

Media Framing of the Steroids Scandal in Major League Baseball

Christopher Jon McCollough

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Dr. Andrew Paul Williams, Chair
Dr. John C. Tedesco
Dr. James D. Ivory

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ABSTRACT

A content analysis and post hoc content analysis of 362 news articles in national newspapers, regional newspapers, and Internet news Web sites investigated the prevalence of issue-specific and generic frames, frame valence, and the personalization of media coverage of the steroid scandal in Major League Baseball. Research guided by framing theory found 2,353 frames present in the initial analysis and 2,834 frames present after the post hoc analysis. Generic frames were more prevalent than issue-specific frames in coverage in initial analysis. The post hoc analysis, however, indicates that issue-specific frames were more prevalent than generic frames in terms of times present. Frames are valenced negatively more frequently than neutrally or positively in coverage. Media coverage was focused on the individuals more often than on the organization. Finally, both the individuals and organization were treated similarly in terms of valence of frames. The findings of the analyses supported scholarship calling for more analysis of generic and issue-specific frames, the presence of valence in frames, and the personalization of media coverage in the political communication context that in this case is present in the sports media context as well. Findings merit further scholarship on broader source comparison in coverage of this scandal, agenda-setting in various forms, and further frame analysis in the sports media contexts and other contexts outside of the political communication context as well.

Dedications

To my family, who has supported me along the way. To my mother, who has always offered support and encouragement for me to go out and pursue what most interested me in life. To my father, who has been critical in my polishing and refinement of applications to the Master's program that has served me so well, and the Ph.D. program that will be a great experience in my future. To my brother and sister, for their companionship over all these years.

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Media Framing of the Steroids Scandal in Major League Baseball

By Christopher Jon McCollough

Introduction

Rationale:

Framing theory guides research used widely in the context of political communication. Framing is used in coverage of policy, as illustrated by Iyengar and Simon's (1993) study examining how the news frames present in coverage of the Gulf War impacted public support for the war. Framing of issues was also illustrated in Ryan's (2004) study on the frames used in news coverage of the war on terror. Political communication scholars have examined framing theory in international news coverage, such as in de Vreese and Boomgaarden's (2003) study of how news coverage frames of the European Union meetings impacted public perception of the events and the participants in the meetings. Framing is also used in coverage of political scandal as determined by Yioutas and Segvic's (2003) study of news coverage of the Clinton and Lewinsky scandal.

Scholars have taken framing theory to other areas of news coverage and communication as well. Tucker (1998) examined the Calvin Klein jeans campaign and the use of frames in news coverage and the public perception of the advertising campaign. Durham (1998) made use of framing to analyze the news coverage of the TWA Flight 800 disaster. Powers and Andsager (1999) examined news frames used in magazine news coverage of breast implant problems. Glascock (2000) examined the frames used in the public relations campaigns of AT&T and how they dealt with the 1982 breakup, and Murphy (2001) examined how news frames were used in the nicotine debate.

This study explored framing theory in a more unique context for scholarship of media coverage. It examined a news situation that is focused on athletes rather than politicians, as well as sports leagues and teams rather than governments and political parties.

The study was designed to identify frames and arguments that consistently appear within sports news articles. The focus of the study was on the steroid scandal in baseball,

and it examined the media coverage of several major national and regional newspapers and Web sites. This study is an attempt to demonstrate that framing is a prevalent occurrence within sports media coverage, both in terms of type of frame and frame valence, serving to advance the scope of framing theory.

Historical Chronology of the Steroid Scandal in Major League Baseball

Like a long touchdown in football, or a slam dunk in basketball, the home run is the most romanticized and revered play in the sport of professional baseball. Throughout baseball's history, America has been captivated by the athletes who have the ability to hit home runs at long distances and at majestic heights out of the ballpark. This American fascination has existed ever since George Herman "Babe" Ruth hit baseballs out of the ballpark and transformed the sport from a game of defense, skill and speed to a game where prodigious power and huge offensive numbers take the glory. Ruth shattered the single-season home run mark at 29 home runs in 1919 with the Boston Red Sox, and then followed that with even higher home run totals, peaking at 60 home runs in the 1927 season. (Babe Ruth: Batting). The previous single-season home run record holder in comparison to Ruth's output was Frank "Home Run" Baker who hit 12 home runs in the 1913 season while playing for the Philadelphia Athletics (Frank Baker: Batting). However, recent history illustrates that the game is not all glory and statistical achievement.

Steroid use is a prominent issue and an area of controversy in professional baseball and has been since the mid-1990s when the home run race came back to prominence with the home run record chase in the summer of 1996 by Brady Anderson of the Baltimore Orioles (Anderson, Tyler inducted, 2004).

Anderson's 50 home runs fell short of Maris' mark of 61 home runs, but it had baseball fans suspicious of a career lead-off hitter known primarily as a contact hitter. Anderson suddenly surged from a previously meager 21 home runs in the 1992 season to 50 home runs in 1996. Anderson then never reached an equivalent number for the remainder of his career, peaking at 24 home runs in 1999. Former Baltimore Orioles pitcher, Hall of Famer, and current Orioles broadcast personality Jim Palmer said of Anderson, "I don't know how he hit 29 more homers that year ... And he hit 31 more on

the road that year, so it's not like he took advantage of Camden Yards" (Hall of Famer, 2004).

In the summer of 1998, the home run record was shattered as both Mark McGwire of the St. Louis Cardinals and Sammy Sosa of the Chicago Cubs pursued and broke Maris's 37-year old mark of 61 home runs. McGwire broke the mark in a September game ironically against Sosa's Cubs and finished the season with 70 home runs. Sosa broke the mark a week later against the Milwaukee Brewers at Chicago's Wrigley field, and ultimately finished with 66 home runs (Sosa moves up, 2005). In the midst of the home run race, reporters noticed that McGwire was using a then legal supplement called Androstenedione, nicknamed Andro. He claimed that it had nothing to do with enhancing his hitting power, even though it has since been described as a precursor to steroids, and the story continues to haunt McGwire until this day. Andro would end up being banned by the government as an illegal supplement the following year (Sosa moves up, 2005).

Sosa, for his part in the scandal, was always under suspicion for his sudden surge in power. His numbers remained slightly more consistent than McGwire's, remaining in the 60s for two more seasons, and then declined sharply over the next 5 seasons. The low point of his involvement was in 2003, when on a broken-bat single up the middle in Chicago, it was discovered that Sosa was using a corked bat, a long-established and punishable offense of cheating in baseball. This event only served to further stigmatize Sosa as a cheater, which led to further questions. Sosa was repeatedly challenged by columnists to take a steroid test and prove his innocence, and Sosa never responded, leaving himself in question (Hyland, 2005).

In 2001, the record that McGwire had set at 70 home runs, which many journalists and broadcasters had claimed would never be broken, was again broken by Barry Bonds of the San Francisco Giants as he jumped from 49 home runs in 2000 to 73 home runs the following season and led his Giants to the World Series in a losing effort. (Player Profile: Barry, 2005). Many questioned why Bonds had exhibited a decreased mobility and an increase in his muscle mass since his arrival in San Francisco in 1993. One Associated Press article noted that Bonds' playing weight in the 2005 season was at 228 pounds

compared to his rookie season playing weight of 185 pounds in 1986 (Sabeen: Bonds could, 2005).

After Bonds' record-setting run in 2001, baseball has shown a decline in production as no one has cleared the 50-home run mark since (Farrey, 2005). However, the numbers across the board still showed high home run production, leaving baseball officials and fans questioning how this phenomenon was occurring. Finally, in the Winter of 2004, the skeptics would get more potential evidence of steroid abuse in baseball with the federal indictment of executives in the Bay Area Lab Co-operative (BALCO) (Specter of scandal, 2004).

Once the investigation of BALCO began in December of 2003, prominent baseball players Barry Bonds, Garry Sheffield of the New York Yankees, and Jason Giambi of the New York Yankees were included in the list of athletes called to testify in what was supposed to be confidential federal grand jury testimony on just what BALCO was doing and to whom they were supplying performance-enhancing drugs in sports. However, the confidentiality of that testimony would be violated in early 2004, as an undisclosed source leaked to the *San Francisco Chronicle* that Bonds, Sheffield, and Giambi had all accepted and used supplements that BALCO had provided (Giambi, Raiders' Robbins, 2003).

Each player denied that he had accepted the supplements, declared he was clean, and went into the 2004 season attempting to disprove critics. Each player who testified showed a decline in his production, with Giambi the most obvious as he lost a drastic amount of weight and missed a great deal of playing time due to injuries often associated with steroid abuse, including a benign tumor on his pituitary gland. It was reported he was battling intestinal parasites all season long. None of the players had tested positive for using banned substances. However, Giambi would eventually admit to some level of wrongdoing, and he held a press conference before the 2005 season to apologize to the fans of New York, though he never admitted to what he had done wrong (Giambi apologizes _ but, 2005).

The controversy became even more prevalent as Jose Canseco, a former major league baseball player and the 1988 American League MVP with the Oakland Athletics,

not only admitted to using steroids, but also implicated several of his former teammates in his ghost-written autobiography *Juiced: Wild Times, Rampant 'Roids, Smash Hits, and How Baseball Got Big*. Some players implicated were Mark McGwire, Rafael Palmeiro, and Roger Clemens. Major League Baseball denounced Canseco and ignored his claims. However, the wheels were already in motion for further inquiry (Pitcher calls Canseco's, 2005).

In March of 2005, Congress called for the steroid testing results and punishment policies of all the major sports leagues, including Major League Baseball. They then moved to subpoena seven of the most prominent former and current players implicated in the steroid scandal on both sides of the argument. Responding to the subpoenas were Canseco, McGwire, Sosa, Curt Schilling of the Boston Red Sox, and Frank Thomas of the Chicago White Sox (Pitcher calls Canseco's, 2005).

The hearings showed a mix of defiance, repeated claims, ignorance, and avoidance of the issue. Schilling consistently attempted to discredit Canseco's claims of rampant steroid use and pledged his help to curb any threat steroids posed to America's youth, while conspicuously backing off of his own previously zealous claims of rampant steroid abuse. Palmeiro vehemently denied using steroids and promised his help as well. Canseco repeated his prior claims that everything in his book was true and that the problem of steroids in baseball was far more prevalent than Major League Baseball would like the public to think. Sosa suspiciously claimed he could barely speak English and had Dennis Kucinich, Democratic Representative from Ohio and former presidential candidate, serve as a Spanish translator and explain the questions to him. Sosa ultimately denied he had used the supplements and pledged his help to aid the government in any way possible to fight steroid abuse in professional sports. Finally, McGwire was almost in tears as he repeatedly declined to talk about the past, but only offered to answer any questions that would help improve the situation in the future, leaving his fans and baseball with no answers about his mammoth, but questionable accomplishments of 1998. His testimony might have been the most tragic sight of the day had it not been for the testimony of two families whose sons had committed suicide due to depression brought on by their steroid withdrawal. The amateur players had taken steroids in an

attempt to try and compete at a level on par with Major League Baseball players (Pitcher calls Canseco's, 2005).

Congress expanded its investigation to include the other major sports leagues, their players, and the league officials. However, in the case of Rafael Palmeiro, his story led to greater controversy. In the summer of 2005, after achieving the benchmark of 3,000 career hits, it was revealed that Palmeiro had failed one of the new steroid tests implemented by Major League Baseball possibly before his Congressional testimony denying steroid abuse. The results of his 10-game suspension may include the end of his Hall of Fame aspirations, his credibility as a spokesman against steroids, and ultimately the remainder of his career (Congress won't charge, 2005). With the context of the story set, the following literature review illustrates the components of examination in this study.

