
Televised Sports, Masculinist Moral Capital, and Support for the U.S. Invasion of Iraq

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**Journal of Sport
& Social Issues**
Volume 30 Number 1
February 2006 79-106
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10.1177/0193723505282472
<http://jss.sagepub.com>
hosted at
<http://online.sagepub.com>

Data from a survey of 1,048 Americans conducted in summer 2003 are used to demonstrate the existence of a “televised masculinist sport–militaristic nationalism complex” that contributed support for the U.S. invasion of Iraq. Involvement in televised masculinist sports is robustly correlated with support for invading Iraq, the doctrine of preventive attacks, and strong patriotic feelings for the United States. Critical feminists and figurationalists posit a linkage between war and masculinist sports that is grounded in a macho or hypermasculinity found most in combat sports such as football. Using Lakoff’s study of the conservative worldview and Lamont’s work on moral boundaries, the author develops an alternative conception of “masculinist moral capital” that better explains the gender and racial patterns of correlation between different types of televised sports and support for invading Iraq.

Keywords: *masculinist moral capital; Bush doctrine; televised masculinist sport–militaristic nationalism complex; national habitus; hypermasculinity*

If we broaden the traditional parameters of sports violence to include violent acts *related to sport* (and I think there are good *sociological* reasons to do so), it becomes clear that our subject may be far more heterogeneous than simply acts of violence perpetrated by athletes or members of sports crowds.

—K. M. Young (2002, p. 208)

The Bush Doctrine of Preemptive Attacks

America’s power position in the world system is in decline, and for the foreseeable future, there will be a strong structural inclination for the United States to use its superior military power to maintain or improve its waning economic and political power position (Wallerstein, 1999, 2003). After Al-Qaeda’s attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on September 11, 2001 (hereinafter, 9/11), neoconservatives in the Bush administration used the fears of terrorism to implement their long-standing plans to overthrow Saddam Hussein (Kessler, 2003; Woodward, 2004). In building support for their plans, they argued that the Iraqi government was stockpiling and hiding chemical and biological weapons and was close to securing nuclear weapons that

could be used on the United States. Furthermore, they claimed that the Hussein regime had strong links to the Al-Qaeda terrorist organization and was thus at the core of the terrorist threat to the United States.

The invasion of Iraq went hand in hand with a major change in American foreign policy in the direction of asserting unilateral military hegemony for the United States in the name of protecting American security and freedom and preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction among terrorist groups and nations that support them. In his 2002 State of the Union address, President Bush publicly identified Iran, Iraq, and North Korea as an “axis of evil” that “by seeking weapons of mass destruction . . . pose a grave and growing danger.” Moments later, he added, “I will not wait on events while dangers gather. I will not stand by as peril draws closer and closer” (Bush, 2002a). In his speech to West Point graduates in early June 2002, Bush directly discounted the value of the strategies of containment and diplomacy in the post-9/11 era and articulated a policy of preventive attacks by declaring, “If we wait for threats to fully materialize, we will have waited too long” (Bush, 2002b). This marked a new imperial doctrine that asserted the right of the United States to attack nation-states that have not attacked, threatened to attack, or even secretly planned to attack the United States or its allies.

The events of 9/11 strengthened Americans’ support for militaristic imperialism, but there is reason to believe that most Americans will not go along with this strategy for long. The failure to discover weapons of mass destruction and the breadth of the armed resistance to the occupation contradict Bush administration depictions of Americans as hero-liberators. Likewise, there is a growing disconnect between the hero-liberator metaphors and evidence that most Iraqis, however glad they are to be rid of Saddam, view the United States as an occupying force motivated by imperial, political, and economic interests (“How Iraqis View the U.S.-Led Coalition,” 2004). It is also becoming increasingly clear that an invasion that intended to create a shining example of Arab democracy is increasing the militarization and masculinization of antimodernist and anti-imperialist resistance to American and Northern hegemony (Burns & Eckholm, 2004).

Compared to the trajectory of Americans’ reactions to the Vietnam War, the opposition to the Iraqi occupation in the United States has grown faster, despite Hussein’s record of genocide and brutality and greater efforts by the U.S. military to control the images of war in Iraq. In early January 2003, before the invasion of Iraq, a Gallup poll found only 53% of Americans supporting the war, with 42% against it. Support for the war was greatest during the invasion, peaking on April 9, 2003, when Gallup found 76% of Americans polled agreeing that the war was a good idea and only 19% disagreeing. As Iraqi resistance to the occupation grew and weapons of mass destruction were not found, support for the war declined sharply. Since the middle of January 2004, less than 10 months after the invasion, support for the war has never risen above 52% (Gallup Organization, 2004). This is consistent with the view that many Americans learned (or were easily reminded of) important lessons about the universality of national self-determination from the Vietnam War and from other anticolonial movements after World War II.

Alan Wolfe's (1998) study of middle-class Americans prior to 9/11 supports this view. Using inductive, semistructured interviews, Wolfe found a strong streak of "mature patriotism" in the United States, a nationalism that rejects the "America, right or wrong" mentality though still believing that America is a special land of freedom and opportunity. Most of those he interviewed were skeptics about wars to bring "freedom" to the less "civilized" regions of the world or to protect our national security against threats that are less than imminent. It is hard to know how deeply habituated these views are and how much the events of 9/11 have changed things, but clearly 9/11 strengthened the hand of militaristic imperialists. In this climate of fear and distrust, neoconservatives successfully portrayed diplomacy, working through international organizations, and containment as evidence of "softness," "weak character," and "moral relativism," keywords that I will show metaphorically link support for the war to sports.

To Wolfe's (1998) mature patriotism we must add a somewhat less sanguine perspective on Americans' national habitus that captures important elements missed by Wolfe, perhaps because his research was structured to uncover high moral status signals (Lamont, 2000)—the part of our national habitus that idealizes our democratic nature. Another aspect of our national habitus emphasizes special qualities that make us stand out among other nations. Wallerstein (2003) clearly summarizes many Americans' sense of distinction, so I will quote him at length:

I think that Americans tend to believe that others have *less* of many things than we have, and the fact that we have more is a sign of grace. . . . Other countries are less modern, the meaning of modern being the level of technological development . . . and that therefore we are certain to win the wars into which others may drag us.

Americans also consider their society to be more efficient. Things run more smoothly—at the workplace, in the public arena, in social relations, in our dealings with bureaucracies. . . . Others do not seem to have American get-up-and-go. They are less inventive about finding solutions to problems major and minor. They are too mired in traditional or formal ways. And this holds the others back, while America forges ahead. . . .

. . . Is there any other country where social mobility, for those with merit, is so rapid? And which country can match us in the degree to which we are democratic? Democratic not merely in the continuing openness of our political structures, the centrality of a two-party system, but also in our quotidian mores? . . .

