The ‘Boy Scouts’ and ‘Bad Boys’ of Skateboarding: A Thematic Analysis of *The Bones Brigade*

Skateboarding has emerged from an alternative subculture to an influential action sport, boosted by recent inclusion in the Olympic Games. Central to debates in both academic and practice communities are the tensions between skateboarding as a lifestyle and ethos, and skateboarding as an Olympic discipline. This article presents a thematic analysis of *The Bones Brigade* (Peralta, 2012) documentary which follows the rise of Tony Hawk, a high profile skateboarder, and the team he skated with during an important historical era in skating. All are men, presenting an opportunity to investigate masculinity in the sport. We reveal how these pivotal figures embody flexible and overlapping formations of hyper to alternative masculinity. Importantly, we also highlight forms of emotional connection and expressiveness that can unify all skaters. Such insights promote a deeper understanding into diverse formations of masculinity and various expressions of identities in skateboarding and with insights for other action sports.

Keywords: skateboarding; lifestyles sports; subcultures; sports documentaries; Tony Hawk; youth cultures

Introduction

Skateboarding has emerged from an alternative subculture and is now becoming an influential action sport, boosted by its inclusion in various large-scale events such as the

Vans Park Series, Street League Series, X-Games and the Olympic Games.

Skateboarding has been described as spanning the worlds of mega-sport, action and lifestyle sports as well as alternative scenes and subcultures traditionally associated with youth (Ellmer and Rynne, 2018; Thorpe and Olive, 2016; Thorpe and Wheaton, 2011; Wheaton, 2010, 2013; Willing and Shearer, 2015). Other dynamic elements in skateboarding include the diversity of its participants as seen in the topics and groups in the program at <https://www.pushingboarders.com> for the *Pushing Boarders* inaugural conference in 2018. The event featured skaters, activists, policy makers and academics who addressed issues such as gender, age, sexuality and skating as a global practice.

However in the West another notable characteristic of skateboarding is that it has also historically been a male dominated practice. On the one hand, scholars argue that the skateboarding scene can be a site of alternative masculinity which can have a positive impact (Beal, 1996; Atencio and Beal, 2011). On the other hand, typical representations of men who skate, such as in skate videos, project an image of them as hyper-masculine and often devoid of social and emotional vulnerabilities (Yochim 2010). The affective dimensions and constructions of identity and gender formations all involved with skateboarding are however beginning to have more exposure in skate documentaries. Consequently, this medium of skate videos is ripe for exploring more complex expressions and formations of masculinity and how it is represented.

In this paper we qualitatively explore how a group of pioneering skateboarders are represented in a video documentary about their experiences from the beginning of their careers to the present day. *The Bones Brigade* (Peralta, 2012) (the 'BB'), which focuses on the eponymous all male 1980s skateboarding team who achieved significant fame

and continue to be influential, is highly suited for exploring representations of men and masculinity in skateboarding. Skateboarding in the pivotal era of the 1980s was predominantly male and continues, at least in the West, to be criticised for being a ‘boys club’ (Ihaza, 2014). We aim to generate a deeper understanding of socially constructed forms of masculinities that have and continue to shape the identities of men who skateboard. Insights into the ethos that pioneering skaters attach to skateboarding also provide important background to understanding its appeal to individuals as an alternative to mainstream sport, and particularly as it approaches its first appearance in the Olympic Games. Additionally, our aim is to also contribute insights for other lifestyle and action sports and scenes where differing types of identities and expressions of masculinity can be overshadowed by more narrow portrayals and assumptions about the men who participate in them.

Studies of Masculinities in Lifestyle Scenes and Action Sports

Sport, along with school and the military, is one of the most significant institutions of male initiation and bonding and studies of sport and masculinity have made extensive use of the concept of hegemonic masculinity. This concept, systematised by Connell (1995) refers to the pattern of practice that allows men’s dominance over women by configuring and embodying ways of ‘being a man’ and requiring all other men to position themselves in relation to the dominant formations. With this ascendancy achieved through culture, institutions, the media and persuasion it is however, also open to challenge and changes (see for example Connell & Messerschmidt 2005). This social constructionist approach to gender and masculinity guides our analysis of the BB.

Research literature alerts us to some of the contrasting ways masculinity can be manifested in sport, although care is needed not to fall into only binary understandings. For instance, it is argued sport traditionally promoted hegemonic masculinity through such ideals as physical domination, aggression, competition, sexism and homophobia, although these ideals are not practiced uniformly and alternative masculinities have been found in studies of traditional team and individual sports (discussed in Beal 1996). In contrast, lifestyle sports, also labelled ‘alternative, new, extreme, adventure, panic, action [and] whiz’ sports’ (Wheaton 2010: 1057), emphasise participation over competition and promote lifestyles constructed in opposition to mainstream sporting cultures.