Literature Review

Framing

Lippmann (1922) was one of the earliest scholars to discuss consider the concept of framing when he suggested that citizens are immersed in messages about how issues should be understood, which problems are important, and how solutions should be applied. Tuchman (1978) asserted that the effect of media frames to organize everyday reality is their most important task. It is also argued that media frames organize the world, both for journalists who provide news reports and for consumers who rely on these reports (Gitlin, 1980).

Entman (1993) argued that “to frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text” (p. 52). Gamson and Modigliani (1987) defined framing as “the central organizing idea or story line that provides meaning to an unfolding strip of events” (p. 143). Similarly, Goffman (1974) defined frames as “principles of organization which govern events – at least social ones – and our subjective involvement in them” (p. 10-11).

Framing has ties to sociology as well. The sociological aspect connects with the attribution theory of Heider (1930, 1959, 1978; Heider and Simmel, 1944), which assumed that humans could not understand the world with all of its complexities, and be able to interpret meaning or underlying relationships from sensory information. The research findings supported attribution theory and gradually expanded through further research to include environmental, personal, and societal factors that influenced the individual’s attribution.

For the purpose of this study, framing is operationalized by the definition offered by Tankard, Hendrickson, Silberman, Bliss, and Ghanem (1991) who defined a frame as the “central organizing idea for news content that supplies a context and suggests what the issue is using selection, emphasis, exclusion, and elaboration” (p. 3).

Extensions of Framing

In addition to the previous scholarship that tries to define framing, scholars have examined various types of frames that are used in media coverage. Iyengar’s (1991) classification of frames as being episodic or thematic focused on the nature of frames.

Iyengar's classification discussed how media channel differences were a large factor in this distinction—with broadcast (TV) coverage tending to be more episodic and print (newspaper) coverage tending to be more thematic. Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) established a set of five generic frames used consistently in political news coverage, and called for further examination based on the prevalence of generic frames in their findings. De Vreese (1999, 2001) called for examination of issue-specific frames that focus on specific themes or aspects of a story exclusively related to that topic.

Recent scholarship extends framing into other contexts of media coverage, dealing with the descriptive nature of coverage and the depth of coverage offered. Fortunato (2001, 2004) suggests framing occurs on two levels in sports media coverage, exposure (layout and amount of content) and portrayal framing (the tone of the story). Williams and Kaid (2006) argued that frames can also be categorized as being either ambiguous or substantive. The ambiguous media frame is vague and indistinct, providing little to no context or clear information — a shortcut of sorts. However, a substantive news frame is detailed and informative — a synopsis that offers the news consumer contextual and detailed information.

Generic Frames, Issue-Specific Frames, and Frame Valence

Prior research (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000) indicates that generic frames such as conflict, responsibility, and political consequences are commonly relied upon in the coverage of news stories. However, framing literature (de Vreese, 1999, 2001; de Vreese, Peter, & Semetko, 2001) also indicates that the media use issue-specific or emergent frames to aid in covering the story. De Vreese (2001) called for the examination of more issue-specific frames in addition to scholarship on generic frames. In essence, he argued for the use of broader, generalizable frames as well as frames that can offer a great amount of description and detail of information on the specific themes related to the news event. In regard to issue-specific framing, Williams and Kaid (2006) suggested that media coverage of the European Union was often focused on the individuals involved rather than on the specific issues important behind the event.

Scholarship also suggests that frames are inherently valenced “by suggesting, for example, positive or negative aspects, solutions, or treatments” (de Vreese, 2003, p. 4).

Prior research also indicates that frames have a valence in tone in coverage of news events (de Vreese & Boomgaarden, 2003). Williams (2003) noted in examination of news coverage on the events of 9/11 that the U.S. media lost all sense of objectivity and became supportive in tone to the government's actions. Williams states that in coverage of the events surrounding 9/11, "Journalists quickly abandoned all pretense of objectivity and became the uncritical mouthpiece of the US state" (p. 177). Dimitrova, Kaid, Williams, and Trammell (2005) in their examined the initial news coverage of Gulf War II and noted that there were regional differences in frames used in coverage, as well as differences in tone of coverage between countries in support of the war, and differences in the tone of coverage of those countries opposed to it.

Framing Scandal

Scholars have examined media frames in connection to public controversies in general. Steele (1997) examined the 1992-1993 controversy relating to gays in the military in broadcast news coverage for an explanation as to why the news coverage tended to utilize anonymous sources and found that the reason was related to the choices made in framing the story by the broadcast news organizations. In choosing a frame that consistently depicted the U.S. Government against a special interest group, they were forced to utilize sources in the government or formerly in the military who were reluctant to reveal their identities for fear of ostracism from their current or former employers.

Ketchum (2004) examined the coverage of the *San Francisco Chronicle* on a story involving the logging of Headwaters, an ancient redwood forest in California. Ketchum's study found that the newspaper's choice to frame the actions of the government and the companies involved as bureaucratic acts rather than responses to radical protest groups' activities resulted in a misrepresentation and perpetuation of the idea of radical groups as "outsider."

These studies illustrate that negatively valenced framing of news coverage of scandals and controversial events and the individuals involved is often negative and focused on conflict. Framing scholarship exists in a wide variety of areas in media coverage, including a large body of work in political communication. The following section illustrates another area of scholarship in which framing theory guides research as

well.

Public Relation's Role in Organizational Communication in Image and Crisis

Framing has been discussed as a key element in the area of public relations work, specifically how practitioners representing an organization structure what they present to the media and the public on general issues as well as in times of crisis. Knight (1999) discussed frames as an effective tool of practitioners by saying “frames represent powerful mechanisms through which public relations practitioners can mediate debate related to public policy” (p. 381).

Hallahan (1999) discussed practitioners from a different perspective:

In developing programs, public relations professionals fundamentally operate as *frame strategists*, who strive to determine how situations, attributes, choices, actions, issues and responsibility should be posed to achieve favorable objectives. Framing decisions are perhaps the most important strategic choices made in a public relations effort (p. 224, emphasis in original).

Knight and Hallahan both suggest that framing is a key component in the public relations profession.

Research has examined how framing is present in the public relations function of an organization. Miller and Reichert (2001) discussed how public relations played a key role in how objects are framed and which of their attributes are conveyed in communication messages. In fact, several scholars have touched on how public relations is key in not only building the media agenda, but also in how the media frames the organizations and issues at hand (Curtin, 1999; Curtin & Rhodenbaugh, 2001; Turk, 1985; Williams, 2004).

In terms of the impact that public relations has on media content, some estimates see public relations as affecting between 25 to 80 % of the news content (Cameron, Sallot & Curtin, 1997; Lee & Solomon, 1990). Turk (1986) found that press releases from state government Public Information Officers (PIOs) in Louisiana impacted how much focus state agencies received in further news coverage. Turk and Franklin (1987) extended the literature to include this trend occurring in the international context.

Public relations and press releases are effective in the context of political

campaigns as well. Kaid (1976) found that in the context of a political campaign, press releases were often published exactly as the practitioner had disseminated them. The releases that focused on campaign announcements and personal information tended to be published more often than those focused on political issues themselves. Miller, Andsager and Reichert (1998) compared political campaigns and found that news articles drew more distinctions among political candidates' views than did press releases.

Framing scholarship indicates that framing is a key function in issue management and controlling organization image. Dow (2004) examined how Marlene Sanders of ABC News, during a 1970 broadcast television documentary, worked to frame the image of the National Organization of Women (NOW) and the Women's Liberation Movement. Through the rhetorical strategy of framing, Sanders's own narration made her sound like the figure of authority when discussing NOW. Furthermore, by framing her program around the contexts of NOW and the Women's Liberation Movement working to advance diversity through civil protest, Sanders was trying to improve the image of NOW in the public eye.

Barnett (2005) examined how NOW was working to frame itself without the aid of a network news documentary. Themes stressed included that they were vigilant and protective of women's rights, united with other advocacy organizations to promote human rights, and struggling against opponents who were unpatriotic extremists and deviant from mainstream American society. The findings suggest that public relations professionals may use framing to correct journalistic frames that ignore or dismiss the work of social movement organizations, as well as to organize ideas and define debates.

Reber and Berger (2005) conducted a framing analysis of Sierra Club's chapter newsletters and the regional and national newspapers to find master and sub-frames. Three sub-frames were found through analysis, including the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, coal-fired power plants, and sprawl. Sprawl was the most frequent frame present, but the discussions were found to be unfocused. Overall, however, the themes disseminated by the Sierra Club were found much more frequently than those produced by competing organizations.

Glascok (2000) examined AT&T's public relations campaign during its break up

in the 1980s and how it addressed the media in press releases. The study showed how the campaign was one factor influencing news frames. Andsager and Smiley (1998) studied the controversy of defective silicone breast implants, and found that press releases issued by medical groups, citizen's groups, and Dow Corning (the manufacturer) did have some impact on shaping news coverage frames.

Scholarship also indicates that framing is a key tool for public relations in times of crisis. This logically relates to Major League Baseball as a major organization at the center of a crisis like the steroid scandal. Maggart (1994) examined the crisis communication efforts of Bowater, Inc., in the wake of an unexpected crisis over which the company had no control that required an immediate response. The findings indicate that Bowater, Inc., officials needed to have a written crisis plan for action. According to Maggart, this written plan for action should be in place for all companies, even when a crisis can't be predicted or controlled by the organization.

Crisis communication literature has its extensions in crises in the food industry. Sellnow and Ulmer (1995) examined the crisis communication strategy of the Jack in the Box food chain in response to an E. Coli contamination scare at one of their restaurants. Findings indicated that purposeful ambiguity in their apologetic arguments reduced negative exposure and maintained company control over the crisis. This approach by the Jack in the Box food chain ultimately led to an increased economic recovery. Sellnow, Ulmer and Snider (1998) examined how Schwan Sales Enterprises dealt with a salmonella outbreak in 1994. The study explored a crisis situation where Schwan Sales Enterprises accepted responsibility for the crisis as part of their image restoration strategies. In this case, Schwan Sales Enterprises was able to maintain consumer confidence and had an economic recovery.

Crisis communication scholarship has examined corporate accidents in a variety of situations. Duhé and Zoch (1994) examined how Exxon dealt with a fire that destroyed a plant. Exxon was framed as the primary source by the media even though there was a period between the times that the fire was reported locally in Baton Rouge, LA, and when Exxon officials first addressed the press. When addressing the press, Exxon used consistent themes of corporate responsibility for the accident; managerial compassion for

those who worked at the plant; expressed their full cooperation with the federal authorities; Exxon's standards of safety for the workers and the public around the facility; hazard monitoring that Exxon had done and would improve in the future; concern for the community in the aftermath of the disaster; and, finally, responsibility towards and compassion for the families of injured or missing employees.

Bobo (1997) examined how Hitachi, Ltd. addressed a factory accident in Greenville, SC, that killed three engineers and injured two associates. Hitachi, Ltd. was able to control public perception by showing concern for survivors, appointing a crisis response leader within the company, the assignment of specific duties to Hitachi managers, and finally the involvement of the Hitachi, Ltd. company president in the crisis.

Seeger and Ulmer (2002) examined how textile company Malden Mills, and its owner, Aaron Feuerstein, and Milt Cole, the owner of a small lumber company, both worked to restore their companies' images following disastrous fires, not only with the public, but among their employees as well. Feuerstein stressed corporate responsibility for the accident. Feuerstein also maintained that he would put his employees first by maintaining salaries and benefits until the factory was rebuilt. Cole stressed the importance of the employees through the lens of personal relationships. Cole also continued salaries and benefits until his lumberyard was back in operation. In both cases, the owners made unconventional choices in saying without question that they would rebuild their facilities in the same location. Both companies have since grown beyond their capacities prior to the disasters.

