

ABSTRACT

Title of Thesis: #LETSACARRIRUN: A THEMATIC ANALYSIS OF THE TWITTER DISCOURSE SURROUNDING SHA’CARRI RICHARDSON’S ABSENCE FROM THE 2020 OLYMPICS

Kristen M. Byers, Master of Science, 2022

Thesis directed by: Alex Leitch, Lecturer, College of Information Studies

Black American female sprinter Sha'Carri Richardson placed first in the women's 100-meter race at the United States Olympic track and field trials in June of 2021. A few weeks later, Richardson's in-competition drug test returned positive for marijuana, and she was issued a 30-day suspension. By conducting a six-phase thematic analysis of 5,041 relevant tweets collected two weeks after Richardson's suspension was announced, this study examines public concerns present in the Twitter discourse surrounding Richardson's absence from the Tokyo 2020 Summer Olympics. The findings demonstrate that while race was present within the discourse, the Twitter conversations were not as overtly racist as expected. Most of the vitriol uncovered within the dataset was directed at the Olympics for perpetuating a variety of double standards. Further, this study suggests that Richardson garnered widespread public support among Twitter users and reveals the public's reluctance to view marijuana as a performance-enhancing drug.

#LETSACARRIRUN: A THEMATIC ANALYSIS OF THE TWITTER DISCOURSE
SURROUNDING SHA'CARRI RICHARDSON'S ABSENCE FROM THE 2020 OLYMPICS

by

Kristen M. Byers

Thesis submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of the
University of Maryland, College Park, in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Science
2022

Advisory Committee:
Lecturer Alex Leitch, Chair
Professor Jennifer Golbeck
Assistant Professor M. R. Sauter
Associate Professor Jessica Vitak

© Copyright by
Kristen M. Byers
2022

Dedication

*For my grandmother, Marlene C. Zelenka-Freas,
my only other family member who has written a thesis*

Acknowledgements

This research project would not have been possible without my advisor and committee chair, Alex Leitch. I am grateful for your guidance and thankful that you pushed me to get out of my comfort zone throughout this process.

My other thesis committee members were also critical to the success of this project. A big thank you to Dr. M. R. Sauter, Dr. Jennifer Golbeck, and Dr. Jessica Vitak. I am grateful to you for your reading recommendations, insight regarding the IRB process, and your general support in getting this body of work across the finish line.

Thank you to my friend Dr. Nicola Dell for your thoughtful insight and advice on how to narrow down my topic and approach potential thesis advisors. Your encouragement gave me the push I needed to start reaching out and having conversations with faculty members last spring.

A note of thanks to both Dr. Wayne Lutters and Carol Boston for exuding endless positivity while answering my mundane questions about style guides and other thesis details and expectations.

I would also like to thank Dr. Giovanni Luca Ciampaglia for offering key advice on tools for Twitter data collection and analysis—your guidance early in the process set me on the right path for acquiring and analyzing my dataset.

My family members have always been my biggest supporters, but I owe a special thank you to my sister, Camille Byers, for assembling and coordinating an anti-racism working group. I am grateful to you for creating a space for our friends to gather and discuss how we can work to combat racism within our communities. We still have a long way to go, but I am hopeful knowing there are other white people out there who are willing to put in the work.

My husband, Craig Noble, has earned the husband of the year award for enduring my endless chatter while I debated whether to write a thesis in the first place and for refusing to believe that I was anything but capable of completing this project. You are the earth sign to my air sign, and I appreciate you always keeping me grounded so I can't float away on a cloud of self-doubt.

I need to acknowledge Laura Wrubel and the 2020 Summer Olympics Twitter dataset that she collected and made available via the George Washington University Libraries TweetSets service. Without this dataset, my thesis project would have likely wandered in a very different direction.

My colleagues on the communications team at the A. James Clark School of Engineering have supported me during my seemingly never ending part-time graduate school journey by granting me time and brain space to devote to my coursework. Thank you for always serving as reliable sounding boards and usability testers; I hope I have returned the favor by bringing new knowledge back to our team.

Last but not least, I would like to thank the roller derby community and all of my former teammates. While the pandemic has prevented us from seeing one another an ample amount, you are still some of the smartest and strongest (and charming) people I know. See you on the track soon.

