"There is little justification for eliminating fighting from hockey, except for those who wish to see the sport emasculated even further. We've already ceded the ground on mandatory helmets and participation trophies for every kid that plays. Let's at least let the professionals play the game as it was meant to be-tough, passionate and **gritty."**

Jesse Kline, *National Post,* 2011 (Kline, 2011, p. **A3).**

INTRODUCTION

Since the development of the first organized athletic spectacles in the ancient world, violence has been a key part of the attraction of sport. Donald Kyle (2007) describes ancient Greek and Roman sport as "visceral, visual, and vulgar" (p. 22). For example, at the **ancient** Olympic Games and on elaborate tracks throughout the Roman Empire, chariot **races** could end in dangerous collisions and lethal crashes. The poet Statius observed that "one would think the drivers were pitted in savage war, so furi, *ous* is their wUl to win, so ever,present the threat of a gory death" (quoted in Pcrrottet, 2004, p. 92). The Greek Olympic program featured wrestling, boxing, and a form of no,holds,barred fighting called the *pankracion.* Participants in the e combat sports expected broken bones, scarred and disfigured faces, and battered heads. Strangling was a legitimate strategy used by *pankraciascs;* one athlete managed to win an Olympic title despite being choked to death because his opponent was in so much pain from a dislocated ankle that he conceded victory first (Perrottet, 2004). Huge crowds gathered at the Colosseum in ancient Rome to watch animal fights and gladiator combats, where death was part of the entertainment package. Across the Roman Empire, exotic beasts were killed in large,scale hunts and public shows. Animals were used to execute deserters, runaway slaves, or criminals. And gladiators duelled-and often died-in violent mass spectacles sponsored by the state and important political leaders.

In modem society, violent sports still command the attention of many fans and spectators. Michael Messner (2002) argues that the centre of sport-the most rewarded and renowned part of the world of sport today-is "defined largely by physical power, aggression, and violence" (p. xviii). The NFL is the most successful sports league in the United States, and it sells a combination of high,speed collisions and hard hits to massive stadium and television audiences. In Canada, the NHL is the dominant sports business--and the only major sports league that does not punish fistfights between players with ejection from the game. Fighting, body checking, and manly displays of toughness are widely regarded as crucial elements of hockey's spectator appeal. Boxing was perhaps the most widely followed sport of the 20th century, although its economic and cultural significance has diminished in recent decades. However, the growth of mixed martial arts (MMA) since the 1990s, particu, larly the popularity of the Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC), indicates the ongoing public fascination with combat sports and raises questions about the place of sporting violence in contemporary culture. In addition, gender identities are closely connected to our understandings of violence in sport, both historically and in the present. Involvement in violent sport has often been an incubator and a prov, ing ground for manhood, but increasing numbers of women athletes are showing "that behaving aggressively, violently or deviantly in sport settings *does* resonate with females" (Young, 2012, pp. 167-168).

When we pay attention to how broader social and cultural changes arc related to ways that perspectives on violence and aggression in sport **have** alsochanged, as I do in this chapter, we are using a *sociological imagination.* Using our sociological imagina, tions helps us see ways that understandings of violence in and around sport are socially constructed. This means that these understandings are not "natural," but instead emerged through struggles over how sports should be played, how sports have been historically institutionalized in "preferred ways," and what playing sports signifies ideologically. It also means that agreements about what are acceptable and unacceptable forms of violence in sport can change (and have changed) over time, and are always open to debate.

DESCRIBING AND CLASSIFYING FORMS OF VIOLENCE

Despite its ubiquity, the concept of violence in sport is not easy to define. Discussions of sporting violence are often inconsistent and contradictory because it is difficult to distinguish "violent" behaviours from acts that are "aggressive," "rough," "hard," or "physical." In addition, violent actions in sport are not only expected and tolerated, they are also frequently celebrated, respected, and admired. Michael Smith (1983) describes aggression "as any behaviour designed to injure another person, psycho, logically or physically" (p. 2). Violence cantherefore be seen as a more specific form of aggression-it "is behaviour intended to injure another person *ph,sicalt,"* (Smith, 1983, p. 2). Although violent behaviour will potentially cause physical harm or injury, violent actions in sport are often permitted as an acceptable **"part** of the game" (Smith, 1983, p. 9).

Another dimension of sporting violence occurs off the playing surface and in the stands and in the streets. Sports crowd violence can be defined [11]as acts of verbal or physical aggression (threatened or actual), perpetrated by partisan fans at, or away from, the sports arena that may result in injury to persons or damage to property" (Young, 2012, p. 42). The post-event riot, when fans respond to the outcome of significant sporting events, is the most common recent example of collective violence in North American sport. Forinstance, when the Montreal Canadiens won the Stanley Cup in 1986 and 1993, downtown Montreal was the scene of considerable looting, numerous arrests. and a significant number of injuries to both riot participants and police officers. On the other hand, the rioting that occurred on the streets of Vancouver in 1994 and 2011 and in Edmonton in 2006 was a response to the Canucks and Oilers losing the Stanley Cup Final (Young, 2012).

Kevin Young (2012) introduces the concept of **sports•rclated** violence (SRV) to convey a broader sense of the manifestations of violence--and the outcomes of violenc that can occur within or **as a** product of the sporting context. This view widens the scope of thinking about violence in sport beyond the two most frequently examined elements of the issue: "violence among athletes, or player violence, and violence among fans, or crowd violence" (Young, 2012, p. 13). As a result, Young (2012) offers the following, more expansive defanition of sports,related violence:

> l. direct acts of physical violence contained within or outside the rules of the game that result in injury to persons, animals, or property; and
> 2. harmful or potentially harmful actsconducted in thecontext of sport that threat• en or produce injury or that violate human justices and civil liberties. (p. 15)

This perspective on SRV includes such behaviours as violent actions or crimes committed by participants away from their sport; injuries and other threats to athletes' health; initiations and hazing of new members of sports teams; sexual harassment and sexual assault; parental abuse in youth sports; harm to animals; and acts of racism, sexism, and environmental destruction related to sport. While some of these examples are not usually considered as *types* of sport violence," they represent concretely or potentially harmful acts that cannot be separated from the sports process and that only begin to make sense when the socially embedded character of sport is closely scrutinized" (Young, 2012, p. 14). I elaborate on this broader understanding of SRV later in this chapter.

