CONFLICTING LOYALTIES: AN EXAMINATION OF THE ROLE COMMUNITY
MEMBERSHIP AND SPORTS FANDOM HAVE ON SPORTS JOURNALISTS'
INTERACTIONS WITH WHISTLEBLOWERS

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A dissertation submitted to the faculty of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the School of Journalism & Mass Communication

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ABSTRACT

SADA REED: Conflicting Loyalties: An Examination of the Role Community Membership and
Sports Fandom Have on Sports Journalists' Interactions with Whistleblowers
(Under the direction of Daniel Riffe)

Stories exposing athletic scandals often began with a sports journalist being contacted by

a "whistleblower," a source whose position or access to information makes him or her privy to

scandal or wrongdoing. When a whistleblower draws attention to wrongdoing in a beloved

community institution by contacting a sports journalist, however, the sports journalist can

experience role conflict: On one hand, a journalist may be committed to transparency and

shining light into darkened corners. On the other, the journalist is a community member and

[most likely] a sports enthusiast. This dissertation argues that sports journalists have interactions

with whistleblowers, but sports journalists' additional roles as community members and sports

fans can influence whether or not whistleblowers confide in sports journalists. This study

examined sports journalists' perception of their varied roles as journalist, community member,

and sports fan, and if a strong presence of any of these roles predicted interactions with

whistleblowers. This study found a significant difference in years employed by current

newspapers between sports journalists who have had interactions with whistleblowers and those

who have not. There was not, however, statistical evidence to suggest additional roles as

community members and sports fans hamper interactions with whistleblowers.

To Jason, who was worth every penny.

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Ten years ago, I thought sports writing was the only career I could be happy pursuing. But as time passed, I became increasingly interested in understanding the factors influencing sports journalism practice. I realized I would need to acquire research skills in order to better understand such influences, and that I would not be able to learn such skills from within the newsroom, where grinding out stories on deadline was my priority.

It has been nearly six years since I began graduate study, three years since I began doctoral study at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. I am humbled by all that I learned and the people from whom I learned it. I will highlight some of those people here.

First and foremost, my husband, Jason Reed, has gone above and beyond the call of a partner. When we married in 2006, I was a content, well-paid professional. But even the surest river changes course. He supported my decision to go to graduate school and has offered his time and talents on numerous occasions – without complaint – to support my endeavors. During our three years living in North Carolina, he continued his job in Minnesota. This involved working out of a home office (aka "our bedroom") and making monthly trips back to the Land of 10,000 Lakes in order to lead strategy and corporate partnership for the Hunger-Free Minnesota campaign. He has maintained a positive attitude through late nights, and sought solutions to challenges that initially looked insurmountable. He is the rock of our family, and I shall not ever forget it.

My aunt and uncle, Grace and Larry Gibbs, have encouraged me and reminded me of who I am and from where I come. They understand the rigors of an academic career. Yet, they

prioritize faith, family, and relationships above all other human pursuits. These values – along with their unmistakable Midwestern work ethic – are traits I hope to exemplify and to pass on to the next generation of our family.

My doctoral advisor, Dr. Daniel Riffe, has had an illustrious career that can be traced through his 30-page curriculum vitae. What these pages do not reflect, however, is the excellence he displays in all aspects of advising and classroom instruction. In the three years I've been Dr. Riffe's advisee, he has never snapped at me or displayed a poor attitude. I have never heard him swear, make a sexist or racist comment, or embarrass a student. These are exemplary attributes. As I begin my career as an assistant professor at Arizona State University, I hope to conduct myself with as much grace and respectability.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

On March 10, 1999, the *Pioneer Press* (St. Paul, Minnesota) published a story that rocked the state of Minnesota. Written by George Dohrmann, "U Basketball program accused of academic fraud" detailed former tutor Jan Ganglehoff's confession to writing more than four hundred papers for at least eighteen University of Minnesota men's basketball players over a five-year period, with the knowledge of Minnesota coaching staff. The story prompted a nine-month, $2.2 million investigation. It also broke on the eve of Minnesota's NCAA tournament-opener against Gonzaga. Minnesota lost.

Public outcry ensued. However, this outcry was not directed toward the university or the men's basketball program: The anger was directed at Dohrmann and the *Pioneer Press*. "People were telling us we weren't public-minded, that we were ruining lives," said then-*Pioneer Press* reader advocate Nancy Conner (Overholser, 2005). Calls and letters poured into the *Pioneer Press*. "Cheating happens throughout college, and not just with athletes," said Jon Schmoll of St. Paul (Overholser, 2005). Even then-Governor Jesse Ventura chimed in: "[The *Pioneer Press*] felt the need to release this story the day before the NCAA Tournament? It couldn't have waited until after?" (Overholser, 2005). One complaint, from Brian Deal of Lake Crystal, said, "It's time the media stopped being the self-appointed watchdog of society" (Overholser, 2005). About 550 people canceled their subscriptions.

Dohrmann said he knew the paper would face backlash for republishing the story (Overholser, 2005). But the staff's ultimate objective, or its primary role, was to serve

journalism: to seek truth, to be transparent, and to engage the community (McBride & Rosenstiel, 2014). But their journalist role was not their *only* role, nor necessarily the best-fitting one. They were also sports fans and community members. Then-executive editor Walker Lundy said the staff had difficulty determining when to run the story. He said publishing the piece meant the *Pioneer Press* was bringing to light the kind of news Minnesotans did not think went on in their midst. "Minnesotans are proud of the fact that we don't have that kind of stuff. So, in the middle of this celebration, comes the *Pioneer Press* to piss all over everything, presenting this revered coach as a cheater and the players they loved as cheaters" (Overholser, 2005). Lundy, Dohrmann, and others on the staff knew the importance of Minnesota sports to their community. They, like their readers, wanted "their" team to do well.

In fulfilling their role as journalists, Dohrmann and other reporters are often contacted by "whistleblowers," sources whose position or access to information makes them privy to scandal or wrongdoing. Historically, whistleblowers have brought attention to wrongdoing in government, industry, and sports. When a whistleblower draws attention to wrongdoing in a beloved community institution by contacting a sports journalist, the journalist can experience role conflict: On one hand, a journalist may be committed to transparency and shining light into darkened corners. On the other, the journalist is a community member and [most likely] a sports enthusiast. According to Hardin (2005), sports journalists' higher levels of fandom may interfere with their journalistic "watchdog" roles, or in this case, whistleblowers' willingness to confide in sports journalists at all.

This dissertation argues that sports journalists have interactions with whistleblowers, but sports journalists' additional roles as community members and sports fans can influence whether or not whistleblowers confide in sports journalists. This study examines sports journalists'

perception of their varied roles as journalist, community member, and sports fan, and if a strong presence of any of these roles correlate with interactions with whistleblowers. This will be measured through a survey that compiles elements and concepts from a variety of literatures: whistleblowing, including its function for society and reporters (e.g., Miceli, Near, & Dworkin, 2008; Near & Miceli, 1995); journalism roles (e.g., Weaver, Beam, Brownlee, Voakes, &Wilhoit, 2007); community membership (e.g., Lowrey, Brozana, & Mackay, 2008); and sports fandom (e.g., Guttmann, 2004; Billings, Butterworth, & Turman, 2012). These combined elements, as well as questions about interactions with whistleblowers and perceived organizational expectations, will provide insights into how sports journalists who interact with whistleblowers perceive their roles differently than sports journalists who have not interacted with whistleblowers. This study argues that there is a significant difference between how sports journalists who have interacted with whistleblowers and sports journalists who have not interacted with whistleblowers rate their roles as journalists, community members, and sports fans.

The following chapter is a review of relevant whistleblower, role theory, and sports journalism history literature, which establishes sports journalism as a distinct genre of journalism worthy of analysis. The remainder of the literature review is divided into the three roles sports journalists have that will be explored in this study: Journalists, community members, and sports fans. Chapter 3 synthesizes the literature review into hypotheses and research questions, followed by a methods section in Chapter 4. Results are discussed in Chapter 5. This dissertation concludes with a discussion section (Chapter 6) and reference section. Tables and figures are displayed in their own section beginning on page 81, followed by a copy of the emails sent to participants.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Whistleblowers

Extensive research has been done on whistleblowers, or people who disclose information about organization members' illegal, immoral, or illegitimate practices to someone who may be able to effect action (Near & Miceli, 1985). The term "whistleblower" derives from police officers blowing their whistles to alert the public of a crime (e.g., Bjørkelo, 2013). Though the current study is about sports journalists' interactions with whistleblowers, it is not about whistleblowing per se. This study will examine how sports journalists' rate the importance of normative aspects of journalism and community roles, as well as how frequently they experience aspects of sports fandom. In short, the study seeks to identify factors which contribute to a sports journalist being "targeted" by a whistleblower.

Some background information on the whistleblowing literature is necessary, of course, in order to give the current study context. For the purpose of this study, whistleblowing will be defined as "the disclosure by organization members (former or current) of illegal, immoral, or illegitimate practices under the control of their employers, to persons or organizations that may be able to affect (sic) action," (Near & Miceli, 1985, p. 4).

Overall, organizational behavior literature devoted to whistleblowing can be organized into three categories: Whistleblowers' defining characteristics, the retaliation whistleblowers face, and conditions under which whistleblowing will likely be effective. The first category, studies that examine whistleblowers' characteristics, suggests that a primary difference between

people who whistleblow and those who do not is that the latter fear jeopardizing their careers and are unwilling to believe they will be protected (Miceli & Near, 1984). Whistleblowers may be driven by anger or resentment, particularly when a wrongdoer or manager uses threats or intimidation (e.g., Near & Jensen, 1983; Near & Miceli, 1995). Dozier and Miceli (1985) drew upon the prosocial behavior literature in order to identify variables that influence a person to whistleblow, like the seriousness of wrongdoing, youth, low status of the wrongdoer, whistleblowers' locus of control, and an altruistic disposition, among other variables.

One of these variables, locus of control, reflects whether a potential whistleblower considers himself or herself as able to change a situation, as opposed to being subject to the world's whims (Dozier & Miceli, 1985). Locus of control literature characterizes people as "internals" or "externals" (e.g., Rotter, 1966). "Internals feel that their actions have an impact on what happens to them and that their behavior makes a difference in the world. Externals think outside forces determine how events occur" (Dozier & Miceli, 1985, p. 829). Altruistic behavior is a voluntary act that results in good and is an end in itself, not directed at self-gain (Leeds, 1963). Prosocial behavior, on the other hand, is positive social behavior that intends to benefit other people, but can also bring the whistleblower rewards (Dozier & Miceli, 1985). In sum, this area of whistleblowing research has found that people are more likely to whistleblow if they have convincing evidence of the wrongdoing, if they were directly affected by the wrongdoing, and if the whistleblower perceived the wrongdoing to be severe (see Miceli & Near, 1985). But if the organization is dependent on the wrongdoing or activities affected by the wrongdoing, whistleblowers are more likely to whistleblow to someone outside the organization (Miceli & Near, 1985).

A second area of whistleblowing research focuses on retaliation, which whistleblowers will either experience or fear experiencing. This fear of ostracism or job loss could prevent potential whistleblowers from whistleblowing (Miceli & Near, 1994; Parmerlee, Near, & Jensen, 1982). Most of the research in this area indicates that organizations are more likely to retaliate against whistleblowers who are valued organizational members (see Parmerlee, Near, & Jensen, 1982).

A third area of research, explored in a pilot study of sports journalists (Reed, 2015), examines the conditions under which whistleblowing is likely to be effective. Reed (2015) built upon work by Near and Miceli (1995), who proposed a model of effective whistleblowing. This model proposes several variables that will increase the likelihood of whistleblowing effectiveness: If the whistleblower is perceived to be credible; is relatively powerful within his or her association or organization; is identified (as opposed to being anonymous); is reporting clearly illegal and unambiguous activity, backed with convincing evidence; and is reporting in a way that would be considered appropriate by the organization or informal norms (Near & Miceli, 1995). People who observe wrongdoing like mismanagement, sexual harassment, and other legal violations are more likely to whistleblow than people who witness stealing, safety problems, or discrimination (Near, Rehg, Van Scotter, and Miceli, 2004). In sum, effectiveness is enhanced when the wrongdoer has little power or credibility, and when the complaint recipient – or in this case, the sports journalist – is credible, powerful, and supportive of the whistleblower (Near & Miceli, 1995).

Like the pilot study (Reed, 2015), the current study examines these elements. Sports journalists in the current study were asked if, during their time at their current newspaper, they've been approached by a whistleblower, how many times they've been approached, how

long ago the interaction was, and through what means the whistleblower contacted the sports journalist (e.g., in person, via telephone). Sports journalists were also asked the subject of the whistleblowing (Near et al., 2004); their perception of the whistleblower's credibility, identity (e.g., anonymous), power within their organization, and provision of convincing evidence, and if their whistleblowing would be considered appropriate to members of their organization (Near & Miceli, 1995). Finally, sports journalists were asked if they wrote a story about the infraction reported to them and if not, why.

As stated earlier, the focus of this study is not about the whistleblower or his or her motivations or goals. It is about the person the whistleblower evaluates on the basis of multiple potential criteria before contacting that person: The sports journalist. A pilot study of 23 sports journalists in North Carolina, informs the present study's design and measures (Reed, 2015). Twelve participants (52.2%) said they interacted with whistleblowers since coming to their current newspapers, which varied between 5,001 and 50,000 in circulation size (Reed, 2015). These circulation sizes suggest sports journalists from small communities are interacting with whistleblowers, regardless of their length of professional experience. There was no significant relationship between sports journalists' years of professional experience and interaction with whistleblowers (Reed, 2015). There was, however, a significant relationship between sports journalists' interactions with whistleblowers and levels of fandom, or the degree to which the sports journalist feels a sense of devotion to a sports team or teams. This supported Hardin's (2005) research, which suggests sports journalists' higher levels of fandom may interfere with sports journalists' "watchdog" roles, or in this case, their journalistic role, or the extent to which they view themselves as representing or aligning with some normative function that journalism serves in society.

Role theory

Like most individuals, journalists exist within and inhabit and represent different roles: A sports journalist has a major occupational role, but also serves a different role as a homeowner or church member, for example. He or she may also have roles as a spouse, parent, child, sibling or other distinct role that is important to them. As the previous section shows, scholars have examined whistleblowers and the potential characteristics they look for when determining to whom they should whistleblow. The following section explains the theoretical lens through which this study will examine sports journalists' potentially conflicting roles as journalists, fans, and community members: role theory. After exploring role theory and the contributions role-theory scholars have made, this section will explain role conflict, which occurs when a person is required to simultaneously fill two or more roles. This is important to understand because sports journalists are prone to role conflict (e.g., Reinardy, 2005).

