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**Racing heroes and grieving widows: A study of the representation of death in
motorsport**

By

Jean-Simon Demers

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Supervisor: Mark Lowes

University of Ottawa

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Abstract

Gilles Villeneuve, Ayrton Senna, Greg Moore, Dale Earnhardt. Only four of a number of high-profile race car drivers to have lost their lives taking part in events at the highest levels of motorsport. The aim of the present study is to analyze the coverage of death in high-level motorsport in the printed sports news of La Presse and The Toronto Star in Canada for the 1982 to 2017 period inclusively. Mobilizing the existing literature on risk-taking, namely Lyng's concept of edgework, as well as Hall's work on representation, a thematic analysis of a sample of sports news articles (N=488) was conducted. Three main themes emerged from the analysis. The discussion surrounding motorsport fatalities revolved around the individual (the deceased driver), the social aspect of the death (primarily the family members left behind), and journalistic practices (how to cover death). In conclusion, the coverage of death in motorsport was found to be an instance where the athlete is heroized and sometimes revered even decades after their death. In this aspect, the figure of Gilles Villeneuve remains pivotal to motorsport discussions in Canada, even to this day. It also was found that sports journalists, through their coverage of deadly accidents, enact the traditional roles of the journalist in offering social criticism of their subject matter to their readers, and that motorsport drivers enact a highly specific type of masculinity when practicing their sport.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Risk is everywhere, or so risk management textbooks would have us believe. While some people take financial risks, others take political ones. There are also some who prefer another kind of risk: sport risks. Whether it is skydiving, rock climbing, BASE jumping or any other activity that has an element of risk to it, there are people ready to push the limits of what is possible and test their abilities in extreme environments (Spiegelhalter, 2014). This is what paraglider Gavin McLurg describes as “walking the line between too much and too little” (Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity, 2015).

That being said, all sports are not created equal. There is an infinite array of variations among them, ranging from technical skills required, equipment used, and inherent risk levels. Beyond individual risks, such as extreme mountain climbers who do not practice their sport in front of a public, there are many cases where the risk taking can be shared with an interested public. If we take the example of motorsport, it is estimated that driving in a Formula 1 Grand Prix (the main racing series of the Fédération internationale de l’automobile (FIA)) includes a one percent probability of dying (<http://www.besthealthdegrees.com/health-risks/>). While this is a clear improvement over the situation for the same series compared to the 1970’s, a time when a driver faced a 20% chance of death if he raced for five years (Barnes, 2013), high-level motorsport remains risky to an almost unparalleled level.

There is one key difference between a Formula 1 Grand Prix event and attempting to climb Mount Everest without oxygen supply: the audience. While climbing Everest is a lived experience shared by a select few or lived alone, a Grand Prix mega-event is shared with the audience on site in the stands at the time of the race, as well as with the spectators watching the show from the

comfort of their homes on television or through online media platforms. Formula 1 Grand Prix alone are watched by over 350 million annual spectators across the world (Sylt, 2018).

This audience is in part Canadian. 3.3 million spectators watched the 2015 Grand Prix of Canada on television (Sylt, 2016). Considering that at the time there were no Canadian drivers in Formula 1, a situation that lasted ten years from the end of Jacques Villeneuve's career in 2006 to the arrival of Lance Stroll in 2017 (Associated Press, 2016), this Canadian audience has potential to expand in the future. If Stroll, a 19-year-old sophomore (or second-season driver), can emulate Villeneuve's successes and become a world champion, Formula 1's popularity, and that of motorsport in Canada, could soar (Donaldson, n.d.).

Still, motorsport remains an activity with a very high degree of inherent risk. On-track mortality is far from exclusive to the highest levels of motorsport. The *Motorsport Memorial* shows that in the last ten years more than 300 drivers of all origins, genders, and performance classes lost their lives driving a race car (<http://www.motorsportmemorial.org/>). This is an average of thirty a year. When including motorcycle racing, the Isle of Man TT, one of the most renowned road races in the world, has had 146 fatalities over its hundred-year history alone (Harris, 2017). Despite the risks, drivers get back on the track and no less than 30 000 spectators attend the event every year (Terry, Maddrell, Gale & Arlidge, 2015). In high-level motorsport series like Formula 1, Indycar (a single seater series where drivers participate in the mythical Indianapolis 500) (Indycar, n.d.; Indianapolis Motor Speedway, n.d.), and NASCAR (an American stock-car series) (<http://www.nascar.com/>), many prominent drivers have lost their lives throughout the years. Men like Dale Earnhardt and Ayrton Senna are amongst the most recognized names. In Canada, we too have our own motorsport martyrs, but one name is remembered above all others: Gilles Villeneuve.

On the Ile-Notre-Dame circuit that has hosted the Canadian Grand Prix since 1978 there is a turn named after Ayrton Senna. The Brazilian triple world champion, who was killed during a race in San Marino in May 1994 (Donaldson, n.d.a), is nevertheless overshadowed by Villeneuve in Montreal. The full name of the track is Circuit Gilles Villeneuve (Onel Mézil, 2017). These drivers still inhabit the imaginations of Formula 1 fanatics, if only by being referred to in prestigious locations. Even for those who are not motorsport fans, the nature of the sport media industry and its extensive coverage on television and in print and online media makes it likely to be exposed to motorsport (Lowes, 2002).

While the broadcasting of sport events on television enables spectators to live these events as they happen, press coverage of those same events presents different challenges for the journalists called on to report their experience. On this matter, Nareau proposes that sports have “narrative power” (2015, p. 51). They bring a flurry of emotions through the spectacle they offer to those consuming them, and can be used to frame social issues and give meaning to the society within which they are enacted. In the case of journalists covering motorsports, it is impossible to avoid the matter of death. The risks taken by drivers can lead to their demise. The challenge journalists face is related to how the subject is approached in their reporting. In the Canadian context, where a driver like Gilles Villeneuve captured the imagination of the population because of his ‘always on the limit’ driving style (de la Plante, 1995), there is a potential for a scholarly study of the representation of death. Gone before he could realize his potential and become a world champion, Villeneuve’s heroic shadow still looms large thirty-five years after his death. Online and printed articles are still devoted to him on each anniversary of his death (Côté, 1992; Trudel, 2002; Tortora, 2007; Waddell, 2017). But he is not the only high-profile driver to have died since that time. The sport media landscape is populated by driver death. Between 1982 and 2017, 26

drivers died driving either in the Formula 1, Indycar, and NASCAR circuits (Motorsport Memorial).

With three Canadians competing at the highest levels of motorsport – Lance Stroll in Formula 1, as well as James Hinchcliffe and Robert Wickens in Indycar – the matter of the Canadian news coverage of motorsport has an increased relevance. Gilles Villeneuve and Greg Moore died in 1982 and 1999 respectively, and 2015 almost saw another Canadian fatality. James Hinchcliffe came close to losing his life in an accident that occurred in a practice session for the Indy 500 (McDonald, 2017). The representation of death in motorsport remains particularly important considering danger is always lurking about. This nonetheless is a specific subject matter that remains virtually unaddressed in the literature.

Against this background, the primary research question guiding this study is the following: How is motorsport death represented in the daily printed sports news in Canada between 1982 and 2017?

The focus put on printed news coverage should not be interpreted as a slight against online publications. For the sake of the research sample, and to ensure continuity within it, the focus of the study was limited to Canadian print media. The goal of this research is to understand the variance in ideas shared with the Canadian public through the last 35 years when it comes to the coverage of dangerous activities, namely motorsport. Death is not, in occidental societies, an everyday possibility anymore and is often experienced in mediated formats, namely in the news. Such is also the case for sport fatalities, especially in highly mediated ones such as top-level motor-racing series. As discussed further later on, media have a potential to shape the thoughts of their publics. Therefore, examining how the media have been discussing death offers the basis how this subject can be discussed in the public sphere.

In Chapter 2, the risk-taking literature is reviewed. Starting with an examination of the ways that sports have been intricately woven into society by media coverage, the focus moves on to the ground-breaking work of Stephen Lyng on “edgework” (1990). Briefly, the edgework concept refers to willingly taking risks and pursuing activities deemed dangerous to most. This literature review articulates the various ways that risk taking in the context of sports, particularly extreme sports, has been treated in the scientific literature. Anchored in the concept of masculinity and the various ways through which masculinity is enacted, the risk taking for which dangerous sport athletes are known has been extensively covered. This yielded a wide range of themes from which risky behaviours such as driving racing cars have been mythicized by the spectacle of sports in the media. This is the basis from which they are analysed. Following the literature review is the description of the theoretical framework on which this research is based. Approaching the matter of the coverage of death in motorsports, utilizing in particular the work of Stuart Hall on “representation”, the framework presents how sense can be made of this singular type of sports news.

Chapter 3 presents the research design and methods mobilized to collect and analyze the sports news articles used in this research. Inspired by a grounded theory research design, this research presents the tendencies and practices in sports news reporting on the topic of death in the last quarter century. To do so, the qualitative method of thematic analysis is utilized. This chapter describes the character of grounded theory research designs, as well as the inner workings of thematic analysis, before moving on to an explanation of how these are relevant to the present research. The data collection and analysis process are subsequently presented and explained, and a quantitative presentation of the data is given.

In Chapter 4, a thorough analysis of the compiled data is presented. A description of the themes found in the data and how they intersect within the landscape of sports media reporting on death in motorsport is offered. The second part of the analysis focuses on the evolution of the coverage of death in motorsports over the last 35 years and attempts to formulate a prognostic for the future.

Chapter 5 summarizes the research findings and offers insights as to their relevance within the current and future world of sports reporting. Finally, the limitations of this research as well as the subsequent research that could be conducted on related topics are presented.

Chapter 2: Literature review

2.1. Sports and the media: A grand spectacle

Sport is the object of a constantly growing scientific literature. This is not a surprising phenomenon when you consider that sports get more coverage than any other single subject on a daily basis (Coakley & Donnelly, 2004). Articles are published in a wide variety of peer reviewed academic journals such as the *Sociology of Sport Journal*, *Communication and Sport*, *Culture, Sport, Society*, the *European Journal of Sport Science*, the *International Journal of Sport Communication* and more. This increase of interest to a domain long considered the “toy department of the newsroom” (Lowes, 1997; Lowes, 2004; Wanta, 2006, p. 105; Rowe, 2007, p. 386) contributes to legitimize the work of sports journalists. Perceived by some as “cheerleaders” (Lowes, 1997, 2004; Rowe, 2007, p. 386), sports journalists are nevertheless also subjected to the normal roles of the journalists working in a democratic society: to observe and inform, to participate in public life as an independent and critical actor, and to create a channel, a forum, or a platform for voices needing to be heard by a public (Christians, Glasser, McQuail, Nordenstreng

& White, 2009). Despite the enormous pressures experienced by sports journalists in relation to the schedules they have to manage in the course of their daily work routines (Lowes, 1997; Lowes 2004; Weis, 1986), they have a “function in the domain of education and of social activities” (Weis, 1986, p. 240). However, the quality of such an education can be considered uneven (Weis, 1986). This is also what Hargreaves (1986) refers to when he observes that sports “can thus constitute regular public occasions for discourse on some of the basic themes of social life” (p. 12). In this sense, they are the perfect occasion to engage in discussions about the meanings of success, failure, appropriate or inappropriate behaviours, and the various qualities expected of members of society. Sports in the media are a vehicle for ideologies by promoting specific traits and values (Lowes, 1999; Lowes, 2004; Coakley & Donnelly, 2004; Campbell, Jensen, Gomery, Fabos & Fréchette, 2014).

Nevertheless, not all media are equal and a fundamental difference exists between written sport journalism and its broadcasted counterpart, whether it be in radio, television or digital forms. According to Koppett (1994), what gets published by the print media has an increased value when compared to media and radio broadcasts. While the latter only tries to keep its viewers or listeners in front of the broadcast by entertaining them, the former is bound to informing its readers through the coverage of events (which does not preclude being entertaining). This highlights a tension between different aspects of the sports media sphere: entertainment on one side, information on the other. While the broadcast allows the spectator to see what is going on, the real substance, the information, can be found in the print. Therein lies the main element of what sports media produces through its witnessing of events (Frosh & Pinchevski, 2014). It is a mediated experience that awaits the sports enthusiast, which means that it does not provide access to the entirety of reality that is attained by the reader, listener or viewer, but only part of a represented reality. This represented

portion of reality, or event, has a dual nature. It is a singular event, unique in how it occurred, made reproducible by its media coverage (Frosh & Pinchevski, 2014) and accessible even to those who were not able to witness it with their own eyes (Bruce, 2004). Moreover, these representations are not innocent or ineffective. Discourse, or theme repetition, solidifies ideologies that enable a comprehension of the world in which we live, and allow us to judge the events that happen within it to which we are exposed (Campbell, Jensen, Gomery, Fabos & Fréchette, 2014). Sports media do not escape this process. For many, they are a reference point in their life and their social relations. Those that are bound to, or might want to experience risk, are more likely to do so if they have witnessed its glorification in the media (Fischer, Krueger, Greitmeyer, Asal, Aydin & Vingilis, 2012). It is this position within society that confers ideological power upon the spectacle of sport.

When looking into the coverage of various topics in newspapers across North America, it becomes obvious that sports occupy a vast majority of the media landscape, to the point that it overshadows political and economical aspects of life. There are a few reasons for this situation. First, sports remain one of the few aspects of life where any individual might experience a sense of uncertainty (Kennedy, 2009; Frosh & Pinchevski, 2014). Whether it is by watching the live broadcast of a hockey game or reading about the results of the weekend's F1 Grand Prix, the whole tale of the event is not certain until the end of the game or its representation through journalistic reportage. It is by catching the eye of spectators that sports media organizations are able to move their product (Rowe, 2011). Selling sports means sharing ideologies, which has the power of enacting social and cultural transformation (Lowes, 1999; Lowes, 2004; Rowe, 2011). The question is: who consumes sports? Individuals, executives, and businesses might buy tickets to games for various reasons. Families may purchase a decoder and sports channel packages to watch

the household's favorite teams from the comfort of home (Whannel, 2009). Commuters may be rivetted to their smartphones reading media coverage of the previous day's sporting events on their way to work. While this mass can be loosely identified in its general makeup, the one thing that truly matters is what is being purchased or consumed through those activities, and that is a spectacle (Whannel, 2009). The last portion of this chapter discusses the notion of spectacle in detail (Debord, 1969). However, it is first necessary to examine one of the main aspects of the sports spectacle that concerns this study: risk.

2.2. Risk-taking and extreme athletes: living on the edge

To date, the literature on the phenomenon of risk-taking in sports has been thematically varied. In order to properly assess the various positions that have been taken on the matter, it is best to review them in the chronological order they have been brought to the fore in scientific literature.

The early scientific take on risk can be described by the idea of balancing risk and reward. The willingness to take greater risks grows proportionally to the size of the rewards (Kahneman, Slovic, & Tversky, 1982 in Lyng, 1990). This point of view has been since contested, namely by Lyng and his concept of "edgework" (1990). Lyng flips the script and proposes that risks are taken voluntarily, for personal purposes, and without incentive.

As the previous model of reward motivated risk-taking could not account for those that took risks that yielded virtually no rewards, Lyng shifted the focus to the experience of risk. This desire for risky experiences is, according to Lyng, anchored in two different aspects: "personality predispositions" and "intrinsic motivations" (1990, p. 853). What this approach proposes is that the reasons for taking risks are not external, but coming from within the individuals engaging in

such behaviours. It brings the personality predisposition position from previous research to light and proposes that some people have the right, and therefore others have the wrong, type of personality to take risks. (Lyng, 1990). The notion of intrinsic motivation is a bit more complex in that it positions itself in a tradition that proposes risk-taking as a way to engage in stressful activities in order to be aroused, stimulated, tested, or even as a desire for self-destruction (1990). In the end, edgework is a way to talk about the individuals that look to voluntarily test the limits of order and chaos (Lyng, 1990). Very specific activities classify as edgework; that which others have called high risk or dangerous sports: “they all involve a clearly observable threat to one’s physical or mental well-being or one’s sense of an ordered existence” (1990, p. 857) It can mean enduring pain and suffering (Woodman, Hardy, Barlow, & Le Scanff, 2010), or enacting specific behaviours related to driving (Fischer, Vingilis, Greitemeyer, & Vogrincic, 2011). In the end, edgework within the context of this study consists of the ability for a race car driver to consciously step into a machine that may yield him glory, death, or neither.

