have grown distrustful of producers:

Word-of-mouth communication may have a more powerful influence on consumer behavior than print sources because consumers find it more accessible, credible, and less biased… using information from w-o-m communications is an effective strategy for reducing any perceived risk associated with consuming a good or service for the first time (Murray, 1991). This is particularly applicable in the case of sport service organizations, in which consumers' perceived risk is usually high, due to the difficulties in making service quality evaluations.

(Alexandris, Tasousi, & James, 2007, p. 132)

Further, Walker and Kent (2009) suggest that sport organizations should find ways to disseminate information via personal communication forums that appear to be free of corporate messaging. The authors write: “Therefore, providing consumers with accurate information from fan groups or team-related chat rooms may be the most appropriate and trusted way for the information to be disseminated and may avoid such ‘diminishing returns’ for the organization” (p. 762). Because consumers have grown skeptical of corporate messaging, firms must find ways to launder their communications in ways that decouple them from the appearance of blatantly advancing their corporate interests.

Even when firms attempt to appear socially responsible or altruistic, consumer unfamiliarity with the practice and lingering skepticism can undermine the impact of social initiatives.

When evaluating an organization, many consumers may not be completely aware of the breadth of activities with which the organization may be involved (e.g., employee treatment, environmental initiatives, and/or human rights activities). The level of information regarding these operations is often forwarded by the firm, the media, or activists seeking to discredit
the organization (McWilliams et al., 2006) and therefore may be substantially biased….Again, while such reports may be useful, some consumers may perceive this information as biased, since it is filtered through senior management. (Walker & Kent, 2009, p. 761)

Gwinner and Bennett (2008) explain that sponsorship suffers from a similar affliction when consumers perceive a lack of fit as evidence of a crass monetary incentive.

Highly commercialized sports might result in feelings of exploitation when there is a lack of connection (fit) between the event and the sponsor. In these cases, consumers would be more likely to infer a crass monetary incentive (e.g., the brand’s goal is to sell more product) rather than a more noble altruistic incentive (e.g., the brand cares about the welfare of the sport) as the underlying motivation for the sponsorship arrangement. (p. 414-415)

Sport scholars have recognized the diminishing effectiveness of marketing communications as well as consumers’ concomitant suspicion of marketing practices (particularly advertising), and so have sought alternative ways to achieve organizational objectives. Perhaps though, it is not the marketing strategies to which consumers are growing increasingly intolerant, but rather the insatiable appetite of firms turning spectators’ watching power into capital and exploiting it to the maximum. Consumers may indeed rely upon sport products to satisfy underlying needs and desires, and producers are not “wrong” for capitalizing on consumer demand; however, the fecund expansion of marketing into increasingly private and personal areas of the consumer should be examined for ill-effects. That is, when should managers stop managing? When should marketing be restrained? What value does consumer research really provide to producers and consumers? Further, what kind of knowledge is produced when researchers are slaved to managerially sensibilities, ceaseless corporate production, and market-pursuant praxeology?

The theories used in marketing make assumptions to explain the relationship between variables—linking that which is known to that which is suspected. When taken for granted,
however, these assumptions can lead researchers astray. The impulse to provide practical recommendations to sport managers may be the Achilles heel of sport consumer research. In the pursuit of managerial relevance, researchers may sacrifice theory development, fail to accurately specify variables, become overly reliant upon convenient sampling, and exaggerate practical utility. In so doing, sport consumer research risks becoming Janus-faced—simultaneously celebrating sport consumers for their passion and packaging their ludicrosity for quick sale. By appearing to form stable and enduring relationships with “customers” but in reality creating identity dependent “consumers” (cf. Alexandris, Tasousi, & James, 2007, p. 138), sport consumer research has situated itself as a whale of a contradiction—behind a veil of benevolence and celebration, researchers craft actionable technologies to create and govern consumption.

Summary

In the preceding analysis I explored two main goals of sport consumer research: 1) to identify clear lines of segmentation to target marketing efforts and 2) to render the consumer knowable according to various marketing approaches. Regarding the latter, researchers have conceived of the consumer as “customer,” “fan,” a source of “brand equity,” and “buyer.” Consistently, researchers have rendered consumers in ways that reinforce them as subjects to their own needs and the marketing technologies that aim to understand and anticipate how they will behave. In pursuit of these aims, researchers have shifted inquiry from the exploration of the components of consumer demand (e.g., consumer needs, consumption motives, and perceptions of quality) to how to influence preferences by understanding a consumer’s disposition and manipulating his or her awareness, attitudes, and beliefs. Ultimately, much of the scholarship has sought to correlate preferences with buyer behavior. Thus, by understanding how preferences are formed, marketers can develop strategies that promote favorable attitudes leading to predictable and loyal consumer behaviors. In this way, customers create equity for a brand when they become
psychologically connected and cognitively loyal consumers of a product. Finally, equity is translated into value for the firm when consumers act upon their preferences during a purchase.

When a consumer chooses one alternative over another (i.e., when he or she exercises a preference), it is because he or she thinks one product is better than the other. Thus, consumer choice is based upon psychological beliefs and attitudes which influence behavior. Yet, according to the praxeological view, preferences are “facts of action” (Hulsmann, 1999)—the act of choice reveals one’s preferences (von Mises, 1949). Unlike neoclassical economics which allows for indifference among consumption alternatives (e.g., a consumer that does not care if they consume one product over another), Austrian praxeology views indifference as a logical impossibility—action invariably exposes a preference.68

While the difference between neoclassical and praxeological preferences may appear subtle, the distinction has large ramifications for the study of consumer behavior. First, if the neoclassical axioms are accepted, preferences indicate there are levels of consumption to which an individual is indifferent as well as his or her expected utility given certain budgetary constraints. Accordingly, statistical analysis can be used to determine at what quantity and price consumer utility (and conversely producer profit) is maximized.

