A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF SUPERBOWL XVI

THESIS

Presented to the Graduate Council of the North Texas State University in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

By

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Denton, Texas
August, 1982
Kuykendall, Francis Marion, IV, A Content Analysis of Superbowl XVI, Master of Arts (Sociology), August, 1982, 83 pp., 12 tables, bibliography, 37 titles.

The purpose of this research was to describe the content of information surrounding a significant sporting event presented by sportswriters through the printed medium. The event chosen for analysis was Superbowl XVI.

Three metropolitan newspapers were selected as the sample representatives of the urban style of sports reporting. Two of these newspapers were chosen because of their geographical representation of a participating team. The third selection was taken because of its large circulation and relative unbiased reporting.

From a pilot study conducted on Superbowl XV, content categories were found to fit in either one of two basic domains: cognitive or affective. The sample population for Superbowl XVI yielded 5,759 individual category entries based on 215 articles. The cognitive category comprised 94 percent of all items categorized, thus clearly demonstrating the dominant theme used by sportswriters for this event.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The printed word had much to do with the expansion of sporting interests in this country. Cheap production methods, including the invention of the hoe-type press, came about following the Civil War. This led to a tremendous explosion of dime sports novels and athletic almanacs. In the early sports novels printed from 1866 on, war heroes merged into sports heroes. Through this medium, the conception of the hero figure in American life gradually assumed increasing importance.¹ It served as a prop for the "survival of the fittest" notions of social Darwinism that became current in succeeding decades.² Baseball offered most of these early sports heroes to us. These men and their sporting endeavors also found their way into the newspapers. By offering exciting news about their heroes these early newspapers maintained their circulation and even increased it.³

¹Paul Hoch, Rip Off The Big Game (Garden City, 1972), p. 47.
²Ibid., p. 73.
Publishers and editors recognized the mounting interest in the new sports industry and began to cater to it to win circulations. This in turn created further sports interest, in an ever-snowballing pattern. Surveys have repeatedly shown that about one-third of the newspaper reading public reads only the sports news.\(^4\)

Marxist thinkers have suggested that sport plays the functional role of an opiate for society, much as Marx thought religion played. Every day workers are enjoined and encouraged by the mass media to think of themselves as fans of a particular team, and they do.\(^5\)

\textit{It is obviously much easier to get excited by a big game than about unemployment, big grocery prices, or big military spending. Were this excess energy not channeled in America's mania for sports, it might well be used in dangerously antisocial ways.}\(^6\)

A second major perspective of the sporting explosion is the mirror-image theory. According to this view, sports and sporting interests merely reflect the true nature of the greater culture. Riesman noted a shift in American character since World War II and demonstrated the same shift in the sporting world. Prior to World War II America was essentially an agrarian society. The farmer and the small entrepreneur succeeded on their own merits

\(^4\)Hoch, \textit{Rip Off the Big Game}, p. 18.
\(^5\)Ibid., p. 82.
\(^6\)Ibid., p. 18.
and efforts. Rugged individualism was the necessary ingredient for success. Americans were inner directed, with a firm sense that there was potential success in everyone. Baseball was born of this time, and according to Riesman, it represented that we were an inner-directed, rural, individualistic society.7

It continues to be popular because of our longing for the peaceful past. Baseball represents an island of stability in a confused and confusing world. Today it provides an antidote for a world of too much action, struggle, pressure, and change. Baseball provides this antidote by being individualistic, unbounded by time, nonviolent, leisurely in pace, and by perpetuating the American myths of equal opportunity, egalitarianism, and potential championship for everyone.8

After World War II the United States and Americans changed. Rural life is replaced by living in cities and suburbs. Individuals now typically are dominated by large bureaucracies, whether they be governments, schools, churches, or factories. In these settings Riesman noted that Americans have become other directed.

Rather than an automatic pilot homing the inner-directed person toward his individual goal, the other-directed person has an antenna tuned to the values and opinions of others. In short he is the team player, and conformist.  

Like baseball before it, football represents what Americans are. Our society is violent, highly technical, highly bureaucratized, and we are all caught in its impersonal clutches. Football fits contemporary urban-corporate society because it is team-oriented, dominated by the clock, aggressive, characterized by bursts of energy, highly technical, and because it disproportionately rewards individuals at certain positions.

In 1966, the United States Department of Commerce estimated the country's annual recreational expenditure at around thirty billion dollars. The following year there were more than two hundred million paid admissions at major sports events around the nation.

For football in particular, average attendance has increased from forty thousand per game in 1960 to over fifty-six thousand in 1979. Many professional clubs sell out every game of the season well in advance. Their final game of the season, the Superbowl, usually gains approximately a forty-six percent share of the eighty million

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9Ibid., p. 46.
10Ibid.
11Hoch, Rip Off the Big Game, pp. 47, 19.
households with televisions—or nearly one hundred million viewers. For the past several years the game has even gained a popular following in non-football playing nations around the world, such as New Zealand and Saudi Arabia. Such popularity warrants further investigation.

Statement of the Problem

The primary thrust of this research was to describe the content of information surrounding a significant sporting event, presented by sportswriters through the printed medium.

The three major questions which guided the research were the following.

1. What are the themes to which the greatest attention was given by sportswriters?

2. Does information presented fall primarily into a cognitive or affective context?

3. What difference in medium coverage, if any, existed between newspapers from the two teams (cities) involved?

Methods

On Monday morning, January 11, 1982, newspapers around the country began reporting information about the two teams slated to appear in Superbowl XVI. Their pre-game coverage lasted through Sunday morning, January 24, 1982—the day of the event. This fourteen-day period was targeted as the
key area for a content analysis study of the nature of news media's promotion of the game.

The Dallas Morning News was first selected because of its large circulation and relative unbiased reporting (because the Dallas team was defeated earlier in the playoffs). It was felt that the other papers should as best as possible represent the home-team view of the upcoming game. Therefore, the San Francisco Chronicle was chosen to represent the San Francisco Forty Niners team, and the St. Louis Post Dispatch as the nearest major paper obtainable to the Cincinnati Bengal team, based in Cincinnati, Ohio.

A pilot, or preliminary content analysis study was performed on Superbowl XV and its participants. Relevant categories were found to fit in either one of two basic domains: affective or cognitive. Within the affective domain are efforts to legitimate the game through fan identification, items covering the contextual events, mentions of fear, pressure and pride. Cognitive categories include team and personal histories as well as comparisons between them. It also includes statements about the economic aspects and event significance.

These certain topics were chosen because of their emphasis and because of their broad application capability. Cognitive categories contain information of a factual nature, such as the personal team, league, and superbowl histories. The use of this kind of information is in a
comparison framework. One player may be compared to another from his own team or another as well as to other players in the league. Their respective performances with or against each other will fall into this category. They can be logically grouped into units for similar comparisons, from unit to unit to league vs. league. Economic information is also cognitively delivered. Statements about television revenue, player bonuses, and Superbowl expenditures to fan expenses will be included.

The affective category contains statements pertaining to the affections, or emotions. Here statements about criminal or deviant acts are categorized, as are those detailing the violent or superstitious aspects of the game, the pride felt by all concerned, or comments about Superbowl pressures.

"Content Analysis is a method of data analysis that permits systematic, quantitative analysis of observations obtained from records and documents."¹³ Content analysis is also a mode of observation of what already exists. It is most often applied to forms of communication, as is the case in this research. Content analysis is essentially an operation of coding or classifying in terms of some conceptual framework. Those codes are cognitive and affective, for this particular work. The end product of this coding process will be numerical. As each item is classified it

is counted as one, or given a value of one. The manipulation of these figures should give the researcher a frequency table for all the various subcategories. It is from this data tabulation that the problem questions will be answered.

From data gathered in the pilot study of Superbowl XV, the following characteristics or categories were developed.

I. Cognitive--Cognitive information is knowledge based on, or capable of being reduced to, empirical factual knowledge.

A. Histories: Much newsprint is devoted to making the reader aware of team and individual accomplishments or histories. Accounts of whom and how each team arrived at the Superbowl fall into this category, as does statistical information. Even the Superbowl itself has a history for the sportswriters to tell the reader about. They also rarely fail to include articles about league histories which become relevant in light of the part they play in the origin of the Superbowl game itself.

B. Comparisons: When personal, unit, team, organization, league or Superbowl histories are used in a comparison format with one another they are itemized under the heading called Cognitive Comparisons. The Comparison format can be quite specific.

C. Economics: This category includes all financial data except when it is cast in the comparison mode, such
as Superbowl X made more money than Superbowl XV. The Superbowl generates vast exchanges of funds. Television networks pay millions of dollars to the NFL for the privilege of airing the Superbowl game, and they always charge advertisers enough to clear a profit. Bonus money is awarded each team and every player from the NFL offices. But most prevalent are accounts of the fans expenditures in the course of enjoying "Superweek" and the Superbowl itself. This category also includes the economic statements concerning criminal acts associated with the Superbowl event. Often these items will report the estimated dollars bet on the Superbowl game, or the price of a scalped ticket to the game.

II. Affective--Affective information is knowledge based on, relating to, or arising from emotions.

A. Contextual Events: Sportswriters, fans, players, television crews, advertisers, and vendors all descend upon the host city for a week of work and festivities in preparation for the Superbowl game. The media personnel become the eyes and ears of the world during football's final two weeks. It is only natural that much reporting of these extracurricular activities find their way into the sports pages.

1. Criminal Acts. This category is best defined by the criminal codes of our land. The most reported crimes during Superweek involve
gambling, ticket scalping, and drunkenness. These activities need not be restricted to this city, but they must be Superweek-Superbowl related as well as affectual in substance.

2. **Party Time.** Statements concerning the best bars, the best food and the best bash for Superweek participants must be entered here. Here the reader learns about the fun other fans are having during the week-long count-down toward the Superbowl.

B. **The Fear/Pride Factor:**

1. **Fear.** There can be little doubt that North American professional football is an aggressive, strictly regulated team game fought between extraordinarily large and fast men. It is a violent game in which fear plays an important part: fear of injury, fear of personal failure in front of one-hundred million viewers, and most of all fear of losing. Even accounts of superstitions play on the fear factor.