Table of Contents

Dedication	ii
Acknowledgements	iii
Table of Contents	v
List of Tables	viii
List of Figures	ix
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
1.1 Background & Motivation	2
1.1.1 Richardson’s Rise to Fame	2
1.1.2 Sexism & Racism in the Olympic Games	2
1.1.3 Twitter as a Platform for Harassment	5
1.2 Research Questions	7
1.3 Project Overview	8
Chapter 2: Related Work	9
2.1 Social Media & User Behavior	9
2.2 Outrage, Harassment & Shaming Online	10
2.3 Digital Racism & Black Athletes	12
2.4 Summary	14
Chapter 3: Methods	16
3.1 Acquiring the Dataset	16
3.1.1 Initial Challenges	16
3.1.2 Discovery of a Public Dataset	17
3.1.3 Finding Relevant Tweets Within the Dataset	17
3.1.4 Hydrating Dataset of Twitter IDs	18
3.2 Cleaning the Dataset	18
3.3 Analyzing the Dataset	20
3.3.1 Getting Familiar with the Data	21
3.3.2 Generating Initial Codes	22
3.3.3 Searching for Themes	22
3.3.4 Reviewing Themes	23
3.3.5 Defining & Naming Themes	23
3.3.6 Producing the Report	23
3.4 Ethical Considerations	23

3.5 Limitations	24
3.5.1 Single Researcher	24
3.5.2 Tweets Lost During Hydration	24
3.5.3 Deleted Tweets	25
3.5.4 Loss of Meaning & Context	25
3.5.5 Hand Coding	25
3.5.6 Missing Tweets	26
3.5.7 Possible Positivity Bias Within Dataset	27
3.5.8 Tweets Spanning More Than One Theme	27
3.5.9 Timing of Dataset	28
Chapter 4: Findings	29
4.1 Major Themes	29
4.1.1 Double Standards	29
4.1.2 Sha'Carri Stirs the Pot	31
4.1.3 Oppose Richardson	31
4.1.4 Can't Stop Talking About Her	33
4.1.5 Rules Discussion	37
4.1.6 Support Richardson	39
4.1.7 Capitalism/Endorsements	41
4.2 Minor Themes	42
4.2.1 Black Twitter Can't Decide	42
4.2.2 Ambivalence Olympics	44
4.2.3 Race Related	45
4.2.4 Absent Athletes	49
4.2.5 Celebrity Involvement	51
4.2.6 Activist Athletes	51
4.2.7 Digging for Dirt	53
4.3 Other Themes	53
4.3.1 Informational	53
4.3.2 Joke	53
4.3.3 Miscellaneous	53
4.3.4 Promotional	53
4.3.5 Unclear	54
4.3.6 Unrelated	54

Chapter 5: Discussion	55
5.1 Main Topics of Conversation	55
5.2 Race Present in Discourse, But No Racist Twitter Mob	58
5.3 Reluctance to View Marijuana as a PED	61
5.4 Richardson Engaged in Digital Black Feminist Practices	65
5.2 Future Research	66
5.3 Conclusion	67
Appendix A: Columns Removed from Dataset	69
Appendix B: Codebook	71
Appendix C: Relevant Tweets Posted by Sha'Carri Richardson	81
Bibliography	91