On the other hand, the Austrian school views such market analysis as inherently “historical.” Because action takes place in time and actors base their decisions on current perceptions of reality

---

68 The key distinction between neoclassical and Austrian consumer theory is that the former assumes that people have preferences which in turn influence action. On the other hand, the Austrian school is based upon von Misesian praxeology, which was first coined by Louis Bourdeau in 1882 but has since been famously associated with von Mises’ (1949) *magnum opus*, *Human Action*. Praxeology rests on the belief that all action is rational and by definition, purposeful—the act of choice reveals preferences as facts of action (von Mises, 1949). Departing from the neoclassical view, von Misesian praxeology is the purposeful, deductive investigation of what *a priori* knowledge individuals use to make decisions. In other words, praxeology seeks to understand the process of valuation which people use to achieve desired ends. Therefore, the study of human action is both the study of causality (postulated causes of effects) and *teleology* (apparent purpose or goal). In this way, choices cannot diverge from preferences because the act of choice implies that preferences are *a priori* true.
which they are free to change, the study of preferences is fundamentally a study of the past. Accordingly, von Mises’ disdain for statistics as “a method of the historian, not the theoretician” (Kirkpatrick, 1982/2011, p. 50) is based upon the futility of attempting to make universal claims from time-bound, subjective decisions. Although marketing managers claim that such historical measures can be extrapolated to predict future events (a common trait among sport consumer researchers), the Austrian school treats them as “accidental and particular” historical facts that “merely verifies the obvious and belabors the trivial” and encourages “coercive and deceptive” persuasive communications to manipulate consumer choice (Kirkpatrick, 1982/2011, p. 50). Thus, the Austrian school advances a form of methodological apriorism which rejects the possibility of testing theory via statistical or experimental methods because real markets are complex and dynamic, and praxeological theory is based upon consequences deduced from a priori true premises (Caldwell, 1984).

The praxeology of marketing, so to speak, presumes that people use particular means to achieve desired ends which are in turn reflective of their preferences. However, the degree to which preferences are enduring and impact future behavior is debatable. Preferences alone rarely determine behavioral consequences—context and other subjective determinants of value weigh heavily upon human action. With such knowledge, marketers can use various mechanisms (e.g., promotions, advertising, aesthetics, and narratives) to influence one’s awareness in hopes of influencing how he or she make consumption decisions. When marketing researchers empiricize the study of preferences (or attitudes, beliefs, motives, etc.), however, they may force respondents to express and rank-order preferences they may not actually believe. Thus, the extent to which preferences can

69 Empirical testing of praxeological theories, von Mises (1949) argued, conflicts with the very notion of apriorism. If the consequences of action are based upon a priori true principles, they cannot be refuted unless there is a flaw in the verbal chain of logic. Further, praxeological theories cannot be falsified because the social world lacks constants—although there may be regularities, it is impossible to control for all the variations of society (Caldwell, 1984).
be assessed and used to predict future behavior is tenuous; awareness and associations, on the other hand, being not so deeply rooted are targets for marketing narratives designed to influence subjective assessments of value.

Linking the praxeology of marketing to the determination of value, markets act as contextual frames bounding exchanges between producers and consumers. Therefore, market prices permit economic calculation to assess whether the terms of exchange will improve the well-being of parties involved. In other words, when a consumer and producer agree to a price in a free market, the praxeological perspective regards the exchange as evidence of an enhancement in the human condition. Thus, the praxeological assumptions inherent in contemporary marketing help explain marketing management’s focus on buying (and the associated antecedents, preferences, prices, intentions) as an uncontroversial optimization of consumer and producer well-being.

Therefore, on one hand sport consumer research appears to stem from a prevailing praxeological perspective which treats market-pursuant rational action as the gold-standard for distributing value and preferences as a priori true remnants of consumer choice. Knowledge of such preferences, based upon action, gives marketers an upper-hand for developing marketing strategies to influence consumer awareness and attitude, and thus driving future purchases. On the other hand, logical positivism clearly dominates the methodological practices of sport consumer researchers which subscribes to the assumptions of neoclassical economics rather than praxeology. Consequently, the sort of research conducted by sport consumer scholars can be described as a historical analysis of consumer preferences to reiterate past and anticipate future decisions to purchase sport-related products. However, while attempting to link actions to psychographic variables, and in absence of observable behavior, scholars have resorted to behavioral intention as a substitute for actual behavior. The paradox of designing research in this manner presents as true one’s preferences in relation to an artificial intended purchase decision. Thus, praxeological
sensibilities prevail, while neoclassical methodologies linger, rendering historical truths in relation to hypothetical behavior with manufactured context and exigencies.
CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION

Making the Sport Consumer

In this dissertation, I examined how sport-based inter-/trans-actions have increasingly been conceived in sport management research as “consumption” and those who engage with sport thus as “consumers.” Ultimately, this project was a study of how a “sport consumer knowledge culture” has come to be so prolific within the field. To be clear, I do not contend that my findings are representative of an overarching “sport management knowledge culture,” nor do I believe the field can be described in such monolithic terms. I sampled the most prominent texts (as determined by citation counts) published in four of the field's most prominent journals to get a sense of how this particular way of thinking about sport constituents has come about. Although this study was not comprehensive (that is, I did not sample all texts on the sport consumer), I followed a systematic approach to explore a selected corpus of texts for how researchers render sport consumers knowable and what such research implies for the field of sport management at large.

Many of the sampled articles can be classified as sport marketing and/or sport consumer research, but this study was not about sport marketing per se—this study is about the consumer in sport management research which, coincidentally, has most often, but not exclusively, been taken up by sport marketing and sport consumer researchers and represents nearly half of the most highly cited articles in the selected journals. Because the articles are from prominent sport management journals and because they are the most highly cited, they have mattered a great deal. These articles have and continue to influence the thinking of other authors, students, and practitioners in, made clear through Foucault's epistemological perspective that power and knowledge are inseparable. Thus, though partial, the analysis of texts conducted in this study provides a critical narrative of a
dominant trend within the field of sport management, advancing a market-pursuant science of the sport consumer.

I embarked on this study at a time when the academic discipline seems to have wholly embraced the sport industry. While the orthodoxy is not absolute, research on the sport consumer has contracted upon a version of sport that is overwhelmingly competitive, commercialized, professional, highly-spectacular, and mass-consumed. Despite the isomorphic acceptance among sport consumer researchers of a marketing praxeology that views calculated market-based exchanges as the optimal allocation of value and pathway to equitable progress, the field has rich practical, pedagogical, and theoretical roots in education, health, and recreation from which the present consumer-model stands as a radical departure. To understand how this apparent contradiction has come about, I conducted a genealogical analysis of a selected corpus of sport management research texts to assay the present state of the field, not as a monolithic edifice of scholarly inquiry, but as a mosaic of intertwined discursive efforts that co-constitute and reproduce the field.

In this dissertation, I examined how ideas, when spoken or written by experts, take on characteristics of truth and structurate not only how things are known, but also the way in which they are known to be true or false. Drawing upon the vast works of Michel Foucault who examined how changes in 18th Century administrative systems and social services such as schools, prisons, and mental hospitals exposed a new kind of modern power, I explored how texts on the sport consumer simultaneously transform sport constituents into knowing subjects and objects of their own knowledge.