2. **Pride.** Almost a natural corollary to fear is the prideful reaction it brings about. Everyone concerned with the Super extravaganza is proud to be so. Being prideful has an affectual appeal to humans as does being afraid.
C. **Pressure:** The last affectual category concerns itself with items covering the pressures of the Superbowl. Pressure—or great psychological stress—is an integral characteristic of the Superbowl. The final game can have only one winner—the crown lords of professional football for one year. The losing team is just one game away from those acalades but is quickly ignored. The Superbowl is viewed by nearly one half of the entire American population. This would certainly add stress to one's efforts not to make a mistake. The players are no less visible to us during the pre-game activities, as hundreds of media personnel disseminate literally millions of words about them. Any mentioning of the great pressures associated with the Superbowl should be itemized in this category.

**Significance**

The Superbowl began sixteen years ago as a little-cared about final playoff game between two football leagues. In this past season, however, more than seventeen million fans attended National Football League games. In this record-setting year the average attendance for regular season games was an amazing 60,745. The final playoff game has become one of the largest spectacles in the television season with advertising fees running into the $550,000 price range per minute of advertising. The economic boon to the host city's
coffiers is estimated to be anywhere from fifty to seventy million dollars in that two-week period prior to the actual game. Each player and member of the winning team's organization receives $18,000 for their efforts while the losers take home $9,000. The Superbowl has indeed become an event of significance.

The media attention it receives is another dimension of its growing importance to the American public. The San Francisco Chronicle reports that the Detroit area received approximately 70,000 visitors and over 3,000 media personnel for the Super-Week. Many of these were involved in the production of the broadcast of the game that was viewed by over one-hundred million persons. CBS, who paid nearly 12.5 million to the NFL to broadcast the game, utilized over two-hundred people, twenty-three cameras, fourteen video-tape machines, four graphic generators, one-hundred microphones, one-hundred monitors, and twenty miles of cable to televise Superbowl XVI.

The news media also devotes great amounts of personnel time and energy to give prospective readers the stories surrounding Superbowls. They were granted 1,245 official passes this year alone. Their presence is so vital to the publicity conscious NFL that much of the daily scheduling of each team's activities depends upon the press's needs.

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Content analysis research of their Superbowl articles should be a preliminary step in ascertaining the nature of the dominant themes used to sell the game to newspaper readers. Through an understanding of the categories they use further steps can be taken to understand why there has been such a tremendous growth in the popularity of the Superbowl event.

Summary

Unlike the World Series, the Stanley Cup, or the National Basketball Association Finals—who all play a series of seven games—the Superbowl is a one-game, life or death contest to determine professional football supremacy. It demands the highest advertising rates of the year for television and radio, and regularly scores the highest audience percentage of the year. As a television spectacle it represents the latest state of the art. As a multi-million dollar business venture it has enjoyed unparalleled financial success, year after year. For its presentation of Superbowl XVI, the Columbia Broadcasting System grossed in excess of twenty million dollars and netted between seven and one-half to six million dollars in advertising revenue.

The two-week delay between their conference championships and the Superbowl game give the newspapers time to dissect the two participating teams and build interest in the upcoming game. In 1982 there were 1,245 official press
credentials issued by the Superbowl committee. They represent the heart of the press corps who descend upon the host city a full week in advance of the final game. Their words are disseminated along wire services and to home town newspapers so that even the smallest rural paper can have access to thousands of lines of information daily.

A preliminary study of newspaper coverage of the Superbowl game revealed two broad categories into which their comments can be divided: Cognitive and Affective. Various sub-categories were delineated in order to ensure repeatable capabilities of the content analysis method of data collection.

This research seeks information in three basic areas. It should provide the fundamental information needed to ascertain if there exists major themes to the sportswriters reports. The next step should be to see if these themes fall into the suggested categories of analysis, and finally to test for any variance between the home-team papers and the neutral selection. But primarily this research seeks to discover just what sportswriters are telling their readers about the upcoming Superbowl game.
CHAPTER II

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE SUPERBOWL

Introduction

Football, first played in the United States in 1869, has become the nation's number one autumn sport. Hundreds of colleges and thousands of high schools play each weekend. The National Football League has grown to include teams in twenty-eight cities around the country, playing a sixteen-game season with an annual play-off system, finally ending with the Superbowl game in late January. Only one team each year can lay claim to being the very best in all of professional football.

The Origins of Football

Football, as we know it today, is a far cry from its parent game of soccer. A few years after the Dane removal and expulsion from England (approximately 1042 A.D.), workmen, excavating an old battlefield, uncovered a skull that undeniably was that of a Dane. "These men, still smouldering with memories of Danish imperialism, kicked at the skull to show their feelings."¹ Others in the party joined in the activity. Together they proceeded to kick the skull around

the countryside. Shortly after an inflated cow bladder replaced the hard skull and the sport of "Dane's Head" or soccer was born.

Entering the twelfth century soccer was basically unorganized. Usually players of adjacent towns would meet at some midway spot. The bladder would be thrown down as a signal for action for the players who sometimes numbered into hundreds. Apparently the winner was judged by which team succeeded in kicking the ball into the middle of the rival town.

Play was generally accompanied by lusty yelling, and when victorious players came charging into small towns, kicking the football through the main streets, the non-combatant villager's became terrified, shop keepers closed their stores and shoppers remained indoors until the tumult and shouting died.²

The authorities were asked to halt this random roving game. Thus the game came to be confined to vacant areas only. This marked the beginning of standardization in kicking the Dane's Head or Soccer. A field was marked off with boundaries somewhat similar to those governing both modern football and soccer. A point was scored whenever the ball was kicked over the goal line of the other team. The rules did not fix the number of players, but they did stipulate that both sides must have an approximately equal number

²Ibid., p. 363.
of players. This usually meant nineteen to fifty players on either side.\(^3\)

By the middle of the twelfth century kicking the Dane's Head had become known as "futballe." It was easily the most popular of the many sports in early England. So much so that Henry II became alarmed because his subjects were neglecting the compulsory practice of archery. "He ordered futballe performers to cease playe and accomplished his purpose when he threatened imprisonment, not only for the performers, but also for the owners of the land whereon the game was played."\(^4\)

So effective was King Henry's order that at the time of his death in 1189 football was little more than a memory. The ban was continued by succeeding rulers for more than four hundred years, but because of the tolerance of certain monarchs the game was played occasionally and thus the principles of the sport passed from one generation to another. When James I ascended the English throne in 1603 the ban was removed on football. By that time, firearms had succeeded archery as a superior means of attack in warfare. As play resumed all over England James I gave the game his support.

"He regarded football as a clean, honorable and manly past-time; one that tended to develop character, as well as the

\(^3\)Ibid.

\(^4\)Ibid.
physical self, and that he sincerely hoped that England would resume to play with enthusiasm."5

England did just that. Football (soccer) teams came into existence everywhere. Cities, towns, and villages became famous when their football team demonstrated consistent prowess. Although no national governing association existed, play was reasonably standardized.

According to Reisman and Denny, the kicking aspect of the game remained dominant until 1823 when a scoundrel named William Ellis, of Rugby School, first took the ball in his hands and ran with it in utter disregard of the rules.6 This innovation on soccer was institutionalized at the school and shortly thereafter was adopted by others, thus forming the new sport of rugby.

In America the first recorded version of any game played only with the feet has been traced to 1609. The early sport consisted of kicking a round ball from one end of a field to another. Hands were not used and the ball was not carried.

Although rugby originated in the early 1820's it did not appear in the United States until 1871. The claim has been made by the participants and officially adopted by the National College Athletic Association that the first

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5Ibid.
6Ibid.
intercollegiate game took place between Rutgers and Princeton in 1869. However, since that contest followed soccer rules, the honor of having played the first game of what was to emerge as American football rightly should go to Harvard and McGill in 1874, when rugby regulations were employed. In 1876 the first Intercollegiate Football Association was formed. Columbia, Harvard and Princeton established the first uniform rules in the United States: fifteen players per team, two forty-five minute halves. The eleven-man team was approved in 1880. The playing area was reduced to one-hundred and ten yards by fifty-three yards. The kickoff was made from midfield and a scrimmage line was established. The period from 1880 to 1890 produced many more changes in the conduct of play. A system of downs was established in 1882. It required the offensive team to gain at least five yards in three downs or surrender possession of the ball. Starting in 1885 a touchdown carried a value of four points: goal from field, five; goal after touchdown, two; safety, two.

The scoring system was changed again in 1897. The value of a touchdown was increased to five points, and a goal after touchdown was reduced to one point.

The wedge formation of blocking meant moving the ball by brute force. In this offense, the blockers formed a V-shaped mass of humanity for their ball carrier by linking their arms together. This mass blocking led to brutality,
severe injuries, and in some cases, death. Newspapers began to campaign for a modification of some of the rules, and some schools dropped football altogether.

President Theodore Roosevelt, anxious to see the sport continue, requested a meeting with representatives from Yale, Harvard and Princeton in 1905. His message to them was clear: "clean up your game or I'll see that it is abolished." These schools soon called a conference of some sixty schools and formed the American Intercollegiate Football Rules Committee. New rules designed to eliminate some of the bone-crushing tactics were placed into effect immediately. The forward pass was made legal, the two forty-five minute halves were reduced to thirty minutes each, and a neutral zone the distance of the length of the ball between the two lines of scrimmage was abolished. The distance to be gained on downs was increased to ten yards.

The forward pass became a favorite offensive play of the Midwestern teams around 1908. The Eastern squads, using players of huge physique and great power, stayed with their fierce ground attack, which remained successful.

In 1910 the rules required seven men to stay on the line of scrimmage. No longer could the offensive linemen drop to the rear to protect the ball carrier. Forbidden were

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7 Willard Mullin and Herbert Kamm, The Junior Encyclopedia of Sports (New York, 1966),

8 Ibid., p. 232.
the flying tackle, crawling, pulling the runner, and interlocking interference. The two thirty-minute halves became four fifteen minute quarters.

More rules changed in 1912. The length of the field was made one hundred yards, the value of a touchdown was increased to six points, and the offensive team was allowed four downs to move the ball the required ten yards. Football gained major status from 1913 to 1917 as a result of these changes and namable stars, including Jim Thorpe, emerged. Many of these men, including Thorpe, went on to play in the new professional leagues.

