

The Representation of Athletes in Tweets at the Toronto 2015 Pan Am and Parapan Am
Games: An Agenda Setting Analysis

By

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Abstract

The agenda setting theory questions how the selection and arrangement of news affect the public's perceptions over news events. As Twitter is a new platform for sport organizations to release news, bypassing traditional agencies, "agenda setting" bears new meanings. This thesis attempts to determine the agenda set during the 2015 Toronto Pan Am and Parapan Am Games by examining the representation of athletes on the Twitter account @TO2015.

Initially, without considering that the news release was the Organizing Committee itself, the analysis assumed incorrectly that the representation favoured the Pan Am Games. Without the support from the data, the researcher re-examined the study and realized that his preoccupations with "equal representation" misled his categorization of the tweets. Then the researcher reanalyzed the tweets in new categories. This time the analysis observed the cultural differences of the two Games, and thus came up with recommendations for more effective Twitter management.

Keywords

Twitter, Pan Am Games, Parapan Am Games, agenda setting, para-sport, sport communication, social media

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Introduction

The purpose of this thesis is to compare the representations of Pan American and Parapan American athletes on Twitter, to determine: i) whether there were significant differences in how they were represented (numerically; but also, in terms of themes); and ii) whether such differences in representation constitute a discrimination against the athletes of the Parapan Am Games. Research conducted in the realm of sport and para sport has revealed that para athletes are marginalized compared to their non-disabled counterparts (Bruce, 2014; Hardin, Lynn, Walsdorf, 2006; DePauw, 1997; Chang and Crossman, 2009; Chang, Crossman, Taylor and Walker, 2011; Tynedal and Wolbring, 2013; Howe, 2008; Berger, 2008). When comparing if an individual or group of individuals are being marginalized, it is important to consider whether or not the factors are at a similar level of competition. It would not make sense to compare the media coverage of children's sport to professional sport. Children are not marginalized based on media frequency when compared to professional sport. Even when comparing professional parasport or female sport to professional men's sports, there can be a large discrepancy in the audience of those sport markets, making it hard to compare. For the purpose of this thesis, I believe comparing two levels of sport at their highest level, at the same event is an ideal situation for comparison. Since the understanding of marginalization varies from research to research, I have to clarify the usage of the term before my analysis.

Marginalization can occur in two distinct cases. Contingent marginality occurs when two or more forces compete in a free market (Alexander, Kinman, Miller, Patrick,

2003). An example of this would be where people live. Individuals in a rural community might not have access to large facilities, the best equipment, superior coaching, or advanced technologies. Therefore, being limited to these resources may place individuals in a rural community at a disadvantage and affect their level of success at sport. Other forms of contingent marginality can be from cultural restrictions, inadequate labour skills and lack of information sharing (Alexander et. Al, 2003). The second form of marginalization is called systemic marginality. Systemic marginality is the “result from a socially constructed hegemonic system that exerts power and control over marginalized populations” (Alexander et. al, 2003; pp.402). Systemic marginality takes place when the society’s perception inflict a stereotype on a group of people. In the case of para-athletes, marginalization occurs when stereotypes such as the ‘supercrip’ is forced on a particular athlete or when a lack of media representation occurs due to the competitiveness of para-sport (Alexander, Kinman, Miller, Patrick, 2003; Berger, 2008). If the Twitter account @TO2015 does not consider Parapan Am sport as competitive as Pan Am sport, and represents them accordingly then they are systemically marginalizing athletes from the Parapan Am games.

Paralympians are some of the best athletes in their respective sports; however, there is little to no discussion or media coverage surrounding their games. Less discussion implies a lack of public interest and as one journalist noted: “No one is interested. No one wants to watch” (Bruce, 2014. pp. 1446). Such attitudes imply that para-athletes and para sport are going to face systemic marginalization through all aspects of competition. This hypothesis is what motivated this thesis. Before any data was categorized and reviewed, I as a researcher assumed that the Twitter account of the

Toronto Organizing Committee (TOC) @TO2015 was going to marginalize or underrepresent para-athletes because the media has displayed para sport as less competitive compared to non-para sport. In actuality, the amount of evidence found marginalizing para athletes is documented for countless decades (Hardin et. al, 2006; Berger, 2008; Howe, 2008; Chang and Crossman, 2009; Chang, Crossman, Taylor and Walker, 2011; Tynedal and Wolbring, 2013; Bruce, 2014). With this assumption, the initial design of this study came from a desire to strive for cultural balance and political justice to counteract the systemic marginalization, which, consequentially, became an unacknowledged presumption – or the agenda of the researcher – which I would have yet to discover. Interestingly, in order to expose the process of systemic marginalization, I have chosen to use agenda setting theory as a framework to engage the study.

Agenda setting theory was initiated from the saying, “the press may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling its readers what to think about” (Cohen, 1963, pp.13). When a study uses agenda setting theory, it typically tries to understand the underlying intentions or motives of a person or group. The media has the opportunity to determine the key issues that they present to the public, therefore setting the ‘agenda’ of the news (McCombs and Shaw, 1972). Back to 1972, the dominant “media” would be television, radio and newspapers who would have different agendas based on their intended audience. When McCombs and Shaw first analysed agenda setting theory, they compared what news broadcasting companies presented as key issues in relation to what the public believed were the most important issues of the United States presidential campaign. In this case, the news broadcasting company had a political agenda as they delivered the message of each

candidate to the public. In comparison, a radio company might have a much more commercialized or social agenda, as they give a great deal of air time for advertising and social discussion. As technology progresses, more people are seeking news and information online (Coche, 2015). However, there is a key difference between traditional mass media and some platforms of contemporary social media such as Tweeter and Facebook: i.e. a mediating agency is not required. There is no news program, and therefore, there is no director, editor or reporter to choose which news to cover. For example, a sports event's organizing committee can release its own news via Twitter, bypassing CBC, Globe & Mail, or the Sports Network. Of course, an "agenda" remains in every tweet, but whose agenda is it? Who drives the agenda when the news come directly from the news release platform?

A quick answer is that the organizing committee sets the public agenda by ways of choosing and writing its own news. However, this answer is too simplistic. Without the news media, the public can also react to the news via social media platforms. Social media platforms provide an interactive space for people to discuss their ideas and opinions with other individuals and news media. With that, the way media sets an agenda has changed. On the popular social media platform Twitter, anyone can set an agenda because of the interactive atmosphere. Increasing your number of followers will increase the amount of people who see your messages or tweets, and can then share or retweet your message with their followers. Understanding the purpose of a someone's Twitter account can provide insight into the agenda they are trying to set.

This thesis, tries to understand the purpose of the Twitter account @TO2015, why it tweeted what it did, and if they had reasonable intentions when it came to promoting

and discussing athletes. A Twitter account like @TO2015 can promote and present the events it chooses during the Pan Am and Parapan Am Games, determining their ideas of important issues, and therefore they may set the 'agenda' of the Games (McCombs and Shaw, 1972). The theory focuses on what the media is saying and how it is said. In relation to what the media is saying, the intellectual properties of this theory also analyze how the public receive it, as well as how the media influences public opinion on the presented topic (McCombs and Shaw, 1972).

Three of the key components of the theory that are used in this thesis are; what is Twitter saying, how often is the Organizing Committee saying it, and how is it present, either positively or negatively. By carefully examining these factors, along with several other minor factors, it can help me as a researcher determine the purpose of the Toronto Organizing Committee (TOC).

Using agenda setting theory, this thesis analyses the Twitter account @TO2015, which is the official Twitter account of the Organizing Committee of the games. This Twitter account was used for the 2015 Pan Am/Parapan Am Games held in Toronto, Canada. The Parapan Am/Pan Am Games occur every four years, hosting thousands of athletes from the nations of the Americas (North, Central and South America). These Games are unique compared to the other major sporting events such as the Olympics/Paralympics, as they were organized and hosted by a single committee. By examining @TO2015, I wanted to determine if Parapan Am athletes are systemically marginalized compared to Pan Am athletes in the dynamic environment of online media.

It is less common for the public to obtain news from traditional media, such as radio, television and newspaper. Instead, they are gathering news from the Internet

through social media (Overbey, 2012). Social media is defined as “Internet based tools and platforms that increase and enhance the sharing of information. This new form of communication makes the transfer of text, photo, audio, video, and information in general increasingly fluid among Internet users” (Overbey, 2012. pp.11). Since its inception, social media has become highly influential, having a direct effect on the agenda of traditional media sources (Kushin, 2010). Social media sites have become extremely popular because of the interactive environment provided by the Web 2.0 design (Kushin, 2010). There are web languages such as JavaScript and PHP that allow for instant interaction and communication between users (Overbey, 2012). Web 1.0 lacked the speed to be used interactively. It could convey information to the public who had access to the Internet, but with limited capability it was not until web 2.0 was established for social media to flourish.

One social media platform that has been particularly influential in changing the way people engage media is Twitter (Frederick, Burch, Blaszk, 2013). Twitter is a micro-blogging platform where members can post their opinions, or thoughts, in a 280-character tweet. During the Pan Am and Parapan Am Games of 2015 the character count was limited to 140 characters per tweet. In this environment, anyone with feedback can contribute to shaping the agenda on social media. Twitter can be a viable way to reach a large and diverse audience. By increasing the number of followers, an account will drastically increase the amount of people who will see your tweets. This also allows more people to retweet your tweets with the rationale of sharing your opinions, thoughts and perspectives of the topic.

The growth of social media has resulted in the decline of traditional media sources, which has influenced how researchers study agenda setting theory. Traditional media sources are losing their market shares in this new technological era; over 52% of the public are using the Internet as their primary source for news and information (Coche, 2015). While the number of people using social media as their primary source of information grow, the number of people using traditional media sources declines. When McCombs and Shaw first looked at the ability of the media to set an agenda, they analysed traditional media (McCombs and Shaw, 1972). However, with the change in the way the public seeks information, the agenda setting theory also needs to change and adapt. This raises the question: how may the changing behaviours of media usage alter agenda setting theory?

To date, there has been an influx of studies examining agenda setting and the Internet (Lee, Lancendorfer, & Lee, 2005; Wallsten, 2007; Sweetser, Golan & Wanta, 2008; Wanta & Cho, 2004; Roberts, Wanta & Dzwo; 2002). Even with this increase of research on the Internet, few studies have been done on social media (Rostovtseva, 2009; Meraz, 2009; Sayre, Bode, Shah, Wilcox, Shah, 2010; Alkhas, 2011), and even fewer on Twitter (Kushin, 2010; Overbey 2012; Frederick, Burch, Blaszk, 2013). While this is a rapidly growing and adapting field of research, agenda setting has only been applied to sport specific content a limited number of times (Frederick, Burch, Blaszk, 2013), and the research has not been applied to para-sport or disability sporting events. My study expands on agenda setting theory in the field of sport, and is one of the first to use agenda setting theory in the realm of para-sport.

McCombs and Shaw established agenda setting theory (1972) when they studied the salience of key components of the political race compared to the media content during the political campaign in Chapel Hill, NC. The results of their research showed that there was a strong relationship between what the media emphasized and what participants believed were the key issues. Since then there has been a great deal of research devoted to agenda setting theory and the salience of the media (Rogers, 1993). Agenda setting theory focuses on the transfer of information between the media and the public and how they articulate the issues at hand (McCombs, 1992). They are “interested in the relationship between the media and the public opinion” (Kushin, 2010. pp.3). As traditional media declines and the rise of the Internet and more specifically social media thrives, agenda setting theory will be used in new fields of research.

My study examines the agenda set by the Twitter account of the Organizing Committee of the Pan Am and Parapan Am Games held in Toronto, Canada in 2015. The Twitter account @TO2015 is capable of setting an agenda on Twitter because they provide information to a large audience, what they say and do influence public opinion. All tweets sent by the account will be inductively analysed to determine what @TO2015 perceived as most important. A further agenda setting analysis will then be conducted inductively on the tweets specifically coded about Pan Am athletes and Parapan Am athletes to decide the agenda set in terms of promoting and discussing athletes in and out of their respective sports. In the end a comparison will be made to determine if the Committee used its Twitter account to represent and promote para and non-para athletes similarly or differently. A comparison will be drawn determining if @TO2015 systemically marginalized Parapan Am athletes by highlighting their games as

unimportant, or inferior to the Pan Am Games based on the representation of the athletes on Twitter. Once compared, an additional analysis will be done to provide insight into the different sub-cultures that the audience of @TO2015 responded to. This information can be used to utilize Twitter better to increase the number of followers.

The 2015 Pan Am / Parapan Am Committee's use of its Twitter account is a good way to examine the application of agenda setting theory for various reasons. In the context of these Games, there is only one committee in charge of promoting, hosting and discussing both the Pan Am and Parapan Am Games. Usually events of this magnitude have separate committees for the two Games. This provides for a unique situation where a single committee will represent para and non-para athletes. Furthermore, since agenda setting theory has only been used on Twitter in a sport specific context a limited number of times (Kushin, 2010; Overbey 2012; Frederick, Burch, Blaszk, 2013), this thesis adds to a small body of existing literature. Specifically, there have been no studies utilizing agenda setting theory on Twitter in the realm of para sport. As a result, the study expands agenda setting theory to new areas of research, just as McCombs (2005) has called researchers to help further his theory in the social media age.

The setting of the Games is another important aspect to consider when analysing systemic marginalization of Parapan Am athletes versus Pan Am athletes. Unlike other countries, Canada has funding and programs in place to assist athletes with disabilities to actively participate and achieve sporting excellence (such as Sport for Life and Athlete Assistance Program). Therefore, Canadian athletes with disabilities have a better opportunity to excel compared to other countries where athletes with disabilities do not receive public funding. Brazil's government limits athletes with disabilities to public

resources, funding and opportunity because they “show confusion about how to implement ‘*sport for all*’, and in doing so sets disability sport within a marginalized, elitist, non-democratic content” (Mauerberg-deCastro, Campbell, Tavares, 2016 pp.116). Additionally, these Games are one of the largest sporting events in the world, having 6,132 athletes participating from 41 countries in 2015 (Toronto 2015 Pan Am/Parapan Am Games, 2015). The event creates a precedent for Canada to showcase their para-athletes on the international stage and prove that we are a leader in para-sport.

Literature Review

Agenda Setting Theory

Initially, agenda setting theory focused on the relationship between what the media was saying and how it was interpreted by the audience. The media has the ability to influence the importance placed on particular issues in the public agenda. With the dynamic state of media, agenda setting theory has continuously grown and adapted. As the theory advanced and the media landscape changed, there has been more emphasis on the relationship that one media source has on another media source. The analysis of agenda setting theory can be broken down into five distinct phases: first level agenda setting, second level agenda setting, the need for orientation, priming and intermedia agenda setting (McCombs & Shaw, 1972; McCombs, Llamas, Lopez-Escobar, & Rey, 1997; Lee, 2005; McCombs & Shaw, 1977; Kim, Scheufele & Shanahan, 2002; Kushin, 2010; McCombs, 1993; Overbey, 2012). First level agenda setting deals with the exchange of information from the media to the public (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). The second level of agenda setting refers to the transmission of attribute salience; whether the comments are positive or negative, it is about how a topic is portrayed and received (Lee, 2005). The need for orientation is about determining what makes individuals more susceptible to the effects of certain agenda setting while others are not (Lee, 2005). Priming is the idea that people prefer things that are easy to understand, as opposed to using complex pieces of information when making a decision (Scheu). People are more susceptible to listen to simplified information when it makes sense to them, and they use what they understand to draw their own conclusion, even when they do not consider all aspects of information. The last phase, intermedia agenda setting, analyses the agenda

setting effects from one news entity to another (Overbey, 2012), asking ‘who sets the media’s agenda? These phases have evolved over time through past research. As McCombs states, “the appearance of a new phase does not supplant the previous phase(s)...[but] adds a new domain to scholarly activity” (McCombs, 1992. pp. 815). These phases “do not work sequentially; rather, they can be seen concurrently or separately” (Overbey, 2012. pp. 31).

McCombs and Shaw (1972) are the first researchers to use agenda setting theory. They examine what Chapel Hill voters considered to be the key issues of the 1968 presidential election and compare their views to the media content during the campaign. They build agenda setting theory off of previous work by Walter Lippman (1922), who argues that what we think is happening around us is not necessarily reality, but rather a figment of reality created in our minds by the media (Lippmann, 1922). Cohen (1963) later clarifies that “the press may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling its readers what to think about” (Cohen, 1963, pp.13). This comment drives agenda setting theory into the latest century.

First level agenda can be found in most agenda setting studies, and deals with the transfer of information from the media to the public. Simply put, the media influences the public to think about a particular topic or issue. The results of McCombs and Shaw’s research shows that there is a strong relationship between what the media emphasize and what participants believe to be the key issues (McCombs and Shaw, 1972). McCombs and Shaw conclude their study by saying that the media does set an agenda for the public.

During the presidential campaign of 1972, McCombs and Shaw put agenda setting theory to test again on a larger scale. They conducted interviews and a content analysis on several national evening news broadcasts (ABC, NBC, and CBS) and the Charlotte Observer. The newsprint initially had stronger agenda setting effects on the public; however, later in the election more voters associated with television coverage. In their paper, McCombs and Shaw shows that, while television has stronger influence on the overall agenda, agenda setting effects of the newspaper are more specific.

Additionally, the study shows that the framework previously used during the Chapel Hill study is easy to replicate, which gives credits to agenda setting theory. An important indicator of first level agenda setting has to do with the number of times that the media discusses or mentions a piece of information. A statistical approach such as the number of times the media discusses or mentions a piece of information is a key research method in agenda setting analysis and serves important as other researchers expanded the theory into new fields of research.

Following the original McCombs and Shaw study of the 1968 presidential election, researchers began examining and expanding agenda setting theory. Leonard Tipton, Roger Haney, and John Basehart (1975) hypothesized that there would be a correlation between the public's identification of important issues and the amount of media coverage to those issues (Tipton et. al, 1975). The results identify a relationship between the number of times the media discuss an event with the public's opinion of whether or not that event is important (Tipton et. al, 1975). Similar results are found when Ray Funkhouser conducted a study to determine if there is a correlation between the major issues presented by the media and the importance the public attaches to those

issues (Funkhouser, 1973). The Cambridge dictionary describes salience as being “important to or connected with what is being discussed or what is happening” (Cambridge online dictionary). The study identifies strong influences of agenda setting and suggest, “the amount of media attention given to an issue strongly influences its visibility to the public” (Funkhouser, 1973, pp.74).

Second level agenda setting was officially established in 1997, when McCombs, Lopez- Escobar, llama and Rey (1997) analysed the 1995 Spanish regional and municipal elections. In their paper, they explain that the study examines “the images of the candidates presented in the mass media [compared to] the images of the candidates among voters” (McCombs, Llamas, Lopez-Escobar, & Rey, 1997. pp. 706). Although the media does not dictate how voters feel about particular issues, they direct, guide or orient the content that the public received by highlighting or discussing specific attributes of a subject (McCombs, Llamas, Lopez-Escobar, & Rey, 1997). The second level of agenda setting is the transmission of attribute salience; it is about how the object is portrayed and how it is received by the public (Lee, 2005). First level agenda setting tells us what to think, while second level agenda setting tells us how to think about it (Cohen, 1963; Overbey, 2012; Lee, 2005). When the media presents an object, the presentation also states something about the attributes of that object to influence the public opinion. By the way the media presents these attributes will impact how the public thinks about the issue. Although there were previous studies that focused on attributes, McCombs, Llamas, Lopez-Escobar, & Rey (1997) is one of the few in an English-language publication.

Attributes are often compared to the framing theory. The framing theory focuses on a specific aspect rather than the whole issue in order to promote an area of interest,

whether the impact is positive or negative (Overbey, 2012). Although the framing theory gives credit to agenda setting theory (Lee, 2005), McCombs believes that the two are different. Whether or not there is a distinct difference between framing and attributes has furthered research into second level of agenda setting (Lee, 2005).

When McCombs et. Al (1997) established second level agenda setting by studying the 1995 Spanish election, they differentiated themselves from the framing theory by focusing on determining attribute dimensions. Researchers “focused directly on the second level of agenda setting, specifically the relationship between the images of the candidates presented in the media and the images of the candidates among voters” (McCombs, Llamas, Lopez-Escobar, & Rey, 1997). Attributes are broken down into two sections: affective and substantive. Affective attributes play a role in the emotions of public. The attributes affect how people feel and think, and as a result, they can shape ideology, personality, qualifications and experience. Substantive attributes relates to how attributes are portrayed or represented, be it positive, negative or neutral (McCombs, Llamas, Lopez-Escobar, & Rey, 1997). The study concludes that there is a second level agenda setting effect, and a strong effect of the affective attributes. It is also determined that framing is different than an attribute because framing is more obvious in its message, and is open to interpretation, while attributes are more subtle (Overbey, 2012).

The third phase of agenda setting refers to the need for orientation. When McCombs and Shaw studied the 1972 presidential election, they sought to answer two questions: first, to replicate their original findings; and second, to “investigate the contingent conditions that enhance or limit media agenda setting with particular emphasis on the concept of need for orientation” (McCombs, 1993, pp. 59). This phase is about

determining the psychological reasons that some individuals are more susceptible to the effects of agenda setting, while others are not (Lee, 2005). Two major factors that determine an individual's need for orientation in terms of agenda setting are relevance and uncertainty (Overbey, 2012). If people do not find the object to be important, then they will not listen to the information, making it irrelevant. If individuals knew everything about a topic, then there would be no uncertainties. These two factors dictate why people seek out or do not seek out information. However, easy access of information via the Internet has created questions surrounding this phase of agenda setting (Lee, 2005).