Smith (1983) attempts to categorize sports violence on a scale of *legitimacy,* as perceived by participants in the sport, the general public, and the legal system. His analysis includes two "relatively legitimate" types of violence-which he calls "brutal body contact" and "borderline violence"-and two "relatively illegitimate" types of violence-described as "quasi-criminal violence" and "criminal violence" (Smith, 1983, pp. 9-23). Brutal body contact is permitted by the official rules of a particular sport, while "borderline violence" does not conform to the rules, but nevertheless is widely accepted as a legitimate aspect of the sport.

Examples of brutal body contact include tackles in football, punches in boxing or MMA, and the kind of physical play that is permitted in soccer or basketball. Examples of borderline violence include fistfights in hockey, "brushback" pitches aimed near a batter's head in baseball, or the pushes and bumps that occur in a pack of distance runners-practices that might be penalized or, in some cases, lead to ejections or suspensions, but which "occur routinely" and usually can be justified within the context of the sport (Smith, 1983, p. 12). In addition, the "sanctions imposed by sports leagues and administrators for borderline violence have been notoriously light" (Young, 2012, p. 19).

On the other hand, quasi-criminal *violence* "violates not only the formal rules of a given sport (and the law of the land), but to a significant degree the informal norms of player conduct" (Smith, 1983, p. **14).** In hockey, for instance, "cheap shots," "sucker punches," and in recent years hits from behind into the boards-especially when these actions result in serious injury-would be regarded as quasi-criminal forms of violence. Other examples include vicious head butts in soccer, bench-clearing brawls in basketball, or batters charging the pitcher's mound to start fights in baseball. While such **acts are** more likely to lead to suspensions or fines than borderline *violence,* punishment is not always consistent for those involved in such incidents. In addition, legal authorities may become involved in dealing with this type of violence, although criminal charges for actions occurring during the course of a sporting contest **are rare.** Civil litigation is more common in these cases. Finally, there are incidents of criminal *violence* in which the degree of violence is "so serious and obviously outside the boundaries of what could be considered part of the game that it is handled from the outset by the law" (Smith, 1983, p. 21)..

While Smith's categories are useful in attempting to understand sport violence, the boundaries between these different types of violence are not always clear, and can change over time. They are, in other words, *socially constructed* concepts. For example, until recently, long-term consequences of concussions have become more apparent, the NFL **and the** NHL have come under pressure to make their sports less dangerous for players. Both leagues have made changes that are intended to reduce the number of head injuries, changes that had previously been regarded as just part of the game by participants, making some actions

owablc fomu of body contact into plays t

now considered borderline, or even quasi--criminal, forms of violence. As a result, actions that have long been considered acceptable within the cultures of football and hockey arc increasingly being seen as violations of the written rules and unwritten codes that operate within these sports. And if some of these trends continue, perhaps che *idiology* for what constitutes criminal forms of violence may change as well.

THEORIES OF VIOLENCE

Two influential **ideas** put forward to explain violence in society (and, by extension, violence in sport) are the instinct theory and the frustration-aggreuion theory. The classic expression of instinct theory is Konrad Lorenz's On *Aggression,* first published In 1966, which examines "the fighting instinct in beast and man which is directed against members of the same species" (Lorenz, 2002, p. ix). In this view, violent behav. iour is inevitable because it is rooted in human biology and "natural" instinct. Proponents of this theory also suggest that such violent impulses can be released "safely" through catharsis-a healthy venting of aggression that reduces the rule of further, more dangerous manifestations of violence. Sport, for instance, can function **as a "safety** valve" that provides a controlled outlet for potentially harmful, innate, **aggressive energies.** These explanations have clear connections to the *srruaural funv tionaUst* **perspective** described in Chapter 2 to the extent that sport-related violence

hete is seen to **"serve a** need" and to stabilize both sport and society, and is an

approved means for minimizing what some see as "unavoidable" forms of violence. The */rwtTation-aggression* hypothesis, on the other hand, proposes that individu,

alsactaggressively, and perhaps violently, when they respond to frustration (Dollard, Doob, Millier, Mowrer, & Sears, 1939). According to this individualistic model, people release built.-up frustration through a form of catharsis in ways that are simi, lar to the dissipation of aggression described by the instinct theory. Sport, for example, is regarded as being cathartic for players and even spectators because it channels frustration into socially acceptable forms of aggression.

However, sociologists have raised significant questions about the biological and psychological/individual bases of violence, the degree to which frustration alone can account for aggressive behaviour, and the extent to which catharsis permits the safe discharge of violence. On the contrary, there is considerable evidence to suggest that violence can be attributed to structural and cultural factors, that frustration is only one contributor to aggression, and that catharsis does not lead to the harmless expression of violence. This is an example of how using a *sociological imagination* might inspire questions about why justifications for SRV are so often individual-focused, and how SRV might be better explained by considering dominant ideological beliefs about the meaning of (and value of!) violence in sport (a point discussed in more detail later).

A more convincing explanation of violence is the social learning theory (Bandura&. Walters, 1963). From this perspective, violence isn't simply "narural" or instinctual; lt is *learned* through socialization processes and cultural understandings

of what is acceptable and unacceptable in particular societies and social contexts. Aggressive behaviour is a product of observation and interaction with others, includ ing peer groups, role models, and community institutions and other social structures. In apott, for instance, violent behaviours frequently become naturalized and normal ized over time as acceptable, ordinary parts of the game. In this view, then, violence in spon is produced by sporting environments that put "people in situations where aggression visibly 'works' and is rewarded and that sanction and even applaud aggressive behaviour" (Gruneau & Whitson,

1993, p. 177). When individuals are

placed ln positions where they can observe violence, where they are encouraged to be violent, or where they arc subjected to violence themselves, they are likely to respond aggressively or violently to a variety of situations.