List of Tables

Table 3.1. Tweets Removed from Dataset

Table 3.2 Misspellings of Richardson's Name Within Dataset

Table 5.1 Themes Present Within Dataset

Table A.1. Columns Removed from Dataset

Table B.1. Codebook

List of Figures

Figure 5.1. Richardson Comments on Tweet About Kamila Valieva

Figure C.1. Lil Nas X Tweet

Figure C.2. I am Human Tweet

Figure C.3. They Got the Right One Tweet

Figure C.4. I am Human Reminder Tweet

Figure C.5. Missing Me Yet Tweet

Figure C.6. Unfollow Me Tweet

Figure C.7. Laughing GIF Tweet

Figure C.8. Congratulates Jamaicans Tweet

Figure C.9. Baby They Don't Care Tweet

Figure C.10. Fingers Crossed Tweet

Figure C.11. The Fake Did Tweet

Figure C.12. Live Your Truth Tweet

Chapter 1: Introduction

Sha'Carri Richardson was briefly known as the fastest woman in America following her performance in the women's 100-meter event at the U.S. Olympic Track and Field Trials held in Eugene, Oregon on June 19, 2021. Richardson cruised to a first-place victory during the first heat of the semifinals, long orange hair streaming behind her, clocking a finish time of 10.86 seconds. She pointed at the clock with one acrylic-nailed finger for the final 30 meters, knowing her time was fast enough to qualify her for the 2020 Summer Olympics¹. She famously jogged into the stands afterwards to greet her grandmother and celebrate her win.

Just a few weeks after the trials, Richardson was disqualified from competing in the 2020 Summer Olympics after it was revealed she had tested positive for tetrahydrocannabinol (THC)—a compound found in marijuana—during the qualifying race. Richardson publicly admitted to using marijuana to help cope with the recent loss of her biological mother. When news of Richardson's suspension broke in early July of 2021, supporters and dissenters both took to Twitter to express their feelings on the matter.

The 2020 Summer Olympics began on July 23, 2021, in Tokyo, Japan, and Twitter was still talking about Richardson. With trending Twitter topics shifting daily if not hourly, it's interesting that one track athlete captured the attention of so many people for so long. If public perception of marijuana has shifted in recent years to reflect legislation changes, do Twitter users agree that Richardson's suspension was warranted? By using her personal Twitter account to add her voice to the conversation, could Richardson have been engaging in digital Black feminism?

¹ While the 2020 Summer Olympics may appear to be a misnomer because the events took place from July 23, 2021, to August 8, 2021, the name of the games is correct. The 2020 Summer Olympics were postponed to 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

1.1 Background & Motivation

1.1.1 Richardson's Rise to Fame

Sha'Carri Richardson is a Black American female sprinter who specializes in the 100- and 200-meter distances. Richardson rocketed to fame after a successful season competing for Louisiana State University (LSU), setting a collegiate record in the 100 meters and becoming the first freshman in Southeastern Conference (SEC) history to sweep the 100 meters, 200 meters, and run as a member of a winning 4×100-meter relay team (Hyder, 2019). Richardson left LSU after just one season as a student athlete to pursue running professionally.

However, her athletic performance was often not the only topic of public discussion. “As she rose in track, Richardson frequently heard or read negative comments about her hair, nails and eyelashes. On social media, her mentions include frequent calls for her to talk less and reminders that she has yet to bag a major championship. She refused to change” (Kilgore, 2021).

Richardson celebrated a decisive victory at the 2020 Olympic trials but was subsequently suspended after her in-competition drug test returned positive for THC. This study aims to determine if participants in the Twitter conversation generally supported or disparaged Richardson during her absence from the 2020 Olympics held in Tokyo, Japan.

1.1.2 Sexism & Racism in the Olympic Games

While at first glance it may appear that the modern Olympic Games are inclusive, with athletes from different races and backgrounds competing on behalf of countries around the world, the majority of progress in this area is relatively recent. Female athletes from the United States did not both outnumber and win more medals than their male teammates for the first time until the 2012 London Olympics—40 years after the passage of Title IX (Coche & Tuggle, 2016, p. 122). In theory, the call for athletes to participate has been broadcast to the entire world, but

only athletes of the correct gender, race², and social class have historically been able to respond to the call.

The first modern Olympic Games were held in Athens in 1896; these early Olympians were almost exclusively wealthy, educated white men, and early Olympic sporting events were controlled by implementing and enforcing “gentlemanly” rules of engagement (Schaffer & Smith, 2000, p. 8).

Wamsley (2007) notes that “there is no other social institution in modern history that has provided more opportunities for female athletes to participate in elite sport, and promoted women’s sport to audiences around the world, than the Olympic Games.” However, it must also be noted that the games have been restricted to men for most of their existence, and there have nearly always been restrictions on which sports are open to women in the modern games. While female athletes competed in golf and tennis as early as 1900, they did not compete in track and field events until the 1928 Olympics in Amsterdam—and the vast majority of these early female athletes were presumably white women from Europe, North America, and Australia (Guttman, 1994, p. 129). Female athletes arrived en masse between 1932 and 1972 to compete with large Soviet teams that were already fielding a nearly full women’s complement (Wamsley, 2007, p. 275). During this timeframe, women were still pushed to compete in “feminine” sports such as swimming, gymnastics, figure skating, fencing, and tennis (Wamsley, 2007, p. 278).