Althaus and Tewksbury (2002) has conducted a study to determine if need for orientation effects are different in print or online with *The New York Times*. The results determine that the public who acquire the news from the Internet develop different agenda issues than the public who read the news in print (Althaus & Tewksbury, 2002). There is significantly more content choices and control when using the Internet to get the news. When seeking news from the Internet, users have their choices to searching and choosing different sources of news based on their personal interest. Readers of the newspaper in print get the news chosen by the news company; they are exposed to news that they do not choose. This difference presents limitation to readers of the online newspaper as they “create personalized information environments that shut them off from larger flows of public information in a society” (Althaus & Tewksbury, 2002. Pp.197). If the news does not fit their search interest, users can easily filter the content to find only what they are looking for. When it comes to the need for orientation, the Internet does restrict the relevance of specific news to groups of society.

When researchers study the need for orientation, they need to consider selective perception (Kushin, 2010). This perception explains why the media might have a limited effect of certain people. For example, if someone has aligned with a particular party, they are more likely to reduce their exposure to the opposing party and increase exposure to their party (Overbey, 2012). Selective perception is measured when McCombs and Shaw studied the 1968 presidential election, and they show that agenda setting is favoured over selective perception (McCombs and Shaw, 1972). Out of the 24 possible comparisons, 18 show that voters are interested in all of the news, not just from their supportive party. Selective perception does exist; however, the news in print sets the agenda not the public. With Althaus & Tewksbury's study, selective perception becomes a more prominent issue.

The fourth phase of agenda setting, priming, became an official phase when Kim, Scheufele and Shanahan (2002) studied attributes and priming. Priming takes place when the media uses specific issues that are easy to understand as opposed to presenting complex pieces of information to make an issue more salient (Scheufele & Twexbury, 2007). People are more susceptible to take information when it makes sense to them, and they can draw their own conclusion, even when they do not consider all the information. The research conducted by Kim, Scheufele, and Shanahan (2002) shows that issue attributes that are communicated by the media served as significant dimensions of issue evaluations among the audience (Kim et. al, 2002). They conclude, "the media plays a key role in indirectly shaping public opinion for a wide variety of issues on a day-to-day basis, especially in small communities with a limited number of media outlets for citizens to choose from" (Kim et. Al. pp. 25). Overbey (2012) has analysed the Walt Disney

World (WDW) Twitter account to determine how the organization is able to set the agenda of their followers. The results show that “priming was evident in how WDW avoided tweeting anything negative and avoided responding to critiques in an open manner” (Overbey, 2012. Pp.128). Limiting the public to see only positive experiences create a false image to attract more individuals to visit WDW. This shows how priming can be a strong influence on setting an agenda to the public, and how it can be used on a social media outlet such as Twitter.

When agenda setting originated, researchers primarily looked at who set the public agenda. In the 1980’s, researchers began examining who set the media’s agenda (McCombs, 1993; Lee, 2005; Kushin, 2010). This phase is known as intermedia agenda setting. Media coverage within one entity can set the agenda in another (Overbey, 2012). The trickle-down effect from a large media outlet will have a direct impact on the smaller local outlets. This was evident when Reese and Danielian (1989) analysed intermedia agenda setting among national news outlets, magazines and broadcast companies (Reese & Danielian, 1989). The results revealed that *The New York Times* had the greatest influence on other news agencies, including television and newspapers (Reese & Danielian, 1989). This study was one of the first that showed the influence of one media outlet on another.

Scholars have continued to explore different dynamics of the intermedia agenda-setting phase. In recent years, researchers have examined the relationship between news media and blogs (Wallsten, 2007; Sweetser, Golan & Wanta, 2008). Wallsten (2007) has performed a study evaluating the ability of the public to influence the agenda of mass media through blogs. Wallsten hypothesizes that the media’s agenda would have a

substantial influence the blogs agenda and observes that a majority (19/35) of the issues have a bi-directional relationship between the media and the blog's discussion (Wallsten, 2007). However, many of the issues have no relationship between the blog's and the media, indicating that the two media outlets respond to different factors. In addition, only two issues show a unilateral influence from the media to the blogs (Wallsten, 2007). The blogs and media have influence on each other at both the professional and amateur levels of media with an immediate effect. A year later, Sweetser, Golan & Wanta (2008) analysed television network news and the official blogs of the 2004 presidential candidates. Although the results reveal a significant correlation in both directions, the study identifies a greater influence of the television broadcast to the presidential candidates' blogs (Sweetser, Golan & Wanta, 2008). In both studies, a bi-directional relationship is discovered, meaning that over the course of a few days, blogs and the news can influence one another depending on the factors and issues at hand (Kushin, 2010), but the two directions are not equal.

Along with blogs, research has also examined discussions in the online environment. Roberts, Wanta and Dzwo (2002) set out to determine if people would share what they learned online. The results reveal that 3 out of 4 topics presented by the media outlets have a direct influence on the content of the electronic bulletin boards. The study concludes that "the more coverage these issues received in the news media, the more messages Internet users posted" (Roberts et. Al, 2002. Pp.459). These results reiterate the findings of Tipton (1975) and Funkhouser (1973), and show how even though the media outlets have changed, the outcomes are the same.

As agenda setting research flourishes on the Internet, Lee, Lancendorfer and Lee (2005) analyse how the Internet has influenced traditional media sources. From their examination of the 2000 Korean election, they find that, with electronic bulletin boards, the Internet has notable influence on traditional media (Lee et. Al. 2005). According to their findings, what is depicted about the candidates in the blogosphere is also depicted in the papers (Lee et, al., 2005).

Intermedia agenda setting has continued to be widely studied in recent years. The theory is now applied to examine the relationship between social media sites like Twitter. Since anything can be posted on Twitter by any user, the platform creates a new spectrum for agenda setting theory because mass communication has a different dynamic compared to traditional sources.

Agenda setting theory and social media

Social media platforms are a form of digital media that can be defined as “forms of media content that combine and integrate data, text, sound, and images of all kinds, are stored in digital formats; and are increasingly distributed through networks” (LaVoi & Calhoun, 2014. Pp. 321). Originally, the Internet used Web 1.0 to convey information similarly to how a newspaper would (Overbey, 2012). Web 1.0 provided very limited interactive capabilities, and Web 2.0 was created with web-languages, such as java script for users to communicate and interact with each other and the agency of information in front of them (Overbey, 2012). This created a foundation for social media outlets to flourish.

What makes social media special is the interactivity amongst all who use it (Penn, 2008). Examples of social media networks include Twitter, Facebook, Blogs and photo sharing apps like Instagram and Snapchat. This digital format has changed the very way that people communicate and how news spreads. In traditional agenda setting, the media convey information to the public in one direction. Now, social media goes in all directions, changing the landscape of journalism (Kushin, 2010). This shift has permitted the audience to become content producers opposed to only content users (Kelly, 2009). Now anyone can be involved in the creation of news. With social media, the public can influence the agenda set by the media: they contribute to discussion, shape opinions, and rate media releases. They interact.

The changing landscape of journalism has prompted researchers to examine how technologies like the Internet and Web 2.0 have influenced newspaper companies. Individuals who have worked for ten of the most sought-after newspapers across the United States have been interviewed to determine how the environment has changed since the emergence of the Internet. The results show that newspaper companies are sharing space on pages of electronic newspapers, and such environments have been diluted with information (Robinson, 2007). As for the companies themselves, the “journalistic missions, routines, and societal relationships, newspapers and their websites are turning into an interactive public sphere that just may be forming a new kind of institution” (Robinson, 2007, pp.318). This change shows how the public has affected the news companies, as opposed to the public simply being users of the news environment. In this way, the “mass is starting to set the agenda for the few” (Overbey, 2012. Pp.51).

Initially, agenda setting analysis was conducted by examining the content on television and in newspapers, while public opinion was measured through surveys and polls (McCombs and Shaw, 1972). Now, a newer form of agenda setting is emerging by using social media, e-mails, electronic bulletin boards and websites. Agenda setting theory needs to adapt in order to incorporate the ever-changing dynamics of communication (Wallsten, 2007; Sweetser, Golan & Wanta, 2008; Roberts, Wanta and Dzewo, 2002; Lee, 2005; Robinson, 2007; Kushin, 2010; Overbey, 2012).

Since blogs have been one platform of social media that researchers conduct their analysis, a study in 2008 has determined that 76.2% of journalists find blogs to be helpful in gaining insight into the tone of a debate or discussion about an issue (Brodeur, 2008). With such a high percentage of journalists utilizing blogs to engage the public, more research is needed to investigate other realms of social media. Platforms such as Twitter enable self-motivated journalists a chance to discuss their opinions about specific issues.

Twitter

This study analyses the Twitter content of the Pan Am and Parapan Am Games to examine the agenda of the tweets. I want to determine whether the Parapan Am Games and its audience have systemically marginalized the athletes. Twitter, created in 2006, is a micro blogging platform that quickly distributes news, ideas and opinions in just 140-character (280 characters as of 2017) messages known as ‘Tweets’ (Clavio & Kain, 2010). In addition to tweets, Twitter also uses a tool called a ‘hashtag’. A hashtag consists of “#” followed by a word or phrase with no spaces. It links tweets to one another within a specific subject, creating a digital archive for particular topics (Frederick

et al., 2013). In the first six years of Twitter's existence (2006-2012) it became the second most used social media site with over 180 million visits each week and 200 million active members (Frederick et al., 2013). Between 2009 and 2011, Twitter grew over 370% (Hagan, 2011), and since then the platform continues to grow 61% from year to year (Aslam, 2017). Fast forwarding to 2017, there are now approximately 317 million active users each week, tweeting over 500 million tweets per day (Aslam, 2017). Twitter has grown into a popular news source where the public can produce news, discuss their thoughts and opinions, and consume information about topics that they wish to know more about. One thing that makes Twitter an effective news source compared to other social media platforms is that it spreads to the public widely and quickly: anything tweeted can be seen by anyone, unless the user has made their account private.

With the growth of Twitter, researchers do not only study the Twitter environment, but they also find the steadily increasing content on Twitter to be an invaluable source of data (Johnson & Yang, 2009; Kushin, 2010; Overbey, 2012; Frederick et. al, 2013). Individuals posting on Twitter are revealing their own opinions and therefore finding and sharing voices in public. This phenomenon in itself can influence and persuade the media to discuss these popular topics. In 2009, Johnson and Yang study the important factors of Twitter, user satisfaction on Twitter, and positive experiences on Twitter. Two major factors are found as to why individuals use Twitter, social motives and information seeking. With that being said, the amount of people seeking information out weight the people going on for social motives. The study has linked Twitter to agenda setting theory: "Twitter can become a 'one-stop-shop' for

obtaining news and information” (Johnson & Yang, 2009. pp.19), making it possible for any user to set agenda.

Kushin (2010) has examined the intermedia relationship between *The New York Times* and Twitter. Kushin hypothesizes that there would be a bi-directional relationship between Twitter in the morning and the online version of *The New York Times* in the evening. Kushin also realizes that what was on Twitter at night would be on *The New York Times* online in the morning (Kushin, 2010). The study determined that the direction of influence between the two media sources was predominantly from social media to news media (Kushin, 2010). This was one of the first studies to bridge the gap between Twitter and agenda setting. Although the study found infrequent evidence of agenda setting, the study provided insight into the role of intermedia agenda setting and Twitter.

Twitter and sport

With a rapid growth and a large audience, the impacts of Twitter become obvious throughout many industries (Frederick et al., 2013). Similarly, sport organizations have been utilizing social media platforms to maximize their communication efforts and outreach. Additionally, athletes and fans are embracing “social media to talk about their lives without having their messages filtered by any marketing or public relations figures” (Pegoraro, 2010, Pp 501). Social media has allowed fans to become closer with their favourite athletes because they can gain insights into an athlete’s day-to-day lives and ideas at a click of a button. Fans have the opportunity to interact with their favourite

athletes, teams, coaches and other fans (Pegoraro, 2010). Twitter gives the public a way to relate to athletes, humanizes or idolizes them.

Several studies have analysed the Twitter and sport environment (Pegoraro, 2010; Hambrick, Simmons, Greenhalgh, Greenwell, 2010; Shultz and Sheffer, 2010; Clavio & Burch, 2012). Where majority of these studies are focusing on fan-athlete interaction and how Twitter is shaping sports journalism, they are also important for showing how Twitter continues to expand into the world of sport as a viable source of information.

Pegoraro's 2010 study of fan-athlete interaction on Twitter looks at Twitter as a tool to decrease the gap between sport fans and their favourite athletes. The results from the study show that direct messages are the most common type of communication and that athletes from the NFL and professional golfers are the top tweeters. However, the findings suggest, "although fans follow these athletes in large number, athletes are not capitalizing on this audience of consumers" (Pegoraro, 2010. pp. 511). This research provides a foundation for future research on how Twitter can shape and change the world of sport.

Frederick, Burch and Blaszkka (2013), uses agenda setting theory to determine whether the London Olympic Summer Games created its own agenda via its Twitter account. Tweets from both @London2012 and tweets containing #London2012 were collected (Frederick et. al, 2013). The results show that when it comes to the primary tweet focus between @London2012 and #London2012, that they are quite similar. Specifically, @London2012 has tweeted about athletes 45.9% of the time and sport only 24.1%, while #London2012 has focused on athletes 39.6% of the time and even less about sport at 19.8%. It is the secondary foci where the two groups become different.

@London2012 typically tweet about the host city London, while the content from #London2012 is about other countries. The overall findings suggest that an agenda can be established via Twitter. However, the “agenda setting presence may have been diminished due to availability, and perhaps ease of access to alternative news sources on Twitter” (Frederick et.al, 2013. Pp.15). The paper also states that the usage of hashtags is more purposeful than tweeting when it comes to setting an agenda because hash tags allow multiple users to emphasize more specific points of view.

Even with the influx of studies analysing the Internet and agenda setting, the number of studies being conducted on social media and agenda setting are still limited, and even fewer are using Twitter (Overbey, 2012). Frederick (2013) is one of the few studies that have examined agenda setting on the social media platform twitter, while analysing a major sport event. He states, “[his] study was one of the first known attempts to apply agenda setting to Twitter within a sport-specific context” (Frederick et al., 2013. Pp. 2). This thesis adds to this very limited body of literature by not only applying agenda setting to Twitter within a sport-specific context, but also by incorporating athletes with disabilities in the research.

Para Sport

There are few agenda setting studies in the realm of sport, and even fewer that examine para sport. By analysing the Pan Am and Parapan Am Games, this thesis tries to inspire more research in the field of para-sport. The Paralympic movement started shortly after World War II when Dr. L. Guttmann opened a spinal cord centre in Great Britain (Howe, 2008b). Initially, para sport was used primarily for rehabilitation, but quickly

evolved to become recreational and then competitive. On July 29, 1948, Dr. Guttman organized the first competition for wheelchair athletes. This event was named the Stoke Mandeville Games, and involved 16 injured servicemen and women who took part in archery. In 1960, these Games transitioned into what we call the Paralympic Games. The vision of the Paralympic movement is “to enable para athletes to achieve sporting excellence and inspire and excite the world” (IPC, n.d). However, para-athletes are still not in the spotlight compared to their non-disabled counterparts; therefore, my study tries to use agenda setting analysis to verify whether systemic marginalization takes place due to the disabilities of the athletes.

Research surrounding para-sport and para-athletes has been on the rise for the last decade, but it is still in its infancy (Bruce, 2014). Researchers have studied several different levels of coverage of disability sport across a range of countries and have identified common patterns in terms of representation (Hardin et. Al, 2006; Howe, 2008; Berger, 2008; Pappous, Marcellini & Leseleuc, 2011; Silva & Howe, 2012; Tynedal & Wolbring, 2013; Bruce, 2014; Misener, 2014). This section will review past literature to show how the media has marginalized athletes with disabilities.

Discourses and disability sport

Para athletes are incredible athletes, and this is often lost or shadowed when they receive media coverage. One constant in previous research has shown that rather than merely reflecting reality, media coverage of para sport has actively created its own “plausible frameworks,” trying to make sense of athletes with disabilities participating in sport (Howe, 2008). This in turn creates concerns surrounding the validity or accuracy

about athletes with disabilities and their representation on mass media. It is important to monitor how the media is representing athletes with disabilities because media representation construct an image that has social impacts for disability sport and its athletes (Howe, 2008). Athletes with disabilities are commonly stigmatized because their “bodies do not reflect the “norm”; they typically face either non-coverage or stereotypical coverage” (Hardin et. al, 2006. pp5). The previous research of DePauw (1997) categorizes athletes with disabilities, and how the media represents them based on their “ability.” I will discuss several discourses that individuals with disabilities face in three categories: the Invisibility of Disability, the Visibility of Disability, and the (In)Visibility of DisAbility.

The Invisibility of Disability occurs when athletes are excluded from sport and are considered invisible by the media (DePauw, 1997). A good example of this is the Paralympics. In comparison to the Olympic Games, the Paralympics has always been underrepresented, even though it is the largest and most elite-sporting event for people with physical disabilities (Hardin et. al, 2006). A comparative analysis has been conducted during the 2004 Summer Olympic and Paralympic Games. The results reveal that there are 261 published articles about the Olympic Games and only 16 about the Paralympic Games (Chang and Crossman, 2009). With these articles there are photographs, where there are 220 of the Olympic Games and only 17 of the Paralympic Games (Chang and Crossman, 2009). A similar study has also been conducted during the 2008 Beijing Olympics and Paralympics. The researchers have reviewed articles posted by The Globe and Mail during each set of Games and the results show that there are 302 articles published during the Olympics, and only 18 during the Paralympics (Chang,

Crossman, Taylor and Walker, 2011). In both studies the results show just how little coverage the Paralympic Games receive compared to the Olympic Games in terms of published articles and photographs. A longitudinal study by Tynedal and Wolbring (2013) examines the number of articles from *The New York Times* from 1955-2012 about the Olympic and Paralympic Games. The results reveal 10,487 articles about the Olympics and 246 about the Paralympics during the 57-year time frame (Tynedal and Wolbring, 2013). This imbalance shows that the marginalization the Paralympic Games face has been an issue over the course of decades. The constant systemic marginalization of para athletes also indicates that disability sport is not considered as competitive or interesting compared to non-para elite sport. This stereotype makes it tremendously difficult for disabled athletes to be seen as anything other than an athletic paradox (Hardin et. al, 2006).

Even in the small number of media representations, para-athletes suffer more problems of stereotypes. The so-called “Visibility of Disability” reinforces the stereotypical discourse that athletes with disabilities are “super-crips” who have overcome adversity to become “normal” (DePauw, 1997). The term super-crip is defined as “those individuals whose inspirational stories of courage, dedication, and hard work prove that it can be done, that one can defy the odds and accomplish the impossible” (Bruce, 2014. pp. 1446). This discourse creates unrealistic expectations about what is possible for most individuals with disabilities, leaving the impression that if they try hard enough that they can do the impossible. Not all disabilities are the same, making it more or less difficult for some people to function with ease. Some individuals are able to conquer their disabilities, but it would be unrealistic to compare all disabled people to

individuals who have done this. In addition, the label of super-crip can be negatively bestowed on individuals who are simply trying to live “an ordinary” life, and this added attention can bring extra media exposure to them (Howe, 2008). This discourse affects not only the individuals who look up to the athlete, but also the athlete themselves. In the context of para-sport, the super-crip is an athlete who wins and receives more media attention. However, not all athletes who win receive media coverage; instead, many winners are marginalized by the degree of their impairment (Howe, 2011) and by the fact that they are not super-crips.

The (In)Visibility of DisAbility are athletes with a disability who are seen primarily as athletes, and have completely overcome their disability in terms of functioning in their sport. When DePauw (1997) created this disability model, there were no athletes who achieved this level. In recent years, however, the achievement has changed: individuals like Louise Sauvage (Australian), Casey Martin (USA), Oscar Pistorius (SA) and Neroli Fairhall (NZ) have defied the discourses that most athletes with disabilities face (Tynedal & Wolbring, 2013). These athletes are no longer presented as special victims who overcome adversity; instead, they are seen as extraordinary athletes. To fall under this category these athletes would need to either win and or gain a relatively high-profile media exposure (Howe, 2011). In return these individuals “inspirational stories of courage, dedication, and hard work prove that it can be done, that one can defy the odds and accomplish the impossible (Berger, 2008. pp. 648).

Media representation are in many ways reflections of the prejudice of the society. One of the first athletes to achieve this status in disability sport was Oscar Pistorius. However, when he wished to participate in the Olympics he faced many of the discourses

often associated with para-athletes. Corrigan, Patton, Holt and Hardin (2010) have studied the Pistorius' case where they examine two popular American prints, the *Times* magazine and *The New York Times*. They determine that these “publications have among the highest circulation in the U.S that they have the potential to set the agenda for discourse about the case” (Corrigan et al., 2010. pp. 297). The primary discourse presented in this case is the ‘fairness’ of competition. There have been discussions on the competitive advantage Pistorius that he might have due to his prosthetic limbs, and the legitimacy of his accomplishments. Many have argued that if Pistorius were allowed to compete it would result in a slippery slope of athletes using technical aids to gain an edge in competition. At the time, these athletes were not considered as disabled or abled-bodied, but rather too-abled (Corrigan et al., 2010). In addition to the primary discourse of fairness, the study also discusses the cyborg discourse. This discourse focuses on the concern that if the technological aids provide a significant advantage, athletes might mutilate their own bodies to gain this benefit. Although this discourse exists only in one quarter of the data, it has been used to diminish Pistorius as an athlete. The study concludes by stating that the “Cheetahs provide an advantage. More rapid repositioning of the limbs... produce a greater stride frequency” (Corrigan et al., 2010 pp. 304). The article provides a detailed role of discursive mechanisms in the media that athletes with disabilities face.