A Brief History of Professional Football

The first professional game was played on August 31, 1895, between teams from the towns of Latrobe and Jeannette, Pennsylvania. When the Latrobe team suddenly found themselves without an experienced quarterback, they offered John Brailler—an ex-college star—ten dollars to play in their game against Jeannette. Brailler accepted and became football's first professional.

Pittsburg was the first large city to have an all-professional team. Among the earliest professional clubs were the Duquesnes of Pittsburg, the Olympics of McKeesport, Pennsylvania, and the Orange Athletic Club of Newark, New Jersey, all organized between 1896 and 1897.
In 1902 and 1903 teams were organized in Canton and Massillon, Ohio, each being backed by wealthy men. Many collegians had enjoyed the game in college and found the possibility of playing a few more years for pay quite attractive. They joined the professional ranks in increasing numbers.

In June 1920 the American Professional Football Association was founded. Few people attended the games, however, and at the end of the season it folded.

Joseph F. Can of Columbia, Ohio, thought the idea of having a professional football league had merit. He rallied several previous owners and inspired some new ones with money to give the venture a second try. Of that original group who posed for the camera in 1920 on an automobile running board, only George Halas is still alive. Their new organization was called the National Football League, and the original cost of a franchise was only $50. Today it is estimated that each of the twenty-eight franchises are worth in excess of twenty million dollars.9

The league struggled for mere existence in those early years. For instance, a game between the New York Giants and the Chicago Bears attracted eighty customers, only a trifle more than the number of players.

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Soon thereafter interest in professional football began to grow. And even though the league continued to have trouble hiring the All-American caliber of collegian, they did get plenty of good men who were willing to play for fun plus a little cash each week. In the 1920's the Chicago Bears had a limit of eighteen hundred dollars expenses per game which was divided among the eighteen players on the team.10

The crowds, impressed by the earnestness of the athletes, patronized professional football in ever-increasing numbers. Soon the clubs were breaking even. As time passed they hired famous college players at much higher wages and still continued to show a profit. Two of these great players were Sammy Baugh who played sixteen seasons and at one time held all possible passing records, and Don Hutson, an eleven-year running back who had scored more points via receiving than anyone else until the 1960's.

There were two basic differences between the professional game and the college game during those early years (1920-1940). First, the professionals consistently used the platoon system, thus there was always a fresh defensive and offensive unit on the field at the same time. Secondly, the professionals had the goal posts on their goal line to encourage field-goal kicking.

10Ibid., p. 5.
In 1946 a rival league was organized called the All-American Conference. The National Football League refused to recognize this new professional group. Both leagues scrambled to secure the services of college players and both leagues suffered losses in attendance. The older National Football League, under the direction of its commissioner, Bert Bell, outlasted the new All-American Conference, which was discontinued after the 1949 season. Many of the best players came over to the National Football League as did the entire Cleveland Brown team and organization—who had won every All-American Conference championship.

In 1960 a new rival league was formed called the American Football League. Once again the old National Football League was forced to compete for college players entering the professional football draft, and for emotional and financial support of professional football's fans.

In the American League's first few years of existence they played a limited schedule of games among their own member teams, largely with football talent omitted from the National Football League squads.

In the battle for good college football players the American Football League scored an early victory. In 1963, the court ruled in favor of the Houston Oilers over the National Football League's Los Angeles Rams after both clubs had signed Billy Cannon, the Heisman trophy winner from Louisiana State University.
Although the leagues agreed to a no-tampering rule on existing player contracts, the competition for college talent drove salaries and particularly bonuses very, very high. The American Football League's New York Jets signed Alabama quarterback Joe Namath in 1965 to a four-hundred thousand dollar contract. In 1966 the National Football League's Atlanta Falcons upped the bidding by giving Texas's linebacker Tommy Nobis a six-hundred thousand dollar contract, and the Green Bay Packers forked over seven-hundred and eleven thousand dollars to Texas Tech's running back Donny Anderson.

Players of ordinary ability began making much higher salary demands on both leagues as a result. Meanwhile, many veteran players in the National Football League were locked into long-term contracts at very low salaries by comparison. For example, John Brodie, the San Francisco Forty-Niner's quarterback, received thirty-five thousand dollars in 1965 after leading the National Football League in completions, percentage, yardage, and number of touchdown passes. For Brodie and other National Football League stars, the high-salaried American Football League appeared the only way to better their situation. Buffalo placekicker, Pete Gogalak, was the first National Football League star to play out his option and sign with the new league, in 1965. The no-tampering code had been broken, and the conflict between the two leagues was without any restraints.
On April 7, 1966, peacemaker Joe Foss resigned as the American Football League commissioner and the next day Al Davis, general manager of the Oakland Raiders, took over. Davis was a hawk in regard to the National Football League. He promptly organized an American Football League war chest and urged his owners to start talking to established National Football League stars. The National Football League had bragged of its superiority because of the caliber of its quarterbacks. Davis wanted to sign those quarterbacks for the American Football League.

The Raiders quickly signed Los Angeles quarterback Roman Gabriel to a commitment starting in 1967. Houston offered the Forty-Niner's Brodie seventy-five thousand dollars spread over ten years to sign a five-year deal with the Oilers. Reportedly eight of the National Football League's starting quarterbacks were dickering with the American Football League.

The National Football League decided it had no choice. Thus on June 8, 1966, two months after Davis became the American League's commissioner, a merger agreement was announced. There would be a common draft starting in 1967, interleague preseason games starting in 1967 and regular season play combining the leagues in 1970. Territorial indemnification of eighteen million dollars was to be paid to the Forty-Niners and Giants over a period of twenty years.

Most important to this research was the establishment of a championship game between the leagues at the end of
each regular season play. In its first two years the game was called the American Football Conference—National Football Conference World Championship Game, but was later popularized as the Superbowl.

The name "Superbowl" actually occurred in an owners' meeting prior to the third intra-league playoff game. Lamar Hunt, owner of the old American Football League Kansas City Chiefs and founder to the American Football League, suggested the new name for their world championship game. He later admitted the idea came from an extremely bouncy ball that his little girl played with called a superball.

A Brief History of the Superbowl

There have been sixteen consecutive Superbowls to date. This football game is the sudden-death playoff game between the two league winners, representing the American Football Conference and the National Football Conference. The winner of this game can claim the United States professional football supremacy for one year.

In the first two Superbowls, Vince Lombardi's Green Bay Packers soundly beat their opponents. Television advertising costs ranged from seventy-five thousand dollars to eighty-five thousand dollars per minute. These games were seen by an estimated sixty million viewers on television on several hundred outlets across the nation.
Superbowl III, in 1969, was the first time an American Football Conference team won—as the New York Jets beat the Baltimore Colts sixteen to seven.

In Superbowl IV, Kansas City was the victor over Minnesota. Baltimore returned to the big game in 1971 and this time was the victor over first-time Dallas Cowboys. Dallas returned the next year to gain its first Superbowl win over Miami in Superbowl VI. Miami returned the following season to post the only perfect record in professional football, capping it off with their Superbowl VII victory over Washington.

By this time television commercials were costing over two-hundred thousand dollars per minute. Miami made a third straight Superbowl appearance in 1974 beating the Minnesota Vikings twenty-four to seven. The Pittsburg Steelers won the next two Superbowls over Minnesota in 1975 and Dallas in 1976. Superbowl XI marked the first time the game had had a live audience of over one-hundred thousand persons. The television audience was now upwards of seventy-eight million people around the world. Oakland won over Minnesota this year, but neither team was to return the next.

Superbowl XII was played by Dallas and Denver in the Louisiana Superdome. Dallas won twenty-seven to ten in the first indoor Superbowl. Television cost had risen to three-hundred and forty-four thousand dollars for one commercial minute. The Columbia Broadcasting System claimed to have
over one-hundred million viewers for Superbowl XII, with the
game rating a record 47.2 rating.

Pittsburg won the next two Superbowls over Dallas in
1979 and Los Angeles in 1980. For Superbowl XIV, 1,900
sportswriters generated over four million printed words prior
to the event itself. Superbowl XV saw Oakland return to
defeat Philadelphia in the New Orleans Superdome. Commercial
time now was costing advertisers five-hundred and fifty
thousand dollars per minute, of nine-thousand dollars per
second. When San Francisco defeated Cincinnati in Superbowl
XVI some forty-five percent of America's eighty-one million
television households tuned in to watch.

A Narrative of Superbowl XVI

On January 24, 1982, the champions of the National Foot-
ball Conference, the San Francisco Forty-Niners, and the
champions of the American Football Conference, the Cincinnati
Bengals, met in the Pontiac Silverdome to play the final
football game of the 1981-1982 professional season. The
81,270 paying viewers witnessed the San Francisco Forty-Niners
emerge victorious by a score of twenty-six to twenty-one.

Superbowl XVI was fourteen seconds old when the San
Francisco Forty-Niner's Amos Lawrence fumbled the opening
kickoff. John Simmons, a Bengal's rookie from Southern
Methodist University, recovered the fumble at the San Fran-
cisco twenty-six yard line. But the Bengals failed to
capitalize on the opportunity to score. With the ball at the
ten yard line, Cincinnati's quarterback, Ken Anderson threw
a pass over the middle intended for wide receiver Isaac
Curtis. San Francisco free safety Dwight Hicks made the
interception and ran the ball upfield to his thirty-two yard
line giving the San Francisco offense its first opportunity
of the day.

San Francisco quarterback Joe Montana orchestrated an
eleven play, sixty-eight yard drive, culminated by a leaping
quarterback sneak for the touchdown. Ray Wersching added
the extra point, leaving 5:52 remaining in the first quarter.
On the drive Montana hit on five of six passes; but the key
play came when coach Bill Walsh called a triple hand-off flea
flicker on a third and one situation--which resulted in a
thirteen yard completion to tight end Charlie Young. In
thirteen of the previous fifteen Superbowls, the team to
score first has won the game. This proved to be the case in
Superbowl XVI also.