Social learning theory also raises questions about the validity of the catharsis hypothesis. lf violence ls a learned response, then violent acts are likely to trigger more violence rather than culminating in a safe, cathartic release of aggression. In contnst to catharsis theory, lt ls well known that aggressive environments produce **aggressive** actions, which regularly lead to more violent outcomes. As a result, "sports violence is a socially constructed and learned behaviour that serves to legitimate and foster more violence" (Hall, Slack, Smith, & Whitson, 1991, p. 217). In other words, sport docs not reduce violent tendencies by providing a place for the healthy venting of aggression. For example., former NHL player Ken Dryden (1989) points out that **hockey** fights may be [11]therapeutic" by allowing players to purge violent feelings. However, fighu arc often [11]inflammatory," as players cccreate new violent feelings to make further release (more fighting) necessary" (p. 232). In this way, "violence feeds violence, flghting encourages more fighting" and as the culture of hoc key tolerates and accepts such acts they arc "ktamed *and repeattd"* over time (Dryden, 1989, p. 233).

Sociologists have identified a number of external and historical factors that influ, cncc aggressive behaviour in sport. Sporting violence is encouraged by parents, coaches, other players, team owners and league officials, fans, and, especially, the **mass media.** If parents reward or approve of their children's aggression, young players learn that such acts arc acceptable and "normal." For example, a Canadian lacrosse official reported, [0]1 have seen young mothers at tyke and novice games (six to ten years old) screaming at their sons to 'kill' the opposing player" (Smith, 1983, p. 84). Players also need to impress their coaches if they want to maintain their position on **a team.** Coaches often want players to display toughness and aggression, and they expect players to engage in the type of violence that is necessary to secure victory. As former NBA coach Pat Riley stated during a lengthy break between playoff contests,

••Several days between games allows a player to become a person. During the playoffs, you don't want players to be people" (Messner, 2002, p. 49). Similarly, players gain respect from their peen by showing courage, demonstrating a willingness to stand up for **their teammates, and** executing the violent tactics that help the team win.

Fnnchlse owners and league commissioners are reluctant to denounce violence **because they arc** confident that it contributes to spectator interest and, hence, profit. 1'be NFL, for instance, **has packagied and** promoted violence since its inception, por, ttaying players u gladiators, linking the game to war, and making aggression into art through lu htghly succesaful NFL Films series. Although UFC and MMA have modi, **Acd some** of their rules to make flghu safer, the success of these sports as live events **and pay-per...Yiew** tclevlsion spectacles relies on the promise of vicious, often bloody, combat. The spons Industry markets violence to fans, and people respond by buying **tickets. purchutna merchandise, and** watching violent sponing events on television. Smith (1983) explains that ,.the popularity of violent sports . . . has to do with the **tcmio& and** c:xcit.emenr,.gencratlng character of violence-not 'mindless violence,' as **themedia arc wont** to put it, but vlolence involving genuine drama, or 'action"' (p. 100). Even promoters of aocccr, tennis, and squuh-not just hockey, football, and lacroue-have incorporated violent and confrontational images into their commercial **advert1sin1**(Smith, 1983). Finally, the media publicizes and exploits violence to capture **audienca thatcan beaold** to **advettisers (see**Chapter 11). In this way, the media *models* and lqfdmiiu violence, conveying "the idea that violence is acceptable, even desirable, behaviour and that violence-docra are to be admired" (Smith, 1983, p. 118).

VIOLENCE, MASCULINITY, AND THE SOCIOLOGICAL IMAGINATION: HISTORICAL SENSITIVITY

Contemporary attitudes toward violence in sport are linked to historical conceptions of violence and *hegemonic masculinltJ.* During the late 19th and early 20th centuries, one of the most Influential masculine ideals in North America was an aggressive ver, sion of manliness that valued combativeness, competitiveness, and toughness. Many men, of course, actively consented to this vision of manhood. For Instance, Duffield Osborn, a defender of boxing, wrote in the *North American Reww* in 1888, [11]This vaunted age needs a saving touch of honest, old fashioned barbarism, so that when we come to die, we shall die leaving men behind us, and not a race of eminently respectable female saints" (as cited in Kimmel, 1996, p. 138). Anchored in concepts of physicality, martial spirit, and primitivism, this new standard of "muscular" man, hood placed a high value on bodily strength and athletic skill.

At the same time, changes in the middle-class workplace raised questions about the ability of men in clerical, sales, business, and professional positions to fashion a masculine identity through "soft" jobs in expanding corporate and government bureaucracies (Rotundo, 1993). The fear that young boys were spending too much time with their mothers and female teachers also produced anxiety about weakened manhood. Capitalist production increasingly took fathers out of their homes and into factories and offices, while their sons attended elementary schools and Sunday schools. Thus, through family, educational institutions, and churches, women **were** frequently in charge of the socialization of the next generation of men (Burstyn, 1999). This "overpresence" of women in boys' lives was widely **perceived as a** sig, nificant problem. Michael Kimmel (1996) writes, "Men sought to rescue their sons from the feminizing clutches of mothers and teachers and create new ways to 'manu, facture manhood.., (p. 157).

As frustrations with the new world of male white-collar work and concerns about cultural feminization and "overcivilization" spurred efforts to revitalize man, hood in new ways, sport became one of the most important vehicles for countering effeminacy and conferring manliness. At the same time, sport was viewed as an instrument of social regeneration that would produce moral as well as physical ben efitsfor young men. In thiscontext, the violence and roughness of sports like boxing, football, hockey, and lacrosse were seen as acceptable--even necessary-in the building of manly character. When injuries and even deaths occurred in rugged sports, supporters argued that the benefits of such activities outweighed the harmful consequences of violence.

For example, a historical examination of violence in hockey demonstrates the long standing consensual acceptance of a high **degree** of roughness and brutality in the sport, and of *hegemonic masculinity* in general. In addition, the justifications for the *institutionalization* of violence that **were** articulated during the first wave of criminal trials involving hockey players in Canada in the early 1900s arc stlll promi, nent in the culture and in the structure of hockeytoday. In 1905, for instance, during an assault case in Brockville, Ontario, Kingston's George Vanhorn stated that in knocking an opponent unconscious with his stick during a brawl, he "only acted on the ice as an ordinary hockey player would in a strenuous game" (Lorenz, 2004). During a particularly vicious 1907 match between the Ottawa Silver Seven and the Montreal Wanderers, the Ottawa "butchers" left several Montreal men bleeding and unconscious on the ice. Although an Ottawa player was arrested for hitting a Wanderers player in the face with his stick, the judge in thecase concluded that such

roughness was a normal occurrence in hockey, so the attacker \Vas discharged.As th *Montreal Star* reported "duringa game, where all players must expect to receive th .e sbare of hard knocks, c here was a scrimmage and a rough check" (Lorenz & Osbor :r

2006, p. 142}.