In 2014, Bruce studied the influence of discourses of nationalism (New Zealand) on media coverage of the Paralympics. Previously, she had considered the 2008 Paralympics through three traditional print sources (*The New Zealand Herald*, *Waikato Times* and *Dominion Post*). These three sources of newsprint reach over three-quarters of

the New Zealand population (Bruce, 2014). In 2012 the study was expanded via coverage from an online newspaper aggregator, stuff.co.nz (which includes the *Times*, the *Post* and the *Press*). Bruce uses an earlier unpublished analysis (Gibbs, 2006) to determine whether similar discursive processes are evident (Bruce, 2014). The results show that, in 2008, the total number of articles and photographs of the three newspapers was merely a fraction of the coverage devoted to the Olympic Games (Gibbs, 2006; Bruce, 2014). “Olympians received over 37 times more articles, and 47 times more photographs, despite winning fewer medals (9) than Paralympians (12), and sending only six times as many participants” (Bruce, 2014. pp. 1449). In 2012, the number decreased to 17 times more articles (the *Herald*) for Olympians than Paralympians.

Additionally, the study finds that home nation athletes are represented differently in the media than international athletes. In the images studied, “disability was highly visible in 73% and 88% of photographs of international athletes compared with only 32% of New Zealand Paralympians” (Bruce, 2014. pp. 1450). Majority of the photos that highlighted the disability of international athletes also have no accompanying story, while almost all images New Zealand athletes do. Bruce concludes that para-sport can be articulated to elite sport with the discourse of “Nationalism.” This study provides proof that the attributes provided to a topic by the media can strongly influence the salience of the story to the public.

Although Bruce does not use agenda setting theory, there are similarities between her research and this thesis. It identifies an important discourse when studying para-athletes and their home nation. With the 2015 Pan Am/Parapan Am Games being held in Toronto, Canada, I found that it might be interesting to examine if @TO2015 is

articulating Canadian para-athletes to elite sporting status over non-Canadian para-athletes. Articulating para-athletes to an elite status can increase their media coverage and fan base, resulting in more people participating in disability sport.

Since the early 1990's participation rates in disabled sporting events have continuously surged, and as the number of athletes increase, the legitimacy of the competition also improves (Hardin et. al, 2006). Upon conclusion of the London 2012 Paralympics, Canada's Chef de Mission stated that she "is thrilled by the increase in participation at the Paralympics and the awareness the Games generate for people with a disability" (Tynedal & Wolbring, 2013. pp.14). However, this awareness is short lived because the growth at the elite level has not been duplicated at any other level of disabled sports. Paralympians are some of the best athletes in their respective sports; however, the common discourses of sport continue to compare disability sport to the portrayal of women's sport as different, secondary and inferior (Bruce, 2014). This is one of the reasons for the fact that there are far less resources given to media covering disabled sporting events. For example, at the London 2012 Olympics, there was over 20,000 accredited journalists, but when the Paralympics started, there was a miniscule 2500 remaining (Bruce, 2014). With far fewer sport journalists to discuss the Games and stories in the Games, there is far less discussion surrounding the Games. Less discussion implies a lack of public interest. As a journalist notes, "No one is interested. No one wants to watch" (Bruce, 2014. pp. 1446). The lack of attention may relate to a predisposed stereotype that surrounds disabled sport as inferior or second to able-bodied sport before the Paralympics even take place (Hardin et. al, 2006). The media perceives a

lack of public interest, and so chooses not to cover much of the Paralympic Games, and in turn, the lack of coverage perpetuates the lack of public interest.

Discourse Analysis

The data for this thesis are tweets from the Twitter account @TO2015. Initially, many of the tweets begin as messages issued by the Organizing Committee of the Pan Am and Parapan Am Games to inform the public. Therefore, these tweets have a potential to set an agenda on Twitter by what they tweet. A discourse analysis is used to “interpret, understand and in some cases critique the function of talk, communication or text” (Taylor and Francis, 2013. Pp.258). A discourse analysis allows the researcher the opportunity to uncover and explain relationships by investigating how concepts and linguistics categories develop (Taylor and Francis, 2013). It is important for this thesis to ask why did @TO2015 do what they did, who were they doing it for, and for what purpose did the tweet and dialogue exist. These questions serve many purposes: the answers do not only help to determine the agenda set by @TO2015, but they also assist in tracking what tweets got the most interactive response from the audience or followers of @TO2015.

When it comes to performing a discourse analysis, there are certain steps that need to be planned and followed. First, the theoretical approach must be appropriate to the study. In this case, I choose agenda setting theory to analyze the agenda because I am interested in prejudice in the discourse that leads to the marginalization of the athletes. Second, I have to determine the choice of the texts and the sampling size. When it comes to the analysis of the data, I have considered several approaches. A quantitative approach consists of counting the number of times information appears (Taylor & Francis, 2013).

However, this approach does not take into consideration any socio-cultural influences that could cause the production of that tweet (van Dijk, 2012). An inductive approach probes the data with the intent to “understand why and for what purpose the discourse exists” (Taylor & Francis, 2013. Pp. 261). Each approach can serve its purpose, but in the end, the research questions determine which one is more effective for the study.

For discourse analysis, there are three aspects in analyzing text: sociocultural influences, discourse practices and textual analysis (McIntyre, K; Francis, K; & Chapman, Y. 2012). Sociocultural influences refer to factors that are not stated, but are embedded in the text. Discourse practice analyzes what the purpose of the text is, how it is distributed and for whom it is done. Textual analysis examines the language and the style of the text to convey meaning (Taylor & Francis, 2013). Once the data has been analyzed thoroughly, the findings are compared with previous literature and points of consistency are expressed, while differences are clarified. As I am trying to find out specifically whether the Twitter discourse generated marginalizes Paralympic athletes; therefore, my analysis concentrates on sociocultural influences and discourse practices.

Summary

The media has the ability to affect the public in terms of what to think about, and how to think about it. This ability has been the bottom line of agenda setting theory for the first 30 years. However, agenda setting theory no longer refers only to how the media influences the public. The Internet and social media platforms have created a new environment where the public can become producers of news and influence the media’s agenda. Communication is now by far more bi-directional. Researchers in the last decade have started to adapt the framework of agenda setting theory to bridge the gap between

the theory to the new media and public relationship. Until recently, there has been little research done on agenda setting in social media, even fewer examining agenda setting and Twitter, and almost nothing on the use of Twitter in sport. To date, no one has examined agenda setting using Twitter in the field of sport and para sport. This thesis utilizes Twitter, and uses an inductive approach to determine what @TO2015 perceived as most important in its agenda in hopes to fill the gap.

Study Rationale and Research Questions

The study examined the official Twitter account of the Pan Am and Parapan Am Games using agenda setting theory to determine what @TO2015 perceived as most important. A further analysis was done to determine if athletes from the Parapan Am Games received the same media coverage and promotion as athletes from the Pan Am Games. The study aims to answer the following research questions:

Research Question 1: What agenda was set forth by @TO2015?

Research Question 2: What agenda was set forth by @TO2015 and how did they frame athletes from the Parapan Am Games?

Research Question 2b: What agenda was set forth by @TO2015 and how did they frame athletes from the Pan Am Games?

Research Question 3: Compared to the Pan Am Games, did the agenda of the Parapan Am Games exhibit marginalization of the para-athletes?

Both the Olympic Games and Paralympics Games have their own organization committees that have their own official Twitter accounts. By analysing the Pan Am and Parapan Am Games that share the same committee and same Twitter account provides a unique situation because one committee represents two different Games, with different types of athletes. Unlike previous research, this thesis answers questions that other studies have not had the opportunity to consider. For example, researchers have examined how para sports are represented compared to non-para sport for over a decade; however, these studies are usually of two different events. This thesis examines how TOC of the Pan Am and Parapan Am Games used Twitter to frame Pan Am and Parapan Am

athletes, and thereby determining what agenda was set through the Twitter account @TO2015.

Methods

In a study of the relation between public opinion and news media, Funkhouser suggests that the amount of media attention has a direct impact on the public opinion (Funkhouser, 1973). His exploratory study raises questions regarding trends in media to provoke discussion and suggestions for inquiry. Due to similarities between Funkhouser's study and this thesis, parts of Funkhouser's approach is modelled here. In Funkhouser's study, specific media outlets are selected to be the primary sources of data. The data is "analysed by counting the numbers of articles appearing in each publication" (Funkhouser, 1973. Pp.64) and sorted based on prominent issues. The information is then measured against the public opinion, which is usually obtained through surveys. By using this method, Funkhouser is able to rank the topics in the news in order of importance. Although it has been nearly 50 years, and agenda setting theory has grown and changed, this model is still used to various study to analyse data. Even though my study does not measure against public opinion, the agenda setting method still allows me to work with my question: what agenda was set by the Twitter account @TO2015 before and during the Pan Am and Parapan Am Games? I am examining what the public is saying, and how are they saying it.

This thesis utilizes a content analysis, where themes and categories are created to measure popular topics tweeted by @TO2015. Then it uses an inductive approach to identify additional sub-categories. Attributes of the tweets that fall under these sub-categories are further analysed. This chapter discusses the rationale behind the content analysis, tweets collection, data analysis, and the validation of the analytical approaches and coding methods.

Content Analysis

My study utilizes a summative content analysis. Summative content analysis consists of both quantitative and qualitative content approaches, which “involves counting and comparisons, usually of keywords or content, followed by the interpretation of the underlying content” (Hsieh & Shannons, 2005. pp.1277). In summative analysis, there are several components that serve to conceptualize, discuss, and evaluate content analysis designs (Krippendorff, 2004). These components include the following: unitizing, sampling, recording/coding, reducing, inferring and narrating. The first four components involve the creation of data from raw text or images. Summative content analysis has been chosen for this study because there is a vast amount of raw data that comes in several forms (such as text, pictures, multiple pictures, videos, and web pages). The flexibility of the first four components allows similar categories to be coded for different types of raw data. The final two components are used to answer the research questions. The analysis considers both the created data and contextual phenomena outside the data (Krippendorff, 2004). These two components of the analysis allow frames related to the athletes to be determined and compared. Once done, the agenda set by @TO2015 is discussed, using the quantitative analysis of the first four components and the qualitative analysis of the final two components of the summative content analysis.

This research project uses a summative content analysis approach to examine the Twitter handle @TO2015 over the course of the Pan Am and Parapan Am Games hosted in Toronto, Canada in the summer of 2015. When examining the underlying message of each tweet, summative content analysis allows for the “systematic and objective analysis

of pre-existing content” (Frederick et al, 2013, pp.7). It provides me with a way to look at the data and make inference using pre-existing sources and schemes from past data.

According to previous research, there are several steps when performing a content analysis on social media (Lai & To, 2015; Schwartz & Ungar, 2015). First, the researchers must state the scope of study, followed by their research questions. They must identify their source(s) of social media and the sample size of each source. Similarly, this study utilizes an inductive approach to serve the purpose of reviewing the samples of data before creating any categories or units of analysis. Once the data has been examined, themes and categories that are relatable to agenda setting or the research questions are made. From there the coding process begins, and when the data is coded, I interpret the findings.

As a researcher, I followed the steps above when reviewing and analysing the data. First, I started by reading all the tweets posted by the Twitter account @TO2015. By reviewing this data, I gained insight into the Twitter environment and recorded popular themes that frequently occurred. From there, I mapped out their impressions and thoughts, which led to the first categories. The first categories and initial themes coded would answer the first research question, “what agendas were set forth by @TO2015?” Visual representation included with text helped clarify what the message of tweets were. Once the initial themes were sorted into categories, tweets were then sorted based on the type of visual media included along with the message of the tweet. Additional themes about athletes were then coded, answering the second research questions (both 2a and 2b). Next, similarities and differences were analysed between research questions 2a and 2b to determine how @TO2015 set agendas for both para and non-para athletes. To

answer research question three, relationships between categories, themes and tweet frequency were compared throughout the different time periods as well as the whole data set.

Data Collection and Coding

When working with online data, certain issues are encountered because data is constantly updating, changing and or being removed (Frederick et al, 2013). A not so perfect solution is Twittonomy. Twittonomy is a Twitter data collection tool that provides “insights and features to help monitor, manage, track and optimize your activities on Twitter” (Rayson, 2014). It can collect 3,200 tweets of any account.

For the purpose of this thesis, Twittonomy was used to collect the tweets from @TO2015 at separate time frames over the course of one year to ensure no tweets were missed. Tweets were collected from July 7th 2014 to August 23. 2015. The collection provided data for a full year before the Games, as well as data for the entire competitive schedule of the Pan Am and Parapan Am Games. Using Twittonomy, all tweets from the Twitter handle @TO2015 were collected (n=4,523 tweets). The collected tweets were then sorted in 5 relevant time frames: (1) more than six months prior to the Pan Am Games (n=911 tweets); (2) between three months to six months before the Games (n=379); (3) three months prior to the Games (n=1,039); (4) during the Pan Am Games (n=1,780); (5) data collected from 3 days after the Pan Am Games to the end of the Parapan Am Games (n=414). Tweets were sorted based on the time they were tweeted to see if the frames were different by time period, and if the agenda set by @TO2015 shifted from data set to data set. Prior to sorting the data by time periods, tweets were then put into four categories depending on the content. The categories were Pan Am athletes

(n=775), Parapan Am athletes (n=263), both athletes (tweets that are about para athletes and non-para athletes) (n=27), and neither (not of athletes) (n=3458). These categories allowed for the separation of cultural events, ticket sales, and other informational themes to be coded in the neither category from tweets specifically about athletes.

A code book was developed specifically related to the purpose of this thesis and its research questions. When determining the themes for coding the data, multiple variables were adopted and or modified from previous research surrounding major sporting events (Blaszka et al., 2012; Frederick et al., 2013). Initially, this thesis primarily examined tweets that were specific to athletes from either the Pan Am or Parapan Am Games (n=1065). This sample size is consistent with other research analysing sport specific tweets. Two specific factors were considered when coding: tweet focus and focus of the visual representation.

The tweet focus variable separated tweets solely based on whether they were about *Pan Am athletes* or *Parapan Am athletes*. Tweets were separated based on whether they were about Pan Am athletes and Parapan Am athletes; however, the themes remain the same. Focus of the visual representation variable specifically analysed what was happening in the link provided and how it coincides with the tweet text. *Picture of athletes* (in sport, out of sport, winning sport), *Pictures x2* (in sport, out of sport, winning sport), *Videos* (of athlete(s), or team(s), *Promotional* (the tweet text is about the Games and the link is about the athlete, or the text is about the athlete while the link is about something different), *Results* (photo of the podium, or link to the results web page), *Stories* (about an individual or about a team), and *not assessible* (links that for one reason or another not assessible). Once these categories were established, they would be further

examined inductively to determine exactly what overall agenda was set by @TO2015, and also, what agenda was set when discussing, and promoting athletes.

Single-coder Reliability

Establishing inter-coder reliability is an important aspect to insure validity when multiple coders are used. However, this study only utilizes one coder. The term ‘coder’ serves as a generic title for an individual who is involved in the “process of recording observation, perceptions and readings of text” (Krippendorff, 2004. pp 126). Although it is less common for having a single coder, in some cases (such as this one), it may be preferable because the main coder is engulfed in all aspects of the study (Pegoraro, 2015). It is more common for there to be multiple coders in quantitative content analysis studies; however, when it comes to qualitative content analysis studies where analysts typically work alone, it is acceptable to have a single coder (Krippendorff, 2004; Pegoraro, 2015).

Advantages to Content Analysis

There are several advantages for using content analysis. First, content analysis is flexible, allowing a systematic way to examine the underlying content of communication messages (Kushin, 2010). When examining a social media outlet such as Twitter, communication comes in all different forms. The flexibility of content analysis allows for the examination of text, images, and videos that serves purposeful for this thesis. Second, content analysis puts forth a step-by-step procedure allowing for a data set that can be easily replicated and reproduced. This is useful for validating the research. Third, Twitter is a free space where anyone can comment, post, and create discussion. Conducting

interviews, surveys or other methods would not be realistic because the amount of people who participate. Fourth, content analysis has been used and proven fruitful in other researches that employ agenda setting theory (Overbey, 2012).

Disadvantages to Content Analysis

Content analysis has several disadvantages. Since the data is collected from Twitter, it has already been created, meaning the researcher cannot ask for clarification as an interviewer can do during a qualitative interview or focus group. At the time of this thesis Twitter only allowed users to tweet 140 characters, so it is common for messages to be brief, fragmented, and often leading to a misunderstanding. This brevity also leads to slang words or improper English, which can create further confusion. In addition, the researchers are subjected to their own bias in reading the messages. When proposing a study, a researcher typically has certain assumptions in mind. The researcher is likely to be engulfed in the culture of the topics, seeing trends in previous research, so as to project certain ideas in the research. It is important for researchers to be conscious of their own agenda, and not to force their preconceived notions onto the analysis. In the case of this thesis, a large portion of data was excluded due to the way I categorized the coding initially with my own assumptions and research questions in mind. After the data was coded and analysed, I realized the problem. I then re-categorized the data to minimize my own influence on the coding.

Results

Analysis #1

In order to analyse the agenda set by the Pan Am/Parapan Am Committee, the tweets from @TO2015 I identified four predetermined categories. This means that themes were allowed to develop from the content in the categories. Initially, the data was reviewed prior to the coding process to determine which themes and categories would relate to agenda setting theory. Next, all tweets were put into four categories directly related to the subject of the text. These categories were: Pan Am athletes, Parapan Am athletes, both types of athletes, and neither. There could be no overlap between these categories, tweets were coded into only one category. In total, there were 775 tweets about Pan Am athletes (17.13%) from @TO2015; 263 tweets about Parapan Am athletes (5.88%) from @TO2015; 27 tweets about both Pan Am and Parapan Am athletes (0.59%) from @TO2015; 3458 tweets in the neither category (76.45%) from @TO2015 (see Table 1).

The first data set from July 7. 2014 - January 9. 2015 had a total of 911 tweets, which made up 20.14% of tweets sent out by @TO2015. Of those 911 tweets, 121 fell into the Pan Am athlete category, 38 into the Parapan Am athlete category, 2 into the both category, and 753 into the neither category (see Table 1). This would mean that during the first data set (six months of more before the Games), @TO2015 tweeted about Pan Am athletes 13.28%, while only tweeting about Parapan Am athletes 3.84%.

The second data set from January 10. 2015 – April 9. 2015 had a total of 379 tweets, which made up 8.37% of all tweets sent out by @TO2015. Of those 379 tweets, 38 fell into the Pan Am athlete category, 19 into the Parapan Am athlete category, 5 into

the both category and 317 into the neither category (see Table 1). This meant that during the second data set (between 3 – 6 months before the Games), @TO2015 tweeted about Pan Am athletes 10.02%, while only tweeting about Parapan Am athletes 5.01%.

The third data set from April 10th 2015 – July 9. 2015 had a total of 1039 tweets, which made up 22.97% of all tweets sent out by @TO2015. Of those 1039 tweets, 128 fell into the Pan Am athletes' category, 12 into the Parapan Am athletes' category, 3 into the both category, and 896 fell the neither category (see Table 1). This means that during the third data set (between 0-3 months before the Games), @TO2015 tweeted about Pan Am athletes 12.31%, while only tweeting about Parapan Am athletes 1.15%.

The fourth data set from July 10th 2015 – July 29. 2015 had a total of 1780 tweets, which made up 39.35% of all tweets sent out by @TO2015. Of those 1780 tweets, 450 fell into the Pan Am athletes' category, 5 into the Parapan Am athletes' category, 8 into the both category and 1317 into the neither category (see Table 1). This means that during the fourth data set (during the Pan Am Games), @TO2015 tweeted about Pan Am athletes 25.28%, while only tweeting about Parapan Am athletes 0.28%.

The fifth data set from July 30. 2015 – August 23. 2015 had a total of 414 tweets, which made up 9.15% of all tweets sent out by @TO2015. Of those 414 tweets, 38 fell into the Pan Am athlete category, 192 into the Parapan Am athlete category, 9 into the both category and 175 into the neither category (see Table 1). This means that during data set five (the week leading up to and during the Parapan Am Games), @TO2015 tweeted about Pan Am athletes 9.17%, while tweeting about Parapan Am athletes 46.37%.

In the first four data sets, the majority of the tweets fell in the neither category. The neither category had more tweets than the other 3 combined in all four cases.

Surprisingly, the fifth data set was the only time frame where any category had more tweets than the neither category (see Table 1). I believe this was because there were less events to promote, and smaller audiences going to the Parapan Am Games. Therefore, there would be less information to provide and far less interaction from the audience to @TO2015.

Table 1: The number of tweets in each data set separated into the four original categories.

	Pan Am athletes	Parapan Am athletes	Both	Neither	Total
Data Set 1 (6+)	121	35	2	753	911
Data Set 2 (3-6)	38	19	5	317	379
Data Set 3 (0-3)	128	12	3	896	1039
Data Set 4 (PA)	450	5	8	1317	1780
Data Set 5 (PpA)	38	192	9	175	414
Total	775	263	27	3458	4523

Table 1 shows the frequency for tweets about or specifically related to athletes and the time frame of the tweet. The problem is that 76.45% of all tweets fell under the neither category. With such a significant number of tweets falling under this category, there can be no way to identify an agenda. Having 76.45% of all tweets being coded into the neither category would mean that they would not be further analysed as they were not about athletes. It also means that the original categorization needed to be re-thought. Is it possible that my motive to right the wrong of marginalization has tainted the way I define the categories? The agenda of the researcher should be taken into consideration when using agenda setting theory on a fixed data source about a particular topic(s). This realization has added some self-criticism which allows this thesis to grow. Expanding the analysis would serve the purpose of determining what @TO2015 was tweeting about. For this reason, I employed inductive coding analysis to determine popular themes tweeted

frequently by @TO2015 (see Table 3). I will discuss this analysis further after a discussion of the break down for prominent themes in each category.