Motorsport figures significantly in the activities that pose a deadly threat to those who partake in it (Lyng, 1990; Woodman, Hardy, Barlow, & Le Scanff, 2010). For sake of clarity, this study relies on Matthews and Pike’s (2016) definition of motorsports as “an umbrella term for many different types of motor-vehicle racing (including motorcycles, aeroplanes and motorboats) but is commonly associated with the motor car” (p. 1534). As briefly touched on in the introduction, the specific types of motorsports that are covered here are single-seaters, namely Formula 1 and Indycar, and sports car racing, in the form of NASCAR. As seen in the pictures in Annex A, the differences between an open-wheel race car and a stock car are numerous. A Formula 1 or Indycar machine exposes its driver exposed to the elements, heavily relies on aerodynamic appendages such as front and rear wings, and employs some of the most advanced technologies

available in the quest for victory. On the other hand, NASCAR machines are based on a road going car, which is then modified for the purpose of racing. Technological development is also present in NASCAR, but in essence, it draws from everyday cars available from dealerships (hence the term ‘stock car’ in reference to NASCAR racing).

Based on the risks associated with the activities classified as edgework, the glorification of risky behaviours and activities can develop preferences for risky behaviours within those exposed to it (Fischer, Krueger, Greitemeyer, Asal, Aydin, & Vingilis, 2012). One of the main motivators behind such a propensity to risk-taking is the sense of belonging that comes with the association to glorified communities of high-risk athletes (Palmer, 2002). While this belonging can be enacted through the consumption of various commercial products promoting living on the edge (Palmer, 2002), it remains a matter of media promotion that such products become associated to edgework activities. Once they belong, the individuals engaged in this “life on the edge” come to seek personal transformation, self-growth, or a way to enact an idealized form of masculinity through their risky endeavours (Brown & Penney, 2014). Nevertheless, edgework is more than finding who one is and a quest for masculine identification, as the following paragraphs discuss.

2.3. The existing literature on risk-taking: a thematic evolution

As noted above, the early literature on risk-taking focused heavily on matters related to the value that was associated to the rewards stemming from risk taking. Once the research started to advance from this position from Lyng’s 1990 work on edgework and onwards, there has been an increased interest in the analysis on how the experience of risk is actually lived by those who choose to engage in high-risk sports and activities. For example, how do athletes understand and process the experience when one of their fellow practitioners perishes while undergoing a

challenging task or in training? In their work, Giddens (1999) and Natalier (2001) argue that extreme athletes will look to marginalize occurrences such as death or grave injury. “It won’t happen to me” becomes a sort of mantra shielding the individual from the possibility of even thinking that something bad might happen to him or her (Giddens, 1999, p. 32).

Such a mental process might very well be necessary for athletes engaging in edgework as they look for and require perfect control (Natalier, 2001), to surpass pain and suffering (Le Breton, 2000), to rediscover sensations felt in the past performing similar activities (Pain & Pain, 2005), or to play with their environment (Breivik, 2011). What remains of these various motivations is a choice that athletes make to engage in sporting practices in which they might harm themselves. Being in control of the situation places one’s own health and well-being squarely in their own hands, removing considerations of external input concerning the athlete’s decisions (Natalier, 2001). This level of control involves taking calculated risks for which the athlete feels he or she is operating within the limits of their competence (Pain & Pain, 2005). This is why, to a certain extent, high-risk athletes can say they are “safe” while undergoing what looks to the uninitiated like a death-defying stunt (Breivik, 2011).

This level of control that expert-level athletes attain does not only reflect on how they approach each instance in which they engage in their sport, but also how they experience the moment. The concept of ‘flow’ has been defined in various ways. It can be “a state of optimal experiencing” (Olivier, 2006, p. 98), “the suspension of time and the freedom of complete absorption in activity” (Pain & Pain, 2005, p. 533), “experiencing a one-ness with the environment and their equipment,” (Natalier, 2001, p. 67), a “fusion, flowing and uniting with the world,” (Le Breton, 2000, p. 2), or “the experience of a unity of self, world and activity” (Willig, 2008, p. 699). Positions vary in the literature on how this state should be perceived. While some prefer to keep

to the working definition which points to a state of mind within which the athlete reaches a higher mental level (Le Breton, 2000; Natalier, 2001; Pain & Pain 2005), there is an alternative position stating that the conscious pursuit of such a state can be perceived as egoistic (Olivier, 2006) or merely as a reward (Willig, 2008) for the athlete's competence. In this research, flow is understood to be a higher state of consciousness which removes the limits between man and machine, allowing a complete immersion in the driving of a race car.

In fact, the pursuit of high-risk activities, or the state of flow, and the pleasure that becomes associated with them can lead to a form of intoxication (Le Breton, 2000; Pain & Kerr, 2004; Willig, 2008). And just like any other substance that may cause intoxication, the engagement in edgework can lead to dependence (Pain & Kerr, 2004). In such a situation, the high-risk athletes have to keep walking the fine line between order and chaos in order to continue experiencing the sensations they extract from partaking in such activities (Le Breton, 2000; Pain & Pain, 2005; Zuckerman, 2007; Tok, 2011). Here the literature gives some insight on the position of those involved in driving machines at the highest levels of motor-racing. While they are not situated at the highest end of the spectrum where those climbing Everest without oxygen supply can be literally and figuratively found, they are nonetheless considered individuals facing a medium level of danger in the pursuit of their profession (Zuckerman, 2007). While they are edgeworkers, they are not the most extreme of them. Moreover, this desire for sensation is thought to be hereditary (Pain & Pain, 2005). This could explain why various examples of father and sons, as well as siblings, have been involved at the highest levels of motorsports (Gilles, his brother Jacques and his son Jacques Villeneuve; Michael and Ralf Schumacher; Dale Earnhardt Sr. and Jr., etc.). Mortality within the ranks of the family does not seem to preclude athletes from pursuing higher speeds, faster lap times, and the laurels of victory.

To David Le Breton, an irrevocable aspect of edgework lies in the innate ability to execute high level feats of risk while under the undeniable pressure of fear (2000). Beyond the pursuit of their athletic goal, the conquest of such a fear becomes a goal in-and-of itself within the athlete's experience (Brymer & Oades, 2009). But the price of this conquest is not cheap. In order to conquer fear, the athlete must first put life and limbs on the line. The athletic pursuit in which the natural limits of the human body can be negated or pushed further requires a form of symbolic deal to be struck with "Death" (Le Breton, 2000, p. 6). Edgeworkers therefore operate at the very limit of existence, trying to overcome what has been deemed the natural limits of the human body, trying to overcome fear itself – trying, in a way, to overcome deadly odds for lack of being unable to overcome death itself.

This is why the notion of control, as noted earlier, is so important to high-risk athletes. Control becomes a form of warranty against the possibility of going beyond, of tipping over that fine edge on which the athletic endeavour occurs. This control can first be found in the position athlete take when saying they are careful while practicing their sport (Natalier, 2001; Brymer & Schweitzer, 2013). But not everyone can know what carefulness means within the practices of edgework. The ability to be careful driving a car at over 300 km per hour while surrounded by dozens of other similar human-driven vehicles can only come from experience (Natalier, 2001; Olivier, 2006; Dean 2012). Obviously, carefulness in such situations is measured in terms of the expertise level reached by the athlete, something Dean (2012) discusses at length while raising the point that many positive experiences accumulated may bring about a desire for riskier endeavours. This position is not shared by Olivier (2006) who proposes that more experienced athletes might reach a sort of 'breaking point' where considerations about the self, as well as about the individuals that are part of the athlete's life (such as his or her family), can bring a reduction in the pursuit of

risky endeavours. In the end, whether experience is equated to more or less risk being taken, it is undoubtedly relevant for the athlete's 'careful' approach of their sport.

Adding to the topic of the importance of experience in edgework is the foremost position that training occupies in an athlete's life. Training is one of the tools in the athlete's arsenal to mitigate risk and ensure safe actions in their endeavours (Natalier, 2001; Pain & Pain, 2005; Schneider, Butryn, Furst & Masucci, 2007; Willig, 2008; Dean, 2012; Brymer & Schweitzer, 2013). Beyond this, though, training has been found in the literature to be more complex than merely being a form of risk management (Dean, 2012). In research conducted with motorcyclists, it was found that working to improving one's technique could be used to attain a state of flow more easily (Natalier, 2001).

Another aspect of the research on training lies in the numerous forms it can take, as well as the degrees of complexity that they can attain (Pain & Pain, 2005). For example, some athletes' training includes visualisation exercises to better prepare for situations they might have to face in practice (Schneider, Butryn, Furst & Masucci, 2007). Moreover, for some individuals training becomes rewarding in-and-of itself (Willig, 2008). Seen as a way to increase performance and harnessing an improved mastery of a specific practice, training is the athlete's most powerful tool.

Nevertheless, no training is infallible. Especially to those engaging in edgework, an element of risk always pervades. This is why when asked to discuss occurrences of their own accidents, edgeworkers are quick to shoulder the blame themselves (Natalier, 2001), often citing lack of training or experience. In instances when edgeworkers asked to discuss others' accidents, whether they resulted in maiming or death, the positions more often revolve around the notion of misfortune (Natalier, 2001). It is accepted that there are situations for which no amount of training and experience will suffice, and that the individuals engaging in high-risk activities are at the

mercy of fate. This is best exemplified by one interviewee in Palmer's study who declared "well, shit happens." (2002, p.335)

As dismissive as that last commentary may seem, it highlights the powerlessness that those engaging in risky activities can feel in their pursuits. In the end, however, every edgeworker faces the ultimate frontier from which it is impossible to come back: death (Houck, 2006). There is a reason that a specific probability of death is calculated for some of the most extreme sports (Donnelly, 2004), as it is the representation of the athlete's prowess to be defying death through his or her actions (Houck, 2006). But sometimes even the best of the best trip and fall beyond the point of no return. The issue lies in the contradiction that arises from the image of the athlete in control that is discussed by the media and the instances where said athlete's death is seen by millions simultaneously on their screens (Houck, 2006), as is often the case in motorsport.

What needs to be remembered is that those who choose to undertake risky feats that could very well lead to their demise do so willingly (Donnelly, 2004; Crust & Keegan, 2010). Admired for their bravery and lauded for their skills, they are fully appreciated when the spectacle they take part in entertains the masses, but blamed for throwing their lives away in the event something goes wrong (Donnelly, 2004). The tragedy that is made of the death of a high-risk athlete is fueled by the media-driven processes heroizing such performers (Sabo, 2004; Nixon II, 2004). The media portrays undertaking an athletic feat despite being injured as virile, which in turn promotes actions that may lay outside of the control zone within which edgeworkers normally operate (Nixon II, 2004). This is called the "pain principle" (Sabo, 2004, p. 64). This notion suggests that one's own worth is closely linked to one's capacity in undertaking normal levels of performance despite the limitations associated with painful injuries. The more one is in pain, the more virtuous he or she becomes. Such a framing of high-risk activity is hazardous at best.

To add to this, there remains the notion that those partaking in high-risk activities have a “death fulfilment wish” (Pain & Pain, 2005, p. 533) which explains their behaviour. This is not a promotion of this position, but merely a reminder that the notion exists. In reality, most of the current literature points in the opposite direction. Edgeworkers are, in reality, disciplined individuals (Pain & Pain, 2005; Brymer & Schweitzer, 2013). Otherwise, how could one explain the rigorous training to which they subject themselves; or their desire for control over every aspect of the activities they engage in; or their carefulness and appreciation for high levels of experience within their field?

Nevertheless, the sole focus of sociological research was put on edgeworkers themselves up until the mid 2000s. In one particular study the risks being taken by athletes are discussed as egoistic endeavours (Olivier, 2006). While the pursuit of self-actualisation has been mostly presented as admirable once the literature stopped portraying high-risk athletes as individuals subconsciously looking to perish, there had not been until that point much of a consideration given to the role such athletes had to play in their personal lives (Castanier, Scanff & Woodman, 2010). What would happen to their family if they came to die in the pursuit of their sport? They have an obligation to ensure that those closest to them could be taken care of if something was to happen to them (Olivier, 2006). But beyond those basic considerations, what other costs could the death of the athlete have on the family, if only in terms of increased scrutiny? (Olivier, 2006) The best illustration of the way such issues have been portrayed is the death of high-profile Alison Hargreaves. She perished while climbing the K2 in 1995, leaving behind two young children and her husband. She was portrayed as selfish for doing so, critics pointing that her role as a mother superseded that of high-risk athlete. This criticism and scrutiny were not faced by the other six male climbers that died that day on the mountain (Olivier, 2006). This raises issues related to the

masculinist approach taken in discussions on edgework, which is discussed in detail in the following section of this thesis.

Beyond this brief interlude that focused on the family role of the athlete outside sportive endeavours, some researchers brought focus back on internal aspects justifying risk taking. For example, age and gender (Zuckerman, 2007) were found to be related with risky-driving. Young males have the highest car insurance premiums precisely because they are more prone to risk taking behind the wheel, for the simple reason of not perceiving any risks to doing so (Näätänen & Summala, 1975), not having reached an intrinsic risk threshold (Wilde, 1982), or craving the dopamine-fueled rush that comes with risky behaviours (Zuckerman, 1994; Zuckerman & Kuhlman, 2000). Even outside the realm of sport, it is relevant to engage with the notion that risk is something that one gets socialized to (Schneider, Butryn, Furst & Masucci, 2007). No one started taking risks by going BASE jumping or driving a race car around Daytona International Speedway; rather, there is a progression involved in engaging in riskier and riskier activities over time. Under similar circumstances, there also are a (lower) number of older individuals, of various genders, that are inclined to take risks behind the wheel. The increase in risk comes with its own form of reward. The increased sense of control that comes with undertaking and succeeding in riskier tasks brings a heightened sense of self-esteem to the edgeworker (Schneider, Butryn, Furst & Masucci, 2007; Willig, 2008). Coupled with the social aspect involved in the approach of new risky activities, feelings of belonging (Willig, 2008) to a select group can prove to be a positive aspect in the edgeworker's life.

A matter of interest is the position most high-risk athletes defend when asked what they would do if they could not practice the activity which they have mastered. Such a possibility is not daunting to them, as they would find another form of risky activity to undertake. Risk is seen as a

lifestyle, as something integral to the daily life of the edgeworker (Willig, 2008). The mastery of a high-risk activity enables individuals to define themselves, to be unique, or to be part of a select few (Willig, 2008). It is by challenging themselves and the boundaries surrounding them that they are able to attain a greater efficacy and find catharsis (Willig, 2008). That being said, not all risks are equal and various degrees of risk taking will benefit or suffice for different people (Laurendeau, 2008). In the end, if a higher degree of risk becomes unavailable to an individual, such as a skydiver being medically forced to stop jumping due to health risks, they can resort to other forms of risk which are deemed safer (so to speak) to themselves.

It takes a specific type of individual to pursue risk, especially when one's health has been impacted by it in the past. Positions vary on this matter, and there is literature supporting both positive and negative perceptions of high-risk athletes. Some more positive outlooks on the matter propose that this inherent capacity to willingly put oneself in harm's way is indicative of individual courage (Brymer & Oades, 2009; Allman, Mittelstadt, Martin, & Goldenberg, 2009; Crust & Keegan, 2010). This propensity to take risk is also portrayed as a sign of being mentally strong and confident in one's own ability (Crust & Keegan, 2010).

Finally, edgeworkers are discussed as being individuals with low levels of anxiety (Brymer & Oades, 2009; Crust & Keegan, 2010), which enables them to retain control over their emotions while under duress. They are also humble (Brymer & Oades, 2009; Allman, Mittelstadt, Martin, & Goldenberg, 2009). This humility in facing dangerous situations is consistent with the idea of an athlete that trains his/her entire life with the goal of conquering what was deemed impossible by the greater population. Without this specific trait, the edgeworker would possibly be what the early literature depicted: simply someone with a death wish. There remains a portion of the literature on risk that views those engaging in risk-taking in a more negative light. Edgeworkers

have, for example, been portrayed as hedonistic (Castanier, Scanff & Woodman, 2010; Brymer & Schweitzer, 2013) individuals that are subjected to their impulsive nature (Castanier, Scanff & Woodman, 2010; Tok, 2011; Thomson & Carlson, 2014). Their engagement in high-risk endeavours is thought to be a form of escapism (Castanier, Scanff & Woodman, 2010), or a way to hide their deeply insecure nature (Castanier, Scanff & Woodman, 2010). While it is impossible to attest which position is undeniably true as each individual taking risks is unique and certainly not made up of entirely positive or negative qualities, it is safe to assume that they are indeed more extroverted and open to experiences than the average human being (Tok, 2011).