The first criminal trial involving an on-ice hockey-related death in Ca d

occurred in 1905, followlng the d_eath of A cide Laurin as a result of inj::ie: sustained during 8 game in Maxvill , Ontano._ Allan Loney, a member of the Maxville team, ,vas arrested for stnking Launn, a member of the Alexand .
Crescents, in the head with his stick following an altercation bet\veen the t\ a

players. During Loney's manslaughter trial, his lawyer claimed that "a manly natio

requires manly games," and "wben a life was lost by misadventure in manly sport it was excusable homicide" (Lorenz & Osborne, 2017, p. 710). Similarly, *Saturda Night* magazine cautioned against overreacting to Laurin's death by curtailln)' participation in vigorous pastimes:

> There is little doubt that many of the qualities that have made the Anglo-Saxon race the world force that *it* is have been developed on the playground. It would be folly and contrary to the teachings of the past to recommend the abandonment or discouragement of strenuously contested games of athletic sport. It would be almost a national calamity if Canadian youth should discard their hockey and lacrosse sticks and puncture their footballs and grow deeply interested in croquet and "button, button, who's got the button." (Sarurday Night, 1905, p. 1)

Ln other words, Laurin's death was the unfortunate price paid for forging hardy Canadian manhood through the competitive rigours of hockey. And \vheo the jury reached a verdict of not guUty, Loney was carried through the streets of Cornwall by a jubilant group of supporters.

CONTEMPORARY SPORTING VIOLENCE

Thinking Sociologically about Fighting 1n Hockey and "The Code"

One of the most contentious issues in modern sport has been the institucionalizacion of fighting in men's hockey. Although other sports penalize fighting with ejection from the game and possible additional punishment, combatants in hockey simply receive a five,minute major penalty-served simultaneously while the teams con tinue to play with five skaters a side-then return to the match. Critics of fighting have become more outspoken in recent years, questioning the purpose of this prac tice in the modern game and calling attention to the injury risks associated with fighting.

Drawing from a *structural functionalist* framework, supporters of fighting fre quently argue that it is a "natural" part of the sport, emerging out of the unique mix of speed, sticks, and rugged masculinity that makes hockey distinct from other team games. Some fights develop spontaneously during the course of action, when angry or frustrated players drop their gloves and use their fists against each other. Most hockey fights, however, result from the workings of an elaborate and unwritten ideological "code" that, according to its defenders, enables the players to "police" the game themselves-and ultimately to reduce the amount of violence in the sport through the strategic use of fighting. At times, players also attempt to instill a higher level of emo tion in their teammates or alter the momentum of a game through fighting. These purposeful, tactical applications of violence demonstrate that fighting is learned behav iour in response to certain structural conditions, and, hence, a *social* construction.

Ideologically, under the "NHL theory of violence" (Dryden, 1989, p. 233), fight ing functions as a "safety valve" that releases dangerous tensions among the players relatively harmlessly and prevents more serious forms of violence, such as stick attacks and overly aggressive hits (Gruneau & Whitson, 1993). According to the "code" that governs the NHL. a player who crosses the line with excessive or unac ceptable physical play must "pay the price" for his actions by fighting one of his opponents or having a teammate fight for him. Thus, fighting acts as a deterrent to potentiaUy more vicious actions on the ice. ln this way, skilled players are protected, dirty players are punished, and cheap shots are minimized. In particular, fighting is supposed to limit the way smaller "rats" and "punks" use their sticks as weapons because they will be held accountable for their choices. However, opponents of fight ing argue that harmful body checks and stick work could be curtailed more effec, tively simply by increasing the penalties for such acts, as these rules do in other levels of the sport. Handing out more major penalties, game misconducts, and suspensions would teach players very quickly that engaglng in such behaviour will not be toler ated and would deter cheap and dirty play more effectively than fighting.

The "code" that governs fighting is a variation of catharsis theory-the *structural functionalist* idea that fighting safely discharges the violence inherent in the sport. NHL commissioner Gary Bettman, for example, has likened fighting to a "thermo, stat" that regulates the game. However, critics of the "code" note that catharsis the ory has been discredited in many other contexts; in fact, violence generally leads to more violence, not less. Instead of preventing spearing, slashing, and dangerous hits, fighting frequently leads to more fighting or escalates into other forms of rough play.

Marty McSorley's assault on Donald Brashear in February 2000 could be seen as an example of this. The two players fought earlier in the game, but McSorley was

unsatisfied with the outcome-and with Brnshear's taunting following the fight-so he challenged Brashear to another scrap. When Brashear refused, McSorlcy responded by clubbing him across the head with his stick. SlmUarly, Todd Bertuzzl's notoriousattack on Steve Moore ln March 2004 shows that flghtlng does not effec tively "police" the sport. Three weeks earlier, Moore hit Vancouver's Markus Naslund with a legal, but In the Canucks' judgment, unacceptable, check.As a result, Moore fought Matt Cooke In the next meeting between the two teams. According to the "code," this should have resolved the Issue, but Bertuzzi felt that Moore deserved further punishment and tried to entice him into yet another fight. When Moore **refused,** Bcrtunl punched him from behind and slammed him to the ice, giving **Moore** I **severe** concussion and breaking three vertebrae. Moore never played **professional hockey again.**

The Costs and Consequences of Violence

Opposition to fighting In hockey has grown in recent years as the effects of concus **sions** and head injuries have become more widely understood. At the same time, the NHL has faced increased pressure to eliminate hits to the head, "blind-side" hits that catch players by surprise, and hits from behind into the boards. Scientists have found evidence of significant brain injury in deceased boxers, professional wrestlers, football players, and hockey players, likely as **a** result of repetitive head trauma. In particular, **a** degenerative brain disease known as chronic traumatic encephalopathy (CTE) has **been** detected in the brains of athletes who engage in these sports. Players suffering from CTE exhibit symptoms similar to dementia, and their brain function and capacity are severely impaired. CTE has been linked to memory loss, aggressive ness, confusion, paranoia, and depression (Concussion Legacy Foundation, 2018).