We can put this all together in a phrase that Americans have not used much, at least until September 11, but which we largely think in our hearts: We are more civilized than the rest of the world, the Old World, as we used to say with a token of disdain. We represent the highest aspirations of everyone, not merely Americans. We are the leader of the free world, because we are the freest country in the world, and others look to us for leadership, for holding high the banner of freedom, of civilization. (pp. 195-198)

As Wallerstein (2003) notes, openly stating this viewpoint would embarrass many Americans, though somewhat less so after 9/11. Democratizing developments and movements have entailed suppressing or even repressing such feelings of superiority (Wouters, 1998). Borrowing from Hochschild (1989), we might describe the Ameri-

can habitus as democratic on top and aristocratic on the bottom, a bottom that some have more openly embraced after 9/11. Many Americans are committed to living up to their democratic ideals, but their feelings of superiority, outlined by Wallerstein, are an important, less acknowledged part of their national habitus, as well. Furthermore, it appears, ironically, that Americans' feelings of superiority are closely tied to their sense that they are beacons of democracy. I believe that Americans' willingness to support the invasion of Iraq demonstrates that as their power position continues to decline, it will take a great deal of work to redefine, sustain, and build on their democratic ideals.

Masculinist Sports and Militaristic Imperialism

Sports are our most explicit and mythologized public spectacles of competition, power, and domination. Consequently, they are important sites where Americans are registering, managing, and shaping the complex feelings about their power position in the post-9/11 world. As the costs of the military intervention in Iraq become clearer to more and more Americans, there will be opportunities to engage in reflection on the morality and rationality of resolving differences through war and on the realities of trying to sustain dominance in an interdependent world system (Schell, 2003). A part of this national self-reflection ought to include asking why so many of us went along with the invasion of Iraq with very little questioning. And if we are serious about understanding the causes of the invasion, we need to consider the ways our cultural institutions contributed to and reinforced the discourses, fears, and beliefs that made the war appear righteous, justified, and necessary to so many.

I posit that popular masculinist sports are among the cultural institutions that functioned to buttress support for the Iraqi war and for the broader Bush doctrine that asserts the authority and obligation of America to attack countries and enemies prior to direct threats to the United States. This study is the first to present systematic data demonstrating the existence of a "televised masculinist sport–militaristic nationalism complex" (MS-MN complex) that contributes to support for imperialistic wars by the United States. The MS-MN complex includes a variety of televised sports that represent, iconize, and naturalize a combination of masculinist and nationalistic ideals and morals and a field of politics where imperialist military projects are imagined and popular support and acquiescence is garnered.

Using data from a nationally representative survey of 1,048 Americans, conducted for the Scripps-Howard News Service, I will show that in the summer of 2003, level of involvement in televised masculinist sports was correlated with support for the Iraqi war and for the unilateralist doctrine of preventive attacks and with strong patriotic feelings for the United States. Because nationalism is a hegemonic process of defining the values, meanings, and goals of large, impersonal "survival units," support for imperialist wars can be found across genders, races, social classes, religions, and political and regional groups. However, there is a social structuring of support for and resistance to imperialist wars. Support for the invasion of Iraq was and is strongest among

men, Whites, and those who identify as born-again in terms of their religion, but other than party identification, involvement in televised masculinist sports has the strongest, most robust correlations with the measures of imperialistic nationalism.

The Structural Linkage Between Masculinist Sports and Imperialistic Nationalism

If masculinist sports and imperialistic nationalism are interrelated, then a crucial question is, what is the structure of this relationship? One possibility is that youthful sports involvement in masculinist sports operates as an explicit or de facto training and proving ground for future soldiers and military leaders. If masculinist sports functioned in this way, then we would expect masculinist sports and soldiering to form overlapping social networks. This is clearly not the case among highly visible professional athletes, who so rarely sign up for military service that the exceptions are often highly publicized, perhaps in a strained effort to assert a linkage that does not exist in social network terms. High school athletes may be somewhat more likely to enter the military than nonathletes, but even this is doubtful. To my knowledge, this question has not been systematically tested, but we do know that high school athletes disproportionately come from the middle and upper-middle classes, and military personnel are disproportionately those who are not going on to college, so it is unlikely that the correlation is very strong.

Another possible structural linkage is that sports and war have similar social structures and are structured around or embedded with similar ideals, belief systems, worldviews, or habitus. I will be arguing that their isomorphism is based on being structured around a common system of "masculinist moral capital." This structural family resemblance between sports and war leads to a cognitive-emotional affinity between a masculinist interpretation of sports and a readiness to go to war to defend one's national interests and to a predisposition to view imperialist wars as opportunities for heroism and as part of our duty as world leaders.

If we conceptualize masculinity as a habitus or worldview that is embodied and institutionalized in practices across various social fields, then it may be an important mediating structure that links support for war and involvement in masculinist sports. Despite increasing opportunities for girls and women to participate in sports, masculinist sports and war are both, to a considerable degree, still male preserves where fighting strength, competitiveness, and controlled aggression are valued. Both construct and channel camaraderie, sacrifice, and risking one's body for the team as high moral values, and both require disciplined training and submission to clear authority. Risking one's body, intense physical training, submission to authority, sacrifice, and so on are conceived of as "character building" tests. Both masculinist sport and military training are perceived by many as exemplary means of building manhood. From this view, the similarities between masculinist sport and militarism appear to be substantial. The overlap between the version of manhood idealized in many sports and in militaristic nationalism is so great that Nagel (1998) concludes,

Terms like honor, patriotism, cowardice, bravery, and duty are hard to distinguish as either nationalistic or masculinist, since they seem so thoroughly tied both to the nation and to manliness. . . . The “microculture” of masculinity in everyday life articulates very well with the demands of nationalism, particularly its militaristic side. (pp. 251-252)

A great deal of work has been done on sports and violence, but surprisingly little systematic analysis has been done on the relationship between popular sports and war. For example, Young’s (2000) excellent summary essay in the *Handbook of Sport Studies* on the research on sport and violence touches on a wide range of issues but does not mention war. In the same volume, Allison (2000), on sport and nationalism, and Houlihan (2000), on sport and politics, also reflecting the state of their subfields, make only passing mention of war. There is, nevertheless, a thread of research and analysis that supports the view that a hard or macho type of masculine habitus mediates the relationship between support for nationalistic wars and involvement in masculinist sports (Burstyn, 1999; Faure, 1996; Hoch, 1972; Jansen and Sabo, 1994; Jeffords, 1989, 1994; McBride, 1995; Sabo, 1994; Sabo and Jansen, 1998; Wakefield, 1997).

I will begin by presenting two theories that develop an analysis of the relationship between mass-mediated sports, gender, and militaristic nationalism: critical feminism and the figurational sociology most associated with Norbert Elias. Both perspectives have done important work to uncover the linkages between sports and masculine domination. I also find both of these theories wanting in their relative silence about what I label masculinist moral capital. I believe that this silence stems from their primary interest in countering the structures of masculine domination in sports. This has placed them in a position of demythologizing powerful ideologies such as the belief that sports build “character” and promote clean, manhood-making aggression and violence. The masculinist myths are challenged by focusing on the underbelly of masculinist sports: destructive violence, physical abuse, homophobia, misogyny, sexual coercion, high levels of injuries and disabilities, and pressure to play with debilitating injuries (Dworkin & Wachs, 2000; Hoch, 1972; Messner, 1992, 1994; Messner & Sabo, 1990; Nelson, 1994; Nixon, 1994; Sabo, 1994; Sabo, Gray, & Moore, 2000; White, Young, & McTeer, 1995; Young, 1993, 2000, 2002; Young, McTeer, & White, 1994).