Of particular relevance to our study, lifestyle sports including skateboarding have been considered spaces for the performance of non-hegemonic masculinities (Thorpe and Olive, 2016). Observations include that individualised activities such as skateboarding create opportunities for homosociality and physicality for men outside of traditional sports. Furthermore, these activities can encourage masculinity and femininity to be embodied in various ways not tied to domination or gender (Whitson 1994). Studies of how ageing and masculinity in skateboarding (O’Connor, 2017; Willing, Bennett, Piispa and Green, 2018) and scenes once exclusively thought of as ‘youth’ cultures (Bennett, 2006; Hodkinson, 2011) also illustrates how masculinity is not static, and can also ‘mellow’ across time and contexts.

Studies of lifestyle sports such as skateboarding (Beal, 1996), surfing (Westly Evers, 2018) and snowboarding (Thorpe 2007) nevertheless remind us that even activities that encourage alternative masculinities can still diminish and exclude females in various ways, while Yochim (2010, 4) argues that skateboarding’s nascent critique of

dominant masculinities nevertheless maintains the power of ‘white middle-class, heterosexual men’. Systemic sexism continues despite significant increases in women’s participation in such sports (Thorpe 2010; Mackay and Dallaire 2012; Backstrom 2013). But there are also exceptions, with roller derby as an example (Pavlidis and Fullagar, 2014; Pavlidis and Connor, 2016). Our research takes the position that masculinities need to be seen as flexible, albeit sitting in a hierarchy in which hegemonic masculinity is situated at the top. We argue there is a need to explore whether both historical and contemporary representations of men who are pioneers and remain highly influential in skateboarding challenge or conform to this hierarchy.

Cultural Dimensions of Skateboarding

Skateboarding is a lifestyle, an art form, a sport, a career, an escape from responsibility, a hobby, a mode of transport, a kid’s pastime, a form of rebellion, a booming industry, a form of expression, family entertainment, a genre of video games, a healthy form of exercise, a dangerous activity, an addiction, a culture, an identity, an education, and even a religion to faithful followers - Tony Hawk, professional skateboarder and original member of *The Bones Brigade* (quoted in Mortimer, 2008: 7).

Skateboarding is an increasingly global and growing practice, with its acceptance for inclusion in the 2020 Olympics further legitimising it as a mainstream sport. But skateboarding also involves elements that are more spontaneous and autonomous than traditional sports. In the West where it originated, skateboarding arose as a lifestyle sport with certain subcultural traits, outlooks and rebellious outsiders (Borden 2001). Lifestyle and boundaries of belonging in skateboarding culture also resonate with Thornton’s (1995) concept of subcultural capital, which adapts Bourdieu’s (1984) theory of cultural capital to analyse distinctions and claims to authenticity within

consciously non-mainstream cultural domains. Both forms of capital confer status on the possessor of objectified and embodied cultural knowledge, in the eyes of the relevant beholder. However, subcultural capital is posited as less class-bound, more closely correlated with media coverage (albeit in complex ways), and in terms of social differences, most systematically aligned with age and gender. For example, Thornton's study of dance club culture found that girls would either elide the pursuit of hipness by knowingly deprecating their own music taste, thus accepting their low place in the subcultural hierarchy, or they would carefully seek to distance themselves from prevailing clichés of the mainstream (Thornton 1995, 13). The concept of subcultural capital has not been used extensively in relation to lifestyle sports though its relevance has been noted (Wheaton 2013, Snow, 2012). In a Californian study, Atencio, Beal and Wilson (2009) use Bourdieu's (1984) concept instead of Thornton's (1995), describing skateboarding media and lifestyle sports as social fields in which risk-taking behaviours and technical prowess are coded as both masculine and authentic.

As noted by Pavlidis (2015, 207), the concept of subculture is a fluid one. In her ethnographic research of women in roller derby in Australia she examined the ways participants *used* the concept in their own ways, 'as a means for understanding, explaining, rejecting, managing, promoting, marketing and shaping this rapidly growing leisure practice'. Like Tony Hawk's description of skateboarding above, Pavlidis' work (2012; 2015) uncovered the ways women in roller derby attached a range of meanings to their involvement. These meanings were often complex and sometimes contradictory, for example the tension between wanting to win, and participating just for the 'love of it' (Pavlidis and Fullagar, 2014), yet these meanings were central in supporting different types of femininities to be enacted through the sport.