Some of the most recent studies on risk-taking have brought some new ideas to the fore while building on existing ones. Adding to the idea of risk management, which had already been discussed in relation to athletes training for their high-risk endeavours, is the focus put on the equipment athletes rely on (Dean, 2012; Brymer & Schweitzer, 2013). Training and equipment are an essential part of the edgeworkers lives which enable them to manage risk and come to view their risk-taking not as the end goal of the activity, but as an input into it (Dean, 2012). The total control the athlete has over their preparation ensures that the odds of success are maximized. While there will always be a part of inherent risk in the activity that is undertaken, it can be mitigated and accounted for, even almost measured. But there are some pitfalls that can await the unsuspecting athlete. It is possible to become trapped in an “identity tunnel”, where the self-association to the ideal of the extreme athlete can lead to isolation from those that are not seen as part of a specific risk-taking culture. This form of isolation also translates into a heightened form of perfectionism that can lead to increased risk taking in order to achieve an idealized performance (Schnell, Mayer, Diehl, Zipfel & Thiel, 2014). In turn, this can lead high-risk athletes to state that they are indeed responsible for themselves and that they are not expecting help in their endeavours

(Brown & Penney, 2014). In the end, though, there always remains the possibility that they cannot get any form of help if something goes wrong.

Injuries are “part of the job. It’s what comes with the territory” (Grier, 2017, p. 89). This is how Sarah Burke portrayed her acceptance of risk within her practice of snowboarding. To her and many other edgeworkers, it is part of the “lifestyle” of being a high-risk athlete. Injuries will happen, and there is no way around it (Grier, 2017). The only thing the athlete can do is to hone their skills and equip themselves to a point where risks are somewhat mitigated, and get a good insurance policy, the latter being often subjected to various clauses that may render payouts to the family in case of death difficult or even impossible (Grier, 2017). But when the worst happens, and an athlete dies or is severely injured, as with Sarah Burke, Dale Earnhardt, Gilles Villeneuve and so many other high-risk athletes, there is invariably a discussion that follows about ways to make a sport safer (Grier, 2017).

Risk-taking has therefore been portrayed through various lenses in the past three decades, a process that mirrors the rise in coverage of high-risk activities that are better encompassed by the notion of edgework. One element that was lightly touched on but deserves a more in-depth discussion is the relation between the notion of masculinity and engagement in risky endeavours. As far as research work goes, only Alison Hargreaves’ behaviour was deemed truly problematic in the media coverage that followed her and the other male climbers’ deaths due to what was qualified as the abandonment of her family in a vain, selfish pursuit. This gendered approach to discussing matters related to edgeworkers can be explained by how masculinity is constructed within society, which is the subject matter of the upcoming section.

2.4. Masculinity and risk: An inseparable pair

What does being masculine entail? If one is looking from an idealized perspective of what is masculinity, it can be defined as “being tough and heroic,” (Wellard, 2009, p. 12) or as willing to put oneself in harm’s way (Laurendeau, 2008). While such a position gives a general sense of the concept, and some of the qualities associated with it, it leaves room for a wide variety of behaviours to be classified as masculine. These traits are not inherently problematic; the real issue with masculinity as a concept arises when it becomes hegemonic, meaning the “culturally normative and influential ideals of masculinity.” (Ricciardelli, Chow & White 2010, p. 64) Those ideals are enacted through practices allowing male domination to remain the norm (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). According to this view, this means that some behaviours, typically related to women or homosexual men, for example, are considered to be the opposite of desirable and unfit for competitiveness and toughness (Nylund, 2007). It is even more of an issue when this hegemonic masculinity is shared through the spectacle of sport itself.

As discussed earlier, sports are vehicles for various ideologies. Hegemonic masculinity is such an ideology, one which perpetuates various negative ideas about segments of society, not only women and homosexual men but any social group that does not conform to the dominant (masculine) norms. While sports could in previous eras be conceived as a tool to ensure the physical attributes and cooperative abilities of men destined to go to war at one point or another in their lives (Mangan, 2012), the situation has since changed dramatically. The utilitarian aspect of sport has given place to the spectacle of sport, a spectacle which is also one of the masculinity of the athletes (Kennedy, 2009). It is this spectacle that contributes to perpetuate the vision of masculine behaviour, exemplified by enduring pain and injuries, downplaying such issues in order to take part in the sport which in turn negates the importance of safer behaviours on and off the

field of play. This starts at a young age where “it seems rational to accept, minimize, or ignore the long-term risks of pain and injuries even though they know that competing hurt or ill may cause more serious damage and therefore impairs their athletic performance” (Schnell, Mayer, Diehl, Zipfel & Thiel, 2014, p. 166). Sports therefore contribute early on in “doing gender”, which is defined as “the construction of gendered identities and images and the enactment of gender in social situations, where we always present ourselves and are perceived as women or men” (Pfister, 2017, p. 102). The danger associated with this state of affairs is that sports media give credence to the notion that masculinity, through the actions and behaviours of the athlete deemed masculine, stems from nature and is universally true, which it is not (Nylund, 2007). It is certainly not only men that can attain flow (Natalier, 2001) or experience the thrills and risks of adventure (Laurendeau, 2008). Masculinity is constructed, in part, by those same media, and more generally by society at large.

This brings us back to what was noted earlier, that sports were used to prepare men for conflict in the past, which needs to be addressed in more detail. While it can be argued that past societies were more tolerant of dangerous sports because of the risks that were inherent to the times (Caplan & Parent, 2017), it seems fair to say that times have changed. Previous barriers that were erected by males to forbid women’s participation may have in great part disappeared, since most sports do not expressly ban women anymore (Matthews & Pike, 2016). However, there remain some tendencies that carried over from previous periods. Sports itself is portrayed as “timeless and transcendent,” something to connect individuals to an ideal past where sporting feats and athletes had mythical proportions (Nylund, 2007, p. 37). Such feats are often deemed impossible to repeat, because of the premium put on individual safety that seeks to balance the greater autonomy which athletes can enjoy nowadays (Berger, 2017). What needs to be remembered though is that these

feats from the past necessarily put forward a vision of the male athlete, not of the female one. While women can participate they find themselves sexualized or marginalized within their discipline (Matthews & Pike, 2016). One only needs to tune in to a match of beach volleyball to see exactly what the sexualization of the female athlete entails (Lavoi, 2013; Neilson, 2013; Varnes et al., 2013; Becera, 2014). This serves the stereotypes that hegemonic masculinity vehicle: even when displaying competitiveness, the women have to look good in a bikini, and they have to be pretty, which in turns removes the threat of them being tough. The same goes for the lack of women in high level motorsport on toughness grounds, giving an idea of the marginalization of an entire gender within a sport discipline. Sports contribute to perpetuating a vision of masculinity that is hegemonic. How it manages to do it is through the making of its contests into spectacles that are meant to reach mythical proportions.

2.5. The spectacle and the myth: The immortal performance

Returning to a matter that was approached earlier, and that needs to be considered: what is spectacle? According to Guy Debord, the spectacle goes beyond mere images being watched by people. The spectacle refers to a full-fledged *relation* between individuals, which is mediated by images (Debord, 1969, p. 10). Therefore, when discussing the spectacle of motorsports, the matter at hand is not simply what is happening in the instance of the Grand Prix itself, but the representation of the action and the implications for the spectators exposed to it. All forms of coverage need to be included within this landscape, as they are constitutive of the “historical moment” that envelopes everyone exposed to it (Debord, 1969, p. 13). This moment itself is inescapable for anyone caught in it; it is a situation in which they supposedly have no agency, which negates the notion of choice. In Debord’s argument, individuals have no agency, but in

reality, they are capable of deciding what they will consume (Møller & Genz, 2014). It is possible to elect to be caught in the possibility of history unfolding before one's eyes. It is sometimes from these historical moments that myths come to life.

Which leads to a second question: what is myth? Roland Barthes (1973) offers a clear definition, which is that “myth is a system of communication, it is a message. [...] Myth is not defined by the object of its message, but by the way in which it utters its message.” (p. 109) Furthermore, building upon Debord's historical moments perspective, Barthes (1973) proposes that myth is the way through which history can be communicated. But a myth is not something that is only to be communicated, it is something that takes a life of its own. Myth is not simply a version of history; its core principle is to shape a historical occurrence and give it all encompassing natural value (Barthes, 1973).

Consider Greek mythology and its impact on current language systems. Narcissus, Oedipus, Hercules, and other mythical figures remain part of our ways to explain concepts such as beauty, familial relations, and strength. In order for a myth to become “nature,” all forms of modern communication can be mobilized, no matter how simple or technologically advanced. This is true for motorsports, especially when the athletes participating in this discipline's events have to wrestle with the some of the most advanced machinery in the world. As an illustration, here is how Barthes (1973) views the everyday car: “I think that cars today are almost the exact equivalent of great Gothic cathedrals: I mean the supreme creation of an era, conceived with passion by unknown artists, and consumed in image if not in usage by a whole population which appropriates them as a purely magical object.” (p. 88) If the everyday car is a magical object, the drivers risking their life, and sometimes losing it, at over 300 km per hour are surely mythical figures worthy of being studied.

2.6. Theoretical framework

The following section describes the perspective from which this research analyzes the representation of death in motorsport. An essential component of the coming paragraphs is to describe what is representation, what are its core ideas, and how it is relevant to the study of sports journalism.

What is representation? According to Stuart Hall (1997), it is “the production of meaning of the concepts in our minds through language.” (p. 17) Moreover, the idea of representation itself requires that someone shares such concepts through meanings by adopting the position of enunciator (1989). As these positions are subjective, individuals are undoubtedly marked by history, and by past experiences, and so meanings are coloured and shaped by those that enunciate them (Hall, 1996). Essentially constructivist, this approach is anchored in the idea that meaning is socially constructed through the use of signs and concepts within representation systems (Marotta, 2011). These signs and concepts, accessible through the use of language, allow the sharing of meaning between individuals (Hall, 1997). But meaning does not exist in itself. It requires discursive action (Hall & Jhally, 2002). In Hall’s words, the Foucauldian perspective on discourse is that it “constructs the topic. It defines and produces the objects of our knowledge. It governs the way that a topic can be meaningfully talked about and reasoned about.” (1997, p. 44) Without communication, no meaning can be therefore be exchanged and come to be. Individuals engaged in a form of communication construct meaning by making use of different systems of representation that are codified and shared, namely language (Hall, 1997, p. 21) For meaning to exist, it must have been conceptualized within a thinking mind, and have been shared between two or more persons through a communication system, such as language (Hall, 1997). It is at that point that the meaning of something comes to be. Despite the existence of a favoured meaning,

representations retain multiple meanings that are interpretable in varied ways based on how they are inserted within a larger culture (Bruce, 2016).

Meaning, to be shared, must mean something in itself. Meaning comes in part from a primary framework, defined by Goffman (1991) as “what allows us, in a given situation, to give meaning to such or such aspects, which otherwise would be meaningless” (p. 30). These primary frames exist under two forms: “natural” and “social” (p. 30). While the natural frames are closely akin to determinism and anchored in various scientific approaches (Goffman, 1991), social frames depend on human interaction. Goffman defines them as elements that “allow the understanding of other events, animated by a will or an objective, and require the mastery of an intelligence; they imply living agents, and the first of them, the human agent.” (Goffman, 1991, p. 31) A frame can also be broken, which is a highly traumatic event in that it requires an individual to revisit what their positions are, and potentially what is seen as a truth in their mind (Goffman, 1991).

Frame breaking requires the construction of a new frame. In social framing, an activity which journalists take part in directly by assuring the mediation between the event and the reader, it is the human being which is at the center of the situation. The individual creates the foundation of the frame, which then allows other individuals to make sense of the events that they live. For example, death is a biological phenomenon to which the human being is subjected. This is based on a natural frame. In a Canadian, Judaeo-Christian, capitalistic perspective, death is the end (Taylor, 2000). Nothing comes after death, other than an individual being mourned by friends and relatives. When a race car driver kills himself on track during an organized competition, this is a natural occurrence which happens within a social frame. The discussion which ensues in the media is also social, as journalists work within organisations that have their own editorial rules. The journalist that has to share the meaning of an event builds a frame from which it is possible for

readers to conceptualise the event and its consequences. If a journalist positions themselves within a natural frame, their approach towards the passing of the subject will look into the physiological nature of the death. The news will be about the precise trauma that caused the death. A social frame, on the other side, “relies on social dramaturgy” (Goffman, 1991, p. 34). The angle chosen by the journalist is indicative of the frame within which he positions the news. Nevertheless, the primary frame (natural or social) is not a precise indication of how the event is discussed. This is why aspects of representations can be based on various concepts that the enunciator can mobilize.

It is important to keep in mind other approaches that favour different notions of representation. The reflective approach works on the preconception that meaning exists within the world. Any person, any image, any act or event carries meaning that waits to be extracted in order to reflect reality. Marotta (2011) proposes that this approach “confuses the ‘real’ tree with the drawing of a tree” (p. 541). This idea according to which meaning exists intrinsically negates the possibility of any mediator, such as a journalist, to bring new meaning to a matter that he is discussing. The other approach that was considered was the intentional one. In this approach the author is the vector of meaning. The author “imposes meaning onto the events and objects they are depicting” (Marotta, 2011, p. 541). Again, without the possibility for a dialogical construction of meaning, the receptor is subjugated to an imposed meaning given by the sense-maker. While potentially useful in the context of a study on the representation of death, it refutes the possibility to discover underlying meanings diverging from what the author produced intentionally. Basing a study on this approach requires having an analytical approach strongly favouring a semantic analysis of a text rather than its latent meaning. A Foucauldian perspective rejects such a notion as it is “discourse, not the subjects who speak it, which produces knowledge” (Hall, 1997, p. 55).

Based on the reasons described above, the reflective and intentional approaches were not deemed appropriate to conducting this research and were left aside.

As noted above, what the author writes has a meaning in itself, through the “encoding” (Hall, 1997, p. 62) of his message. This encoded meaning is not anchored or definitive. Representations and their meaning are decodable by receptors. A receptor does not necessarily get the intended meaning which was inscribed by the author in his representation. Interpretation is possible (Hall, 1997). Discourse reflects “how our knowledge about ‘the social, the embodied individual and shared meanings’ comes to be produced in different periods” (Hall, 1997, p. 42-43). This knowledge is not cut from the real world. It is anchored to it and will morph through time and the associated situational, technological and institutional changes that are associated with it (Hall, 1997). In addition, despite of the encoding of meaning determined in the discourse, the individuals receiving it do not have to take it as it is as a whole. They are free (Maigret, 2012) to accept (hegemonic decoding), refuse (oppositional decoding), or partly accept it (negotiated decoding) (p. 140). Representations and their meaning, articulated through discourse, can therefore change and adopt new forms through their reception and successive sharing. This includes for example representations of death within a culture such as the one of motorsport. In such a context, it is justified to adopt a diachronic analytical approach when possible which can allow the discovery of an evolution or variations through time. The diachronic approach allows the studying of aspects of the subject while allowing the possibility to unearth elements outside the written meaning. From this perspective, a study can be done on the evolution of coverage over a 35-year period.

In positioning this research within a constructivist paradigm, the notion of sense-making must be considered. A process that is both social and individual, sense-making is described by

Bruner (2004): “The self-telling of life narratives achieves the power to structure perceptual experience, to organize memory, to segment and purpose-build the very ‘events’ of a life. In the end, we become the autobiographical narratives by which we ‘tell about’ our lives” (p. 694). Any individual becomes the vector of mediation of his own experiences. In the current context, this includes any journalist called on to construct the meaning of an event he or she is reporting on. The difference is that the journalist does not live his own experience, but must mediate the experience of someone else and share it to readers. Journalists, as well as the press organisations they work for, come to be witnesses of what happens (Frosh & Pinchevski, 2014).