Breaking with the myths of character and heroism is an important function of sport sociology, but as Bourdieu showed for the reproduction of social class, critical sociology is also advanced when one breaks from that initial break to view these myths as well-founded myths. By *well-founded myth*, I do not mean that the myths are true or partially accurate but that they are exemplars of the moral schemes of evaluation or system of metaphors that are instituted as an “illusio” that makes a social game possible and structures the purpose, meaning, and socially valued identities for those involved (Bourdieu, 1990a, 1990b; Bourdieu & Waquant, 1992). I will argue that George Lakoff’s (2002) work on the conservative worldview uncovers a system of metaphors that constitutes the schemes of masculinist moral capital that centrally underpin the association between televised masculinist sport and support for imperialist wars.

Critical Feminist Perspectives on Televised Sport, Masculinity, and Militaristic Nationalism

Although it is difficult to generalize about feminist perspectives of the relationship between sport, masculinity, and war, there is a clear tendency to draw strong linkages between war and sports, such as football, that emphasize physical domination and an extreme form of masculinity that associates manhood with physical domination and with heroically risking and sacrificing one's body. I will label this perspective *critical feminism* and illustrate it with a few of the best critical feminist analyses, focusing on how they conceptualize the form of masculinity that mediates between sports and war, developing a critique of this conceptualization as I go.

Jansen and Sabo's (1994) analysis of the use of sport (primarily football) metaphors by military leaders and media commentators to heroicize and mythologize the 1991 Persian Gulf War exemplifies a critical feminist view that an aggressive macho masculinity was legitimated and reproduced through war-as-football metaphors. Raising vital issues on the racial, national, and class gendering of sport and, through sport, support for the war, they summarize the prowar masculinity as a hypermasculine one that emphasizes "aggression, competition, dominance, territoriality, and instrumental violence" (Jansen & Sabo, 1994, p. 10).

Burstyn (1999) provides a sociohistorical explanation for the emergence of hypermasculinity in sports, arguing that the erosion of and challenges to the systems of masculine domination have led to hypermasculine responses in the popular culture, particularly in televised sports. The hypermasculine popular culture is then drawn on to build support for war (Burstyn, 1999; see also Jeffords, 1989).

Hypermasculinity is typically viewed as an exaggerated masculinity found among those who are compelled to constantly defend their masculine honor against continuous assaults and challenges or against feelings of shame for failing to meet the standards of masculinity. For Burstyn (1999), hypermasculinity in mass-mediated sports and in male popular culture more generally is a lowest-common-denominator masculinity that reduces and essentializes masculinity to a primal or pure form of violent physical domination stripped of withering Victorian associations with character, sacrifice, and fair play. Drawing from and expanding on Jeffords (1989), she argues that a central cause of the rise of hypermasculinity has been the ways "the sport-media complex both draws on and supports a militarist response to men's feelings of frustration, alienation, isolation and rage" (Burstyn, 1999, p. 179).

Men's feelings of alienation have roots in a variety of social developments, including the increased social power and independence of women and gays, the neoliberal political economy that has increased the economic insecurity of many working-class and middle-class families, the absence or remoteness of fathers in many American families today, and especially feelings of national embarrassment and disgust about losing the Vietnam War. On the supply side, competitive pressures within the segmenting entertainment industry contribute to the production of hypermasculinist heroics and idols.

Burstyn's (1999) and Jansen and Sabo's (1994) analyses are supported by Messner, Dunbar, and Hunt's (2000) content analysis of televised sports, sports news, and the surrounding ads. They uncovered a "master discourse" that they labeled the "televised sports manhood formula," which identifies real men as aggressive, violent, tough "winners" who are such "true warriors" and possess so much competitive drive that they heroically play through pain and injuries and risk their bodies for victory. Echoing Jansen and Sabo's finding of the discursive integration of football and war, they found that play-by-play coverage and reporting of masculine televised sports closely associates sports with war and weaponry by describing sport using military terms and metaphors, sometimes quite directly framing the contest as a war. The National Football League (NFL) and National Basketball Association (NBA) used the language of war much more than Major League Baseball and extreme sports did, a finding that should be kept in mind when we turn to the survey findings.

I agree with Burstyn (1999) that there has been a broad remasculinization of American popular culture since the 1980s, that something like a lowest-common-denominator hypermasculinity has grown in televised sports during the same period, and that it plays a role in the MS-MN complex (Whannel, 2002). However, I do not believe that it is the lowest-common-denominator forms of masculinity that primarily underpin the MS-MN complex. Rather, the qualities or forms of masculinity that Burstyn claims are being eroded in mass-mediated sports, things such as moral order and character, centrally underlie and stitch together the MS-MN complex in the United States. The critical feminists' conception of hypermasculinity is more congruent with a Social Darwinist or Machiavellian view that the world is a war of all against all. I believe that by itself, this worldview is an extreme version of a conservative worldview that is not hegemonic. I argue that the hegemonic masculinist worldview combines Machiavellianism with moral metaphors such as moral strength, character, and moral order, which provide a vision of how one should bring and sustain moral order to the war of all against all.

From the perspective developed here, critical feminist analyses of masculinity leave out central aspects of the televised sports manhood formula by not adequately capturing the linkages between televised sports discourse and conservative metaphors of moral character, family, and nation, which are at the heart of the moral capital of masculine sports. I believe this is not because they do not recognize the metaphors of masculinist moral capital but because their demythologizing analysis is working to frame these metaphors as ideological to develop a critical analysis of sports that brings the negative aspects of masculinist sports into view. Although indispensable, this strategy may prevent us from more clearly understanding important aspects of how masculine domination operates by limiting us too much to the analytical tool of ideology (distorted images, narratives, and beliefs that naturalize hierarchies and distinctions and secure consent). To this valuable analytical tool I want to add (not replace with) an analysis of habitus or worldview that attempts to empathetically uncover the masculinist schemes of moral and cultural evaluation.

Figurational Sociology, Masculinist Sport, and Violence

The other major approach to studying the relationship between sports, masculinity, and violence is the figurational sociology pioneered by Norbert Elias and Eric Dunning. Figurational sociology is particularly well suited for this task because it provides empirically developed theories and concepts that have at their center issues related to state processes, nationalism, violence control, emotional controls, masculinity, democratization, and long-term social figurations or structuring processes (Dunning, 1999; Dunning & Sheard, 1979; Elias, 1994, 1996; Elias & Dunning, 1986; Maguire, 1999; Stempel, 1992). Given the primacy of Elias's claim that "modern" sport emerges as it gains autonomy from mock battles and the preparation for war, it is somewhat surprising that the figurationalists have done little work on contemporary linkages between sport and war. Nevertheless, Dunning, Sheard, and Elias have analyzed a number of "civilizing spurts" that involved improving the power positions of women, reducing the level of violence in sport contests, and increasing the autonomy of sports from war (See Dunning, 1999, and Maguire, 1999, for summaries).

During civilizing spurts, greater constraints are placed on men from using physical domination and the threat of physical domination as a power resource. Under these conditions, men whose power chances are in decline may turn to male preserves such as masculinist sports, male-exclusive clubs, sports and sex bars, and so on to bond around the ethos and practices of masculine domination and nostalgic feelings about the past, when "men were men." Male preserves are important power resources for militarists during decivilizing spurts such as wars or violent revolutions (Elias, 1996).

Wars, aftermaths of lost wars, violent revolts, or other decivilizing spurts dissolve controls on violence and increase the level of fear and insecurity and, often, the masculinist solutions to fear and insecurity. The "taste" for masculinist solutions to fear and insecurity is expressed in recreational and leisure activities, such as participation in violent or macho sports. In this regard, Dunning (1999) cites as support for the figurational approach Sipes's (1973) classic study that found that hunting and football grew in popularity during World War II, whereas the popularity of baseball declined.