During the coding process, each theme was labelled, defined, indicators were posted, themes were differentiated and an example was included to keep the data consistent. In total, four themes emerged from the Pan Am and Parapan Am athletes' categories, while 10 themes emerged from the neither category. The themes are the following: (Athlete themes) Out of sport, In sport, Results, Promotional. (Neither category themes) Replies, Informational, Gaining interest, Ticket sales, PANAMANIA, Torch relay, Volunteer, Opening and Closing ceremonies, Venue, Merchandise sale. Below are examples of each, in order from highest tweet frequency to lowest.

Replies: The most prevalent theme from @TO2015 has to do with replies (n=1334). These postings recorded tweets that answer questions of followers, and tweets that contain little relevance to the original research question. The problem for this study is that the initial message cannot be recorded. Tweets that started with a user name indicated that the tweet is a direct message. It is the job of the coder to know and differentiate whether the user account is an athlete or a fan. This often required some additional searching when coding data.

Examples of tweets in this theme include:

”@weijiaz Congratulations! See you at the Games!” (data set 1, tweet 27);

“@nandorejas Hi Nando, details aren't available yet, but we will provide you with that information once it does become available.” (data set 1, tweet 28);

“@magoo_stuart Some are given as a gift with purchase while supplies last.” (data set 4, tweet 3); (

“@MariaLung We're so glad you had such a great time, thanks for the support!”(data set 5, tweet 34).

The theme of the replies’ is the primary use of the @TO2015 account. It peaks in frequency during data set four, directly tweeting out 658 times. Although these tweets are not relevant to my research questions, some of them may indicate meaningful information to an analysis of the agenda behind the tweets. The examples above shows a sense of community excited about the Games, where the organizers and the users maintain a positive exchange of information. As well, these examples from “other” category indicate a variety of activities that may not have been covered by the rest of the categories.

Table 2.1: Inductive Thematic Code - Replies

Replies	
Label	Replies
Definition	Postings that respond to the general public about the Games and or tweets where the question is unknown and the answer does not give enough information to know the subject of the question
Indicators	Postings that start with an account Ex: @username, postings that do not make sense or have missing information.
Differentiation	A posting that is not about athletes, and or were discussing a question/subject that was unclear
Example	”@weijiaz Congratulations! See you at the Games!”(data set 1, tweet 27),

Informational: The informational theme is the second most tweeted subject (n=599). In their tweets, @TO2015 discussed events that were happening and ways to be prepared for those events. This theme provided the Twitter account a way to reach out to public to promote the Pan Am /Parapan Am Games and events at the Games. Some events were tweeted so much that they were classified as their own themes (i.e. Opening/

Closing ceremonies, Panamania, Torch relay). It is important for the media to draw “the right type of audience into a conversation before, during, and after an event [to] create a buzz that will allow even those who don’t attend to feel part of the action” (Overbey, 2012. Pp. 91). By tweeting information at the right time, @TO2015 can create the conversation they want the participants to have.

Examples of tweets that fall in this theme:

“Thanks to NPC Mexico for hosting the final coaching/classification workshop! 74 trained from 17 countries #TO2015 <http://t.co/nLYvZ2ODyG>” (data set 1, tweet 71);

“Winner of today's games goes to the finals to play the US tomorrow. <http://t.co/uCQuPuTRD1>” (data set 4, tweet 228);

“Don't forget, your #TO2015 ticket gets access to free public transit on game day! <http://t.co/exOWboffch>” (data set 5, tweet 69).

The difference between informational and direct message is that informational tweets have a clear message (instead of being an entry with just the user handle). The informational theme peaks at the fourth data set, being tweeted 274 times.

Table 2.2: Inductive Thematic Code - Informational

Informational	
Label	Informational
Definition	Postings that engage the public about events happening at the Games and how to be prepared for those events
Indicators	Postings that engage the public with a clear message
Differentiation	Have a clear message to the public and enough information to know the subject of the tweet
Examples	“Don't forget, your #TO2015 ticket gets access to free public transit on game day! http://t.co/exOWboffch ” (data set 5, tweet 69)

Gaining interest: The gaining interest theme is a way for @TO2015 to promote not only the Games but also specific events. In total there are 382 tweets that fell under this theme. The theme includes tweets that bring attention to events surrounding the Games. Examples are countdowns, introducing countries that have qualified for the Games, and must-see events in the form of “Perdita’s picks.” The tweets in this theme grouping are promotional in nature and are meant to stimulate discussion.

Examples of tweets that fall in this theme:

“Did you see the @TourCNTower lit up blue, green, red & orange to celebrate 200 days to go until #TO2015? <http://t.co/bPMEIACqrB>” (data set 1, tweet 41);

“@CityofHamilton will be home to the sport featured in today's Perdita's Pick video. #TO2015 <http://t.co/OcMNIBRCj8>” (data set 3, tweet 375);

“@CDNParalympics: Show the world: The Games are tough. The athletes are tougher. #PARATOUGH #TeamCanada @TO2015 && Aug 7-15 <https://t.co/...>” (data set 4, tweet 5).

The gaining interest theme had its highest frequency in the first data set, tweeting out 166 tweets.

Table 2.3: Inductive Thematic Code – Gaining Interest

Gaining Interest	
Label	Gaining Interest
Definition	Tweets that are promotional in nature and meant to stimulate discussion.
Indicators	Perdita’s picks, countdown to the Games, introducing countries
Differentiation	Promotional tweets that attract people to the Games
Examples	Did you see the @TourCNTower lit up blue, green, red & orange to celebrate 200 days to go until #TO2015? http://t.co/bPMEIACqrB ” (data set 1, tweet 41)

Ticket sales: The ticket sales theme are tweets by @TO2015 that provide a link to the ticket master website or tweets that inform ticket sales for events. The purpose of these tweets is to attract people to events during the Games. In total there are 288 tweets in this theme, with the majority coming in data set 3 where there are 124 ticket sale tweets.

Examples of tweets that fall under this theme:

“#TO2015 tickets are on sale now – starting at just \$20! Don't miss out! #TO2015

<http://t.co/THffmAft66> <http://t.co/UfUg3g6oOy>” (data set 1, tweet 29);

“Catch #CIBCTeamNext athlete @Benhuot during #TO2015 Parapan Am

swimming! Get your tickets! <http://t.co/4nmBsp50Jx> <http://t.co/bkhICo79gl>”

(data set 4, tweet 8);

“@CKIcandothis Please call our Ticketmaster call centre (1-855-726-2015) to

request more than 1 companion ticket. FAQ: <http://t.co/9I7sH0n0WE>” (data

set 5, tweet 277).

Table 2.4: Inductive Thematic Code – Ticket Sales

Ticket Sales	
Label	Ticket Sales
Definition	Tweets that direct the public to the Ticket Master website or discuss tickets for sales for events.
Indicators	Ticket master link
Differentiation	Only tweets that discuss ticket sales or have a link to the ticket master website
Examples	#TO2015 tickets are on sale now – starting at just \$20! Don't miss out! #TO2015 http://t.co/THffmAft66 http://t.co/UfUg3g6oOy (data set 1, tweet 29)

Panamania: During the Games there are often events such as concerts or entertainment spectacles. Tweets that are in this theme highlighted these events with the utilization of

the hashtag ‘#PANAMANIA’. Similarly, to the other coded themes, this theme is specific and it is used to promote only Panamania events. It peaks in tweet frequency in the fourth data set; however, there was also a significant percentage of tweets in data set 5 (see Table 3).

Examples of tweets:

“RT @serenaryder: I joined the @TO2015 #PANAMANIA party! On stage July 11 with the greatest acts of the Americas! 8:30pm, be there!! [http://...](#)” (data set 3, tweet 99);

“Loved for her voice and her sense of humour, @jannarden does #PANAMANIA at @npstoronto on August 11 at 9:45pm! [http://t.co/hVLYT7ZHRl](#)” (data set 4, tweet 1);

“.@atribecalledred is closing #PANAMANIA with a thunderous BANG @npstoronto! #TO2015 #ParapanAmGames [http://t.co/6XURFiiLq](#)” (data set 5, tweet 94).

Table 2.5: Inductive Thematic Code - Panamania

Panamania	
Label	Panamania
Definition	Tweets that are about the Panamania events
Indicators	#PANAMANIA
Differentiation	Only tweets that state Panamania are coded in this theme
Examples	“RT @serenaryder: I joined the @TO2015 #PANAMANIA party! On stage July 11 with the greatest acts of the Americas! 8:30pm, be there!! http://... ” (data set 3, tweet 99)

Torch Relay: Prior to the start of the Games, there was a torch relay across various regions of Canada. Tweets coded in this theme promoted the relay, telling people where

the future relays would be held, who the torchbearers would be, and telling stories about the significance of the relay. It peaks in tweet frequency before the games takes place, across data sets 1,2 and 3.

Examples of tweets that fall in this theme:

“@ehmelelwhy Hi Melanie, here is a list of key dates regarding the torch relay journey. Hope this helps! <http://t.co/aodvVZzOww>” (data set 1, tweet 58);

“Did you know? The #TO2015 Pan Am torch can withstand winds up to 70km/h! <http://t.co/xi5pKdkeop>” (data set 2, tweet 2);

“RT @TO2015torch: Our torchbearers are rocking a special edition uniform this morning, hats off to them! <http://t.co/uePSvXG5kG>” (data set 3, tweet 172).

Table 2.6: Inductive Thematic Code – Torch Relay

Torch Relay	
Label	Torch Relay
Definition	Tweets that were about the torch relays, torchbearers, or the torch schedule
Indicators	Tweets containing @TO2015torch, torch relay, torchbearer
Differentiation	Only tweets that were related to the torch relay were coded in this theme
Example	“Did you know? The #TO2015 Pan Am torch can withstand winds up to 70km/h! http://t.co/xi5pKdkeop ” (data set 2, tweet 2)

Volunteers: Tweets that fall under this theme vary in nature due to the diversity of acquiring and assigning volunteers. In total, there are 118 tweets in this theme, which cover a variety of duties from attracting volunteers, giving information on how to volunteer, volunteer schedules, to thanking volunteers. This theme peaks in tweet frequency in data set 1, containing 53 tweets.

Examples of tweets that fall in this theme:

“@blackmantroy Hi Troy, you can still sign up to volunteer! Please visit

<http://t.co/Z1Y1v6FM1h> for more information on how to apply.” (data set 1, tweet 32);

“#TO2015 seeks volunteers for ceremonies roles. Auditions March 29.

<http://t.co/618ULeOYgg> <http://t.co/AY0bb9R5AM>” (data set 2, tweet 51);

“@Tarigosman5 You can pick a time on your Volunteer Portal

<http://t.co/EnE6lMWqg0>” (data set 3, tweet 121).

Table 2.7: Inductive Thematic Code - Volunteers

Volunteers	
Label	Volunteers
Definition	All tweets about volunteers, their schedules and roles.
Indicators	The word ‘volunteer’
Differentiation	Tweets were needed to be specifically about volunteering and or volunteers
Examples	“#TO2015 seeks volunteers for ceremonies roles. Auditions March 29. http://t.co/618ULeOYgg http://t.co/AY0bb9R5AM ” (data set 2, tweet 51)

Opening and Closing Ceremonies: This theme includes all tweets about the opening and closing ceremonies for the Pan Am and Parapan Am Games. In total there are 115 tweets in this theme, peaking in tweet frequency in the fourth data set where the ceremonies for the Pan Am Games took place. Surprisingly, there are more tweets in data set 3 compared to data set 5. It is unexpected because data set 5 covers the Parapan Am Games’ opening and closing ceremonies. Tweets in this theme specifically promote the ceremonies and/or pertained to the ceremonies themselves.

Examples of these tweets in this theme:

“Watch the #TO2015 Opening Ceremony FREE @npstoronto this Friday night.

Party starts at 5pm! <http://t.co/yQLk9LgFI> <http://t.co/q7bTDM4K8n>” (data set 3, tweet 19);

“July 10: #TO2015 Opening Ceremony Parade of Nations featured 41 countries,

5K athletes & 5 @Cirque guardians. <http://t.co/dTqBbBHETs>” (data set 4, tweet 48);

“TODAY'S THE DAY! The action continues with the #TO2015 Parapan Am

Games Opening Ceremony tonight. Don't miss it! <https://t.co/eHDJLi11d3>” (data set 5, tweet 286).

Table 2.8: Inductive Thematic Code – Opening/ Closing Ceremonies

Opening and Closing Ceremonies	
Label	Opening and Closing Ceremonies
Definition	All tweets that are specific to the opening and closing ceremonies for the Pan Am and Parapan Am Games
Indicators	The words ‘Opening’, ‘Closing’, ‘Ceremonies’
Differentiation	Tweets are needed to be specifically about the opening/ closing ceremonies.
Example	“Watch the #TO2015 Opening Ceremony FREE @npstoronto this Friday night. Party starts at 5pm! http://t.co/yQLk9LgFI http://t.co/q7bTDM4K8n ” (data set 3, tweet 19)

Venue: This theme includes tweets that promote new venues, and or events specifically related to venues. In total there are 108 tweets, peaking in tweet frequency in data set 1. Tweets in this theme contain a variety of information ranging from opening the venues, venue maps, and specific events at venues (Ex. Milton International Challenge).

Examples of tweets that fall in this theme:

“.@CiscoCanada Milton Velodrome opens to the public tomorrow for the Canadian Track Championships! #TO2015 <http://t.co/TVQobLv9Pj>” (data set 1, tweet 18);

“Look who's here! PACHI is enjoying all the festivities at the opening of the @Atos Markham Pan Am Centre. #TO2015 <http://t.co/ZD20w4YOjy>” (data set 1, tweet 200);

“Thank you to all who attended the Milton International Challenge! #TO2015 <https://t.co/8fNiJN87yn> <http://t.co/DekKrSOexP>” (data set 2, tweet 342).

Table 2.9: Inductive Thematic Code - Venue

Venue	
Label	Venue
Definition	Tweets that promote new venues, and or events specifically related to venues
Indicators	‘Venues’, Milton Velodrome, Atos, flatwater center, stadium,
Differentiation	Tweets are specifically related to venues and centers at the games
Examples	“.@CiscoCanada Milton Velodrome opens to the public tomorrow for the Canadian Track Championships! #TO2015 http://t.co/TVQobLv9Pj ” (data set 1, tweet 18)

Merchandise Sales: This theme includes all tweets posted by @TO2015 that promote the selling of their merchandise. The tweet frequency peaked in data set 3 and 4, containing 55 of the total number of tweets. In order to be identified in this theme, tweets have to be specifically about the sale of Pan Am and Parapan Am merchandise.

Examples of these tweets in this theme:

“Avoid the #BoxingDay crowds and gear up for the Games by visiting our online shop! #TO2015 <http://t.co/KQxCnHbZHw> <http://t.co/t2cHgxAHSg>” (data set 1, tweet 35);

“Feel like a #TO2015 athlete with your own @RootsCanada replica medal pouch! Get yours now at <http://t.co/LxKTllKCST>! <http://t.co/nd9Y2AQHL1>” (data set 3, tweet 170);

“Spend your Saturday shopping. For one day only, get 30% off at the @CIBC Pan Am Park Superstore. <http://t.co/HV0eVX3fWK>” (data set 4, tweet 244).

Table 2.10: Inductive Thematic Code – Merchandise sales

Merchandise Sale	
Label	Merchandise Sale
Definition	Tweets that promote the selling of Pan Am and Parapan Am merchandise.
Indicators	“% off”, “Merchandise,” “sale,” “online shop,” “Pan Am Park Superstore”
Differentiation	Tweets are specifically about the selling of Pan Am and Parapan Am merchandise
Example	“Spend your Saturday shopping. For one day only, get 30% off at the @CIBC Pan Am Park Superstore. http://t.co/HV0eVX3fWK ” (data set 4, tweet 244)

Athletes in sport: In order for tweets to fall in this theme, they need to be about athletes playing in their respective sport at an event either qualifying for the Games, practicing for the Games, or at the Games. In total, there are 126 tweets about Pan Am athletes in sport, with the greatest tweet frequency occurring in data set 4. There are 61 tweets about Parapan Am athletes in sport, with the highest tweet frequency occurring in data set 5.

Examples of tweets in these themes:

“RT @RYA_HoopsLive: And the game begins CAN vs ARG #NowOrNever

@CanBball @TO2015 #TO2015 @OBANews <http://t.co/GIrJq9sDxP>” (data set 4, tweet 360);

“RT @NHLRossy: The 1st pitch in women's Pan Am history is a STRIKE thrown

by Sarah Hudek @TO2015 @townofajax <http://t.co/mI8zVYdGKe>” (data set 4, tweet 459);

“Canadian @ZMadell is regarded as one of the best #wheelchairrugby players in the world

<http://t.co/qHJVnoAxam> <http://t.co/wGe03B1tnw>” (data set 5, tweet 187).

Table 2.11: Inductive Thematic Code – Athletes In Sport

Athletes In Sport	
Label	Athletes in Sport
Definition	Tweets need to be about an athlete playing in their respective sport at an event either qualifying for the games, practicing for the games or at the games
Indicators	@athlete, visual media of athlete(s) in sport
Differentiation	Tweets need to be of athletes competing in their sport
Example	“RT @NHLRossy: The 1st pitch in women's Pan Am history is a STRIKE thrown by Sarah Hudek @TO2015 @townofajax http://t.co/mI8zVYdGKe ” (data set 4, tweet 459)

Athletes out of sport: This theme includes all tweets from @TO2015 pertained to athletes who are not competing in their respective sport at the time of the tweet. The messages are promotional in nature and cannot be about ticket sale or promoting events. In total there are 238 tweets about Pan Am athletes and 86 tweets about Parapan Am athletes out of sport. Tweet frequency is the highest during data set 4 for Pan Am athletes and data set 5 for Parapan Am athletes. Indicators for this theme are words such as

“meet,” “periscope,” and “Twitter mirror” because these words typically introduce athletes before the Games and/or after they have accomplished something in their sport such as breaking a record. In addition, pictures and videos are a great indicator whether or not the athletes are in sport or out of their sport.

Examples of tweets that fall in this theme:

“RT @crispin_duenas: Halfway done our @TO2015 streetcar trip

<http://t.co/Dzc2jATr7h>” (data set 1, tweet 127);

“At noon Olympian @juliaH20 is on #periscope & hitting @npstoronto to talk top moments of #TO2015! <http://t.co/6AqAHgX6cl>” (data set 4, tweet 219);

“Andre De Grasse flashed his 100m gold medal to the #TO2015 #TwitterMirror.

Catch him if you can today in the 200m. <http://t.co/e0L9ENTwjj>” (data set 4, tweet 285).

Table 2.12: Inductive Thematic Code – Athletes out of sport

Athlete out of sport	
Label	Athletes out of sport
Definition	Tweets of athletes that are not competing in their respective sport.
Indicators	‘meet, periscope, and Twitter mirror’. Visual media such as photos and videos.
Differentiation	In order for tweets to fall in this theme they must be of an athlete, and they cannot be competing in sport. It also cannot be promoting an event or ticket sales.
Example	“New World Record! #TO2015 Athletics - Men's 100m T44 - @aleginfaith - USA http://t.co/HbHwKtWfec #TwitterMirror http://t.co/DEY9LoyuGz ” (data set 5, tweet 124)

Athlete Promotional: In order for a tweet to fall under this theme, it must be of an athlete who is used to promote an event, ticket sales or sport. All tweets must be promotional in nature. In total there are 233 tweets that fall in this theme, and a majority occurs in data set 3 for Pan Am athletes and data set 5 for Parapan Am athletes. Indicators for this theme are words like “ticket(s),” “check out,” “sneak peek,” as well as the visual media associated with the tweet.

Some examples of these tweets:

“Get a sneak peek of Trinidad & Tobago this weekend before they compete at #TO2015! <http://t.co/WChpPFaUQN> <http://t.co/ZrNA7NLs9H>” (data set 2, tweet 360);

“Watch Olympian @MarnieMcB talk Beach Volleyball and #TO2015 w/@drjoshbinstock @sam_schachter <https://t.co/OetBF5VN7Y> <https://t.co/3uAvZisb94>” (data set 3, tweet 396);

“Will @boxing_Canada 's star @MandyBujold leave #OBX in gold tonight? The bell rings at 7pm! <http://t.co/j6NL6XreOU> <http://t.co/2DQefVYiMC>” (data set 4, tweet 187).

Table 2.13: Inductive Thematic Code – Athlete Promotional

Athlete Promotional	
Label	Athlete Promotional
Definition	Tweets that use athletes to promote the games, ticket sales and sporting events
Indicators	“ticket(s),” “check out,” “sneak peek,” and the visual media associated with the tweet
Differentiation	Tweets must be promotional in nature, and must use an athlete
Example	“Get a sneak peek of Trinidad & Tobago this weekend before they compete at #TO2015! http://t.co/WChpPFaUQN http://t.co/ZrNA7NLs9H ” (data set 2, tweet 360)

Athlete Results: This theme includes all tweets that are results of sporting events of athletes who are either qualifying for the Games or at the Games. In total there are 256 tweets in this theme, with a majority being posted in data set 4 (n=145). In order for tweets to fall in this theme, they must be about a specific event, and discuss the outcome of that event. Indicators for this theme are words like “gold,” “silver,” “bronze,” “win (*),” “defend,” as well as a link to the results webpage and visual media included with the tweet. What makes this theme different from other themes is that the tweet must be specific about an outcome of a sporting event.