The flrst NFL player diagnosed with CTE was former Pittsburgh Steelers line man Mike Webster; more than 200 football players-one as young as 18 years old **have** been subsequently confirmed to have this condition (Concussion Legacy Foundation, 2018). Unfortunately, a major difficulty with assessing CTE is that the only way currently to detect Its presence is to examine the brain tissue directly fol lowing a person's death. However, by 2017, 110 of the 111 deceased NFL players studied by researchers at Boston University had CTE. The brains of several hockey players have also tested positive for CTE. As a result, the NFL and the NHL are fac ing difficult questions about the level of brutality in their sports. Is such violence inherent in football and hockey, or arc there ways that violence can be limited in these sports to reduce the risk of head injuries?

In December 2008, Don Sanderson, a 21,year,old university student playing senior amateur hoclccy for the Whitby Dunlops, hit his head on the ice after losing his balance during a fight with an opposing player. He was in a coma for three weeks before he died In January 2009. Although Sanderson's death triggered another round of discussion about hockey violence, the NHL made no substantial changes to curtaU fighting or prevent similar incidents in the future. Commissioner Gary Bettman **stated** In February 2009, "I don't think there is any appetite *to* abolish fighting from the game. I think our fans enjoy this aspect of the game" (Gillis, 2009, p. 51). Former NHL player and general manager Mike Milbury even responded to the assertion that **a** current player could die in a fight by saying, [11]Some guy's going to di every day. It doesn't matter. If you don't want to get hurt, don't play the game [1] (Arthur, 2009, p. S1).

The league had a similar response to concerns about the possible consequences of violence when three NHL players passed away under troubling circumstances dur ing the summer of 2011. Derek Boogaard died as a result of an overdose of paioki11- ers and alcohol, and Rick Rypieo and Wade Belak committed suicide. Boogaard was **a** classic NHL enforcer, Belak was a journeyman defenceman who fought regularly, and Rypien was a tough, hard-working player who was willing to fight much bigger opponents when called upon. The deaths of three such players in a four-month period prompted questions about the psychological pressures and health risks of fighting, panicularly the possible connections to depression, substance abuse, and brain injury.

Even though the damaging consequences of punches and checks to the head are becoming more apparent, many of the sport's most outspoken defenders, like Don Cherry, continue to glorify rough, "old-time" hockey. Cherry's defense of the game's traditional character resists any move toward a less violent and physical ver sion of hockey. As long as fighting and aggression remain markers of masculinity and hockey continues to be seen **as a** training ground for manhood-it will be difficult to remove such forms of violence from the sport. Hockey "provides a pub,.
lie platform for celebrating a very traditional masculine ideal" (Gruneau &.Whitson,

1993, p. 190) at a time when societal roles for men and women are changing and opportunities for men to demonstrate toughness and physical prowess arc diminish ing. In the context of an unstable gender order, many men fear that the removal of fighting would not only jeopardize the masculine subculture of hockey, but trigger a wider erosion of manhood in society as a whole. For example, some commentators have suggested that taking flghts and hard hits out of hockey would lead to the emas
culation (Kline, 2011), "panslflcation" (Arthur, 2009), or "pussification" (Spector, 2013) of the sport.

A CRITICAL FRAMEWORK FOR UNDERSIAND\NG

VIOLENCE IN SPORT

Three Forms of Ma\e Ath\ete v,o\ence

Michael **Messner**' ramcwo[k] r f[or] analyzlng xtre$_{c}$tn$_{tc}$e\$_{d}$'i.

a[f] violence related to

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useful in considering how different manifestations of violence are mterconneboth Messner suggests that male athletes commit three main forms of v\o\encei

during and outside of their sport: violence against women, violence against other men, and violence against their own bodies. He argues, "Far from beingan aberration perpetrated by some marginal deviants, male athletes' off-the-field violence is gener, ated from the normal, everyday dynamics at the center of male athletic culture" (Messner, 2002, p. 28).

The interactions and gender performances of male athlete peer groups are a crucial dimension of the triad of men's violence in sports. Indeed, two group-based processes wtderlie men's violence against women, against other men, and against their own bod, ies: *"misogynist and homophobic talk and* actions" and the *"suppression of empathy'* (Messner, 2002, p. 60). First, all-male groups bond through competitive, sexually aggressive talk that "serves to forge an aggressive, even violent, hierarchical ordering of bodies, both inside the male peer group and between the male peer group and any other group" (Messner, 2002, p. 38). Misogynist and homophobic insults and banter are used to punish and police non-conforming group members through "an ever, present threat of demasculinization," exclusion, and humiliation, as well as to distin guish the group from outsiders (Messner, 2002, p. 60). At the same time, within athlete peer groups, boys and men learn to stifle any empathy they might have for women, for other men, and even for themselves. For example, rather than treated as equals, boys and men frequently treat girl:> and women as potential objects of sexual conquest and as opportunities to perform heterosexual masculiniry for one's male peers.

In the book *Our Quys,* Bernard Lefkowitz (1997) points to a culture of disrespect for women as one of the factors that led a group of high school athletes in Glen Ridge, New Jersey, to assault and abuse their female classmates. Growing up within "a hermetic all-male world of teams and friends and brothers and fathers," these privileged young athletes "just didn't know girls as equals, as true friends, as people you cared about" (Lefkowitz, 1997, p. 91). After several members of the Glen **Ridge** "jock clique" were charged with sexual assault, a father whose daughter went to the same school recalled seeing the boys "getting stronger, closer, every time they got together and humiliated a girl." He added, "My daughter would come home with stories-I'd just shake my head and wonder if they thought a girl was human" (Lefkowiti, 1997, p. 160). On the whole, there is considerable research suggesting "that the social worlds created around men's power and performance sports subvert respect for women and promote the image of women as 'game' to be pursued and conquered" (Coakley, 2009, p. 213).

A lack of empathy for girls and women is one of the primary reasons that male athletes, particularly in contact sports, appear to commit acts of sexual violence against women at a higher rate than nonathletes. Most researchers have concluded "that sexual assault by male athletes is bound up with wider social structures of gen der and power and, in particular, with the acting out of codes of hegemonic masculin ity, sexism, and misogyny-which, again, are far from rare in the often hyper-macho world of sport" (Young, 2012. p. 78). A study of reported sexual assaults at a range of US institutions with Division I sports programs indicated that male student-athletes were disproportionately involved in incidents of sexual assault on university campuses. For the years 1991 to 1993, male athletes made up 3.3% of the total male student population at these schools, yet they represented 19% of those reported to judicial affairs offices for sexual assault (Grosset, Benedict, & McDonald, 1995).