² Although this study focuses on Sha’Carri Richardson, Black athletes are not the only athletes to face racial discrimination in the Olympics. Jim Thorpe’s two gold medals were stripped the year after he became the first Native American to win gold at the 1912 Olympics in Sweden under the guise that he had played semiprofessional baseball for two summers and was therefore ineligible to participate in the Olympics. Some suspected that the Amateur Athletic Union (AAU)’s decision to strip his medals was racially motivated, and AAU was accused of perpetuating double standards by turning a blind eye to other known instances of professionalism among Olympic athletes (DeMeyer, 2000).

The founder of the modern Olympic Games, Baron Pierre de Coubertin of France, strongly believed that the Olympics should be free from political and governmental interference (MacAloon, 1981, p. 89). He created the International Olympic Committee (IOC) in 1894 to control international sport and help protect the games from political and governmental influence. Coubertin himself sat on the first iteration of the IOC; the remaining members—men from America, Greece, Sweden, Russia, Bohemia, Hungary, England, Argentina, New Zealand, Belgium, and Italy—were appointed by Coubertin (MacAloon, 1981, p. 180). By handpicking the inaugural IOC members, Coubertin ensured they were like-minded and would help perpetuate his notion of what the Olympic Games should be. Female participation in the games was not supported by early IOC leadership. Wamsley (2007) examined materials from the initial IOC executive meetings and determined that “the promotion of women’s participation was not one of the heralded Olympic ideals” (p. 274). The IOC itself did not have any female members until nearly a century later, when the first two female IOC members were added in 1981. As of July 25, 2020, 39 out of 104 active IOC members are women (*Women in the Olympic Movement*, 2021). Lopiano (2000) suggests that the inclusion of women on the IOC was critical to the adoption of various gender-equity policies including “10 percent representation of women on National Olympic Committees [and] no new sports without both male and female events” (p. 126).

Even after women were allowed to participate in various Olympic events, there were other obstacles and inequities related to their participation. Media coverage of Olympic events in the 1920s tended to write about female athletes with a focus on their physical appearance, followed by their personal behavior, and lastly their athletic performance (Wamsley, 2007).

The 1996 Atlanta Olympics was dubbed the “Year of the Women” because of the surge in corporate support for female athletes. High-profile publications started featuring the athleticism of female Olympians on their covers and alongside male athlete profiles (Heywood, 2000). After the 1996 Olympics, brands started featuring athletic female bodies in advertisements for everything from cars to bottled water.

While female athletes have had a presence at the Olympics for decades, women are still breaking gender barriers by competing in certain sports for the first time. At the 2000 Olympic Games in Sydney, American pole vaulter Stacy Dragila became the first woman to vault over a bar that had previously only been crossed only by men (Wamsley, 2007, p. 273). Wrestling, which was included in some form since the first modern games in 1896, did not have a women's event until the 2004 Summer Olympics in Athens.

It has taken Black women an even longer time to start gracing the winners’ podium at the Olympic Games. Alice Coachman became the first Black woman to win an Olympic gold medal at the 1948 Summer Olympic Games in London for her high jump performance. At the 1988 Winter Olympic Games in Calgary, figure skater Debi Thomas won bronze and became the first African American athlete to earn a medal in the Winter Olympic Games. Even more recently, American bobsled team member Vonetta Flowers became the first Black athlete to win an Olympic gold medal at a Winter Games in 2002 at the games in Salt Lake City, and speed skater Erin Jackson became the first Black woman to win an individual gold medal at the 2022 Winter Olympics in Beijing.