Examples of tweets in this theme:

“July 16: Hometown #badminton star @miichelleli defended her women's singles gold at #TO2015! <http://t.co/ahaenBbHRy>” (data set 4, tweet 10);

“RT @TeamCanada: With @JasminGlaesser's gold in women's road race, #TeamCanada has a new Pan Am medals record. #TO2015 #NowOrNever <http://t.co/...>” (data set 4, tweet 203);

“July 26: #URU won gold medal in men's #soccer at the @cibc Hamilton Pan Am Soccer Stadium vs. #MEX <http://t.co/14EsA29U8d>” (data set 5, tweet 275).

Table 2.14: Inductive Thematic Code – Athlete Results

Athlete Results	
Label	Athlete Results
Definition	Results of sporting events of athletes who are either qualifying for the games or at the games.
Indicators	“gold,” “silver,” “bronze,” “win(*),” “defend,” a link to the results webpage and visual media included with the tweet
Differentiation	Tweets must be specific about an outcome of a sporting event
Example	“July 26: #URU won gold medal in men's #soccer at the @cibc

	Hamilton Pan Am Soccer Stadium vs. #MEX http://t.co/14EsA29U8d (data set 5, tweet 275)
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All tweets are coded in the themes above. Table 3 shows how many tweets are coded in each theme, and what data sets those tweets came from. The themes are presented in order from the highest tweet frequency to the lowest, considering the four original categories of Pan Am athletes, Parapan Am athletes, neither and both.

Table 3: The number of tweets that fall into each theme from the four primary categories.

Tweet frequency							
		1	2	3	4	5	Total
Neither	Replies	215	78	319	658	64	1334
	Informational	76	60	148	274	41	599
	Gaining Interest	166	36	96	83	1	382
	Ticket sale	81	50	124	32	1	288
	PANAMANIA	1	1	48	87	36	173
	Torch Relay	27	20	80	7	0	134
	Volunteer	53	21	19	19	6	118
	Opening/Closing ceremony	8	0	14	80	13	115
	Venue	40	27	21	19	1	108
	Merchandise Sale	12	11	27	28	17	95
Pan Am	Out of sport	41	15	28	149	5	238
	Results	20	0	0	145	54	219
	Promotional	33	17	61	58	1	170
	In sport	17	3	10	92	4	126
Parapan Am	Out of sport	16	5	5	3	57	86
	Promotional	9	9	3	7	38	66
	In sport	4	2	0	0	55	61
	Results	3	0	0	0	34	37
Both	Both	2	5	3	8	9	27

Change in Perspective; A qualitative analysis

Following the first analysis, I realized that @TO2015 was not used to highlight the athletic competition of the Pan Am and Parapan Am Games. A shocking 76.45% of tweets were not about athletes or athletic competition. However, this created an additional opportunity for this thesis. Different questions are needed to be asked to account for this high number of tweets. What was the purpose of @TO2015? And to whom were they tweeting? These questions drove an additional analysis of the neither category, or the unexpected 76.45% of tweets.

With the assumption that @TO2015 was created to get as many followers as possible, it becomes clear that their purpose was to reach out to and attract people to the Games. They wanted to bring in people who were not only interested in the athletic competitions, but also the events, concerts and atmosphere. There is more to the Pan Am and Parapan Am Games than just the athletic competition, and the initial code underestimated that fact.

With such a large percentage of tweets being coded as neither Pan Am athlete or Parapan Am athlete, I conducted a further qualitative analysis to find out what the followers of @TO2015 responded to best through retweeting. In order to create an agenda on Twitter, followers need to retweet to reach as large of an audience as possible. With this being said, tweets in the neither category (information, gaining interest, ticket sale, Panamania, torch relay, volunteer, opening/closing ceremonies, venue, and merchandise sales) were analysed based on words in the tweet, and the general theme of the tweet. Tweets were coded into themes and then sorted based on the number of

retweets. The retweets were sorted into the following amounts, 0-9, 10-19, 20-29, 30-39, and 40+.

Due to the contents of the “replies” category, this theme was not further analysed because it did not set an agenda in any way or form. These tweets were specific in nature and usually to only one user. The majority of these tweets have 0-1 retweets. Also, without any predisposed information on the initial tweet, the message of the reply was easy to misunderstand or interpret and for these reasons this theme was not qualitatively coded.

The information theme is the first theme to be analysed further. There are nine categories found in the tweets; if a tweet does not fit into these nine categories, it is coded as other. The categories are labelled as the following: party/celebrate, countdowns, facts, historic/special/different, programs/workshops, schedules, seating/attendance, sponsors, sport information, and other (see Table 3.1).

Table 3.1: Categories in the information theme and the number of retweets of these categories.

Theme	0-9	10-19	20-29	30-39	40+	Total
Celebrate or Party	4	4	3	0	7	18
Countdowns	4	4	3	7	5	23
Facts	2	6	0	1	5	14
Historic, Spec., Diff.	4	3	2	2	8	19
Other	294	25	11	10	4	344
Programs/ Workshop	7	5	1	0	0	13
Schedules	88	2	1	1	2	94
Seating/attendance	7	0	0	0	0	7
Sponsor	5	2	4	2	5	18
Sport information	31	7	7	1	3	49
Totals	446	58	32	24	39	599

The statistics in this theme revealed that a majority of the information tweets does not receive a significant response from the audience of @TO2015. In total 446 (74.5%) of tweets, 599 tweets received 0-9 retweets. There are some notable values that receive a significant number of retweets even though the number of total tweets is low. The tweets that include the words celebrate/party have 18 tweets and 7 (38.9%) are retweeted 40+ times. Tweets providing information about a countdown to the games or an event have 23 tweets and 12 (52.2%) are retweeted 30+ times. Tweets about facts surrounding the games are tweeted 14 times with 5 (35.7%) being retweeted over 40+ times. Tweets about how the 2015 Pan Am and Parapan Am Games are historic, special or different have been tweeted 19 times, with 8 (42.1%) being retweeted 40+ times.

Opening and closing ceremonies are the next categories to be analysed qualitatively. In total, there are 115 tweets coded into six different categories: auditions/performers, closing ceremony information, countdown to the ceremonies, opening ceremony information, tweets using the words party/celebrate and selling tickets (Table 3.2).

Table 3.2: Categories in the opening/closing ceremonies theme and the number of retweets of these categories.

Theme	0-9	10-19	20-29	30-39	40+	Total
Auditions/performers	3	4	5	1	14	27
Closing information	25	1	0	0	6	32
Countdown	2	1	0	0	3	6
Opening information	34	5	1	1	2	42
Party/celebration	0	0	0	1	3	4
Selling tickets	1	0	2	0	0	3
Total	65	11	8	3	28	115

The statistics in the opening/closing ceremony theme reveal that 65 (56.5%) of the 115 tweets have little to no response from the audience. Information on the opening

and closing ceremonies has made up 59 of the 65 tweets that had 0-9 retweets. On the other side of the chart, three of the themes have a high percentage of tweets that have received attention from @TO2015 followers. Auditions/performers has 14 (51.9%) of their 27 tweets receive 40+ retweets. Countdown to the ceremonies has 3 (50%) of their 6 tweets receive over 40+ tweets. Party/celebration has 3(75%) of their 4 tweets receive over 40+ tweets.

The Panamania theme is tweeted 173 times, and is coded into the four following categories: tweets that use the word party/celebrate, countdowns to concerts, tweets that use the words free/discount, and information/dates (see Table 3.3).

Table 3.3: Categories in the Panamania theme and the number of retweets of these categories.

Theme	0-9	10-19	20-29	30-39	40+	Total
Celebrate/party	1	2	3	2	10	18
Countdown	2	3	7	5	6	23
Free/ discount	5	7	2	1	4	19
Information/dates	56	40	10	6	1	113
Total	64	52	22	14	21	173

The Panamania theme relates to the cultural events and concert surrounding the Pan Am and Parapan Am Games. Overall, this theme receives a good response from the audience of @TO2015, with approximately 1/3 of the tweets having a significant number of retweets. Tweets that include the words party/celebrate had 10 (55.6%) of their tweets fall into the 40+ retweets category. However, of the 173 tweets, 113 (65.3%) relate to information/dates. A majority of these 113 tweets have only 0-9 (49.6%) and 10-19 (35.4%) retweets.

The merchandise sale theme is tweeted 94 times, and is coded into five categories: discount, new/gift ideas, official shop, online shop, and other (Table 3.4).

Table 3.4: Categories in the merchandise sales theme and the number of retweets of these categories.

Theme	0-9	10-19	20-29	30-39	40+	Total
Discount	12	14	3	3	0	32
New/Gift ideas	6	7	0	1	0	14
Official Shop	15	4	2	1	1	23
Online Shop	9	0	1	0	0	10
Other	13	1	0	1	0	15
Total	55	26	6	6	1	94

The merchandise sale theme are tweets that promote the sales of official Pan Am and Parapan Am merchandise. This theme receives little response from the audience of @TO2015, with 81 (86.2%) of the 94 tweets receiving less than 19 retweets. There is no category in the theme that has more than 40+ retweets, except that for one tweet about the official shop.

The ticket sale theme is tweeted 288 times, and is coded into five categories: countdown to ticket sales, discount sales, promoting people to buy tickets, asking the public to retweet or asking a question that says retweet for this option or favourite for this option, and tweets that use teams and athletes to sell tickets (see Table 3.5).

Table 3.5: Categories in the ticket sales theme and the number of retweets of these categories.

Theme	0-9	10-19	20-29	30-39	40+	Total
Countdown to sell	0	3	4	8	21	36
Discount, sale	1	3	5	3	13	25
Ticket sale promotion	117	12	2	0	4	135
RT option/question	0	0	4	0	5	9
Team/athlete to sell	21	30	15	9	8	83
Total	139	48	30	20	51	288

The ticket sale theme receives a noticeable amount of responses from the audience of @TO2015. The three categories (countdown to ticket sales, discount sales and, RT option/question) had a significant percentage of tweets that get 40+ retweets. Countdown to ticket sales has 21 (58.3%) of their 36 tweets that get 40+ retweets; discount sales has 13 (52%) of their 25 tweets that get 40+ retweets; and RT option/question has 5 (55.6%) of their 9 tweets that get 40+ retweets. The only part in this theme that does not receive a response from the audience is the ticket sale promotion, which has 117 (86.7%) of their 135 tweets receive 0-9 retweets.

The venues' theme refers to tweets 105 times, and is coded into six qualitative categories: tweets that include the word party/celebrate, tweets about a venues grand opening, tweets live from the athlete's village, tours or sneak peeks, information about the venues and other (see Table 3.6).

Table 3.6: Categories in the venues theme and the number of retweets of these categories.

Theme	0-9	10-19	20-29	30-39	40+	Total
Celebrate or party	1	0	3	0	3	7
Grand opening	3	5	4	0	7	19
Live from the village	7	3	2	1	1	14
Other	16	0	0	0	0	16
Tour/ sneak peek	3	6	8	1	3	21
Information	22	2	3	1	0	28
Total	52	16	20	3	14	105

The venues theme has little response from the audience of @TO2015. Almost half (49.5%) of the 105 tweets received 0-9 retweets, with majority of those tweets being coded into the information and other theme. The information theme has 22 (78.6%) of their total 28 tweets receive 0-9 retweets. The only category to have a significant percentage of tweets fall in 40+ retweets is celebrate/party.

The torch relay theme is tweeted 136 times, and is coded into six categories: tweets that ask for retweets, tweets that use the words celebrate or party, city or destination, tweets about countdowns, information, and tweets about a torchbearer (see Table 3.7).

Table 3.7: Categories in the torch relay theme and the number of retweets of these categories.

Theme	0-9	10-19	20-29	30-39	40+	Total
Ask for retweet	0	0	1	0	2	3
Celebration/party	4	4	5	5	3	21
City of destination	3	1	3	0	12	19
Countdown	0	0	3	1	7	11
Information	25	8	5	1	5	44
Torchbearer	9	13	6	4	6	38
Total	41	26	23	11	35	136

The torch relay theme receives some attention from the audience of @TO2015. The three categories are: ask for a retweet, the city or destination, and tweets about a countdown. Although there are only three tweets in this theme that asked for retweets, two of them received 40+ retweets and one received 20-29 retweets. Tweets that are about the city or destination have 12 (63.2%) of their 19 tweets get 40+ retweets. Tweets that relate to counting down the torch relay have 7 (63.6%) of their 11 tweets get 40+ retweets. The information category has the most tweets (44) in the theme; however, 25 (56.8%) of the 44 tweets received 0-9 retweets.

The volunteer theme is tweeted a total of 118 times, and is coded into five categories: information, thanking volunteers, think of/attracting volunteers, events and tweets replying to volunteers or applications (see Table 3.8).

Table 3.8: categories in the volunteer's theme and the number of retweets of these categories.

Theme	0-9	10-19	20-29	30-39	40+	Total
Information	24	6	0	0	0	30
Thanking	3	3	2	2	4	14
Thinking of/attracting	8	12	2	5	3	30
Volunteer events	2	1	1	2	0	6
Volunteer replies	38	0	0	0	0	38
Total	75	22	5	9	7	118

The volunteer theme shows little to no response from the audience of @TO2015. The informational pattern shows 24 (80%) of their 30 tweets receive 0-9 retweets. In addition, all 38 tweets from the volunteer replies received 0-9 retweets. No category in this theme receives significant responses.

The gaining interest theme is tweeted a total of 382 times, and is coded in seven themes: ambassadors, athletes promoting events, countdowns, tweets that use the word celebrate/party, Pan Am and Parapan Am slogans or hash tags, promoting events and other (see Table 3.9).

Table 3.9: Categories in the gaining interest theme and the number of retweets of these categories.

Theme	0-9	10-19	20-29	30-39	40+	Total
Ambassadors/important	4	6	1	4	0	15
Athletes promoting	24	13	2	2	1	42
Countdown	17	28	5	5	17	72
Party/celebrate	6	4	4	1	10	25
Slogan or hashtag	56	29	8	4	7	104
Promoting Events	17	19	13	7	6	62
Other	44	15	0	1	2	62
Total	168	114	33	24	43	382

The gaining interest theme receives some attention from the audience of @TO2015. The countdown pattern has 17 (23.6%) of their 72 tweets that get 40+

retweets. However, this category also has a significant number of tweets that receive both 0-9 retweets and 10-19 retweets. The tweets that relate to party or celebrate have 10 (40%) of their 25 tweets that get 40+ retweets.

Analysis #2

As previously mentioned, there are 775 tweets about Pan Am athletes and 263 tweets about Parapan Am athletes. In order to code these tweets, I have to determine which tweets have links of information and which tweets have not (see Table 4). Of the 775 tweets, about Pan Am athletes, 699 (90.19%) include a link while only 76 (9.8%) are just text. Of the 263 tweets about Parapan Am athletes, 240 (91.25%) attach to a link, while only 23 (8.75%) are just text.

Table 4: The number of tweets about athletes from the Pan Am Games and Parapan Am Games that had a visual link with text or just text.

	Pan Am (775)	Parapan Am (263)
Link	699	240
No Link	76	23

Once the data is sorted, I engage an inductive approach to code the data into important themes based on the text and media in the link. The themes for the links include: No access, Pictures, Pictures x2, videos, promotion, results and stories. The guidelines for each category are the following:

1. **No access:** when clicking on the link within the tweet, the webpage is no longer accessible and/or taken down. The researcher cannot see any visual media;

- however, users can still read the text or caption provided by @TO2015 with the visual media.
2. **Picture:** When clicking on the link within the tweet, there is a single photo included. Either the photo or the text/caption has to be about an athlete(s) from the Games.
 3. **Picture x2:** When clicking on the link within the tweet, there are more than one photo included in the tweet. Either the photos or the text/caption included has to be about an athlete(s) from the Games.
 4. **Video:** When clicking on the link within the tweet, there is a link to a video page. The video needs to be of either athletes, or use athletes to promote the Games.
 5. **Promotion:** There are two ways that a linked tweet can fall into this category. Most of these tweets include a link to ticket sales for events.
 - a. The text/caption is only about the Games and is not about an athlete/event; however, they use a photo of an athlete or athletes to promote the Games.
 - b. The text/caption is about an athlete or athletes but the photo is of something different.
2. **Results:** The tweets need to include the final outcome of an event in which someone has reached the podium. If it were not a medal round, then the tweet would not qualify for this category. The other acceptable type of tweet is qualified if the link goes specifically to the results page of the Pan Am or Parapan Am Games. The content of the results page must match the caption/text provided by @TO2015 in the tweet.

3. **Stories:** The tweet needs to include a link that brings us to a story of the athlete or athletes that is specific to them. If the link went to introduce a team or person who qualified for the Games, then it would not qualify for this section. However, the tweet counts if it links a story of the history or accomplishments of the individual athlete.

Depending on the content of the link, each tweet puts in the respective theme or themes. Some tweets have multiple links, so an individual tweet may fall under several of these themes.

Table 5: The number of tweets with a link pertaining to Pan Am athletes in the seven themes.

Pan Am Tweets							
Data set	No access	Picture	Pictures x2	Video	Promotion	Results	Story
1	10	35	14	26	18	18	2
2	4	16	7	6	17	0	1
3	9	52	7	17	67	0	6
4	38	117	85	12	92	110	0
5	0	5	27	0	0	28	0
Total	61	225	140	61	194	156	9

In total, there were 846 links coded from 699 tweets about the Pan Am Games. There are 61 links with no access; most of which are links to a live video stream. There are 225 tweets that link to a single photo and 140 tweets that connect to more than one photo. There are also 61 videos, 194 promotion tweets, 156 tweets pertaining to results, and only 9 stories of athletes.

Table 6: The number of tweets with a link pertaining to the Parapan Am athletes in the seven themes.

Parapan Am tweets							
Data set	No access	Picture	Picture x 2	Video	Promotion	Results	Story
1	6	9	3	6	10	2	2

2	1	3	4	3	10	0	3
3	1	1	0	2	5	0	3
4	0	3	1	1	3	0	2
5	14	33	85	2	42	24	12
Total	22	49	93	14	70	26	22

In total, there are 296 links coded from 240 tweets, 22 links with no access, 49 tweets with a single photo, 93 tweets connected to more than one photo, 14 videos, 70 promotion tweets, 26 result tweets, and 22 stories of athletes. From here all the visual media is coded again depending on the content.

No Access

Unfortunately, the no access category cannot be coded further because the links cannot be opened. However, because I can still read the caption or text provided in the tweet, I can determine that majority of these tweets are links to live streamed events that are no longer open. With the Pan Am Games (data set 4), I have collected 38 tweets that are not accessible, making up 62.3% of all non-accessible links about Pan Am athletes (see Table 5). With the Parapan Am Games (data set 5), I have 14 tweets that are not accessible, making up 63.64% of all non-accessible links about Parapan Am athletes (see Table 6).

Picture

After reviewing the tweets that connect to a single picture, I have established three themes. For the content to fall under any of these themes, they must meet the criteria defined by each theme. The Athletes and Not Athletes themes are also broken down into additional sub-categories with specific guidelines. In addition to the sub-

categories, each group of that Parapan Am tweets is broken down into Ability versus Disability sections. The guidelines for the themes and sub-categories are the following:

1. **Athletes:** the category needs to include one picture of an athlete or athletes who participated in the Pan Am Games
 1. **Athletes in sport:** the picture is of an athlete or athletes competing in their sport. If the picture is about the individual(s) playing a sport/game, stating that they have won the event or reached the podium, it does not fall under this category.
 2. **Athletes out of sport:** the picture is of an athlete or athletes doing something that is not their sport, or they are not currently competing in the picture.
 3. **Winning sport:** the picture is of an athlete or athletes who have just medalled/reached the podium. The picture must be either as soon as the game has ended or when the athlete(s) receive(s) the medal(s) on the podium, or else it falls under the athlete out of sport section.
2. **Not athletes:** the picture itself is not of an athlete or athletes, but the tweet is specifically related to or discusses an athlete or athletes.
 1. **About Athlete out of sport:** the picture is not of an athlete, but the tweet text is about an athlete or athletes.
 2. **Schedules:** the tweet pertains to a specific athlete or team and when the event takes place showing the schedule.

2. **Promotion pictures:** the picture is of an athlete or athletes, but the text is promoting a different thing. These tweets also usually include a link to buy tickets.

Ability versus Disability: these pictures are of Parapan Am athletes. Each photo is coded depending whether or not the disability of the athlete is showcased in the picture or if the ability of the athlete is more prominent.

After the themes and sub-categories emerge, all 225 Pan Am tweets and 49 Parapan Am tweets that include a picture are coded. Of the 225 picture tweets, 110 (48.89%) were of athletes, 42 (18.67%) were not athletes and 73 (32.44%) were promotional pictures (see Figure 1).