However, despite the evidence of the overrepresentation of male athletes among those who engage in aggressive and violent sexual behaviour, the precise association between sports team membership and sexual assault remains unclear. In addition, disrespectful attitudes toward women are not unique to sport; the issue of men's

violence agalrut women ls a brosd soc1 a 1 pro bl em re 1 ate d to widely held views of **women** ln society and culture **as a** whole. Still, students will be well aware of the **sheer** number of **ln1tances** of sexual assault and domestic violence that have been commlttcd by professional and amateur athletes in recent years.

In committing violent acts against other men, male athletes are taught to obJec tify opponcn as outsiders and enemies and to display toughness to their teammates. For instance, the following statement from Jack Tatum, a former NFL defensive back known u "The Assassin," reveals how violence is rewarded and normalized in football whllc opposing players arc eventually dehumanized:

> When I first stancd playing, if I would hit **a** guy hard and he wouldn't get up, it would bother me. (But) when I was a sophomore ln high school, first game, I knockcJ out two quarterbacks, and people loved it. The coach loved it. Everybody loved it. You never stop feellng sorry for Lvour injured opponent]. If somebody doesn't get up, you **want** him to get up. You hope the wind's just lcnoclccd out of him or somcthlng. The more you play, though, the more you realize that It ls just a part of the game-somebody's gonna get hurt. It could be vou, It could be him-most of the time it's better if it's him. So, you know, you just go out **and** play your game. (quoted in Messner, 2002, p. 50)

Although Tatum called himself a "natural **hitter,"** his story highlights how "the **tendency to utilize** violence against others to achieve a goal in the sports context is **learned behavior"** (Messner, 1990, p. 207).

Injury, Violence, and Sport Culture

Perhaps the most innovative clement of Messner's framework for understanding sporting violence is the way that he conceptualizes injury as a form of violence that **athletes** commit against themselves, and as a form of alienation. Male athletes often **develop a sense** of their bodies "as a machine, or a tool, to be built, disciplined, used (and, if necessary, used up) to get a job done" (Messner, 2002, p. 58). Injuries are an **expected** outcome of sport, even among children. However, athletes **have** long been judged on their wUlingne sand ability to endure pain and to play hurt, even at the risk of their long term health and well-being (Nixon, 1993).

> Boys learn that to show pain and vulnerability **risks** their being **seen** ns "soft," **and** they **know** from the media, from coaches, and from their peers that this is **a** very bad thing. Instead, they learn that they can hope to gain access to high status, privilege, respect, and connection with others if they conform co what sociologist Don abo calls "the pain pranc1ple," a cultural ideal that demands a suppression of self-empathy and a willlngncgs to take pain and take risks. (Messner, 2002, p. 58)

"The quickest way to earn the respect of your teammates and coaches is to play through injuries," says NFL quarterback Man Hasselbeck. "The quickest way to lose *res ct* isto say 'Hey, J can't go'" (quoted in Junod, 2013, p. 3).

The txpectation of vlolencc committed against a male athlete's own body is upheld by rhc sporting peer group through the same kind of misogynist and homo phobic talk and actions that support other forms of violence. If a member of the group doesn't meet this masculine standard by being willing to play hurt, he faces the threat of being labelled a girl, a sissy, a coward, a queer, or a pussy omething less

than a "renl⁰ man (Messner, 2002, p. 58). At the same time, the abUity to absorb pain and punishment without complaint is widely respected among players and conscnsu, ally accepted as "common sense." A veteran NFL player provides an insightful example of this attitude:

> If you get hurt, you feel like you've done something wrong, especially if you eo on injured reserve Your pain threshold Is used to decide what quality of football player you are, and what quality of person. Injuries are used **as aeauec.** And I've done it, too. Many times, I've been battling through injuries, eoreneas, or pain, and I've seen a young guy come off the field for something *minuet.* And I'm thinking, *What a p,us-y--let's get a* guy in *thtre who's coughtr.* (quoted in Junod, 2013, p. 3)

Some studies have suggested that this gender ideology has "softened" in recent years, and that there is now a greater openness to challenging traditional ideals of play, ing hurt and accepting injury without complaint{Anderson&. Kian, 2012; McGannon, Cunningham, and Schinke, 2013). News reports and films like the PBS documentary *l..tague of Denial* have started to "contest the rationalization of injury and the normal, izadon of violence" in pro football, and question °the notion of head injury as merely 'part of the game' and a risk that players ostensibly understand" (Furness, 2016, p. 50). However, showing "a complete disregard for one's well being" continues to be "a way of 'performing' a highly honored form of masculinity" (Messner, 2002, p. 59). Another powerful example of the enduring influence and *irutitutionalitation* of cultural attitudes toward violence and injury is the recent account **given** by 1**J,year** NHL veteran Nick Boynton in *The Players' Tribune.* Boynton, who retired in 2011, provided the following description of the cultural expectations that permeate the NHL, and the consequences of these structures for his personal health:

> The thing about hockey is that it's a fast game. Things happen in the blinJc of an eye. People arc flying around. And when you act your bell rung, it's not Uke every, thing stops. You know what 1 mean? You just keep playing. That's how it works. And it wasn't really my coaches who pushed me to be that way. I expected it from myself. It was the only way I knew-me basically doing what I thought l was supposed to do, and what l saw everyone else dolr\i. Push throue}l, iplorc the pain, finish out the shift, all that shit. *lt* was all second narure to me.
>
> So I'm definitely not looking to blame my coaches or anyone else for all those head hits I took o"cr the years and never really said anything about.
>
> I did it to myself. No doubt.
>
> But over time, all those hits to the head they add up. And when you look back on it, honestly, it's hard not to shake your head at how bad things actually were. I mean, I had eight or 10 conflnned concussions when I played in the NHL, but who knows how many others I just simply played through? I'd **bet** I **had actu** ally more like 20 or 30 of them altogether, and even that might **be a** bit low.
>
> But I just fucking toughed it out cry time and kept things moving. {Boynton, 2018)

Although Boynton takes personal responsibility for hisdecisions and reflects on his own 4gency in the process, his words clearly demonstrate the overwhelming lnflucnce of socialization, culture, and Mgemonic ma.sculinit) in shaping his determination to wlthstand violent acts and to repeatedly consent to physical punishment, including concussions.