Departing from the pre-modern structuralist conceptualization of power in terms of sovereignty, coercive discipline, and juridical proceedings, Foucault offered a historical method to account for the constitution of knowledges, discourse, and domains of knowing without having to make reference to a transcendental subject spanning the course of history (Foucault, 1980b).
perspective, though acknowledging the repressive and ideological state apparatuses of Marxism (i.e., capitalist production and class domination), contends that the mechanics of modern power cannot be fully analyzed without accounting for its productive qualities. Foucault explained:

In defining the effects of power as repression, one adopts a purely juridical conception of power, one identifies power with a law which says no, power is taken above all as carrying the force of a prohibition. Now I believe that this is a wholly negative, narrow, skeletal conception of power, one which has been curiously widespread. If power were never anything but repressive, if it never did anything but to say no, do you really think one would be brought to obey it? What makes power hold good, what makes it accepted, is simply the fact that it doesn’t only weigh on us as a force that says no, but that it traverses and produces things, it induces pleasure, forms knowledge, produces discourse. It needs to be considered as a productive network which runs through the whole social body, much more than as a negative instance whose function is repression. (p. 119)

As a result, Foucault (1980b) proposed that the political economy of modern power is characterized by five important traits of truth: 1) truth is based upon the scientific discourse and institutions that create it; 2) truth is subject to economic and political incitement; 3) truth is consumed and dispersed through apparatuses of education and information; 4) truth is produced and transmitted by dominant political and economic apparatuses such as university systems, scholarly writings, and the media; and 5) truth is subject to political debate and ideological struggles contested by society (p. 131-132). In this way, Foucault proposed that genealogy is not a method for delineating what is true or false at any given time, but of decoupling the power of truth from forms of hegemony (social, economic and cultural) within which it operates in the present.

By viewing modern power as rooted within scientific discourses, the things scholars say and write matter a great deal when they speak and write as experts. However, when scholars produce
discourse, they seldom (if ever) do so in solitude. As Foucault (1977b) argued, intellectuals speak and act only as a multiplicity. That is, political involvement by intellectuals is the product of two components: 1) the status of the intellectual afforded by society (e.g., recognition as a professional or expert) and 2) the status of the intellectual’s discourse to reveal truth statements and disclose political relationships that were otherwise unexpected. In other words, the intellectual speaks truth to those who have yet to see it or in the name of those who are forbidden to speak it (ibid).

Correspondingly, the genealogist does not seek to understand the intent behind the production of a given text, but rather to examine the text as it is found—as a partial representation of the knowledge of a field, espoused by professionals or experts, fully capable of producing the phenomena contained therein.

Adapting Foucault’s method to the study of how sport management scholarship has coalesced around the consumer model of sport behavior, I examined how knowledge has been produced, expressed, and disseminated throughout the academy. As scientific discourses feed regimes of truth, they are inculpated in the operation of power in and beyond the field, empowering and constraining thought, knowledge, and action. Therefore, I conducted a genealogical analysis of a sample of research texts published in four sport management journals—Journal of Sport Management (JSM), Sport Management Review (SMR), European Sport Management Quarterly (ESMQ), and Sport Marketing Quarterly (SMQ)—to examine how scholarly discourse on the sport consumer has inscribed the field. I explored how sport consumer researchers, as expressed in scholarly writings, have conceived of sport-based engagements as the meaningful consummation of autonomous consumer choice, while also defining what consumer outcomes are possible and acceptable. Academic publications were selected because they are the most enduring representation of scholarly endeavor, with these peer-reviewed journal articles standing as the most visible and prestigious expression of the field’s knowledge base.
In this manner, I examined how sport consumer research employed systems of governance—research tactics of observation, surveillance, and assessment—to create and reproduce managerial strategies that sought to create through inquiry disciplined and predictable consumer subjects. Accordingly, I treated the production of knowledge as a partial representation of the field’s sport consumer knowledge culture, shaped by the politics and values of a nascent managerial science.

From this perspective, acknowledging the interdependency of truth, knowledge, power, and governance, questions about the state of research on the sport consumer were posed to understand how certain strataums of knowing and acting have become dominant, defining the conduct of inquiry in the field. This view perceives the present in terms of truths, objects, and actions—products of historical translations of discourse and knowledge that constitute the order of things and render individuals and society in knowable and governable ways.

The epistemological premise for the current research project hinged on two genealogical concerns: 1) how particular versions of the sport consumer and sport consumption are made to appear true and solid; and 2) how, in sport management research discourse, certain ways of thinking about the sport consumer have become dominant over others. In pursuit of these aims, an alternate narrative of sport consumer research is proposed, recounting historical conditions that substantiate claims the field is advancing towards “tautological inefficaciousness” (Newman, 2014). This area of inquiry, inscribed by positivist pragmatics and praxeoligcal deductivism, has adopted a research orthodoxy that purports to know consumers in order to influence their behavior, preferences, and, ultimately, their disposition. This orthodoxy favors nomothetic (quantitative) methodologies and
prescribes “best-practices” which stovepipe conceptual maturation and restricts intellectual creativity.

Therefore, instead of enlightenment we may be advancing upon ineffaciousness—adopting a knowledge culture that seeks to confirm the banal and exaggerate the trivial aspects of our subjugating and subjugated practice. Throughout this project, I attempted to cut through epistemological sedimentation to demonstrate how this particular sport consumer knowledge culture has come to be, rendering sport engagements and identities in ways that bolster market-pursuant approaches to how “sport” and “management” should be theorized and practiced.

In developing the discursive method used in this study, though moored to Foucault’s basic theoretical tenets, I incorporated insights from other genealogical theorists to refine my analytical approach. This project is centered on the belief that discourse actually constructs the objects that make up our reality, simultaneously enabling and constraining the possibility for understanding the world, ourselves, and others. Put a bit differently, discourse makes possible and limits what can be said, by whom, where, and when. According to this view, people construct their own subjectivity (and identity) by adopting subject positions that make sense according to discourses that construct and obscure their ability to make sense of their existence. Hall (1992) attributed the power of discourse to its ability to articulate knowledge about a topic—concurrently giving a topic meaning and limiting the possibility for other interpretations.