Thus, figurational sociology is in substantial agreement with critical feminism that masculinist sports, resistance to gender equality, and a warrior ethos form a historically shifting but relatively obdurate complex. Like critical feminists, figurationalists expect that those who are most involved in the most male exclusive and most battle-like sports will, other things being equal, be most likely to support wars in response to threats to national security.

Televised Sports as Forms of Mimetic Leisure

On the other hand, Elias and Dunning (1986; Dunning, 1999) also initiated a line of analysis into spectator sports as mimetic forms of leisure that diverges from critical

feminism and may help in understanding how televised sports are interpreted by viewers. Earlier, we saw Burstyn (1999) argue that the hypermasculinization of sports stemmed in part from the transformation of sports into commercialized spectacles aimed at wide audiences. The concept of mimetic leisure points to a different side of sport as spectacle by illuminating how viewing violent masculinist sports on television is congruent with a more advanced level of revulsion toward violence than actually playing violent sports. For spectators, mimetic sports, such as televised sports, operate on a different plane or register than direct physical involvement in the contest, action, or drama. Through mimetic sports, one can emotionally experience violent, dangerous, and intensely competitive games and drama without being overwhelmed by them or having to live the real-life consequences of direct participation. Thus, for example, people who enjoy the danger and physical domination of watching boxing or American football on television might be disgusted or overwhelmed by participation that drew them closer to the physical violence.

Violent mimetic sports fit societies where violence and masculine aggression has been hedged in to some degree and where some steps have been taken in the direction of gender equality. Conversely, they fit societies of "late barbarism," where violent masculine domination is still celebrated, admired, and found to be thrilling, at least at a distance.¹

This view of mimetic sport is strongly supported by sport and theater historians (Gorn, 1986; Guttman, 1986; Kasson, 1990; Levine, 1988), and professional wrestling is an illuminating present-day case because it hyperbolizes macho masculinity and violence much more than legitimate sports (Messner et al., 2000). Pro wrestling can only stay on the acceptable side of its audience's level of revulsion against violence by making it clear that the blows and falls are not real and that no one really gets hurt (even if many do suffer serious injuries; Atkinson, 2002). The level of revulsion against violence may be one reason efforts to transfer the professional wrestling formula to legitimate sport as a form of "smashmouth" football failed so quickly and resoundingly.

The producers of other televised sports that are working at the boundary between legitimate and illegitimate mimetic violence and domination understand the threshold of repugnance in legitimate sports and carefully manage spectators' impressions of levels of violence, injuries, and domination. Pointing out that athletes are stoically playing hurt, for the team and because they are "competitors," is a common theme in sports coverage that reinforces the masculinist account of games and polices those athletes who might be tempted to put their health ahead of the team. However, routinely reporting the pervasiveness or cumulative effects of injuries is a politically and economically incorrect move that, in our late barbaric society, upsets the impression of the level of violence that makes spectating pleasurable (Sabo & Jansen, 1998).

Analyzing televised sports as mimetic leisure raises the possibility that many viewers of mimetic combat sports view them within more of a "quest for excitement" frame that disembeds hypermasculinism from the masculinist morality that I maintain holds the MS-MN complex together. When combined with an analysis of masculinist moral

capital, this thread of figurational sociology leads us to somewhat different conclusions than its primary analysis, which supported the critical feminist analysis.

Masculinist Moral Capital

To describe masculinist moral capital, I will turn to a reading of Lakoff's description of the conservative worldview through the lenses of Bourdieu's work on masculine domination (Bourdieu, 1990b, 2001). According to Lakoff, the conservative worldview, which he considered labeling a patriarchal worldview, pulls together a variety of metaphors to form a "strict father" model of the family—a "cognitively real idealized model" (Lakoff, 2002, p. 67). I am interpreting Lakoff's account of the conservative worldview as the system of deep metaphoric schemes that constitute internalized masculinist moral capital. This moral-cultural system is reproduced in social figurations such as sports that produce, recognize, and circulate masculinist moral capital.

The strict-father model views the world as a cold, dangerous place where survival and success are difficult to achieve. In this perspective, evil is alive in the world and within ourselves, and morality is the courage and self-discipline to stand up to and resist evil. The family is headed by the father, whose primary parenting function is, through clear rewards and punishments, to instill self-discipline and self-reliance—the moral habits needed to succeed and prevail against children's natural tendency to sloth and ease. The greatest danger in this process is that a child will end up "weak," "spoiled," and easy prey to the many temptations of evil. The phrase *tough love*, which became popular in the Reagan era, captures important elements of this ethos, updating and downplaying the violence of the somewhat quaint "spare the rod and spoil the child" and, through a "nation as family" metaphor (see below), linking parenting to a model of how government leaders (ruling fathers) should govern their citizens (children).

Central metaphors in the strict-father morality include the complex and flexible metaphors of moral strength, moral order, and moral authority. At the level of embodied symbolism (Bourdieu's body habitus), moral strength is conceived of as standing upright and being upstanding, straight, and on the up and up. Moral strength is the backbone and fortitude to stand up to or resist evil. Evil can take the form of external threat to one's family or nation or the internal weakness of the body that gives in to desire, escapes from duty, and chooses the easy life. Like physical strength, moral strength is cultivated through self-denial and strict self-control, which is why physical training or displays of the physically well-trained body can be readily articulated with the strict-father morality (cf. Hoberman, 1984).

A moral father must have the moral strength to set and expect clear standards and take strong corrective action when necessary, including using physical punishment. A moral father also needs to instill respect for authority in general, whether it is his law, the law of the state, or the rules of organizations such as schools and businesses. In this

way, the strict father contributes to his children's success and strengthens the moral fabric of the community.

The strict-father morality also sets a vision of the structure of a moral society and of the moral individual. A moral individual is one who is competitive and "self-disciplined enough to make his own plans, undertake his own commitments and carry them out" (Lakoff, 2002, p. 69). A moral society is a competitively structured society that rewards self-disciplined and competitive individuals with wealth, status, and power. Thus, a just society has a hierarchical social structure that reflects a moral hierarchy (remember "*upright*" and "*upstanding*").

The conservative moral system, familiar to us because it is a central part of our symbolic order, is actually a system of flexible, embodied metaphors that operate as interpretive schemes, which can be applied to various situations and excluded from application to others. For example, one might apply this worldview only to public, impersonalized, bureaucratic life and use another more "feminine" cognitive-emotional system of metaphors while operating in one's private life. Similarly, a wide variety of moral-political positions is created by focusing more on particular metaphors and focusing less on others, by adhering to the moral system to varying degrees, or by approaching the moral system either more idealistically or more as a pragmatic means of personal advancement. Thus, Lakoff purports to explain a wide range of actual perspectives and position takings in terms of variations on this relatively obdurate system of cognitive-moral schemes.

Masculinist Moral Capital and the Televised Sport

More encompassing systematic content analyses are needed, and there are no doubt multiple readings of televised sports, but from my less systematic observations, the conservative worldview appears to mediate televised sport and support for the war in Iraq.