1.1.3 Twitter as a Platform for Harassment

Twitter was launched as a social network in 2006. While composing a new post—commonly known as a “tweet”—users are prompted to respond to the question, “What’s

happening?” Known as a microblogging service, Twitter’s original character limit for individual tweets was 140 characters and was increased to 280 characters in November of 2017. As a result, tweets are forced to be much more concise than posts on other social networks including LinkedIn, Facebook, and Instagram, which all have much higher character limits. Twitter is a popular source of data for researchers because the Twitter application programming interface (API) is more open and accessible compared to other social media platforms (Ahmed, 2015); other social networks including Facebook have been limiting access to their APIs since 2018 in response to the Cambridge Analytics scandal (Schroepfer, 2018).

As Twitter usage has grown, it has become a popular channel for news outlets to share breaking news. Twitter’s promise of real-time information exchange also makes it a perfect social network for users to discuss major sporting events as they happen. Users often convene to converse about common topics using hashtags—a particular word or phrase preceded by a pound sign (#). Hashtags can help users increase the visibility of their tweets or enable them to follow tweets about a specific topic. The names of teams from America’s National Football League (NFL) regularly appear in Twitter’s list of trending topics on the days the teams are playing, so it makes sense that Twitter users would similarly flock to the social network to discuss Olympic events while they are taking place.

The 2012 London Olympics was dubbed the “first social media games” because of the prevalence of both athletes and fans embracing social networks like Twitter and Facebook for sharing news of “memorable moments” (Creedon, 2014). For this iteration of the games in London, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) also launched a searchable directory of Olympians with active social media accounts so that fans could find and follow their favorite athletes on networks including Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, Instagram, and Foursquare. Because

of this interactive directory, the 2012 London Olympics was also called the “Twitter Olympics” (Creedon, 2014). It became clear that a major shift in media coverage of the games was occurring; rather than coverage being limited to major newspaper and television outlets, social media allowed anyone to share their commentary about the Olympics online. Many professional athletes including Olympians maintain active social media profiles that they can leverage to keep in touch with their fans and add their own authentic voices to the media coverage about them.

While Twitter is a popular platform for conversing about sporting events including the Olympic Games, it has also served as a place where users can express outrage and direct shame or harassment at other Twitter users. Previous research has shown that Black women tend to bear the brunt of this type of online harassment (Burns, 2017; Steele, 2021), but Black women have also used Twitter and content creation as forms of digital resistance (Bailey, 2021; Steele, 2021). Sha’Carri Richardson herself maintains an active Twitter account (@itkerrii) and engaged in the conversation surrounding her absence from the 2020 Olympics. This study seeks to understand whether Richardson endured an extended period of Twitter harassment and what role Richardson herself played in the Twitter discourse following her suspension.

1.2 Research Questions

This study investigates the following research questions:

RQ1: What conversations emerged on Twitter following Sha'Carri Richardson's suspension that resulted in her missing the 2020 Olympics?

RQ2: How did race factor into the Twitter discourse surrounding Richardson’s absence from the 2020 Summer Olympics in Tokyo, Japan?

RQ3: What does the recorded reaction of Twitter users to Richardson’s absence from the 2020 Olympics reveal about public perception of the Olympics’ anti-doping rules?

RQ4: How does Richardson’s participation in the Twitter conversation embody the principles of digital Black feminism?

1.3 Project Overview

This study was designed to examine the Twitter discourse surrounding Sha’Carri Richardson’s absence from the 2020 Olympics with a goal of determining public sentiment about this Black female track and field athlete as well as examining the conversations that emerged following her suspension. In Chapter 2, existing literature on social media, online harassment, and digital racism is synthesized to provide a framework for understanding the Twitter conversation surrounding Sha’Carri Richardson’s suspension and her subsequent absence from the 2020 Olympics. Chapter 3 provides details on the Twitter dataset examined, including how the researcher assembled, cleaned, and analyzed the tweet corpus. In Chapter 4, the major and minor themes that emerged during the analysis are presented. Finally, Chapter 5 discusses how the findings of the study relate to the research questions and how the findings could be applied to future research.

Chapter 2: Related Work

This chapter provides an overview of existing research that is relevant to this study. The works include books, papers, and journal articles related to social media and how social networks including Twitter facilitate outrage, harassment, and shaming online. Two studies related to public opinion of Black athletes as expressed via Twitter are also specifically mentioned.