The discourses that tend to become dominant are those that privilege versions of reality that validate entrenched power relations and social structures. That is, discourses germinate from and

70 On the tautology of the practices of enlightenment, Horkheimer and Adorno (1947/2002) write:
Instead of such negation, mathematical formalism, whose medium, number, is the most abstract form of the immediate, arrests thought at mere immediacy. The actual is validated, knowledge confines itself to repeating it, thought makes itself mere tautology. The more completely the machinery of thought subjugates existence, the more blindly it is satisfied with reproducing it. (p. 20)
become increasingly intertwined with institutional practices that organize, govern, and administer social life. As a genealogical researcher, in this project I aimed to identify, analyze, and interpret dominant ways of studying sport consumers and how such research has become so prolific. In this analysis, I resisted assumptions about which discourses were “good” or “bad,” and attempted to be patient in passing judgment to shepherd a more nuanced understanding for how discourses have been used to structure the field.

From Foucault’s theoretical basis, I adapted the genealogical technique based upon the work of Dean (2010) to target my investigation in four key areas: ontology (what is acted upon—the substance of governance), aesthetics (how the substance is governed—the work of governance), deontology (who we become when we are governed in such a manner—the mode of subjectification), and teleology (why we govern or are governed—the goal of governmental practices). In so doing, I posed three specific research questions to guide my discursive analysis. First, the question “what is the sport consumer” was countered by probing the texts for the needs, substances, and behaviors of sport consumption to survey definitional acceptance among the field. Second, the question “what makes the sport consumer unique and worthy of study” was examined by investigating how scholars have posed and solved problems, and exploring the ontological and epistemological assumptions contained therein. Third, “how has the research discourse legitimized certain ways of knowing and managing sport consumers” asks what social categories and research/management strategies have been made actionable by the discourse. After the initial selection of research texts, these questions directed subsequent readings of the discourse, first refining the sample and then guiding thematic analysis (ordering), interpretation (writing), and assemblage (rewriting) of the genealogical narrative.

In this final section, I revisit the preliminary findings and suppositions made in the preceding stages of analyses and expand upon various themes as they relate to the field as a whole. I begin by
discussing the relationship between theory and practice to understand how research discourses exert control over renderings of the sport consumer and how calculable management strategies are made actionable. I then discuss the issue of research orthodoxy and what my efforts to definitively locate the sport consumer imply for the study of sport consumption. I conclude by proposing several new avenues for sport consumer research that could steer the field towards a more experiential and authentic understanding of sport consumption.

Business is “Bad” for Sport Consumer Research

Frankfurt School critical theorists (cf. Adorno, 1975; Horkheimer & Adorno, 1947/2002; Marcuse, 1991; Packard, 1957) have popularized the view that consumers are helpless, subjugated to the whims of “want-makers” and seduced by the pleasures of consumption. This overtly critical position is based upon the supposition that marketing is a powerful economic, social, and cultural institution designed to control consumers (Denegri-Knott, Zwick, & Schroeder, 2006). Conversely, others have focused on the functional notion that consumers are powerful given their ability to exercise free choice (Gabriel & Lang, 1995)—accordingly, the “free” consumer exonerates marketing from charges of seduction, coercion, and manipulation (Ritzer, 1999). Such a view of consumer sovereignty has a long tradition in classical and neoclassical economic theory couched in the belief that a dispassionate market championed by self-determined consumers advances the “invisible hand” of capitalism, thus improving the general welfare of society. This optimistic, yet overly reductive conceptualization has been criticized for its negative influence on the social and political imagination of consumers, accusing the market of stifling communicative transparency and semiotic diversity by superimposing and extending commodity capitalism to all domains of society (see Murray, Ozanne, & Shapiro, 1994; Ozanne & Murray, 1995). In a departure from such deterministic renderings, postmodern consumer researchers have criticized both the structuralist and neoclassical position, theorizing consumption instead as a site of resistance and emancipation (see
Thirty years ago, Morris Holbrook (1985) explained how business has been bad for consumer research. In so doing, he did not infer that business has negatively impacted the opportunities for consumer researchers or that good consumer research does not have anything to do with business. Rather, Holbrook contends that business is bad for research because it encourages a narrow-minded and anti-intellectual view of consumption, which “smashes, crushes, and pulverizes” (p. 145) the possibility for truly enlightening inquiry about the customer. A practical, managerially relevant science of consumption places too heavily, Holbrook argues, an emphasis on buying. As a result, consumer researchers direct their efforts to the study of purchase decisions at the expense of consumption experiences. Accordingly, research conducted from a managerial perspective is based on a distorted view of the nature of business that confuses “management” with “business” (ibid).

From a systems perspective, businesses are organizations comprised of interrelated parts including regular interactions between managers and customers. Thus, in seeking to understand business, researchers must equally study the behavior of both managers and customers. Yet, much marketing and consumer research is preoccupied with the imperatives of management (i.e., what can be managed and how to manage it effectively). Very rarely do sport consumer researchers actually focus solely on the customer. Furthermore, when researchers do target the customer experience, they often translate “consuming” into “buying” reflecting marketing’s praxeological obsession with market-based exchanges. In sum, it can be said that sport consumer researchers are not studying the sport consumer at all—they study managers at the expense of consumers. Accordingly, how can scholars claim to produce knowledge about the sport consumer when the very topic of study has not only been undefined, but has actually been incorrectly defined? As Holbrook describes, “we are...
licked before we start. We wear a set of blinders that excludes important consumption phenomena from our field of vision” (p. 145.5).

By blindly adopting a business perspective, researchers seek to provide “concrete answers to questions that arise about industry and for industry” (Newman, 2014, p. 607-608). As we have seen in the rhetorical effort used to justify research, this tautological exercise has resulted in the creation of crises where none actually exist and drawing attention to problems that lack reasonable solutions. The effect of such tactics is the creation of a uniform knowledge base that seeks inspiration from sport business and dares only to reference those works that do not seriously challenge underlying assumptions. In the pursuit of managerial relevance, consumer researchers don a parasitic bias that forces them to take shortcuts in theory development, use instruments and select variables that are poorly specified, adopt sampling methods dictated by convenience as opposed to representativeness, and are incentivized to over-exaggerate the practical utility of their findings. Veblen (1918) wrote nearly a century ago, warning that research slaved to “practical or utilitarian consequences” precludes the “free play” necessary for academic inquiry to be truly interesting (p.39). The result of dogged attempts to make research practical, Veblen argues, is a “coercive bias” (p. 87) impeding the free and unencumbered pursuit of scientific work.

Holbrook’s call to unshackle consumer research from business was met with a concomitant expansion in mainstream marketing of conceptualizations about consumption phenomena. Although there are streams of mainstream marketing management that align with the present state of sport consumer research, there have also been many creative derivatives that have balanced this perceived entrenchment. For instance, Cova and Cova (2009) in their own genealogy of “the faces of the new consumer” explore how the consumer has been presented and popularized over 20-years of research, to what extent the new faces developed in different or complementary ways, and how propagation of such research resembles a form of governmentality. Cova and Cova map the
evolution of the consumer from 1990 to 2010 and identify three distinct periods representative of different approaches to marketing and concomitant conceptualizations of the consumer.