Skateboarding also has emotional and experiential dimensions that are an important part of the attraction of the culture and doing it as an activity for the 'love of it'. For instance, Wheaton (2010) observes one of the influential impacts and meanings of lifestyle sport activities for participants is found in their potential for creativity, self-actualisation and transcendence of the self. This includes offering individuals a 'sanctuary' from their troubles and limitations elsewhere in life and an ability to pursue a commitment to the feeling of 'stoke' and being 'at one' with and in intense awareness of 'the moment'. This is different to more tangible motivations such as achieving the status of being a 'winner' or being financially rewarded for their efforts.

Borden (2001) also notes the significance in skateboarding of creativity and 'style' and non-conventional outlooks to the world and its built environment by seeing it differently through potential skateboarding tricks. Non-conformity and being resistant to conventions play a role in the sport, scene and its cultural dimensions. But the more resistant and rebellious side of skateboarding is also argued to sit in a complex, sometimes contradictory, sometimes complementary and complicit relationship with its concurrent growth from commercialisation. For instance Lombard (2010, 2016) highlights that many professional skaters consistently move between enjoying mainstream popularity and the alternative status of being a legitimate or 'lit' member of the 'core' skateboarding scene.

What is lacking in research is how the skateboarding community and its pioneering individuals themselves perceive and reflect on these connections and tensions. Accordingly, our research is interested in how skateboarders talk about their identities,

and how skaters also represent the life stories of skaters in documentaries, as a way of recognising pivotal men in the history of skateboarding. Our analysis focuses on only a small group of professional skateboarders and not ‘ordinary’ men who skate. However, our case study provides a suitable window into the dynamics between alternative and hegemonic masculinities, skating as a youth culture for ‘misfits’ and ‘rebels’ and its mainstreaming, and the affective and intangible joys versus the profitable, structured and competitive side of skateboarding. Our study was guided by the following questions: Firstly, what are some of the characteristics of the pioneering men who shaped skateboarding portrayed in the BB documentary? Secondly, how do these men conform to or challenge dominant perceptions about men who skate? And thirdly, what motivations, values and outlooks connected to skateboarding might unite skateboarders despite their differences?

Sports Documentaries, Skate Videos and The Bones Brigade

Skate videos are argued to communicate the styles, locations, heroes, and values of the culture (Willing, Bennett, Piispa and Green, 2018; Yochim 2010) and help to construct powerful notions of authentic identities and core participation. According to Yochim (2010), skate videos position skateboarding as a lifestyle or expression of personality as opposed to a competitive sport; they also emphasise individual identity and well-being. They also elevate hyper-masculine traits such as physical prowess along with traditionally feminised artistic and emotional expression, while explicitly mocking the norms of white, adult, suburban masculinity. Thus, skate videos offer a highly suitable medium to explore many of the issues so far raised being of interest to this research including the interweaving relationships between skateboarding culture and

masculinities that influence high profile male skaters who in turn influence the scene and its participants.

According to McDonald (2007), sports documentaries have made significant contributions to the critique of sport and society, yet the sub-genre has received little attention in documentary studies and sports studies. By placing sports in their social context, documentaries reveal that sport is about more than performance on the field of play and may challenge or reinforce dominant ideologies (McDonald 2007). Relevantly, McDonald analyses *Dogtown and Z-Boys* (Peralta, 2002), a documentary in the participatory mode about ‘a group of skateboarders from California who helped to transform skateboarding from its former image as a land bound pastime for surfers to its status as an extreme and acrobatic sport in its own right’. Director Stacey Peralta, who went on to direct the BB, was one of those skateboarders. Interestingly, McDonald argues that by juxtaposing their stories in a certain light, the film celebrates the virtues of individual entrepreneurialism and thus reflects rather than challenges the dominant ideology of sport and capitalism.

The BB documentary video is a combination of the identity defining skate videos and cinematic sport documentary of the kind discussed by McDonald (2007). In our exploration, we focus on how the video represents and captures the perspectives of Tony Hawk, arguably the most famous professional skateboarder in skateboarding history, as well as other key BB members. This includes Rodney Mullen, Lance Mountain, Steve Caballero, Mike McGill and Tommy Guerrero. Additionally, the video considers reflections in the video by key rivals of the BB such as Christian Hosoi, Tony Alva, Duane Peters and Steve Olsen, who are portrayed as the ‘bad boys’ of the scene,

in contrast to the image of the BB, who we shall learn were labelled as being ‘boy scouts’. Insights from Stacy Peralta, the BB video’s director, a former pro-skateboarder himself and a ‘svengali’ like manager and ‘father figure’ of the BB team are also analysed. In the 1980s the BB team starred in a number of videos made by Peralta and his business partner George Powell that captured their skills and personalities in their youth, but mainly through skateboarding scenes and scripted antics. These videos, as commented about in the BB documentary, were highly popular and influential on skateboarding but more focused on entertainment than a deeper exploration of the skaters’ biographies.