Role theory is a lens used to examine one of the most important characteristics of social behavior: That human beings behave in ways that can be predicted, based on their respective social identities and situations (Biddle, 1986). A role is a set of expectations applied to a position, designated by the person holding the position and/or by outside forces, or "role senders" (Van Sell, Brief, & Schuler, 1981). Though it had precursors, role theory as we know it developed in the 1930s as a theatrical metaphor. It is based on the idea that theatrical performances are different but predictable because actors perform parts from scripts. As Biddle and Thomas (1966, p. 4) describe it:

> When actors portray a character in a play, their performance is determined by the
> script, the director's instructions, the performances of fellow actors, and reactions
> of the audience as well as by the acting talents of the players. Apart from

differences between actors in the interpretation of their parts, the performance of each actor is programmed by all of these external factors; consequently, there are significant similarities in the performances of actors taking the same part, no matter who the actors are.

In "real life," people occupy social positions, and these positions are determined by factors like social norms, demands, rules, other people's performances, and a person's specific capabilities (Biddle & Thomas, 1966). The "director" can be a supervisor, parent, editor, or coach. The "audience" consists of people who observe the person's behavior and the "performance" is connected to a person's familiarity with his or her "part," "script," personality, and personal history (Biddle & Thomas, 1966).

Role theory and its conceptualization underwent notable changes in the 1970s as scholars disagreed over what was responsible for the roles (Biddle, 1986). Some role theorists, for example, assumed expectations to be prescriptive norms. Others, however, assumed them to be beliefs or preferences. This resulted in three diverging areas of role theory: Biddle (1979) and Burt (1982), for example, used the theory to examine roles; Winship and Mandel (1983) and others used the term to study social position; and Bates and Harvey (1975) and Zurcher (1983) focused on expectation. A disadvantage of this fragmentation is that role theory has not been developed theoretically as much since the 1980s (Biddle, 1986). An advantage, however, is that the field has mostly focused on practical questions like role conflict, role taking, role playing, and consensus (e.g., Biddle, 1986). By the 1980s, five subfields of role theory emerged that remain in contemporary literature: Functional, symbolic interactionist, structural, cognitive, and organizational role theory.

Functional role theory focuses on the characteristic behaviors of a person holding a social position within a stable social system (Linton, 1936; Parsons, 1951; Parsons & Shils, 1951). Roles are "shared, normative expectations that prescribe and explain these behaviors" (Biddle, 1986, p. 70). People in the social system have an unspoken consensus about what is appropriate and inappropriate for particular roles (Biddle, 1986). For example, a mechanic's expected style of clothing, degree of cleanliness, and knowledge of automobiles differs from what is expected of a medical professional. Functional theory was popular until the mid-1970s, but has since fallen out of favor because it assumes that *all* roles are associated with identified social positions and functions, that social systems are stable, and that norms are shared and, by default, lead to conformity and sanctioning (Biddle, 1986).

Symbolic interactionist role theory stresses the roles of individual actors, role evolution through social interaction, and the cognitive concepts social actors use to understand and to interpret conduct (Biddle, 1986). Through this lens, shared norms are perceived to be associated with social positions (Biddle, 1986). An example of this is Gordon and Gordon's (1982) study of displaced homemakers. These women had distinct, well-defined roles as wives and mothers until divorce, desertion, or their spouse's death forced them into a job market "that is accurately characterized in terms of both ageism and sexism" (Gordon & Gordon, 1982, p. 243). Entering and navigating the job market influenced the displaced homemakers' self-worth. Symbolic interactionists have contributed to role theory through their examination of relationships among such role changes, as well as role taking, emotions, and stress (Biddle, 1986).

Structural role theory is a lesser known perspective that uses mathematically expressed structures to examine roles (e.g., Burt, 1976; Winship & Mandel, 1983). Through this lens, social structures are conceptualized as stable organizations of people who have similar roles (Biddle,

1986). Overall, structural role theory focuses on the social environment more than the individual, exploring social networks, kinships, role sets, exchange relationships, and economic behaviors (Biddle, 1986). An example would be the study of prisons or mental hospitals. These types of facilities are "total institutions," where leadership is formalized, the environment is constant, and there are limited communication channels and movement in and out of the institution (Trahair, 1975). Goffman (1961), for example, used structural role theory to examine inmates' roles within these total institutions. However, structural role theory did not gain a large following because of the complex nature of the mathematical symbols it uses.

Cognitive role theory is rooted in social psychology and focuses on relationships between expectations and behaviors (Flynn & Lemay, 1999). It examines the social conditions that give rise to expectations, techniques for measuring expectations, and expectations' influence on behavior (Biddle, 1986). An early example is Moreno's (1934) study on role playing, or when a person attempts to imitate others' roles. Cognitive role theory has also been used to study leaders and followers in group norms (Sherif, 1936) and anticipatory role expectations, which focus on counseling and the interpretation of mental illness (e.g., Brewer, Dull, & Lui, 1981; Carver & Scheier, 1981).

Organizational role theory is where the most empirical research has been done and is the lens through which this paper will explore roles, in particular because of its explanatory utility in dealing with instances of role conflict. Organizational role theory focuses on social systems that are preplanned, task-oriented, and hierarchical, such as workplaces (Biddle, 1986). This focus began with seminal studies by Gross, Mason, and McEachern (1958) and Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, and Snoek (1964) of school superintendents and supervisors at industrial plants, respectively. Roles in such organizations are assumed to be associated with distinct, identified social positions

that reflect the organization's official demands and informal groups' pressures (Biddle, 1986). Because there are multiple sources for norms, people often experience role conflict.

Role conflict happens when a person is required to simultaneously fill two or more roles or expectations that are inconsistent, contradictory, or mutually exclusive (Getzels & Guba, 1954). A person may or may not be consciously aware of role conflict. Though a person plays a part in defining his or her own role, the role may conflict with other roles (Van Sell, Brief, & Schuler, 1981). Role conflict differs from role ambiguity, which involves unclear information about a role's expectation (Van Sell, Brief, & Schuler, 1981). The severity of role conflict depends on the relative incompatibility of expectations between or among roles, the rigor with which expectations are defined within a given situation, and personality (Getzels & Guba, 1954). When a person cannot fully meet the expectations of the conflicting roles, his or her superiors determine that person to be ineffective (Getzels & Guba, 1954).

In their examination of role conflict, Kahn et al. (1964) interviewed supervisors at several industrial plants about their role senders, or people who made demands upon them or held expectations of them. These role senders then completed a questionnaire. The questionnaire asked about the style of behavior role senders preferred supervisors to follow and how this preference compared to the role sender's perception of supervisors' actual behavior. Kahn et al. (1964) determined role conflict to be hierarchical, often resulting from supervisors' and their role senders' differing views on work performance, opportunity for advancement, and responsibilities associated with supervisors' roles. These conflicts led to low job satisfaction, low confidence in the organization, tension, and withdrawal (Kahn et al., 1964). Other outcomes of role conflict within organizations are inaccurate job performance (Liddell & Slocum, 1976), lower

performance evaluations (Haas, 1964), perceived inadequate leader behavior (Rizzo, House, & Lirtzman, 1970), and unfavorable attitudes toward role senders (Miles, 1976).

Pondy (1967) highlighted two types of role conflict: Intrarole and interrole. In intrarole conflict, there are incompatible requirements within the same role. Different people have inconsistent conceptions of what the job requires. The role conflict Kahn et al. (1964) examined was intrarole conflict: The supervisors and their role senders had different expectations of what supervisors' roles required. In interrole conflict, however, there are clashing expectations from multiple roles held by the same person. An example would be a supervisor dealing with a crisis at work, but also needing to go home because of ill children who need his or her care.

The type of role conflict that will be explored in this study is interrole conflict, or the potentially incompatible requirements related to an individual's role as a journalist, community member and sports fan. Scholars have examined specific types of interrole conflict journalists face. This research includes concepts like work-to-family conflict, which is when work responsibilities interfere with family responsibilities, and vice versa, or family-to-work conflict (see Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Love, Tatman, & Chapman, 2010). Frohlich, Koch, and Obermaier (2013, p. 813) studied interrole conflict among journalists who also work in public relations, noting distinct expectations for both positions:

> Freelance journalists, for example, have to (critically) report on relevant issues
> and be independent of political or economic interest groups. On the contrary, for
> instance, role expectations aimed at PR practitioners are communicating
> adequately according to the interests of their clients. However, freelance
> journalists with secondary employment in the field of PR might not always be
> able to (efficiently) fulfil these expectations …

Though freelance journalists in Frohlich, Koch, and Obermaier's (2013) study were aware of their conflicting roles, participants in past journalism role conflict research have not always perceived such conflict. For example, in their study of 88 Minnesota newspaper editors, Olien, Donohue, and Tichenor (1968) found that editors viewed themselves more as promoters of civic endeavors or "boosters" than government watchdogs. This is role conflict. To be an "adversarial" watchdog, or to monitor government action, is such an established, normative role of American journalists, it helped earn U.S. journalism the moniker "the Fourth Estate." As former muckraking journalism-era reporter Finley Peter Dunne said, it is the job of the newspaper to comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable. To be a promoter, or a community booster, on the other hand, means putting the community's "best foot forward" (Sneed & Riffe, 1991). In fact, numerous studies have found that local newspapers' function is to maintain the stability of their communities (e.g., Dalisay & Yamamoto, 2012; Donohue, Tichenor, & Olien, 1973; Hindman, 1996; McCluskey, Stein, Boyle, & McLeod, 2009; Tichenor, Donohue, & Olien, 1980). This function requires a less critical eye on government activity – and may lead to the press turning a blind eye to threats to wrongdoing.

Sneed and Riffe (1991) interviewed five publisher-public officials and their readers looking for role conflicts. In each of the five communities, the publishers, who also served as public officials (e.g., local politician, sheriff, school board member), perceived themselves to be more socially responsible than readers perceived them to be; the public saw role conflict, but the publisher-public official did not. The publisher-public officials said in interviews that the potential for role conflict was there, but, largely due to their wisdom and perspective, that they had successfully dealt with it, to their own satisfaction at least. Readers disagreed, to an extent (Sneed & Riffe, 1991).

While some of these publisher-public officials apparently dealt with role conflict by denying it (Sneed & Riffe, 1991), other studies have examined how people handle perceived role conflict. Getzels and Guba (1954) studied 14 military officers, ranking from lieutenant to colonel, who also teach at the then-Air Command and Staff School of Air University. They found that officer-instructors facing role conflict may abandon one role and cling to another, may compromise between the roles, or may physically or psychologically withdraw from either of the roles altogether. More recent scholarship (e.g., Wolf, 2008) suggests people like parents who work outside the home prioritize conflicting roles. For example, if someone has a looming deadline at work, he or she may decide it is more important to stay late at work than to go home to family (Wolf, 2008). However, if that person's children are ill, he or she may decide to go home (Wolf, 2008). In other situations, roles are compartmentalized. A person may display certain characteristics at work, for example, but be more oriented toward a role as parent or spouse at home (Wolf, 2008).

In their study of school superintendents, Gross, Mason, and McEachern (1958) posed a theory of role conflict resolution that suggests that how people choose among incompatible norms can be predicted based on the degree to which a person considers others powerful and their norms legitimate. In his reanalysis of five survey studies, Van de Vliert (1981) proposed role conflict within organizations could be resolved by choosing among the norms (taking into account anticipated sanctions and judgments of legitimacy) or compromising norms. In his 1972 study of college-educated women, Hall suggested people negotiate with others to change their expectations, restructure one's view so that the problem is less worrisome, and adjust their own behavior.

While these scholars provide an array of perspectives on how individuals in particular positions or occupations deal with conflicting demands, how sports journalists handle conflicting roles is unknown. Nonetheless, deduction permits specification of some potential outcomes. It is possible they do not perceive their roles to be in conflict: Their roles are not necessarily in conflict with society's normative expectations for sports journalists (Sneed & Riffe, 1991). Also, it is possible a sports journalist may contemplate a course of action through the lens of his or her role as a journalist or community member, for example, in different contexts or at different stages of their decision-making process. For this reason, participants' normative role as journalists will be the primary role through which role conflict is examined in this study. Normative characteristics of this role include behaviors like getting information to the public quickly and providing analysis and interpretation. These and other characteristics were elements used in previous journalism role surveys that will be explained in greater depth later and are also variables in the current study's survey. Also, this study will limit sports journalists' interactions with whistleblowers to the time since sports journalists' came to their current newspapers. In most cases, this will allow for a relatively recent snapshot of the sports journalists' journalistic values and loyalties to community and to sport.

History of Sports Journalism

Sports journalism has elements that distinguish it from the "news" side of the newsroom. These distinctions can be best understood by examining sports journalism's history, particularly the sports page's inception in the 19th century and its development in newspapers until the 1920s. Events and concepts described in the following section will not specifically be explored in this study's survey. Instead, this section summarizes events of the 19th and early 20th century that past

research has highlighted as being pivotal to the development of American sports journalists' dual roles as sports enthusiasts and journalists.

A common assumption in sports communication research, and a reason why examining sports journalists' roles is important, is that sports and media have a symbiotic relationship: Sport's popularity is due to the attention given to it by mass media, and media are able to generate enormous sales in both circulation and advertising based on their sports coverage (e.g., Enriquez, 2002; McChesney, 1989; Reinardy, 2005). Historically, journalists not only covered sports, but had a role in popularizing sports. As the literature shows, sports journalists' appreciation for athletes' physical prowess and the "beauty" of games was evidenced in their narratives. This appreciation resulted in media's ability to profit from sports coverage.

The first American magazines devoted to sport debuted in the 1820s. At that time, sport was generally considered "vulgar and disreputable" among a large portion of the American reading public (McChesney, 1989). In fact, many journalists writing about sports used pseudonyms in order to protect their professional reputations (Berryman, 1979).

Several factors changed the sports journalism landscape in the mid-19th century. The first great wave of immigration and industrialization swept the United States in the 1830s and 1840s (McChesney, 1989). Literacy rates increased, leading to higher newspaper circulations and advertising revenue (Creedon, 1994; McChesney, 1989; Schiller, 1981; Schudson, 1979). Printing costs decreased, allowing for the emergence of a "penny press" that made newspapers more readily available to working-class readers (Schiller, 1981). Also, the nation became more urban and people sought to enjoy leisure time (Everbach, 2008). This led to an increase in team sports, outdoor recreation, and fitness facilities like parks, pools, tennis courts, golf courses, and athletic fields (Everbach, 2008). When Knickerbocker Ball Club established rules for a game it

called "baseball" in 1845, *Spirit of the Times* editor William Trotter Porter promoted it by printing the first rules, the first scores, the first pictures and the first box score (Reinardy, 2005). Several more sports leagues and tournaments began soon thereafter: The first American Cup was sailed in 1851; the first Belmont Stakes was held in The Bronx in 1866; country clubs first appeared in 1886; James Naismith introduced basketball in 1892; and the first Major League Baseball World Series was held in 1903. Newly invented electricity meant there could be night games; not only could people attend or participate in evening events, results could be transmitted through telegraph (Gems, 1996).