In addition to examining accidents in the corporate environment, crisis literature has examined companies dealing with scandal. Ohl, Pincus, Rimmer, and Harrison (1995) studied the impact of news releases on media coverage of corporate takeovers. They found that news releases not only had an impact on the number of stories on the issue, but also influenced what frames were used to tell the stories. Press releases were linked to longer news stories containing a favorable tone about corporate takeovers.

Cowden and Sellnow (2002) examined how Northwest Airline (NWA) used issue advertising in response to the 1998 pilots' strike. The advertisements allowed NWA to

reduce culpability for the strike, and to maintain their passenger volume. However, NWA failed to maintain investor confidence. NWA's success was limited by their pseudo-corrective action, an inappropriate attempt at separation from its pilots and a failure to account for their relationship history with NWA employees.

Greenberg and Knight (2004) examined the framing of newspaper coverage of Nike, Global Productions, and the sweatshops that they utilized for mass production of their products. They found that the frames used turned from a social to an economic and production issue, particularly in *The New York Times*. *The Washington Post* framed its media coverage from the workers' perspective. Nike themselves framed the sweatshops as an aberration among the workplace norm. Kathie Lee Gifford (investor in Global Productions and prominent figure under scrutiny) claimed it was an oversight in sales projection, and placed the blame with the public as a result of their demand for the product. The issue ultimately rose to prominence because of the concern of consumers for the products they were buying. The news media, in a rare case, allowed the social activists rather than the companies and their CEOs to provide the definitions for the event as the credible news source.

Research indicates that nations make use of public relations to improve their image in times of crisis as well. Albritton and Manheim (1983) examined Rhodesia and how that nation was able to decrease negative coverage in *The New York Times* that previously focused on the country's domestic violence problems. An extended analysis (Manheim & Albritton, 1984) found that *The New York Times* coverage of six countries was influenced by American public relations firms hired by those nations. In comparing coverage before and after the involvement of the public relations firms, they were able to see that the countries attained improved visibility and valence in content. It is important to note that positive coverage was often associated with decreased overall content on the countries because they were viewed so negatively. Zhang and Cameron (2003) found parallels with both of these studies in examining news coverage of China in the *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and *The Los Angeles Times*.

Finally, when examining relevant literature in crisis communication because of the need for Major League Baseball to maintain control over the steroid scandal and to

keep a positive public perception, there is crisis literature examining Major League Baseball in two previous crisis scenarios. Anderson (2001), in a historical perspective, examined the desire of Major League Baseball executives to present the game as the national past time, and the influence that this desire had on their crisis communication strategy throughout history. Included in this study was the sports media's influence on Major League Baseball's image in the public. The historical perspective of crisis analyzed was the negative impact of the 1919 Black Sox scandal. The scandal involved the illegal arranging of the outcome of the 1919 World Series by the Chicago White Sox. The negative media coverage of Major League Baseball after this scandal led to a negative public perception of the game. Ironically, Major League Baseball only began to repair its image after the arrival of Babe Ruth and the rise of the homerun in the 1920s.

From a Major League Baseball team perspective, Domingo (2003) developed a theoretical approach for creating a crisis communication plan in sports. In this case, it was how the Chicago Cubs should approach the media after Sammy Sosa was caught using a corked bat in a baseball game, an established form of cheating in the game of baseball. Domingo modeled his strategy after Mead's (1934) symbolic interactionism theory. The main premise of his model being that the Chicago Cubs' ownership and officials (Sosa's team at the time) should be mindful of their words and actions as they will create meaning for the media covering the scandal. Because symbols create meaning for the media, Cubs' officials should outline symbols that accommodate the media because media compliance will aid in cleansing their fallen icon, Sammy Sosa.

Crisis communication literature demonstrates effective strategies for dealing with the media in a company's time of crisis. In this case, this is pertinent as Major League Baseball must deal with the constant media scrutiny in light of the steroid scandal. Arpan and Pompper (2003) examined a proactive form of crisis communication called "stealing thunder." A group of reporters and journalism students were brought together and put into two test conditions. The first condition offered information about a mock crisis that came directly from the company's officials. In the second condition, the reporters and journalism students were offered an ambiguous statement by the company in the same mock crisis, and received the same legitimate information from a source outside of the

company. The findings indicate that the company officials were perceived to be far more credible by the reporters and journalism students when they were up front with the information. In addition, the findings indicate that “stealing thunder” as a strategy actually generated more positive interest in coverage by the reporters and journalism students.

Scholarship in the field indicates the emotive approach when engaging in crisis communication can have a positive impact on perception and consumer response. This is of course applicable when considering that Major League Baseball must maintain a strong connection to its fans during and after the scandal. Coombs (1999) examined 114 crisis managers in companies and their strategies for dealing with a crisis. There was a significant positive effect found for organizational reputation, honoring accounts, and intended potential supportive behavior when using compassion in their crisis communication. The same findings found no such effect for simply using instructing information when engaging in crisis communication.

Individual Image Framing and the Personalization of Coverage

Research indicates that the media will focus on self-image of members of an organization during major news events, and that organization will either work to make their more prominent members more identifiable with the public or to discredit the prominent members if they present a threat to the organization’s credibility. This area of scholarship is relevant to the study because the individuals within the organization, the players, are the focus of scrutiny during the steroid scandal. According to several scholars (King, 1997; Kiousis, Bantimaroudis & Ban, 1999; McCombs, Llamas, Lopez-Escobar & Rey, 1997) in the context of political candidates’ self-image in times of campaign, much of scholarship focuses on how media emphasis on candidate attributes affect their perceptions in public.

Scholarship found that individuals work to frame themselves to the public as well as their own organization. McCarthy and Hatcher (2004) conducted a comparative analysis of frames used by two heads of major corporations, Rupert Murdoch of News Corporation and Carly Fiorina of Hewlett-Packard. In looking for how both individuals framed their self-image with their companies and the public, the scholars noted that both

framed themselves as opinion leaders, caring individuals, and as corporate and socially responsible. In order to fight off their critics, both framed their companies as having to balance expansion with concern for society. Finally, they drew on their personal experiences and background to help identify with their consumer public and company.

Gerlach and Hamilton (2005) examined how the scientific community worked to frame Richard Seed, the Chicago physicist first credited with attempting to clone humans and how the scientific community's frames went from initially discrediting him as a mad scientist to a bad scientist, due to the fact that the public would perceive scientists as less credible individuals for allowing him to conduct his work in such a manner. Instead, the scientific community chose to discredit him as a scientist who was unqualified, and worked outside of the tenants of proper scientific conduct. Finally, media framing shifted to how Seed was the kick off to a major shift in policy and was a creator of a major biogovernmental event.

In the realm of political coverage, recent scholarship has illustrated that on a global level, political campaigns are adopting an American model of campaigning, while still avoiding the American methods of political news coverage. Several scholars (Kavanagh, 1996; Negrine & Papathanassopoulos, 1996; Norris & Kalb, 1997) noted in light of the 1997 British Prime Ministry elections that Tony Blair and his Labour party were beginning to utilize the techniques of American campaigns, in particular, those of Bill Clinton in the 1996 presidential election. Among the strategies were a focus on the candidate running rather than the issues surrounding their campaign, as well as the use of paid political advisers in a greater number and a professional control over mediated messages. However, Lichter and Smith (1996) noted a difference in that the American press made use of coverage strategies such as horserace coverage and the shrinking soundbite unlike the British media. Scholars noted a difference in coverage in the British media that remained focused on political issues rather than individuals (CARMA, 1997). However, scholarship did note that a previous bias in the British media coverage against the Labour party was significantly in decline in the 1997 election (Seymour-Ure, 1997).

Framing in Sports

Framing research in sports writing is limited. However, Fortunato (2004) has

conducted some research in the field. He argued:

Framing can be thought of as occurring on two levels: exposure and portrayal.

Exposure framing includes selection in terms of which stories got aired or printed to even have the opportunity of reaching the public, but also include gate keeping characteristics such as frequency, placement, and the amount of time and/or space devoted to an issue (p. 5).

Portrayal framing is, “developing and communicating storylines that create drama and a rooting interest for the audience” (Fortunato, p. 4).

Fortunato and Kim (2004) analyzed how major sports newspaper columnists covered Annika Sorenstam, a prominent female golfer, playing in the Colonial golf tournament, a small tournament on the men’s Professional Golf Association (PGA) tour. In sampling the articles of prominent sports columnists at several major nationally circulated regional newspapers, they were able to identify several consistent frames through individual descriptive analysis of the event before it occurred, while it happened, and the reflection on the news event afterward. Among the frames they found were player motivation, the magnitude of the event, expectations and predictions of performance, and the analysis of performance.

In addition to these findings, Fortunato and Kim (2004) were able to point out that as the event occurred, the expectations of Sorenstam’s performance were initially set high in the hopes of her making the cut and shattering the gender gap. However, when she did not make the cut, the writers consistently got behind her performance, and said it was simply a success for her to have played as well as she did at the tournament.

Framing scholarship in sports media is not limited to sporting event coverage, but also includes scandal coverage, a relevant component in this study that used a relevant event as well. The issue of steroids in sports news coverage and its political implications are not entirely new ground covered in this study. Denham (1996) examined how *Sports Illustrated* used negative frames in its 1980s coverage of steroid use in athletics at all levels. By comparative analysis of frames in congressional testimony and *Sports Illustrated* articles, Denham demonstrated how *Sports Illustrated* was able to aid in building the policy agenda on anti-steroids abuse legislation.

This review of literature discusses framing in its relevant forms and discusses the role of public relations in framing organizations and individuals. These are critical to consider when examining the steroid scandal, specifically, how the media will frame a controversial issue, how Major League Baseball will frame the issue and their organization, and how the players and officials in the issue will be framed in terms of self-image in the face of the controversial event.

Hypotheses and Research Questions

Based on prior research indicating the prevalence of generic frames in media coverage (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000), as well as the importance of studying issue-specific frames in media coverage (de Vreese, 1999, 2001; de Vreese, Peter, & Semetko, 2001), the following hypothesis is posited:

Hypothesis One: Similar to other framing research in other contexts, generic frames will be more commonly utilized than issue-specific or emergent frames in media coverage.

Based on literature that states that organizations in a campaign place the focus on individuals in the time of a campaign (Kavanagh, 1996; Negrine & Papathanassopoulos, 1996), as well as the media outlets covering them (Lichter & Smith, 1996; Williams & Kaid, 2006), the following research question is posited:

Research Question One: What is the media coverage focused on primarily in reporting the steroids controversy—the organization (MLB) or its members (players)?

Finally, based on prior scholarship suggesting the presence of valence in tone and treatment of frames (de Vreese, 2003; de Vreese & Boomgaarden, 2003); literature suggesting that frames used in coverage of scandals focus on the negative (Ketchum, 2004; Steele, 1997); and literature from the political communication context illustrating that media coverage focuses on the negative aspects of an event, (CARMA, 1997; Lichter & Smith, 1996), the following hypothesis and research question are offered:

Hypothesis Two: Negative media frames of the steroids issue in professional baseball will be present more frequently than positive or neutral media frames.

Research Question Two: In terms of the framing of the organization (MLB) and its members (players) in relation to the steroid controversy, what is the difference in valence of the player consequence and major league baseball consequence frames?

Materials and Methods

Sample

The method used in this study is a content analysis of stories coming from news sources covering the time period from December 1, 2003 to December 1, 2005. This time frame includes the time period in which Major League Baseball players were giving testimony in the BALCO investigation, the press leak of the testimony in the BALCO investigation by the *San Francisco Chronicle*, the growing scandal, the Congressional hearings, the season following, and finally the policy changes of Major League Baseball regarding steroid testing and punishment.