The remainder of the first quarter was a defensive
struggle with no team managing to score. But early in the
second quarter Cincinnati was in excellent position to score
with a second and nine at the San Francisco twenty seven.
Bengal quarterback Ken Anderson passed to rookie wide
receiver Cris Collinsworth crossing over the middle at the
eight yard line. But cornerback Eric Wright hit the
receiver and knocked the ball away from him. Lynn Thomas recovered it on the eight for the Forty-Niners.

San Francisco drove the ball, a record ninety-two yards, for its second score of the day. Twice in the twelve-play drive San Francisco quarterback Joe Montana converted crucial third down plays. The Forty-Niners got a break at Cincinnati's nineteen yard line when Jim LeClair was penalized for a late hit on a play that had resulted in a two yard loss. That put the ball on the ten. From there Montana hit fullback Earl Cooper at the five and Cooper advanced the pass into the end zone to give San Francisco a two-touchdown lead with 6:52 to play in the half.

On the ensuing kickoff, Cincinnati's David Verser recovered his own fumble at the Bengal four, and a penalty moved the ball to the two yard line. The Bengals advanced to their own twenty five before having to punt on a fourth and one. This gave the Forty-Niners offense the ball on their own thirty-four yard line. Once again Montana started the drive with a pass to wide receiver Dwight Clark. But this drive stalled at the Cincinnati twenty five on a fourth and two. Ray Wersching was called on to kick his first of four field goals of the day to make the score seventeen to nothing in favor of San Francisco with fifteen seconds left to play in the first half.

No team had scored twice in such a short span of time until Superbowl XVI. The Bengals Archie Griffin fumbled
the kickoff and the Forty-Niners Milt McColl recovered the
loose ball with four seconds still remaining in the first
half. Wersching's second field goal attempt was also good
and the Forty-Niners left the first half with a twenty-point
margin. This was the largest such point gap for two quar-
ters in Superbowl history.

During the first half San Francisco quarterback Joe
Montana had completed twelve of eighteen passes for one-
hundred and thirty-two yards and one touchdown. Overall
the Forty-Niners had outgained their opponents two-hundred
and eight yards to ninety-nine and they had caused four
Cincinnati turnovers while allowing none. They had also
already set two new Superbowl records with the two quickest
scores (13 seconds) and the largest point margin for two
quarters of play. In short, San Francisco had dominated
the Cincinnati Bengals for the first half of play.

The reasons for their offensive success lies in several
areas, most centering upon their ability to control Cincin-
nati's left defensive end Eddie Edwards. Edwards ordinarily
is Cincinnati's best pass rusher, so when the Forty-Niners
passed they used sprint-out formations in Edward's direction
and double teamed him with the tackle and the tight end.
They also ran timely screen passes to negate his rush, and
the flea flicker to use his pursuit against him. San Fran-
cisco also presented the Bengals with many forms of an
unbalanced line and multiple offensive formations and pass patterns to keep their defense constantly off balance.

In the second half the American Football Conference champions finally demonstrated the power of their own offense. In nine plays opening the third quarter the Bengals marched eighty-three yards for their first touchdown.

On a third and four from the Cincinnati forty-one yard line, receiver Steve Kreider beat San Francisco's Ronnie Lott over the middle for nineteen yards. After a five yard run by fullback Pete Johnson, the Bengals used their own version of the flea flicker for a twenty-two yard gain. A late hit on the play by San Francisco's Eric Wright moved the ball to the eleven. On a third and four from the five yard line Cincinnati's quarterback Ken Anderson faded back to pass and then ran up the middle and into the end zone for the score.

The remainder of the third quarter was a defensive struggle by both clubs. With two and one-half minutes left in the quarter Cincinnati found themselves in a first and goal to go situation from the San Francisco three yard line. Pete Johnson went off left guard for two yards. On the next play the San Francisco defense halted Johnson's charge for no gain. With a third and one to go for the touchdown, Cincinnati's Ken Anderson tossed a swing pass to running back Charles Alexander. San Francisco linebacker Dan Bunz met Alexander near the goal line and stopped his forward progress eighteen inches short of the end zone. After a time out the
Bengals tried another line plunge with fullback Johnson, who was stopped once more for no gain and a change of possession.

Cincinnati was the first team to score in the fourth quarter. The seven play, fifty-three yard drive was dominated by the accurate passing of Ken Anderson, including the pass to Ross for the touchdown. With 10:06 remaining in the game the score was San Francisco twenty and Cincinnati fourteen.

San Francisco took the kickoff and drove downfield mainly on the running of Ricky Patton. Their efforts ended in another Ray Wersching field goal, this time a forty yarder.

Cincinnati ran the kickoff back to the twenty-two yard line and with 5:14 remaining in the game Anderson dropped back to pass to rookie wide receiver Cris Collinsworth. The pass found its way into the hands of a San Francisco rookie cornerback, Eric Wright, who made a twenty-five yard return.

San Francisco conducted a six play drive mostly on the ground which ended in the fourth Ray Wersching field goal of Superbowl XVI. Wersching's four field goals tied the Superbowl record by Green Bay's Don Chandler in Superbowl II. Less than two minutes remained for the Bengals to erase a twelve-point handicap.

With time rapidly running Cincinnati Bengal's quarterback, Ken Anderson, completed six consecutive passes, the
last to Ross for a final touchdown with only sixteen seconds left to play. When San Francisco's Clark recovered an on-side kick attempt, time ran out on Superbowl XV. The final score was San Francisco twenty six and Cincinnati twenty one.

Summary

Football first came into existence as a type of soccer called Dane's Head, in 1042 A.D. This occurred in England just after the end of Danish rule there. Although it was banned soon after, football-soccer survived to be taken across the ocean to America. The first recorded soccer game in this country was in 1609. At this time hands were not used and the ball was not carried. This changed, however, in 1823 when rugby was invented in England. Americans had adopted this new form of football by 1871. It was primarily from rugby that football, as we now know it, developed.

The first professional football teams were organized in the late 1890's, usually by urban athletic clubs. It was not until 1920, however, that the first professional football league was formed. After many failures, changes and troubles, the game began to gain needed supporters. Although the National Football League survived several challenges from new professional leagues, it could not defeat the 1960-formed American Football League. After six years of cut-throat competition between the National Football League and the American Football League a compromise merger was agreed upon
by all. In 1967 interleague play began culminating in the first Superbowl.

The Superbowl is now sixteen seasons old. The game itself represents the sudden-death final game of each professional football season. Its victor can lay claim to professional supremacy for one year. Nearly one half of the twenty-eight teams have never made it to the Superbowl. Three teams have been there a record four times: Pittsburg, Minnesota and Dallas. Of this elite group, Pittsburg holds a commanding lead in number of victories with four in four appearances. Of the fifteen different teams to have appeared in the Superbowl game, seven have been there only once. The 1982 game was unusual in that two first-time visitors emerged from playoff competition to face one another in Superbowl XVI.

In Superbowl XVI the San Francisco Forty-Niners outscored the Cincinnati Bengals team twenty-six to twenty-one to win the coveted Lombardi trophy and sole claim to first place in the United States professional football world.
CHAPTER III

A DESCRIPTION OF SPORTSWRITERS REPORTING OF SUPERBOWL XVI

Introduction

To understand the dominant themes used by newspaper sportswriters to hype interest in the Superbowl game requires a thorough knowledge of the sample and the categories used in the content analysis. The following chapter will aid the reader in this capacity by describing the sampling procedure and the newspapers selected. A complete description of the categories and their respective subcategories will follow.

Description of the Sample

In this study there were 215 articles from three major metropolitan newspapers used for analysis. The dates for the articles extended from January 11, 1982 through January 24, 1982. The newspapers chosen were the Dallas Morning News, the San Francisco Chronicle, and the St. Louis Post Dispatch. The first paper was chosen because it represents a large urban center which is very sports-minded and whose own professional football team was not itself a participant in the Superbowl. The last two represented the largest
obtainable metropolitan papers which were nearest each participating team (see Table I).

TABLE I

INDIVIDUAL ITEM SUMMARY TABLE BY CATEGORY AND NEWSPAPER

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Dallas Morning News</th>
<th>San Francisco Chronicle</th>
<th>St. Louis Post Dispatch</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. Cognitive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Histories</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>2512</td>
<td>881</td>
<td>5393</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Comparisons</td>
<td>1685</td>
<td>2103</td>
<td>866</td>
<td>4654</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Economics</td>
<td>267</td>
<td>316</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>585</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. Affective</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Contextual Events</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Fear/Pride</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>366</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Pressure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

No newspaper utilized color photographs, but the San Francisco Chronicle did print much of their sports news on green colored paper. All three papers used black and white photographs, charts, diagrams of key plays, and bold headlines describing the upcoming event and its participants. Only the Dallas Morning News used any Superbowl-related cartoons in its sports sections.

The San Francisco Chronicle yielded 135 individual Superbowl-related articles. This figure represents nearly sixty-three percent of all articles in the study, or five
times the number from the St. Louis Dispatch and more than twice that of the Dallas Morning News. Another characteristic of the Chronicle was the relative brevity of its articles. While the San Francisco paper averaged just under twenty identifiable items per article, the Dallas Morning News and the St. Louis Post Dispatch ranged near forty items per article (see Table II).

**TABLE II**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Dallas Morning News</th>
<th>San Francisco Chronicle</th>
<th>St. Louis Post Dispatch</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. Cognitive</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>18.6</td>
<td>37.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. Affective</td>
<td>2.56</td>
<td>1.11</td>
<td>1.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total average number of items per article per paper</td>
<td>37.65</td>
<td>19.71</td>
<td>39.34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The San Francisco Chronicle also contributed the largest number of items for categorization with 2,693 entries. The Dallas Morning News produced 2,146 and the St. Louis Post Dispatch was third with only 920 categorized items. Thus, in sheer numbers of recorded items the San Francisco Chronicle was again the largest contributor with a forty-seven percent share of the total. The Dallas Morning News
was again in second place with thirty-seven percent while the Post Dispatch contributed sixteen percent to the total number of items (see Table III).