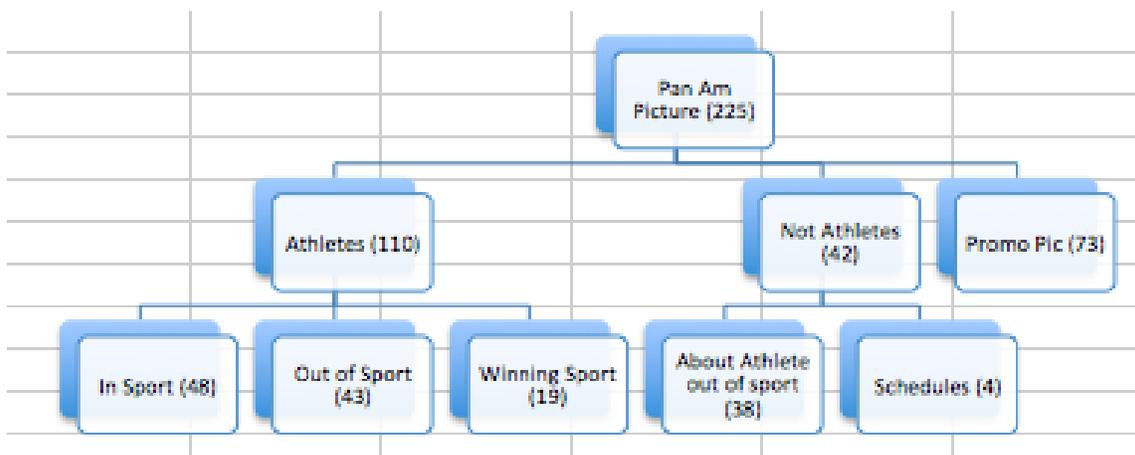


Figure 1: The number of Pan Am tweets that included a picture, and the theme of those pictures.

The 110 tweets under the athlete's theme are then put into three additional sub-themes (see Figure 1). In sport has 48 of the 110 pictures of Pan Am athletes (43.64%), or 48 of the total numbers of pictures of Pan Am athletes (21.33%). Out of sport has 43 of

the 110 pictures (39.09%), or 43 of the total numbers of pictures (19.11%). Athletes winning sport has 19 of the 110 pictures of athletes (17.27%), or 19 of the total number of pictures (8.44%).

The 42 tweets in the Not Athletes sub-category are then put into two sections (see Figure 1). About Athlete out of sport has 38 of the 42 pictures (90.47%) or 38 of the total number of pictures (16.89%). The schedule has only 4 of the 42 pictures not of athletes (9.52%) or 4 of the total number of pictures (1.78%).

Of the 49 tweets about Parapan Am athletes that have a single photo, 31 (63.27%) of them are of athletes, only one (2.04%) is not of an athlete, and 17 (34.69%) are of promotion pictures (see Figure 2).

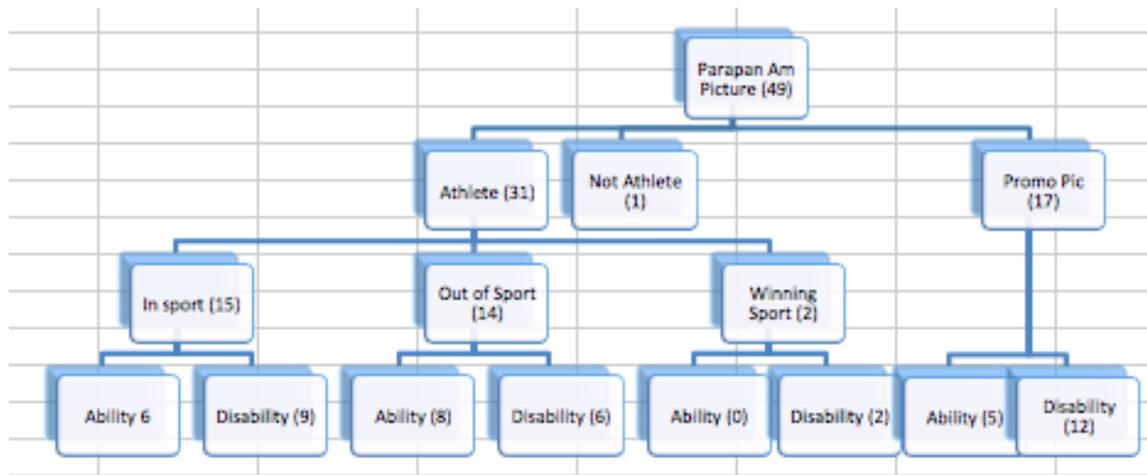


Figure 2: The number of Parapan Am tweets that included a picture, and the theme of those pictures.

The 31 tweets in the Parapan Am athlete's theme are then put into three additional sub-categories (see figure 2). In sport has 15 of the 31(48.38%) pictures of Parapan Am athletes, or 15 (30.61%) of the total number of pictures. Out of sport has 14 of the 31 (45.16%) pictures of Parapan Am athletes, or 14 (28.57%) of the total number of pictures.

Winning sport has 2 (6.45%) pictures of Parapan Am athletes, or 2 (4.08%) of the total number of pictures. In addition, each section is then coded on whether the picture showcases the ability or disability of the athlete. Of the 31 pictures of athletes, 14 (45.16%) pictures showcase their abilities, while 17 highlight their disabilities (54.84%).

The promotion picture theme is also coded further on the ability and disability of the athlete in the picture. Of the 17 tweets, five (29.41%) showcase their ability, while 12 (70.59%) highlight their disabilities.

Picture x2

There are only 140 tweets of Pan Am athletes (see Table 5) and 93 tweets of Parapan Am athletes (see Table 6) that have multiple pictures. After reviewing the tweets that included 2 or more pictures, the three sub-categories that have been used to code a picture are used in this category. For the content to fall under any of these sub-categories, they must meet the specific guidelines. The Athletes and Not Athletes sub-categories are broken down into additional sections with specific guidelines. These additional sections are then broken down to identify whether the athletes in the photos are the same or different. Furthermore, each group of that Parapan Am tweets are also broken down into Ability versus Disability sections.

The guidelines for the sub-categories and the sections are listed below:

- 1. Athletes:** majority of pictures are of an athlete or athletes participating in the Pan Am Games
 - A. Athletes in sport:** majority of the pictures are of an athlete or athletes competing in his or her sport. If the picture is of the

individual(s) playing a sport/game that states they have won the event or reached the podium, it does not fall under this category.

B. Athletes out of sport: majority of the pictures are of an athlete or athletes doing something that is not his or her sport or the athlete is not currently competing in the sport.

C. Winning sport: majority of the pictures are of an athlete or athletes who have just medalled/reached the podium. The pictures must be either taken and posted as soon as the game has ended, or when the athlete(s) receive their medal for the first time on the podium, or else it fell under the athlete out of sport section.

i. Different: when the pictures show different athletic Games, athletes and or teams;

ii. Same: when the pictures show the same athletic event, athlete, and or teams.

2. Not athletes: majority of the pictures are not of an athlete or athletes, but the tweet is related specially an athlete or athletes. Unlike in the picture subcategory, this section is not further broken down because there are no schedule segments.

3. Promotion pictures: majority of the pictures are of an athlete or athletes, but the text promotes a different thing. These tweets usually include a link to buy tickets.

After the themes and sections emerged, all 140 tweets that include multiple pictures of Pan Am athletes are coded. Of the 140 tweets, 96 (68.57%) are of athletes, 15 (10.71%) are not athletes, and 29 (20.71%) are promotion pictures (see Figure 3).

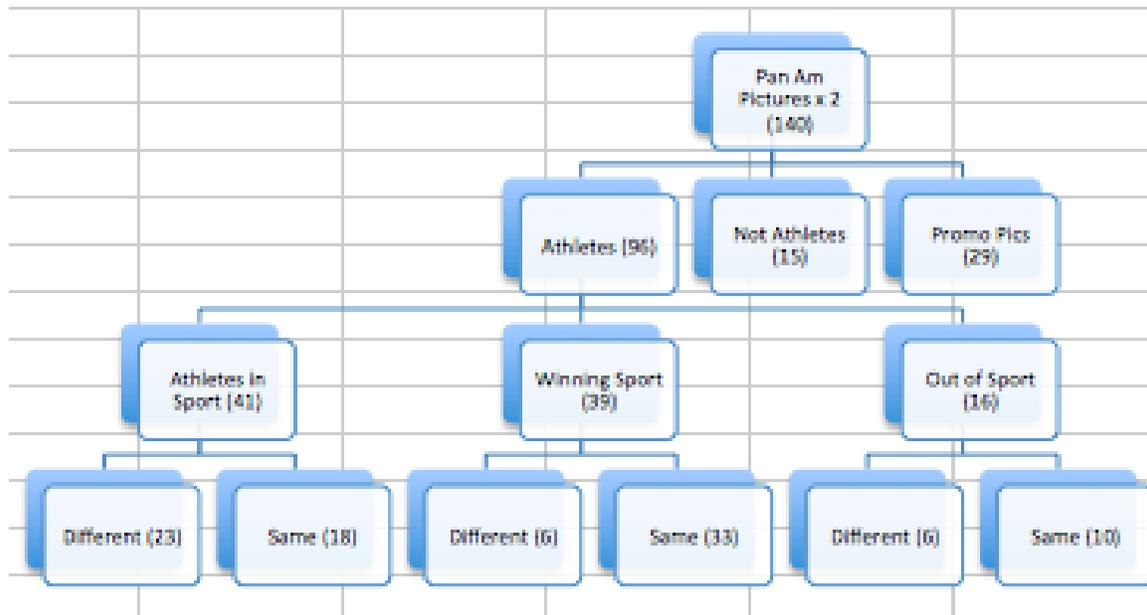


Figure 3: The number of Pan Am tweets that included multiple pictures, and the themes of those pictures.

The 96 tweets coded in the Athlete's theme are then put into three sections (see Figure 3). In sport has 41 (42.7%) of the 96 tweets with multiple pictures of athletes, or 41 of the total number of tweets with multiple pictures (29.29%). Of those 41 tweets, 23 are of different athletes, while 18 are the same. Out of sport has 16 (16.67%) of the 96 tweets with multiple pictures of athletes, or 16 out of the total number of tweets with multiple pictures (11.42%). Of those 16 tweets, six are of different athletes, while ten are of the same. Athletes Winning Sport has 39 (40.62%) tweets with multiple pictures in it, or 39 of the total number of tweets with multiple pictures (27.86%). Of the 39 tweets, six are of different athletes, while 33 are the same.

Of the 93 tweets of Parapan Am athletes including multiple pictures, 67 (72.04%) are of athletes, nine (9.68%) are not of athletes, and 17 (20.43%) are promotion pictures (see figure 4).

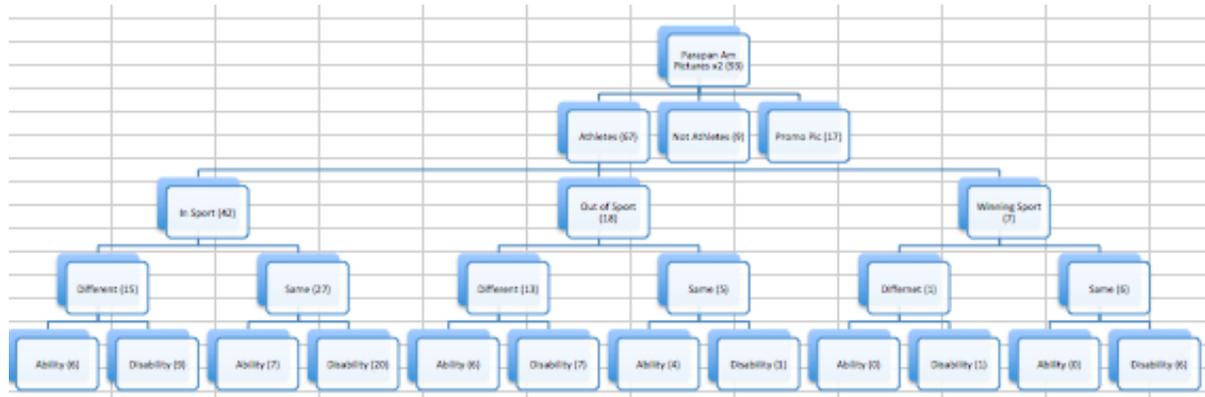


Figure 4: The number of Parapan Am tweets that included multiple pictures, and the themes of those pictures.

The 67 tweets coded into the Athlete's theme are put into three sections (see Figure 4). In sport has 42 (62.69%) of the 67 tweets with multiple pictures of athletes, or 42 of the total number of tweets with multiple pictures (45.16%). Of those 42 tweets, 27 are of the same athletes, while 15 are of different athletes. Out of sport has 18 (26.87%) of the 67 tweets with multiple pictures of athletes, or 18 of the total number of tweets with multiple pictures of athletes. Of those 18 tweets, five are of the same athlete, while 13 are of different athletes. Winning sport has seven (10.45%) of the 67 tweets with multiple pictures of athletes, or seven of the total number of tweets with multiple pictures of athletes. Of those seven tweets, six are of the same athlete, while only one is of different athletes. In total, 23 pictures are showing the athlete's abilities, and 44 highlight their disabilities.

Video

In total, there are 61 video links tweeted by @TO2015 related to athletes from the Pan Am Games (see Table 5). As part of the analysis, the videos are sorted by their content into three sub-categories: promoting athletes, promoting the Games and highlights. To be a part of each sub-category, the videos need to meet the following criteria:

1. **Promoting athletes:** the video needs to be promoting an athlete or a team from the Pan Am Games.
2. **Promoting the games:** the video uses athletes to promote or draw attention to either the Games or an event at the Games.
3. **Highlights:** the video highlights of athletes and athletic events at the Pan Am Games.

There are 30 (49.18%) of the 61 videos promoting athletes, 24 (39.34%) videos are promoting the games, and only seven (11.48%) videos show athletic highlights (see Table 7).

Table 7: The number of videos about Pan Am athletes in the three video sub-categories and data set.

Pan Am Videos			
Data Set	Promoting athletes	Promoting the games	Highlights
1	16	10	0
2	5	1	0
3	8	9	0
4	1	4	7
Total	30	24	7

In total, there are only 14 videos of Parapan Am athletes. Of those 14, six (42.86%) are promoting athletes, six (42.86%) promote the games, and two (14.29%) are highlights of athletes (see Table 8).

Table 8: The number of videos about Parapan Am athletes in the three video themes and data set.

Parapan Am Videos			
Data Set	Promoting athletes	Promoting the games	Highlights
1	2	4	0
2	2	1	0
3	2	0	0
4	0	1	0
5	0	0	2
Total	6	6	2

Results

In total, there are 156 tweets about Pan Am athletes (see Table 5). 26 tweets of Parapan Am athletes have showed results (see Table 6). These tweets are then sorted into 3 sub-categories: picture, picture x2 and results page. To fall under these sub-categories, the tweets need to meet specific requirements.

- 1. Picture:** the tweet needs to discuss results taking place during the Games and include a single photo. The photo does not specifically have to be of an athlete, making it different than that of the picture-athlete-winning sport.
- 2. Picture x2:** the tweet needs to discuss results taking place during the Games and include multiple photos. The photos do not specifically have to be of an athlete, making it different than that of the picture x2-athlete-winning sport.

- 3. Results page:** the tweet needs to discuss results taking place during the Games and include a link that goes straight to the results page of the Pan/Parapan Am Games.

All 156 of the Pan Am tweets containing results are coded into themes. 39 (25%) result tweets include a picture, 49 (31.41%) include multiple pictures, and 68 (43.59%) have links to the results webpage (see Table 9). Of the 26 tweets that are of Parapan Am athletes containing results, three (13.04%) contain a single photo, 12 (46.15%) include multiple pictures, and 11 (42.31%) link to the results webpage (see Table 9).

Table 9: The result tweets of the Pan Am and Parapan Am Games

Results Type	Pan Am	Parapan Am
Picture	39	3
Picture x2	49	12
Results Page	68	11
Total	156	26

Stories

In total, there are 9 links that provide stories of athletes competing in the Pan Am Games (see Table 5) and 22 links of athletes participating in the Parapan Am Games (see Table 6). To fall into this category, tweets need to be specifically about the athlete or a team. The tweet cannot be an introduction to a team or individual because they qualify for the Pan Am Games. Once they are placed in the story category, they are then separated depending if the story is about a team or a single athlete. The stories about a single athlete are analysed to determine if the story is about his/her accomplishments in sport or if the story is about his/her outside life accomplishment outside of sport (see Figure 5).

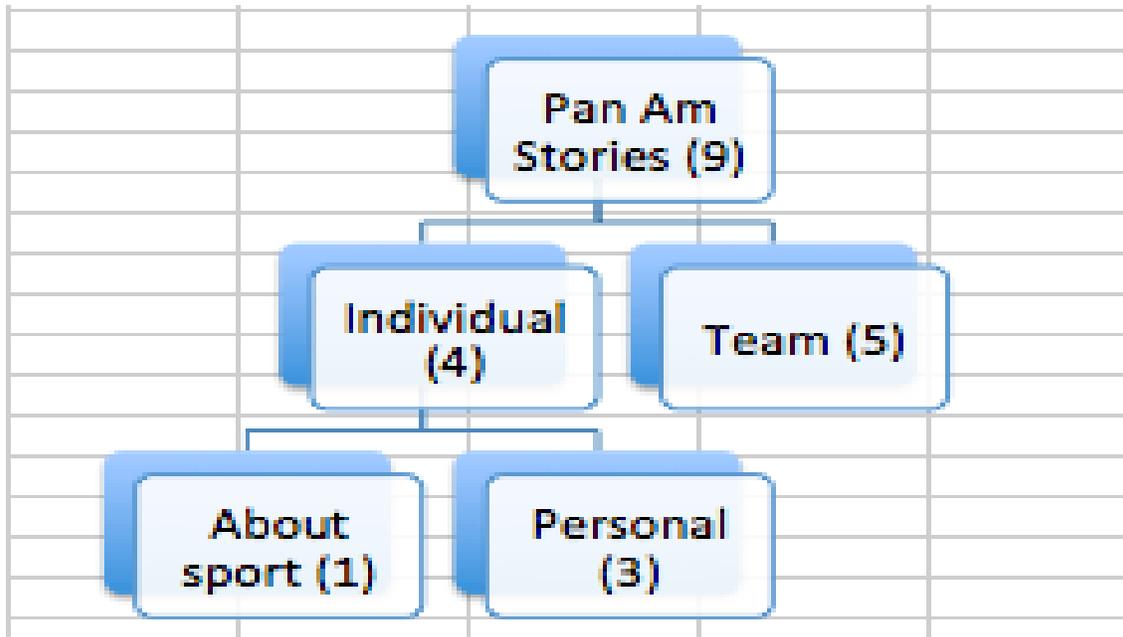


Figure 5: the number of stories about Pan Am athletes and the themes those stories fell under.

Of the 9 total numbers of stories, four are about an individual athlete, while five are about teams. Only one story is about the accomplishments of an athlete. The other three stories are about personal life outside of sport.

In addition, tweets about athletes from the Parapan Am Games have another theme that discusses para-athletes and things athlete need (such as their equipment). As seen in figure 6, there are 22 stories pertaining to Parapan Am athletes. In total, ten (45.45%) stories are about individual athletes, four (18.18%) about teams, and eight (36.37%) about Para-athletes and their equipment (see Figure 6). Of the ten stories about an individual, five are about the athlete's accomplishments in sport, and five are about personal matters of an athlete not pertaining to sport.

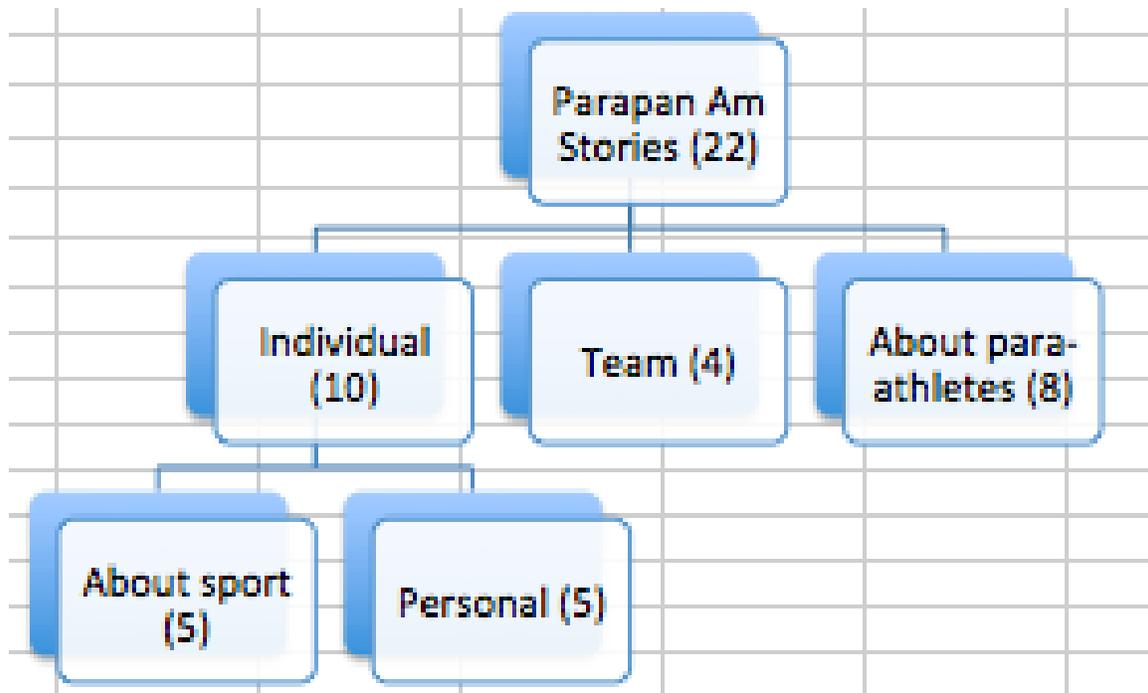


Figure 6: the number of stories about Parapan Am athletes and the themes those stories fell under.

Discussion

In terms of setting an overall agenda by @TO2015, it is clear that the athletes and athletic competition are not the main focus of the tweets. With the majority of the tweets being replies and/or information, the main focus of @TO2015 is to answer questions and to deliver news about events at the games. With respect to the first research question – “*What agenda was set forth by @TO2015?*” – I will discuss further below.