A search was conducted on the Lexis-Nexis database for news articles related to *Major League Baseball*, *Steroids*, *Congressional Hearings*, and *BALCO*. The newspapers examined were the *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *San Francisco Chronicle*, and *The Boston Globe*. The search produced 362 stories in total, coming from staff writers, syndicated columnists, independent contributors, and news wire services.

The rationale for including these papers is that each of them has a major geographic connection to the events surrounding the scandal. *The New York Times* (52 articles) often covers the New York Yankees, who currently have two of the players in question, Giambi and Sheffield, on their roster. *The Washington Post* (57 articles) was selected because of its proximity to the nation's capital and its great coverage of national political events, including congressional hearings. *The Boston Globe* (51 articles) was used because of its depth of coverage on professional baseball, as well as its connections to Curt Schilling, a current player for the Boston Red Sox and major focus of coverage of the steroid scandal in professional baseball. The incorporation of the *San Francisco Chronicle* (62 articles) is due to its role in breaking the BALCO grand jury testimony story, as well as its daily coverage of the dealings of Barry Bonds, one of the most talked about players in the steroid scandal in professional baseball.

The sample included on-line sports news Web sites and their news archives from this time frame as well. Samples were taken from the archived stories from *ESPN's* Web site, *ESPN.com* (94 articles) as well as from the *CNN*-controlled Web site for *Sports Illustrated*, *CNN.com* (46 articles) The rationale for these sources is their national

rather than regional approach to news coverage.

The CNN-powered Web site for *Sports Illustrated* not only covers general sports stories, but also the archived weekly content of *Sports Illustrated*'s newsstand edition. ESPN's Web site typically runs up-to-the-minute updated stories of the day and makes most of the coverage that they offer on their cable network available on their Web site as well. This study accounted for other forms of media commonly accessed as sources of news that have come to prominence in addition to major newspapers.

The sample included a mix of stories ranging from basic news reports to opinion/editorial pieces covering the events related to the scandal. It could be argued that this introduces bias into the sample, which will impact valence. However, the choice to incorporate opinion/editorial material in the sample was made with the understanding that it would be more representative of the kind of exposure an average media consumer would gain when reading about this story.

Unit of Analysis and Unit of Enumeration

The classifications for unit of analysis and unit of enumeration were based on the work of Kaid and Wadsworth (1989). The material analyzed is organized by numbered news articles. Therefore, the news article was the unit of analysis. The unit of enumeration was the absence or presence of the frames established for analysis, as well as the valence of each of the frames present.

In order to analyze, coders read the article once to get a feeling for the overall message behind each article. They again read the article and this time examined the piece for each of the variables marked for coding, and made note of their status on the code sheet provided. Finally, the coders read the article a third time to find noteworthy quotes or descriptions within the article that help illustrate story focus, source attribution, as well as any that may have established a dominant frame within the article. This process was used in examining both the on-line news articles and the newspaper articles.

Categories and Definitions

This study was designed to identify the types of frames that exist in the coverage of the steroid scandal in Major League Baseball. Therefore, each story was coded with entries for a number of variables, including: news source, author, source attribution, focus

of stories, types of frames present, valence of frames, and overall tone of the piece.

Story Author

Coders identified the absence or presence of the individual(s) who wrote each story from the predetermined list:

- (1) staff writer
- (2) syndicated columnist
- (3) independent contributor
- (4) news wire (i.e. Associated Press, Reuters, Knight Ridder, etc.)

Source Attribution

Coders looked for the absence or presence of sources attributed in each story from a predetermined list:

- (1) Major League Baseball players
- (2) Major League Baseball officials
- (3) Major League Baseball team officials
- (4) Major League Baseball union representatives
- (5) amateur baseball players
- (6) families of amateur baseball players
- (7) baseball fans
- (8) baseball broadcasters
- (9) BALCO employees
- (10) BALCO executives
- (11) Congressional committee members
- (12) members of Congress
- (13) political figures (i.e. President, Attorney General)
- (14) anonymous
- (15) other

The option of selecting “other” provides coders with the opportunity to identify any other source in an open-ended response section of the codesheet. (Appendix A).

Story Focus

Coders identified each of the following elements as being part of the focus of the

article being examined by noting their absence or presence:

- (1) Major League Baseball players
- (2) Major League Baseball
- (3) amateur baseball players
- (4) families of amateur baseball players
- (5) baseball fans
- (6) Bay Area Laboratory Cooperative (BALCO)
- (7) BALCO executives
- (8) Congressional hearings
- (9) Congress members
- (10) Other political figures (i.e. President, Attorney General)
- (11) other

The coders then described what that other focus was through an open-ended response area on the codesheet.

Frames

Again, frames are operationalized as central organizing ideas under which several themes can occur (Tankard et. al, 1991). With this definition in mind, coders then determined the absence or presence of the following list of generic (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000) and issue-specific frames (de Vreese, 1999, 2001; de Vreese, Peter, & Semetko, 2001):

Generic Frames:

- (1) Conflict – frames that deal with any conflict between any of the major players in the scandal, whether it be the players, BALCO, Congress, Major League Baseball, or the Major League Baseball Players' Union.
- (2) Social Impact – frames that deal with the impact of steroid abuse in baseball and its impact on amateur athletes, youth, adults, and the public in general.
- (3) Responsibility – frames that attempt to attribute whose responsibility it is to police steroid abuse, as well as who is at fault for promoting the steroid abuse.
- (4) Economic Consequences – coverage that discusses how the scandal may

impact the economy surrounding league cities, the teams, owners, or the individual players.

(5) Morality – frames that discuss the ethics of the individuals and organizations involved in the steroid abuse scandal in Major League Baseball.

(6) Public Backlash – frames that discuss the public's reaction to the investigation, the people involved, and the organizations in question.

(7) Diagnostic – frames that discuss the processes in each investigation, the testing methods for steroid abuse, or the effects of steroid abuse.

(8) Prognostic – frames that discuss the potential outcomes of the investigations and the future of those involved.

Issue-Specific Frames:

(1) Impact on MLB (Major League Baseball) – frames that discuss the short-term or long-term impact on Major League Baseball either due to steroid abuse or through league policy change.

(2) MLB (Major League Baseball) Consequences – the outcome for the league following reaction from the government or the public.

(3) MLB (Major League Baseball) Player Consequences – frames that discuss what kind of impact that steroid abuse and the subsequent investigations are having on the players in the league.

(4) BALCO (Bay Area Laboratory Cooperative) Consequences – frames that establish what the impact of the investigation will be on BALCO.

(5) Political Consequences – frames that discuss the fallout politically for figures involved in the Congressional investigation, as well as the benefits for those pursuing answers in the investigation.

In incorporating the idea of issue-specific frames (de Vreese, Peter, & Semetko, 2001), themes were selected for analysis based on the necessity to discuss them in the coverage of Major League Baseball, its players, the policies governing it, as well as the external element of an increasingly politically salient issue that reached the level of a congressional committee hearing.

At this point, it is important to note that there was initially a disparity between generic and issue-specific frames. Therefore, an initial examination for emergent themes (see p. 26, this document) produced three themes that were used in an operationalization as three issue-specific frames for a significant recode and post hoc analysis. The three issue-specific frames are as follows:

Post Hoc Issue-Specific Frames

- (1) Government Watchdog – A frame in the article that discusses the role of the government as either protecting the public good, working to reform drug testing policies OR as an interfering force that is infringing upon player and league rights in relation to labor agreements or the players' right to privacy.
- (2) League Official Reputation – A frame that speaks about the characteristics of either MLB commissioner Bud Selig or MLBPA chief Donald Fehr. This can either speak to their abilities in performing their job, or to their personal characteristics and intangible character traits.
- (3) Fallen Hero – A frame in an article that examines a player in the league, and discusses how their better traits have diminished in light of the scandal. This can either be manifest in terms of a comparison to past historical achievements by the player, or by simple mention of who they once were compared to who they are.

Frame Valence

Prior research indicates that frames have a valence in tone (de Vreese & Boomgaarden, 2003). Coders examined, using a 3-point scale, whether each frame was valenced as positive, neutral, or negative. This allowed for the determination of positive, neutral, and negative news frames. An additional analysis of valence was also conducted for each of the additional issue-specific frames examined in the post hoc analysis.

Emergent Themes

Prior research suggests that frames emerge as themes develop throughout the media's coverage of a news event (de Vreese, Peter, & Semetko, 2001). Coders were asked to identify in an open-ended response section if there were any emergent themes that they noticed in the story, and if so, what the overall valence was on the themes they observed.

Dominant Frame

Coders were then asked to identify if there was a dominant frame in the news article they coded. This was a simple closed-ended question that asked them to indicate which of the previously explained frames was the dominant frame, as well as the option of another open-ended response section in the event that one of the emergent themes had been the primary focus in the news coverage.

Overall Story Tone

With prior research in mind regarding valence of frames and the overall news story (de Vreese & Boomgaarden, 2003) coders were also asked to make note of the overall tone of the news article. Overall story tone was determined by a combination of story headline, valence of content, amount of content devoted to each aspect of the article, as well as the placement of frames in the story with respect to the inverted pyramid standard used in journalism, putting the most important material near the beginning of a story.

Coding Process

Based on prior research addressed in the literature review, and the listed hypotheses and research questions, a codesheet (Appendix A) and a codebook (Appendix B) were developed. Due to the similarities in content and approach to writing, there was one codesheet and one codebook used for both newspaper articles and on-line news articles. The codesheet was converted for use on Virginia Tech's on-line survey tool, <http://www.survey.vt.edu>. This allowed for more efficient coding, as well as ease of transfer to SPSS Graduate Pack 11.0 for Mac OS X for statistical analysis.

The author and a graduate student were trained in a series of coding sessions for the newspaper and on-line news articles, and then the coding process was implemented. Due to time constraints and limited resources for coding, the researcher coded 100% of the articles analyzed, and used the second coder to perform a 10% overlap in order to establish intercoder reliability. Intercoder reliability was calculated for each category and for all categories based on Holsti's formula: $1R=2M/(N1+N2)$, where M is the number of agreements between the coders, N1 is the total number of coding decisions made by Coder 1 and N2 is the total number of coding decisions made by Coder 2 (North, Holsti,

Zaninovich, & Zinnes, 1963). The overall intercoder reliability was calculated for all possible categories of variation using Holsti's formula and found to be .92, with an individual item reliability range of .84 to 1.00. The post hoc analysis intercoder reliability was calculated for all categories of variation using Holsti's formula and found to be .88, with an individual item reliability range of .87 to .93. The overall intercoder reliability using Holsti's formula that is generally accepted is .85.

Data Analysis

Once coding was complete, the results were analyzed using SPSS Graduate Pack 11.0 for Mac OS X software in order to run frequencies to establish presence, crosstabulations to examine presence of frames by valence, and chi square tests to determine the statistical significance in each case.

Results

Hypothesis One posited that generic frames would be more commonly utilized than issue-specific or emergent frames in media coverage. A frequency was run for each of the individual frames in terms of frame presence or absence. Overall, frame prevalence was analyzed through a frequency of presence of frames and a crosstabulation and chi square test in order to determine statistical significance of the findings.

Overall, 2,353 frames were initially coded as being present in the articles examined during this study that dealt with the steroid scandal in Major League Baseball. Of these frames, 1,375 (58%) were found to be generic frames, while 978 frames (42%) were found to be issue-specific frames (Table 1). This difference between generic and issue-specific frames is statistically significant, $\chi^2(1, N = 2,353) = 66.97, p < .001$. Thus, Hypothesis One is supported by the initial analysis.