Even before readers can come to make sense of the information, the journalist must comprehend the double nature of testimony: “on the one hand, the event is indeed an instant – a singular, unrepeatable irruption in space and time; on the other hand, the event is an instance – reproducible and rendered communicable through testimony.” (Jacques Derrida, 2000, In Frosh & Pinchevski, 2014, p. 597). Sense-making operates according to a similar model. New narratives cannot be constantly created to constitute a reality. It is the stories being created that are contributing to the founding narrative around which a concrete reality is articulated (Chater & Loewenstein, 2016). Journalists are therefore subjected to that phenomenon. They cannot constantly invent a new central narrative about the matter they are writing about. In the case of a journalist covering motorsport, this narrative can be the ongoing season, or the story of the discipline itself, for example. Each article becomes a new story attaching itself to this narrative. The reader is in turn brought to reconstruct the meaning of what is offered to him based on his own experiences with the subject, on his culture, and on his age.

2.7. Research outline: what is to be accomplished?

While a lot is known about risk taking in terms of scientific literature, this research project looks to go further than discovering what is said about risk taking within motorsport coverage. As stated in the introduction, the main research question asks, how did the representation of motorsport death evolve in the daily printed sports news in Canada between 1982 and 2017? While the question supposes the existence of a diachronic evolution of the coverage of death in motorsport, it does leave the door open for the possibility that such a process could also not have occurred during the period. In order to answer the question, precise aspects of this question have to be extrapolated. Given that this thesis is anchored in risk taking literature, and how it has evolved through time, the first sub-question is: How are risk taking literature and print media coverage of motorsport related in terms of the themes they emphasize for the 1982 to 2017 period?

As motorsport has been and remains a dangerous endeavour for those taking part in it, it can be safely assumed that risk taking literature themes will be present in the data analysed and can be relied on to appropriately describe portions of the sample. This nonetheless means that there is the possibility that risk taking literature cannot be relied upon to describe the entire sample. This is why a second aspect of interest lies with what themes unrelated to risk taking literature exist within the coverage of death in motorsport for the 1982 to 2017 period. While this last element of inquiry may open the door to a variety of themes difficult to relate to each other, it is essential in that there is a highly likely possibility that there are themes unrelated to risk literature within the data sample of this study.

Once the matters of themes related, or not, to risk literature have been clearly characterized, then an analysis of the evolution of the thematic coverage of death can be undertaken in order to understand the representation of death over the study period.

Chapter 3: Methodology

In order to conduct this research project, different analysis techniques were considered. This chapter will first present the grounded theory approach from which the research drew inspiration. Secondly, the qualitative thematic analysis technique that was used to work on the data set will be discussed. Third, there will be a discussion on the sampling process that was put in place. A brief interlude provides a description of a pilot study that was executed prior to conducting the full data collection for this thesis in order to assess the potential of this project. Finally, the last portion of this chapter will present a few characteristics of the data set in order to give an idea of the material that was worked on.

3.1. The grounded theory approach.

Developed by Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss (1967), grounded theory is an approach that favours “the discovery of theory from data.” (p. 1) To put it simply, it allows the researcher to look into a data set and formulate a theory explaining its intrinsic reality. This is not a purely descriptive approach as its goal is to extract knowledge from the subjects being studied, particularly through comparative analysis. The theories that can be created from such an approach are either substantive or formal, meaning they are either anchored in empirical research or are more abstract in nature (1967). In the present case, the research develops into more of a conceptual account of the phenomenon of risk taking. It stops short of theorizing the representation of death in motorsport, which in a constructivist perspective cannot solely rest on journalists as socializing agents of their readers to the realities of race car driving fatalities.

Amongst the reasons why a grounded theory inspired approach was adopted for this present study is the access to past events it gives to the researcher. As Glaser and Strauss explain it:

special and highly empirical studies are made, as when the contents of novels or newspaper columns are studied for what they reflect of an era, a class, or the changing tastes of the country. (...) Every book, every magazine article, represents at least one person who is equivalent to the anthropologist's informant or the sociologist's interviewee. In those publications, people converse, announce positions, argue with a range of eloquence, and describe events or scenes in ways entirely comparable to what is seen and heard during field work. The researcher needs only to discover the voices in the library to release them for his analytic use. (p. 162-163)

A grounded theory inspired approach focusing on newspapers is therefore ideal as it helps the researcher negate matters of time, space, participation, data review, and scheduling (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). There is no need for the researcher to move all over an area for interviews, get them moved or cancelled last minute, or to simply be unable to get the data desired because the data source has passed away years prior. From the data that already exists, knowledge can be extracted.

This approach does have its flaws. In some cases, library materials left behind can be scarce, inappropriately focused on certain issues or “purposely misleading” through authorial intent (Glaser and Strauss, 1967, p. 181). This was not an issue in this case, as technological advances allowed for the creation of entire databanks that could be explored. Another proposed flaw lies in what could be described as a skill gap between an observer writing about what he saw, and a field researcher trained in taking notes on relevant events (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). Another disadvantage that is that of a lack of continuity in the data (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). As will be demonstrated in the sampling portion of this chapter, this did not turn out to be an issue in the present context.

Grounded theory as a methodology has been revisited since its conception. While intended as a way to approach research untethered to theory in order to extract theory from data according to a purely inductive approach, findings nonetheless require to be anchored within a theoretical

framework (Licqurish & Seibold, 2011; Charmaz, 2014). As it is an approach that is well suited to a constructivist approach (Charmaz, 2014), and considering the specific nature of motorsport and the community of participants and enthusiasts it fosters, combining a grounded theory inspired research design with the theoretical frame of symbolic interactionism has the potential to unearth a vast array of representations within journalistic coverage of death in motorsport. As symbolic interactionism proposes that “meaning is interpreted through social interactions, and the communication and understanding of verbal and non-verbal sociocultural symbols” (Licqurish & Seibold, 2011, p. 12), it informs and justifies research on the symbols shared by journalists in their coverage, themselves making sense of the experience of race car drivers constantly facing death. Returning to the matter of comparative analysis that was briefly mentioned earlier, this method allows the generation of “categories.” (Charmaz, 2014, p. 180) These categories that emerge from the data, as well as the properties that are inherent to them and that explain their structure, are the foundation of the theory. It is between those categories that “hypotheses or generalized relations” (Glaser and Strauss, 1967, p. 35) can be drawn as well as from the intersection of the categories with the theoretical framework the study is based upon (Charmaz, 2014). Therefore, grounded theory is extracted from categories in the data, as well as the relations existing between those categories, and how they are both reconciled within a greater framework, which in this case is essentially constructivist. The more diverse a matter is being analysed, the more categories and relations can be drawn, which can in turn deepen the complexity of the theory. To be able to reach that end goal, a specific analytical approach is needed to guide comparative analysis.

3.2. Qualitative thematic analysis

The method best suited to this research was that of the qualitative thematic analysis. Braun and Clarke (2006) describe it as “a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data.” (p. 79) Themes are also defined in their relation to the frames. These are the recurring typical theses that run through a lot of media. As Altheide and Schneider (2013, p. 53) note, frames are the focus, a parameter or boundary, for discussing a particular event; in this sense such themes are more basically tied to the format used by journalists who have a short time to “tell a story” that an audience can “recognize,” “that they have probably heard before,” and, moreover, “to get specific information from sources that can be tied to this” (Altheide and Schneider, 2013, p. 52) Themes are therefore an important part of mediated communication, in the sense that their variation through time, and their importance within daily life, make them an unavoidable element of analysis (Altheide et Schneider, 2013). For these reasons, and for the advantages of the method that will be explained in the next paragraph, qualitative thematic analysis was selected to conduct the study of the journalistic coverage of death in motorsport in Canada.

Thematic analysis has numerous advantages. Braun and Clarke (2006) give an exhaustive list of them:

Flexibility, relatively easy and quick method to learn, and do, accessible to researchers with little or no experience of qualitative research, results are generally accessible to educated general public, (...) can usefully summarize key features of a large body of data (...), can highlight similarities and differences across the data set, can generate unanticipated insights, allows for social as well as psychological interpretations of data, can be useful for producing qualitative analysis suited to informing policy development. (p. 97)

Nonetheless, these numerous advantages must not obscure the fact that this method has some negative aspects. First of all, qualitative thematic analysis can be seen as simplistic. Goffman (1977) mentions it himself in an analysis of the ritualization of the feminine: “Since there are no limits to what I could decide to call a theme, (...) one could believe that nothing forbids me from

demonstrating what I wished, from a few seemingly common elements.” (p. 34) But when the analysis is situated within established literature, such as those of risk and representation for example, this critique is lessened.

Establishing a solid methodology, as well as a clear and precise analytical process that has defined objectives, brings structure to the process and generates results with both credibility and validity. Article analysis based on the risk literature described earlier enables a comparison of the process through which death in motorsport is discussed in sports journalism. Moreover, as demonstrated in the results of the pilot study that was carried on a limited sample of articles covering driver mortality in motorsport, the existing risk literature is an ideal foundation upon which to conduct this research. The approach taken for this study is both inductive and deductive: while being anchored in themes brought forward in the risk literature, it looks to extract more from the data set than mere proof that the ways in which extreme activities other than motorsports are discussed are also present in motorsport journalism. It does not focus on the semantic aspect of texts, but rather on the latent meaning of these journalistic products, which helps conceptualize the sports journalism view of death in motorsport in the period from 1982 through 2017. This means that going beyond the specific words used by the journalists, and the implications of their use as opposed to other words, this research tries to make sense of the broader issues touched upon in the articles.

In order to accomplish the analysis, each article that was selected for the sample was read and themes were extracted from the articles. The first themes that were looked for were related to issues of risk-taking, as informed by the scientific literature on the subject presented in Chapter 2. A second category of themes was specifically related to masculinity and it how is discussed in the literature. Those revolved for example around matters of toughness, of resistance to pain, of the

egotistic nature of drivers. Finally, themes concerning the mythification of a deceased driver, such as reaching Godhood in the eyes of many or how the legend of a driver came to be through on-track exploits was the focus of the analysis. In numerous instances, it was found that this first theoretically anchored analysis did not account for a variety of themes that remained within the sample. In such cases, themes were extracted from the articles themselves, by identifying the underlying subject of a journalist's article, adding to the list of themes that were part of the sample. Once the complete list of themes was drawn, a categorisation was undertaken in order to understand the overall interaction of the pool of themes that were found, the result of which can be found in Annex C. Under the overarching subject of death, three main themes were found. The first concerned the individual, meaning the deceased driver. The second concerned the social aspect of the death, meaning all those involved in the driver's life or death. The third theme concerned the journalistic practices of covering death in motorsport.

3.3. Sampling

The Canadian context of this research, as well as its relation to questions of media framing, required the creation of a sample that was representative of the subject matter. To achieve this, two daily newspapers (one in French and the other in English) were analyzed. There was the option to extend the sample to a third daily, a pan Canadian English newspaper, which is listed below. This plan was found unnecessary, which will be discussed in the data collection results portion of this chapter.

1- La Presse: A renowned French-Canadian daily newspaper published in Montreal (host city of the Formula 1 Grand Prix of Canada), its readership comes close to 20% of Quebec's total population with 1 118 548 weekly readers (Centre d'étude des médias, 2015, p. 13)

2- The Toronto Star: English Canadian daily newspaper published in Toronto (host city of the Indycar grand prix of Toronto), it has a weekly readership beyond two million people.

(Newspapers Canada, 2016)

*3- The Globe and Mail: English Canadian newspaper also published in Toronto, it is distributed across Canada. Its readership also goes beyond two million people weekly.

(Newspapers Canada, 2016)

The daily newspapers were selected because of their substantial readerships, which give a them high degree of relevance due to their reach within the general population, and because of their proximity to major motorsport events taking place in the cities they are published in. Beyond these considerations, it was the matter of the important number of in-depth articles on the subject of death in motorsport within these publications that played a role in their selection. The results of the pilot study will bring more detail to that effect.

The data collection included articles published during the period from May 1st 1982 to August 31st 2017, a span of 35 years. This period was selected for two reasons. First, in order to include any article discussing the death of Gilles Villeneuve on May 8, 1982, an unavoidable element when discussing the Canadian coverage of motorsport fatalities. Second, the dates were selected to include some high-profile drivers that died more recently, particularly Dan Wheldon, Justin Wilson and Jules Bianchi, former Formula 1 and Indycar drivers (Motorsport Memorial). Finally, the dates covered by the study enabled a comparison between themes and the safety improvements that were made in motorsport over the period (Schrader, 2016; Valentine, 2016). From the data published on the Motorsport Memorial (<http://www.motorsportmemorial.org>), a website that compiles all the motorsport fatalities that have occurred, newspaper articles that include the names of high-profile drivers that died driving in one of the top series (Formula 1,

Indycar, and NASCAR) were searched for. This allowed for the creation of a bank of articles to analyze. 26 drivers were counted by the author according to these criteria (see Figure 3.1) and those are the name that were used to conduct both the pilot study and the complete research project.

Daily newspaper articles were first obtained through the Eureka (for *La Presse*) and Canadian Major Dailies (for *The Toronto Star*) data banks. Available online, Eureka and Canadian Major Dailies are databanks of daily newspapers that allow the downloading of articles in .pdf format, which made it easier to conduct a quality thematic analysis.

The reasoning behind the use of different data banks is that *Eureka* only has articles from *La Presse* dating back to 1989. The situation is similar for Canadian major dailies and *The Toronto Star*, the articles of the *Star* being available only from 1985 onward. Since seven drivers died during that period (1982-85 for *The Toronto Star* and 1982-89 for *La Presse*), the number of articles was thought to be important enough, especially when considering the coverage of Gilles Villeneuve's death, that they had to be analyzed. To complete the sample, a few different approaches had to be taken. A first attempt to contact both *La Presse* and *The Toronto Star* to determine the possibility and cost of obtaining the relevant newspaper articles published during the period unavailable on the data banks was not fruitful; both dailies responded that they did not hold archives dating back to such periods. Staff at *La Presse* were helpful enough to guide the data collection towards the website of the Bibliothèque nationale du Québec, which had the articles of *La Presse* from 1980 onwards in downloadable .pdf format. Concerning the missing articles from *The Toronto Star*, staff at *The Toronto Star* proposed to consult either Library and Archives Canada or a public library to find the missing articles. While the former option was not useful because of the way the "search" function is built on the website (a matter that would probably deserve a management study in itself), the latter proved more helpful. The Ottawa Public Library

had microfilms of the *Star*'s articles dating back to 1984. Finally, by turning to the University of Ottawa library, the missing 1982 to 1985 articles were found, as they were held in the reserve in microfilm format.

Search guidelines had to be planned in order to guide the search for articles in the newspaper unavailable on data banks. The newspapers were searched on a period lasting one month after the date of the passing of a driver, as well as on anniversaries for a period of five years. This way, the search allowed the possibility to discover changes in the thematic coverage of the death of a driver, while remaining systematic and as exhaustive as possible.

In order to verify the validity of the data for analysis, a pilot study was conducted from *La Presse*'s articles available through Eureka. The following section covers the search, compilation, and analysis processes that were employed.

3.4. Pilot study

The Eureka data bank allows the research of newspaper articles with precision throughout the world from the input of keywords and over customizable time periods. In order to conduct the pilot study, the search requests that were put in to the data bank were exclusive to *La Presse*, and for the entirety of the existing archives. As mentioned earlier, the coverage of *La Presse* stops in 1989 on Eureka. The requests were inputted according to a specific protocol. The name of the deceased driver was written in its full length and put between brackets in order to obtain articles where the name would appear the same way (for example "Gilles Villeneuve"). The request asked for articles in which the name appeared in the core of the text. A second level of request was made to the core of the text for the word *death* ("mort") with the option for *passing* ("décès") if an unmanageable number of results was to appear. With these levels of search requests, the articles

that were obtained were in general only related to the death of the driver, except in the case of Gilles Villeneuve. The coverage of the Formula 1 Grand Prix of Canada mentions the Circuit Gilles Villeneuve often, so another level of request had to be added. This level asked for articles with the word “circuit” (which means race track) to be excluded.