**TABLE III**

**TOTAL NUMBER OF ITEMS PER PAPER**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Dallas Morning News</th>
<th>San Francisco Chronicle</th>
<th>St. Louis Post Dispatch</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Number of Items</td>
<td>2,146</td>
<td>2,693</td>
<td>920</td>
<td>5,759</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of Total</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Description of the Categories

The sporting news media represents one of the major avenues of sports reporting. Their official Superbowl coverage begins in earnest once the two participating teams are decided in playoff competition. The nature of their work can be aptly divided into two basic categories: Cognitive and Affective, each with three subcategories.

The cognitive division contains factual information. Factual information must be considered to be verifiable truth, or knowledge supported by evidence. A cognitive statement may take the form of statistical information about a particular game or a particular person's past performance. Reporters even present mathematical accounts
of the stadium in which the Superbowl is played, the cost of tickets and air fare to the host city, the economic boon to the host city from the Superbowl extravaganza, or statistical comparisons between key players, units and teams for the super game. Cognitive information may take a more personal tone when reporters give the reader factual information about a player, team or place. Cognitive data is unemotional and not presented to elicit a direct emotional response from the reader. It seeks to merely inform the reader.

Of the total number of items categorized from the three sample newspapers, the cognitive categories comprised ninety-four percent of the entries, or 5393 individual items (see Tables I and IV). This dominance of the cognitive category over the affective category remained constant across the entire sample.

TABLE IV

CUMULATIVE PERCENTAGES BASED ON TOTAL NUMBER OF ITEMS
(Total Number of Items = 5759)

 I. Cognitive
 A. Histories ........................................ 81
 B. Comparisons .................................... 10
 C. Economics ...................................... 3
   Percentage of Total
   Items Categorized .............................. 94

 II. Affective
 A. Contextual Events ............................ 3
 B. Fear/Pride ..................................... 2
 C. Pressure ........................................ 1
   Percentage of Total
   Items Categorized .............................. 6
   Total ........................................... 100
Table V shows the percentages of each individual newspaper and all papers combined by category.

**TABLE V**

**INDIVIDUAL CATEGORY PERCENTAGES/ALL PAPERS COMBINED WITH INDIVIDUAL PAPER PERCENTAGES INCLUDED**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Total Number of Items for Percentage Base</th>
<th>Total Percentage Value</th>
<th>Dallas Morning News</th>
<th>San Francisco Chronicle</th>
<th>St. Louis Post Dispatch</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. Cognitive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Histories</td>
<td>5393</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Comparisons</td>
<td>4654</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Economics</td>
<td>585</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>45.7</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. Affective</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Contextual Events</td>
<td>185</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Fear/Pride</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Pressure</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The San Francisco Chronicle and the Dallas Morning News each had a cognitive category which comprised ninety-three percent of their total number of individual items. The St. Louis Post Dispatch revealed the strongest cognitive category with a 95.9 percent share to its total categorized items (see Tables VI, VII, and VIII).
TABLE VI
CUMULATIVE PERCENTAGES BASED ON TOTAL NUMBER OF ITEMS PER PAPER

San Francisco Chronicle:

I. Cognitive
A. Histories ........................................... 78
B. Comparisons ...................................... 12
C. Economics .......................................... 3
   Percentage of Total
   Items Categorized ............................... 93

II. Affective
A. Contextual Events ............................... 3
B. Fear/Pride ........................................ 2
C. Pressure .......................................... 2
   Percentage of Total
   Items Categorized ............................... 4
   Total ........................................... 100

TABLE VII
CUMULATIVE PERCENTAGES BASED ON TOTAL NUMBER OF ITEMS PER PAPER

Dallas Morning News:

I. Cognitive
A. Histories ........................................... 79
B. Comparisons ...................................... 12
C. Economics .......................................... 2
   Percentage of Total
   Items Categorized ............................... 93

II. Affective
A. Contextual Events ............................... 3
B. Fear/Pride ........................................ 3
C. Pressure .......................................... 1
   Percentage of Total
   Items Categorized ............................... 7
   Total ........................................... 100
TABLE VIII
CUMULATIVE PERCENTAGES BASED ON TOTAL NUMBER OF ITEMS PER PAPER

St. Louis Post Dispatch:

I. Cognitive
   A. Histories ............................................. 94
   B. Comparisons .......................................... 0.2
   C. Economics ........................................... 1.7
       Percentage of Total
       Items Categorized ..................................... 95.9

II. Affective
   A. Contextual Events ................................. 3
   B. Fear/Pride .......................................... 1
   C. Pressure ............................................ 0.1
       Percentage of Total
       Items Categorized ..................................... 4.1

Total ......................................................... 100

In raw numbers this translates into 2,512 cognitive items out of a possible 2,693 categorized items for the San Francisco Chronicle, 2,000 items out of a total 2,146 for the Dallas Morning News, and 881 cognitive entries out of a total 920 for the St. Louis Post Dispatch (see Tables I, IX, X, and XI).

The first cognitive subcategory is Histories (1A). A history entry is normally a narrative of events which have already occurred. They create a record of the past providing background from which to view the upcoming spectacle. In the case of this inquiry, histories were usually directly related to the past performances of teams or individuals, or cognitive information about their past experiences. For
### TABLE IX

WHOLE CATEGORY PERCENTAGES PER PAPER

San Francisco Chronicle:

I. Cognitive Percentages (Total Number of Items = 2,512)
   - A. Histories ........................................ 84
   - B. Comparisons ..................................... 12
   - C. Economics .......................................  4
   - Total ................................................ 100

II. Affective Percentages (Total Number of Items = 181)
   - A. Contextual Events ............................... 46
   - B. Fear/Pride ....................................... 32
   - C. Pressure .......................................... 22
   - Total ................................................ 100

### TABLE X

WHOLE CATEGORY PERCENTAGES PER PAPER

Dallas Morning News:

I. Cognitive Percentages (Total Number of Items = 2,000)
   - A. Histories ........................................ 84
   - B. Comparisons ..................................... 13
   - C. Economics .......................................  3
   - Total ................................................ 100

II. Affective Percentages (Total Number of Items = 146)
   - A. Contextual Events ............................... 49
   - B. Fear/Pride ....................................... 41
   - C. Pressure .......................................... 10
   - Total ................................................ 100
### TABLE XI

WHOLE CATEGORY PERCENTAGES PER PAPER

**St. Louis Post Dispatch:**

I. Cognitive Percentages (Total Number of Items = 881)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Histories</td>
<td>98.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Comparisons</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Economics</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

II. Affective Percentages (Total Number of Items = 39)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Contextual Events</td>
<td>74.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Fear/Pride</td>
<td>23.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Pressure</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

instance, an article may be entirely devoted to telling the reader all about the San Francisco quarterback, Joe Montana, from his collegiate days at Notre Dame through his current playoff experiences. This information allows the reader to become cognitively aware of Joe Montana the person, and exactly how he came to be in the final National Football League game for the 1981-1982 season.

This area was the most prolific for all categories across the entire sample. Of the total 5,751 items categorized, Histories dominated the field with an eighty-one percent share, or 4,654 individual references (see Tables I and IV). Furthermore, the Histories category commanded
fully eighty-six percent of all cognitive entries across the three newspaper samples. Thus it was easily the most used of all categories by reporters in Superbowl-related articles.

Individually each of the sample newspapers reflected this overall relationship. Of the total number of history entries (4,654), the San Francisco Chronicle has a forty-seven percent share. The Dallas Morning News followed with thirty-six percent, while the St. Louis Post Dispatch contributed nineteen percent. These percentages are based on the total number of history items per paper divided by the total number overall. Thus in real terms, the San Francisco Chronicle had 2,103 items recorded in category 1A while the Dallas Morning News had 1,685 and the St. Louis Post Dispatch had 866 (see Tables I and V).

Since histories composed eighty-one percent of the total number of recorded items, one would expect this category also to dominate the field when looking at each newspaper individually. As expected this was the case. The category 1A or cognitive histories comprised seventy-eight percent of the San Francisco Chronicle's total entries, seventy-nine percent of those in the Dallas Morning News, and ninety-four percent of the St. Louis Post Dispatch's total 920 items (see Tables VI, VII and VIII).

In single category analysis, the history subdivision made up 84 percent of the San Francisco Chronicle's 2,512
cognitive items, 84 percent of the *Dallas Morning News'* 2,000 cognitive entries, and 98.2 percent of the *St. Louis Post Dispatch's* 881 item cognitive category (see Tables IX, X and XI). When all three sample newspapers are combined and their total cognitive category entries are examined, the 1A History subdivision still commands 86 percent of the total 5,393 cognitive items (see Table XII).

**TABLE XII**

**WHOLE CATEGORY PERCENTAGES, ALL PAPERS COMBINED**

I. Cognitive Percentages (Total Number of Items = 5,393)

A. Histories ............... 86
B. Comparisons .............. 11
C. Economics ................. 3

Total ...................... 100

II. Affective Percentages (Total Number of Items = 366)

A. Contextual Events ........ 51
B. Fear/Pride ................ 34
C. Pressure .................. 15

Total ...................... 100

This History category so dominated the other categories that sportswriters used it eight times more frequently than the next highest used category, 1B, Comparisons, and eighty-three times more often than the least used category, 2C, Pressure (see Table I).
The second cognitive subcategory is 1B, Comparisons. All factual data that appeared in a comparison format was itemized in this category. A comparison is the act of representing two things as being similar, equal, dissimilar, or at least analogous with one another. This often appears in a format that accentuates differences between two things. Much of this comparison data would have fallen into the 1A History category had it not been presented in the comparison format.

For this particular research project, comparison items most often took the form of a player vs. player presentation. Other favorite comparisons were between isolated units such as one team's offensive line compared to the other's defensive line, team vs. team references, coaches vs. coaches, owner vs. owner, the National Football League vs. the American Football League, fans vs. fans, cities vs. cities, and even one Superbowl as compared to another.

This category was the second most productive area of analysis. Of the total 5,759 items categorized, Comparisons held a ten percent share, or 585 individual items (see Tables I and IV). Of the total cognitive entries (5,393), comparisons comprised eleven percent.

When one examines just the comparison items the San Francisco Chronicle is responsible for over half of the total 585 entries with 316, or 54 percent. The Dallas Morning News is not far behind the Chronicle with 267, or
45.7 percent of total comparison items recorded. The St. Louis Post Dispatch is a very poor third with only two cognitive comparisons, or a .3 percent share of the total (see Tables I and V).