Scholars also associate the rise of yellow journalism, a type of journalism based on sensationalism, with this time period, when sports journalism's style and philosophy were forming. During the circulation war between Joseph Pulitzer's *New York World* and William Randolph Heart's *New York Journal*, Pulitzer noted the public's rising interest in sports and published sports stories in a new, separate sports department run by its own sports editor (e.g., Campbell, 2006; Swanberg, 1967). Hearst and other newspapers followed suit, expanding newspapers' audience and establishing sports "as a respectable pastime for the middle classes" (Everbach, 2008, p. 187). Sports writers of the time used colorful and entertaining styles of writing – including some phrases that are still used in modern sports jargon and in the crafting of "hero narratives," or journalists' use of myths in the stories they wrote (Everbach, 2008).

These hero narratives have received scholarly attention. Lule (2001) and Oates and Pauly (2007) argue that myths are not nonfactual, made-up stories, but are constructed, and they are stories that reflect humankind's values and vices. Lule (2001) argued that journalists present people and events through the lens of seven common myths: The victim, the scapegoat, the hero, the good mother, the trickster, the other world, and the flood (Lule, 2001). These myths resonate

with and guide members of society, but they can also marginalize, oversimplify, and deify

people (e.g., Bird & Dardenne, 1988). The hero became a dominant myth in sports journalism

during the Gilded Age, "the first period in American history when sports and games moved away

from casual amateurism in the direction of organization and professionalism" (Isenberg, 1988, p.

206). In his 1988 work on first Heavyweight gloved boxing champion John L. Sullivan, Isenberg

showed how sports journalists helped create Sullivan's hero status through prose. For example,

one writer penned a song with lyrics published in the *National Police Gazette* on June 6, 1885:

> Oh! The chorus swell for bold John L.,
>
> We'll fling it to the breeze,
>
> Yes, shout it loud, so England's crowd
>
> Shall hear it o'er the seas;
>
> The great and small, he's downed them all
>
> In many a clever bout'
>
> Hurrah for John L. Sullivan,
>
> The famous "Knocker-out" (Isenberg, 1988, p. 208)

When a statue of Sullivan's likeness was erected in Boston, journalist John Boyle O'Reilly

(1890, p. 77) wrote that the statue was Sullivan in "life, body, and spirit":

> See the tremendous chest, filled with capacious lungs and a mighty heart, capable
>
> of pumping blood everywhere at once. See the ponderous fist and the massive
>
> wrist; and the legs and feet – ah! There you see the limbs of a perfect boxer – light
>
> as a dancer, firm as a tower. And then, look up to the buttressed, Samson neck,
>
> springing beautiful from the great shoulders; look at the head – large, round as a
>
> Greek's, broad-browed, wide-chinned, with a deep dimple, showing the good

nature, and a mouth and lips that ought to be cut in granite, so full are they of doomful power and purpose.

According to Everbach (2008), sports journalists' use of myth allowed sports to take on a symbolic representation of America. For example, then-President Theodore Roosevelt, a "vigorous outdoorsman" came to represent "the impending strength of America as an international power" (Everbach, 2008, p. 186). This coincided with an evolving concept of manhood and masculinity. Kasson (2001) argues that exemplars of physical prowess like vaudeville star and body builder Eugen Sandow, Edgar Rice Burroughs's fictional hero Tarzan, and escape artist and magician Harry Houdini embodied symbolic values like willpower, strength, wit, and "escape from civilization" that contributed to sports' symbolic relationship with American greatness. The U.S. solidified this image at the 1908 Olympics in London. Though Great Britain ended the games with 146 medals compared to America's 47, the U.S. won most of the track and field competitions, which were considered "the heart of the games." American newspapers covered the games extensively, with much hyperbole. According to Everbach (2008, p. 194):

> Although the British won more medals, the Americans claimed victory based on
> their dominance in track and field and, with the help of the press, transformed the
> victories into an image of overall world dominance. The *New York Times* wrote
> on July 25 that the marathon 'is not only a triumph for the United States, but in a
> larger sense for America,' and the following day championed the 'supremacy' of
> the American Olympic athletes. *The Times* also ran a cartoon on July 19 that left
> no doubt that Americans felt superior. The sketch featured a robust, muscular
> Teddy Roosevelt, smoking and carrying thousand-pound weights over his

shoulder, facing a skinny, priggish Englishman wearing a top hat and monocle

and carrying a pedometer.

By 1910, virtually every newspaper gave prominent coverage to major sporting events. The 1920s became known as the "Golden Age of Sports" in which sport began to resemble its modern position in American culture (McChesney, 1989).

Numerous scholars, through a variety of theoretical perspectives and disciplines, have analyzed the influence these events and perspectives had on shaping modern sports journalism practice. Sports journalists still use myth-making in their narratives. Arguably more important, many sports journalists may believe the myths they help create. *Sunday Times* sports writer David Walsh (2012) said most journalists chose the field because they love sport: "Enthusiasm for the game is what drives our work. When doubts about the worth of the performance arise, they drain our enthusiasm. This is why so many refuse to ask the obvious questions" (Walsh, 2012, p. 24).

In addition to Kasson's (2001) analysis on manhood and "the body," other scholars have examined how athletes are portrayed differently based on sex and race (e.g., Hardin, Dodd, Lauffer, 2006; Trujillo, 1991); how disabled athletes (e.g., Paralympic athletes) struggle to receive mainstream coverage (e.g., von Sikorski & Schierl, 2014); the biases female sports writers still face (e.g., Hardin & Shain, 2006; Kian & Hardin, 2009); and the professional line – or lack thereof – sports journalists maintain between themselves and the people they cover (e.g., Banagan, 2011; Garrison & Salwen, 1989). Though these issues are not measured in this study's survey, they shaped the field of sports journalism and distinguish this field and its practitioners from the rest of the newsroom.

Sports Journalists' Roles

As the previous sections show, scholars have examined whistleblowers and the potential characteristics they look for when determining to whom they should whistleblow, as well as role conflict and the early development of sports journalism as we know it. The following section summarizes scholars' examinations of journalists' perceptions of their roles. Sports journalists' perceptions of their roles – particularly their additional roles as community members and sports fans – will be explored through this study's survey. The first subsection is about journalists' normative role as journalists. The following subsections are about sports journalists' additional roles as community members and sports fans, respectively.

Journalism. Early black and white films exemplify the stereotype: A cigarette-smoking social misfit wearing a press pass in his hat brim and taking a drink from a flask (Shoemaker & Reese, 2014). Though working-class images of journalists were common in the 1930s, by the mid-20th century, about 80 percent of journalists had at least some college education and the industry as a whole was becoming more corporate and professionalized (Shoemaker & Reese, 2014). Journalists' increased status led to a scholarly interest in journalists' roles that continues today.

Rosten undertook the first study of American journalists' roles in 1937. Rosten (1937) examined Washington correspondents, finding the press at that time to be mostly married, Protestant, under 40 years old, college-educated, and originally hailing from small Midwest towns. Journalists' professional roles became the subject of further study because of the way journalists shape the public's perception of the world (e.g., Jamieson & Waldman, 2003). Johnstone, Slawski, and Bowman (1976) conducted interviews with journalists, asking open- and closed-ended questions in order to learn about their perceived, expected functions (e.g.,

"investigate claims and statements made by the government," "provide analysis and interpretation of complex problems"). After developing categories and pre-testing the survey twice, Johnstone, Slawski, and Bowman (1976) interviewed 1,313 journalists nationwide. The authors argued that journalists fall into two camps: Those who saw their roles as "neutral" and those who saw their role as "participant." Journalists who saw themselves as "neutral" saw their jobs as serving as mere channels of transmission (Johnstone, Slawski, & Bowman, 1976). This meant getting information to the public quickly, avoiding stories with unverified content, concentrating on the widest audience, and entertaining the audience (Shoemaker & Reese, 2014). Those who saw themselves as participants believed journalists need to sift through information in order to find and to develop stories, investigate government claims, provide analysis of complex problems, discuss national policy, and develop their audience's intellectual and cultural interests (Shoemaker & Reese, 2014). Journalists who perceive themselves as "participants" tended to be "younger, better educated, and worked for bigger media organizations in large cities" (Shoemaker & Reese, 2014, p. 231).

Later, Weaver and his colleagues researched journalists' perceptions of their roles, conducting the first of many national surveys of journalists in 1982. In telephone interviews with journalists, interviewers asked journalists to rate on a five-point Likert scale how important they thought a variety of objectives are for news media to try to do. Examples included "get information to the public quickly" and "provide analysis and interpretation of complex problems." These surveys were pivotal to journalists' role perception research and are the foundation on which this study's examination of role perception is based. These surveys were administered again in 1992, 2002, and 2013, each time by Weaver and his colleagues at Indiana University. As noted above, these studies were an aggregation of a wide range of journalists,

from general assignment to graphics editors, and their perceptions of their roles. To summarize, however, the 1982 study revealed differences unexplained in Johnstone et al.'s (1976) study. This resulted in three, as opposed to two, roles emerging in the 1982 study: Adversarial, interpretative, and disseminator. The adversarial role was endorsed by 17 percent of the sample, while a third of journalists fully embraced the interpretative and disseminator roles (Weaver & Wilhoit, 1986). When the study was conducted again in 1992, similar results emerged: The two roles journalists most strongly supported were those of disseminator and interpreter. The adversarial role was still present, and a fourth function, populist mobilizer, emerged (Weaver & Wilhoit, 1986). These four functions from the foundation for studying roles in the current study.

The interpretive function was the strongest perceived role in the 2002 study. Journalists working on large staffs and taking "their ethical cues from more senior colleagues" tend to embrace the interpretive role (Weaver et al., 2007, p. 147). Journalists with higher levels of education ("well-educated liberals") who learn from their immediate bosses, not their owners, tend to endorse this role, too (Weaver et al., 2007, p. 151). "They believe journalists' work should influence public affairs, and they relish the opportunity to do so. They are especially supportive of the use of unauthorized official documents to report an important story" (Weaver et al., 2007, p. 151).

The disseminator function had a steep decline in importance in 2002: For the first time since Weaver et al. (2007) began this program of study, this role appeared to be not terribly important to journalists. Unlike the adversarial and interpretative roles, disseminators are "more ethically cautious and traditional" (Weaver et al. 2007, p. 151). They tend to believe high profits are important to their organization and that their organizations do a good job informing the public (Weaver et al. 2007). Job security is important to this group, as is having a journalism

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degree. Their news judgment is shaped by wire-service budgets, and they frown on using unauthorized official documents, hidden microphones, or rape victims' names in stories (Weaver et al., 2007).

As it was when it first emerged in the 1982 study, the adversarial role remained a minor function in the 2002 study. Weaver et al. (2007, p. 143) were surprised this role had not become more prominent, arguing that this finding represented "either a popular misunderstanding of the nature of the American journalist or a widespread denial among journalists that they are skeptical adversaries of those in power." Along with the interpretive role, journalists working on large staffs tend to embrace the adversarial role (Weaver et al., 2007, p. 147). Journalists in the adversarial role tend to influence not just public affairs, but public opinion: "They seem to embrace their "watchdog" attitude from the security of a large newspaper or magazine, surrounded by colleagues whose judgment they trust, insistent that their work influence the public" (Weaver et al., 2007, p. 151).

The populist mobilizer role first appeared in the 1992 study and described or was endorsed by a larger minority in the 2002 study. This role is tied to the growth of public journalism, an historical movement that garnered advocates and adversaries since the 1990s. Whereas journalists working at large newspapers had a tendency to embrace the interpretive and adversarial roles, journalists at small news organizations embraced the populist mobilizer role (Weaver et al., 2007, p. 147). This populist mobilizer role is also associated with more predictors than any others in Weaver et al.'s (2007) study. Populist mobilizers tend to be print journalists at publications smaller than average but not necessarily locally owned (Weaver et al., 2007). Populist mobilizers feel a higher degree of freedom than other journalists in terms of what to emphasize in their stories, and they value developing a specialty (Weaver et al., 2007). What is

distinctive about this group is its attitude toward community. "They were the only group to display exceptional affinity with the media's opportunities to help people, as well as to influence public affairs and public opinion" (Weaver et al., 2007, p. 152).

Results of Willnat and Weaver's 2014 study, which comprised a national survey administered to 1,080 U.S. journalists and online interviews, suggest U.S. journalists are now, on average, older, slightly more likely to be women, slightly less likely to be racial or ethnic minorities, slightly more likely to be college graduates, more likely to call themselves Independents, and less likely to identify with Republican or Democratic political parties. Journalists are less satisfied with their work, less likely to say they have complete autonomy to select stories, much more likely to say journalism is headed in the wrong direction than in the right direction, and more likely to say that their news staffs have shrunk in the past year rather than remained the same or grown (Willnat and Weaver, 2014). They are also less likely to say certain practices are OK in some circumstances, like using confidential or personal documents without permission, badgering or harassing news sources, seeking undercover employment, posing as someone else, and paying for information (Willnat & Weaver, 2014). Journalists' government watchdog role increased, as well as the perceived importance of analyzing complex problems. There is also an increased perceived importance of using social media in daily work for checking breaking news and to monitor what other news organizations are doing. However, few journalists used social media for verifying information and interviewing sources.

Though the Weaver et al. (2007) study was extensive, it was broad. It was an aggregated study of a wide range of individuals identifying as journalists. Weaver et al. (2007) defined "journalist" as "those who had responsibility for the preparation or transmission of news stories or other timely information – all full-time reporters, writers, correspondents, editors, news

announcers, columnists, photojournalists and other news people." It is unclear how sports journalists' roles interact, and if sports journalists' perceived roles mirror Weaver et al.'s (2007) overall analysis of journalists' habits and beliefs.

This study differs from the broad, cross-sectional aggregation approach used in the Weaver et al. (2007) studies and will focus specifically on sports journalists, while using questions from Weaver et al.'s (2007) survey in order to determine if sports journalists see their roles as interpreters, disseminators, adversaries, or populist mobilizers. It will also explore further the potential connection Weaver et al. (2007) found between populist mobilizers and strength of community membership or identity, discussed next, focusing on whether sports journalists who identify as populist mobilizers prioritize community roles higher than sports journalists who identified as interpreters, adversaries, or disseminators. Whether any of these role perceptions can explain sports journalists' interactions with whistleblowers is unknown. Nonetheless, Weaver et al.'s (2007) four categorical roles will be the measures through which sports journalists' role perceptions will be quantified and examined as predictors of sports journalists' interactions with whistleblowers.

Community. Sports journalists' perception of their journalistic role is not the only role this study will explore. Whether sports journalists' additional role as community members predicts interactions with whistleblowers has not been researched and will be explored in this study. There is, however, extensive research on the concept of the community.