Cova and Cova (2009) contend that the 1990s was an era of relationship marketing (e.g., McKenna, 1991a/b) highlighting the face of the individualistic consumer. Marketing during this period acknowledged the volatility and inconsistency of consumer behavior and created procedures to track consumers individually and quickly react to their desires. The late-1990s and early-2000s were marked by an increase in experiential marketing (e.g., Cova & Cova, 2001; Schmitt, 1999) affirming a new characterization of the consumer as hedonistic. In the experiential approach, management of the consumption experience is the primarily means of marketing the brand because the consumer is not only rational, but emotional. “In other words, experiential approaches account for the fact that what consumers seek through (and in) their consumption is pleasure” (Cova & Cova, 2009, p. 86). Finally, the mid to late-2000s signaled a rise in collaborative marketing practices (e.g., Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004; Vargo & Lusch, 2004) and the emergence of the creative consumer. Here, the consumer is viewed as a key collaborator and co-producer of the product. The resultant marketing approach became known as Service Dominant Logic (Lusch & Vargo, 2006; Vargo & Lusch, 2004) which shifted the focus of marketing from “marketing to” to “marketing with” consumers. The collaborative view treats consumers as fully-integrated subjects, but subjects with resources and the means to implement them. Thus, the objective of collaborative marketing is to combine the resources of the firm with the resources of the consumer to co-create and co-extract value from a consumption experience (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004).

While consumer research in mainstream marketing has evolved, incorporating various conceptualizations of consumer agency and adopting disparate approaches to knowing and marketing to and with consumers, sport consumer research appears to have stalled. Although many scholars beyond (and some within) our field have encouraged consumer research that is experiential
and transformative, sport consumer research seems to be headed in the opposite direction—becoming more orthodox, underscored by a managerially relevant, market-pursuant logic. In this way, research on the sport consumer paradoxically enables and fails the consumer. Inquiry advances consumer autonomy by empowering and elevating the primacy of consumer choice, though choice (and how consumers develop preferences) is increasingly subjugated to managerial observation, calculation, and manipulation.

**Research Orthodoxy**

The intellectual debate about the merits of sport is alive and well. Many agree that sport can be beneficial when it is played, but when sport is engaged in other ways (e.g., spectating, consuming, identifying, etc.), the individual and societal benefit is a bit more opaque, drawing proponents from all sides. Amidst this tension, research published in the leading sport management journals has been characterized as largely uncritical, overly represented by deductive-nomothetic logic, and slaved to industry necessitating managerially relevant forms of inquiry (see Frisby, 2005; Newman, 2014; Zeigler, 2007). At the same time, idiographic research from alternate onto-epistemic paradigms is marginalized—all but absent in the field’s most prominent journals.

Scholars have suggested that sport management research is trending towards orthodoxy, with little theoretical variation, lack of interdisciplinary collaboration, and often conducted within common (predominantly professional) contexts (Newman, 2014). Within the field’s most prominent journals, research has gravitated towards familiar marketing and consumer behavior topics with a demonstrable proclivity for reductionist research designs and rising instances of self-referential citation. Newman proposed that such insular research strategies compel sport management scholars to engage in entrepreneurial tactics to succeed in a competitive, self-referential, market-compliant science.
Moreover, technocratic externalities have been invited to participate in research activities which aim to reduce economic complexities, predict market patterns, and manipulate consumer preferences. Thus, the observed orthodoxy may be credited to such encroachment by industry (admittedly, upon invitation by scholars), dictating what and how things are studied (see Denzin, Lincoln, & Giardina, 2006; Giardina & Newman, 2011a, 2011b; Koro-Ljungberg & Barko, 2012). The result has been a heavy-dose of nomothetic positivism which fetishizes the creation of knowledge, sacrificing authentic scholarship for epistemological uniformity. There are obvious benefits to adopting research nomotheticism where practitioners demand definitive answers to complex economic, social, and cultural phenomena. However, what is lost in reductive research that seeks unassailable truths may be the essence of phenomena that are inherently mobile, plural, or contingent. In this way, a focus on market-based “truths” may leave behind other verities that are inadvertently or intentionally overlooked.

My analysis supports the suspicion that sport consumer research is increasingly “stove-piped,” if not orthodox. I founded that research on the sport consumer is overwhelmingly descriptive as opposed to predictive or causal as many researchers claim. While many authors attempt to model behavior to infer causality, cross-sectional research design and psychometric instruments preferred by scholars restrict findings to mere descriptions of attitudes, perceptions, and opinions held by a sample of the population. Although in many cases authors sought to prove causality, the limits of statistical techniques merely describe (historical) correlations, significant differences between groups, and goodness-of-fit.

In support of Newman’s (2014) proposition, the results of my analysis indicate that sport consumer research exhibits substantial theoretical homogeneity and a high-incidence of self-citation. A degree of theoretical overlap and disciplinary siloing is expected in any field, but for a nascent field such as sport management, the frequency of both traits seems rather high. Further descriptive
analysis elucidated the features of sport most valued by the field, with spectators of U.S. male elite sport emerging as the most common research subject and purchase intention topping the list of popular dependent variables. Such an observation gives a sense of the kinds of sport engagements most popularly consumed and the sort of sport products that are most interesting to sport consumer researchers.

**Omission by Design**

Although sport consumer research represents nearly half of the most highly-cited texts in the field’s most prestigious journals, the sport consumer stands as a rather equivocal subject. Scholars identify sport consumers by their behavior—more often than not the consumer is one who buys (or intends to buy) a sport product. Indeed, in most texts, scholars avoid defining or explaining what a consumer *is*, what a consumer *does*, or what a consumer *consumes*. The quasi-intangibility of the sport product, simultaneity of production and consumption, and variability of the substance of consumption adds to the difficulty of arriving at a solid definition; however, scholars seem all too eager to rely upon the prototypical assumptions that a consumer simply *is*. Accordingly, these taken-as-given assumptions direct research on the sport consumer to psychographic mapping of links between antecedents (e.g., preferences, attitudes, beliefs, and values) and behavioral outcomes (namely, purchase intentions, loyalty, and favorable word-of-mouth communications). The resultant sport consumer knowledge base is founded on a belief that sport is a distinct social phenomenon, with unique processes of emotional and psychological involvement.