The overall agenda

All phases of agenda setting are reflected in this study: first level, second level, need for orientation, priming and intermedia (Lee, 2005). The first phase of agenda setting focuses on the object, and in the case of @TO2015, the object is the Pan Am and Parapan Am Games. It is imperative that the transfer of information from the media to the public reaches as many people as possible (McCombs & Shaw, 1972; Funkhouser, 1973; Tipton, 1975; Shaw & McCombs 1977; Rogers, 1993). This can be measured on Twitter through the number of retweets and the transfer of themes (Overbey, 2012). Of the 4,523 tweets, 2,793 (62%) were retweeted a total of 76,270 times. Retweets are a powerful tool because they not only allow tweets to reach more individuals, but also because people are more likely to retweet something in which they agree with (Kushin, 2010).

The next phase, second level agenda setting is also verified in the study. Second level agenda setting deals with how the media discusses the object (Pan Am/Parapan Am Games) either positively, negatively or neutral. It is clear that @TO2015 was using their Twitter handle to create a positive atmosphere around the Games. For example:

“Thank you athletes, fans & volunteers for making #TO2015 the best Games ever!
<https://t.co/qgwZL7MLR2>” (data set 5, tweet 29).

For the purpose of research question one, it is clear that @TO2015 created a positive environment when discussing events around the Games and or had neutral tweets when sending out direct messages as there were no negative tweets. Second level agenda setting will be further discussed when analysing research question two and three.

The need for orientation (NFO) refers to the reason why agenda setting effects have stronger influences on some individuals over others (Kushin, 2010). Two criteria as defined by Weaver (1977) are essential for explaining the effects of NFO, relevance and uncertainty. In order for there to be NFO, the Pan Am and Parapan Am Games needed to be relevant to the people seeking out information on Twitter. For the purpose of this thesis, I assumed that everyone who followed @TO2015 thought that the account was relevant, or else they would not have followed the account. Therefore, there was high relevance for the Twitter account. In addition, uncertainty was relevant because people followed @TO2015 for a variety of different reasons. I assume that some of these reasons were for information on updates, news, events, results and stories. If there were no uncertainties and no relevance, then no one would have followed @TO2015 on Twitter. Due to the number of followers, there was a high relevance and high uncertainty for individuals seeking information about the Pan Am and Parapan Am Games on Twitter.

As mentioned, @TO2015 created a positive environment. Positive attitude was achieved by utilizing techniques like the fourth phase of agenda setting, priming. Priming takes place when the media creates a certain image by highlighting specific characteristics of an object and ignoring others (Scheufele & Tweksbury, 2007). In

@TO2015, there were no tweets that incited any negativity, and anything that might have been was dealt through other measures. There were no direct messages responding to critiques. The organization never showcased any negative events or breaking news through the use of the twitter account. Examples are the mysterious tunnel dug near one of the venues, the lack of tickets sold before the Games, and the argument about poor public transportation to the Games (CBC news, 2015). It is common for an organization to use their Twitter account to inform the public and apologize for negative circumstances (Overbey, 2012). An example would be US Airways (@USAirways) who is constantly responding to criticisms on Twitter:

“I’m sorry for your experience. I would be happy to assist you. Please follow/DM with the confirmation if I can help” (Twitter, 2017).

“Sorry for your loss... If I can look into something for you please follow & DM your confirmation code with details” (Twitter, 2017).

By avoiding any negative events and criticism, @TO2015 created an atmosphere that remained positive throughout the course of the Games. This positivity was reflected in the word choice and punctuation used by @TO2015. For example,

“July 16: Hometown #badminton star @miichelleli defended her women's singles gold at #TO2015! <http://t.co/ahaeNBbHRy>” (data set 4, tweet 10). “TODAY'S THE DAY! The action continues with the #TO2015 Parapan Am Games Opening Ceremony tonight. Don't miss it! <https://t.co/eHDJLi1ld3>” (data set 5, tweet 286).

By using exclamation marks and capitalization, @TO2015 highlights their main message, increases sense of excitement, and, within the limitation of text, makes the tweets look visually interesting. The style of the tweets shows the organizer's effort to reinforce positive attitudes.

The remaining phase of agenda setting is intermedia agenda setting, which can be defined as the influence that one media source has on another media source (McCombs, Lopez-Escobar & Llamas, 2000). Research has shown that a media entity can set the agenda of other media outlets (Roberts, Wanta, and Dzwo, 2002). Over the course of the Pan Am and Parapan Am Games in 2015, there were several different media outlets that covered the Games. CBC/Radio-Canada won the rights as the official host broadcasting company, other major broadcasting companies such as TSN, ESPN, ABC and Sportsnet also covered the Games (Toronto 2015 Pan Am/ Parapan Am Games, 2013). Most of these broadcasting companies were sport specific, and therefore did not influence the events surrounding the Pan Am and Parapan Am Games. However, when it came to influencing @TO2015, CBC was tweeted 47 times. This was determined by running a text search on NVivo, where the tweets were managed and coded. However, there was not a strong influence of intermedia agenda setting on @TO2015 by other media outlets.

It is clear that the agenda set by @TO2015 was about reinforcing a positive environment surrounding the Pan Am and Parapan Am Games. By examining the overall agenda, I as a researcher, realized that @TO2015 was not focused on the athletic competition like I originally assumed. Instead, the overall agenda was to provide information to the public similarly to the way traditional media would about the events at the Games. What I mean by this is that the organizing committee operating @TO2015

did not utilize social media in a way to adapt their information based on what the public said. They simply provided information about events one way, and did not stimulate discussion based on their tweets.

Athlete tweet frequency

Tweet frequency can provide the answer to the third research question concerning marginalization. Unsurprisingly, leading up to the Games, there was significantly more discussion surrounding Pan Am athletes than Parapan Am athletes. There had been 287 tweets about Pan Am athletes, while only 66 tweets about Parapan Am athletes in the first three data sets, or up to a year before the Games took place. Clearly, even with one committee hosting and promoting the Pan Am and Parapan Am Games, para-athletes were still being underrepresented compared to their non-para counterparts. Based on the fact that para-athletes were promoted 77.1% less than non-para athletes, @TO2015 considered them as less significant for public interest before the Games even took place. Marginalization does not occur simply because para-athletes received less tweets, as @TO2015 could have been tweeting to what their audience is interested in. However, if @TO2015 is tweeting less about para athletes because their audience believes that para sport is less competitive or less interesting than under the definition of systemic marginality, para athletes are marginalized. Systemic marginality occurs when a socially constructed hegemonic system exerts power and control over marginalized populations (Alexander et. al, 2003). By determining that Pan Am athletes were promoted 77.1% more than Parapan Am athletes shows that @TO2015 was either playing to audience demand or less likely, purposely excluding Parapan Am athletes. However, by looking at how @T02015 tweeted about the end of events during the Parapan Am Games shows a

different tell. @TO2015 tweeted about results of Pan Am competitions a total of 156 times, and only tweeted about Parapan Am results 26 times. When it came to showing pictures of athletes winning, either on the podium or during events, Pan Am athletes were shown 58 times, while Parapan Am athletes were shown 9 times. @TO2015 did not purposely marginalize athletes from the Parapan Am Games, but they did unintentionally represent their Games as less significant as they did not cover the Games from beginning to end. By considering their sport as not interesting or insignificant for any kind of reason, even if unintentional, is a form of systemic marginalization. The argument of whether or not marginality occurs can be further analysed based on how @TO2015 discussed, promoted and represented its athletes.

There is an argument to be made regarding whether or not the analysis should take an inequity standpoint or an inequality standpoint. Inequity refers to “differences that are unnecessary and avoidable but, in addition, are also unfair and unjust” (Whitehead, 1992. pp. 219). The key words are unfair and unjust because @TO2015 should do what they can to present all their athletes as fairly as possible without marginalizing them. Using this approach, media journalists, committees and representatives should provide more coverage and attention to individuals who do not regularly receive it. From a media outlook, it does not make sense to cover stories that the public or audience are not interested. However, when it comes to international sporting competitions, national pride and ‘patriotism’ can skewer what individuals care to pay attention. Nothing brings people closer together than being a part of the same team or fan base. Watching Team Canada compete in any event will usually catch a Canadian’s eye. In the case of these Games, changing the status quo and providing more representation

for para athletes than they would regularly receive compared to non-para athletes would eliminate the unnecessary and avoidable differences. To do this @TO2015 would have to tweet no more than 2.7 times more about Pan Am athletes than Parapan Am athletes because there are 2.7 times more Pan Am athletes participating in the games. All athletes should receive a similar amount of coverage and promotion before the games begin. In reality, Pan Am athletes received 4.35 times the amount of promotion and discussion than Parapan Am athletes. The avoidable differences are even more skewed when looking at the end coverage during the Parapan Am Games versus the Pan Am Games. There are 156 tweets about results from the Pan Am Games and only 24 tweets about the Parapan Am Games. It is hard to grow any sport when the outcome of the game is not important enough to even make a comment about. Tweeting about the outcomes of the game is something that needs to happen to make the event seem necessary and in the situation of the Pan Am and Parapan Am Games should be unavoidable. This example is unfair for the athletes competing in the Parapan Am Games and increases the argument for marginalization not based on tweet frequency, but by not tweeting about events that are necessary and unavoidable. Arguing the inequity standpoint strengthens the fact that athletes with disabilities are not given a fair chance to grow and promote their games and that they were marginalized by @TO2015. To provide equity would be to give greater support to Parapan Am athletes to ensure that they reach a condition of equality with their non-para counterparts in Pan Am athletes.

An inequality stance would strengthen the argument that para-athletes are even more marginalized in terms of representation compared to the inequity stance. It is easy to identify perfect equality from a state of inequality and the ratio of tweets from

@TO2015 show that they do not equally discuss, promote and represent athletes. However, inequality measures cannot be meaningfully applied to all quantitative variables (Allison, 1978). When simply looking at the numbers to determine if there is equality of representation, there will hardly ever be perfect equality (Grogan, 1999). Perfect equality refers to two groups or individuals who receive the exact same amount of a resource. In terms of arguing an inequality standpoint, @TO2015 should promote athletes from the Pan Am and Parapan Am Games equally. In total there were 221 more tweets discussing athletes from the Pan Am Games than the Parapan Am Games. Simply looking at the numbers does not do justice to this argument because there are too many variables that can affect why @TO2015 discussed and promoted events as much as they did.

During the Pan Am Games, or data set 4, was the period when non-para-athletes received the most media attention from @TO2015. At this period, there were 775 tweets pertaining to Pan Am athletes and 450 came during this time frame. This is understandable because there were many athletic events taking place, and athletes were winning medals and breaking records. What is most surprising about this data set is that discussion surrounding and promoting athletes from the Parapan Am Games basically stopped. There were only five tweets about para-athletes in the month leading up to the Parapan Am Games. Even in the three months leading up to the Pan Am Games, there were only twelve tweets about para-athletes. Therefore, in the four months before the Parapan Am Games, para-athletes averaged only 5.6 tweets per month. In other words, even with one committee promoting both Games, para-sporting events were still caught in the shadows of their athletic counterparts.

The only time where athletes from the Parapan Am Games received more media attention than athletes from the Pan Am Games was during the Parapan Am Games (in the fifth data set). In a mere 25 days, @TO2015 tweeted para-athletes 192 times. This means that 73% of tweets about para-athletes happened in the remaining days that @TO2015 tweeted. Similar to how majority of tweets about Pan Am athletes came in data set 4, majority of tweets about Parapan Am athletes came in data set 5 because of the athletic competitions taking place. However, when comparing the number of tweets of Pan Am athletes versus Parapan Am athletes in data set 4 versus data set 5, there is a significant lop side. In data set 4, there is a ratio of 90:1 when looking at tweets for Pan Am athletes versus Parapan Am athletes, compared to 1:5 in data set 5. The ratios reinforce that athletes with disabilities were excluded from media coverage compared to athletes without disabilities.

Data set 5 was also the only data set in which the neither category did not have the greatest number of tweets. This could have happened for many reasons: the data set coincided with the end of the Games; there were less Panamania events and volunteering events to promote; therefore, there were fewer non-athletic events occurring. This resulted in less discussion about events surrounding the games and left the remaining focus on the athletes.

However, a counter argument can also be made whether or not fewer tweets about Parapan Am athletes is marginalization. Audience demand is the one of the strongest influences the media faces, and perhaps @TO2015 gave their audience what they wanted. Is it unfair or unjust to have fewer Parapan Am Games covered when there was a lower percentage of audience for the Parapan Am Games compared to the Pan Am Games? The

agenda of @TO2015 was to provide information to their followers, and in doing so there was little discussion and promotion about Parapan Am athletes.

Athletic agenda

A further analysis was conducted on the 1,065 tweets specifically about athletes from the Pan Am and Parapan Am Games. The comparison of the themes that emerged (picture, picture x2, video, results, story) on @TO2015 need to be investigated in detail to determine what the official committee perceived as most important. In doing so, I respond to the research questions 2a (“*What agenda was set forth by @TO2015 for athletes from the Parapan Am Games?*”) and 2b (“*What agenda was set forth by @TO2015 for athletes from the Pan Am Games?*”). By simply looking at tweet frequency, Pan Am athletes received 775 tweets while Parapan Am athletes received only 263 tweets. By the sheer numbers, @TO2015 set their athletic agenda to cater to the fact that their audience would be more interested in the Pan Am athletes than Parapan Am athletes. However, the point of the analysis is not just to reply on the broad number. What are the content of the themes?

Comparing athlete themes

I would like to compare the picture theme first. There are 225 tweets of Pan Am pictures and only 49 tweets of Parapan Am pictures. With both groups of athletes, there is a significant greater emphasis on Pan Am athletes. When looking at the comparison of promotion pictures of Pan Am athletes versus Parapan Am athletes, the percentages are extremely close. 32.4% of Pan Am athlete pictures were promotional, while 34.6% of

Parapan Am athlete pictures are promotional. Based on the close match, I may conclude that @TO2015 promoted both sets of athletes using pictures with an even ratio.

In the athlete's theme, there is an equal amount of in sport and out of sport for both Pan Am and Parapan Am athletes as well. However, there is definitely less emphasis on Parapan Am athletes winning sport compared to the winning of Pan Am athletes.

There were only two tweets with a picture showing a Parapan Am athlete winning a sport while there were 19 pictures showing Pan Am athletes win a sport. This leads me to the stereotype, "go ahead and play but don't expect us to pay attention to your activities" (Bruce, 2012). The committee used @TO2015 to promote and discuss Parapan Am athletes; however, they hardly showcased anyone winning sport using a picture like they did for Pan Am athletes.

The second theme to be compared is Picture x2. There are 140 tweets of Pan Am pictures and only 93 tweets of Parapan Am pictures. This theme has a significantly closer total number of tweets compared to individual pictures of Pan Am and Parapan Am tweets. Similarly, to the single picture theme, the multiple pictures tweets fall under the same themes and categories and have a similar break down in the number of tweets in each sub-theme (see Figure 3 & 4). Again, there are more Pan Am tweets than Parapan Am tweets, but the percentages of the number of tweets in the 3 sub-themes are almost identical. Although both types of athletes have the most pictures of athletes in sport, when it comes to promoting athletes winning, only Pan Am athletes receive a significant amount of attention. Out of the 93 tweets including multiple photos of Parapan Am athletes, only seven of them are of Parapan Am athletes winning their event/sport. In comparison, 39 of the 96 tweets including multiple pictures of Pan Am athletes were of

them winning a sport. This result leads to the same conclusion stated in the picture theme: one could promote and discuss para-athletes; however, no one cares about it in the long run.

The third theme is concerned with videos posted by @TO2015. There have been 61 videos about Pan Am athletes, and only 14 videos of Parapan Am athletes. Both sets of data are put into the three themes. Similar to the picture and picture x2 themes, @TO2015 emphasises promoting both individual athletes and promoting the games, as opposed to showcasing highlights from the games and/or specific events. There is not a significant difference between the promoting athlete and the promoting the Game's themes, and as shown in table 5 and 6, once the Games start (data set 4 or 5), the tweets with videos about athletes stop. Based on the limited number of tweets of videos, leaves the impression that the agenda of @TO2015 concentrated on promoting events before the Games.

The fourth theme has to do with results posted by @TO2015. There are 156 result tweets about Pan Am athletes, and only 26 result tweets of Parapan Am athletes. As shown in table 7, there are more tweets in every result sub-theme for Pan Am athletes. This trend follows the developing trend in the seven themes that the Parapan Am Games can be promoted; however, when it comes to showcasing the events and outcomes, @TO2015 falls short.

The fifth theme is stories posted by @TO2015. There were 9 story related to Pan Am athletes, and 22 story links about Parapan Am athletes. These tweets are then broken down into a couple of themes, either about individual athletes or teams. The break down between these categories of Pan Am athletes is fairly even, but when looking at the

Parapan Am story breakdowns, there are over twice as many stories about individuals. In this set, Parapan Am athletes' stories dominate over Pan Am athletes. People like inspirational stories. As a result, it is common for the media to represent para-athletes as individuals who over-come hardships and adversity. They highlight their resilience as human beings as opposed to highlighting their abilities in sport. When looking closer, themes broke down into individual stories about athletes' personal lives and about their sporting abilities. There are more stories about an athlete's personal life compared to their sporting abilities. These results reveal that @TO2015 under-emphasized the abilities of the para-athletes by covering more of their past and less of the fact there at the 2015 Pan Am and Parapan Am Games.

All five athletic themes in some way make Parapan Am athletes appear insignificant to Pan Am athletes. With the counter argument of audience demand in mind, is this marginalization? In international events such as the Pan Am/ Parapan Am Games or even the Olympics/ Paralympics, 'patriotism' plays a huge role on audience demand. During these events, countries come together and cheer on their athletes and teams no matter the events. Why should it be any different for para sport? With more positive media coverage, para sport may grow into the consciousness of national pride and patriotism.

I have done an additional analysis looking at visual media for athletes from the Parapan Am Games. This analysis is important for determining if and how @TO2015 marginalized Parapan Am athletes. When it comes to visual media, there are layers of meaning (Bruce, 2014). Therefore, it is important to monitor how the media is representing athletes because they can construct a public image for all athletes (Howe,

2008). My study examines whether or not images of para-athletes showcased or highlighted their disability versus their athletic ability (see figure 2 and 4). In total, 147 images are studied from the picture, picture x2, and results themes. Of these images, 59 (40.14%) show the abilities of Parapan Am athletes, while 88 (59.86%) highlight their disabilities. When articulated to the public as disabled first, athletes second, they are marginalized by “narrow stereotypes... within dominant discourses related to perceived difference” (Bruce, 2014. pp1455). However, almost 60% of the images of Parapan Am athletes highlight them as disabled. Do these images communicate “narrow stereotypes” within dominant discourses? Does the representation constitute systemic marginalization?

@TO2015 might have underrepresented the results of the Parapan Am Games and highlighted the perceived differences of Parapan Am athletes, but they did not systemically marginalize athletes because the proportion of athlete’s representation is by and large consistent. More strikingly, in fact, athletes were not at the focus of @TO2015. The majority of tweets were not on the athletic events and athletes in general. Therefore, in terms of setting an agenda that portrayed Parapan Am athletes as anyone less than Pan Am athletes did not happen, Parapan Am athletes received similar attention in percentage for promotion and discussion in all aspects of their games, except for the results or outcome of the Parapan Am Games. All three-research questions are answered in this study, but the answers do not support my initial presumptions.

“Social media” are not administrated the same way, so there should be a term of agenda setting theory specific to social media platforms in contrast to “media” in general. Social media platforms have completely changed how people seek news and information,

and have given a single individual the opportunity to set their own agenda through ideas and opinions in a 280-character tweet (Overbey, 2012). It has also given power to agencies to manage their own news going directly to the public. Through the power of re-tweeting, any message can reach a large number of people in a short period. This in itself can create an agenda on Twitter and reflect on other media outlets through intermedia agenda setting. In order to study how agencies like Parapan set its agenda on Twitter, we have to realize that these agencies have their own agenda, and the foremost of which is to have as many followers as possible to reach the largest audience. Knowing how to increase the number of followers will increase the likelihood of conveying and engaging an agenda on Twitter.

This thesis also highlights a couple points about agenda setting theory that researchers may have either ignored or not considered. First, the agenda of the researcher can influence the categorization of themes. In this case, my initial thesis was specifically concerned with the marginalization of para-athletes, advocating for the marginalized group was my agenda. This agenda affected my research questions. Assuming that Parapan Am athletes would be marginalized at each turn, I developed my initial categorization and coding of the data in order to find cases of marginalization. Because of this assumption, I coded the athlete themes accordingly. However, my analysis of the data did not turn out as expected. Although the data showed some degree differences between the two games, a majority of tweets fell into the “other” category. I could have drawn on the minor differences to make an argument concerning discrimination, but I decided against making such an argument. I recalled Gregory Bateson’s lesson in *Mind and Nature*, which showed me that categorization was just a way of describing the

subject. No description could be objective; instead, our description – or categorization – came from certain assumptions, which would be guided by our perceptions. Bateson adds, “Explanation must always grow from description, but the description from which it grows will always necessarily contain arbitrary characteristics” (Bateson, 2002, pp. 37). My concerns with para-athletes marginalization guided my categorization, and the arbitrary elements would be the “other” category, which showed that the athlete theme was not even important to the tweets. In the end, I asked additional research questions to find new themes and in order to investigate the data further.