On an individual basis, it was found that two issue-specific frames outranked the other frames in terms of presence in the articles examined. These two frames were MLB (Major League Baseball) Player Consequences (14%, $N = 308$) and Impact on Major League Baseball (11%, $N = 270$). These were immediately followed by five generic frames, which were Prognostic (11%, $N = 268$); Conflict (11%, $N = 262$); Diagnostic (10%, $N = 236$); Responsibility (8%, $N = 187$); and Morality (8%, $N = 183$). The next two were issue-specific frames, Political Consequences (8%, $N = 177$) and MLB (Major League Baseball) Consequences (6%, $N = 147$). The next frame was Social Impact, a generic frame, (5%, $N = 106$). The remaining frames appeared with much less frequency. The next frame is BALCO (Bay Area Lab Cooperative) Consequences, an issue-specific frame, (3%, $N = 76$) and Public Backlash, a generic frame, (3%, $N = 75$). Finally, Economic Consequences is a generic frame, (2%, $N = 58$) (Table 1).

Research Question One asked if media coverage focused on Major League Baseball (MLB) players was more common than coverage of Major League Baseball (MLB), their host organization, in coverage of the steroid scandal in Major League Baseball. The answer to this question was determined by examining the frame presence in the case of Major League Baseball (MLB) Player Consequences frames in comparison to Major League Baseball (MLB) Consequences frames. In terms of frame presence,

results indicate the media covered consequences for players more than the league. The consequences for Major League Baseball players were covered 308 times (14%), while the consequences for Major League Baseball were covered 147 times (6%), a statistically significant difference, $\chi^2 (1, N = 455) = 56.969, p < .001$ (Table 1).

Hypothesis Two posited that frame valence would be negative more frequently than positive or neutral in media coverage of the steroid scandal. A frequency of frame valence was run in the case of each frame as well as a crosstabulation and chi square test in order to determine statistical significance. The same process was used to determine overall frame valence in all frames used. The findings were in support of Hypothesis Two. In examining the individual frames, all frames examined with the exception of Diagnostic frames, 3 (1%) positive, 192 (82%) neutral, and 41 (17%) negative, were found to be valenced negatively in the majority of frames present. All chi square test values, with the exception of Public Backlash frames and Economic Consequences frames, were found to be statistically significant differences. Among the frames of stronger statistical significance are MLB (Major League Baseball) Player Consequences, $\chi^2 (2, N = 308) = 267.279, p < .001$; Conflict, $\chi^2 (2, N = 262) = 464.299, p < .001$; Diagnostic, $\chi^2 (2, N = 236) = 254.093, p < .001$; and MLB (Major League Baseball) Consequences, $\chi^2 (2, N = 147) = 123.224, p < .001$. All values were found to be statistically significant at $p < .001$ (Table 2).

In a comparison of frame valence to overall tone of the stories, it was found that the overall valence of the 2,353 frames used were positively valenced in 165 (7%) cases, neutrally in 736 (31%) cases, and negatively in 1,452 (62%) cases (Table 3). This inequity was found to be statistically significant, $\chi^2 (2, N = 2,353) = 1060.377, p < .001$. However, in the case of overall tone of the stories, it was found that in the 362 stories analyzed, the tone was found to be positive in 18 cases (5%), negative in 175 cases (48% of stories), and neutral in 169 cases (47%). These differences in story tone are found to be statistically significant, $\chi^2 (2, N = 362) = 131.177, p < .001$. This indicates that while a greater majority of overall frames used were negatively valenced (62%), the overall tone of the stories was far less negative (48%) (Table 3).

Research Question Two asked how the MLB Player Consequences frame compared in valence to that of Major League Baseball Consequences frames. The answer to this question was found by examining the calculation of percentages for frame valence in the case of MLB Player Consequences in comparison to MLB Consequences. A report of percentages indicate that in terms of frame valence, Major League Baseball players' consequences were framed positively 3% of the time compared to Major League Baseball's consequences being framed positively 8% of the time. Player consequences were framed neutrally 21% of the time while Major League Baseball consequences were framed neutrally 16% of the time. Finally, both MLB consequences and the consequences of its players were framed negatively 76% of the time. These differences were found not to be statistically significant, $\chi^2(4, N = 200) = 7.142, p > .1$

As mentioned before, a post hoc analysis was conducted in order to rectify the imbalance between generic and issue-specific frames. The post hoc analysis of the emergent themes as issue-specific frames produced interesting results in an examination of the overall findings with the new frames and valences incorporated. The Fallen Hero emergent theme when recoded for as an issue-specific frame was present at the third highest total among the issue-specific frames ($N = 185, 7\%$). The Government Watchdog emergent theme when recoded for as an issue-specific frame was present at the fourth highest total among the issue-specific frames ($N = 179, 6\%$). Finally, the League Official Reputation emergent theme when recoded for as an issue-specific frame was present at the seventh ranked total among the issue-specific frames ($N = 117, 4\%$) (Table 4). When integrated into analysis with the generic frames for overall rankings in terms of presence, the Fallen Hero frame was the seventh highest total out of the 16 frames analyzed. The Government Watchdog frame was the ninth ranked out of 16 frames analyzed. Finally, the League Official Reputation frame was the 11th ranked total out of the 16 frames analyzed. (Table 5).

While these rankings illustrate that the frames observed have a strong prevalence, the most interesting shift in the findings occurs when the total frame prevalence is recalculated in response to Hypothesis One. In this case, the findings now actually did not support the hypothesis, indicating that issue-specific frames ($N = 1,459, 51\%$) are more

prevalent than generic frames ($N = 1,375$, 49%). While the findings here did shift significantly from the previously indicated results, the difference between issue-specific and generic frames through a chi square test was found not to be statistically significant $\chi^2 (1, N = 2,834) = 2.49$, $p > .1$ (Table 4). The post hoc analysis had a significant impact on the findings of this study in the case of overall frame prevalence. The post hoc analysis in addition to examining for prevalence also looked at the influence on overall valence and individual valence as well,

The post hoc analysis of frame valence incorporating the emergent issue-specific frames provided findings that were consistent with the previous analysis used to address Hypothesis Two. In the case of the individual emergent issue-specific frames, the Fallen Hero and League Official Reputation frames both trended negative in their frame valence, while the Government Watchdog frame was predominantly neutral in its overall frame valence. The Fallen Hero frame was valenced positively in 6 cases (3%), neutrally in 24 cases (13%), and positively in 154 cases (84%). The difference in valence in this case was a statistically significant one, $\chi^2 (2, N = 185) = 212.652$, $p < .001$. The League Official Reputation frame was valenced positively in 16 cases (14%), neutrally in 25 cases (22%), and negatively in 75 cases (64%). The difference in valence in this case was again a statistically significant one, $\chi^2 (2, N = 117) = 52.529$, $p < .001$. Finally, the Government Watchdog frame was valenced positively in 48 cases (27%), neutrally in 93 cases (52%), and negatively in 38 cases (21%). The difference in this case was again a statistically significant one, $\chi^2 (2, N = 179) = 28.771$, $p < .001$ (Table 5).

In terms of overall frame valence, there was a minimal shift in percentage of frame valence with respect to all frames being incorporated. The percentage of positively valenced frames increased from 7% to 8%, the neutrally valenced frames remained the same at 31%, and the negatively valenced frames decreased from 62% to 61% (Table 6).

Discussion

The initial finding that generic frames were more prevalent than issue-specific frames was in support of Hypothesis One, and supported the statements in prior literature that indicate the presence of generic frames in media coverage in a news event (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000). However, it is interesting to note that while the initial analysis indicated that generic frames were more prevalent than issue-specific frames, the top two frames on an individual basis were in fact issue-specific frames. This finding supports prior literature that indicates the need for further examination of issue-specific frames in media coverage (de Vreese, 1999, 2001; de Vreese, Peter, & Semetko, 2001).

The remaining frames analyzed demonstrated a split between generic and issue-specific frames, with a significant drop off in presence in the final three frames analyzed (Table 1). Included in this group were BALCO Consequences, Public Backlash, and Economic Consequences. While the issue-specific frame of BALCO Consequences and its low ranking indicates that the media's focus was on Major League Baseball and its players, the scant coverage of Public Backlash or Economic Consequences frames seem to be related to one another.

The scant coverage of public backlash was focused primarily on the public's lack of protest to Major League Baseball and its players' involvement in the steroid scandal. Several articles actually laid blame on the fans for their ambivalence on the matter. A *Washington Post* article by Mike Wise from December 5, 2004, examined a poll result that indicated the dichotomy between the public's outrage and their moral and ethical stance on the issue. One question asked, "Do you care if Major League Baseball players use steroids?" Not surprisingly, 93.2 % responded yes. (p. E12)

However, when the same people were asked if they would take steroids if it could make them better professional athletes, they answered that they would in fact take the same steroids in 50 % of the responses. In his commentary, Wise (2004, December 5) made the assertion that steroids are not a problem exclusively relegated to the players, but a problem that we have engendered. Wise commented, "Steroids are not a baseball epidemic; they are a societal problem. They make us ponder the harshest question of all: How naive were we to believe in our sports heroes in the first place? No one wants to

answer that. We would rather turn the channel” (p. E12).

A consistent source on this topic was Dr. Charles E. Yesalis, a professor at Penn State University who specializes in health policy and administration and is an expert on steroids. His views on the matter were twofold: one made the point that the harder that we push for tough legislation, the more adept the players and pharmaceutical companies will become at outsmarting drug testing measures. His second point is relevant to this line of thought in that he believes that the public is ultimately as much at fault for the scandal as any athletes currently abusing steroids (Araton, 2005, September 16).

In a *New York Times* article written by Araton (2005, September 16), Yesalis likened professional athletes to rock stars, and made the comment, “This is all entertainment to most of these people now, like going to a Rolling Stones concert ... And if that is the case, well, who cares whether Keith Richards is ever tested for drugs?” (p. D1). In the same article, Yesalis further extended the analogy to the entertainment industry by acknowledging the one way that the public can make a statement for change, by simply not buying the product. Yesalis commented, “People still vote with their wallets ... To a large extent, and especially to the younger fans who don’t give a rat’s behind about the sacredness of baseball records, they don’t want to go through a moral struggle when they go to a ballgame” (p. D1). Yesalis was a source to *The New York Times*, *San Francisco Chronicle*, and *The Washington Post*. This theme of focusing the blame on the public for their apathetic behavior and ultimately the lack of negative economic consequences related to the steroid scandal in Major League Baseball, was the only consistent angle adopted in media coverage through the frames of Public Backlash and Economic Consequences.

While it is not surprising that generic frames would outrank issue-specific frames in terms of frequency, there were more generic frames than issue-specific frames analyzed in the initial study conducted (Table 1). In creating a set of issue-specific frames for analyzing the media coverage, the preliminary examination of the sample provided the concepts for the five issue-specific frames analyzed. However, a more in-depth examination of the sample illustrated the need for further examination of more potential issue-specific frames (de Vreese, 1999, 2001; de Vreese, Peter, & Semetko, 2001) that

arose in media coverage of the scandal. The subsequent findings had an impact on the findings for Hypothesis One.

Emergent Themes, Issue-Specific Frames and Post Hoc Analysis

The first emergent theme that was analyzed as an issue-specific frame for Hypothesis One was that of a Government Watchdog frame. While the coverage towards the end of the time period analyzed became positive in valence towards the government, this aspect was predominantly negative in valence.