If the 1B Comparison category is viewed along with the other five subcategories it represents 10 percent of the total number of items recorded (see Table IV). Once again analysis of the individual sample papers supports the average figure. The San Francisco Chronicle carried a 12 percent comparison usage as did the Dallas Morning News. The St. Louis Post Dispatch sportswriters continued to show their lack of concern for utilizing the comparison format by contributing .2 percent of their total category entries to the 1B Comparison category (see Tables VI, VII and VIII).

Examination of the cognitive entries as a total subset finds the 1B Comparison subcategory comprising an 11 percent share of the whole (see Table XII). When the cognitive category is analyzed paper by paper, similar results are obtained. The San Francisco Chronicle's comparison category made up 12 percent of its total cognitive category. The Dallas Morning News' comparison category gained a 13 percent share of its cognitive domain and the St. Louis Post Dispatch was again third with the smallest percentage at .3 percent (see Tables IX, X and XI). In the case of the Chronicle and the News the 1B Comparison subcategory was the second most utilized divisions of the cognitive category. For the St.
Louis Post Dispatch the comparison section was third behind the next subcategory—1C, Economics.

The third subcategory of the cognitive domain is 1C, Economics. An economic entry first and foremost must conform to the overall cognitive specifications. It must be a factual statement pertaining to the production, development and/or management of material wealth. Cognitive Economic items would include statements about player salaries and bonuses for playing the game, various monies to be made from the game or cost estimates to fans, teams and television, and all other financially related statements of a cognitive nature.

The 1C Economics category ties another category for the third most prolific area of usage with a three percent share of the total number of items scored (Table 4). In real terms this translates into 154 items out of a grand total of 5,759 categorized entries (see Table I).

Among the three sample newspapers there are a total of 154 1C Economics data entries. The San Francisco Chronicle is responsible for 60 percent of these with 93 items, the Dallas Morning News consumes another 31 percent with 48 categorized items, and the St. Louis Post Dispatch contributes the last 9 percent of 13 cognitive economic items among its Superbowl-related articles (see Tables I and V).

When placed among the rest of the categories, 1C, Economics accounts for only 3 percent of the total number
of scored items (see Table IV). Taken individually, the San Francisco Chronicle sportswriters use cognitive economic references 3 percent of the time, the Dallas Morning News 2 percent and the St. Louis Post Dispatch 1.7 percent (see Tables VI, VII and VIII).

Similar findings are present for the economics subcategory when it is analyzed as a part of the whole cognitive subset. Once again it represents a 3 percent factor, but this time as a proportion of the total 5,393 cognitive items (see Table XII). When analyzed separately the San Francisco Chronicle's cognitive domain used its IC Economics category 4 percent of the time, while the Dallas Morning News is again second with a 3 percent usage and the St. Louis Post Dispatch follows with a 1.5 percent proportion (see Tables IX, X and XI).

It should be noted that no economic statements were included here that were directly related to the affective division, and in particular to the subcategory 2A, Contextual Events. Financial statements created to elicit an emotional response or those of an emotional basis are reserved for the Affective domain and in particular its subcategory 2A.

The second major division for this research project is called the Affective category. Like the cognitive division, the Affective domain carries with it three subdivisions. They are Contextual Events/ Fear/Pride, and
Pressure. Each will be discussed in detail following a
description of the Affective category as a whole.

For an item to be affective it must be either designed
to elicit an emotional response from the reader or be of an
emotiononal nature itself. The affective statement therefore
relates to, arises from, or seeks to influence non-factual
feelings or emotions.

Upon reading that the Superbowl fans are having enor-
mous fun in the bars and restaurants of the Superbowl city,
the reader may be moved to join friends in his own town in
the Superbowl merriment or to at least empathize with their
celebrations. When he learns of Superbowl-related crimes
such as gambling, he may be inspired to join the many other
fans who hope to win money on the game's outcome. He may
be stirred by the accounts of immense Superbowl pressures
or tantalized by the emotional tales of a fearsome defensive
lineman or by the pride of his favorite team. All such
statements are to be considered affective and are to be
placed into one of the three affective subcategories.

Of the total number of items categorized from the three
sample newspapers, the affective categories comprised only
6 percent of the entries, or 366 individual items (see
Tables I and IV). At no time did the Affective category
proportion of the whole rise above 7 percent.

When considered as a total subset, the affective
division gained its largest support from the San Francisco
Chronicle with a 50 percent contribution or 181 individual items. The Dallas Morning News accounted for 40 percent of the total affective category with 146 entries while the St. Louis Post Dispatch added thirty-nine tallies for the final 10 percent (see Tables I and V).

If the affective division is compared to the cognitive division on a sample by sample basis, it is found that both the San Francisco Chronicle and the Dallas Morning News show it accounts for a 7 percent share of the total number of items categorized. The St. Louis Post Dispatch sports-writers used affective statements in only 4.1 percent of their total cases (see Tables VI, VII and VIII).

The evidence is clear. Although sportswriters do indeed utilize affective-oriented statements, they do so in far fewer instances than they use cognitive ones.

The first subcategory in the affective division is 2A, Contextual Events. A contextual event is one that occurs within the environment of the Superbowl but is not central to or necessary for the game itself. Affective contextual events range from accounts of Superbowl parades and parties to Superbowl-related crimes.

Although this category comprised only 3 percent of the total number of recorded items, it still shares the honor of being the third largest category overall (see Table IV). Contextual events account for 185 total category entries from the three sampled newspapers (see Table I). Providing
the bulk of these items was the San Francisco Chronicle with a 45 percent share or 84 of the total 185 contextual entries. The Dallas Morning News added 39 percent or 72 contextual items and the St. Louis Post Dispatch completed the category with 29 items for another 16 percent (see Tables I and V).

When individual newspapers are examined, the 2A Contextual Events category still accounts for a 3 percent share of their total item entries (see Tables VI, VII and VIII).

Perhaps the relative impact of this category can best be seen in Table XII. Here it is viewed as a proportion of the affective category as a whole, across the three sample newspapers. In this analysis, the contextual events subcategory accounts for over one-half of the entire affective entries. The San Francisco Chronicle's affective entries were examined next. Here the Contextual Events subcategory accounted for 46 percent of the total number of affective items. Its relative importance grew with the Dallas Morning News to a 49 percent share. Contextual Events in the St. Louis Post Dispatch, however, dominated the affective category with a 74.4 percent contribution (see Tables IX, X and XI).

The Contextual Events subcategory is the most significant of the three affectual subdivisions in terms of percentage of relative contribution or in numbers of items scored.
The second affective subcategory is 2B, Fear/Pride. While it ranks second in relative importance within the affective domain, it supports only 2 percent of the total number of categorized items in the study. This percentage represents a total of 125 Fear/Pride items across the three sampled newspapers (see Tables I and IV). Of this 125 items most came directly from the San Francisco Chronicle with 46 percent or 57 entries and the Dallas Morning News with 47 percent or 59 items. The St. Louis Post Dispatch contributed only 9 Fear/Pride items or 7 percent of the total number of 2B entries (see Tables I and V).

The Fear/Pride category is perhaps the most straightforward of all the categories. References to either fear or pride from Superbowl-related articles were recorded in this 2B affective category. Fear is simply to be afraid of, to be apprehensive, in awe, dread or to possess a feeling of alarm caused by awareness or expectation of something. In Superbowl-related articles, mentionings of fear usually take the form of such things as a fear of losing or a personal fear of not performing well in front of one-hundred million viewers. There are also several references to the intimidation factor. This represents the act of giving fear to others, usually an opponent. Items in this form usually are presented in comparison-oriented articles.

Pride is the other half of the 2B, affective subcategory. Statements in this context deal with a person's
self-respect. In football, this usually comes from a history of past accomplishments or achievements. A statement does not become eligible for the Pride subcategory, however, unless it is written as a quotation or paraphrase from an individual or unless it is a direct statement about pride, such as "the 49'ers are a prideful team." Simply recounting a team's past achievements usually will be itemized in the 1A Histories subcategory.

When the 2B Fear/Pride subcategory is analyzed as one of the total six categories sample by sample, the Dallas Morning News again leads the way. Overall its writers utilize the Fear/Pride category for 3 percent of its total entries, while the Chronicle's sportswriters found it useful in 2 percent of all cases. Once again the St. Louis Post Dispatch trails the others with a 1 percent Fear/Pride category contribution to the whole.

Continuing to examine Fear/Pride on an individual basis, but this time as a proportion of own affective domain, similar patterns develop. The Dallas Morning News' 2B category has 59 of its 146 affective items or 41 percent and the Post Dispatch has a 23 percent Fear/Pride contribution to its affective category (see Tables I, IX, X and XI).

The third and final affective subcategory is 2C, Pressure. Pressure means a physical or mental distress usually mentioned in connection with media attention or in statements stressing the importance of winning the big game. Pressure
items also include mentionings of stressful or urgent situations, distress, or the oppression from adversity.

This category received the least attention of all six divisions from all sources. It tallied only 56 entries out of the total 5,759 scored items (see Table I). This represents only a 1 percent contribution to the study (see Table IV).

When 2C, Pressure, is analyzed as across all three sample newspapers as a whole, the San Francisco writers found it the most useful. Out of the total 56 Pressure items they utilized this category 40 times, or 71 percent of the total 2C entries. The Dallas Morning News was second with 27 percent of the total category or 15 scored items while the St. Louis Post Dispatch contributed only one entry for the final 2 percent of the Pressure subcategory (see Tables I and V).

This rank-order pattern follows suit throughout the analysis of 2C. When Pressure is examined as one of six subcategories, it gained its largest acceptance from the San Francisco Chronicle paper once again with a 2 percent contribution to its total entries. Pressure accounted for 1 percent of the Dallas Morning News' total items and only .1 percent of the St. Louis Post Dispatch's (see Tables IX, X and XI). Combined, the 2C subcategory amounts to 15 percent of all affective entries in the study (see Table XII).
Summary

Once the Superbowl teams have been determined by play-off competition, sportswriters have exactly two weeks to report on the upcoming event. In this study two categories were developed in which all such information would be placed. They represent diametrically opposed concepts. The first is labeled Cognitive and is designed to encompass all factual statements. The second area is the Affective category. All statements designed to evoke emotion or emotionally-charged statements are placed here. Each major category has been further divided into three subcategories. This was done in an effort to give texture and depth of meaning to the overall category divisions.