Televised sport discourse is to varying degrees structured by several metaphors that are closely connected to the conservative worldview:

1. Self-discipline, self-reliance, self-control and competitiveness are virtues that are highly rewarded and extolled (moral order).
2. The televised sports world richly mythologizes character (competitive, self-denial, moral strength). It reinforces the view that character underlies success in sports and in the world. Winners are viewed as possessing the most moral strength or character, keeping in mind that moral strength is equated with competitiveness and the "will to win" (Moral strength, moral authority, moral order).
3. Character is defined in masculinist and essentialist terms of being the "go-to" guy under intense competitive pressure and being a true warrior who sacrifices his body and is resolute in the pursuit of victory (the will to win) in the face of great obstacles. Those possessing character or moral strength are the ones who stand up to adversaries when the going gets tough. Sports are a test of and crucible for constructing masculine honor or character (moral strength).

4. The “us-versus-them” structure of most sporting contests can easily operate as a metaphor for good versus evil, which is prominent in the conservative worldview. Sports provide clear guidelines and boundaries that closely match the conservative metaphor of the moral order having clear boundaries between right and wrong and between good and evil. The rules of conduct are clearly demarcated, and order is maintained through strict enforcement of the rules. The presumption is that the playing field is a dog-eat-dog world and that chaos would prevail without clear absolute authorities imposing strict control (moral order).
5. The popular discourse on the history and traditions of many sports closely matches the conservative vision of decaying and eroding values and of declining respect for authority. The purity of the game for testing and forging character is believed to be corrupted by money and by eroding respect for the legitimate authority of coaches and referees. Conversely, nostalgia is cultivated, and timeless sport traditions and memories are actively constructed and highly honored, especially in the media buildup to the most sacred events, championship tournaments (tradition, moral character resisting corruption).
6. Less often stated but highly sacralized when it comes up is the assertion that the virtues of televised sports heroes are the same virtues of defending our country. Reactions to the death of Pat Tillman, NFL defensive back turned Army Ranger, in Afghanistan were illustrative. On ESPN, a leader and innovator of masculinist sport discourse, the tone of the coverage of his death was deferential, with a mixture of pride that Tillman was one of us and mild shame that sports are, after all, just games that only “play” at this courage and heroism stuff. Tillman was the “real hero.” In somber tones somewhat at odds with their norms, they quoted NFL Commissioner Paul Tagliabue: “Pat Tillman personified all the best values of his country and the NFL” (Anderson & Shapiro, 2004).

I present this provisional analysis of the conservative metaphors in televised sports as a crucial part of the *illusio* (Bourdieu, 1990a, 1990b; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992; Wacquant, 2003) that underlies the value of televised sports and the worldview or habitus that recognizes and identifies with the value of masculine moral capital in both sports and war. But to understand how closely this habitus connects with militaristic nationalism, we must add the metaphor *nation as family*. The schemes of nation as family are used to project the strict-father metaphors into politics. Thus, without thinking, we speak of forefathers, Uncle Sam, and when we conceive of government as intrusive, Big Brother. Lakoff (2002) argues that there are no “higher generally accepted moral principles” (p. 326) and that it is thus not possible to have political values that are separate from family values, a fact that conservatives make use of much more than liberals (Lakoff, 2002, chap. 8, 19).

Masculinist Moral Capital and Support for the Iraqi War

Although Lakoff focuses on liberal-conservative differences internal to the United States, I believe that Americans operating within the conservative worldview conceive of their relations with other nation-states and international relations using the same metaphors. That is, those who rely heavily on the strict-father morality to think about

local and national politics tend to interpret foreign policy issues within the same framework. Within this conservative worldview, I believe that with regard to the war in Iraq, the United States is conceived of as a strict-father country that was “born again” in the Reagan years after failing for a period of time to rule or lead the world because it fell victim to sloth, hedonism, and a loss of courage (Jeffords, 1989, 1994). At the same time, our greater economic and military power is seen as a sign of the moral virtues of self-discipline, independence, competitiveness, and self-reliance that make the United States special. Finally, the conservative metaphors of moral strength and so on, applied to international relations, closely link with the metaphor of America as courageous hero rescuing the Iraqis and the Middle East from evil and bringing our special way of life to them. The conservative worldview, projected to the sphere of global politics, appears to be the worldview that President Bush is speaking to and from when he addresses the American people on the war.

To illustrate this, I will briefly analyze a speech Bush made before his news conference on April 13, 2004. This speech was symbolically structured to demonstrate resolve and a clear sense of the enemy as desperate, marginal evildoers in the face of growing doubts in the United States about the war and to displace a growing awareness that many “ordinary” Iraqis saw the U.S.-led coalition as an illegitimate occupying power.

In the speech, Bush made subtle but metaphorically clear reference to our “exit strategies” from the Vietnam War and first Gulf War, in which the United States showed signs of moral weakness.

As I have said to those who have lost loved ones, we will finish the work of the fallen [moral strength, character].

We’re carrying out a decision that has already been made and will not change [resolute, unwavering; moral strength, moral authority].

A free Iraq will confirm to a watching world that America’s word, once given, can be relied upon, even in the toughest times [*standup* nation, moral strength]. (Bush, 2004)

The American people are now more resolute and are willing to pay the costs of freedom. This is because we now understand that there is great evil in the world and we are strong in our resolve to stand up to it:

And the enemy has seen that we will no longer live in denial or seek to appease them. For the first time, the civilized world has provided a concerted response to the ideology of terror—a series of powerful, effective blows [moral strength].

Now is the time, and Iraq is the place, in which the enemies of the civilized world are testing the will of the civilized world [moral strength, character, moral order]. (Bush, 2004)

Notice how “testing the will” metaphorically evokes conservative views on parent-child relationships. The contemporary conservative heirs to the belief that children are born with the devil in them are the beliefs that children are always testing the boundaries or testing parents’ authority. Conservative parenting experts, such as the popular

James Dobson (1996), are constantly advising parents to have the courage or will to discipline in this permissive era.

The internal evils, which we have previously succumbed to (prior to being reborn in the Reagan era), loom in the background as the imagined derision of the enemy, should we lose our nerve.

Yet in this conflict, there is no safe alternative to resolute action. The consequences of failure would be unthinkable. . . . Every enemy of America in the world would celebrate, proclaiming our weakness and decadence, and using that victory to recruit a new generation of killers [moral order, moral strength]. (Bush, 2004)

By now, the differences between critical feminism and figurational sociology and the analysis that I am developing here should be much clearer. Through the lenses of Lakoff's analysis of the conservative worldview, Burstyn's (1999) hypermasculinity is an element of the conservative worldview (masculinist moral capital), but on its own, it is an extreme and marginalized form of masculine domination that is disembedded from the dominant moral framework. That is, Burstyn and other critical feminists may be presenting an extreme form of masculinity as the dominant form in an effort to highlight its negative aspects. This is a common rhetorical strategy that we should avoid because it leads to misunderstandings about the nature and uses of hegemonic masculinity. Burstyn might counter that there has been both a long-term and a recent spurt in the coarsening of popular American sports in the direction of representing a Darwinian war of all against all, where raw power rules and aggressive, violent domination is legitimate. I believe she is right about the recent coarsening or decivilizing spurt but not her analysis of the dominance of hypermasculinity and its linkage to support for the war. If she is right about hypermasculinity, then we should find that the fans of the most hypermasculinist of televised sports are the most supportive of the war in Iraq.