Date of death	Name	Nationality	Series
May 8 th 1982	Gilles Villeneuve	Canada	Formula 1
May 15 th 1982	Gordon Smiley	United States	Indycar
June 13 th 1982	Ricardo Paletti	Italy	Formula 1
July 31 st 1982	Jim Hickman	United States	Indycar
February 17 th 1983	Bruce Jacobi	United States	Nascar
November 11 th 1984	Terry Schoonover	United States	Nascar
May 14 th 1986	Elio de Angelis	Italy	Formula 1
June 14 th 1986	Rick Baldwin	United States	Nascar
November 19 th 1989	Grant Adcox	United States	Nascar
August 11 th 1991	J.D. McDuffie	United States	Nascar
May 15 th 1992	Jovy Marcelo	Philippines	Indycar
February 11 th 1994	Neil Bonnett	United States	Nascar
February 14 th 1994	Rodney Orr	United States	Nascar
April 30 th 1994	Roland Ratzenberger	Austria	Formula 1
May 1 st 1994	Ayrton Senna	Brazil	Formula 1
May 17 th 1996	Scott Brayton	United States	Indycar
July 14 th 1996	Jeff Krosnoff	United States	Indycar
September 11 th 1999	Gonzalo Rodriguez	Uruguay	Indycar
October 31 st 1999	Greg Moore	Canada	Indycar
July 7 th 2000	Kenny Irwin Jr.	United States	Nascar
February 18 th 2001	Dale Earnhardt	United States	Nascar
October 22 nd 2003	Tony Renna	United States	Indycar
March 26 th 2006	Paul Dana	United States	Indycar
October 16 th 2011	Dan Wheldon	United Kingdom	Indycar
July 17 th 2015	Jules Bianchi	France	Formula 1
August 23 rd 2015	Justin Wilson	United Kingdom	Indycar
Total	26 pilotes		

Figure 3.1: Compilation of Formula 1, Indycar, and NASCAR drivers killed between 1982 and 2017

Despite these precise requests, a manual compilation had to be done to ensure the relevance of the articles. Of the thirty-one articles that discussed death, seventeen were analyzed, as the other articles were doubles. Only four of the seventeen articles did not have any relevance in light of the study’s research objective. These four articles were limited to announcing the death of the driver without giving details that could be analyzed from a risk literature perspective.

A quick analysis of the seventeen articles also showed that three themes related to risk literature were present within the articles. The matter of driver personality (namely in the form of courage), masculinity, and taking risk as an integral part of their lives were present in one form or another. Interestingly, the idea of striking a symbolic agreement with death was not present. From a limited sample, it was possible to display the feasibility of conducting a thematic analysis of the coverage of motorsport fatalities in a Canadian journalistic context.

3.5. Data collection summary

The data collection took place over a two-month period, from mid-August to mid-October of 2017. Following the guidelines mentioned earlier, a total of 488 articles were extracted from *The Toronto Star* (n=276) and *La Presse* (n=212). The number of articles already gathered at that point, coupled with a tentative start to data aggregation, led to the conclusion that the *Globe and Mail* articles would not be needed. Time constraints were also factored in, keeping in mind the need to collect, aggregate, and analyse the added data of a third publication.

Newspaper	Number of articles
<i>The Toronto Star</i>	276
<i>La Presse</i>	212
Total	488

Figure 3.2: Number of articles per newspaper

While the focus of this research is not quantitative, there remains a few elements of interest that are useful in order to understand how the matter of death in motorsport has been discussed in the past. For example, as shown in Figure 3.3, the distribution of the articles through time in the two newspapers studied show important spikes in the total numbers of articles for the year 1982, 1994, 1996, and 1999-2001. These are respectively the years in which Gilles Villeneuve, Ayrton

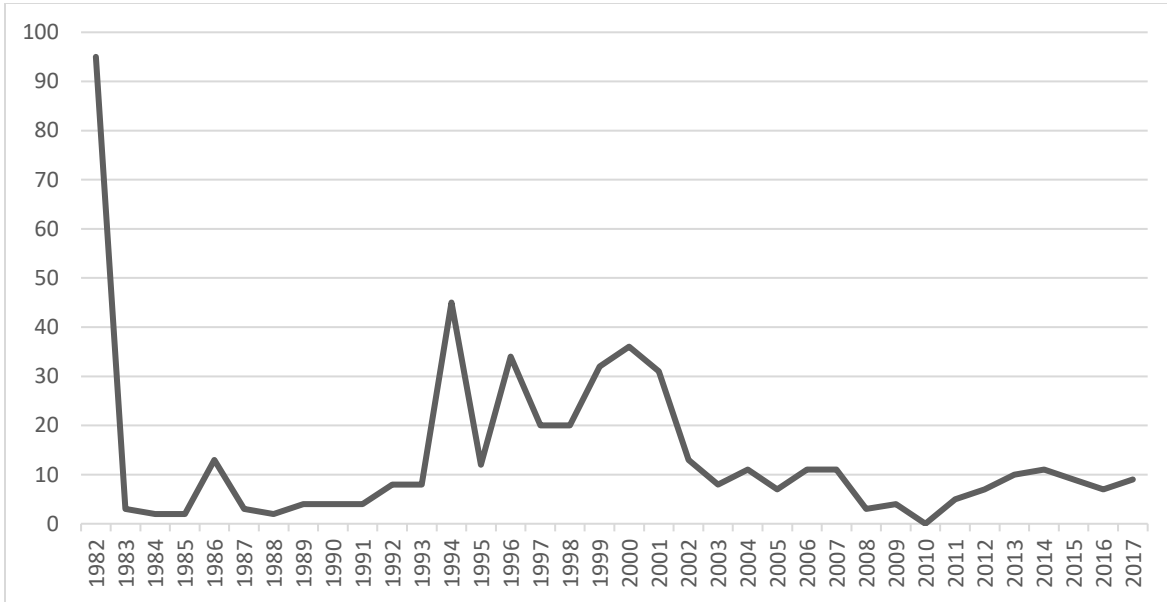


Figure 3.3: Number of articles discussing death in motorsport, per year.

Senna, Jeff Krosnoff, Greg Moore, and Dale Earnhardt perished in a race. Villeneuve and Moore were both Canadians, Krosnoff died in the Toronto Indycar event, and both Earnhardt and Senna were already deemed legendary drivers before they died. In no other time period is there more than thirty articles per year broaching the subject studied here. No matter the number of motorsport deaths to occur in a specific year, the newspaper coverage in the *Star* and *La Presse* never reaches the importance it had during the aforementioned periods.

Considering how the articles are grouped within the sample, three distinct periods of coverage were found. The first period covers from May 1982 up until the end of 1986, the second period covers from 1994 to 2004, and the third period covers from 2011 to 2017.

Deceased driver name	Number of articles mentioning death
Gilles Villeneuve	191
Ayrton Senna	99
Greg Moore	73
Jeff Krosnoff	39
Roland Ratzenberger	29
Dale Earnhardt	26
Ricardo Paletti	24
Dan Wheldon	24
Jules Bianchi	15
Elio de Angelis	15
Kenny Irwin Jr.	13
Gordon Smiley	12
Paul Dana	11
Gonzalo Rodriguez	11
Neil Bonnett	8
Justin Wilson	7
Scott Brayton	5
Rodney Orr	5
Tony Renna	5
J.D. McDuffie	4
Jovy Marcelo	3
Terry Schoonover	3
Bruce Jacobi	2
Grant Adcox	1
Rick Baldwin	1
Jim Hickman	1
Total	627

Figure 3.4: Number of articles mentioning a driver's death

This last point is particularly striking when looking at a breakdown of the number of articles mentioning the death of a specific driver. Gilles Villeneuve comes first and foremost, being discussed in ninety-two articles more than any other single driver (see Figure 3.4). The names following him are those of Senna, Moore, Krosnoff, and Earnhardt. Nevertheless, there is another

driver name inserted within this group of five: Roland Ratzenberger. His position on the list could be explained by the fact he died a day before Senna did, during a qualification run. As both died over the same race weekend, their names became somewhat intertwined in the news coverage. When looking at more recent deaths, such as those of Dan Wheldon, Jules Bianchi and Justin Wilson, there is still a significant number of articles that were published in each case; twenty-four, fifteen and seven respectively. Nevertheless, none of these cases reached the proportions seen previously, even if they were the first high-profile fatalities at the top levels of motorsport in some time. Finally, as made obvious by the total number of articles (n=627) which is much higher than the previous total mentioned (n=488), journalists discuss multiples drivers at once in some of their articles. The average number of articles addressing the passing of a driver is twenty-four, but the median number of articles is eleven. This highlights that a few drivers have been written about at length, while others have not received as much coverage when it comes to their racing death.

The last quantitative aspect of the data that will be looked at is in regards to the authors that have contributed in the *Star* and *La Presse* to the discussion on motorsport fatalities. Some of the most important individuals to have contributed to the subject are Norris McDonald (n=40), and Rick Matsumoto (n=39) from the *Star*, as well as Gilles Bourcier (n=37), from *La Presse*. But as seen in Figure 3.5, there are eighty articles that have no author name attached to them. Those were mostly articles from the *Star*, which were obtained through the Canadian Major Dailies databank. While many other articles obtained that way did have the name of an author attached to them, the missing names did not seem to be a missing feature of the .pdf files obtained through the databank itself. News aggregators were also main contributors to the topic, especially Associated Press (n=72), and Agence France Presse (n=24). Finally, and perhaps most interestingly, eighty-four authors wrote three or less articles on the subject of motorsport fatalities. The articles written by

Article author	Number of articles
No author	80
Associated Press	72
Norris McDonald/Norm McDonald	40
Rick Matsumoto	39
Gilles Bourcier	37
Agence France Presse	24
Réjean Tremblay	19
Frank Orr	15
Gerald Donaldson	14
La Presse Canadienne/CP (The Canadian Press)	11
Reuter	10
UPI (United Press International)	7
Jean-François Bégin	5
Mark Zwolinski	5
Garth Woolsey	4
7 different authors	3
19 different authors	2
58 different authors	1

Figure 3.5: Number of articles per author

those authors amount to over 20% of the total sample (n=117). This roughly amounts to the same number of articles as those written by Bourcier, Matsumoto, and McDonald, which worked for the sports sections of their respective newspapers for a long and continuous period of time.

To summarize, articles touching on the matter of death in motorsport were written in bursts that were determined by the passing of high-profile drivers, almost equally between the *Star* and *La Presse*, by a wide variety of authors. As interesting as these elements are in themselves, the focus of this research lies in qualitative thematic analysis, which will be the focus of the upcoming section.

3.6. Preparation of the analysis

In order to conduct the analysis of such a body of articles, a multi-step process was put in place. The first step consisted in logging each article of the sample into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet which recorded the date of publication, the title of the article, the name(s) of the author(s), and the newspaper in which the article was published. After this was done for a specific article, quotations that touched on the matter of the driver's death itself were extracted and inputted in the spreadsheet. Many articles had multiple separate quotations, which were listed numerically in order to keep them separate so there would not be confusion when coming back to the data in the future. This process was completed by the end of October 2017 and an example of it can be found in Annex B.

The second portion of the analysis began in February 2018. It consisted of going back to the quotations that were logged in the first portion of the analysis and evaluating if themes of risk-taking literature were relevant to them, and if so, which ones. It became apparent early on that while most of the themes of risk literature appeared at one time or another within the coverage of death in motorsport, there remained quite large thematic gaps. Numerous articles could not be encoded while relying only on risk literature. A third round of analysis became necessary.

The third round of analysis was conducted over the last week of February 2018. Similar to the second round, each quotation was analysed, but this time, instead of using risk taking literature as the basis of the analysis, what was of interest were the latent themes of the quotes, and what similarities existed between them. A highly iterative process, this third portion of the analysis yielded entirely new themes, with their own subthemes, categories and indicators, as will become evident in Chapter 4.

To conclude the analysis at the end of the third step, a table was created in order to make sense of the various themes and their articulations within the data sample. The analysis of the data sample yielded a wealth of thematic elements. The final outlook of the relation between those themes can be found in Annex C. As can be seen in the table, the overarching theme of the study is death. This overarching theme was surrounded by three main themes: The individual (the race driver), the social aspect (of driving race cars and dying doing so), and the journalistic duty attached to the coverage of motorsport fatalities. Each of these themes will now be discussed individually in order to elucidate the inner workings of each, and to facilitate addressing the sub-research question later in this thesis.

First comes the individual. The driver as an individual was extensively covered in the data sample. Three main sub-themes were related to the individual that allow for a greater understanding of how these deceased drivers were covered. The masculinity of the drivers was approached in a myriad of ways, most of them aligned with the risk-taking and masculinity literature examined at length in Chapter 2. These include driving despite physical injuries, downplaying health concerns, a willingness to take risks, the egoism and hedonism of the drivers having a symbolic deal with death or a death fulfilment wish when driving, and finally experiencing the state of flow that comes with being perfectly in tune with one's machinery. Another aspect of the individual that was covered in the data was the qualities associated with a driver. Whether it was mastery of their craft, a perfectionist nature, courage, self-confidence or mental toughness, to name merely a few of the qualities discussed, it was a common occurrence to heap praise upon a driver who died while practicing the highly dangerous sport of motor racing. This portion of the data was also drawn almost exclusively from themes that were present in the risk-taking literature. The last sub-theme attached to the theme of the individual was waste. The

most straightforward of the three, it was mostly a matter of a driver dying too young and falling short of realizing his potential in the sport.

Moving on to the social aspect of the death in motorsport, it was found here too that a wide variety of sub-themes were related to the main theme. These sub-themes were: the family, the history of death in motorsport, the notion of risk-management (which derives from risk-taking literature), the idea of the spectacle, the “heroization” of the deceased, the beliefs of drivers, the quest for the guilty parties contributing to a death, and finally the future, or what comes after a driver dies. In the case of this specific theme and its sub-themes, most of the knowledge coming from risk-taking literature was found to be a category of a sub-theme, meaning a way in which the sub-theme was approached by the journalists in their reportage. Coverage of the family or risk-management measures were most significant for this as a variety of themes from risk taking literature were found to be related to those sub-themes.

The final main theme and the one that had nothing to do with risk-taking literature was the journalistic duty to cover death in motorsport. While it was not the most important theme in terms of numbers of articles that were centered around it, it nonetheless produced various articles that informed readers of the various processes sports journalists follow when discussing a death. The sub-themes related to this theme were anchored in the way the news was covered, and whether it was oriented medically, politically, personally, or factually. These will be more extensively covered in the third part of this chapter which addresses themes lying outside of risk literature, but nonetheless is relevant to the coverage of death in motorsport.

Now that the most important specifics of each theme have been established, it is possible to examine how the coverage of death in motorsport evolved on a thematic level throughout the 1982 to 2017 period.

Chapter 4: Results & Analysis

Before delving into the specifics of the analysis, it is important to recall what the main research question is: *How is motorsport death represented in the daily printed sports news in Canada between 1982 and 2017?* It is broken down in three sub-sections which revolve around the individual, the social aspect of death in motorsport, and the journalistic coverage on the subject.