As stated by Nichols (1991, x), documentaries ‘provoke or encourage response, shape attitudes and assumptions’. In this way, the BB documentary can be viewed as pivotal in contributing towards and challenging our understandings of masculinity and youth culture in skateboarding. In her analysis of football hooligan documentaries, Poulton (2008) notes that documentaries are ‘polysemic. They are encoded with different meanings by their producers and can be received by audiences in a variety of different intended or unintended ways’ (p. 331). Documentaries are often considered to be informative and representative (Poulton and Roderick, 2008, 336) and are important cultural forms to analyse in sport studies. The BB documentary is not seen as a ‘true’ representation of skateboarding, particularly with Peralta as director. Nevertheless, scholarly research on the men central to the BB documentary is scarce, as are studies of skate videos and skate documentaries such as the BB, which are argued to play an important cultural role in skateboarding and how skaters are represented (O’Connor, 2017; Yochim, 2010; Willing, Bennett, Piispa and Green, 2018).

Insight into how key figures in skateboarding's history embody and perform their identities as skaters is useful for understanding influential expressions of identity and gender in this lifestyle sport and scene. The BB documentary is also highly suitable for our research due to its length (1 hour and 51 minutes), its combination of interviews with skateboarders, biographical information about them by the director in voice overs (and also himself as a skater from an even earlier era), skate video footage of the BB, clips from skate movies featuring the BB's and archival photos.

Our research used an inductive and thematic analysis approach of looking for common patterns in this material through open coding, and then refined categories of relevance that shed light on the meanings (Braun and Clarke, 2006). The research team watched the BB video together to make notes, then as individuals to make further notes, and then coded these notes as a team. The first author is a sociologist and also a dedicated skateboarder and therefore an 'insider' of the community being investigated, but a woman, therefore allowing her to be sensitive to the particular ways skating and skater identities are often performed in gendered and hierarchical ways (as highlighted by Connell, 1995). The second author is a male sociologist and youth cultures researcher who is not involved in lifestyle sports and was therefore able to provide an 'outsider' perspective. The third author is a former roller derby participant, interdisciplinary scholar with sociological and cultural studies training and feminist scholar, and she was also able to draw on her personal and scholarly insights on lifestyle sports. As a team, we trouble the insider/outsider dualisms typical to sport research (Pavlidis and Olive, 2014), providing a nuanced account of gender and culture. Codes and themes were refined and reviewed by all team members to check if they were plausible and also checked against relevant literature on skateboarding, gender and other lifestyle sports.

Findings

In this section we draw attention to certain typologies that appeared to be significant windows into the culture of skateboarding and key identities shown in the video. We illustrate how skateboarding attracts various individuals who can perform hyper-masculinity while also having a broad emotional range and social and physical traits not usually associated with men who skate. The main themes presented are: 1) Misfits as Unlikely Pioneers in a Hyper-Masculine World; 2) Boy Scouts and Bad Boys: Contrasting and Entangled Masculinities and 3) Skate Dedication and Resistance to Hegemonic Masculinity. We argue that while the video represents its main subjects heroically or spectacularly for dramatic effect, it nevertheless paves the way for a greater range of masculinities to be recognised, remembered and also understood as an ongoing influence and part of skateboarding culture.

Misfits as Unlikely Pioneers in a Hyper-Masculine World

“It was like I found a home of misfits.” Tony Hawk (in the *Bones Brigade*, Peralta, 2012)

Contemporary skate videos regularly portray skaters as physically youthful and fit, and as high risk takers, getting injured while attempting difficult skateboarding tricks without any safety gear. Common tropes in modern day skate videos include scenes of skaters bleeding and swearing while skating, and drinking and being rebellious and raucous when off the board. Strong connections are also often made in these skate videos between skateboarding and particular music genres (punk, metal and so on) signified by the clothing, such as bandanas, black clothes and band t-shirts (Yochim

2010). However, these combinations only illustrate a certain range of masculinities that are performed by men who skate.