Scholars have used numerous definitions for "community," each of these definitions receiving criticism. An historical definition, coined by Ferdinand Tonnies (1957), describes a small, close-knit group in which individuals have much in common, interact frequently, and know each other intimately. However, "community" can also mean a large and diverse group of

people who share an idea or place, or existing as an "imagined community" (Anderson, 1983).

Conceptualizations of community vary in terms of size, type of interaction, and degrees of organization and planning (Hartmann, 2005). The community label can be applied, for example, to neighborhoods, book clubs, religious groups, or ethnic backgrounds (Hartmann, 2005).

In their study of conceptual approaches used in 11 years of communication scholarship on the relationship between community and news media, Lowrey, Brozana, and Mackay (2008) found that 72 percent of studies did not define "community." Of the 65 studies that defined "community," 30 used definitions tied to physical location (Lowrey, Brozana, & Mackay, 2008). Communities were seen as territorially organized systems with a settlement pattern (Taylor, Lee & Davie, 2000) and determined by functional regions or flow of commerce, administrative regions or legal and government boundaries, and formal regions or geographic boundaries (Kang & Kwak, 2003). These conceptualizations also emphasized a community's role as a place to meet and to connect. Communities are "interconnected relationships among people" (Kurpius, 2000, p. 340), "overlapping systems that include a communication network and a social structure" (Jeffres, Atkin, & Neuendorf, 2002, p. 391).

Other scholars conceptualized "community" as symbolic interaction, not requiring physical, geographical proximity in order to thrive. Twenty-seven studies in Lowrey, Brozana, and Mackay's (2008) analysis found such "imagined" communities were prevalent. In these situations, newspapers helped create and perpetuate community identity. Hamilton (1998) used an example of migrant workers in the 1930s: They perceived their temporary work camps as geographical communities, but they also identified with a larger community of migrant labor workers, or their "field" or profession. In 30 semi-structured interviews with editors, journalists, advertising sales representatives, sources of news, media relations professionals, and readers,

Hess and Waller (2014, p. 9) found that "the practice of reading the local newspaper regularly was a key strategy for gaining the necessary social knowledge to embody 'the local.'" In other words, community members read the local newspaper, but by reading the local newspaper, people become community members.

A third and final conceptualization that Lowrey, Brozana, and Mackay (2008) found in their analysis was that of interpretive communities. Interpretive communities are groups united by shared interpretations of reality (Hymes, 1980). They produce texts, determining the shape of what is read (Fish, 1980). They also display certain patterns of authority (Degh, 1972). Zelizer (1993) argued that journalists, for example, are not as much of a profession as they are an interpretive community. This is because the common characteristics of a profession do not take into account three key characteristics of journalism: The importance of informal networking in journalism, the importance of storytelling and narrative in journalism, and journalism's lack of professional trappings (Zelizer, 1993).

Overall, Lowrey, Brozana, and Mackay (2008) argue that "community" is both geographic *and* a concept of shared meaning building. Anderson, Coleman, and Thumim (2014) confirm this analysis. In their 2014 study, Anderson, Coleman, and Thumim interviewed a range of stakeholders – mainstream journalists, bloggers, and "artist-storytellers," for example – to determine who and what should count as "local" media. In order to define "local" in Philadelphia, the authors conducted a social network analysis of online media within the city. They constructed two separate social network maps that analyzed Philadelphia's blogosphere in order to determine the city's media nodes, clusters, and important subgroups. Findings suggest an overlap between geographical and imagined communities. Or, as Lowrey, Brozana, and Mackay (2008) argue, community is a process of negotiating shared symbolic meaning *and*

degree of structure. McMillan and Chavis (1986) echo this argument, suggestion a person's sense of community was the person's perception of membership, influence, met needs, and shared emotional connection. Chavis, Lee, and Acosta (2008) created a 24-item, Likert scale Sense of Community Index that reflects these elements and will be modified in this study. Through these measures, the strength of sports journalists' community membership will be examined in order to determine if populist mobilizers have higher community membership than non-populist mobilizers, if community membership negatively correlates with interactions with whistleblowers, and if community membership can predict sports journalists' interactions with whistleblowers.

Sport. In addition to being journalists and community members, sports journalists are sports enthusiasts. Many sports journalists played organized sports as children and/or enjoyed consuming sports media. They believe sport should be a vital, healthy part of someone's life; that sport serves a social function; and that people who participate in sport develop quality characters and new opportunities (Billings, Butterworth, & Turman, 2012). But as Hardin's (2005) research suggests, sports journalists' higher levels of fandom may interfere with their normative journalistic role, particularly its adversarial or "watchdog" dimensions.

However, there are various levels of fandom, and it is unclear if *all* fandom leads to role conflict. Sutton, McDonald, Milne, and Cimperman (1997) identified three types of fans: Social fans, focused fans, and vested fans. Social fans, also referred to as fair-weather fans, have "a limited sense of identification with a particular team, sport, or athlete," and view sports primarily as a socializing opportunity (Billings, Butterworth, & Turman, 2012). The outcome of the game is not as important as the experience of participating. A focused fan has moderate levels of identification, with some vested interest in or affiliation with a team. But these fans are also

driven by a sense of civic engagement, giving their support toward a city or community's local team (Billings, Butterworth, & Turman, 2012). An example Billings, Butterworth, and Turman (2012, p. 46) offer is of someone saying, "I'm from Denver, which means that I support the Broncos, Rockies, Nuggets, and Avalanche." A vested fan, or a die-hard fan, has high levels of emotional attachment and identification with a team. Team wins and losses are of critical importance to vested fans' self-esteem and identity (Billings, Butterworth, & Turman, 2012). These fans invest time, money, and energy into "their" teams (Billings, Butterworth, & Turman, 2012).

Multiple measures of sports fandom exist. Wann (1995) used a 38-item survey, distributed to undergraduate students and recreational softball league members, in order to assess participants' motivation for being fans. The dimensions were eustress, or positive levels of arousal or drama; self-esteem; escape; entertainment; economic (gambling on events); aesthetic; group affiliation; and family needs. Trail and James (2001) modified this scale in order to measure motivations behind sport spectator consumption behavior. They created the Motivation Scale for Sport Consumption after mailing surveys to season ticket holders for a major league baseball team. Respondents completed three-item scales measuring their level of identification with the team, the number of games they attend, and their level of team fandom. Izzo, Munteanu, Langord, Ceobanu, Dumitru, and Nichifor (2011) further adapted the Trail and James (2001) and Wann (1995) measures in order to investigate Romanian soccer fans' consumption motivation. Izzo et al. (2011) surveyed 486 undergraduate marketing students at five major public universities in Romania. Izzo et al.'s (2011) measures are more useful for the purpose of this study because they distinguish between fan socializing while watching soccer on television or in person. This is more appropriate for the current study than Wann's (1995) study because sports

journalists primarily cover sports in person. Sports journalists' level of fandom will be measured using Izzo et al.'s (2011) scale and analyzed as a potential inhibitor of sports journalists' interactions with whistleblowers. This study will also determine if sports fan correlates negatively with interactions with whistleblowers and if sports fandom can predict sports journalists' interactions with whistleblowers.

CHAPTER 3

HYPOTHESES AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

According to Near and Miceli (1995), the whistleblower complaint recipient – or in the context of this study, the sports journalist – needs to be credible, powerful, and supportive of the whistleblower in order for whistleblowing to be effective. But the influence of sports journalists' sports fandom and community membership role on interactions with whistleblowers represents a crucial gap in the literature. In order to better understand how sports journalists' additional roles as community members and sports fans potentially inhibit their interactions with whistleblowers, sports journalists' perceptions of their role as journalists must first be explored.

The following section is divided into two parts. The first section includes research questions that explore sports journalists' perception of their journalist, community member, and sports fandom roles, as well as hypotheses that synthesize arguments made in the literature review. The second section includes a research question specific to whistleblowing.

Roles

Past research suggests sports journalists' roles as journalists, community members, and sports enthusiasts conflict. Potential whistleblowers may recognize when sports journalists have high levels of sports fandom, and this fandom may inhibit whistleblowers from approaching that sports journalist. For example, a pilot study (Reed, 2015) found that the higher that sports journalists ranked their level of fandom, the fewer interactions they had with whistleblowers. It is possible that potential whistleblowers, when analyzing the costs and benefits of whistleblowing to sports journalists, may see high degrees of sports fandom negatively. If a sports journalist

appears to prioritize his or her sports fandom over his or her responsibilities as a watchdog, he or she may appear to the whistleblower as more a booster than a journalist. The whistleblower might then, as a result, decide that whistleblowing to that particular sports journalist would not be effective.

On the other hand, strong community identification may not be necessarily helpful either. As past research shows, journalists – particularly those working in small communities – may see themselves more as community promoters than adversarial watchdogs (e.g., Olien, Donohue, & Tichenor, 1968; Sneed & Riffe, 1991). Sports journalists may *think* they successfully deal with the potential role conflict between being a journalist and being a community member, but as Sneed and Riffe (1991) show, it is likely members of the public disagree. If a potential whistleblower perceives a sports writer has a high degree of community membership, it is also possible the whistleblower will not confide in that sports journalist.

In order to examine these potential conflicts, sports journalists' understanding of their journalistic role needs to be understood. How sports journalists perceive their journalistic role (e.g., interpreter, adversary) is unclear because the Weaver et al. (2007, p. 256) studies were a cross-section of professionals "who had a responsibility for the preparation or transmission of news stories." In order to determine if and how sports journalists depart from other journalists in terms of their understandings of their normative professional role, the following research question is proposed.

R1: With which of the four roles outlined in Weaver et al.'s (2007) study do sports journalists most identify (i.e., interpreter, disseminator, adversary, or populist mobilizer)?

This research question will first be examined through the lens of Weaver et al.'s (2007) measures. Participants' answers will be grouped into the four role categories Weaver et al.

(2007) propose, and answers' internal consistency will be measured. Then a factor analysis will be done to determine how this specific sample's answers group, and how these groupings compare to Weaver et al.'s (2007) groupings. Descriptive statistics and correlations will also be examined in order to determine differences among sports journalists who rank their roles the way they did.

Weaver et al. (2007) also found that journalists at smaller news organizations more often embraced the populist mobilizer role. Smaller organizations arguably represent smaller, more cohesive communities. Journalists in this group tend to be print journalists at smaller news organizations and are "eager to connect with and influence the local community" (Weaver et al., 2007, p. 152). This means sports journalists who identify as populist mobilizers may also prioritize their roles as community members. Sneed and Riffe (1991), who examined small community leaders also serving in journalistic roles, found that community goals often took precedence over journalistic performance.

H1: The strength with which sports journalists rate themselves as populist mobilizers will predict the extent to which they prioritized community roles.

This hypothesis will be examined through a linear regression.

The second overarching task will be to determine sports journalists' community membership. According to Chavis, Lee, and Acosta (2008), community is a multi-dimensional concept that has four factors: Reinforcement of needs, membership, influence, and shared emotional connection. Chavis, Lee, and Acosta's (2008) measures have been used in a variety of settings, like urban, rural, and tribal, and in workplaces, schools, universities, recreational clubs and internet communities in North America, South America, Asia, and the Middle East. How important sports journalists perceive aspects of community membership to be remains unknown.

R2: Based on measures designed by Chavis, Lee, and Acosta (2008), how do sports journalists rate their community membership?

Like the first research question, this question will first be examined through the lens of Chavis, Lee, and Acosta's (2008) measures of community membership, and answers' internal consistency will be measured. A factor analysis will be used to determine which roles emerge from these specific data, and how sports journalists' priorities compare to Chavis, Lee, and Acosta's categories. Descriptive statistics and correlations will also be examined in order to determine differences between sports journalists who rank their roles the way they did.

According to Weaver et al. (2007), populist mobilizers are "the only group to display exceptional affinity with the media's opportunities to help people, as well as to influence public affairs and public opinion" (Weaver et al., 2007, p. 152). Weaver et al. (2007) concluded that this group, more than others, believes its job is to motivate people to get involved in important issues, to set the agenda, and to look for possible solutions to problems. As stated earlier, however, sports journalists' strong membership identification may inhibit their interactions with whistleblowers. Past research suggests that journalists working in small communities in particular may shy away from their adversarial journalistic role and see themselves more as populist mobilizers. This means sports journalists with higher community membership scales would have fewer interactions with whistleblowers than sports journalists with lower community membership.

H2: Sports journalists' level of community membership negatively correlates with sports journalists' interactions with whistleblowers.

This hypothesis will be tested through a correlation.

The third research question involves sports journalists' role as sports enthusiasts and requires measuring their levels of fandom. Izzo et al. (2011) adapted components of earlier measures of sports fandom (e.g., Funk, Mahony, Nakazawa, & Hirakawa, 2001; Trail & James, 2001; Wann, 1995) and tested a new, seven-factor scale on Romanian undergraduate students. The following study will use this modified scale.

R3: How do sports journalists rate their levels of sports fandom?

This research question will first be examined by comparison with Izzo et al.'s (2011) components of sports fandom, and groupings' internal consistency will be determined. A factor analysis will be used to determine which roles emerge from this sample. Descriptive statistics and correlations will also be used to better understand sports journalists' perception of their levels of sports fandom.

Sports fandom likely has a different influence on whistleblowing interactions than community membership. In a 2013 survey of North Carolinian sports journalists, eight of the 15 participants said they had interactions with whistleblowers during their time at their current newspaper (Reed, 2015). There was a significant difference between sports journalists' level of sports fandom for sports journalists who have interacted with whistleblowers once and more than five times. Hardin (2005) suggests young editors analyze sports as fans and not enough as journalists. Fink (2001) supports this argument, finding that about 46 percent of sports editors at small dailies support boosterism (i.e., when a reporter is a fervent sports fan or has close relationships with sources). This suggests sports journalists' additional role as sports fan may inhibit interactions with whistleblowers.

H3: Sport journalists' level of sports fandom negatively correlates with sports journalists' interactions with whistleblowers.

This hypothesis will be explored through correlations.

Another potential predictor of whistleblowing is circulation size. Sports journalism as an industry has changed by adopting ethical standards and covering issues formerly considered taboo. However, not all sports departments are the same. As Hardin (2005) argued, sports editors at small-circulation newspapers practice different professional norms than those practiced in larger sports departments. Editors at small-circulation newspapers are more likely to be in their 20s or 30s and have less professional experience than their large-paper counterparts (Hardin, 2005). Though 90 percent of sports editors in Hardin's (2005) study believed sports departments should use the same code of ethics as the "news" side of the newsroom, sports departments at small-circulation dailies were less likely than larger newspapers to use codes. This suggests circulation size may influence interactions with whistleblowers, with sports journalists at smaller circulation newspapers in particular having fewer interactions with whistleblowers than sports journalists at larger circulation newspapers.

H4: Sports journalists at newspapers with circulations of 5,000 and less will have fewer interactions with whistleblowers than sports journalists at newspapers with circulations of 100,001 and greater.

Because both variables are categorical, a linear regression is an inappropriate test for this hypothesis. Instead, a chi-square test of independence will be used.