Survey Analysis

To compare the claims of the different theories, I analyzed the results of a nationally representative telephone survey of 1,048 adults conducted for the Scripps Howard News Service between July 30 and August 12, 2003. The survey is one of three or four that Scripps Howard conducts each year to generate political and human interest stories. Questions were asked about how often respondents watched 14 different sports or sporting events on television or read about them in the newspaper or on the Internet. Respondents were selected using a random-digit-dialing technique, and the analyses presented here utilize sample weights that brought the sample in line with valid national estimates on key demographic variables. None of these analyses varied substantially from the same tests done using unweighted data.

Three survey questions make up the measures of support for the Iraqi war and militaristic nationalism: support for the Iraqi war, support for U.S. military policy of pre-

Table 1
Dependent Variables: Question Wording and Response Percentages

	%	n
Support for the Iraqi war: As you know, the United States sent troops into Iraq to force it to disarm its weapons of mass destruction. Are you absolutely certain, pretty certain, or not certain that this was the correct thing to do?		
Not certain	41.1	431
Pretty certain	20.5	215
Absolutely certain	31.9	334
Don't know or refused	6.5	68
Support for preventive attacks: Thinking about America's foreign policy, how do you feel about our policy of preventive military attacks on countries that we feel threaten our national security?		
Strongly disagree	7.0	73
Somewhat disagree	16.6	174
Neutral	19.4	203
Somewhat agree	30.6	321
Strongly agree	18.6	195
Don't know or refused	7.7	81
Patriotism toward the United States: Generally speaking, how would you describe your own feelings of patriotism toward the United States?		
Very unpatriotic	1.9	20
Somewhat unpatriotic	2.3	24
Neutral	5.1	54
Somewhat patriotic	27.5	288
Very patriotic	59.8	626
Don't know or refused	3.4	36

ventive attacks, and the respondents' feelings of patriotism toward the United States. The fixed choice questions measuring these variables along with the univariate percentages are presented in Table 1. Support for the war and support for preventive attacks were strongly correlated (Spearman's $r = .514$), but patriotic self-identity was only moderately correlated with the other two variables. This is not surprising, because many of those who are antiwar and antimilitarist identify as being patriotic, sometimes pointedly in an effort to articulate protesting the war as a patriotic position. Conversely, many who are most in favor of the Iraqi war acknowledge that the antiwar protesters are patriotic, perhaps in deference to Americans' identity as beacons of democracy.

Table 2 looks at bivariate relationships between support for the war and several important social structural variables. We see that Whites, men, and those who identify as being born-again were the most likely to support the war. African Americans were the most antiwar, and race had the strongest impact on support for the war. On the other hand, there were not statistically significant differences in support for the war by level of education, although those with 4-year college degrees were slightly more sup-

Table 2
Support for War in Iraq by Gender, Education, Race, and Born-Again Religious Identity (July 30, 2003, to August 12, 2003)

	Male	Female	High School	College	Postgraduate	Black	Hispanic	White	Born-Again	Not Born-Again
N	473	507	240	225	144	120	108	690	334	572
How certain that troops to Iraq was a good idea (in percentages)										
Absolutely certain	41.0	27.6	35.0	37.8	31.3	20.0	29.6	38.7	41.6	31.3
Pretty certain	22.6	21.3	18.3	24.0	19.4	14.2	13.0	24.6	22.8	19.8
Not certain	36.4	51.1	46.7	38.2	49.3	65.8	57.4	36.7	35.6	49.0
Pearson correlation	-.160**		-.063 ^a		-.098 ^b	-.194 ^{c**}	-.116 ^{d*}			.129**

- a. Test for relationship between college degree and high school degree.
 b. Test for relationship between college degree and postgraduate degree.
 c. Test for relationship between Blacks and Whites.
 d. Test for relationship between Hispanics and Whites.

** $p \leq .05$. *** $p \leq .001$.

portive than either the high school graduates or those with postgraduate degrees. Not shown were data on income and region attendance, which had no statistically significant differences, or on city type, age, and church attendance, which found weak positive but significant relationships ($p < .05$) between living in small cities and attending church last week and support for sending troops to Iraq. Being age 65 and older had a weak negative relationship with support for the war.

The Televised Masculinist Sport–Militaristic Nationalism Complex

If the critical feminist and figurational perspectives are right, viewers of the most macho or hypermasculinist and male-exclusive sports should have the strongest association with support for the war. As an initial test, I conducted a separate ordinary least squares (OLS) regression for each of the 14 sports, with support for the war as the dependent variable. Each regression model included gender, education, region of the country, racial identity, church attendance, born-again religious identity, married-with-children status, and age as control variables. With these controls, often watching baseball was associated with support for the war at a .001 level of significance; NFL, college football, National Association for Stock Car Auto Racing (NASCAR), and tennis were associated at .01; golf, extreme sports, and boxing were associated at a .05 level of significance; and NBA basketball ($p = .057$) and Indy car racing ($p = .058$) approached significance (results available on request). It is striking that baseball, tennis, and NASCAR had the largest standardized regression coefficients and that the sports that most dramatize direct physical domination and/or are most narrated with the discourse of war (Messner et al., 2000) were not the sports whose viewers were most likely to support the war.

A similar pattern emerged when I conducted a regression that entered all of the televised sports simultaneously along with the control variables. This is a quite different model because for each sport, it controls for the effects of watching the other 13. In this model, only watching baseball and tennis were associated with support for the war, using a .05 significance level as the cutoff. Watching the Olympics was negatively associated with support for the war. Both college football ($p = .092$) and NASCAR ($p = .101$) had positive associations, and figure skating ($p = .086$) had a negative association with support for the war that approached significance. NFL football ($p = .590$), NBA basketball ($p = .417$), and boxing ($p = .219$), all sports that critical feminists and/or figurationalists would expect to have strong associations with support for the war, had weak nonsignificant positive relationships with support for the war. Thus, the hypothesis drawn from critical feminism and the figurationalists, that sports which are most combat-like or display the most violent domination, would be most associated with support for the war was not supported by these initial tests.

There is a clear racial dimension to the connection between support for the Iraqi war and involvement in televised masculinist sport. The sports most strongly associated with support for the war are, within the American racial formation, coded as

White. Virtually all of the NASCAR drivers and most professional tennis players are White, and Major League Baseball has by far the highest proportion of White players (and lowest proportion of African American players) of the big three American sports. Conversely, many of the sports that most emphasize violence and/or direct physical domination (NFL football, NBA basketball, boxing, and college basketball) have the highest proportions of African American and Latino players and are not associated with support for the war. Even college football, the apparent exception to this pattern, stands out as the most White-coded of the sports emphasizing direct physical domination: A considerably higher proportion of Division I college football players and coaches are White than their counterparts in the NFL, basketball, or boxing (Lapchick, 2003).

A brief side note on encoding is in order here. It is now widely recognized that encoding occurs on both the production and reception sides, but less recognized is the importance of field or relational encoding. That is, the encoding of any particular sport is formed in relation to the other televised sports. So, for example, it may be that hypermasculine sports are coded as brash, youthful, unrestrained, and Black, whereas baseball, tennis, golf, and NASCAR are coded in relation to the hypermasculine sports as disciplined, mature, courageous, and White.