In retrospect it becomes clear that sportswriters sought to develop our Superbowl interest mainly through the use of personal and team histories. This 1A category alone accounted for 81 percent of the total 5,759 items scored from all three sample newspapers. It is equally apparent that they preferred to use cognitively-oriented statements to entice their readers rather than emotionally-charged ones. Their use of the cognitive domain dominated the entries with a 94 percent contribution or 5,393 items out of a possible 5,759. Individually, these observations held true in all three sampled newspapers.
CHAPTER IV

INTERPRETATION OF THE DATA

Introduction

This research was designed to discover and analyze the dominant themes used by sportswriters to heighten the pre-game expectation and excitement of Superbowl XVI. The phenomenal growth of this event is represented in many ways. One of the major sources of pre-game reporting of the game is undeniably from the daily sports pages around the country. Inquiry into the basic nature of their reportings led to the development of a content analysis program stipulating two broad areas for the placement of such statements. These areas are the Cognitive and the Affective categories. For a more precise look at each area they were subdivided into three divisions or subcategories.

The cognitive area thus became Histories, Comparisons, and Economics, while the affective domain became Contextual Events, Fear/Pride, and Pressure. References to these areas, or information displayed in the manner described by these areas caused the item to be placed into the proper subcategory with a score of one. The items were tallied by subcategory and category for analysis.

These items were drawn from a set of three sample newspapers. It was felt that each participating team's
home-town newspaper would have a larger number of articles to work with than those from other cities. A third selection was added to act as a control group-like set of data. It would act as the one unbiased source to highlight any possible data skews that may have occurred due to the inherent biases of the home-town papers.

Profile of the Sampled Newspapers

As a set, the three papers demonstrated surprising homogenity. All three displayed over 90 percent of their scored items in the cognitive category and less than 10 percent in the affective. Within each major category there are also close parallels. For all three samples the 1A, Histories, subcategory of the cognitive domain holds the vast majority of items. Within the affective category, all three newspapers experienced a leveling of the proportions between the three subcategories. Here no one category totally dominated the affective entries, but 2A, Contextual Events, did evolve as the slight winner in two of the three sample papers.

Thus, sportswriters from three different geographical areas of the country, from three different cities, each located near a different National Football League Team, all share an overwhelmingly strong cognitive style of writing. It would seem that the days of "yellow" journalism, of sensationalism in sports reporting, are no longer in vogue.
The San Francisco Chronicle

The Chronicle shared many characteristics with the Dallas Morning News. As they are discussed, these parallels will be mentioned in the following text.

The San Francisco Chronicle contributed the most articles and the greatest number of itemizations of the three papers. It was also the leader in creativity and variety in its presentation of the Superbowl-related news. Front page banner headlines concerning Superbowl news was common for the Chronicle, as was the use of colored newsprint, illustrations, and a myriad of presentation formats from which they told their readers about the upcoming event.

Statistically the Chronicle contributed 2,512 items from 135 articles for a 47 percent share of the total number. This gave the San Francisco Chronicle fully 10 percent greater impact on the study than the next largest contributor--the Dallas Morning News. When each category is taken separately, the Chronicle maintains its percentage lead on the others in the sample. In the Cognitive category, the Chronicle contributed 47 percent of the total cognitive entries. This was once again 10 percent larger than the Morning News' contribution, and 31 percentage points ahead of the Post Dispatch. Within the affective area the Chronicle was responsible for 50 percent of the tallies. This was again a 10 percent greater number than the next largest contributor. Similarly, the San Francisco Chronicle
dominated the individual subcategories in five out of six occasions, losing by only one percentage point to the Morning News in the 2A, Fear/Pride subcategory.

Most of this can be explained in terms of the sheer numerical advantage that the San Francisco Chronicle possessed both in articles and scored items. With more numbers in the study it would naturally contribute the greatest percentages. Perhaps the most revealing information lies in comparisons between the San Francisco Chronicle and the Dallas Morning News. Before undertaking this study it was felt that there may have been some sort of an effect from a particular newspaper representing a participating team in the Superbowl. But in comparing the News and the Chronicle this worry proved to be unfounded. The neutral source matched the 49'ers home paper in every category possible. It would seem to suggest that there is a code of style adhered to amongst the metropolitan sportswriters. Even the smallest sample in the study, the St. Louis Post Dispatch, followed the same statistical pattern of cognitive, and in particular IA, Histories, dominance of the categories.

The only detectable San Francisco Chronicle uniqueness from the others in the sample lies in the relative brevity of its articles. This accounts for the gap between its huge number of articles advantage and yet only a 10 percent lead in individual itemizations. The San Francisco Chronicle averaged approximately one-half the number of items per
article than the other sampled papers. Since this characteristic was not shared by the Dispatch it cannot be contributed to any notion of home team representation, but must be merely labeled as a personal style preference.

The Dallas Morning News

The independent source for this study contributed a total of 2,146 scored items for a 37 percent share of the total, on the strength of 57 of the 215 articles read.

It matched the San Francisco Chronicle in its relative contribution to its two overall categories. Each had 93 percent of their total itemizations in the cognitive category and the remaining 75 percent to their affective division. Over 80 percent of these cognitive entries were in the News' 1A, Histories, subcategory.

Perhaps the greatest difference between the Dallas Morning News and the San Francisco Chronicle is that the News had very few sports or Superbowl-related articles in any other section of its paper. This was also true of the St. Louis Post Dispatch, which may be a beginning suggestion of the effects of being from the city which has a participating franchise in the Superbowl. Furthermore, this is the beginning of evidence that the Dispatch is not truly representative of any home team, although it is located near Cincinnati.
The St. Louis Post Dispatch

The Dispatch was the weakest contributor in the sample in nearly every category numerically. It accounted for 881 of the total cognitive entries and only 39 to the affective category. This amounts to a 16 percent total contribution from 23 articles over the two-week period. This can be explained by the recognition that its low percentages are a function of its fewer itemizations. But what may be of significance is that even with far fewer numbers, the St. Louis paper continued in large part the pattern set by the other two sampled newspapers.

As before, this paper contributed the major portion of its sports articles to the cognitive category--95.5 percent overall. It also gave the vast majority of these cognitive entries to its IA, Histories, subcategory as did the other papers. Whereas the other two newspapers had a 7 percent itemization rate in the affective category, St. Louis gave it 4.1 percent. If anything, it must be said that the St. Louis Post Dispatch was more dispassionate in style than the two larger newspapers. Since all three followed this relative pattern, this cannot be attributed to size of the paper, or support of any home team involved. It would seem to be uniformly true of metropolitan newspapers in general. Since they must sell their product to the reading public, one might further suppose that this cognitive approach has been successful to this end. In other words, the cognitive style
of presenting sports information must in fact appeal to the sports reading and buying public in the metropolitan areas. Efforts to go beyond this line of reasoning would not be proper for the scope of this work. Other studies should be conducted to discover why this style of sports reporting has come to so dominate the more emotional style.

Summary

The dominant theme of all Superbowl-related news articles was cognitive. Sportswriters from all three sampled newspapers relied upon factual data 94 percent of the time. When this figure is further analyzed it is clear that the vast majority of cognitive entries came from the 1A, Histories, subcategory.

The San Francisco Chronicle and the Dallas Morning News appear to be very similar across all categories. Individually the San Francisco Chronicle was the largest contributor to the study in the number of items overall as well as in five of the six subcategories. It also provided the largest number of articles but they were the shortest in average length of the three papers. Although the Chronicle was clearly in support of their local team, the 49'ers, it appeared to have no effect upon the data.

The Dallas Morning News mirrored the results of the San Francisco Chronicle in every category. While each shared a 93 percent of their total itemizations in the
cognitive category, the *Morning News* placed second to the *Chronicle* in five of the six subcategories.

The *St. Louis Post Dispatch* also followed this general data patterning. Of the three selections the *Post Dispatch* had the largest individual percentage of cognitive dominance with 95.5 percent of all entries. In contrast to this fact was that the *St. Louis Post Dispatch* was the weakest contributor of the three in total number of items scored and in the number of articles contributed to the study.
CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND FINDINGS

Introduction

Since the gilded age of industrialization in this country, the sports reading public has looked to its daily paper for news. Today fully one-third of the newspaper reading public reads only the sports news.

As the character of our nation was transformed from rural to urban and from preindustrialism to a post-industrial society, sports have gained in popularity. Americans spend billions of dollars annually in the sports and recreational field.

Of all the major sports, football has enjoyed the greatest amount of growth. It was first played in this country in the late 1860's among the Northeast athletic clubs and colleges. The modern version of the game dates back to the 1920's when the National Football League was created. One measure of football's rise in popularity is the cost of a professional football franchise. In 1920 this cost would have been about fifty dollars. Today no team is worth less than twenty million. Players' salaries have risen in similar fashion. In 1920 most played for a few dollars per game. Today the league average is in excess of one-hundred and fifty thousand dollars per person per season.
The Superbowl was first played sixteen years ago between the National Football Conference and the American Football Conference to establish professional football supremacy on an annual basis. Television advertising costs have risen from seventy-five thousand dollars per minute in 1967 to five-hundred and fifty thousand dollars per minute in 1982. This fact can be considered to be the third major yardstick to measure football's rise in popularity. As expected the viewing public has increased along the same lines. In 1967 some sixty million viewed the game. In Superbowl XVI the viewing audience comprised nearly one-half of the homes in America, and thousands more around the world.

Such a rise in popularity warrants sociological investigation. The Superbowl has clearly become a social event for millions of Americans annually. How has this enthusiasm been nurtured by the media? This study sought to answer this question in part by analyzing the dominant themes used by newspaper sportswriters.

Summary

Through a preliminary content analysis of Superbowl XV, certain categories and their subdivisions were established. By placing every statement from each article into one of these categories, a summary counting of dominant themes can be inferred.