Overall, little is known about which factors may best predict sports journalists' interactions with whistleblowers. Sports journalists' journalist, community membership, and sports fandom roles will be used as variables to see which, if any, can predict interactions with whistleblowers.

R4: Which variables have the greatest overall predictive power in explaining sports journalists' interactions with whistleblowers?

This research question will be explored through a binary logistic regression. This type of regression predicts a dichotomous dependent variable (in this case, interaction with whistleblower, which is coded 1 for "yes" and 0 for "no") on the basis of several independent variables.

Whistleblowing

According to Near, Rehg, Van Scotter, and Miceli (2004), people who observe wrongdoing like mismanagement, sexual harassment, and other legal violations are more likely to whistleblow than people who witness stealing, safety problems, or discrimination. A potential explanation is that these types of wrongdoings involve legal violations that carry a higher risk of psychological costs and damage to an organization's reputation (Near et al., 2004). These categories were explored in a pilot study, with mixed results (Reed, 2015). Describing their interactions with whistleblowers, one North Carolinian sports writer said a whistleblower reported mismanagement (e.g., cover-up of a poor performance, using a group or team's money poorly), and four participants said whistleblowers reported other legal or unethical violations, for a total of five instances (Reed, 2015). However, five participants reported safety problems (e.g., unsafe or non-compliant conduct, equipment, or products; unsafe working or playing conditions), one participant reported discrimination (e.g., and other discrimination based on race, sex, religion, etc…), for a total of six instances. One person reported drug or alcohol abuse. A national sample, like the one used in this study, may provide a more valid test of Near et al.'s (2004) hypotheses.

R5: What types of wrongdoing do whistleblowers most often disclose to sports

journalists?

This research question will be explored through descriptive statistics.

CHAPTER 4

METHOD

This study uses a multi-contact survey (Dillman, Smyth, & Christian, 2008) to identify the characteristics of sports journalists who have and have not interacted with whistleblowers and to determine if sports journalists' additional roles as community members and sports enthusiasts predict sports journalists' interactions with whistleblowers. This research uses whistleblowing elements explored in a pilot study (Reed, 2015), including Near and Miceli's (1995) model of effective whistleblowing and Near et al.'s (2004) seven categories of wrongdoing. It also contributes to the literature by adapting Weaver et al.'s (2007) journalists' role perception measures; Chavis, Lee, and Acosta's (2008) Sense of Community Index; and Izzo et al.'s (2011) sports fandom measures.

Sample

Previous surveys of journalists, like Weaver et al. (2007), used resources like the *Editor & Publisher International Newspaper Data Book* or *US Newspaper List* in order to identify the population and to compile a sample. However, these sampling frames have weakness. They do not indicate if newspapers have sports departments. The current study's sample is based on *Ulrichsweb*, a bibliographic database that filters for the presence of specific genres of journalism published in newspapers, like sports sections.

A search for English-language, American newspapers that publish sports stories in print editions was conducted. This resulted in 3,281 newspapers. Because of the number of newspapers, stratified sampling was used (Riffe, Lacy, & Fico, 2005). Of the 3,281 newspapers

in the population, there were 1,865 weekly, 1,067 daily, 290 biweekly, 36 monthly, and 18 "other" (e.g., fortnightly, quarterly, 20 times a year) types newspapers. The 36 monthly and 18 "other" newspapers were dropped because a randomly selected sample from this relatively small group would not be a representative sample. This left a total of 3,227 newspapers. In order to achieve a 5% margin of error (95% CI), 802 newspapers were selected. Random sampling was done within these categories: 464 weekly, 266 daily, and 72 biweekly newspapers. Weaver et al.'s (2007) method of systematic random selection – selecting every fifth newspaper within strata – was used.

For example, there are 290 biweekly newspapers. Seventy two were selected for this sample. The first randomly selected newspaper in this category, the fifth newspaper, is *The Wilson Post* of Lebanon, Tennessee (http://www.wilsonpost.com). The only sports-related staff member listed on *The Wilson Post's* website is sports editor Tommy Bryan. Bryan and other participants were contacted at least once, but no more than four times, via email. A copy of these emails is in the appendix. The first email was sent March 1, 2015, and explained the survey's purpose and expected length, participants' privacy, and incentives. A link to the survey was also included at the bottom of this email. On March 13, 2015, Bryan and other participants – if they had not yet participated – received a second email asking for participation. Two more reminder emails were sent: One on March 24, 2015, and the final email on April 16, 2015. The same process was used for Bryan was used for the remainder of the randomly selected participants: The second randomly selected newspaper was the 10th newspaper and the third selected paper was the 15th newspaper, for example.

Some of these newspapers listed only one sports-related email contact. Others, however, had several sports-related staff members. A list of every sports-related staff member (e.g., sports

writer, sports editor) appearing on each of the 802 newspapers' website was compiled. This resulted in a list of 1,137 emails from the 802 newspapers. Some sports journalists were listed as contacts on multiple newspapers' websites, resulting in duplicate email addresses. These duplicates were eliminated. After approval from the university's Institutional Review Board, the selected newspapers were contacted. This list included 1,035 emails.

Measures

This dissertation combines scales from the journalism, community, and sports fandom literature in order to create a new measure assessing sports journalists' perceived roles. It also uses items from the whistleblowing literature in order to assess sports journalists' interactions with whistleblowers.

Journalism. This study adapts Weaver et al.'s (2007) 15-item survey measures of journalists' role perception (i.e., interpreters, disseminators, adversaries, or populist mobilizers). This is a 5-point Likert scale, asking participants to rate (1 being "not at all important" and 5 being "extremely important") how important a list of items are. These items are categorized into the four designated subcategories:

Interpretive. Three items measure interpretive roles, though initially there were four: "Providing analysis and interpretation of complex problems" and "providing analysis and interpretation of international developments" were merged into "providing analysis and interpretation." Two other roles, "discussing national policy while it is still being developed," and "investigating claims and statements made by the government" were modified in order to make them more appropriate for sports journalists: "Discussing national policy" was changed to "discussing athletic policy" and "investigating government claims" was changed to "investigating coaches' claims and statements."

Disseminator. Four items measure disseminator roles: "Get information to the public quickly," "stay away from stories with factual content that cannot be verified," "concentrate on stories that are of interest to the widest possible audience," and "provide entertainment and relaxation."

Adversarial. Weaver et al.'s (2007) two adversarial items, "be an adversary of public officials by being constantly skeptical of their actions" and "be an adversary of businesses by being constantly skeptical of their actions," were modified. "Public officials" became "coaches," and "businesses" became "athletic directors and other sports administrators."

Populist mobilizer. Four of Weaver et al.'s (2007) five items were modified for the study: "Give ordinary people a chance to express their views on public affairs" became "give ordinary people a chance to express their views on sports issues"; "develop intellectual and cultural interests of the public" became "develop public's athletic interests"; "motivate ordinary people to get involved in public discussions of important issues" became "motivate ordinary people to get involved in public discussions of important sports-related issues"; "set the political agenda" became "set sports news agenda"; and "point people toward possible solutions to society's problems" became "point people toward possible solutions to the world of sports' problems."

Community. Chavis, Lee, and Acosta's (2008) 24-item Sense of Community Index measures four subcategories of community: Reinforcement of needs, membership, influence, and shared emotional connection. Because of space and time constraints, three of the six scales measuring each of the four subcategories were used, for a total of 12 items.

Reinforcement of needs. Three items measured reinforcement of needs: "My important needs are met because I am part of this community," "value the same things members of the community value," and "be able to talk with a member of the community about my problems."

Membership. Three items measured membership: "Trust people in the community," "recognize most members of the community," and "invest a lot of time and effort into being part of the community."

Influence. Three items measured influence: "Fit into the community," "care about what other community members think of me," and "influence the community."

Shared emotional connection. Three items measured shared emotional connection: "Be part of the community," "spend time with community members often, and enjoy that time with them," and "feel hopeful about the community's future."

Sport. Izzo et al.'s (2011) 25-item scale measures seven subcategories: Vicarious achievement, escape, socialization while watching sports on television, drama (suspense), physical skill, socialization while attending live sports, and entertainment. Izzo et al.'s (2011) survey, however, measured soccer fandom. For the purpose of this study, "soccer" was changed to "sports" or "games," depending upon the context. Also, six of Izzo et al.'s (2011) measures were dropped for this study because of their irrelevance to sports journalists: Three entertainment questions ("Games offer an alternative pastime," "attending games is a fun way to spend time," and "I don't find games to be very exciting"); one socializing while attending live games item ("attending games gives me the opportunity to see players mixing with fans, such as when signing autographs"); one escape question ("games are a great change of pace for what I regularly do"); and one drama (suspense) question ("I get excited when my team comes onto the field"). This left 19 items.

Drama (suspense). Four items measured this category: "I enjoy watching games when the score is close," "I am very disappointed when my team loses," and "a game is more enjoyable when the outcome is not decided until the very end."

Vicarious achievement. Three items measured vicarious achievement: "I feel like I have won when my team wins," "I feel proud when my team plays well," and "I feel a sense of accomplishment when my team plays well."

Escape. Two items measured escape: "Games provide me with an escape from my day-to-day activities," and "watching games helps me forget my troubles." The first item was modified, with "day-to-day activities" changed to "other day-to-day activities."

Socializing while watching televised games. This category has three measures: "I like to watch games on TV with family and/or friends," "watching televised games is a great opportunity to socialize with other people," and "I enjoy meeting with other fans to watch televised games of my team."

Physical skill. There items measured physical skill: "I enjoy watching the skillful performances of players," "watching a well-executed athletic performance is something I enjoy," and "I enjoy the gracefulness I see in games."

Socializing while attending games. Three items measured this category: "Interacting with other fans is an important reason to be at games," "attending games gives me the feeling of belonging to a group," and "games are great opportunities to socialize with fans."

Entertainment. Two items measured entertainment: "I look forward to games because they are exciting entertainment," and "I am more interested in watching individual players than the team as a whole."

Whistleblowing. In the second half of the questionnaire, Near and Miceli's (1985) definition of whistleblowing were provided, as well as Miceli, Near, and Dworkin's (2008) distinction between illegal or immoral behavior and misguided or stupid behavior. After making this distinction, participants were asked if they have ever been approached by a whistleblower,

and if so, to answer the following questions. Sports journalists who responded "no," "I don't know," or "I'm not comfortable disclosing this information" were asked to skip to the bottom of the survey in order to provide demographic, newspaper circulation, and publication information.

Near and Miceli's (1995) model of effective whistleblowing. One of the 12 propositions Near and Miceli (1995, p. 694) argue is needed for effective whistleblowing is that complaint recipients view the whistleblower as credible and powerful. Participants were asked to indicate on a 5-point Likert scale if they perceived the whistleblower to be credible (1 being not at all credible, 5 being very credible); powerful within their organization or association (1 being not at all powerful, 5 being very powerful); identified, as opposed to anonymous (nominal scale, "yes," "no," "I don't remember," "I am not comfortable disclosing this information"); and able to provide convincing evidence (nominal scale, "yes," "no," "somewhat," "I don't remember," "I am not comfortable disclosing this information").

Nature of whistleblowing. Sports journalists were asked if they were approached in-person, via telephone, via text message, via social media, via a handwritten letter or note, via e-mail, or other. Participants checked all that apply.

Near et al.'s (2004) seven categories of wrongdoing. These categories were used to determine the type of wrongdoing reported: Stealing, waste, mismanagement, safety problems, sexual harassment, unfair discrimination, and other. Another category, drug or alcohol abuse, was added because the primary beat for sports journalists at many small-circulation newspapers is prep sports. Because alcohol use among these athletes would be underage drinking, adding this category was appropriate for this sample.

In addition to assessing participants' professional characteristics, the survey also gathers sports journalists' professional demographics, like their news organization's circulation size and

publication schedule (e.g., daily or weekly print edition). Participants were also asked for an

email address to which they would like a $10 Amazon gift card incentive sent.

CHAPTER 5

RESULTS

The following section will be organized in a fashion similar as the previous section. Results will be presented in the same order as their research questions and hypotheses were presented, beginning with descriptive statistics for the role-related research questions and hypotheses. The section will conclude with results for the research question related to whistleblowing. Tables of descriptive statistics and other results begin on page 81.

Roles: Descriptive Statistics

Out of the 1,104 emails sent, 50 emails were returned undeliverable and 19 people opted out. Of the remaining 1,035 emails, 116 people participated, for a response rate of 11.2%. The sample was heavily male (87.1%) and White (83.6%), with participants' ages ranging from 21 to 80 years (M = 40.88, SD = 14.59). Most participants work for dailies (64.6%) and were sports writers or sports reporters (48.3%), though sports editors (39.7%) also made up a large portion of the sample. Participants hailed from a variety of market sizes, the largest percentage working for publications with circulations of 10,001 to 50,000 (38.8%). Participants averaged 10.48 years (SD = 11.12) with their current news organizations and 15.70 years (SD = 13.47) of overall professional journalism experience. See Table 1 for descriptive statistics for these and other key variables.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

R1 asked with which of the four roles outlined in Weaver et al.'s (2007) study do sports journalists most identify (i.e., interpreter, disseminator, adversarial, or populist mobilizer).

Participants answered 14 questions about what they thought were important elements of their job. Participants' answers in this study, however, did not fit well with Weaver et al.'s (2007) dimensional structure. For example, the Cronbach's alpha of participants' answers for the three items Weaver et al. (2007) grouped as interpreter items was $\alpha = .241$ (M = 3.95, SD = .728). This low alpha suggests the items lack internal consistency. Deleting one of the three items did not raise the alpha to an acceptable .70 either (Santos, 1999). The disseminator measure was even less reliable. Its composite score of four items was $\alpha = .201$ (M = 4.01, SD = .820). The two adversarial items had a moderate, positive correlation, $r = .652$, $p < .001$, and the composite score of the five populist mobilizer items was $\alpha = .633$ (M = 3.41, SD = .938).

Because participants' answers did not align with Weaver et al.'s (2007) dimensional structure, a Principal Axis factor analysis with direct Oblimin rotation was performed to see what role structure would emerge from these data. A factor analysis allows researchers to explore underlying structures that drive participants' responses (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). According to Tabachnick and Fidell (2007), factor analyses can help develop and assess theories. The results of a factor extraction can be difficult to interpret, so a factor rotation is often used. Orthogonal rotations are used when the researcher is confident the items are independent, while oblique rotations are used when the researcher believes underlying processes could be correlated (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). Because sports journalists are prone to experience role conflict (Reinardy, 2005), it is unlikely items measured in this factor analysis are independent. An Oblimin (oblique) rotation was used for this analysis because it minimizes cross-products of loadings without attempting to load the majority of items into one factor (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007).