Why tepid definitions of the sport consumer been taken at face value is unclear. Further, why the field does not publically wrestle with its politics and celebrate diverse scholarship is another worthy question. Through a genealogical lens, I have come to view the omission of such dialogue as omission by design. Scholarly disputes have failed to capture the attention of the field at large for two likely reasons. First, such quarrels do little to advance practical knowledge. The sport industry is
clear about what it values; if sport management scholars get caught up in arguments about the politics of research and epistemology, they may risk dismissal by practitioners as mere residents of the “ivory tower.” Second, there is risk to speaking out amidst a field steadily moving in one direction. Scholars can choose to “jump ship” and study topics beyond that which is considered mainstream or popular. However, these scholars may find that their work is not accepted or poorly understood among their peers, at the most popular conferences, and in the most prestigious journals. Besides stifling intellectual creativity, there are other risks in regard to academic promotion and career accession. Perhaps the lack of theoretical rigor with regard to defining sport consumption is that it simply does not matter to the field. By accepting the sport consumer as given, as the exemplar of the sport constituency, researchers succeed in advancing a knowledge culture that looks past idiographic traits of the consumer and instead searches for causes to enhance desirable effects.

**Transforming Sport Consumer Research**

The preceding analysis offers a critical account of how sport consumer scholarship renders sport constituents in knowable ways, transforming them into allegiant consumers who make decisions among competing sport products in order to exert their autonomy and acquire new, manufactured identities. In conclusion, it is clear that the modern sport consumer is not only made subject by a repressive market society and an ideology of consumer culture, but also by expert knowledges, created and transmitted by our field, which mediate the necessary and superfluous exchanges between producers and consumers. Thus, the sport consumer is placed within a new set of power relations, constructed by the architects of our field and redefined by scholars ever since, that are wielded by a system of surveillance, normalizing judgement, and the popular imagination. By labeling sport constituents “consumers,” sport participants and spectators are transformed into abstract entities that elicit new, governable techniques of management enabled by a sort of pathological profiling that searches for causes and, ultimately, aims to normalize desirable forms
consumer behavior. In some ways, sport consumer research is repressive, but it is also highly productive, endowing the consumer subject with an insatiable appetite for modern sport (see Belk, Ger, & Askegaard, 2003; Shankar, Cherrier, & Canniford, 2006).

Drawing this project to an end, I again reference Holbrook (1985) who reminds us that life involves many consumption experiences that impact our happiness, well-being, and quality of life. Thus, even if these experiences are not of interest to business managers, they still merit investigation simply because they are important to being human. Holbrook writes: “the managerial perspective is parochial, self-interested, and unimportant in the general scheme of things” (p. 146). As opposed to justifying how our research is practical, we will be better off by seeking to make our research meaningful, empowering, and transformational.

Ultimately, in these final pages I respond to a simple question: “through our research, what version of the world do we hope to create?” Indeed, some researchers claim they do not create reality; through the objective lens of social science, they sample reality and merely seek to depict it through theorization, modeling, and empirical testing. However, it is all too convenient to reason, through plausible deniability, that researchers do not have a hand in producing the world in which we live. Moreover, others assert that the market is a perfect arbitrator of value—because the market is amoral, it is the ideal mechanism for governing exchange. However, if researchers refuse to take a moral stand, deferring to an amoral market to decide what is good and worthy, we are all in big trouble. What is permanent about sport that consumers cannot get elsewhere? If business prevails at the expense of the customer, sport will ultimately lose and we will all be out of a job (but that will be the least of our worries). A familiar statement by Zeigler (2007) emphasizes this concern:

I want to be certain that sport maintains itself as a beneficial force in society—that it contributes more ‘good’ than ‘evil.’ Right now I feel this is becoming a more difficult
assertion to make and to prove. Sport management urgently needs substantive theory to support or refute current practice! (p. iv)

Zeigler argues that if we find something about the field of sport management untenable, we should do something about it. We do not have to accept the status quo because we, as authors of the field, are capable of rendering a future that is different than the present (even if it means going backwards). This point cannot be overemphasized—sport management in its present form is significant and worth celebrating. However, the current version of sport management (and its component parts) is not definitive—we can take it, leave it, or transform it. I believe, as demonstrated through my research findings, that the field as a whole (researchers and the products of scholarly endeavor) would be better off by adopting a multidisciplinary perspective that encourages intellectual creativity, boundary crossing, and theoretical risk-taking. What do we have to lose?

The theoretical paradigm offered by Foucault and adopted in this study provides one response to this question. As opposed to other more deterministic readings of power, power in the Foucauldian sense is exercised relationally between individuals. Therefore, in every exchange there is room for action and resistance. While the conclusions provided above may lead one to believe that change is not likely given the trend towards orthodoxy, change is still possible if scholars dare to fashion alternative framings that are transformative and empowering. There are many opportunities for organic intellectualism that questions socialized norms and constraints within our practices, and concomitant pathways to break free from the epistemological lethargy affecting the field. In this way, discourse can be a site of both power and resistance, providing the necessary space to “evade, subvert or contest strategies of power” (Gaventa, 2003, p. 3).

The lack of alternative ontological, epistemological, and methodological alternatives in sport consumer research has produced a sanitized social science. Although the following criticism was
directed towards the field of marketing and consumer research in general, the same may be said of research on the sport consumer: “Such cognitive homogeneity has restrained development in the field and has made marketing predictable, prosaic, almost irrelevant in the eyes of many academics and practitioners outside the discipline (Kasabov, 2005, p. 8). Thus, to transform sport consumer research, new research strategies are required.

Alternate tactics of studying the sport consumer may be approached from a cultural and/or discursive perspective. For example, through a cultural approach researchers may explore how power constitutes sites for consumption and marketing strategies that impose onto consumers specific behavioral and cognitive logics (Denegri-Knott et al., 2006). Researchers interested in exploring consumer empowerment from the cultural perspective could examine the ways in which marketers order consumers through commercial messaging and the design of public spaces such as stadiums and other aesthetic consumption environments to steer consumers towards specific activities. Such research objectives may be achieved through ethnographic and/or phenomenological studies examining how consumers navigate, respond, evade, and resist contemporary marketing practices in their everyday lives.