Hawk and the males in the BB team are introduced in the video as still embodying alternative identities to the mainstream but with noticeable differences too. For instance, their clothes are colourful and quirky and they do not wear the adornments of music scenes like heavy metal. They are shown wearing helmets and ‘padding up’ in protective gear, emphasising safety over risk, often thought of as ‘feminine’ (Young and Dallaire, 2008). They are also portrayed as emotionally vulnerable, pensive, earnest and awkward, and generally in stark contrast to the more boldly confident personas and conventionally athletic bodies of skaters typically seen in today’s videos. Moreover, the video presents them as being misfits as youth in the mainstream world too, who somehow become drawn to and end up excelling in an often hyper-masculine world of skateboarding. Hawk for instance states:

I was the scrawny little kid with probably size six feet, right...when I started skating it gave me a sense of identity, it gave me a sense of self-confidence. It gave me a purpose (1.00 - Hawk)

The underlying theme conveyed in the introduction to him is that skateboarding back in the 1980s offered a sanctuary for ‘misfits’ not immediately suited to fitting in, including in conventional sports dominated by ‘jocks’. Hawk, is presented in the video as ‘geeky’ in his mannerisms, there is no ‘tough talk’ from him, and his tone is modest rather than one of boasting in opposition of a more dominant and confident persona that would quickly be aligned with hegemonic masculinity.

The idea of misfits finding a place in skateboarding fits how the other BB members appear in the introduction, with each later being revealed as inventing ground-breaking styles and tricks that are still respected and practiced within skateboarding today. Steve Caballero explains he was at risk of being sent to juvenile hall until he found skateboarding as an adolescent. Lance Mountain has a tall, lean and lanky appearance, and has a more brash and jovial persona, but also exhibits plenty of self-depreciation by regularly describing himself as less talented than the others. At the 1.37 mark Mountain states, “Skateboarding was the first time I was good at something”. Tommy Guerrero confesses at the 2.15 mark that for him growing up, “Every sect, every faction in school gave me grief...the cool kids, the stoners, you know, the jocks”. Skating, he reveals “was the only thing I could find, um, sanctuary in, you know, a sense of peace”. Mike McGill explains he embraced team sports, but it was the pressure to think and act collectively that pushed him away and over to focusing on skateboarding. And Rodney Mullen, who appears to be the most introverted BB member is introduced in the video as having perhaps the greatest influence on skateboarding inventing quintessential tricks skateboarders still perform today such as the ‘kickflip’ (a trick requiring a high degree of skill, dedication and agility). Mullen appears in the video as emotionally sensitive, intellectual and eccentric. Growing up he states at the 2.37 mark, “I could never speak!...Skateboarding, what it represented, the ability to create, to express myself. It became my voice”. Despite the successes and heroic prowess (in terms of skateboarding) of these men, they do not construct themselves in these terms. Indeed they appear to be at pains to, as Wetherell and Edley (1999) note, ‘doing being normal...where normality includes procedures for presenting oneself which manage

narcissism, keeping it in check through a mixture of modesty, work and self-deprecation, and so on' (p.343).

Former pro-skater Stacy Peralta and businessman George Powell, the team bosses of the BB, are also introduced. Peralta is also the director of the BB video. He does not portray himself as overtly corporate and powerful, despite his achieving wealth from turning skateboarding into a highly profitable business. He instead uses archival footage of him with skaters, looking youthful and rebellious and photographed with the Zephyr Skate Team in 1975, also known as Dogtown and Z-Boys and featured in an earlier documentary of the same name by Peralta (year). In short, Peralta promotes the image of him being an outsider too, influenced by creativity and subcultural lifestyles rather than formality and competition of traditional sports.

Despite being 'misfits', we find out in the video that the team Peralta selected were all pioneers in skateboarding in significant ways. Peralta states of the BB, "They weren't just guys who dominated competition. But they were also skateboarders who invented some of the most revolutionary manoeuvres of that entire decade" (Peralta, BB video 5.06). The video's progressive narrative also reveals that the BB team also quickly achieved an unseen level of competitive and commercial success in skateboarding. However, as shall be revealed in the next section, creative innovations and mainstream success were not always enough to win them acceptance in the very scene in which they had originally sought refuge.

Boy Scouts and Bad Boys: Contrasting Masculinities in Skateboarding

This section discusses two main typologies of masculinity observed in the BB video. The first typology revealed in the video is that of ‘boy scouts’, with the BB perceived as such due to their abstinence from drugs, wearing protective gear such as helmets and knee pads when skating, and performing an alternative type of masculinity that is quirky rather than ‘cool’ and macho. The video also highlights how the BB had mainstream appeal that they profited from. The second typology is that of ‘bad boys’, with the video pointing to Tony Alva and his skate ‘crew’ who were contemporaries of the BB but adopted an image of being ‘rock stars’ with ‘tougher’ images, such as having tattoos, wearing black, drinking and partying.