The first factor analysis was performed. Initially, five factors emerged. One item was spread relatively evenly across the third and fifth factor, while four loadings in the third, fourth, and fifth factors were below .35. Without these items, the third and fourth factors each had only one item, while the fifth factor had none. Because of their weak natures, these factors were not included in the analysis. (They are, however, included in Table 2.) This resulted in two strong factors: The first factor (eigenvalue = 2.41) explained 17.27% of the variance. Two of the three items making up this factor were adversarial characteristics in the Weaver et al. (2007) study. This first factor will be referred to as the adversarial function. The second factor (eigenvalue = 2.17) explained 15.51% of the variance. Four of the five items were designated by Weaver et al. (2007) to be characteristics of populist mobilizers; this factor will be referred to as the populist mobilizer factor. As stated earlier, Table 2 shows the resulting patterns. This solution's Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure of Sampling Adequacy is .615. This measurement is a ratio of the sum of squared correlations to the sum of squared correlations plus the sum of squared partial correlations. A value of .60 and above is acceptable (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007).

Based on the results of the factor analysis, sports journalists see themselves primarily as adversaries and populist mobilizers. The sample's majority (68, or 58.6%) had a stronger identification with the adversarial role, while 42 (or 36.2%) identified more as populist mobilizers. Six participants (5.2%) were tied between the two. The percentage of participants who interacted with whistleblowers did not differ by whether they identified more as adversaries or populist mobilizers, X^2 (1, N = 99) = .749, p = .752.

In order to complete further tests using the adversarial and populist mobilizer factors, composite scores were created. The three items pertaining to adversary were averaged into a composite score, α = .756 (M = 3.70, SD = .655, range = 1.0 to 5.0). Loadings in excess of .71,

or 50% overlapping variance, are excellent; .63 (40% overlapping variance) are very good; and .55 (30% overlapping variance) are good (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). Adversary's loading of .756 is excellent. The alpha for populist mobilizer, however, was not as strong, $\alpha = .678$ (M = 3.43, SD = .833, range 1.0 to 5.0). Eliminating an item did not strengthen the alpha, so all five items were averaged into a composite score.

An examination of descriptive statistics shows that both composites' distributions are skewed negatively – the adversarial function (skewness = -1.13) more so than the populist mobilizer (-.408). The adversarial function's distribution is also more peaked (kurtosis = 2.57) than the populist mobilizer distribution (kurtosis = .053). Because participants ranked items' degree of importance on a 1 to 5 scale (5 being "extremely important"), these descriptive statistics suggest participants feel strongly about adversarial items – being skeptical of and investigating coaches, athletic directors, and other administrators' claims – being an important part of their journalist role.

When asked about their roles as journalists, more than 40% of respondents rated "stay away from stories with unverifiable factual content" and "get information to the public quickly" as "very important." Other items from Weaver et al.'s (2007) study, however, were not considered as important. Table 3 lists the percentage breakdown of items participants rated as "very important."

R2 asked how sports journalists rate their community membership. This study adapted Chavis, Lee, and Acosta's (2008) 24-item Likert scale Sense of Community Index measure. This measure divided community membership into four subcategories: Reinforcement of needs, membership, influence, and shared emotional connection. However, participants' answers in the current study did not fit well with Chavis, Lee, and Acosta's (2008) dimensional structure, either.

A composite score of the three items measuring reinforcement of needs was α = .560 (M = 3.03, SD = .969). Dropping items did not substantially improve the alpha. The composite score for the three items measuring membership was α = .561 (M = 3.683, SD = .857) and the composite score for the three items measuring influence was α = .515 (M = 3.34, SD = .953). The composite score for shared emotional connection was better, α = .705 (M = 3.67, SD = .918).

Because Chavis, Lee, and Acosta's (2008) measures of community membership strength did not work with this sample, a Principal Axis factor analysis with direct Oblimin rotation was performed to see what participants identify as being important to them as members of the community they cover. Results confirmed two factors that explained 51.83% of the variance. However, four items loaded evenly across the factors. Only one item, "influence the community," had a strong loading in the second factor (.772). Because of the second factor's weak loading, only the first factor will be used for analysis. This first factor explained 40.24% of the variance (eigenvalue = 4.83). The items in this factor spanned four subcategories in Chavis, Lee, and Acosta's (2008) measures: One item was a reinforcement of needs item, two were shared emotional connection, one was influence, and three were membership. This factor will be referred to as community. This model's KMO Measure of Sampling Adequacy is .847. The seven total items in this factor were averaged into a composite score, α = .844 (M = 3.67, SD = .631, range 1.0 to 5.0). This composite score will represent community through the remainder of this study's tests.

Descriptive statistics of this factor indicate participants were relatively unified on the importance they placed on community. The distribution has a sharp peak (kurtosis = 4.60) and is negatively skewed (-1.47). This suggests sports journalists in this sample value fitting into and

being part of the community more so than elements like valuing the same things community members value or caring about what community members think.

Two hypotheses related to participants' roles as journalists. **H1** predicted sports journalists who identify as populist mobilizers will prioritize community roles higher than sports journalists who do not identify as populist mobilizers. A simple linear regression was calculated. Populist mobilizer significantly predicted community β = .418, t(113) = 6.97, $p < .001$. Populist mobilizer also explained a significant proportion of variance in community, R^2 = .164, F(1,113) = 22.22, p = .001. **H1** was supported.

H2 predicted sports journalists' level of community membership would correlate negatively with sports journalists' interactions with whistleblowers. However, there was no correlation between community and interactions with whistleblowers (r = -.002, p = .984). **H2** was not supported.

R3 asked how sports journalists rate their sports fandom. This study adopted 19 items from Izzo et al.'s (2011) scale to assess participants' perception of their sports fandom. Items addressed seven factors of sports fandom: Vicarious achievement, escape, socialization while watching sports on television, drama (suspense), physical skill, socialization while attending live sports, and entertainment. Items were on a 5-point scale, with higher scores indicating feelings or experiences occurring frequently.

Participants' responses did not achieve acceptable alphas in three of Izzo et al.'s (2011) seven subcategories: The composite score for the three items measuring drama was α = .576 (M = 3.61, SD = .974); for the two items measuring entertainment, r = .182 (M = 3.42, SD = .914); and for the two items measuring escape, r = .564 (M = 2.77, SD = 1.16). Participants did, however, achieve acceptable alphas in Izzo et al.'s (2011) four remaining categories: The

composite score for the three items measuring vicarious achievement was α = .900 (M = 2.82, SD = 1.20); for the three items measuring socialization while watching televised games, α = .798 (M = 3.34, SD = 1.12); for the three items measuring physical skill, α = .795 (M = 4.22, SD = .811); and for the three items measuring socializing while attending games, α = .787 (M = 3.06, SD = 1.12).

A Principal Axis factor analysis with direct Oblimin rotation was performed to determine which factors of sports fandom were most relevant to this study's participants. The model's KMO of Sampling Adequacy is .853 and four factors emerged, explaining 66.33% of the variance. One item, however, loaded poorly and two items evenly loaded across at least two factors. This weakened the fourth factor.

The first factor (eigenvalue = 7.55) explained 39.74% of the variance. Because three of the five items in this factor were designated as vicarious achievement items in Izzo et al.'s (2011) measures, this factor will be referred to as vicarious achievement. Three of the six items in the second factor were physical skill measures in Izzo et al.'s (2011) scale. This second factor (eigenvalue = 2.49) explained 13.13% of the variance and will be referred to as physical skill. Two of the four values in the third factor were socializing while attending games, while the other two were socializing while watching television in Izzo et al.'s (2011) scale. This factor (eigenvalue = 1.32) explained 6.96% of the variance will be referred to as socialization. As stated earlier, the fourth factor (eigenvalue = 1.23) was weak because its items bled into other factors. Though it explained 6.49% of the variance, the fourth factor had only one strong item – an item Izzo et al. (2011) designated as an escape item. Because of its weakness, this fourth factor will not be included in the analysis. (It is, however, still displayed in Table 5.)

Based on the results of the factor analysis, the five total items pertaining to vicarious achievement were averaged into a composite score, α = .907 (M = 2.89, SD = 1.02). Likewise, the six items relating to physical skill were averaged into a composite score, α = .853 (M = 4.11, SD = .639), and the four items pertaining to socialization were averaged into a composite score α = .877, *p* < .001 (M = 3.03, SD = .969).

Descriptive statistics show that physical skill's mean (M = 4.11) was higher than the other sports-related factors, socialization (M = 3.03) and vicarious achievement (M = 2.89). Physical skill was also negatively skewed (skewness = -1.26), while the other two factors were relatively close to zero. Physical skill was also more peaked (kurtosis = 2.83), while the other factors had negative kurtosis and wider ranges. This suggests sports journalists can confidently say they often or very frequently enjoy the physical aspects of the game, like watching well-executed and skillful performances. This cannot necessarily be said of the other factors.

Another aspect of these data not to be overlooked is the relationship between age and sports fandom. Each sports fandom factor correlated negatively with age, to varying degrees: There was a moderate negative correlation between age and vicarious achievement (*r* = -.351, p = .004) and age and socialization (*r* = -.320, *p* = .001), and a weak negative correlation between and age and physical skill (*r* = -.273, *p* = .004). The correlation was even stronger with years of professional experience: There were moderate negative correlations between professional experience and vicarious achievement (*r* = -.395, *p* < .001), professional experience and socialization (*r* = -.379, *p* < .001), and professional experience and physical skill (*r* = -.322, *p* = .001). This suggests that the older and the more professional experience sports journalists have, the less frequently they emotionally invest in the teams they cover (vicarious achievement) or experience sporting events as opportunities for socializing or escaping. To a lesser extent, they

appreciate the physical aspects of the game less as well. This supports Hardin's (2005) research, which argued that young editors, often working at smaller circulation newspapers, see themselves more as sports fans than journalists. A moderate negative correlation between vicarious achievement and circulation size ($r = -.392$, $p < .001$) also supports this argument.

H3 predicted sports journalists' level of sports fandom would negatively correlate with journalists' interactions with whistleblowers. There was a weak, negative correlation between socialization and interactions with whistleblowers, $r = -.210$, $p = .034$. However, there were no significant correlations between interactions with whistleblowers and the other two sports fandom elements. **H3** was partially supported.

H4 predicted sports journalists at newspapers with circulations of 5,000 and less would have fewer interactions with whistleblowers than sports journalists at newspapers with circulations of 100,001 and greater. This was explored through a chi-square test. However, only three participants from newspapers with circulations of 50,001 to 100,000 had interactions with whistleblowers, while four from the same circulation size did not. Since at least five cases per cell are needed for a chi-square to work, the two smallest categories were combined and the two largest categories were combined, for a total of three categories. These categories are shown in Table 6. A chi-square test of independence was performed to examine the relationship between circulation size and interactions with whistleblowers. The relationship between these variables was not significant, X^2 (2, N = 101) = 1.45, $p = .484$. **H4** was not supported.

R4 asked which variables have the greatest overall predictive power in explaining sports journalists' interactions with whistleblowers. In order to address this, a binary logistic regression was performed.

First, however, the data had to be examined for violations of regression assumptions. The data were examined for missing cases and outliers. Little's Missing Completely at Random (MCAR) test was conducted in order to see if missing cases were missing at random (Little, 1998). Quantitative items examined were the journalism factors (adversarial and populist mobilizer); community; sports fandom (vicarious achievement, physical skill, and socialization); and years employed by current organization. Categorical items examined were sex, interactions with whistleblowers, newspaper circulation size, education, and race. Interactions with whistleblower had 13 missing cases, or 11.2% of its total cases. Race had seven, or 6.0%, missing cases, and education had four (3.4%) missing cases. Current organization, circulation size, and sex each had three (2.6%) missing cases.

Results of the MCAR test were not significant (chi-square = 7.78, $df = 8$, $p = .455$). This suggests missing cases are as likely to be missing as any other case. Though missing cases may lead to a loss in power, it will not lead to bias (Howell, 2007). The data did not contain outliers, though there was evidence of multicollinearity, or the degree to which items measure the same things. Scholars differ on their view of an acceptable Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) measures: Some suggest 10 (e.g., Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black, 1995) while others suggest 5 or 4 (e.g., Rogerson, 2001; Pan & Jackson, 2008). In these data, years of professional, full-time journalism experience and age had VIF scores of 7.80 and 6.22, respectively. Both factors were dropped from the analysis. This left 13 predictor variables to be used in the model: The journalism factors, adversarial and populist mobilizer; community; the sports fandom factors, vicarious achievement, socialization, and physical skill; and demographics measures, sex, race, education, years employed by current newspaper, and newspaper's market size. Data were then analyzed for 45 people who had interactions with whistleblowers and 58 who have not. Two variables, market

size and education, were categorical variables with three and four groups, respectively. The regression model created dummy variables for these during its analysis.

The Hosmer-Lemeshow test, which is a goodness of fit test for this type of regression, was not significant, $X^2(8) = 6.71$, $p = .568$, which indicates this model predicts values not significantly different from what is observed. A test of the full model with all predictors was not statistically significant, $X^2(16) = 19.62$, $p = .230$. A second model was created, though this time, demographics (i.e., sex, race, and education) were dropped. This was done for two reasons: First, the sample was relatively homogenous. With the majority of participants being White males with four-year degrees, there was not enough diversity for statistical significance. Second, the purpose of this model is to test what role the constructs play in interactions with whistleblowers, not who the sports journalists are demographically.

Removing these factors strengthened the model. The Hosmer-Lemeshow test was not significant, $X^2(8) = 6.17$, $p = .628$, and the model was statistically significant, $X^2(8) = 16.71$, $p = .033$. The model explained 21.1% of the variance in interactions with whistleblowers and correctly classified 66.3% of cases. As Table 7 shows, years at current news organization was statistically significant ($p = .005$). This suggests the more years participants were employed by their current news organizations, the more likely they were to have interactions with whistleblowers. Table 7 also displays regression coefficients (β), which signify each independent variable's contribution to predicting interactions with whistleblowers. The Exp(B) marks the increase or decrease in probability that a case will fall into a group per unit increase of the independent variable. For example, an Exp(B) of 3 means for every one unit increase, the independent variable in question is three times as likely to fall into the group under study (Riffe, Lacy, & Varouhakis, 2008).

Given that none of the role predictors was statistically significant in this model, a similar analysis was done with "did you at some point write a story/stories about the issue the whistleblower presented to you?" as a dependent variable. Using the constructs representing journalism, community and sports fandom, plus years at current newspaper and market size, another binary logistic regression was performed. The model was not statistically significant, $X^2(8) = 10.84$, $p = .211$. As Table 8 details, however, sample size may be partially to blame: Community, physical skill, and mid-sized market had high regression coefficients (β). These variables in particular contribute heavily to this model. Also, physical skill and writing a story negatively correlate ($r = -.355$, $p = .029$). This suggests that with a larger sample size, these variables could be statistically significant.