An article from *The New York Times* by Murray Chass (2005, November 25) commented on the government's intervention and how it impeded on the rights of the players' and Major League Baseball. He made the connection that Major League Baseball and the players had established their steroids testing policy through a labor agreement. By seizing testing results for players and the means of identifying which players had tested positive, the government was violating a protective agreement between the player's union and Major League Baseball. Chass said of the government, "Nah. This is the government we're talking about. It would be like Congress pledging not to interfere with legally bargained labor agreements, and we know that won't happen" (p. D4).

A *Washington Post* article by Sheinin (2005, March 11) reported on Congress's subpoena for 11 players and league officials. A source used in all of the papers and Web sites analyzed covering this story was Philadelphia Phillies union representative, Randy Wolf, who offered a quote that established a historical appeal associated with Congressional political grandstanding. He said of the Congressional hearings:

'It's definitely chemical McCarthyism ... It's politicians soapboxing. [Steroids are] a popular subject right now. It's a good way [for politicians] to put themselves out there on a subject that has a lot of public awareness. They want to look like they're fighting this' (Sheinin, p. D03).

This quote is emblematic of much of the commentary about the government's role in supervising Major League Baseball's approach to instituting a tougher penalty for steroid abuse. Major League Baseball and many of its members argued that the government was investigating purely on prurient interest rather than truly fixing a problem.

The next emergent theme that was analyzed as an issue-specific frame in post hoc analysis is a League Official Reputation frame. The media coverage of both newspapers and Web sites took substantial time in addressing Major League Baseball commissioner Bud Selig and Major League Baseball Players' Association head Donald Fehr. Selig was framed in early media coverage in terms of his leadership as being weak, incompetent, and unfit. However, as time passed, Selig's image shifted to that of a champion of the cause. In an editorial from *The New York Times*, columnist George Vecsey (2005, May 19) commented on this dramatic shift in Selig's approach to the issue. Vecsey lauded Selig as if he had undergone a great transformation. Vecsey said of the commissioner, "Selig did everything but stand up on a table and shout, 'Off with their heads!' It was perhaps his finest hour. Cringing Selig, dithering Selig, consensus-gathering Selig was long gone" (p. D1).

In contrast, Fehr's image was valenced negatively throughout. His image as a Union leader was maintained as corrupt, arrogant, immoral, and ultimately, he was seen as a hypocrite. The last was a prominent focus of media coverage when writers made the connection between his role on the United States Olympic Committee, where he levied heavy penalties on prominent Olympians like Marion Jones, and his role as Major League Baseball's Union Chief, where he stood opposed to Major League Baseball's demands for tougher steroids testing and penalties for infractions. A *New York Times* editorial by Araton (2004, May 29) commented on Fehr's dichotomous position in the two organizations. Araton said of Fehr and the poor treatment of Olympians:

In his role as executive director of the Major League Baseball Players Association, Fehr can be counted on like clockwork to stonewall management in its Buddy-come-lately efforts to cleanse baseball of performance-enhancing drugs. In the alternate Olympic universe of strict drug testing, Fehr would be more closely associated with the apparent attempt to run Marion Jones, the world's fastest woman, out of her sport (p. D5).

The final emergent theme that was analyzed as an issue-specific frame in relation to Hypothesis One is a Fallen Hero frame. This frame focuses on individual players in Major League Baseball that were at the center of the steroid scandal. Among the more

commonly mentioned players were Jason Giambi, Mark McGwire, and Rafael Palmeiro. Each illustrated a different approach in treatment of valence in frames used in coverage. The most common aspects were historical backdrops on the previous moments in their career transitioning into where they are now.

Mark McGwire was focused on as a legend of the game that had become a broken man in the time following his career. The media coverage of his testimony before Congress compared a man who had reached the summit in the summer of 1998 and was now in the abyss in the spring of 2005. An example of this failure was a *Washington Post* article by Milbank (2005, March 18) that reported on McGwire's testimony before Congress. The story opens with, "Seven seasons ago, Mark McGwire set the single-season record for home runs. But when McGwire appeared before a House committee probing big-league steroid use yesterday, Big Mac may well have set the single-day record for evasions" (p. A12).

Jason Giambi had a contrast in coverage after admitting that he had been using steroids and other performance-enhancing drugs, and then rebounding after a sub-par season. His story was one of a promising young star who went before a Federal Grand Jury to testify in the BALCO case, and suspiciously fell ill the following spring with ailments that are often considered side effects from steroid abuse. The season following however was one of redemption for Giambi as he battled back from his ailments, performed well on the field, and won the Major League Baseball Comeback Player of the Year Award. So, in Giambi's case, there was an element of redemption for the fallen hero.

Two examples of this transition are drawn from *The New York Times*, the most geographically focused newspaper that reported and commented on the Yankees' first basemen at the center of the scandal. The first example by Anderson (2005, February 11) commented on Giambi's public apology prior to the 2005 season regarding his abuse of steroids and other performance-enhancing drugs. However, the most notable element of this press conference was that he never explicitly said what he had done that required an apology. Anderson wrote:

Which evidently is not what he did when, on reporting to spring training a year

ago, he was asked if he had used steroids or any performance-enhancing drugs. ‘No,’ he said then. For that and other lies, which he termed distractions, Giambi apologized, saying: ‘I feel I let down the fans, I feel I let down the media, I feel I let down the Yankees, and not only the Yankees, but my teammates. I accept full responsibility for that, and I’m sorry’ (p. D1).

In contrast, a *New York Times* article by Kepner (2005, August 3) later in the same season, reported on Giambi’s opinion on fellow player Rafael Palmeiro after his failure of a steroid test in the middle of the 2005 season. This article reads “Giambi ripped 14 home runs in July after hitting 5 from April through June. His surge has been told mostly as a story of triumph, but that was before Monday’s disclosure that another baseball star, the Baltimore Orioles’ Rafael Palmeiro, had tested positive for steroids” (p. D5).

Rafael Palmeiro’s presence in this frame is one that is reported on in a consistently negative manner. This negative reporting was, of course, due to the fact that he was the first prominent Major League Baseball player to have failed a test under the new, evolving testing policies. It was also amplified by his now famous bold responses at the Congressional hearing on March 17, 2005, when Palmeiro was seen waving his finger at the committee asking if he had ever used steroids, and denying vehemently that he had ever used steroids.

An example of this reporting was in an article by Hohler (2005, August 2) from *The Boston Globe* reporting on Palmeiro’s failed drug test and subsequent denials. Hohler wrote:

In the latest blemish on the sport after sluggers Barry Bonds, Jason Giambi, and Gary Sheffield were implicated in the BALCO steroid scandal, Palmeiro began serving his suspension just 17 days after he was widely celebrated for joining Hank Aaron, Willie Mays, and Eddie Murray as the only players to record at least 3,000 hits and 500 home runs. He risks becoming the first player to achieve either milestone and be rejected for induction into the Hall of Fame because of steroid abuse (p. D1).

This article makes the note of historical significance tied to the prominent player

being discussed, and then connects to how they have fallen in light of the steroid scandal.

These quotes are a few examples of the emergent frames that were analyzed as issue-specific. Included were the Government Watchdog frame, League Official Reputation frame, and the Fallen Hero frame. In order to correct the disparity between issue-specific and generic frames, the emergent themes were converted and coded as issue-specific frames in a post hoc analysis and incorporated with the prior frames used in analysis to offer a more balanced range of issue-specific and generic frames for analysis. The post hoc analysis of the emergent themes as issue-specific frames produced interesting results in an examination of the overall findings with the new frames and valences incorporated. The issue-specific frames examined in post hoc analysis were not the foremost prevalent individual frames in media coverage, but were strong in presence.

The frames observed in post hoc analysis have a strong prevalence, but the most interesting shift in the findings occurred when the total frame prevalence is recalculated in response to Hypothesis One. In this case, the findings now actually did not support the hypothesis, indicating that issue-specific frames ($N = 1,459$, 51%) are more prevalent than generic frames ($N = 1,375$, 49%). This additional finding further supports prior scholarship that calls for further examination of issue-specific frames (de Vreese, 1999, 2001; de Vreese, Peter & Semetko, 2001). The post hoc analysis had a significant impact on the findings of this study in the case of overall frame prevalence. The post hoc analysis in addition to examining for prevalence also looked at the influence on overall valence and individual valence as well. The findings for overall and individual valence will be discussed after the findings for valence in the initial study.

The answer to Research Question One was that players were covered more frequently than the league or the issue itself in terms of frame prevalence (Table 1). This finding supports the prior scholarship that suggests that in the political communication context, the individual tends to become the focus of the news coverage over the organization they belong to or the issues being discussed (Kavanagh, 1996; Lichter & Smith, 1996; Negrine & Papathanassopoulos, 1996; Williams & Kaid, 2006).

Also in support of this literature was the noticeably scant discussion (106 times,

5%) of the social impact on children and amateur athletes that this problem had caused. While this does mean it was mentioned in 106 of the articles analyzed, it was in all cases a mere mention that amateur athletes had suffered or died because of steroid abuse.

Another element of prior scholarship (Shoemaker & Reese, 1991) suggests that this sort of coverage focused on the individual might be due to an ethnocentric bias explained previously in terms of the differences in source coverage as it relates to the newspapers and the Web sites. Basically, depending on where the media channel is located is where its attention of coverage will be, whether on the local prominent figures, or on locally prominent issues. The examination of the sample suggests that each paper did focus on how its team's players were related to the scandal. Also, sports journalism has had a longstanding debate regarding whether or not there are regional biases in coverage of sports news.

The second hypothesis dealing with frame valence was supported overall by the findings in the initial analysis of frame valence (Table 2). The findings were in support of prior literature that suggested the presence of valence of tone in frames (de Vreese, 2003; de Vreese & Boomgaarden, 2003). In addition, the findings were also in support of literature suggesting that news coverage of scandal tends to valence frames negatively and focus on conflict (Ketchum, 2004; Steele, 1997), as well as literature from the political communication context that suggest that American and international political news coverage tends to focus on the negative (CARMA, 1997; Lichter & Smith, 1996; Seymour-Ure, 1997).

The presence of a largely negative valence in overall frame use illustrates what was largely covered as a negative event in news coverage. One possible explanation for the negative valence in overall use is the prevalence of player and league consequence in coverage. The most prevalent frames were MLB Player Consequences (308 times), Impact on Major League Baseball frames (270 times), and Conflict frames (262 times) (Table 1).

Another possible explanation for the negative valence in coverage was the inclusion of editorial or opinion pieces in the sample along with news wire and news reports in all sources. There were some interesting differences and similarities between

each of the sources selected for analysis, and while the focus of the study was not on comparative analysis of media channels, the differences are worth noting.

The newspapers selected all held similarities in terms of format and overall content devoted to reports and news stories, however, each had their own specific regional focuses in terms of teams and players covered, as well as themes discussed. The first two papers discussed were more national in their focus of coverage. *The New York Times* tended to focus its stories on Major League Baseball administration, the Labor Union's dealings, and not surprisingly, the New York Yankees' and their connection to the steroids scandal (i.e. Jason Giambi and Gary Sheffield). *The Washington Post* was actually less focused on Major League Baseball and was more focused on Congress's dealings in the scandal, with the exception of some coverage of the expansion franchise, the Washington Nationals, and Rafael Palmeiro, who plays for the geographically relevant Baltimore Orioles.

The next two papers analyzed were regional papers. The *San Francisco Chronicle* gave much of its focus to the emergent Government Watchdog theme, invasion of player's rights, Major League Baseball's labor union, and the San Francisco Giants' player at the center of the controversy, Barry Bonds. *The Boston Globe* focused largely on the political implications of Congress's involvement in the scandal, Major League Baseball leadership, and, not surprisingly, the Boston Red Sox and their players that were closely connected to the scandal (i.e. Curt Schilling, Johnny Damon, and David Ortiz).