The preliminary analyses were the impetus for developing three indexes of televised sport viewing:

1. The number of White-coded masculinist sports on television (baseball, tennis, NASCAR, golf, Indy car racing, and extreme sports) often watched
2. The number of non-White-coded hypermasculinist sports (NFL, boxing, college football) often watched
3. The number of non-White-coded masculinist sports (soccer, NBA, and college basketball) often watched

In constructing these indexes, I created the groupings based on two overlapping but somewhat separate dimensions: (a) the degree of direct physical violence and domination sanctioned in the sports and (b) the racial coding of the sports, which is closely related to the racial makeup of its players and coaches. Two sports or events, the Olympics and figure skating, were left out of this analysis. The Olympics was left out because it is an event with many sports (and is thus hard to categorize) and because it is produced and received through strong internationalist frames that run against militaristic nationalism, as evidenced by its viewers' antiwar tendencies. Figure skating was left out because it is the one sport whose fans are primarily women, as are its most famous athletes, and because it is structured around traditionally feminine frames.

I conducted OLS multiple regression analyses that compared the explanatory power of each of the televised sport indexes on support for the war, using the same social structural control variables used in the previous regressions. The results shown in Table 3 add strong support to the preliminary finding that the White-coded masculinist sports, not the hypermasculinist sports, are the sports most associated with support for the war.

Table 3
Ordinary Least Squares Regression Coefficients for Social Structural Variables and
Indexes of Masculinist Televised Sports Viewing on Support for the Iraqi War

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Female ^a	-.267	-.309	-.253	-.242
Black ^b	-.492	-.525	-.524	-.520
Hispanic ^b	-.264	-.297	-.289	-.278
Asian or Other ^b	-.532	-.563	-.531	-.527
Married with children ^c	.197	.206	.191	.186
Some college ^d	-.018	-.022	-.035	-.017
College graduate ^d	.041	.013	.000	.028
Postgraduate ^d	-.118	-.159	-.167	-.127
Northeast ^e	.048	.091	.041	.056
South ^e	-.091	-.100	-.107	-.094
Midwest ^e	-.002	-.010	-.026	-.003
Born-again	.260	.260	.271	.256
Church attend	.124	.121	.118	.120
Age 18 to 24 ^f	.271	.228	.203	.250
Age 25 to 34 ^f	.381	.362	.367	.374
Age 35 to 44 ^f	.133	.107	.115	.132
Age 45 to 54 ^f	.134	.110	.123	.127
Age 55 to 64 ^f	.240	.218	.227	.242
Small city ^g	.166	.195	.185	.173
Suburb ^g	-.067	-.054	-.043	-.060
Rural ^g	.029	.030	.020	.024
White-coded masculinist sports	.164	.084	.140	.138
Non-White-coded masculinist sports		.050	.036	.052
Non-White-coded hypermasculinist sports			.133	.064

a. Reference category is female.
b. Reference category is White.
c. Reference category is unmarried and/or no children.
d. Reference category is high school or less.
e. Reference category is West.
f. Reference category is 65 and older.
g. Reference category is large city.
* $p \leq .05$. ** $p \leq .01$. *** $p \leq .001$.

I first conducted separate regressions for each index, the results of which are shown in Models 1 to 3. The non-White hypermasculinist and the White masculinist sport indexes are positively related with support for the war at .001 levels of significance, and the non-White masculinist sports are not associated with support for the war at a .05 level of significance. However, the White masculinist sport index had a larger standardized regression coefficient, and when all three indexes are entered into the same regression (Model 4), neither the non-White hypermasculinist sports nor the non-White masculinist sports were associated with support for the war at $p = .05$, whereas the White masculinist sports are associated with support for the war at a high level of confidence ($p = .001$).² Thus, for this nationally representative sample, White-coded masculinist sports, which I contend are, for many Americans, the sports that are encoded as exemplars of masculinist moral capital, are most strongly associated with support for the war.

It should be noted that because respondents' race was controlled for in all of the regressions reported here, the lack of association in the full model between the non-White-coded sports (masculinist and hypermasculinist) and support for the war is not because those sports have higher rates of non-White viewers, who, as we saw earlier, were less supportive of the war. However, further analysis uncovered an interaction effect involving race that may be an important piece to the puzzle of why the White-coded masculinist sports that emphasize physical domination less are most strongly related to support for the war.

To test interaction effects by race and the different types of masculinist sports, I conducted separate regressions for each of the three sport indexes among Whites and then among non-Whites (available on request). For both Whites and non-Whites, the White masculinist and the non-White hypermasculinist sports were associated with support for the Iraqi war. However, the non-White masculinist index was associated with support for the war only among non-Whites.³

Taken together, the evidence closely fits a model that the racial coding of different televised sports goes hand in hand with different racial-moral readings of those sports. My hypothesis, which closely fits the evidence presented here, is that the White-coded sports are more often "read" within the hegemonic schemes of masculinist moral capital (the strict-father morality), which I contend is a central mediating framework between televised sports and support for the Iraqi war, and thus these are the sports that are more strongly associated with support for the war. Conversely, the non-White-coded sports are more often read within a "quest for excitement" or "hypermasculine as spice" framework that is less connected to masculinist morality. This is why the non-White-coded hypermasculinist sports are more weakly associated with support for the war and why White fans of non-White-coded masculinist sports, such as NBA basketball, do not support the war in Iraq: They are not relating to basketball within the framework of masculinist moral capital.

If we view the field of televised sport as a racialized social space where hegemonic masculinity is contested and constructed, the patterns uncovered here are consistent with Lamont's (2000) finding that White, lower-middle-class males view themselves as superior to African Americans on moral grounds, identifying strongly with what

she calls the “disciplined self” that they believe many African Americans lack. It is also consistent with a racial order where Whiteness and Whites are conceived of as the mature race that is neither too effeminate nor overly masculinist, both of which are perceived as childlike qualities. And at the level of the field of nations, this interpretation fits a theory that the habitus schemes of many Americans, the middle-class nation par excellence, entail a national identity of being neither too civilized (European) nor too uncivilized (Third World or Muslim), a perspective whose general contours go back at least to postrevolutionary republicanism.⁴

Intensity of Involvement in Masculinist Sports and Imperialist Nationalism

We have seen that the televised sports central to the MS-MN complex are somewhat different than expected by the prevalent theories in the field, and we have found strong indirect support for the alternative explanation put forward here. With these findings as a foundation, I turned to gauging the strength of the relationship between masculinist televised sports and militaristic nationalist beliefs. To be able to present measures of strength that are intuitively and statistically accurate, I conducted three binary logistic regressions, using strong support for war, preventive attacks, and feelings of patriotism as dependent variables. For the measure of involvement in televised masculinist sports, I added the scores on the White-coded masculinist sports index with the scores on the non-White-coded hypermasculinist sports to form a single index. The non-White-coded masculinist sports index (college and NBA basketball and soccer) was left off because its effects were virtually eliminated when the other two indexes were included in the earlier regression model. Thus, the index used consisted of nine sports: baseball, tennis, golf, NASCAR, Indy car racing, extreme sports, NFL, college football, and boxing.

Logistic regression generates estimated odds ratios for each category of the independent variables, so to ensure that there were enough cases in the high category of the index, anyone who often watched four or more of the nine sports was coded 4. Table 4 shows the estimated odds ratios for the variables in each of the three logistic regressions. Several structural variables have some explanatory power on one or more of the dependent measures of militaristic nationalism, but the dummy variable for African Americans and the masculinist sport index are consistently the two most powerful explanatory variables. This is strong support for the existence of the MS-MN complex. Note also that with the marginal exception of *feels very patriotic*, the masculinist sport index is linearly related to measures of militaristic nationalism. That is, increased involvement in televised masculinist sports increased the estimated odds of feeling strong patriotism and of supporting the war and the policy of preventive attacks. For example, often watching one masculinist sport increased the odds of strongly agreeing with preventive attacks to 1.471 (relative to not watching any masculinist sports often), and the odds ratios increased markedly with greater involvement, up to 5.21 for those who often watch four or more masculinist sports.