My second realization out of this study is that Twitter is not a third-party media source. As it was the Organizing Committee and its communication department that managed their own account, @TO2015 would not intentionally set an agenda to marginalize themselves. My assumptions to conduct an agenda setting analysis, while looking for marginalization on Twitter influenced the study in a way to limit the true potential of my research, until I reshaped the analysis without marginalization at the helm. When administrated by the agencies themselves, Twitter acts more like a marketing platform, which is significantly different from third-party news channels. This difference explains why there were only positive news on the tweets of the two Games. For this reason, we see no discrimination against para-athletes; for the same reason, however, we do not even see news about poor Toronto traffic conditions. We need to question the social accountability of Twitter as a news platform. Future research happening on Twitter and utilizing agenda setting theory need to consider the agenda of the researcher and whether the Twitter account being analyzed is a third-party source, or not.

Beyond the Numbers

The original idea of this thesis was to use the Twitter account @TO2015 to determine the agenda set when it came to promoting and discussing athletes from the Pan Am Games versus athletes from the Parapan Am Games. I followed the method of agenda analysis with the expectation that the study would find differences in the agenda setting behind the tweets of each type of athlete. There were underlying assumptions behind the analysis: (1) Pan Am and Parapan Am *should* have the same agenda because the athletes of both Games *should* be treated as equals; (2) Pan Am and Parapan Am *would not* have the same agenda because the athletes were not promoted the same way. Since I took these assumptions for granted, I was neither thinking about them critically, nor seeing how they affected my analysis, including the choice of categories in coding and the subsequent analysis. Once the initial analysis was completed, I realized that I *could not* get what I expected. I could not have enough to determine, for example, that Parapan Am Games failed to feature the athletes like "stars" as in Pan Am Games. I could not draw any conclusion that supports my underlying assumptions. In addition, the coding seems to exclude data. For instance, 344 of 599 retweets (57.43%) were in the category of "other" (see figure 3.1). It was a sign that the categorization was not optimized to represent the patterns in the data. These problems brought me to rethinking my analysis itself. There should be an extra research question in practicing agenda setting analysis: "How did the agenda of the researcher influence the expectations of the study?"

The development of the scientific method in the postmodern era may shed some light on my problem. Starting in the 1950s, most notably in complex systems theory and

quantum physics, scientists across all disciplines began to demystify a naïve understanding of "objectivity." In his book, *Mind and Nature* (1979, reprinted in 2002), Gregory Bateson tries to explain the thinking to the public. He argues, "science never proves anything" (p. 25). Instead, scientists observe patterns by exploring: "Science *probes*; it does not prove" (p. 27). The patterns that we observe form a way to represent the thing itself, and thus, as Bateson quotes Alfred Korzybski, "the map is not the territory" (p. 27). Bateson elaborates, "Above all, the relation between the report and that mysterious thing reported tends to have the nature of a *classification*, an assignment of the thing to a class. Naming is always classifying, and mapping is essentially the same as naming" (p. 27). This process is by and large unconscious (p. 29). No wonder we incline to think that there is only the subject's agenda at work in an agenda analysis, while ignoring the agenda of the analyst.

To illustrate, Bateson elaborates that it is the researchers who divide the universe into parts and wholes. The division "may be necessary, but no necessity determines how it shall be done" (p. 35). He draws a geometrical shape on the blackboard (figure 7) and asks his students to describe it in a page of written English (p. 36). About 10% of the students describe the object as a boot. A much larger number of them describe it as an object containing a hexagon and rectangle, etc. Among this group, a small number of them draw a line to connect B, H, and I to form two triangles and a hexagon (figure 8). Bateson congratulates this small group on "their ability to create what resembles many scientific hypotheses, which 'explain' a perceptible regularity in terms of some entity created by the imagination" (36). Some other students use an operational method of description, usually starting from an angle and proceeding clockwise (p. 37). Bateson

also observes that no student thus far started the description by noticing that "It's made of chalk and blackboard" and no one has used the method of the halftone block to divide the surface of the blackboard into a grid for analysis (p. 37).

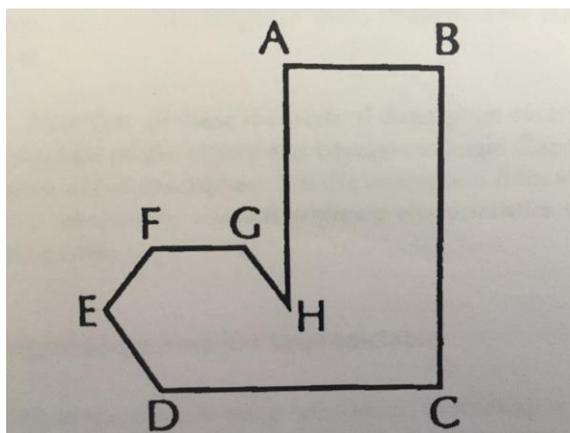


Figure 7: Bateson's geometrical figure (in the actual usage, he does not provide the letters to his students).

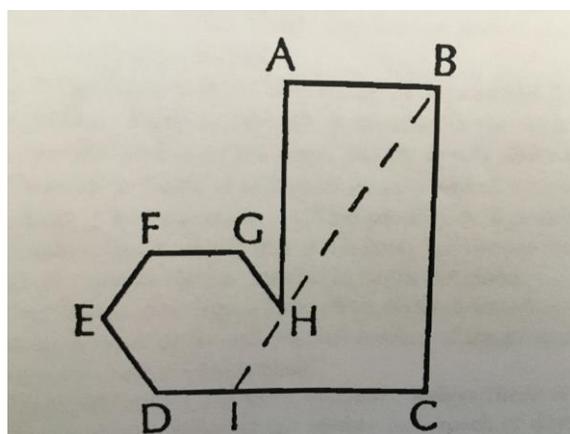


Figure 8: The imaginary line that creates a hypothesis to "explain" the shape.

The point of the exercise is that all the methods of description contribute "nothing to an *explanation* of the object, and the most important of all, "Explanation must always grow out of description, but the description from which it grows will always necessarily

contain arbitrary characteristics" (p. 37). The "arbitrary characteristics," however, are not random. They are determined by the agenda of the analyst.

Thinking back to other agenda setting analyses in my literature review, I notice that the focus has always been on one agenda – the agenda of the subject being analysed. However, there is another agenda – the agenda of the analyst. The researcher observes the pattern, draws the lines, categorizes the items, and creates the codes. The activity is by no mean a "blind" study; the analyst's agenda (or presupposition) drives the study, and therefore affects the results.

Originally, this thesis started at one point and followed the steps to complete the shape or project until finished. The research questions focused on only athletes even though only a fraction of the tweets was about athletes. The thesis needed to re-evaluate the data and the desired outcome. By re-evaluating the research questions, and reanalysing the neither category it enlightened the pre-existing analysis and provided insight to the subcultures that were present at the Games. The first code was not done wrong; it just did not fit the data. This realization also made me as a researcher question agenda setting theory itself, not the existence of the theory, but the agenda of the researchers. From the beginning to the end, there was an expected outcome of the thesis. Of course, it was not expected that @TO2015 would discuss athletes from the Parapan Am Games as much as the Pan Am Games. However, the study was done to show time after time that para-athletes are marginalized based on exposure. It has been proven with pre-existing research that para athletes have been considered insignificant in the eyes of media; therefore, I sought out to find those same results. This in fact is an agenda by the researcher, even though the agenda set by @TO2015 in terms of athletes

underrepresented athletes from the Parapan Am Games. Every research project has this hidden agenda that some naively ignore. As a researcher is it important not to let this hidden agenda manipulate the outcome of the data. I would like to say that the realization of my hidden agenda provided a much deeper analysis of my data. The tweet frequency of the neither category showed what kind of audience was following @TO2015. The findings of this thesis now offer more to future researchers; but more importantly to Twitter users with the goal of creating a large and diverse set of followers.

The purpose of conducting a more in-depth analysis of the neither category was to determine what the audience of @TO2015 responded to best through the number of retweets. This study utilized an inductive approach when analysing the data and did not let the hidden agenda determine the themes of the code. Nine themes made up the neither category (information, gaining interest, ticket sale, Panamanian, torch relay, volunteer, opening/closing ceremonies, venue, and merchandise sales) and each theme was analysed based on qualitative patterns that occurred. Similar patterns across all themes observed that had a positive or negative response from @TO2015 were sought after in order to provide future organizing committees who use Twitter, an opportunity to best utilize their Twitter account. This information can help organizing committees to use their Twitter accounts to obtain maximum number of followers and have their tweets reach as many people as possible.

The remaining 76 percent

To begin, I would like to reiterate Table 3 that showcases the number of tweets in not only all four categories, but also the themes of each category. By the sheer numbers,

the neither category could not be ignored or left out. Four of the ten themes in the neither category have more tweets than all the Pan Am categories, and all ten have more tweets than any of the Parapan Am categories (See Table 3).

The first set of tweets observed that has a positive response from the audience of @TO2015 are the ones that include the word(s) “party or celebrate.” Of the nine themes, six (information, gaining interest, opening/closing ceremony, Panamania, venues, and torch relay) have tweets with the words party or celebrate.

The information theme has 18 tweets that contain the word or an abbreviation of the word party or celebrate, seven of which have 40+ retweets. An example would be “a detailed schedule of artists, athletes and family-friendly activities at our free #WeArePanAm party this weekend: <http://t.co/q7t3TWNv6H>,” and this tweet has been retweeted 69 times. The gaining interest themes have 25 tweets containing the words party or celebrate, ten of which have been retweeted 40+ times. An example would be “@cibc: In celebration of our #CIBCKidSport partnership for every #TBT sports photo you share, we'll donate \$1 to @KidSport,” and this tweet has been retweeted 265 times. The opening and closing ceremony theme have only 4 tweets that include the words party or celebrate, but three of those tweets have received 40+ retweets. An example would be “Retweet to celebrate the Parade of Nations as athletes from 28 countries enter the #ParapanAmGames #OpeningCeremony! <http://t.co/dzVjaV7C7l>,” and this tweet has been retweeted 483 times. The theme Panamania theme has 18 tweets that contain the words party or celebrate. Ten of those tweets receive 40+ retweets. An example would be “RT @serenaryder: I joined the @TO2015 #PANAMANIA party! On stage July 11 with the greatest acts of the Americas! 8:30pm, be there!!!”, and this tweet has received 68

retweets. The venues theme has seven tweets that contain the words party or celebrate, three of which have 40+ retweets. The last theme to have tweets coded in the party/celebrate pattern is torch relay. There are 21 tweets that have the words party or celebrate, three of which have received 40+ retweets.

In total, there are 93 tweets in the party/celebrate pattern through the six different themes. Of the 93 tweets, 36(38.7%) are retweeted 40+ times. People of all ages, cultures, and genders can relate to the words party or celebrate and think of a good time, and for this reason the audience of @TO2015 responded well to these tweets. These results represent the audience of @TO2015 from a consumer ideology. Although this was very much a sporting event, the consumers want a celebration and additional entertainment. They are very much attracted to 'stars' such as Pitbull and Serena Ryder, who were headliners at the opening and closing ceremonies. The results represent this attraction though the high number of retweets about these entertainers. Not only is the audience attracted to stars in entertainment, but they are also attracted to star athletes. A household name like Andre De Grasse (Canadian sprinter) is someone who people can rally behind and support as he was expected to win several gold medals for Canada, which he did (100m & 200m). The culture is set to celebrate him because of his talent, exposure but most importantly his stardom. If @TO2015 were to use words like party and celebrate with a household athlete, they would potentially receive a high number of retweets. In comparison, there are not nearly as many household names for Parapan Am athletes. There is not the same exposure for athletes to become a household name for the cultural niches that make up the audience. It would be ideal if equality existed in the media but it is not realistic. The Parapan Am Games have a smaller budget, smaller fan base, smaller staff, and less

media; however, TOC tries to create a similar culture as the Pan Am Games, just on a smaller scale. For this reason, it is even more practical to showcase para athletes as stars, and use words such as party and celebrate to have fans rally behind them. Future organizing committees should try to use words like party or celebrate as often as possible when tweeting. Words that people can relate to are a foundation for strong Twitter account, and will allow for a diverse group of followers.

Another pattern observed that has a positive response from the followers @TO2015 are tweets that counted down to something. Of the nine themes, six (information, opening/closing ceremony, Panamania, ticket sales, torch relay, and gaining interest) has tweets coded into the ‘countdown’ pattern. It often happens that tweets in this pattern are not frequently tweeted; however, when it is, they receive more retweets than the most other categories.

The information theme has 23 tweets about countdowns, and 12 of those tweets received 30+ retweets. An example would be “with the Pan Am Games just 2 days away we are excited to welcome our Parapan athletes to #TO2015 in just 30 days! <http://t.co/9zi0KeBH4B>,” and this tweet has been retweeted 62 times. The opening/closing ceremony category has only six tweets about countdowns, three of which have 40+ retweets. An example would be “@Cirque: Step inside the creative process for the #TO2015 Opening Ceremony #countdown #24days<https://t.co/kYQjZ1zOAp>,” and this tweet has been retweeted 47 times. The Panamania theme has 23 tweets about countdowns, 11 of which have been retweeted 30+ times. The ticket sale theme has 36 tweets about countdowns, 21 of which have received 40+ retweets. An example would be “three hours and counting until the #TO2015 ticketing program opens. Request the best

tickets today. <http://t.co/1pv6WR7iPd>,” and this tweet has received 69 retweets. The torch relay theme has 11 tweets about countdowns, seven of which have been retweeted 40+ times. An example would be “RT @TO2015torch: The Pan Am Games Torch Relay kicks off in one week! Who's joining us as we visit 130+ communities across ON and Canada?” and this tweet has received 49 retweets. The last theme to have a countdown theme is gaining interest. There were 72 tweets in this set, 17 of which have received 40+ retweets.

In total, countdown has been tweeted 171 times through the six different themes. Of those 171 tweets, 59 (34.5%) have been tweeted 40+ times. When @TO2015 would countdown the days to an event using a hashtag, they received substantially more retweets. More countdowns will result in more retweets, and more retweets will increase the number of people who will see the tweet and potentially follow the Twitter account.

Another strategy that can potentially increase the number of retweets is by making requests. @TO2015 did this a number of times and produced great results. An example would be “.@SimonWhitfield wants YOU to register for a chance to be a #TO2015 torchbearer. #CelebrateAndShare by retweeting! <http://t.co/jLiBFPd5ma>.” This tweet has received 69 retweets. Another slightly different example would be “RT using hashtag #TO2015GOLD for your chance to win 4 tickets to women's Football GOLD on July 25th @ 6:35PM <http://t.co/o0Rx3nCTDq>.” This tweet has been retweeted 156 times. Although this strategy is only used a handful of times, majority of these tweets received a large number of retweets from the audience of @TO2015. Another similar approach to this strategy is to say something such as, ‘which event will you attend? RT for women’s Football GOLD or Favourite for men’s baseball #TO2015.’ This can be a

viable option to increase the response to a tweet and promote multiple events at the same time.

As opposed to strategies that received retweets from the audience of @TO2015 are themes that do not. When @TO2015 tweeted out general information, or even information regarding a specific theme, there was almost never a response from the audience in the form of retweets. The information theme itself has 446 (74.5%) of the 599 tweets that have received 0-9 retweets (see Table 3.1). Information regarding the opening and closing ceremonies have 59 (79.7%) of the 74 tweets receive 0-9 retweets (see Table 3.1). The Panamania theme is one of the themes that had the most retweets, but even the information tweets have 56 (49.5%) of the 113 tweets that have received 0-9 retweets (see Table 3.1). As this data continuously repeats itself in each theme, the audience of @TO2015 does not retweet information.

The overall agenda set by @TO2015 was to provide information to their audience. However, their audience did not respond to the information in a way to set an agenda. TOC utilized their Twitter account @TO2015 as a traditional news source, in the sense that they provided information to their audience without considering what their audience was reacting to. Previous research on agenda setting theory and social media has shown that there is a bi-directional relationship between media sources and their audience (Wallsten, 2007; Kushin, 2010). Although TOC used a Twitter account, they did not adapt to the new and interactive way social media can be used to deliver news. They did not engage the audience with news, and they did not consider how their audience was responding to news. Twitter is not like a news outlet such as CBC (Canadian Broadcast Company), who covers an event as a third party and chooses what

they perceived to be important. Instead, the Twitter account is run by a team of individuals who represent the Pan Am and Parapan Am Games. They do not decide what is and is not important, they simply cover the Games with the intention of making it successful. In order to promote the Games in hopes to make it more successful, @TO2015 should have paid closer attention to their Twitter followers. The audience wants to be a part of the news and because @TO2015 tweeted boring news, the informational tweets received little to know acknowledgment. If @TO2015 monitored the informational topics that received the most retweets and exposure from their audience, then they could have used this information to set an agenda. Due to the bi-directional relationship of agenda setting theory and social media, the audience plays a key role in setting an online agenda. TOC did not make the most of the responses from their audience, resulting in little success setting an agenda on Twitter.

Limitations

As all studies do, this study has limitations. First and foremost, agenda setting theory reflects the transfer of information and how that information is received. This thesis has not analysed how the public received the information in regards to setting an agenda about athletes from @TO2015; instead, it focuses on what themes being perceived as most important and how the themes are treated differently between Pan Am and Parapan Am athletes. Without addressing public opinions, the study cannot determine how the public react to the agenda set by @TO2015. Although the transfer of information is a key aspect of agenda setting theory, there has never been a way to know what solely effects people's opinion. There are too many variables to say that one thing is

determining their thoughts and opinions, and this problem has been evident since the original McCombs and Shaw studies (1972; 1977). When studying agenda setting theory on Twitter, there are more reasons that make it difficult to determine public opinion. An example is that it could not have been determined if followers of @TO2015 saw the tweets posted, or interacted with these tweets.

Additionally, my study has utilized Twitter as a source of information in the form of tweets. Some of the tweets are extremely short or do not have much meaningful contents. An example would be “@nandorejas Hi Nando, details aren't available yet, but we will provide you with that information once it does become available.”(data set 1, tweet 28). Without a link to additional information or some form of imagery, the tweet sheds little light on any “agenda.” “Without context, words and actions have no meaning at all” (Bateson, 2002. Pp.12). By only investigating one form of media, the conclusions drawn are specific to only @TO2015. As well, there are several other media outlets that cover the Games, but only the Twitter account @TO2015 is analysed. The big picture is missing.

By acknowledging these limitations, this thesis contributes to future research into the new and ever-changing dynamics of agenda setting and social media. It also provides some groundwork when analysing multiple types of athletes across the realm of sport and para-sport. Future research in this field will help strengthen the limited number of studies utilizing agenda setting on Twitter in a sport specific content.

Conclusion

My results reveal that all five phases of agenda setting are present in the Twitter handle @TO2015. The primary use of @TO2015 is to respond to questions and deliver information to the public about events surrounding the 2015 Pan Am and Parapan Am Games. There is little emphasis put on the athletic events and the athletes themselves. In comparison to one another, the Pan Am Games has received almost three times the number of tweets than the Parapan Am Games. In ratio, the Games are similarly promoted and discussed; however, the results of the Parapan Am Games has received almost no attention or tweets. With the audience demand and purpose of @TO2015 in mind, this was not systemic marginalization. The agenda of the committee did not marginalize the para-athletes because the agenda is to promote and foster a positive atmosphere surrounding the Parapan Am Games.

Suggestions for Future Research

Future research may be conducted across realms of social media to create a network of intermedia agenda setting. This thesis has showed a lack of intermedia agenda setting analysis, as multiple media outlets have not analysed. Future research may investigate social media outlets side by side to determine which has a larger agenda-setting role. By comparing this relationship, key media forces can be used to create an agenda that will be best received by the public.

Leaning from other media outlets could have provided insight to events that may have been misunderstood, and or showed additional themes or attributes to those themes. Future studies may also be conducted across social media platforms to show the

intermedia agenda set. This will provide credibility for agenda setting theory across the social media realm. Social cohesion and intermedia agenda setting will expand agenda setting theory not only on Twitter, but also on other social media.

As I conduct an additional analysis on the neither category, I have found insights into the niches of subcultures to a large audience that can be reached on Twitter.

Additional research may be conducted on the subcultures of Twitter and social media to learn about how they affect a particular realm such as sport or entertainment. Not all individuals who have followed @TO2015 are interested in the athletic competition, some are more interested in the events around Toronto that are put on by the Pan Am and Parapan Am Committee.

Most importantly, this thesis uncovered the agenda of the researcher after the initial categorization failed to sort out the data. There is a major difference between Twitter and, say, CBC. CBC covers the news as a third party. The news crew chooses what they perceive as important. As a result, there is an agenda of the media different from the agenda of the organising committee. With Twitter, the organising committee and the “media” share the same agenda, i.e. making the events successful. So as the Parapan Am Games happen, there is no way that the Tweets carry a hidden agenda to marginalize the para-athletes. The relatively fewer representations of the para-athletes are the result of the perception of what the audience wants. As this study observes, the audience likes celebration, party, countdown, as well as taking up tasks on requests. We are dealing with an insider’s culture at Twitter. The traditional relationship of mass media being outside of the games does not apply. If so, the agenda of the committee (and therefore of the tweets) cannot be the marginalization of the para-athletes because the

agenda is to promote the Parapan Am Games. In other words, the lower frequency of para-athlete appearance may not function an indicator of a marginalization in the agenda of the committee.

This may be a case of the “observer effect.” What may be possible is that the idea that “the appearance of para-athletes should be highlighted equally compared to other professional athletes” is itself a prejudice. Would it be possible that we should regard the Parapan Am Games and its audience as a different subculture with different interest and emphasis. For example, this group is less interested in star athletes and more interested in participating in the events. Perhaps there may be new research questions to identify the cultural differences between the Parapan Am and the Pan Am Games before applying any standard of equality.

Future research using agenda setting theory should be aware of their own agendas.

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