Finally, while Messner'• analysis of the connection between manhood and nttl tudes toward pain ls pcnuaslve, it docs not fully account for the dynamics of female athlete peer groups and how those Interactions shape female athletes• responses to Injury. Charlesworth and Young (2004) found that female university athletes were wllllng••ro place their bodies at risk byaccepting injuries and tolerating pain" in ways that were ..consistent with studies of male spons environments,, (pp. 165-166). Similar to male athletes, thcac female athletes "quite frequently normalised and rationalised pain and injury u a necessary part of sport involvement" (Charlesworth & Young. 2004ı p. 165). For Instance, the group bonds and team commitments dC\•clored by female athletes, the pressure they felt from coaches and peers, and their acceptance of routine pain as an ordinary part of sport were comparable to the atti• tudes adopted by male athletes. Likewise, Young and White (1995) argue, "If there ls a difference bctwcc:n the way male and female athletes in our projects appear to understand paln and injury, lt ls only a matter of degree" (p. 51).

As a result of these similarities in the outlook of male and female athletes, Charlcswonh and Young (2004) suggest that [11]the data invite us to consider the fact that while pain and injury arc likely to be linked to gender socialisation processes, they may **also be a** product of socialisation into sport culture per se" (p. 178). In fact, growing numbers of female athletes are problematlzing traditional constructions of masculinity and femininity, and deriving satisfaction and enjoyment from the physicality. intensity, competitiveness, excitement, skill, rigorous training, and psy• chological demands of various spons. Women athletes' increasing involvement in sports like rugby, hockey, boxing, martial arts, and the expanding range of summer and winter extreme sports means that actions llke "playing ultra,aggressively, hitting, being hit, becomlng injured and injuring others are assuming an increasingly central place in female sport and female sport cultures" (Young, 2012, p. 168).

SPORTS-RELATED VIOLENCE: A WIDER VIEW

Young (2012) has urged sociologists and observers of sport to look beyond conven, tional views of player violence and fan violence and examine "a far broader landscape of harmful, or abusive, behaviours" related to spon (p. 15). He suggests that if "the customary paramcten of 'sports violence' arc broadened to include aggressive, threatening, harmful or otherwise unjuat practiCC!enacted within the context of sport, tt **becomes evident that the subject matter may be** far more expansive and vaned **than** commonly **assumed" (Young,** 2012, p. 13).

An expanded view of sports-related violence reveals the far-reaching implica• dons **and complexities of violent behaviours** in **sport.** ***As*** Young (2012) points out, "there **are many examples of how spon continue,** to encourage, systematically and in paaemed ways. hyper-egressivlty, forms of exploitation and abuse and injury, producing and community-compromisiog behaviours" (p. xii). For instance,

> "fonm of SRV milflt include **players betn, harused,** atalked or attacked away from the **pine. uhlern** Involved iD fe1onioul 'meet crimes', neophyte players **bana coerced by verenn tanHDltea** inco abusive initiation ('hazing') rituals apinlt their wi1L aabNJ, beinstreaced In a cruel and Inhumane way, exploitative labour pnccica in cbe production of sport merchandue and forms of environ mental danaale ID die preparation and bosdns of larse«ale venues and sports evena" (Youns, 2012. pp.13-14).

SRV also includes personal problems that are connected to broader public Issues of sporting structure, including sports-relatedeating disorders· the chronic use of drugs like anabolic steroids and painkillers to enhance or malnt in sporting per, formance; the sexual abuse of young athletes by coaches; and the unique risks of injury and death associated with extreme sports or dangerous activities like mountain climbing. A growlng area of concern in relation to SRV involves "problem parents" who harass coaches and officials, threaten their children's rivals, confront other spectators, encourage violent play, and pressure their "children into demand, lng or dangerous training regimens at extremely young **ages"** (Young, 2012, p. 83). On a bigger stage, incidents or threats of political violence or terrorism in relation to major international sporting events are types of SRV. In addition, many forms of gender and racial discrimination, the sexual exploitation and commodificatlon of female athletes, homophobia, jingoism, and xenophobia can also be understood as manifestations of sports-related violence.

These diverse formations of SRV offer a powerful perspective that runs through many of the issues and institutions examined in this book, from race, **gender,** and sexualities in sport, to youth sport, deviance, and health. Sports-related violence must also be considered in the context of the media, politics, business, globalization, and the environment. Finally, expanding our notion of SRV is valuable because it counters "the de-contextualizing inclination of existing research-that tends to **view** types of sports violence as separate episodes of social action, unrelated to other types or to broader social structures and processes-and highlights the links and associa tions that underpin many, if not all, forms of SRV" (Young, 2012, p. 14).

For example, US national team luge athlete Samantha Retrosi (2014) connects the multiple levels of SRV she experienced during her career-her personal trou bles-to broader public issues of social structure like the commodificatlon and dehumanization of athletes in high-level international sport. She compares the Olympic Games to the fictional, dystopian world of *Tht* Hunger *Games* novels and fUms where children are forced to compete in televised fights to the death. Retrosi describes her historical dependence on corporate sponsorship and the ways in which theexploitation of her athletic labour underpinned the physical and emotional harm she endured:

> I grew accustomed to gritting my teeth under the strain of various forms of pain: the daily grind of hours of elite,level training, and the toll It exacted on my developing body; the pain 1 felt upon slammina into **a wall** of ice at 80 miles per hour; the biting winter cold that whip across my thinly protected, spandex-dad form while sitting atop a frozen winter landscape. Then there was the emotional pain and fear, which took on various forms: the constant fear of bodily harm that scarred my mind, just as my body was scarred by more than a hundred stitches; the fear that 1 would disappoint those I loved and those who had invested time and money in my athletic career. There was the pain of failure, of hope swallowed by frequent defeat. Then there was the gendered pain: that of an adolescent female standing in underwear in the glass cube of sport science, each **area** of fat accumulation clinically pinched by **a** man with metal tongs. (Retrosi, 2014)

Using her *sociological imagination,* Retrosi's critical reflection reinforces the value of adopting a °more diverse and encompassing" (Young, 2012, p. 16) approach tosports-related violence.