Table 4
Estimated Odds Ratios From Logistic Regressions of
Structural Variables and Index of Masculinist Sports Viewing
on Militaristic Nationalism Variables

	Is Absolutely Certain About Troops to Iraq	Strongly Agrees With Preventive Attacks	Feels Very Patriotic
Male ^a	1.835***	1.301	.854
Black ^b	.347***	.376**	.305***
Hispanic ^b	.690	.627	.334***
Asian or Other ^b	.317***	.178*	.517
Married with children	1.547*	1.048	1.208
Some college ^c	.841	.624	1.402
College graduate ^c	.940	.623	1.353
Postgraduate ^c	.657	.584	1.631
Northeast ^d	1.013	.619	.736
South ^d	.662	.828	.958
Midwest ^d	.788	.456**	.731
Born-again	1.685**	1.354	1.579**
Church attend	1.327	1.201	1.093
Age 18 to 24 ^e	1.091	1.012	.199***
Age 25 to 34 ^e	1.929*	.760	.320***
Age 35 to 44 ^e	1.130	1.243	.330***
Age 45 to 54 ^e	1.180	.746	.845
Age 55 to 64 ^e	1.753*	1.948*	1.114
Small city ^f	1.481*	1.003	1.107
Suburb ^f	.801	.896	.996
Rural ^f	1.037	.753	1.429
Number of masculinist sports viewed			
One ^g	1.493*	1.464	1.537*
Two ^g	2.149***	2.325**	3.478***
Three ^g	2.165**	3.463***	2.878***
Four or more ^g	3.329***	5.177***	3.814***

a. Reference category is female.

b. Reference category is White.

c. Reference category is unmarried and/or no children.

d. Reference category is high school or less.

e. Reference category is West.

f. Reference category is 65 and older.

g. Reference category is large city.

h. Reference category is watches zero masculinist sports.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Conclusion

Previous studies have analyzed the historical roots, structural relationships, and discursive similarities between masculinist sports and war. They have developed a

compelling case that televised masculinist sports are cultural and social supports for militaristic nationalism and imperialist wars. The findings from a nationally representative survey presented here provide strong evidence that level of involvement in masculinist sports on television is robustly associated with strong feelings of patriotism and with support for the American invasion of Iraq in 2003 and the Bush doctrine of preventive attacks. Following others, I have interpreted these findings as evidence that televised masculinist sports constitute a central institution in producing and reproducing militaristic nationalism, surpassing social class, religion, age, gender, family structure, and region in explanatory power. This finding suggests that political sociologists can no longer afford to ignore the importance of televised sports and the sports culture more generally in their efforts to explain support for militaristic nationalism.

However, the analysis presented here differs from previous studies that have pointed to institutionalized representations of violent, aggressive, macho hypermasculinity as the social form that links masculinist sports to militaristic nationalism. At the core of this perspective is the view that both masculinist sports and war are best characterized as testing and forging masculinity through violent domination while risking life and limb. The evidence presented here suggests that a hypermasculine-prowar connection exists for some sports fans but that for more, the cognitive-emotional linkage consists of a system of masculinist moral metaphors that Lakoff labels a strict-father morality.

At the core of the strict-father morality are metaphors of moral character, moral strength, and moral order. From the perspective developed in this article, the macho or hypermasculinity focused on by both figurational sociology and critical feminism is an extreme form of masculinity that, in the reception of televised sports, is more often marginalized and/or disembedded from hegemonic masculinist morality than critical feminists recognize. I found strong and consistent support for this interpretation throughout a variety of empirical tests, which found that hypermasculinist sports, such as boxing and NFL football, were less strongly associated with support for the invasion of Iraq than several other masculinist sports that do not emphasize violence and direct physical domination, such as baseball and tennis.

The critique of critical feminist explanations presented here is in no way meant to suggest that macho or hypermasculinity in televised sports is not an important phenomenon. Nor am I suggesting that the masculinist moral capital that I have focused on is unrelated to macho masculinity, although I am asserting that mimetic forms of hypermasculinity may be relatively disembedded from the metaphors of masculinist moral capital. I am further suggesting that previous work on sports, masculinity, and war has at times mistakenly conflated hypermasculinity with hegemonic masculinity and that contrary to this view, hegemonic masculinity often takes a more civilized form, even as it sides with those who propose the most decivilizing solutions to fearful situations.

I believe that including a greater focus on masculinities built around the strict-father morality could have practical political and analytical benefits in the field of sports and sport studies. If we are interested in working against hegemonic masculinity in ways that will have the greatest chance of getting people to rethink their practices

and perspectives, recognizing the symbolic power of the strict-father morality should help us avoid stereotyping hegemonic masculinity as a violence-based masculinity that those we would like to reach do not see themselves in. At the same time, it may help us clarify the nature of the task before us, which includes recognizing and articulating moral and ethical alternatives to the strict-father morality in the field of sports along with challenging hypermasculinist tendencies.

This study also uncovered important racial patterns that should be followed up in more detail in future studies. The division between hypermasculinist and masculinist sports is, to a great extent, a racial divide. Viewing White-coded masculinist sports is more strongly associated with support for the Iraqi war than non-White-coded hypermasculinist or masculinist sports are. Also, White viewers of non-White-coded masculinist sports, such as NBA basketball, were not more likely to support the Iraqi war, whereas the non-White viewers were. Although not anticipated, these patterns closely fit my emphasis on masculinist moral capital when we conceive of the televised sports market as a racialized field of contested masculinities. A provisional interpretation is that in the field of televised sports, Whiteness is more strongly associated with the capital of moral character and moral strength, and this association goes hand in hand with limits on direct physical violence and domination in the White-coded sports. Conversely, Blackness is more associated with brute strength, physical above mental prowess, passion, and uncontrolled violence, and these qualities, however exciting and thrilling to watch, poorly mediate support for military aggression framed as liberation and spreading civility and democracy.

Notes

1. Note that this is neither a “catharsis” theory nor a theory that fits very easily with other abstracted empirical questions, such as whether watching violent sports causes one to act violently. Rather, it links the development and popularity of mimetic forms of combat sports to the emergence of highly routinized and somewhat pacified societies and hypothesizes that a taste for mimetic forms of violent masculine domination fall on a scale of violence control somewhere between being repulsed by such forms and participating directly in those activities.

2. To make sure that the strong association for the White index was not simply the result of baseball, which has a much larger following than the other sports, I did the same test using the White index minus baseball and baseball entered as a separate dummy variable. The White index minus baseball and baseball had almost identical standardized regression coefficients, and both were significant at $p < .01$. The non-White indexes continued to be nonsignificant at $p < .05$.

3. Non-Whites included African Americans, Hispanics, Asian Americans, and Other. Non-Whites' views on the war and televised sport viewing habits are fairly similar across races.

4. Here it is noteworthy that baseball, the sport most strongly associated with support for the war, has long been dubbed the national pastime, is the subject of the most intense nostalgia, and has strong middle-class origins (Adelman, 1986).

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