Whistleblowing: Descriptive statistics

The second part of this results section focuses on the research question regarding whistleblowing. The majority of the sample (50%) said they have never been approached by a whistleblower. Forty-five people, or 38.8% of the sample, said they had. Of the people who have been approached since coming to their current news organization, 23 (52.3%) said they have been approached two to four times. See Table 9 for a list of descriptive statistics of key variables.

R5 asked what types of wrongdoing whistleblowers most often disclose to sports journalists. Unlike the pilot study (Reed, 2015), there are clear leaders in this sample. Seventeen participants said mismanagement, like the cover-up of a poor performance or using a group or team's money poorly, was disclosed to them. However, 18 participants chose "other." This "other" was the most common category selected. After these two types of wrongdoing, there is a drop: Four people each said drugs or alcohol abuse, and six people said they were not comfortable disclosing the information. See Table 9 for a full list.

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION

This dissertation argues that sports journalists do have interactions with whistleblowers, but that sports journalists' additional roles as community members and sports fans influence whether or not interactions with whistleblowers are taking place. This study failed to find a significant statistical difference between how sports journalists who have interacted with whistleblowers and those who have not perceive their roles as community members, journalists (adversarial and populist mobilizer) and sports fans (physical skill, vicarious achievement, and socialization). The fact that none of these constructs emerged as predictors of whether or not a sports journalist interacted with a whistleblower could be the result of a variety of problems, like too small a sample size, inappropriate measures, or role conflict. (As stated in the literature, journalists are not necessarily aware that roles conflict.) Overall, however, the current study laid the groundwork for future research by identifying factors that may contribute to a sports journalist being "targeted" by a whistleblower. One of them is longevity. Years at current newspaper positively correlated with interactions with whistleblower ($r = .387$, $p < .001$) and was a statistically significant predictor in the regression model. This tells us that the longer someone is working as a sports journalist, the more opportunities he or she will have to engage whistleblowers. This does not mean, though, that sports journalists who have been at work the longest are breaking big stories initially given to them by whistleblowers.

In the case introduced at the beginning of this dissertation, then-*Pioneer Press* sports editor Emilio Garcia-Ruiz said he wondered if the University of Minnesota men's basketball

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scandal story would have been broken if "the only sports staffers around had been the long-timers that dominated both papers' sports staffs" (Overholser, 2005). Overholser (2005) argued that Dohrmann, a then-relatively recent arrival in the Twin Cities, pursued the story particularly because he was not a long-time resident. In fact, Dohrmann and Garcia-Ruiz said they expected an "unusually high level of scrutiny" from the sports writing community – to the extent that they thought the sports journalism community would turn on them if their story was not "Sid-proof." (The moniker is a reference to long-time *Star Tribune* columnist Sid Hartman, who works for the *Pioneer Press'* competing Minneapolis-based newspaper and was assumed to be critical of the then-upcoming story.) As data in the current study suggest, interactions with whistleblowers are more likely to take place with sports journalists who have career longevity. But as the above anecdote and second regression suggests, longevity does not mean sports journalists will necessarily write the story. Sports journalists' traits that increase the likelihood of an interaction with a whistleblower are not the same traits that increase the likelihood of a story actually being written. Sports journalists also do not make decisions about what stories to pursue in isolation. They most likely spoke with an editor, for example, who contributed his or her opinion. They also may differ in their training: Sports journalists trained in investigative work, for example, may interpret interactions with whistleblowers differently than sports journalists who did not receive such training. The survey asked participants how credible and powerful they perceived the whistleblower to be, if the whistleblower was identified and if they provided convincing evidence; and if they were blowing the whistle on a coworker or colleague, and if coworkers would support the whistleblower. But there may be more elements, like conversations with editors or past training in investigative reporting, that would better predict an actual story being written. This study's binominal logistic regression model could not take into account credibility,

power, etc. because the number of observations was less than or equal to the number of model parameters. As stated earlier, only 45 participants reported having an interaction with a whistleblower. When asked whether or not the whistleblower had their coworkers' support, 13 participants said "no" and two said "yes." (Twenty participants said "some would, some would not," seven said they did not know, and two said they were not comfortable disclosing this information.) This violated an assumption of a regression: that the lowest the ratio should be is 5:1, or five cases for every independent variable in the model (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). A larger sample is necessary in order to detect statistically significant predictors of whether or not a sports writer actually writes a story. This should be further explored because data from the current study indicated the top two reasons participants gave for not writing a story was lack of proof (47.1%) and lack of credibility (23.5%). Preliminary analysis suggests a statistically significant relationship between convincing evidence being provided and a story being written, X^2 (1, N = 19) = 9.74, p = .002.

Though this study accomplished a great deal, it has limitations. First, the population parameters are unknown. Of the 1,104 email addresses to which the survey was distributed, only 153 surveys (13.8%) were even opened. This resulted in a small sample. For a factor analysis, at least 300 cases are preferred (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2011). However, there are situations where 100 – or even 50 – cases are sufficient (Sapnas & Zeller, 2002), like solutions that have several high-loading markers (>.80). This meant a factor analysis could still be done in the current study. But the small sample size hampered the kind of tests that could be run. As stated earlier, the regression to predict whether or not a story was actually written could not be completed with all of the available items.

Also, participants were not required to answer every question. This was not a problem in the first half of the survey, which asked participants about their journalism, community, and sports fandom roles. The second half of the questionnaire, however, asked about interactions with whistleblowers. As many as 12 people left some answers blank. This was puzzling because questions were exhaustive: Each question included an "I am not comfortable disclosing this information" option. As many as six participants (10.9%) used it when asked about the nature of the whistleblower's complaint (e.g., stealing, mismanagement). However, the research design and IRB approval were not enough to prevent participants from skipping questions – or being too uncomfortable to participate. The *Pittsburgh Tribune Review* managing editor said he was "surprised" I emailed members of his staff and that he "would have preferred the opportunity to approve [my] request in advance of that email" (D. Maas, personal communication, March 3, 2015). He said he followed up with an email to his staff, asking them to delay participating in the survey until he had an opportunity to look at the survey and to assess its objective. After reviewing the questions, he said he was declining participation. It is unclear how many other people saw the survey and were either too uncomfortable to participate or were advised by superiors to decline participation. This may be partially to blame for the small sample size. It also may have shaped the data collection process. If people who did have interactions with whistleblowers were less likely to participate, then it is possible the value of this variable was influenced by the probability of whistleblowing interactions being reported (Howell, 2007).

It is also unclear how helpful the Amazon gift cards were as incentives. Using gift cards for this particular online commerce company may have backfired. One participant sent an email that said, "Amazon does not support local businesses, which do support local sports. I decline to participate in the survey" (R. Connelly, personal communication, March 13, 2015). This

comment is referring to controversy that arose in May 2014 when Amazon demanded a larger

percentage of publishing house Hachette's book sales. When Hachette did not agree, Amazon

disrupted Hachette's sales by delaying delivery and raising prices (see Streitfeld, 2014). This

resulted in authors and publishers taking to Twitter to denounce Amazon's actions. Since then,

Amazon has come under fire for being harmful to small business (see Power, 2013). Though

only one email denouncing Amazon was received, 23 participants either asked that they would

not be sent a gift card or did not provide an email address to which the incentive would be sent.

Not so much of a limitation as it is an opportunity is the hole this study revealed in Near

et al.'s (2004) seven categories of wrongdoing. The most commonly selected category was the

"other" category. It is unclear what this "other" category could have been encompassing. Near et

al. (2004) tested these measures on employees of a large military base. They adapted these

measures from studies that surveyed whistleblowers working for government agencies,

businesses, firms, and not-for-profit organizations. It is unknown why this study's sample would

need an "other" category that previous groups did not need. Finding this out is important for

future research.

One way this can be done is through examination of individual instances, or case studies,

where whistleblowers confided in sports journalists. Case studies receive criticism because of

their lack of generalizability. Case studies are not concerned with generalizability because their

purpose is to achieve what Stake (1995) calls, "particularization," or building a "bottom-up

approach such that the specifics of data produce the generalizations of theory" (Eisenhardt, 1989,

p. 547). Selecting case studies and interviewing specific sports journalists would allow for

greater understanding of the nature of these interactions and for the creation of stronger predictor

variables.

Despite these limitations, the study has contributed to the literature and paved the way for further research in multiple ways. First, it shows where sports journalists fit in Weaver et al.'s (2007) four roles. In their factor analysis, Willnat and Weaver (2014), like Weaver et al. (2007), had four factors emerge – interpretive, populist, adversarial, and disseminator functions. This current study's sample, however, did not follow suit. Sports journalists saw themselves primarily as adversaries and populist mobilizers. More than half of the sample's adversarial score was higher than their populist mobilizer score. As the composite adversarial score and its descriptive statistics showed, this sample felt strongly that adversarial items – being skeptical of coaches, athletic directors, and other administrators' claims – were important components of their journalistic role. And the more a respondent identified as a populist mobilizer, the higher he or she rated community ($r = .405$, $p < .001$). Weaver et al. (2007) said populist mobilizers were distinctive because of their attitudes regarding their audience and their community, and this connection between populist mobilizers and community was supported in this study. The regression to predict community based on the populist mobilizer role was significant while the adversarial role was not a statistically significant predictor.

This has implications for further interrole conflict research. Studies like Olien, Donohue, and Tichenor (1968) found that editors saw themselves more as "boosters" than they did watchdogs. As indicated earlier, this was role conflict because a person could not be an adversary or local government while cheering for local government. Participants in the current sample, however, favored an adversarial role. They did not appear to have the interrole conflict apparent in past research. They highly rated being skeptical of coaches,' athletic directors', and other administrators' actions. The current study did not find statistical differences between how sports journalists ranked their journalism, community, and sports fandom roles and whether or

not sports journalists had interactions with whistleblowers. Further interrole conflict research, however, should look into the next step – whether or not sports journalists write a story. It is possible it is in these later steps, as inquiring and research begins, that sports journalists feel role conflict and choose to cling to one role over the other two roles, compromising roles, or physically or psychologically withdrawing from roles all together (Getzels & Guba, 1954).

Second, it showed that in terms of measuring sports journalists' perception of their community membership, this sample also did not fit well with the Chavis, Lee, and Acosta's (2008) measures. This was surprising, since these measures have been successfully applied to a variety of contexts across four continents (Chavis, Lee, and Acosta, 2008). The initial run of the factor analysis showed either low loadings or items that bled together. This suggests sports journalists, who were asked what was important to them as members of the community they cover, view their community differently than other people surveyed with Chavis, Lee, and Acosta's (2008) measures. For example, Chavis, Lee, and Acosta had three items, "fit into the community," "care about what other community members think of me," and "influence the community," measuring influence. "Fit into the community" had a strong loading (.781) in this study's community factor. "Care about what other community members think of me," however, was spread evenly between two factors. These may represent separate realms for sports journalists because having influence in the community is a normative function of journalism. Sports journalists may not even necessarily seek this within their community. Plus, fitting into the community has a professional advantage, while caring about what other community members think of a journalist could be outside journalists' normative professional role. Perhaps creating a question that asks if the sports journalist *cares* about being influential, or what *kind* of influence they desire to have, would be more appropriate.

A similar argument can be made for recognizing members of the community or feeling hopeful about the community's future. These could be not so much about community membership, as Chavis, Lee, and Acosta (2008) proposed, but about getting out into your community and knowing people – normative elements of being a good journalist. The initial factor analysis implied this: "feeling hopeful about the community future" was spread across all of the initial factors. Further research on sports journalists should use the current study's post-factor analysis measures, but control for residency within the community sports journalists cover.

Third, it showed how sports journalists differ from other fans in how they perceive their sports fandom. There were no significant correlations between interactions with whistleblowers and any of the sports fandom elements. Though this appreciation for the game was apparent, not all participants were comfortable being asked about their degree of sports enthusiasm. "I don't quite understand questions that mentioned being with 'other fans,'" one participant wrote. "I am not a fan. I'm a journalist." This is where Izzo et al.'s (2011) scale fell short. It tested measures on 486 undergraduate students from five different Romanian universities. Though it contributed to the literature by testing earlier measures on a more diverse range of young adults (some who were sports fans, some who were not), it does not take into account those whose work includes covering sports. Sports fandom in earlier studies is a measure of *play*, not *work*. A body of literature exists on the differences between play, games, and contests, and the psychological and physiological changes a person experiences when they do something for work as opposed to doing it for play (e.g., Dandridge, 1986; Guttman, 2004). Escape, drama, and entertainment are the three elements from Izzo et al.'s (2011) scale that did not garner acceptable alphas in this study. Even after the factor analysis, the alpha for escape remained low. This may be partially explained by the fact that these elements are more aspects of play, not work. Results from this

study suggest using the measures from the current study in tandem with concepts from the deep play literature (see Geertz, 1972) in order to sift through play versus work elements and to determine which elements of fandom are less likely to resonate with people whose jobs and training entail creating sports narratives.

Sports journalists' appreciation for physical skill is also something to be explored further. It was the only construct to have a statistically significant correlation with writing a story. As indicated earlier, the concept of appreciating physical skill dominated sports journalists' sports fandom preferences. Previous studies have examined connections between athleticism and notions of heroism, masculinity, manhood, and modernity (e.g., Lule, 2001; Reed, 2014) and the historical connections of these elements (e.g., Kasson, 2001). More about the contemporary and historical fixation with athletic bodies and what this fixation says about American culture may offer insights into sports journalists' relatively unified appreciation for physical skill.

In summary, this dissertation argued that sports journalists do have interactions with whistleblowers, but that sports journalists' additional roles as community members and sports fans influence whether or not interactions with whistleblowers are taking place. There was a significant difference in years employed by current newspapers between sports journalists who have had interactions with whistleblowers and those who have not. There was not, however, statistical evidence to suggest additional roles as community members and sports fans hamper interactions with whistleblowers. Exploring which factors predict whether or not sports journalists write a story is a next step for this research and should be done with a larger sample size.

Table 1.
Descriptive statistics for key variables

Variable	N*	M/%	SD
1. Age	110	40.88	14.59
2. Years employed by current news organization	113	10.48	11.12
3. Years of professional experience	112	15.70	13.47
4. Education$_a$	112	2.95	.641
5. Journalism role			
Adversarial	116	3.59	.758
Populist Mobilizer	116	3.43	.833
6. Community role			
Shared Emotional Connection	116	3.65	.767
Reinforcement of Needs	116	2.90	.802
7. Sports fan role			
Vicarious achievement	116	2.72	1.09
Physical skill	116	4.31	.689
Socialization	116	3.06	1.06
Escape	116	2.76	1.03
8. Race			
White	97	83.6%	
Other	12	10.3%	
9. Sex			
Male	101	87.1%	
Female	12	10.3%	
10. Title			
Sports editor	46	39.7%	
Sports writer/reporter	56	48.3%	
Columnist	5	4.3%	
Other	6	5.2%	
11. Circulation			
Less than 5,000	19	16.4%	
5,001 to 10,000	19	16.4%	
10,001 to 50,000	45	38.8%	
50,001 to 100,000	9	7.8%	
More than 100,001	21	18.1%	

*Participants had the option of not responding to demographics questions.
$_a$Education was analyzed as an ordinal variable: (1 = high school diploma/GED, 2 = two-year vocational/community college, 3 = four-year undergraduate degree, 4 = master's degree or higher, 5 = I prefer not to answer).