4.1. Death in motorsport: The individual

4.1.1. Masculinity

When examining each main theme through all three periods, a number of similarities can be found. Starting with the coverage on the individual, the notion of *masculinity* of the drivers is present from the beginning of 1982 with Gilles Villeneuve's passing up until the fatal accidents of Jules Bianchi and Justin Wilson which constitute the tail end of the sample. One of the earliest examples found in the sample stipulates the following: "Each time it happens, the debate over the morality of racing rages anew. Attempts are made to rationalize the carnage. But the bottom line is that each driver who dies was prepared to do so." (Wayne Parrish, 1982)

This notion of "being prepared to do so," meaning dying, is prevalent through the entire sample. This concept is often presented in those exact words as well. There does not seem to be a need to dress up what is a foregone conclusion to most sports journalists, drivers or other personality associated to the field. Drivers can die doing what they love, as explained by Jacques Laffite, a Villeneuve-era Formula 1 driver:

On aime la vitesse, reconnaît Jacques Laffite. Depuis que l'on est petit on fait tout vite. Et franchement cette mort de Gilles, si elle m'attriste, ne me fait pas réfléchir. Lorsque l'on choisit cette voie, nous savons qu'elle comporte des risques énormes. Mais c'est notre vie. Je considère que ce soit en course, dans un sport dangereux, voire sur la route ou ailleurs... Il faut mourir un jour ou l'autre. Alors que ce soit en course, pourquoi pas? » (...) « Quand

il n'y a pas d'accident, on a du mal à croire que l'on fait un métier dangereux', avouait Alain Prost. La disparition de Villeneuve vient de le rappeler. (Patrick Burchkalter, 1982)

What is of interest with this specific quote is the notion that only another driver dying can actually make the potential of death a real possibility for these athletes. In all other instances, they do not even believe their sport presents any form of danger, or if it does, they accept it:

Car racing history is replete with the celebrated names of the deceased - Gilles Villeneuve, Ayrton Senna, Jimmy Clark - and now add poor Krosnoff to the list. He never knew what hit him, but you can't say he didn't see it coming. That he understood, precisely. (Jim Proudfoot, 1996)

Death is an accepted possibility to the point where a fellow driver fatally crashing is of no immediate concern, the show must go on:

I do not recall a professional car race ever being stopped as the result of a fatal accident. (...) did they stop the Grand Prix of San Marino in 1994 when Ayrton Senna was killed? No. Did they stop the CART race at California Speedway in 1999 when Greg Moore was killed? No. After Paul Dana was killed at Homestead- Miami in 2006? No. That is what you do in racing. As Speed TV's Dave Despain said last Sunday night: 'Racers race, then grieve.' (Norris McDonald, 2011)

To some, like Villeneuve, death was not even considered a potential outcome, he thought he was quite safe from it:

Gilles was at my house for Christmas in 1981. Jochen Mass and Patrick Tambay were there. My wife said that night to Gilles that if he drove like that, you are going to kill yourself. He just said, 'Barbara, you don't know what you are talking about. I'm never going to kill myself.' He was dead five months later. (Allan de la Plante, 2012)

What emerges from these quotes is the notion that drivers exude a certain amount of bravado in the practice of their profession. While this bravado might allow them to strap on their seatbelts and take to the track at inhuman speeds, it also is an attitude that relates directly to their passing. When looking at the last quote in particular, wherein Gilles Villeneuve tells Barbara de

la Plante that he is “never going to kill himself,” there seems to be a sort of fatality in such a skilled and confident driver being killed doing what he was best, and arguably *the* best, at. Nevertheless, such is the case of all drivers when looking into the coverage of death in motorsport. Those that “choose this life” (Burchkalter, 1982) are aware of the risks and are going beyond them in order to attain fame and glory in their sport. And if another driver dies right next to them, well “racers race, then grieve” (McDonald, 2011) – as simple as that. To juxtapose this with risk taking literature, what is written about race car drivers is that they will take risks, and ignore physical injuries (Greg Moore killed himself driving with a broken thumb) and health concerns – and that if they get killed doing so, it is simply part of who they are.

When it comes to the evolution of the coverage centered around the masculinity of the driver itself, there are also variations throughout the study period. The ideas of flow and egoism which were present in the first and second periods ('82 to '86 and '94 to '04) seem to have completely disappeared from the coverage in the third period. In most cases, the state of flow is something approached through two drivers, Villeneuve and Senna. In Villeneuve's case, his death is partly blamed on a broken flow due to an ongoing dispute he was involved in with his teammate at the time (Tremblay, 1982). When flow is approached in relation to Senna, the following quote sums it up:

‘There was a stage when I was over two seconds quicker than anybody else, including my teammate with the same equipment. I realized at that moment - suddenly - that I was well over something conscious. I was not aware, exactly, of what was going on. Not that I was not in control. I was just going-going-going. An amazing experience.’ (Ingram, 1994)

For Villeneuve, even a broken flow did not keep him off the track and could have ultimately cost him his life. Senna's legacy remains that of a driver that could push beyond all limitations of a race car, even after said race car killed him.

The last element of the *masculinity* sub-theme that is present in the sample centered around the individual is the idea of egoism. This is a marginal theme, as it is only present in one instance in the entire data sample. It revolves around a teammate begging for a driver's race seat even though he had died a only few hours before (Bourcier, 1999). That is to say, the death of a comrade does not hamper the desire of race drivers to put their own lives on the line, even when the car they are trying to get in suffered a deadly mechanical failure. This is nonetheless significant. The preoccupation with getting a race seat for oneself is greater than any other consideration, even when it means racing a machine that just caused the death of its driver.

4.1.2. Qualities of the driver

Who drivers are nevertheless goes beyond a masculine approach to life and their profession. Race car drivers, particularly successful ones, are lauded for their talent, even a long time after they kill themselves at the wheel of their machine. In this respect two names seem forever "irreplaceable" (Bourcier, 1986) in the heart of fans and journalists: Gilles Villeneuve and Ayrton Senna. All other drivers, no matter how skilled, pale in comparison, even multiple Indy 500 winners.

C'est par défaut que cet enfant chéri de la scuderia Ferrari souffre aujourd'hui la comparaison avec eux, lui que d'aucuns ont qualifié d'irremplaçable, de dieu du volant, de champion sans titre. La foule l'adorait, a-t-on écrit, 'parce qu'il était le seul funambule du lot à se produire sans filet'. Depuis, les meilleurs pilotes, tout bons qu'ils soient, ne l'ont toujours pas délogé de cette scène qu'il occupait seul, dans ses numéros de haute voltige où l'audace et le dépassement étaient les règles du jeu. (Bourcier, 1986)

Even four years after Gilles Villeneuve's death, the one thing that remains a certainty is that Villeneuve's skill was incomparable. He was widely regarded as an irreplaceable driving superstar, without equal or competition despite the fact he had never won a title. Notwithstanding the fact that other more successful drivers (in terms of championships won) have perished at the wheel as

well, Villeneuve's mystique lies in how he drove cars, which even, 35 years after his death, is still lauded in articles.

The only other driver to reach such a level of skill, if one only takes in consideration what is written about him, is Ayrton Senna.

Ayrton Senna da Silva, 34 ans, était né à Sao Paulo. Divorcé, sans enfant, il était reconnu comme le pilote le plus rapide de la Formule 1, comme en témoigne son record de 65 pole-positions et ses 41 victoires. Deux fois vainqueur du Grand Prix du Canada à Montréal (1988-1990), le Brésilien pilotait comme un funambule, toujours à la limite, ce qui lui avait valu de remplacer Gilles Villeneuve dans le cœur des amateurs. (Marois, 1994)

In a similar fashion to Gilles Villeneuve, one of the most important notions that remains talked about in his case is his skill level, which rivaled even Villeneuve's in the eyes of many. The difference lies in the fact Senna did win three Formula 1 World Championship titles. However, once the discussion shifts to drivers not named Villeneuve or Senna, the formulation is more restrained.

Wheldon, double vainqueur des 500 milles d'Indianapolis (2005, 2011) et champion de la série IndyCar en 2005, n'avait pu trouver un volant régulier cette saison, malgré sa victoire à Indianapolis. Il avait toutefois récemment conclu une entente avec l'équipe Andretti-Green pour remplacer Patrick la saison prochaine. (Marois, 2011)

The way in which the qualities of a driver are approached in the news coverage therefore varies. It is always present, but since no other driver has been able to capture the imagination of fans the way Senna and Villeneuve did, the praise heaped on a driver's memory highlights how good they were, though it is never as much as the Canadian and the Brazilian legends. The figure of Villeneuve is especially powerful throughout the dataset, and is often mobilized, which is understandable considering the Canadian audience the newspapers articles analyzed were written for and directed towards.

The only element that risk-taking literature had not touched on that was present in the themes extracted from the data was maturity. It is marginal, as only in the case of Elio de Angelis was a deceased driver qualified in such a way: “Andretti left Lotus the following year and de Angelis became the youngest No. 1 driver in Grand Prix racing at 23. Team owner Colin Chapman called him ‘a youngster with a mature approach, an impressive degree of confidence and considerable ability.’” (Associated Press, 1986)

When looking at the evolution of the driver’s *qualities* sub-theme, there are two angles that have been used for a period before vanishing from the narrative: the ideas of perfectionism and responsibility. Speaking to the idea of perfectionism, it was intrinsically related to Gilles Villeneuve from his death up until Senna’s passing. Outside of his broken flow mentioned earlier, it is that quality that has been thought of having been his downfall: “Gilles Villeneuve était un perfectioniste, ce qui, pour un conducteur de voiture, est à la fois une bénédiction et une malédiction. Finalement, c'est peut-être son besoin d'être le meilleur qui l'a tué samedi.” (La Presse Canadienne, 1982). Blessed and cursed by this quality, it is what drove him to undertake the lap which proved fatal to him. But drivers ultimately declare themselves responsible for the choices they make. Every one of them agrees on the matter, even those that have passed since voicing such an opinion, namely Dale Earnhardt, the NASCAR legend, and Greg Moore: “Race drivers say they understand the risks. Or, simply don't think about them. ‘If I crash, I crash,’ Greg Moore, the B.C.-born CART driver who died last November, once said, summing up the attitude.” (Donaldson, 2000). Just as in the case of the perfectionism of drivers, this idea of responsibility has not been present in the coverage of death in motorsport since early 2000. Perhaps it is a point that has been driven home so much in the past that drivers do not feel the need to mention it anymore.

In short, the theme of the individual in the coverage of death in motorsport can be described as very constant in asserting the *masculinity* and the *qualities* of deceased drivers through the study period. The exceptions to this lie in some angles in the coverage that have disappeared as time faded away, in the case of Gilles Villeneuve's perfectionism for example, or the responsible nature of race car drivers. Interestingly, no new sub-themes have emerged through time to diversify the narrative in any way. The idea of the deceased race driver remains more or less the same as it was 35 years ago. Something that did vary, however, is the discussion surrounding the social aspects of death in motorsport, which will be the topic of the upcoming paragraphs.

4.2. The social aspect of death in motorsport

When it comes to the theme of the social aspects of a death in motorsport, the coverage across all three periods mentioned earlier ('82 to '86, '94 to '04, and '11 to '17), is much less homogeneous than the one that was focused solely on the individual. Through the three periods, there are three sub-themes present. They are matters related to the family, to risk management, and to the heroization of a deceased driver. Notions of remembrance and spectacle have entered and left the media representation of death landscape during the same period.

4.2.1. Racing, death, and family

The angle that defines the constant presence of the *family* sub-theme within the data sample is that of the socialisation to risk which drivers have experienced in their lives. From Gilles Villeneuve to Greg Moore, and including upcoming or would be racers, it seems to be part of the racing culture to be initiated by a family member. In the words of Séville Villeneuve, Gilles' father:

“J'ai toujours été un conducteur rapide. Quand ils étaient jeunes, je les amenais en voiture. Sur les coins de rue, lors des départs je faisais crisser les pneus de l'auto. Ça donnait du ‘trill’ aux enfants.

Je crois qu'ils en sont restés marqués” (1982a). The situation was similar for Greg Moore:

He was young, cocky and talented. And most of all he was unafraid of driving sleek race cars at terrifying speeds around tracks lined with concrete walls. And it was those traits that took Greg Moore to the heights of the sport with which he had fallen in love as an 8-year-old when his father, Ric, bought him his first go-kart. Yesterday, those qualities cost him his life. (Matsumoto, 1999)

While these deceased drivers have been initiated to speed at a young age by loved ones, it is important to note that at no point is there a correlation established between the initiating figure and a responsibility for the death of the driver. This is in line with the idea of the personal responsibility of the driver in undertaking the hazardous venture of motorsport that was discussed earlier. As relatives fostered a love for racing, the eventual demise of a driver is nonetheless the deceased's sole responsibility.

The relatives are also those left behind when a driver dies, something that does not fail to be noticed, although in a very limited manner. Gilles Villeneuve left his wife Joann, and his children alone when he died (Tremblay, 1994; Tremblay, 2005) but other issues may have to be faced by a family when a driver dies:

Gorsline sells life insurance to some of the world's best drivers. The young Canadian superstar never got around to buying any. ‘He died (in a crash) without the insurance,’ says the Rochester-based Gorsline, in an apparent reference to British Columbia's Greg Moore who died in 1999, although Gorsline wouldn't confirm that. ‘It was stupid. Absolutely dumb. For whatever reason, (his) advisers said, ‘You don't need life insurance.’” (Feschuk, 2004)

Adding to this lack of insurance is the fact that Moore's family launched an unsuccessful wrongful death lawsuit (for the lack of safety measures at the track) against CART, one of the two racing series which later fused to become Indycar (2002b), and the Fontana track where he died.

Essentially, Moore's relatives were left to pick up the scraps of the driver's death. Such considerations did not seem to bother Moore in any way when he had discussed the potential of death in motorsport:

"If I crash, I crash," Greg Moore said with a shrug yesterday, explaining how he feels about the deadly perils of racing high-powered cars for a living. "I have no family, hardly any bills to worry about. So I'm out there giving 150 per cent." Moore and the three drivers finishing ahead of him in the Molson Indy gave mostly cheerful and at times triumphant interviews half an hour after a first-year competitor from California named Jeff Krosnoff had been killed in an accident so dreadful the race was called off with two laps to go. (Proudfoot, 1996)

Keeping in line with the masculine aura of invulnerability drivers drape themselves in, Moore's take on the death of a fellow driver was simply that he did not need to worry about a family he did not have, only his performance. His violent passing would later prove him wrong. There is a form of exclusion of the family from the discussion around the passing that may be traced down to the heroic aura in which news coverage bathe the drivers, particularly in death. The coverage of what happened to Gilles Villeneuve's family only came in years after, and only once his son Jacques started his racing career himself, and Gilles' widow Joann had come back to live in Canada (Tremblay, 1994; Proudfoot, 1995; Tremblay, 2005). It would be hard to praise a hero that abandons his close relatives. An example of this is how the narrative surrounding Moore's death went from the loss of a budding superstar, to the fact his family had to fight in court in order to pick up the pieces left by his untimely and uninsured passing over several years. Such a courtesy was not given to Alison Hargreaves when she perished on the K2. In the days and even the weeks following a driver's death, the concerns for loved ones do not exist. Those only come years down the road, if ever. In that, the coverage focuses on the same thing the drivers do: the drivers themselves.

4.2.2. Managing the risk of death

Nevertheless, there are aspects outside of the sole responsibility of the driver that do get pointed to as being factors in a motorsport death. When looking into the sub-theme of *risk management*, the discussion around protective equipment of all varieties is the overarching narrative within the data sample. There were very few deadly accidents that did not revive the discussion on safety in motorsport. Almost every aspect imaginable has been discussed, from the track, to the cars, to the equipment worn by the drivers, all the way to the rules of the racing series themselves. There has been, and still is, an all-encompassing discussion around ways to manage the risks that drivers are facing. The following provides a good illustration of the scope of the discussion:

Par ces pilotes qui dénoncent l'insécurité permanente sur les circuits due particulièrement à leurs voitures toujours plus rapides, de moins en moins contrôlables. C'est Didier Pironi, président de l'association des pilotes, qui affirme 'l'adhérence des voitures est maintenant assurée à 90 pour cent par l'effet de sol. Lorsqu'un incident se produit au niveau des jupes, la monoplace devient alors un avion, un obus. Avant ces jupes, nous passions à 180 km/h à l'endroit où Gilles s'est tué. Aujourd'hui la vitesse atteint 250 à 260 kmh (sic) à ce même endroit.' (Burchkalter, 1982)

Technological development in motorsport is what drives the quest for increased speeds and competitiveness. But what is highlighted in this passage is that this development had started to catch up to the capacities and capabilities of drivers even in 1982. The effect of Gilles Villeneuve's death when it comes to risk management was that the "ground effect skirts" (Miller, 2013) were banned. This is one of the many reported cases of something being done by regulatory bodies after a death. However, it is also sometimes a rule change that can lead to increased risks for drivers, as the following quote suggests:

According to many sports commentators, new racing regulations and the track at Imola were what killed Senna. "He was the victim of the new regulations that banned active suspension, traction control and electronic accelerators," Formula One reporter Castilho de

Andrade said in the *Jornal da Tarde* newspaper. The ban on electronic gadgets also included computer-assisted brake systems and fully automatic transmissions. The idea was to reduce the technological advantage of big, rich teams such as Williams, McLaren and Benetton and to make the driver – not the car – the key to success. Mauricio Gugelmin, who has raced in Formula One and IndyCar, said electronics were an important safety element. (Associated Press, 1994a)

In the name of fairness and spectacle, Formula 1 cars were modified prior to the 1994 season. While Senna's death was traced back to a broken suspension after his steering failed (Associated Press, 1994b; Cantin, 1996), the fact remains that the discussion was centered around the rule change and its impact on the drivability of the cars that drivers had to wrestle around the track in their quest for victory. The other interesting aspect of this passage revolves around the discussion on the acceptability of the track itself. This element of risk-management discussion has been prevalent ever since then.