Three major questions prompted and have guided this research from its inception. They are as follows.
1. What are the themes to which the greatest attention was given?

2. Does information presented fall primarily into a cognitive or affective context?

3. What differences in medium coverage, if any, existed between newspapers from the two teams (cities) involved?

These questions have now been answered.

From the sampled newspapers the greatest attention was given to developing Superbowl participants into fully dimensional persons. As the interested reader learns more and more about the players, coaches and teams he begins to identify with them and the event. As others envelop themselves in the extracurricular activities of this event, he too begins to think of the fun to be had during Superbowl week. By game time he has become an expert on relevant statistics and comparisons between the two teams. He has probably chosen a particular team to root for and has done so based on reams of cognitive information to be found in the daily sports pages. In short, metropolitan newspapers seem to rely on cognitive information which is usually delivered in the form of factual accounts of persons' past accomplishments and personal characteristics. Of all individual items tallied in this study, over 80 percent were from the IA, Cognitive Histories, subcategory.
The second problem question concerns the category from which most of the information comes. The cognitive category or domain totally dominated the affective category with 94 percent of all items registered in the study. This was the case in all three sample papers as well as across the three sample set. It remained true despite other differences between the three papers, such as size, number of articles, or home team representation.

The third question was concerned with any differences in medium coverage among the three newspapers. The two largest newspapers, the San Francisco Chronicle and the Dallas Morning News, were virtually identical in every statistical category. Their only difference came in the relative length of articles. Whereas the Dallas Morning News and the St. Louis Post Dispatch had nearly 40 scored items per article the San Francisco Chronicle rated just under 20. Coupled with the brevity of its articles was its dominance in number of articles presented during this fourteen-day period. Therefore it can be deduced that the Chronicle had more articles but individual style dictated that they be shorter than the average article length in this study. This difference had no effect on the statistical pattern so prominent in all three samples.

All three papers agreed upon an overwhelming cognitive approach to sports reporting of the Superbowl event. Their agreement was often only a few percentage points apart, and
uniformly so throughout all six subcategories. This homogeneity came in the face of some obvious variances which were expected to cause statistical differences but did not. For instance, the smaller size of the *Post Dispatch* seemed to have no effect upon the agreement between the samples, as did the fact that the *Chronicle* was clearly pro San Francisco 49'ers.

Conclusions

Data analysis from this study has led to the following six conclusions. Three of them represent conclusions about each sampled newspaper. The other three represent conclusions from the sample as a whole.

1. The *San Francisco Chronicle* most closely resembled a home team representative paper from a major metropolitan center. The *Chronicle* was the clear leader in number of items for five of the six subcategories and in both overall categories. In addition, it contributed twice the number of articles to the study as did the next largest sample newspaper. Within the context of its articles, the *Chronicle* favored the San Francisco 49'ers football team over the American Football League's Cincinnati Bengals. To its own credit and in keeping with its overwhelming cognitive style of reporting, the *Chronicle* also included a number of unbiased articles daily. These articles were usually from the two national wire services: the Associated Press and the United Press International.
2. The *Dallas Morning News* was the sample representative which best depicted the notion of a non-partisan metropolitan newspaper. The *News* is one of the largest daily newspapers in the Dallas/Fort Worth area with a circulation well over 300,000. It also lies outside the geographical jurisdiction of either participating team for Superbowl XVI.

3. The *San Francisco Chronicle* and the *Dallas Morning News* remained virtually identical across all subcategories and in overall style of presentation. So similar were they that they must be considered representative of a certain classification of newspapers. Even if most cautiously approached it can be concluded that they may well be representative of major urban center daily newspapers, and in particular those who house a National Football League professional football team.

4. The *St. Louis Post Dispatch* does not appear to be representative of the Cincinnati Bengal team located in Ohio. Its articles were largely bipartisan and limited in scope and depth when compared to the other two sample selections. Furthermore, the *Dispatch* does not represent a major metropolitan area on the scale of the San Francisco Bay area or the Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex. The *St. Louis Post Dispatch* contributed the fewest number of articles to the study, the fewest number of items scored and the lowest percentage of contribution in every subcategory. It is
more accurate to suggest that the St. Louis Post Dispatch represents a single city in the midwest whose writers presumably lost interest in the National Football League playoffs once their own team was out of the race. The predominance of Dispatch articles concerned local basketball and hockey news at both the college and high school levels of competition. In six days out of the two-week testing period, the St. Louis Post Dispatch's sports section had no articles concerning the upcoming Superbowl extravaganza. Certainly these facts lead to the conclusion that the St. Louis Post Dispatch does not feel representative of any participating team in Superbowl XVI, nor can it be considered in the same size category as the papers from San Francisco and Dallas.

In spite of these clear differences between the St. Louis Post Dispatch and the other two sampled newspapers, the pattern of its itemization remains the same. Regardless of size, or the primary sporting interests of its readers, the Post Dispatch utilized cognitive themes in 95 statements out of every 100. This congruence of themes from all three papers leads to conclusions in number five.

5. All three sampled newspapers represent a very homogeneous response to the analysis. Their averaged cognitive items indicate that 94 out of every 100 statements made were cognitively oriented. This cognitive dominance from widely diverse geographical areas suggest a style of
newspaper sports reporting which may be much broader. If it is given that competition exists amongst papers within an urban center, and relative freedom for each to change their style of reporting, then this cognitive approach must appeal to their buying-reading public. If it did not please the consumer, then sales would follow that newspaper who reported its sports news in the affective style. It must be concluded that at least those who read their urban sports pages are less interested in affective comments about the Superbowl than factual data.

6. The categories seemed to be both necessary and sufficient to encompass all statements made by sportswriters covering Superbowl XVI. Furthermore, they were equally adequate when applied in the pilot study to Superbowl XV. Further tests of them is now needed.

Suggestions for Further Study

As is normal with any research project, a few answers only stimulate more questions. The answers presented here have provoked questions in five broad areas which need further study. Extensions of this work could be beneficial in the following areas.

1. An expanded test of these categories is necessary. Their usefulness must be determined through a broad range of applications. Many of these future studies will also highlight other areas of need beyond this preliminary work. Some of these other areas are listed below.
2. A repetition of this study using other sampled papers would certainly add strength to the findings if the same results were obtained. There is a need to make a comparison between the major urban newspapers and the smaller rural ones. Do they employ the same style of sports reporting? Is it dominately cognitive or affective?

3. Longitudinal studies are also easily done using this same research format. To date there have been sixteen Superbowls and a larger number of professional football playoff games. Each of these could be analyzed and data compared year to year. It is likely that this cognitive style has not always been in vogue. Interesting questions could be asked if the time of change could be located. With a longitudinal study question in mind, another sport with a much longer playoff history could also prove a worthy quest.

4. The worth of these categories would be enhanced even further if they proved to be both necessary and sufficient to categorize newspaper sports reporting on other sports. Such information would immediately paye the way for a truly lengthy longitudinal study in an effort to locate approximate dates or periods when the style of reporting has changed. Furthermore, it would give sociologists another reliable tool for uniform analysis of all sporting events. Such a common denominator would allow for more congruity in spirited debates concerning various findings from many researchers.
5. For future work in this area there are many social-psychological questions to be asked. If it can be concluded that the cognitive theme used in newspaper sports reporting does indeed stimulate the reader to greater than normal interest, then why does it do so? What does the knowledge or persons and teams involved in the event do for or to the reader? Does he begin to identify with them or come to see their supporters as mutual members of some primary group or association? And finally, what factors come to bear upon the reader to cause him to choose one team over another? This is especially puzzling when one considers that the vast majority of newspapers are relatively neutral in their reporting of the upcoming Superbowl event. This question applies to the growing international Superbowl audiences as well. Without prior partisanship, how do they choose which team to root for? The logical answer is that they do so from the information they are able to assimilate about the upcoming game. Once again newspapers represent a major portion of this knowledge.

6. If more research continues to support the cognitive theme dominance, then it must be asked how does the fan become affective about the game? Two possible areas may prove fruitful to explore.

A. It may be that television is the major source for affective data. Television shows at close range terribly fierce collisions between players. Through
the magic of television viewers are present at bars, parties, parades, and street dances in the host city and around the country. They hear testimony from people who were victims of a Superbowl counterfeit ticket scam. Television takes its viewers onto the field and presents many significant-other experts to tell their opinions about the upcoming game. In every way television seems to be the more affective medium of the two, and a likely target for an extension of this work.

B. A conclusion that cannot be drawn from this study alone, but one that seems to be a logical inference, is that people are moved to affective reactions by cognitive information. As the reader begins to amass the reams of cognitive data about the participating teams and about the Superbowl, he comes to make logical decisions about what he has assimilated. He might for instance decide that San Francisco's wide receivers will be ineffective against Cincinnati's hidden zone coverages and physical defenders. Furthermore, he has concluded that Cincinnati's front offensive line will be successful because they are both heavier and quicker than San Francisco's defensive linemen. These two key decisions will mean for the reader that Cincinnati should win the Superbowl game. Since winning is culturally preferred, he will root for Cincinnati in Superbowl XVI.
People can emote anything. If the reader is an old Notre Dame alumni and he reads that the San Francisco quarterback is also an alumni, an in-group bond is tentatively formed. They are distant members of the same association. If other bits and pieces of cognitive data strengthen this new association with San Francisco, the reader may become quite affective about this team by game time. This process by which cognitive data seems to become the basis for affective actions and feelings should be explored in further studies.

7. Finally, this study may have practical applications for those major metropolitan newspapers. They must work in a highly competitive atmosphere. This demands that they know what the competition is doing and the effects of their efforts. New approaches to journalism must not escape their notice. For example, through content analysis research, a particular newspaper knows that all major metropolitan newspapers do their sports reporting in a cognitive style approximately 90 percent of the time. However, when this data is grouped by author it is discovered that the leading sportswriter in a particular area uses an affective style of sports reporting. This information would allow that particular newspaper who conducted the research to quickly take advantage of the new and successful trend. They might employ a new sportswriter who's particular style better suited the affective style, or urge staff writers to use a
more affective flair in their own articles in the future. This research could be expanded to include many other types of news reporting and thus serve as a market analysis tool for them.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books


Articles