Despite this seemingly split binary of masculinities in the video, we argue that these so-called ‘boy scouts’ and ‘bad boys’ nevertheless have some overlapping characteristics, motives, practices and outlooks on skateboarding. For instance, the BB and their rivals approach to skateboarding includes forms of aggression and competitiveness more readily associated with hyper-masculine and even hegemonic traits. At the same time, both crews are also misfits and outcasts who embraced skateboarding partly as a way to resist being part of the mainstream and conformity, and as we shall see later, value the physical experience of progression, joy and lifestyle of skating over other imperatives such as money, fame and winning. Peralta explains of Hawk for instance, “He got made fun of a lot by other people. Because of the tricks he did, he was doing things that people at the time didn’t understand” (Peralta at 24:48).

The individuality of the BB team also extended to their image and social lives. Their own styles lacked easily identifiable subcultural capital (Thornton, 1995) from scenes such as heavy metal and rock n’ roll, as did their behaviour when not skating. As Glenn

Friedman, a skater interviewed in the BB video declares, “You couldn’t find a nicer group of fuckin’ boy scouts than the Bones Brigade” (BB video 1:37:00). McGill states as a point of defence, “Hell no, we weren’t boy scouts! But we didn’t get into alcohol or drugs or anything like that. Skateboarding was our way of letting loose I guess” (BB video 1:37:40). Also as a point of defence Mountain states:

“For them [BB rivals at the time] to say “You guys were straight and lame and we were partying, having a good time” - nah nah. You’re partying to have a good time because you cannot compete with Caballero. Man up! Man up and beat us! Not me personally, they always beat me [he laughs]. But man up and beat my boys!” (Mountain, BB video 1:38:10).

Mountain emphasises that his team of ‘boys’ had superior skating skills to the tougher acting and looking ‘bad boy’ skaters who were their rivals. As the ‘boy scout’ labelling indicates however, the BB were not viewed by rival skaters as having ‘manly’ traits. Hawk for instance is ridiculed at the 25.00 mark of the video for wearing safety equipment by Duane Peters, who with many tattoos, smoking a cigarette and swearing explains, “Yeah I didn’t like him. I didn’t like his style. He was just an annoying, little fuckin’ kid with way too many pads on” (BB video, 25.00). And at the 1:37:18 mark Steve Olsen, now a middle-aged but once an influential pro-skater, is shown saying, “I didn’t like the way they dressed. I didn’t like their haircuts!”. At the 1.12.11 mark of the video Alva also points out that Hawk began to become a focal point by Alva’s ‘crew’, who had a tougher image, and were openly hostile towards him:

These guys were animals, they were just like dreadlocks, leather jacket, beer in their hand, you know they probably just smoked a joint in the parking lot, you know my guys were the rockstar guys, and that's why my guys were so, just like, man, aggro over Tony Hawk. They were cursing under their breath when they saw him take a run. (Tony Alva, 1.12.11 mark)

The video then introduces Christian Hosoi as the main 'bad boy' rival to Hawk. Peralta states:

Hosoi, he was as beautiful a skater as there has been in the history of the sport, and he was powerful, and he was exotic looking, and like Alva, he was a rockstar. And everyone, the punks, the hardcore, loved Christian. And if they're going to love Christian, they're going to hate Tony". (Stacy Peralta, 1:13:00 mark).

The video makes much of this dramatic rivalry, editing interviews and footage showing archival clips of Hawk, looking clean cut and focused, and Hosoi in contrast, playing up his 'rock star' image. In interviews heard while both are shown doing battle in a vert competition, Hawk is described by Peralta as technically brilliant, but robotic in movement, while Hosoi is framed as being a graceful yet aggressive competitor who is conventionally handsome, brawny and conveys supreme confidence. The dynamic between Hawk and Hosoi in the video, as well as the 'boy scouts' versus 'bad boys' theme in interviews in this section is dramatically compelling and follows typical sports documentary conventions (Poulton and Roderick, 2008). However, both demonstrate forms of hyper-masculinity so far as risk taking. Furthermore, we argue both reject

conventional hegemonic masculinity through their non-mainstream styles and creativity, and at other times, embody it through their aggressive drive to win and be the best.

There is an entangled rather than clearly divided relationship between alternative, hyper-masculine and hegemonic masculinity in the way these skaters are represented.

Skate Dedication and Resistance to Hegemonic Masculinity

Despite the competitive rivalry shown between the ‘boy scouts’ and ‘bad boys’ in the BB video, this section highlights lifestyle ethics and dedication to the joy of skateboarding that, we argue, still differentiate them from mainstream sports. In particular, we point to how skaters’ dedication to ‘skating first’ also symbolises a form of resistance to hegemonic masculinity.