Concerning Senna's, as well as Greg Moore's passing, the main concern was the lack of run-off areas and wall protection, as no tire barriers were present in either case to soften the blow against a concrete barrier (Orr, 1995; 1999b). NASCAR needed the deaths of Kenny Irwin Jr and Dale Earnhardt before starting the development of wall protections called soft wall (Zwolinski, 2001) which eventually became known as SAFER barriers. Moving forward, modifying the cars and the tracks have not been the only aspects that have been looked at in order to reduce risks following fatalities.

It wouldn't have saved Greg Moore. But there are those who feel it might have prevented Gonzalo Rodriguez's fatal accident at Laguna Seca, Calif., or even the recent racetrack deaths of NASCAR drivers Adam Petty and Kenny Irwin. That's why there is a rush to perfect the HANS (Head And Neck Support) device and, following the lead of Formula One, make it mandatory for the 2001 CART season. (Matsumoto, 2000b)

Designed to reduce the whiplash accompanying the abrupt deceleration of a car hitting a wall and its effect on a driver's head and spine, the HANS was already being talked about before Dale Earnhardt died at Daytona in 2001. The "Intimidator" refused to wear it, even though it could have very well saved his life (—, 2001b). This is in line with the masculine persona attached to the race car driver, the self-professed invulnerability, and the complete disregard for the possibility of serious injuries and even death that have previously been discussed in the theme of the individual.

All top-level racing series have since the early 2000 have made the HANS device mandatory (Matsumoto, 2006), whether a driver wanted to wear one or not. Up until recently, it was fair to say that existing risk management measures were deemed adequate in the media coverage. This situation changed drastically after Jules Bianchi's accident in 2014 as this extensive piece written by McDonald shows:

Okay, I have to say it: what are they thinking? I'm talking about Formula One and that absolutely awful, awful, awful halo thingy they are going to put on the cars next year to better protect the drivers. It is hideous. If you are the driver, it interferes with your view of the track ahead. It offers no protection from a tire or something else landing in the cockpit from above, as happened to Henry Surtees. Does anybody really think that thing would have saved Felipe Massa from nearly being killed by that suspension part seven years ago? Not a chance. (...) When Jules Bianchi died of the injuries he suffered at the Japanese Grand Prix, there was a great hue and cry and F1 pledged to do something. But then they dragged their heels. As a result, they got an earful from the insurance companies. Yup, that's the dirty little secret here. The insurance companies told F1 and the teams that they would not provide coverage (or enough coverage) if something wasn't done to make sure what happened to Bianchi didn't happen again. So very quickly, late in the 2016 season, somebody came up with that halo that was supposed to be in use this year - 2017. But it clearly wasn't going to work - for many of the reasons I outlined above: it hinders the driver's view, it doesn't stop small objects from flying into the cockpit and there is no protection from above. All the drivers and the teams said the halo was really stupid and more time was needed. Because F1 had made a good faith effort to at least do something, the insurance companies went along with a request that implementation be put off for a year, until 2018. Then, it appears F1 forgot all about it again. Reminded that 2018 is looming and that something had better be on those cars, F1 panicked. Ferrari - specifically Sebastian Vettel - was rushed into "testing" a canopy-like windshield, or windscreen, for 15 minutes before the first free practice session last Friday at the British Grand Prix and he reported that it distorted his vision, made him dizzy and that he didn't like it. So F1 said

that's it, we're going with the halo. What? Let's ask fighter pilots, who seem to do just fine flying their F-18s and F-35s with those canopies in place. Or how about hydroplane racers, who are protected by canopies? Or some top-fuel drag racers? Do they get dizzy? Is their vision distorted? Don't really think so. So, one "test" in 15 minutes in one day by one team. One driver says he doesn't like it. So the whole thing is shelved? F1 should be ashamed, because that is just not good enough. (2017a)

For the sake of context, Jules Bianchi died a few months after his car rammed into a stopped maintenance vehicle and his helmet absorbed the shock. The discussion around head protection for single seater drivers has been ongoing ever since. In the piece above, Norris McDonald's outcry is not against such protection, but the fact that a top racing series such as Formula 1 was being so dismissive about the whole situation by rushing into one option without properly assessing the other options properly. When it comes to the sub-theme of risk management, the journalistic coverage is invariably in favour of avoiding needless blood being shed in the name of spectacle. What journalists are also always guaranteed to do is heap praise upon those that die racing and elevate them to heroic status, as discussed in the section below.

4.2.3. Heroizing the fallen

To discuss the sub-theme of the *heroization* of deceased race car drivers, there is no better starting point than Gilles Villeneuve. « Gilles était déjà un héros avant qu'il ne trouve la mort (...) il a été grandi par la mort. Il est devenu un personnage légendaire pour les amoureux de la course. » (Bourcier, 1983). Death serves to perpetuate the myth, and often enhance it. The words "God" (Bourcier, 1986), and "national hero" (2002a) are used to discuss the likes of Villeneuve and Senna on a regular basis from the moment of their deaths up to the present, or once human titles like that of the 'greatest driver to have ever lived' (Agence France Presse & Associated Press, 1982; Donaldson, 1994) became insufficient to talk about them:

There is no exaggeration in saying the men who drive race cars, in quest of the world championship, are worshipped as deities around this planet. Villeneuve was Ferrari's pilot so his status in Italy was especially exalted. Brazil still mourns the death last year of Ayrton Senna. The names don't lose their magic. (Proudfoot, 1995)

This heroization of drivers is undoubtedly anchored in the fascination they hold over the public witnessing their driving prowess and the risk they expose themselves to:

There is potential for disaster at 320 kilometres an hour. Serena Williams is in no danger of being killed on the job; Jacques Villeneuve is – and it happened to his father. The drivers are knights in shining armour, and when they set off on the reconnaissance lap before forming up on the grid, it's as if they're riding out before the joust, their steeds different only in that it's 2005 and the word 'horse' boasts the addendum 'power.' (McDonald, 2005)

Needless to say, drivers that died at the pinnacle of motorsport but who were not as accomplished or recognized do not get such media treatment. Nevertheless, all drivers get put into the hero category when they are being compared to “knights in shining armour,” wrestling their mounts around the track on which they joust for glory and fame (McDonald, 2005). Those that paid for such prizes with their lives are never forgotten, even when they did not achieve the status of Villeneuve or Senna.

4.2.4. Remembering those that are gone

Moving past coverage concerning the families of deceased drivers, another sub-theme related to the social aspect of the coverage of death in motorsport is the *history* of those occurrences. Beginning during the '94 to '04 period of the data sample, there is a distinct weight that starts to be felt amongst the racing community when it comes to the death of racing drivers:

It was an emotional win for Papis for a number of reasons, not the least of which was the fact his close friend Greg Moore, who was killed in the final race of last season, won the 1999 Miami event. 'It's a very special win because this is where my friend Greg won last year,' said Papis, his voice quivering momentarily. 'Greg is in my heart. I think of him every day. It was difficult (yesterday) when I saw the starting grid and I didn't see him. I

looked up to the sky and said, 'Red gloves rule.' He was referring to the fact Moore also wore red driving gloves. (Matsumoto, 2000)

It is not only the family that is left to pick up the pieces, but also friends and racing colleagues. Even when no fatality occurs, the shadow of the past lingers over dramatic accidents, like the one Robert Kubica had in Montreal in 2006:

Gilles Villeneuve. Greg Moore. Il était difficile de ne pas songer aux deux regrettés pilotes canadiens quand la BMW Sauber de Robert Kubica s'est désintégrée, au 27^e tour du Grand Prix du Canada, tellement les images terrifiantes de l'accident du pilote polonais rappelaient celles des tragédies de Zolder et de Fontana. (Bégin, 2007)

An accident so violent that it struck fear into the hearts of many that remembered the deadly crashes of Villeneuve and Moore, Kubica walked away and only missed the race immediately following his accident. He even won the Montreal Grand Prix the following year (Formula 1, 2008) Nevertheless, the following coverage immediately drew comparison to crashes that were fatal to high profile drivers in the past, but were not in Kubica's case as safety measures, and a good dose of luck, came out on top.

In the eyes of many, however, luck has nothing to do with how an accident unfolds. There is a marginal yet important sub-theme that revolves around the *beliefs* of drivers that either fate or God is ultimately what determines the outcome of one's racing endeavour. Senna thought he was "protected by God" (Marois, 1994) and that is what allowed him to be who he was and drive the way he did. When it comes to a justification as to why such skilled drivers would die, the reasoning behind it is simple: "It's like they said after he died: God needed a driver. That's why Dale's not with us" (Zwolinski, 2002). Completely disregarding all the possible safety improvements that could have saved Dale Earnhardt's life, through this view life and death is a simple matter of whether one's time is up or not, and high-speed mechanical fights will claim another life.

4.2.5. The spectacle of death

It is this fight between modern gladiators at inhuman speeds that spectators revel in and that has led to what can only be called the *spectacle* of motor racing. In the words of Jean-Pierre Dufour: « La Formule Un passionne et distille le danger suprême à chaque seconde. Elle passionne, tue parfois, et il n'est pas certain que la fascination qu'elle engendre, surtout à travers la télévision, ne se nourrisse pas de cette mort qui rode à 250 km/h. » (1982b). Danger at every turn and death ever-present have long been how this spectacle was framed to the public. This is no longer true; safety improvements are to be thanked for that. The cries for increased safety have outlasted the portrayal of motorsport as a mere spectacle, at least in this data sample. Unlike the gladiators of old, Max Papis, a friend of Moore says “We are not here to kill ourselves” (1999b). Risk taking is not the be all and end all of motor racing.

To summarize the social aspect theme, it can be said that through the 1982 to 2017 period, there has been constant coverage of the socialisation of drivers to risk at a young age, of the risk management in motorsport through various measures, and of the heroic nature of those donning the helmet and strapping into their racing machines. There has also been a constant evolution where sub-themes such as family, beliefs, history, and spectacle have been either broadened or brought to the fore and have contributed to the increase in ways in which death in motorsport is being talked about in the printed sports news in Canada.

4.3. Journalistic practices of covering death

The final main theme found within the data set is somewhat different, in that it revolves around the journalistic duty to cover death and is composed of four sub-themes. First are the *facts*. Factual coverage is present through the entire data sample. What is meant by this is better

explained by the following quote on the Dan Wheldon accident: « Le pilote de 33 ans est mort des suites d'un accident impliquant pas moins de 15 voitures quelques minutes après le départ de la course de Las Vegas, dernière épreuve de la saison du championnat IndyCar. » (Marois, 2011).

Who, what, where, when, how – the basics of journalism, no more no less. The following quote is a good example of the presence of such a theme:

Le coureur recrue Jovy Marcelo a été tué, hier, dans un accident lors d'une séance d'entraînement à la piste Indianapolis Motor Speedway. Le coureur de 27 ans a perdu la vie quand sa Lola- Cosworth a frappé le mur dans le tournant no 1. Le docteur Henry Bock a confié que Marcelo avait succombé à des blessures subies à la tête et à la poitrine. (1992)

While some of these quotes found in the data sample serve as introductions to other themes, particularly with high profile drivers, some drivers' deaths have received less coverage and it is all there is to be found. Such is the case for example with NASCAR driver J.D. McDuffie: “John Delphus (J.D.) McDuffie, 52, was killed yesterday when his car became airborne and smashed into a tire wall and guardrail just five laps into the Budweiser Winston Cup race at Watkins Glen, N.Y.” (1991). Or in the case of Dale Earnhardt:

“Although Dale played a huge part in motorsports, we also feel for Kenny Irwin and Adam Petty and Tony Roper and a number of other folks,” Mark Martin said. “It feels like it's taken away from that, too. “In a way, if you want to turn it around, it's being disrespectful to other people we lost by overkilling on this.” The Earnhardt issue has been so prevalent this weekend that Sterling Marlin wasn't even asked about Irwin- his former teammate- during the pole winner's news conference. (Associated Press, 2001)

Some drivers' deaths just have not warranted the level of attention the passing of drivers such as Villeneuve, Senna, Moore, Earnhardt. Sometimes they get lost in the shuffle of a higher profile driver meeting the same fate as them, whether at a similar time or even in the same circuit or racing season.

Another sub-theme related to the journalistic duty to cover death is related to the *medical aspects of a passing*. What precise injuries caused the death? Regarding Riccardo Paletti's death in Montreal just a month after Villeneuve's passing in Belgium:

Ils sont morts de la même façon: une blessure sérieuse au niveau du cou ou de la colonne qui étire ou sectionne la moelle épinière. Habituellement, les fonctions vitales cessent (mort cérébrale) et le coeur, dont le réseau nerveux ne passe par la moelle épinière, continue à battre jusqu'à ce que le cerveau se détériore davantage sous l'effet de l'enflure et, conséquemment, de la diminution progressive de la circulation sanguine à ce niveau. (Bourcier, 1982)

This type of detail on the ailments suffered by the drivers is present all throughout the data sample. Senna's head injury (Associated Press, 1994), Earnhardt's whiplash (2001b), and all the way up to Jules Bianchi's diagnosis in 2014-15 which was described as a "traumatisme cérébral axonal diffus"¹ (Agence France Presse, 2014). There was during this period an evolution from the simple reporting on a head injury to discussion of the precise nature of the fatal condition, which while being more precise, can be somewhat confusing to the uninitiated.

A third sub-theme is that of *politics*. Only present when discussing the passing of Gilles Villeneuve, it is specifically linked to his funeral. As it attracted numerous politicians of the period, and was extensively covered in the media, it became a spectacle in itself. The best example of this being a testimony from Réjean Tremblay ten years after the fact:

J'ai réalisé à quel point Gilles Villeneuve était un grand personnage quand le premier ministre Pierre Elliott Trudeau avait récupéré ses funérailles à des fins politiques. Le père consolateur au bras de la veuve, c'était Trudeau. Les télés du monde entier avaient repris l'image. Sauf que la veuve était trop gelée par les médicaments pour même réaliser qui lui tenait le bras. (1992)

A Canadian Prime Minister placing himself front and center to honour the passing of a Canadian sport icon that represented the country on the international stage makes for quite a picture. Such was the situation in Berthierville when Villeneuve was laid to rest.

¹ Diffuse axonal injury

The last sub-theme related to the *journalistic duty* to cover death is about the personal experience of the journalist when it comes to witnessing and discussing death in motorsport. This began to be discussed with the Jeff Krosnoff accident in the streets of Toronto in 1996. This was due to the presence of Al Unser Jr. a decorated driver turned analyst, in the broadcast booth:

I know what they were trying to do. They were hoping all the television would be off the air and that would soften the whole thing... If you were on their side of the fence, you'd probably try to do the same thing," Unser said. "But that doesn't work. Past tense is past tense. You might as well not run away from it. As far as telling people, you have to be honest with them. I feel honesty always works. We don't like to bring news like that. But it happened. We didn't cause it. To be journalistically correct means we have an obligation to the people watching our show and we were not able to do that because of the officials. We had a pretty good idea someone had died, but we can't speculate. If the guy is known to be dead and they knew it (and) his wife was right there in the motor home . . . I mean, c'mon, it's time to say it. It happened. (McKee, 1996)

Having seen his fair share of death in racing (1999a), Unser's approach to the situation is extremely rational: Report the facts., no speculation, but if a driver is known to be dead, the public has a right to know the seriousness of the situation. Once those guidelines were explicitly stated, however, the personal nature of the reporting shifted to how a journalist can be living such difficult situations:

Debate can continue forever about the circumstances that led to one of the most unholy of racing crashes in the history of the sport (I can remember watching the first couple of laps and being almost overcome by a sense of dread; I couldn't put my finger on it right away, but there was something drastically wrong and a pileup was inevitable, I thought). On Lap 11, two drivers running closely together touched and their cars wiggled and before anybody could blink, 15 cars were sideways and hitting retaining walls and flying through the air, Wheldon's included. (McDonald, 2016)

This is something that Norris McDonald has also described as the horror and sometimes evil nature of motor racing (2004; 2013). Unable to take one's eyes off of the spectacle, it is nonetheless somehow felt that the worst is going to happen, and when it indeed does, it becomes the journalists' job to convey this reality and the ramifications of what they just witnessed.