The Web sources were quite different from one another in their approach to coverage for the most part, both in terms of valence and content of reports. The most obviously negative in valence of any of the sources was *CNN.com*. It predominantly incorporated opinion pieces in its coverage of the steroids scandal in Major League Baseball.

An example of this negativity is in a *CNN.com* article written by John Donovan (2005, March 18) that reported on the Congressional hearings on the steroid scandal in Major League Baseball. Donovan wrote:

Who looks good in this latest round between baseball and Congress? Most of the politicians look silly, most of the players look like stonewallers, all of the lawyers

look like lawyers. Baseball officials, keepers of that great American institution, look completely blind and incompetent. And Mark McGwire? Hoooo, how Big Mac has fallen (p. 1).

This was quite different from *ESPN.com*, which used very few staff contributors in reporting news stories surrounding the scandal and utilized the Associated Press in large part to cover the news, which leaves little room for opinion or even for reporter analysis of their own coverage. The lack of negativity in coverage provided a significant contrast from the coverage provided by *CNN*.

This disparity in tone of coverage between each of the different types of news sources merits further examination devoted to media channel differences specifically. A possible route would be to expand the sources analyzed in the coverage of this event to incorporate a larger print sample, more Internet news sources, as well as broadcast news sources in order to form a larger, more representative study in order to provide a comparative analysis and understanding of the source differences in the media channels devoting coverage to the event.

The post hoc analysis of frame valence incorporating the emergent issue-specific frames provided findings that were consistent with the previous analysis used to address Hypothesis Two. In the case of the individual emergent issue-specific frames, the Fallen Hero and League Official Reputation frames both trended negative in their frame valence, while the Government Watchdog frame was predominantly neutral in its overall frame valence. In terms of overall frame valence, there was a minimal shift in percentage of frame valence with respect to all frames being incorporated.

The findings for Research Question Two indicated that frame valence of Major League Baseball Player Consequences (76%) was, in terms of percentage, equivalent in negativity to that of frame valence of Major League Baseball Consequences (76%) (Table 2). This finding is also in support of literature that suggests the presence of valence in tone of frames (de Vreese, 2003; de Vreese & Boomgaarden, 2003) as well as the presence of negativity in news coverage of both scandal (Steele, 1997; Ketchum, 2004) and political campaigns (CARMA, 1997; Lichter & Smith, 1996; Seymour-Ure, 1997).

While this was not a statistically significant difference, it suggests that while Major

League Baseball consequences were covered at a far less significant rate (147 frames) than Major League Baseball player consequences (308 frames present) (Table 1), both the organization (Major League Baseball) and its members (Major League Baseball Players) were treated in a similar manner in terms of tone of coverage (Table 2).

Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to investigate the prevalence of generic and issue-specific frames, frame valence, and personalization of coverage in the steroid scandal in Major League Baseball. As with any research, there are limitations, and this one is no exception.

Due to using Lexis-Nexis, there were not samples available from local newspapers that were situated directly in some of the cities where prominent players like Mark McGwire, Rafael Palmeiro, Sammy Sosa, and others with ties to the steroid scandal could get more individual coverage in the context of the scandal. A search was conducted for regional papers (i.e. *The Baltimore Sun*, *The Chicago Tribune*), producing no articles.

The selection of specific search terms used in the Lexis-Nexis search for news articles related to the steroid scandal may have been another possible limitation as different newspapers may have used different terms in their reporting of the scandal. It could also be argued that the use of media channels more closely connected to the scandal like *The New York Times* and *San Francisco Chronicle* was a limitation because it does not offer a more neutral and representative sample of coverage on the scandal than more distant newspapers may have offered. Although, it should be noted that the coverage of the players in these regions were not covered positively in relation to the scandal, with the exception of Jason Giambi in *The New York Times*, which took place after he had quit using steroids, and recovered a measure of his talents in the subsequent season after being implicated in the steroid scandal. Finally, another limitation is the lack of literature offering in-depth analysis of framing of sports news in sports media to offer guidance in approaching this study in design and practice.

Even with these limitations, the research offers several implications about the framing of coverage of the steroids scandal in Major League Baseball. First, the presence of issue-specific frames were more prevalent in coverage of the scandal than generic frames with the additional post hoc analysis of the three emergent issue-specific frames. The finding that issue-specific frames and consistent trends emerged as frames – which may fulfill a need for journalists to simplify information – reinforces prior literature that calls for continued examination of both generic and issue-specific news frames (de

Vreese, 1999, 2001; de Vreese, Peter, & Semetko, 2001; Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000). An interesting finding related to this hypothesis, made less so after the post hoc analysis disproved the first hypothesis, is that the top two frames used in media coverage were in fact issue-specific frames (MLB Player Consequences and Impact on MLB).

The overall valence of frames used in coverage of the steroids scandal was found to be proportionately negative at a statistically significant rate. With the exception of three categories, the first, Diagnostic was found to be neutral at a significant difference. Public Backlash was reported as being negative due to the absence of it from baseball fans, while overall it was found to be negative, was not a statistically significant difference. Finally, there were Economic Consequences frames, which were also found to be negative, but not at a statistically significant difference. The post hoc analysis again was overall in support of these findings, although the Government Watchdog frame was found to be overall a neutrally valenced frame more often than positive or negative in valence. This finding indicates that in terms of frame valence, that when news coverage is predominantly focused on negative aspects surrounding an organization (Major League Baseball) and its members (Major League Baseball Players), the valence of frames tends to be negative, which reinforces prior trends of negative coverage found in the literature (CARMA, 1997; Ketchum, 2004; Lichter & Smith, 1996; Steele, 1997).

The finding for Research Question One that the majority of coverage, in terms of frame presence, tended to focus on the players' consequences rather than Major League Baseball consequences was also in support of prior literature in political communication that suggests that in dealing with coverage of prominent news events, the coverage tends to focus on individuals rather than the organizations or the issue (Kavanagh, 1996; Lichter & Smith, 1996; Negrine & Papathanassopoulos, 1996; Williams & Kaid, 2006). The findings for Research Question Two indicate that despite a large difference in the level of coverage, both Major League Baseball Consequences and Major League Baseball player consequences were treated in a similar manner in terms of percentage of negative valence (76%).

The last finding of significance in this study is the discovery of three emergent

themes that were examined as issue-specific frames in a post hoc analysis in order to rectify the imbalance between issue-specific and generic frames. The first of these was a Government Watchdog frame, which actually has a broader reaching scope than the sports media realm, as it can potentially be applied to other special interest groups, labor organizations in particular, that are being supervised and legislated into reform by the federal government. Major League Baseball's collective bargaining agreement is akin to many labor agreements than unions hold with major companies.

The second emergent frame, League Official Reputation, suggests a means of looking at the leaders of an organization, and how they are represented in terms of their competency, leadership and character. Bud Selig, the commissioner of Major League Baseball, went through an evolution of sorts, moving from an image of incompetency to an image of good leadership and positive perception. In contrast, Major League Baseball Players' Association head Donald Fehr's framing moved from negative to more negative as he continually decreased in image as a poor leader who was hypocritical in his stances on steroids testing and punishment.

The third, a Fallen Hero frame, deals with how the media puts a player's failure in light of this scandal into context with the previous successes of their career. The most often covered in this study were Jason Giambi, Mark McGwire, and Rafael Palmeiro. Giambi offered an example of a fallen hero that works their way back to success again. McGwire represents someone who has fallen and left his legacy largely in doubt. Finally, Palmeiro is a figure that was probably the most abrupt in shift of his coverage due to his failed steroid test, going from a guardian of the integrity of the game and a potential hall of fame athlete to someone who was portrayed as a liar and a hypocrite. These three frames while not emerging as the most prevalent on the list, did have a major impact in terms of frame prevalence between issue-specific and generic frames. The addition of the emergent issue-specific frames not only balanced the frames analyzed at eight in each category, but also shifted the percentages from 58% to 42% in favor of generic frames to 51% to 49% in favor of issue-specific frames, disproving the initially supported Hypothesis One.

Findings reported in this study represent the beginning of a line of research

examining the various influences of media coverage on public perceptions, organizational policy, political implications, and the ability for different forms of media to influence one another. There are several directions of research stemming from the study in each of the realms of agenda-setting, but most directly related in the area of framing. One possible direction for research includes examining how individual players, as opposed to players as a whole, would be framed in this sort of a scandal. Hopefully, scholarship will extend the research to more fields of media coverage, including Web sites and Blogs, and ultimately gain a greater perspective on the phenomenon known as framing, as well as various forms of agenda-setting including intermedia, policy, and of course, issue agenda-setting in sports media coverage. In addition, the differences in sources used for analysis in this study suggest that a study devoted to media channel comparison would help demonstrate the differences in media coverage of the steroid scandal in Major League Baseball.

Implications

This study was a content analysis of frame use and frame valence in the media coverage of Major League Baseball, its players, and the Congressional hearing and fallout the season following related to the steroid scandal. The study made use of content analysis and statistical analysis to determine the prevalence of frames, the valence of frames, and the focus of coverage within the stories analyzed.

Findings initially indicated that generic frames were more prevalent than issue-specific frames, though issue-specific frames did have a strong presence within the media coverage. A post hoc analysis conducted included three emergent issue-specific frames balancing the comparison of frames to eight frames in both the issue-specific and generic frame categories. This analysis reversed the balance between issue-specific and generic frames in favor of issue-specific frames in terms of overall prevalence. Frame valence was largely negative in overall frame presence. Surprising in the findings was the lack of Public Backlash frames in coverage, with the exception of critical editorials of the public's lack of outrage to the scandal in Major League Baseball, which was connected to the surprising lack of Economic Consequences frames. Another surprise was the relatively weak focus on social impact, and how professional athletes' use of steroids and other performance-enhancing drugs were impacting the behaviors of amateur athletes.

In response to the disparity between generic and issue-specific frames, there were three emergent themes that were recoded as issue-specific frames as they relate to this topic of coverage. These three frames were a Government Watchdog frame, with implications in political communication research; a League Official Reputation frame; and finally, a Fallen Hero frame. The post hoc analysis and integration had a significant impact on the prevalence of issue-specific frames, as mentioned above, but were in congruence with the initial findings in terms of overall percentage of frame valence in news coverage.

Findings also illustrated that the focus of the coverage was centered far more consistently on Major League Baseball Players than on their organization, Major League Baseball. In addition, findings indicated that while the majority of frames used in coverage focused on player consequences rather than consequences for the league, both

Major League Baseball and its players were covered with very similar frame valence.

Finally, this study provides a preliminary framework for approaching future framing studies dealing with similar content in a variety of contexts. The studies can move through various aspects of framing, as well as agenda-setting dealing with issue agenda-setting, policy agenda-setting, as well as the potential role of various forms of media in coverage, and their ability to set intermedia agendas. In addition, further examination of the differences in media channels covering the scandal in a broader spectrum than print media would provide a better understanding of differences in scandal coverage in the sports media context.