Table 2.
How important are the following to you as a sports journalist?

Component	1	2	3	4	5
Be skeptical of athletic directors' and other administrators' actions.	-.909	-.031	-.063	-.100	.013
Be skeptical of coaches' actions.	-.758	-.246	-.076	.021	.331
Investigate coaches' claims and statements.	-.549	.047	-.292	.143	-.025
Motivate ordinary people to get involved in public discussions of important sports-related issues.	-.015	.691	-.325	.240	.052
Develop the public's athletic interests.	.138	.612	-.004	.146	.243
Point people toward solutions to sports' problems.	-.174	.553	-.270	-.271	-.023
Give ordinary people a chance to express their views.	-.026	.498	.042	.092	.199
Concentrate on stories that interest the widest possible audience.	.156	.442	.126	.128	-.032
Discuss athletic policy while it is still being developed.	-.135	.081	-.561	-.006	.049
Provide entertainment and relaxation.	.045	.070	.513	.199	.480
Get information to the public quickly.	.060	.130	.048	.698	-.055
Provide analysis and interpretation.	-.203	.074	-.018	.374	.286
Set the sports news agenda.	.024	.261	.226	.081	.351
Stay away from stories with factual content that cannot be verified.	-.035	.050	-.011	.012	.264
Eigenvalues	2.41	2.17	1.63	1.26	1.05
Percentage of total variance	17.27	15.55	11.67	9.00	7.53
Number of test measures	3	5	–	–	–

Table 3.
Percentage saying extremely important

Item	Percent (%)
Get information to the public quickly.	44.8
Stay away from stories with factual content that cannot be verified.	41.4
Provide analysis and interpretation.	39.7
Concentrate on stories that are of interest to the widest possible audience.	25.9
Investigate coaches' claims and statements.	15.7
Set the sports news agenda.	14.7
Motivate ordinary people to get involved in public discussions of important sports-related issues.	12.1
Be skeptical of athletic directors' and other administrators' actions.	12.1
Discuss athletic policy while it is still being developed.	10.3
Provide entertainment and relaxation.	10.3
Develop the public's athletic interests.	8.6
Point people toward possible solutions to the world of sports' problems.	7.8
Be skeptical of coaches' actions.	7.8
Give ordinary people a chance to express their views on sports issues.	6.1

N = 116

Table 4.
How important are the following to you as a member of the community you cover?

Component	1	2
Fit into the community.	.781	.213
Be part of the community.	.733	.230
Invest a lot of time and effort into being part of the community.	.725	.225
Spend time with community members often, and enjoy that time with them.	.698	.259
Have important needs met because I am part of this specific community.	.663	.325
Trust people in the community.	.596	.222
Value the same things members of the community value.	.595	.436
Feel hopeful about the community's future.	.588	.350
Care about what other community members think of me.	.450	.434
Recognize most members of the community.	.430	.010
Influence the community.	.165	.772
Be able to talk with a member of the community about my problems.	.328	.509
Eigenvalues	4.83	1.39
Percentage of total variance	40.24	11.58
Number of test measures	6	–

Table 5.
How often do you feel or do the following?

Component	1	2	3	4
Feel like I have won when my team wins.	.897	.227	-.382	.436
Feel a sense of accomplishment when my team plays well.	.871	.202	-.438	.332
Feel proud when my team plays well.	.805	.327	-.490	.321
Feel disappointment when my team loses.	.771	.282	-.433	.460
Feel like I belong to a group when I attend games.	.704	.203	-.371	.437
Enjoy watching athletes' skillful performances.	.266	.828	-.340	.243
Enjoy watching a well-executed athletic performance.	.143	.772	-.345	.166
Enjoy games when the score is close.	.159	.742	-.340	.377
Look forward to games because they are exciting entertainment.	.371	.742	-.426	.420
Enjoy the gracefulness I see in games.	.146	.630	-.322	.228
Enjoy watching sports on TV with family and/or friends	.379	.550	-.539	.493
Enjoy the game more when the outcome is decided at the very end.	.201	.548	-.308	.185
Show more interest in individual players than teams as a whole.	-.058	.196	-.102	.009
Interact with other fans at sporting events.	.454	.412	-.941	.305
Socialize with other fans at games	.480	.404	-.893	.261
Enjoy meeting with other fans to watch televised games.	.390	.362	-.720	.517
Watch televised sports as a way to socialize.	.370	.504	-.644	.557
Feel like games provide an escape from other day-to-day activities.	.320	.345	-.319	.779
Watch games to help forget troubles.	.419	.157	-.274	.681
Eigenvalues	7.55	2.49	1.32	1.23
Percentage of total variance	39.74	13.13	6.96	6.49
Number of test measures	5	6	4	–

Table 6.
Cross-tab of circulation sizes and interactions with whistleblowers.

Have you ever been confronted by a whistleblower?	Up to 10,000	10,001 to 50,000	More than 50,001	Total
Yes	21	23	13	57
No	12	18	14	44
Total	33	41	27	101

Table 7.
Binominal logistic regression predicting interactions with whistleblowers

	β	Exp(B)	P
Adversarial	.249	1.28	.486
Physical Skill	-.073	.930	.864
Community	.208	1.23	.616
Vicarious Achievement	.033	1.03	.915
Physical Skill	-.073	.930	.864
Socialization	-.232	.783	.463
Market (less than 10,000)			.890
Market (10,001 to 50,000)	.145	1.156	.795
Market (More than 50,001)	-.129	.879	.849
Years at Current Organization	.078	1.08	.005
Constant	-1.84	.157	.470
Nagelkerke r-square	.211		
% cases correctly classified, d.f.	66.3%	8, n = 98	

Table 8.
Binominal logistic regression predicting sports journalists writing a story about infraction

	β	Exp(B)	Sig.
Adversarial	.482	1.619	.459
Physical Skill	-1.02	.358	.173
Community	-.817	.442	.250
Vicarious Achievement	-.463	.629	.474
Physical Skill	-1.026	.358	.173
Socialization	.169	1.18	.760
Market (less than 10,000)			.649
Market (10,001 to 50,000)	.296	1.34	.794
Market (More than 50,001)	.970	2.63	.388
Years at Current Organization	.032	1.03	.372
Constant	5.34	209.7	.263
Nagelkerke r-square	.331		
% cases correctly classified, d.f.	65.8%	8, n = 38	

Table 9.
Descriptive statistics for key whistleblowing variables

Variable	N	M/%	SD
1. Have you been approached by a whistleblower?			
Yes	45	38.8%	
No	58	50.0%	
I don't know	7	6.0%	
I am not comfortable disclosing this information.	6	5.2%	
2. How many times have you been approached since working for current newspaper?			
Once	8	18.2%	
Two to four times	23	52.3%	
More than five times	8	18.2%	
I don't know	3	6.8%	
I am not comfortable disclosing this information	2	4.5%	
3. How long ago was the interaction?			
Within the last year	25	56.8%	
Between one and five years ago	15	34.1%	
More than five years ago	2	4.5%	
I don't know	1	2.3%	
I am not comfortable disclosing this information	1	2.3%	
4. Did the whistleblower provide convincing evidence?			
Yes	12	27.3%	
No	10	22.7%	
Somewhat	21	47.7%	
I am not comfortable disclosing this information	1	2.3%	
5. Did/was the whistleblower …			
Credible	43	3.53	1.05
Powerful	44	2.57	1.20
Identify himself or herself?			
Yes	27	61.4%	
No	15	34.1%	
I don't remember	1	2.3%	
I am not comfortable disclosing this information	1	2.3%	
Whistleblowing on someone with whom they were coworkers?			
Yes	17	39.5%	
No	21	48.8%	
I don't know	1	2.3%	
I am not comfortable disclosing this information	3	7.0%	
Have support from fellow members of organization?			
Yes	2	4.5%	
No	13	29.5%	
Some would, some would not	20	45.5%	
I don't know	7	15.9%	
I am not comfortable disclosing this information	2	4.5%	
6. Did you (eventually) write a story about the issue?			

	Yes	21	47.7%
	No	18	40.9%
	Lack of credibility	4	23.5%
	Lack of proof	8	47.1%
	Issue was personal vendetta	4	23.5%
	No one would go on record	1	5.9%
	Still investigating	5	11.4%
7.	Nature of complaint*		
	Stealing	2	3.6%
	Mismanagement	17	30.9%
	Safety problems	3	5.5%
	Sexual harassment	4	7.3%
	Discrimination	1	1.8%
	Drug or alcohol abuse	4	7.3%
	Other legal or ethical violations	18	32.7%
	I am not comfortable disclosing this information	6	10.9%

*Multiple responses were possible

APPENDIX

E-mail #1 to potential participants

Send date: March 1, 2015 @ 8:46 p.m.

Subject Line: Sports Journalists' Roles survey

Body of e-mail: Hello. I am writing to request your participation in the Sports Journalists' Roles survey. Your newspaper was randomly selected out of about 3,280 newspapers nationwide. This survey is for all members of your news organization who regularly produce sports-related content. Your participation is appreciated; the first 200 participants will receive a $10 Amazon gift card upon completion of the survey.

This study is conducted by Sada Reed, doctoral student, through the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill's School of Journalism and Mass Communication. The purpose of this survey is to learn more about sports journalists' roles as journalists, community members, and sports enthusiasts, and to learn about sports journalists' experiences with whistleblowers, or community members who approach sports journalists with information about illegal or immoral activity. Please feel free to email the survey to any other sports journalists in your department.

There are no immediate or expected risks for participating in the survey. At the end of the survey, you will be asked for an email address to which a $10 Amazon gift card will be sent to the first 200 participants. Other than this, the survey is completely anonymous and confidential. Your responses are assigned identifications; I will not be able to see participants' or newspapers' names. There are also no immediate or expected benefits for participating in the survey. The records of this study will be kept private. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with the University. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time.

The survey should take between 10 and 15 minutes to complete. You will be asked questions about your role as a journalist, community member, and sports enthusiast. Then, you will be asked questions about potential interactions with whistleblowers.

In order to participate, **follow this link to the survey:** ${l://SurveyLink?d=Take the Survey} Or copy and paste the URL below into your internet browser:
${l://SurveyURL}

Should you have any questions, concerns, or comments, please contact Sada Reed at sjreed@live.unc.edu or at 207.319.6272.

Thank you,
Sada Reed

Follow the link to opt out of future emails:
${l://OptOutLink?d=Click here to unsubscribe}

E-mail #2 to potential participants

Send date: March 13, 2015 @ 10:48 a.m.

Subject Line: Reminder of Sports Journalists' Roles survey

Body of e-mail: Hello. I send this to follow up my previous e-mail regarding the Sports Journalists' Roles survey. Your participation is not only appreciated, it is crucial: By sharing your thoughts and experiences, you are contributing to the profession's understanding of sports journalists' roles as journalists, community members, and sports enthusiasts. The first 200 participants will receive a $10 Amazon gift card.

This study is conducted by Sada Reed, doctoral student, through the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill's School of Journalism and Mass Communication. The survey should take between 10 to 15 minutes to complete. You will be asked questions about your role as a journalist, community member, and sports enthusiast. Then, you will be asked questions about potential interactions with whistleblowers.

The survey is completely anonymous and confidential. Your responses are assigned identifications; I will not be able to see participants' or newspapers' names. There are also no immediate or expected benefits for participating in the survey. The records of this study will be kept private. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with the University. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time.

I hope you are interested in participating. **Follow this link to the Survey:**
${l://SurveyLink?d=Take the Survey}. Or copy and paste the URL into your internet browser: ${l://SurveyURL}

Should you have any questions, concerns, or comments, please contact Sada Reed at sjreed@live.unc.edu or at 207.319.6272.

Thank you,
Sada Reed

Follow the link to opt out of future emails:
${l://OptOutLink?d=Click here to unsubscribe}

E-mail #3 to potential participants

Send date: March 24, 2015 @ 10:08 a.m.

Subject Line: Still seeking participants in Sports Journalism survey

Body of e-mail: Good morning. I hope you are still interested in participating in the Sports Journalists' Roles survey. Your participation is crucial. As a professional journalist, you have insights that can help other professionals and scholars better understand the changing field of sports journalism. The first 200 participants will receive a $10 Amazon gift card. If you are not interested in participating and would like to be removed from this list, please scroll to the bottom of this email and click on the unsubscribe link.

This study is conducted by Sada Reed, doctoral student, through the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill's School of Journalism and Mass Communication. The survey should take between 10 to 15 minutes to complete. You will be asked questions about your role as a journalist, community member, and sports enthusiast. Then, you will be asked questions about potential interactions with whistleblowers.

The survey is completely anonymous and confidential. Your responses are assigned identifications; I will not be able to see participants' or newspapers' names. There are also no immediate or expected benefits for participating in the survey. The records of this study will be kept private. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with the University. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time.

To take the survey, **follow this link:** ${l://SurveyLink?d=Take the Survey}. Or copy and paste this URL into your browser: ${l://SurveyURL}

Should you have any questions, concerns, or comments, please contact Sada Reed at sjreed@live.unc.edu or at 207.319.6272.

Thank you,
Sada Reed

Follow the link to opt out of future emails:
${l://OptOutLink?d=Click here to unsubscribe}

E-mail #4 to potential participants

Send date: April 16, 2015 @ 10:16 a.m.

Subject Line: Deadline for Sports Journalism Roles survey

Body of e-mail: Hello. You are receiving this email as a final reminder of the Sports Journalists' Roles survey. The survey will close at 5 p.m. EST on **Monday, April 20**. I hope you are still interested in participating. This survey is part of my dissertation. The more participants, the more accurate my results will be regarding how working sports journalists perceive their roles.

The survey should take between 10 to 15 minutes to complete. You will be asked questions about your role as a journalist, community member, and sports enthusiast. Then, you will be asked questions about potential interactions with whistleblowers. I have 16 $10 Amazon gift cards remaining and will give them to the next 16 participants.

The survey is completely anonymous and confidential. Your responses are assigned identifications; I will not be able to see participants' or newspapers' names. There are also no immediate or expected benefits for participating in the survey. The records of this study will be kept private. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with the University. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time.

To take the survey, **follow this link:** ${l://SurveyLink?d=Take the Survey}. Or copy and paste the URL into your internet browser: ${l://SurveyURL}

Should you have any questions, concerns, or comments, please contact Sada Reed at sjreed@live.unc.edu or at 207.319.6272.

Thank you,
Sada Reed

Follow the link to opt out of future emails:
${l://OptOutLink?d=Click here to unsubscribe}

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