Reflecting on the time when they were at their peak, various BB members reveal that winning became a burden. Hawk states that he was winning all the events but was resented for his success then ridiculed when he placed second or third, and that:

I just didn’t like what it was doing to me. It was crushing mentally, as I wasn’t enjoying it...It was too much for me at the time. It was really draining on me, and I wasn’t enjoying skating as much because of it. (Tony Hawk, BB video, 1:15:35)

Mullen offers more insight into the pressure he too felt from being at the top. He explains that he threw many of his trophies away and hated them, because expectations of him winning:

Creates so much more pressure because there's no gratification in winning, there's only upholding something so that you don't lose it. And it is staggering. It usurps the joy of it. It's like a Kafka short story, you build the house but you can't live in it. Just sit around guarding it. (Rodney Mullen, BB video, 1:16:37).

The creative aspect of skateboarding was more important to Mullen and speaks to the types of meaningful 'subcultural careers' described by Snyder (2012) in his ethnographic work on skateboarding. At one point he emphasises an emotional, internal rather than external dimension of skateboarding was core to his involvement, "The joy is in creating something. The joy is in what comes out of you, that's what keeps me going" (Rodney, BB video, 51:50). In Hawk's and Mullen's interviews there is a rejection of power, ruling and dominance through competition. Winning is not glorified by these males and instead is weighed up against their feelings.

The video also reveals that members like Hawk and Mullen temporarily quit competing, even though they almost always won, bringing them dissatisfaction. The shift from subcultural career to professional skateboarder was for them untenable, and, more importantly, undesirable. This refusal to completely give themselves to the sport/industry complex speaks directly to skateboarding's long affiliation with the values of resistance and leisure (rather than conformity and work). The narrative in the BB video proposes it was not until Hawk and Mullen stopped putting pressure on themselves to win, and instead place more emphasis on the pleasures and enjoyment of being creative and innovative, that they were able to fully return to the sport. Even their key 'rivals' in the video express respect for these decisions made by the BB. At the

24:08 mark Hosoi states, of a trick invented by and named after Caballero, “When he did the Caballerial, I’m still today like blown away because I still can’t do it!” At 1:38:30 Glenn Friedman also expresses admiration of the BB’s pioneering tricks stating, “...here were these little soft kids, but all their integrity and all their heart was in skateboarding”. And Alva also speaks with respect about the integrity of Hawk, commenting that, “I don’t think Tony ...ever did it to be famous or to be like this big...He was not the rockstar guy”. (Tony Alva, BB video, 1:12:10). It seems that once the BB had reached the top, being victorious and always winning at competitions becomes secondary to these skateboarders. Their emotional well being and ability to be creative became a top priority. This part of the documentary moves away from the typical hyper-masculine representation of skating seen in contemporary skate videos, and offers a much more nuanced, multi-dimensional depiction of men who skate.

The emotional and affective dimensions of skateboarding are also highlighted in the concluding part of the documentary when the BB discuss the contributions they felt they have made to skateboarding and also, what skateboarding has done for their lives. The BB members interviewed in this part position themselves as elders in the scene and are framed as ‘sage’ like. They appear emotionally exposed and spontaneously allow themselves to appear sad and vulnerable, with some starting to cry. For example, Mountain is not boastful of the fame and wealth he achieved within the BB, nor his skill at skating which was proven in competitions. He is instead humble, grateful and downplays his role. He is shown crying and wiping away tears as he explains, “I shouldn’t have even been in a position to have it. Let alone fade away...I mean all you guys gave me an opportunity and I shouldn’t have even been in it. Is my opinion” (Mountain, BB video, 1.42.00).

Caballero is also shown crying but does not deny the impact he and the team had on skateboarding. He states, “I just look back on my life. And I feel so blessed. (holding back tears) to be part of this whole scene. (wipes tears). The people we’ve affected. Just because it’s a passion that we have” (Caballero, BB video, 1.43.09). Mullen too is proud of the contribution he feels he and the BB made to skateboarding. He does not cry, but his mannerisms are quiet and introverted, he sometimes almost whispers and his body language is contained and gives the impression he is meek. He explains, “I was able to contribute with a lot of tricks. And those tricks now have names. And those tricks factor into what everybody else does. And in a very meaningful way I have helped create a vocabulary by which this community communicates” (Mullen, BB video 1:43:59). He is however also humble and gracious about how skateboarding and being in the BB changed his own life, indicating that it made him feel very rich inwardly, stating, “Everything I am today somehow is fed by my need for acceptance...because of Tony and...these guys [Bones Brigade] that gave me a sense of acceptance and belonging” (Mullen, BB video 1.24.19).