Hazing in Sport

One of the lcey formations of sports-related violence is the practice of hazing: "the required performance by neophyte athletes of often traumatic initiation rituals in the pursuit of **a** new aroup identity and induction into a new team setting" (Young, 2012, p. 75). Margery Holman (2004) stresses that °the haiing actions that strip another individual of their freedoms, dlanlty, and self-identity, are components of a violent concept" (p. 51). Young (2012) calls athlete Initiation "one of the worst kept secrets In all of spons" (p. 75), although he clarifies that "a growing trend toward policing and anti-hazing policy" ln recent yean, especially ln school and university settings, "has changed its manifestation somewhat, as well as consolidated codes of silence around the practice" (p. 76).

The practice of hazlna has deep historical roots in educational institutions and the military **as a** means of soclallilng boys into manhood. In sport, initiations involve young men and women being forced lnto degrading and often dangerous situations u the price of admission lnto their athlete peer group 0ohnson & Holman, 2004). Initiation activities **are a** means by which "veterans 'test' rookies and evaluate whether they have suffadendy adopted behaviours and beliefs required for member ship" on a new team (Bryshun &. Young, 2007, p. 302). Sports,related hazing fre, qucntly involves **excessive** alcohol consumption, nudity, simulated sex acts, humiliating or painful punishments, and other abusive and demeaning rituals.

While the common public perception seems to be that hazing is a rellc of a pre vious era, there Is no doubt that forms of athlete initiation continue in present-day spon. For Instance, in a recent study of hailng in Canadian university sports, more than half of the athletes surveyed reported experiencing at least one hazing behav iour, such **as wearing** embarrassing clothing, unusual public singing or chanting, attendine a skit night or "roast," or being forced to eat or drink something unpleas ant 0ohnson, Guerrero, Holman, Chin, & Signer..Crolcer, 2018). However, because this panlcular study did not ask respondents about their involvement in abusive, sexual, or alcohol-related Initiation activities, the prevalence of hazing in Canadian intercollegiate athletics ls likely even higher overall than these results indicated. In addition, female athletes (57%) reported more involvement than male athletes (43%) in the haiing rituals dlscusscd in the study Gohnson ct al., 2018, p. 151).

Bryshun and Youna (2007) suggest "that hazlng ls linked to *both* gender soclaliza, tion and sport socialization" (p. 319), with veteran male and female athletes alike supporting **"aagressive** and power-based methods in initiating rookie teammates" (pp. 319-JZ0). Hning rituals enable senior players to assert thelr status and superior, ity in relation to less experienced team members, although Bryshun and Young (2007) indicate that perhaps women do "not adhere as rigidly as their male counter pans to forma of aggression, dominance, and punishment in their initiations" (p. 320). Nevertheless, "for both male and female athletes, socialization into sport involves socialization Into a culture that may denigrate, intimidate, and demoralize its roolcle1 rather than encourage, respect and 'celebrate' them" (Bryshun &. Young, 2007, **p.** 322).

Former NHL player Daniel Carclllo recently raised renewed questions about hazing when he **apolce** out about the bullying and initiations he faced during the 2002-03 **season as•** 17,year-old roolcie with the Sarnia Sting of the Ontario Hockey **League.** CarcUlo recalled lnitlatlon incidents In which he was forced to bob for apples in **a** cooler fllled with a mixture that Included urine and spit and beaten with the paddle of **a** sawed-off &oalic stick. He also detailed situations where he and some of

his teammates were stripped naked and trapped in the washroom on the team bus dur, ing road trips, or required to sit in the shower whUe veteran players urinated on them and spit tobacco juice at them (Chidley,Hill, 2018). Carcillo's stories echo the hazing rituals described by Laura Robinson (1998), who demonstrated how players at various levels of Canadian junior hockey coerced their teammates into perform lng humiliating and embarrassing acts, all with the consent-'clnd, at times, the participation-of coaches, other team personnel, managers, owners, and community leaders.

Robinson persuasively connects a range of violent actions and behaviours com, mitted by and against junior hockey players to a culture of exploitation and abuse that leads to these athletes becoming both perpetrators and victims of SRV. She argues that junior hockey's structure and culture enable and encourage the economic exploitation of athletes, the pain inflicted by players against each other through haz, ing practices, and the denigration of young women in hockey communities. Robinson (1998) states that "in the social context of junior hockey, young men see themselves treated as objects, and consequently readily objectify young women" (p. 5). Therefore, it is not surprising that many of these women are mistreated or sexually assaulted by players who are seen as "young gods," or that some male athletes are sexually abused by coaches, most notably in the case of Graham James (see Chapter 7). In these inter, connected ways, hockey culture harms male athletes as well as the young females who frequently surround them. As a result, hazing can be seen as one manifestation of sports-related violence in an environment that condones and facilitates violence on many different levels.

CONCLUSION

Thischapter has provided theoretical. historical, and contemporary perspectives on violence ln sport. More and more frequently, fan interest in violent sport is coming into conflict with the consequence.s of sporting violence for the health of partici, pants. At the same time, questions are being raised about the responsibility of sports leagues to protect players from the damaging effects of sanctioned violence as part of a broader discussion of working conditions and labour relations. For example, more than 4,600 retired players sued the NFL in 2013 for the way it han dled the issue of concussions and head trauma, "alleging that the league not only failed to warn athletes about the long,term dangers of repetitive blows to head, but also actively hid information about the threat to their mental and neurological health" (Hruby, 2013).

Confronted by the prospect of a significant class,action lawsuit, the NFL eventu ally acknowledged a connection between football and CTE, and reached a settlement that would pay former players approximately Sl billion for a number of ncurodegcn erative conditions, including Parkinson's disease and amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS)(Hruby, 2018). More than 20,000 retired players have registered for compensa tion, which may reach up to $5 million for each individual case. However, since the settlement was finalized in 2017, disagreements have continued over appropriate payouts, with players accusing the league of delay and intimidation, and the FL making allegations of fraud and deception (Belson, 2018).

A group of retired professional hockey players launched a similar class-action lawsuit against the NHL in November 2013. However, in July 2018, the federal judge overseeing the case in US District Court in Minnesota refused co gram class-action