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Appendix A

Codesheet

Media Framing of the Steroids Scandal in Major League Baseball

1. Article ID Number: _ _ _ _

2. Coder ID: [] Chris [] Kyle

3. Story Date: _ _ / _ _ / _ _ _ _
mm/dd/yyyy

4. Story Headline : _____

5. News Story Type: (Reliability .84)

- | | |
|-----------------------------|-----|
| 1. Hard News | [] |
| 2. Soft News | [] |
| 3. Opinion/ Editorial Piece | [] |

6. News Source: (Reliability 1.00)

- | | |
|----------------------------|-----|
| 1. New York Times | [] |
| 2. Washington Post | [] |
| 3. San Francisco Chronicle | [] |
| 4. Boston Globe | [] |
| 5. ESPN.com | [] |
| 6. CNN.com | [] |

7. Story Author / Contributor: (Reliability 1.00)

- | | |
|--|-----|
| 1. Staff Writer | [] |
| 2. Syndicated Columnist | [] |
| 3. Independent Contributor | [] |
| 4. News Wire Service (i.e. AP, Reuters, Knight Ridder) | [] |

8. Story Focus:

(Reliability 1.00)

MLB Players	Yes	No
Congressional Hearings	Yes	No
Political Figures	Yes	No
Major League Baseball	Yes	No
Amateur Player Families	Yes	No
Amateur Players	Yes	No
Baseball Fans	Yes	No
BALCO	Yes	No
BALCO Executives	Yes	No
Other	Yes	No

If Other, please specify? _____

Noteworthy quote or example: _____

9. Source Attribution:

(Reliability .85)

Baseball Players	Present	Absent
MLB Officials	Present	Absent
Families of Amateurs	Present	Absent
Amateur Players	Present	Absent
Congress Committee	Present	Absent
Baseball Fans	Present	Absent
Baseball Broadcasters	Present	Absent
Team Officials	Present	Absent
BALCO Employees	Present	Absent
BALCO Executives	Present	Absent
Anonymous	Present	Absent
Labor Union Representative	Present	Absent
Political Figure	Present	Absent
Other	Present	Absent

If Other, please specify? _____

Noteworthy Quotes from Sources: _____

10. Frame Identification (Identify as absent or present):

(Reliability .98)

1. Conflict	absent	present
2. Social Impact	absent	present
3. Impact on MLB	absent	present
4. MLB Consequences	absent	present
5. MLB Player Consequences	absent	present
6. BALCO Consequences	absent	present
7. Responsibility	absent	present
8. Morality	absent	present
9. Public Backlash	absent	present
10. Diagnostic	absent	present
11. Prognostic	absent	present
12. Political Consequences	absent	present
13. Economic Consequences	absent	present
14. Other	absent	present

If Other, Please Specify: _____

Frame Valence: Indicate whether the frames present were positive, negative, or neutral

(Reliability .93)

1. Conflict	positive	negative	neutral
2. Social Impact	positive	negative	neutral
3. Impact on MLB	positive	negative	neutral
4. MLB Consequences	positive	negative	neutral
5. MLB Player Consequences	positive	negative	neutral
6. BALCO Consequences	positive	negative	neutral
7. Responsibility	positive	negative	neutral
8. Morality	positive	negative	neutral
9. Public Backlash	positive	negative	neutral
10. Diagnostic	positive	negative	neutral
11. Prognostic	positive	negative	neutral
12. Political Consequences	positive	negative	neutral
13. Economic Consequences	positive	negative	neutral
14. Other	positive	negative	neutral

If there were any emergent or issue-specific frames not presently identified, please make note in the space below, and briefly explain their tone as positive, negative, or neutral.

Post Hoc Frame Analysis:

	Absent	Present	
Government Watchdog:	[]	[]	(Reliability .89)
League Official Reputation:	[]	[]	(Reliability .93)
Fallen Hero:	[]	[]	(Reliability .87)

Post Hoc Frame Valence:

	Positive	Neutral	Negative	No Frame	
Government Watchdog	[]	[]	[]	[]	(Reliability .87)
League Official Reputation	[]	[]	[]	[]	(Reliability .90)
Fallen Hero	[]	[]	[]	[]	(Reliability .87)

12. Identify the Dominant Frame? (Reliability .84)

Yes	No	1. Conflict
Yes	No	2. Social Impact
Yes	No	3. Impact on League
Yes	No	4. League Consequences
Yes	No	5. Player Consequences
Yes	No	6. Balco Consequences
Yes	No	7. Responsibility
Yes	No	8. Morality
Yes	No	9. Public Backlash
Yes	No	10. Diagnostic
Yes	No	11. Prognostic
Yes	No	12. Political Consequences
Yes	No	13. Economic Consequences
Yes	No	14. Other

If Other, Please Specify: _____

16. Please write out or describe any noteworthy examples that illustrate the dominant frame within this article.

17. Overall Story Tone

(Reliability .88)

Positive []
Neutral []
Negative []

Appendix B

Codebook

Media Framing of the Steroids Scandal in Major League Baseball

Case ID: Coders will print here the 3-digit or 4-digit Case ID provided at the top of the article. For example 0123.

Coder ID: Coders will choose their name from the survey tool option. In this case, Kyle or Chris.

Story Date: Coders will indicate the eight-digit date of the story in the space provided. For example, October 28, 2004 as 10/28/2004

Story Headline: Coders will provide the full text of the story headline in the space provided.

News Story Type: Identify the story as soft news (human interest story), opinion piece (author's position on the story), or hard news (coverage of the basic facts involved in the story).

News Source:

If a print newspaper story, Coders will select the source of the story from the following list.

New York Times
Washington Post
Boston Globe
San Francisco Chronicle

If On-line News Story, Coders will select one of the two following options

ESPN.com
CNN.com

Story Author:

Coders will identify the author by selecting one from the following list

Staff Writer (Any writer at the paper aside from syndicated columnists.)
News Agency (AP, Reuters, Etc.)

Syndicated Columnist (Any writer that is listed at the head or tail of the article as a nationally recognized columnist in syndication).

Independent Contributor: Anyone knowledgeable on the subject offering a writing piece to the paper or website.

Story Focus:

Coders will identify any of the following elements focused on in the story by simply selecting those present in the article:

- Professional Baseball Players
- Congressional Hearings
- Major League Baseball
- Families of amateur baseball players
- Amateur baseball players
- Baseball fans
- Political Figures
- BALCO
- BALCO executives
- Other

Notable Examples: Coders will then list any notable quotes or examples from the story that illustrates the themes covered.

Source Attribution: Coders will identify the following list of possible sources as present or absent in the story.

Baseball players	Baseball fans
MLB Officials	Baseball Broadcasters
Families of amateur baseball players	Team Officials
Amateur Baseball Players	BALCO executives
Congressional Committee Members	BALCO employees
Labor Union Representatives	Political Figure
Anonymous	Other

Other Sources: Coders will then list any other potential sources NOT included on the list. Be Specific.

Noteworthy Quotes from sources: Coders will write down any meaningful quotes that help build the story's overall theme

Frames: Coders will indicate the absence or presence of the following frames. Explanations follow each frame for clarity.

Conflict – coverage that emphasizes conflict between Major League Baseball and the players, Major League Baseball and BALCO, Major League Baseball and the Congressional Committee investigating steroid abuse, Major League Baseball and the Players’ Union, Players and BALCO, Players and the Congressional Committee investigating, etc.

Social Impact – coverage that deals with the impact of steroid abuse in baseball and its impact on amateur athletes, youth, adults, and the public in general.

Impact on MLB (Major League Baseball) – coverage that deals with the impact of steroid abuse in baseball or the impact that the federal investigations and Congressional hearings are having on the league.

MLB (Major League Baseball) Consequences – coverage that emphasizes what the long-term or short-term impact on Major League Baseball will be regarding steroid abuse and the fallout from the Congressional investigation.

MLB (Major League Baseball) Player Consequences – coverage that examines what the impact on the players will be following steroid abuse and the investigations from the federal investigation, the Congressional Investigation, and Major League Baseball’s investigation.

BALCO Consequences – coverage that examines what the impact will be on BALCO following the federal grand jury investigation and the Congressional investigation into steroid and performance enhancing drug abuse in Major League Baseball.

Responsibility – coverage that emphasizes or examines whose responsibility it is to police steroid abuse, or at fault for promoting steroid abuse among amateur athletes.

Morality – coverage that examines the ethics behind those involved in the steroid abuse scandal.

Public Reaction/Backlash – coverage that emphasizes the public’s reaction to the issue of steroid abuse in baseball, the hearings in Congress, or the federal investigation and those involved in it.

Diagnostic – coverage that examines the processes in the investigations, the testing methods for steroid abuse, or the effects of steroid abuse.

Prognostic – coverage that attempts to predict the outcome of the investigations, the changes in baseball’s testing for steroid abuse, or the futures of athletes involved in the scandal.

Political Consequences – coverage that discusses the political consequences for the committee, key figures, or the national agenda

Economic Consequences – coverage that discusses how the scandal may impact the economy surrounding league cities, the teams, owners, or the individual players.

Other – coverage that illustrates anything that falls outside of the previous frame categories.

Frame Valence: Coders will then for each of the above frames identify each of the frames present as positive, negative, or neutral.

Emergent of Issue-specific Frames: If coders find that there are additional frames that emerge in the news coverage that are not indicated for evaluation from the previous list, they should identify what they notice by a simple name, a brief description, and explain whether the frame is valenced, positively, negatively, or in a neutral manner.

Post Hoc Emergent Frame Analysis: Coders will read the articles carefully for the absence or present of the following emergent frames.

Government Watchdog – A frame in the article that discusses the role of the government as either protecting the public good, working to reform drug testing policies OR as an interfering force that is infringing upon player and league rights in relation to labor agreements or the players' right to privacy.

League Official Reputation – A frame that speaks about the characteristics of either MLB commissioner Bud Selig or MLBPA chief Donald Fehr. This can either speak to their abilities in performing their job, or to their personal characteristics and intangible character traits.

Fallen Hero – A frame in an article that examines a player in the league, and discusses how their better traits have diminished in light of the scandal. Can either be manifest in terms of a comparison to past historical achievements by the player, or by simple mention of who they once were compared to who they are now.

Each of these should be identified as either absent or present

Emergent Frame Valence: Coders should identify each of the frames as positive, neutral, or negative. If the frame is absent, then the coder should identify the valence as no frame present.

The available choices are:

Positive

Neutral

Negative

No Frame

Dominant Frame: Coders will identify the absence or presence of a dominant frame by indicating yes or no.

Coders will identify FROM THE GIVEN LIST, what they see as the dominant frame used in the story. If the dominant frame is

Noteworthy Examples: Coders will then identify any noteworthy examples that help identify or illustrate the dominant frame that they found within the article.

Overall Tone of the Piece: Coders will identify the tone of the piece as positive, neutral, or negative. Overall story tone will be determined by a combination of story headline, valence of content, amount of content devoted to each aspect of the article. Included in the determination for coders is whether the content treats the story in a positive manner in support of the individuals covered, the actions taken, or the topic discussed; whether the content treats the story in a negative manner in criticism of or opposition to the individuals covered, the actions taken, or the topic discussed; and the placement of the valenced frames in relation to location in the story as it relates to the principle of the inverted pyramid commonly used in journalistic practice. This principle indicates that the most meaningful parts of the story appear early in the article.

Result Report Tables

Hypothesis One:
Table 1

Issue-Specific and Generic Frame Prevalence

$N = 2,353$

Frame	Frame Presence	Frame Type
Prognostic	268 (11%)	Generic
Conflict	262 (11%)	Generic
Diagnostic	236 (10%)	Generic
Responsibility	187 (8%)	Generic
Morality	183 (8%)	Generic
Social Impact	106 (5%)	Generic
Public Backlash	75 (3%)	Generic
Economic Consequences	58 (2%)	Generic
Player Consequences	308 (14%)	Issue-Specific
Impact on Major League Baseball	270 (11%)	Issue-Specific
Political Consequences	177 (8%)	Issue-Specific
MLB Consequences	147 (6%)	Issue-Specific
BALCO Consequences	76 (3%)	Issue-Specific
Total Frames	2,353 (100%)	
Generic	1,375 (58%)	
Issue Specific	978 (42%)	

$\chi^2 = 66.97$, $df = 1$, $p < .001$, for comparison between overall issue-specific and generic frame prevalence.