In short, in doing their jobs to cover a racing fatality, journalists have had to go beyond the simple facts and medical aspects of an accident and have had to provide comments on the political nature of the event, or merely on the impression they have been left with. As no driver's death has mobilized the political sphere in Canada since Villeneuve's passing, the political aspect has not been found in the data sample since then. Nonetheless, as drivers do still die in racing, the narrative of an 'evil weekend' at the track is nonetheless still present and could very well always be. Journalists do seem to feel they have an important role to play in offering extensive, accurate, and critical coverage of the instances in which drivers perish at the wheel of a high-powered race car. Far from remaining hapless cheerleaders, they can be quite blunt in pointing fingers at those they deem responsible for needless loss of life. While there are many deaths that have received next to no coverage, meaning it was limited to a two-line mention of the death, there is nonetheless a feeling that journalists do step into the fray at a pivotal moment to offer a social critique of the unacceptability of another death.

The previous paragraphs have portrayed how the coverage on death in motorsport evolved through all three main themes. The focus on the individual drivers, the social aspects of death in racing, and the journalistic duty to cover such instances have each seen change through the 1982 to 2017 period. While the portrayal of drivers has been the most consistent, it is the coverage around social aspects that has seen the most evolution. As the heroic and masculine nature of drivers remains undisputed, they are nonetheless human figures with families and friends that have to cope with their deaths, sometimes relying on faith to do so. Also, while motorsport does remain a spectacle in itself, this narrative has been pushed back, at least in the coverage surrounding the passing of a driver itself, which can be seen as a sensible and tactful endeavour. This in turn gave

rise to a more personal approach to how a death is lived by journalists themselves, and the challenges of coming to grips with the reality they have to report on.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

This study looked into motorsport fatalities from the informed point of view of risk-taking literature by conducting a constructivist grounded theory-inspired qualitative thematic analysis. Despite being the main frame from which this research was based, risk-taking literature had to be supplemented as it could not explain various themes that were found in the data. What was learned was that the figure of the race car driver is, even in death, seen as a scion of masculinity. It is a highly specific type of heterosexual masculinity that is portrayed by journalists through the figures of deceased drivers. Part of a team, the driver must nonetheless be able to dissociate himself completely from fear, pain, family, and colleagues. The driver is a solitary figure even when he is surrounded by mechanics, teammates, and loved ones, in and out of the race car. He alone has to heroically wrestle his machine at breakneck speeds around the track and face the associated dangers. He is the one who stands victorious on the podium claiming the glory of victory. He also is the only one to perish when death comes knocking. He is the one that must step back into his race car when friends lose their lives racing right next to them. This is particular to high-risk athletes, in that death is the ultimate individual price to pay, something that is not the case with other popular team-based sports like hockey, rugby or soccer/football. No matter how violent sports get, or how masculine and tough athletes are portrayed, they rarely have their own life as the ultimate price to pay. In hockey and football for example, only recently have athletes really starting to pay attention to the risks on long-term health associated to concussions. In motorsport

it remains a possibility, and individuals step into their race cars event after event, conscious that they could be the next fatality.

What has changed is the degree of acceptance of motorsport as a blood sport. Too many were sacrificed on the altar of spectacle and those held responsible, be it the driver's racing team, the race series homologating the event, the promoters, or others, have been regularly called upon to ensure a better protection of the drivers. Death is not the purpose of racing and even if it is accepted as a potential by-product, it is no longer considered the norm. The legendary drivers of bygone eras are remembered for their most famous exploits, just as those who lost their lives chasing the same fame and glory are. They are gone but not forgotten, if only by their grieving relatives, specifically mothers, fathers, girlfriends, widows, and children. If a deceased driver ever had a same sex partner grieving them, it never was publicised in sports media. In the end, it is the memory of the deceased that drives forward progress on race safety at all levels, while acknowledging that racing can never be a totally safe endeavour. The greater the danger, the more heroic are those that take part in it. That is still the appeal of motorsport.

Even though journalists are regularly called to cover high-level motorsport, the biggest surprise of this research was the presence of the theme of the journalistic practices. It was not initially expected that much would be discussed beyond factual coverage of deadly accidents, but it nonetheless was. The self-critical outlook sports journalists did not hesitate to have on themselves or their colleagues is one of the main discoveries of this research in that it shows an ongoing reflection on the best way to approach such a difficult, albeit nowadays rarer, subject. To Canadian journalists, the stakes remain high when considering that they could have to cover the death of a fellow Canadian. After all, the risk for another Gilles Villeneuve-type situation remains with three racers at the highest echelons of motorsport.

5.1. Limitations

While this research project produced a wealth of knowledge, internal limitations stemming from the way it was designed nevertheless exist. As in any qualitative research, a researcher bias can be pointed to as a weakness. Various steps were taken in attempting to reduce this bias. First, by basing the content analysis in an already established tradition of literature, which served to inform the data being collected and analyzed. Second, through a systematic process of analysis, where the literature informed relevant segments of data, and when it could not, new themes, categories, and indicators arose.

Another limitation of the research has to be how it was focused. It focused on a single topic, death, and was centered on Canada. Through this design, it is impossible to generalize what was discovered to the coverage of death, or even accidents, in motorsport in general. Moreover, when considering the fact May 1982 was the earliest time period analyzed, there remains wide gaps that could have been addressed to offer a complete outlook. The first motorsport-related death of a driver recorded so far is that of Emile Levassor in 1897 (<http://www.motorsportmemorial.org/>). This leaves over eight decades worth of coverage that remains untouched.

Finally, while having two different publications helped diversify the coverage and the data that was extracted from it, a more thorough sample could have included more publications, as well as opened the sample to drivers from outside the top levels of motorsports. Pan-Canadian publications such as *The Globe and Mail* have already been considered promising for such an endeavour. Such potential research endeavours will be addressed in the following section.

5.2. Future research

There are many ways future research on the topic of death in motorsport could be conducted. Working from the limitations of this research and some of the data collected, here are a few of the research topics that could be of interest in the near future.

Further research designs could seek to address death in motorsport elsewhere in the world. As this research focused on Canada, it only offers a narrow outlook on a reality discussed by a specific set of journalists. Are other countries' journalists covering death differently? What about different visions and types of masculinity? Or different cultural approaches to death? Comparative analysis has its merits for such a question as it would help understand the relationships other societies have with the passing of athletes undertaking such dangerous endeavours.

Another element of interest could be the journalists called upon to cover the deaths themselves. While the elements unearthed from the articles present within the sample give an outlook into the reality of covering such events, a specific focus on the work practices related to such a delicate subject would be relevant to the scientific discussion on sports journalism.

Finally, there is the possibility to look into other forms of racing. Motorsport also means motorcycles, motorboats, and air racing, for only a few examples. In addition to racing at large, there are also sailboat races across oceans or around the world, which present very high levels of risk to their participants. These are but a few of the possibilities which could help build on the knowledge extracted from this research. Such comprehension is important, if only for the purpose of being aware of how we treat those who willingly put their lives on the line for the pursuit of fame, glory, as well as the entertainment of the masses.

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Appendix

Annex A: Pictures of single-seaters and NASCAR race cars



A Formula 1 race car (Photo credit: *PublicDomainPictures.net*)



A NASCAR event (Photo credit: *PublicDomainPictures.net*)

Annex B: Data compilation chart

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	A	B	C	D	E
121	1988-08-17	The Toronto Star	Graham Jones	Ferrari's death a huge loss for all of motor racing world	Gilles Villeneuve
122	1988-11-11	La Presse	Reuter	Un adieu paisible aux moteurs turbos; la saison de F. 1 prend fin dimanche [en Australie]	Elio de Angelis
123	1989-03-05	La Presse	Richard Chartier	La route céleste de Jean-François Gagnon : du mont McKinley jusqu'au K2	Gilles Villeneuve
124	1989-05-25	The Toronto Star	Graham Jones	Young Jacques Villeneuve is put on a racing hot seat	Gilles Villeneuve
125	1989-06-14	La Presse	Robert Duguay	[Grand Prix de Montréal]: complètement bouché	Gilles Villeneuve
126	1989-11-20	The Toronto Star	Associated Press	Wallace wins Cup, big pot	Grant Adcox; Terry Schoonover
127	1990-06-07	La Presse	Gilles Bourcier	Gilles Villeneuve classé 11e de tous les temps par [le quotidien français] L'Equipe; les 20 plus grands de la F.1	Gilles Villeneuve

Annex C: Themes, categories, and indicators within the data sample

Overarching Theme	Main Themes	Secondary Themes	Categories	Indicators
Death*	Journalistic duty to cover death	Medical	Medical result of the accident	Cause of death, normal body functions
		Factual	Factual coverage	Naming drivers that died, dates, time of race, driver age, cause of accident, coverage of funeral
		Political	Political appropriation of the death	Political leaders commenting on death but not about safety
		Personal	Private life of the driver	Mistress, quality as a father
			Event lived by the journalist	Horror/Evil
	Individual	Masculinity*	physical injury*	Lying to get back in car
			downplay health concern*	Injuries will happen, safety-based complacency, racing while injured, ignoring death of fellow drivers, race must go on even if death occurs, invulnerability
			Willingness to take risks*	Levels of risk taking*
				Lack of self-discipline*
				Extraversion*
				Intoxication*
				Integral part of lives*
			Egoism*	Challenge Seeking*
				Lack of self-discipline*
			Hedonism*	Intoxication*
Asking for a just deceased driver's seat				
Symbolic deal with death*	Enjoying life (glamour and girls)			
	Prepared to die, knowledge of risks, playing at the edge of life			
Death fulfilment wish*	Death instinct, desire for violence,			
Flow*	Focus, beyond awareness and consciousness, dream			

		Qualities of the driver	Mastery*	Control*
				Experience*
			Perfectionism*	“determined to improve position”
			Responsible*	Carefulness*
			Courage*	Working with fear*
				Low anxiety*
			Self-confidence*	Belief in own skills
			Mental toughness*	Cold-blooded, getting back in car, racing despite loss, not thinking about death
			Maturity (not risk lit.)	Approach to racing,
			Humility*	Simple, like everyone
	Waste*	Age*	Died too young, emulating racing heroes,	
		Insult to the dead	Political disputes hampering racing event driver made famous,	
	Social aspect	Family	Obligation to family*	Having none so able to race
			Socialisation to risk*	Father influence, impact of meeting racing heroes, parents influence, giving kids the thrill of speed
			Legal repercussions	Investigations, charges, trials
			Friendship	Best friend replacing the deceased
			Cost of injury/death on family*	Lack of insurance of the driver, suing for death, wife and children left to cry the dead, grief, raising children alone, travelling around the world to join the injured/deceased
		History	Weight of the past	Remembering those that died, physical marks of accidents, accidents looking similar to deadly ones, retiring numbers of dead drivers
			Luck of the survivor vs the dead	Miracle, “bonne étoile”
			Perspective	Loss of meaning of the race or championship
		Risk management*	Equipment*	Track quality, HANS device, helmets, on-off switches to negate stuck throttles, soft walls, restrictor plates, run-off areas, driver safety, aerodynamics changes, seat belt usage, survival cells, fire prevention, ground effect, qualifying tires, health care equipment at the track, cockpit protection, plexiglass barriers over

				catchfence, engine power, tracks unfit for speed of cars, equipment failure (rear wing, seatbelts, loss of wheel, etc.)
			Training*	Equipment ahead of man, of officials to ensure driver safety, start procedures, blocking maneuvers,
			Change of rules as a risk	Rules change that make cars harder to drive,
			Risk as an input not the end goal*	Drivers not racing to die, not a blood sport, no death wish,
			Marginalizing of the occurrence*	Safe sport aside from death, self-illusion of control,
		Spectacle	Complaints of fans	Want action, don't want death
		Heroization*	Godhood	King of the world, only defect was a baseball cap, immortality, invincibility, compared to Christ, from another world,
			Greatest driver title	Number of world championships, self-identification of everyday drivers to hero,
			Myth	Heroes die young from activities to keep themselves busy when not at war, glory, growth of myth through death, panache, time erasing defects of heroes, national hero, irreplaceable, refusal to accept limitations
		Beliefs	Fate	Strikes
			Faith	God needed a driver/beyond all control but God, praying, driving on the paradise track, belief in God fueling own skill,
			Shit happens/Misfortune*	Freak accident, drivers do die in the pursuit of glory, nothing to be done, sequence of events, part of racing/"one of them racing deals"
			Nothing happening = safety	Racing is fun because it is safe now
		Finding a guilty party	Another driver	Niki Lauda and Jochen Mass,
			Racing organizations	Formula 1, Indycar, NASCAR
		Future	New generation	Jacques Villeneuve (GV)
			Replacement	Patrick Tambay (GV)

*Indicates a theme extracted from risk-taking literature

Annex D: Theme of risk literature present in the data sample

Themes of risk literature	Authors
Age	Zuckerman (2007)
Belonging	Willig (2008)
Catharsis	Willig (2008)
Carefulness	Natalier (2001); Brymer & Schweitzer (2013)
Challenge seeking	Willig (2008); Crust & Keegan (2010)
Control	Le Breton (2000); Natalier (2001); Pain & Pain (2005); Breivik (2011)
Cost of injury/death on family	Olivier (2006)
Courage	Brymer & Oades (2009); Crust & Keegan (2010); Castanier, Scanff & Woodman (2010)
Death	Donnelly (2004); Houck (2006)
Death fulfilment wish	Pain & Pain (2005)
Desire for self-actualisation	Olivier (2006); Castanier, Scanff & Woodman (2010)
Discipline	Pain & Pain (2005); Brymer & Schweitzer (2013)
Efficacy	Willig (2008)
Egoism	Olivier (2006)
Experience	Natalier (2001); Olivier (2006); Dean (2012)
Extraversion	Tok (2011)
Flow	Le Breton (2000); Natalier (2001); Pain & Pain (2005); Olivier (2006); Willig (2008)
Gender	Zuckerman (2007)
Hedonism	Castanier, Scanff & Woodman (2010); Brymer & Schweitzer (2013)
Heroization	Sabo (2004); Nixon II (2004)
Humility	Brymer & Oades (2009); Castanier, Scanff & Woodman (2010)
Impulsivity	Castanier, Scanff & Woodman (2010); Tok (2011); Thomson & Carlson (2014)
Identity tunnel	Schnell, Mayer, Diehl, Zipfel & Thiel (2014)
Insecurity	Castanier, Scanff & Woodman (2010)
Integral part of lives	Willig (2008)
Intoxication	Le Breton (2000); Pain & Kerr (2004); Willig (2008)
Lack of self-discipline	Tok (2011)
Levels of risk taking	Laurendeau (2008)
Low anxiety	Brymer & Oades (2009); Crust & Keegan (2010)
Marginalizing of the occurrence	Giddens (1999); Natalier (2001)
Masculinity (adventure)	Laurendeau (2008)
Masculinity (downplay health concern)	Pain & Kerr (2004); Laurendeau (2008); Wellard (2009); Huybers-Withers & Livingstone (2013); Schnell, Mayer, Diehl, Zipfel & Thiel (2014)

Masculinity (flow)	Natalier (2001)
Masculinity (physical injury)	Laurendeau (2008); Wellard (2009); Schnell, Mayer, Diehl, Zipfel & Thiel (2014)
Mastery	Willig (2008)
Mental toughness	Crust & Keegan (2010)
Not expecting help	Brown & Penney (2014)
Obligation to family	Olivier (2006)
Openness to experience	Tok (2011)
Pain principle	Sabo (2004)
Perfectionism	Schnell, Mayer, Diehl, Zipfel & Thiel (2014)
Responsible	Brown & Penney (2014)
Risk as an input not the end goal	Dean (2012)
Risk management (equipment)	Dean (2012); Brymer & Schweitzer (2013)
Risk management (training)	Natalier (2001); Pain & Pain (2005); Schneider, Butryn, Furst & Masucci (2007); Willig (2008); Dean (2012); Brymer & Schweitzer (2013)
Self-blame	Natalier (2001)
Self-esteem	Schneider, Butryn, Furst & Masucci (2007); Willig (2008)
Self-confidence	Crust & Keegan (2010)
Sensation-seeking	Le Breton (2000); Pain & Pain (2005); Zuckerman (2007); Tok (2011)
Shit happens/Misfortune	Natalier (2001); Palmer (2002)
Socialisation to risk	Schneider, Butryn, Furst & Masucci (2007)
Symbolic deal with death	Le Breton (2000)
Turning attention away from the self	Castanier, Scanff & Woodman (2010b)
Uniqueness	Willig (2008)
Willingness to take risk	Donnelly (2004); Crust & Keegan (2010)
Working with fear	Le Breton (2000); Brymer & Oades (2009)
Waste	Donnelly (2004)