Using a discursive approach similar to the one used in this study, researchers can interrogate how consumer power is exercised in exchanges and interactions between consumers and producers to co-create and reproduce markets (Denegri-Knott, et al., 2006). This perspective rejects the notion of the sovereign consumer and discards the dialectical struggle between powerful marketers and resisting consumers posited by the cultural theorists. Following Foucault, the discursive model is concerned with how linguistic strategies produce truth claims and constitute culturally significant categories of knowledge that create normalized standards of conduct (ibid). The discursive approach encourages researchers to seek a more nuanced understanding of how power produces discursive strategies that delineates “normal” from “deviant” consumer behavior. Methodologically, discursive
studies examine historical documents to explore how discourses and normalization procedures have changed over time, or conversely, the researcher may draw upon phenomenological tactics to understand how consumers interpret, adopt, reproduce, and/or redefine disciplinary discourses (ibid). Specifically, research in this vein could explore how commodities and concomitant consumer demand come into being, how consumers learn to regard themselves as such, how consumption imperatives have come to be intertwined with notions of freedom and modernity (or why consumers may choose not to consume as a form of resistance), and to identity who benefits from particular discursive practices. In addition, these studies can explore how consumers elicit types of reflexive monitoring and self-management when deciding what or if to consume.

Lastly, by pursuing alternative research tactics, we can also consider the role of the researcher. Studying consumers in the post-modern tradition is not likely to be an easy exercise. Addis and Podestà (2005) explain that post-modern consumer research is “neither simple nor automatic, because it attacks any apriorism of marketing” (p. 407). By assuming more ethical responsibility for one’s research, scholars are made vulnerable by their intellectual curiosity and humility. In my view, this is an acceptable risk, one likely to result in enriching inquiry for both the research participant and researcher alike.
# APPENDIX A

## SAMPLE OF RESEARCH TEXTS

Table A.1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Journal</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Author(s)</th>
<th># Cites</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Subtype</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ESMQ</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Downward &amp; Rasciute</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>EC</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESMQ</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Funk, Toohey, &amp; Bruun</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>MK</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESMQ</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Bodet</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>MK</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESMQ</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Beccarini &amp; Ferrand</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>MK</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESMQ</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Robinson</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>MK</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESMQ</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Alexandris, Zahariadis, Tsorbatzoudis, &amp; Grouios</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>MK</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESMQ</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Alexandris, Dimitriadis, &amp; Kasiara</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>MK</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JSM</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Yoshida &amp; James</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>MK</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JSM</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Kim &amp; Trail</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>MK</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JSM</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Babiak &amp; Wolfe</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>MG CSR</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JSM</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Walker &amp; Kent</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>MK CSR</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JSM</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Bauer, Stokburger-Sauer, &amp; Exler</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>MK</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JSM</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Shonk &amp; Chelladurai</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>MK</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JSM</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Gwinner &amp; Bennett</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>MK S</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JSM</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Seo &amp; Green</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>MK</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JSM</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Kwon, Trail, &amp; James</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>MK</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JSM</td>
<td>2007a</td>
<td>Heere &amp; James</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>MK</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JSM</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Boyle &amp; Magnusson</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>MK</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JSM</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Hur, Ko, &amp; Valacich</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>MK</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JSM</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Funk &amp; James</td>
<td>306</td>
<td>MK</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JSM</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Ross</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>MK</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JSM</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Ross, James, &amp; Vargas</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>MK</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JSM</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Robinson &amp; Trail</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>MK</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JSM</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Chalip, Green, &amp; Hill</td>
<td>285</td>
<td>ST</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JSM</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Fairley</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>ST</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JSM</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>McGhee, Yoon, &amp; Cárdenas</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>ST MK</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JSM</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Gladden &amp; Funk</td>
<td>379</td>
<td>MK</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JSM</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>DeSchrive &amp; Jensen</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>EC</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JSM</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Gladden, Irwin, &amp; Sutton</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>MK</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JSM</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>McDonald &amp; Rascher</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>MK</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JSM</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Park &amp; Kim</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>MK</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JSM</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Gladden, Milne, &amp; Sutton</td>
<td>246</td>
<td>MK</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JSM</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Kerstetter &amp; Kovich</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>MK</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JSM</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Wakefield, Blodgett, &amp; Sloan</td>
<td>257</td>
<td>MK</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JSM</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Kinney &amp; McDaniel</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>MK</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JSM</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Wakefield &amp; Sloan</td>
<td>381</td>
<td>MK</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JSM</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Kim &amp; Kim</td>
<td>219</td>
<td>MK</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table A.1.—continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Journal</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Author(s)</th>
<th># Cites</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Subtype</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>JSM</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td>Melnick</td>
<td>234</td>
<td>MG</td>
<td>SOC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JSM</td>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Chalip</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>MG</td>
<td>MK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JSM</td>
<td>1989</td>
<td>Hansen &amp; Gauthier</td>
<td>306</td>
<td>MK</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMQ</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Funk, Filo, Beaton, &amp; Pritchard</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>MK</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMQ</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Wann, Grieve, Zapalac, &amp; Pease</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>MK</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMQ</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Dees, Bennett, &amp; Villegas</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>MK</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMQ</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Kim, Greenwell, Andrew, Lee, &amp; Mahony</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>MK</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMQ</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Koo &amp; Hardin</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>MK</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMQ</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Fullerton &amp; Merz</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>MK</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMQ</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Alexandris, Tsoutsou, &amp; James</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>MK</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMQ</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Tsuji, Bennett, &amp; Zhang</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>MK</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMQ</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Ross</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>MK</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMQ</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Koo, Quartermen, &amp; Flynn</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>MK</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMQ</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Miloch &amp; Lambrecht</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>MK</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMQ</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Bee &amp; Kahle</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>MK</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMQ</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Trail, Anderson, &amp; Fink</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>MK</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMQ</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Ko &amp; Pastore</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>MK</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMQ</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Robinson, Trail, Dick, &amp; Gillentine</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>MK</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMQ</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Donavan, Carlson, &amp; Zimmerman</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>MK</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMQ</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>James &amp; Ross</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>MK</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMQ</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Ko &amp; Pastore</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>MK</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMQ</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Boyd &amp; Shank</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>MK</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMQ</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Campbell, Aiken, &amp; Kent</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>MK</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMQ</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Pitts &amp; Slattery</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>MK</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMQ</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Kwon &amp; Armstrong</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>MK</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMQ</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Trail, Fink, &amp; Anderson</td>
<td>336</td>
<td>MK</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMQ</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Trail, Robinson, Dick, &amp; Gillentine</td>
<td>243</td>
<td>MK</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMQ</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Matsuoka, Chelladurai, &amp; Harada</td>
<td>185</td>
<td>MK</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMQ</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Irwin, Lachowetz, Cornwall, &amp; Clark</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>MK</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMQ</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Roy &amp; Graeff</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>MK</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMQ</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Swanson, Gwinner, Larson, &amp; Janda</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>MK</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMQ</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Funk, Mahony, &amp; Ridinger</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>MK</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMQ</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>McDonald, Milne, &amp; Hong</td>
<td>238</td>
<td>MK</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMQ</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Fink, Trail, &amp; Anderson</td>
<td>189</td>
<td>MK</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMQ</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Kwon &amp; Armstrong</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>MK</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMQ</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Bennett, Henson, &amp; Zhang</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>MK</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMQ</td>
<td>2002a</td>
<td>Greenwell, Fink, &amp; Pastore</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>MK</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMQ</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>James, Kolbe, &amp; Trail</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>MK</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMQ</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Lyberger &amp; McCarthy</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>MK</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMQ</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Mahony, Madrigal, &amp; Howard</td>
<td>358</td>
<td>MK</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMQ</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Pope &amp; Voges</td>
<td>198</td>
<td>MK</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMR</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Lee, Kim, Ko, &amp; Sagas</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>MK</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal</td>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Author(s)</td>
<td># Cites</td>
<td>Type</td>
<td>Subtype</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMR</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Beaton, Funk, Ridinger, &amp; Jordan</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>MK</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMR</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Smith &amp; Stewart</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>DS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMR</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Drayer, Shapiro, Dwyer, Morse, &amp; White</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>MK</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMR</td>
<td>2007b</td>
<td>Heere &amp; James</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>MK</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMR</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Casper, Gray, &amp; Stellino</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>MK</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMR</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Xing &amp; Chalip</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>MK</td>
<td>ST</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMR</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Kwon, Trail, &amp; Anderson</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>MK</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMR</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Funk &amp; James</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>MK</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMR</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Robinson, Trail, &amp; Kwon</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>MK</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMR</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Cunningham &amp; Kwon</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>MK</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMR</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Funk, Ridinger, &amp; Moorman</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>MK</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMR</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Murray &amp; Howat</td>
<td>287</td>
<td>MK</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMR</td>
<td>2002b</td>
<td>Greenwell, Fink, &amp; Pastore</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>MK</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMR</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Mahony, Nakazawa, Funk, James, &amp; Gladden</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>MK</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMR</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>van Leeuwen, Quick, &amp; Daniel</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>MK</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMR</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Funk &amp; James</td>
<td>519</td>
<td>MK</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMR</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Green</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>MK</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMR</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Chelladurai &amp; Chang</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>MK</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMR</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Hill &amp; Green</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>MK</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMR</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Funk, Haugvedt, &amp; Howard</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>MK</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMR</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Mahony &amp; Moorman</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>MK</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Key: Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), Disciplinary Studies (DS), Economics (EC), Management (MG), Marketing/Consumer Behavior (MK), Sponsorship (S), Sport Development (SD), Sport Tourism (ST), Sociology (SOC).
REFERENCES


BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Education

2016  Doctoral Candidate, Sport Management, Florida State University
2012  Air Command and Staff College, U.S. Air Force Air University
2010  Master of Business Administration, Entrepreneurship (w/Honors), American Military University
2009  Squadron Officer School, U.S. Air Force Air University
2002  Bachelor of Science, Economics, U.S. Air Force Academy

Professional Experience

2016-present  Director of Physical Education Division, Curriculum and Assessments, U.S. Air Force Academy
2013-2016  Doctoral Candidate, Department of Sport Management, Florida State University, Air Force Institute of Technology—Civilian Institution Program

Dissertation Title: Making the Sport Consumer: A Genealogy of Sport Management

Research Texts

2012-2013  Director of Intramural Athletics and Physical Education Instructor, U.S. Air Force Academy
2010-2012  Director of Commander’s Action Group, Hickam AFB
2009-2010  C-17A Pilot and Support Flight Commander, Hickam AFB
2008-2009  Student, C-17 Aircraft Commander Initial Qualification Course, Altus AFB
2008  Operations Group Executive Officer, Ali Al Salem AB, Kuwait
2004-2008  C-12 Instructor Pilot and Squadron Executive Officer, Elmendorf AFB
2002-2004  Student, Joint Specialized Undergraduate Pilot Training, Moody AFB/NAS Corpus Christi
Teaching & Instruction

2016-present/
2012-2013  
Physical Education Instructor, Basic Swimming/Swimming, U.S. Air Force Academy

Physical Education Instructor, Basic Water Survival/Water Survival, U.S. Air Force Academy

Physical Education Instructor, Rock Climbing, U.S. Air Force Academy

2013-2016  
Doctoral Seminar Leader, Globalization, Development, and Sport, Florida State University

Graduate Guest Lecturer, Sport Leadership, Florida State University

Undergraduate Guest Lecturer, Sport and Diversity, Florida State University

2006-2009  
Instructor Pilot, U.S. Air Force C-12F/J Aircraft Commander Initial Qualification Training, Elmendorf AFB

Instructor Pilot, U.S. Air Force C-12F/J Instructor Qualification Training, Elmendorf AFB

Instructor Pilot, U.S. Air Force C-12F/J Remote Airfield Qualification Training, Elmendorf AFB

Publications


Presentations


**Grants & Contracts**

2016  NASSM Service Learning Grant (Awarded)

2016  Council of Research in Education Travel Grant (Awarded)

2015  Contributor, National Institute of Health SF 424 Grant Proposal

2015  Contributor, State Farm Insurance Community Grant Proposal

2015  Council of Research in Education Travel Grant (Awarded)

2014  Council of Research in Education Travel Grant (Awarded)

**Service**

**Department**

2014-2016  Coordinator, Strategy and Academics, Center for Sport, Health, and Equitable Development, Department of Sport Management, Florida State University

**Field**

2012-2013  Volunteer Coach, Men’s Swimming and Diving, U.S. Air Force Academy

**Special Qualifications**

Military Pilot Aeronautical Rating and FAA Multi-Engine Commercial Civilian Pilot’s License

SECRET Security Clearance

Distinguished Graduate, U.S. Air Force Arctic Survival Training

Graduate, U.S. Air Force Survival Evasion Resistance Escape and Water Survival Training

Diversity in the Work Place for Leaders Training

American Heart Association CPR and AED Certified

U.S. Armed Forces Self Aid Buddy Care Certified

**Professional Honors and Awards**

U.S. Defense Meritorious Service Medal (2)

U.S. Air Force Aerial Achievement Medal
U.S. Air Force Commendation Medal (2)
U.S. Air Force Achievement Medal
Wing Company Grade Officer of the Quarter (2010)
Group Company Grade Officer of the Quarter (2007, 2008, 2009)
Expeditionary Air Wing Safety Award (2008)
Squadron Member of the Year (2007)
Squadron Instructor Pilot of the Year (2006)