Such displays of vulnerability and the emotional impact skateboarding has on the BB sits in contrast with the performances of more hyper and hegemonic masculinity seen in other parts of the video. Scholars, such as Courtenay (2000) agree that emotional control and the refusal of vulnerability are a central part of hegemonic masculinity and support our analysis as to the complexity of masculinity presented in BB. At the same time, the final scenes wrap up the stories of the BB team members in a narrative that establishes these elder ‘skatesmen’ as successful in also mainstream, hegemonic and seemingly heteronormative ways. That is, they are represented as wealthy, heterosexual

and married with children. Nods to the more alternative aspects of their lives include Hawk's philanthropic side and some of the skaters' music-related activities such as playing in bands. In the end, these ageing skaters benefit from the relationships they have fostered and embodied between skateboarding for love, pushing and pioneering how it is done through dedication and competitive drive, and mainstreaming it and profiting from it. All the while however, as conveyed in the video, the BB team did not appear to compromise their 'boy scouts' image and going 'outside the box' styles of skating, even when heckled or despised for it.

Discussion and Conclusion

This article's thematic analysis of the BB video highlights how various forms of masculinity can coexist with each other in skateboarding, and that these forms exist beyond the hyper-masculine type typically seen in skate videos. As observed in representations of the BB, skaters can also be misfits who are not 'cool', lack subcultural capital in the very scene they excel in, can be not conventionally athletic and have lifestyles that stand in contrast to 'rockstar' and subversive activities often associated with youth cultures and alternative scenes.

As we also highlighted in the findings, despite the tensions between the 'boy scouts' and 'bad boys', the intense dedication the BB exhibited, which advanced skateboarding to a highly original and technically advanced level nevertheless earned the respect of the 'bad boys'. This respect, we argue, arises from a mutual recognition of shared forms of masculinity and shared affective motivations. Thus, masculinities in skaters can at times be poles apart and at others, interweave and be shared by very different males, further

highlighting the socially flexible and constructed ‘nature’ of masculinity and what it is to ‘be a man’ in sporting contexts.

The binary often set up between skateboarding as a lifestyle done for love versus something done as a competitive sport for profit was also able to be interrogated in our exploration. We demonstrated how the BB were successfully competitive but Hawk, and his peer Mullen in particular, felt conflicted when winning took them away from doing skateboarding for personal enrichment. At the end of the documentary, as middle-aged men, the BB embrace their success, but with an attitude of gratitude that contrasts with descriptions typical of hegemonic masculinity which privilege ideas of dominance and superiority. We recommend that future studies further unpack how skateboarders negotiate the lifestyle aspects of their sport with the mainstream and imperatives for success and forward advancement, further building on the growing body of critical literature by scholars such as (Dinces, 2011, Willing, Bennett, Piispa and Green, 2018, O’Connor, 2017, Turner, 2013). While not central to the focus of this paper, researchers point to how social constructions of ‘race’ and ethnicity and even religious faith can impact on various aspects of skateboarding and the identities of skaters (for instance see Kyle Kusz, 2007 and Yochim, 2010). Such a focus in analysing the BB skaters and the era they represent is worthy of further investigation.

As this article has highlighted, for men skaters and the male dominated world of skateboarding, various life stages, opportunities and motivations all come to shape and be shaped by a spectrum of masculinities that at times can compete and at other times connect with each other. Recognising the diversity of masculinities and the flexible, constructed nature of how they manifest in skateboarder identities also prisms the scene

open and away from the essentialist idea of skateboarding as a ‘man’s’ sport and just ‘for the boys’, when those very categories of gender are shown to be unstable and multiple.

Skateboarding has been and continues to be a physical cultural practice that defies categorization. Questions as to ‘what is skateboarding?’ and ‘who can be a skateboarder?’ continue to provoke debate both within academia and within skateboarding communities. This article has illuminated some of the history of skateboarding, told through a documentary, where the story of the ‘bad boys’ and the ‘boy scouts’ of skateboarding embody these key tensions. Both the ethos and subculture of skateboarding, together with the skill and ‘sport’, are central to what skateboarding was, and what it may become. Like most lifestyle sports, men have been in the majority and have hence been held as the ideal. Yet unlike some other fields, as the BB video and our analysis demonstrates, skateboarding can hold in tension a range of expressions of masculinity, celebrating both the ‘bad boys’ and the ‘boy scouts’ simultaneously.

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