2.1 Social Media & User Behavior

Social media facilitates connections between users who share similar interests, including sports. Twitter allows users to converse about common topics in real-time, and all participants in the conversation share the same 280-character limit for their posts. Farrington et al. (2015) notes that “Twitter is not a platform for well-reasoned arguments or in-depth discussion, but its limits are what make it so convenient and therefore appealing” (p. 10).

Early social networks like Echo were largely discussion forum-based and served as a place where users gathered using either aliases or real names to form connections with other users around common interests (Horn, 1998). Some users approached these early social networks as a “utopia” where sexism and racism couldn't possibly exist—but unfortunately, people bring their offline selves to their online personas and thus these prejudices remain pervasive in the digital world much like the physical world. “Online and offline experiences are in fact so fundamentally intertwined that it's impossible to parse where the embodied ends and the digital begins; the one sustains and contextualizes the other” (Phillips & Milner, 2017). McNeil (2020) concurs that users’ online identifies are largely representative of their offline selves, suggesting that “there was never an opportunity to be a faceless, genderless, raceless internet user, because the public imagination of online identity has always defaulted to standards that white men had constructed.” Sharma (2013) adds that “the original cyberspace promise of ‘leaving the meat

(body) behind' has done little to withstand the racialization of online spaces.” Van Dijk (1992) concurs that access to technology is not a cure for social inequalities and suggests that this way of thinking “is a remnant of the Internet hype of the 1990s” (p. 5).

By the time more modern social networks like Facebook came onto the scene, the number of Internet users had increased. Initially limited to college students when it launched in 2004, Facebook eventually became a social network adopted by the masses: at the end of 2021, Facebook had 2.91 billion monthly active users (Statista, 2022). However, early Facebook leadership consisted almost entirely of privileged white men with Ivy League educations who heavily influenced the company's direction from its infancy. Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg himself famously stated that “having two identities for yourself is an example of a lack of integrity” and made it difficult if not impossible for users to have multiple Facebook accounts or use aliases (Kirkpatrick, 2010). Early Facebook leadership did not balk when users were shocked by the perceived breach in privacy when the News Feed was first launched. Phillips and Milner (2017) suggest that historically underrepresented populations may be able to use social media to disrupt the status quo and fight the offline power structure that has long been reflected online. Relatedly, McNeil (2020) indicates that there is no way to disrupt an existing hierarchy without outrage.

2.2 Outrage, Harassment & Shaming Online

The accessibility of social media has made it easier for people to find a public platform for expressing their outrage, and multiple studies have found that outrage expressed online can have offline consequences for the targets of the outrage (Millas, 2016; Oravec, 2019; Stroud, 2016). Social networks facilitate easy access to other individuals and help remove a sense of responsibility for user behavior (Farrington et al., 2015; Losse, 2012). In addition, there is some

evidence of the dehumanization of users that occurs on social media by representing a human being as a two-dimensional avatar (Crockett, 2017; Keiper, 2019). While the online shaming of individuals can sometimes have significant social consequences for these individuals offline (Crockett, 2017; Keiper, 2019; Millas, 2016; Oravec, 2019), the types and extents of these damages are usually unknown (Oravec, 2019). Bates and LaBrecque (2020) go as far as to suggest that “collective shaming has contributed to more extreme forms of individual and collective dehumanization. The denigration of a group and its human legitimation is a prerequisite for extreme measures, such as social isolation, slavery and even genocide.”

Social media users perceive the expression of outrage online to be a form of activism even though their actions may not directly benefit the cause they are attempting to support. Sometimes this outrage leads to harassment, shaming, and mob behavior online and on social media specifically. The pervasive availability of social media has extended the range of potential impacts of such shamings (Oravec, 2019).

The public nature of social networks has helped facilitate a resurgence in public shaming by giving a voice to the masses (Farrington et al., 2015; Ronson, 2015) and creating a space where users feel safe expressing their opinion (Van der Klashorts & Safarikova, 2018). Motivations for public shaming can differ—sometimes the goal is to make the original content creator see the error of their ways, and sometimes the goal is much less clear. Phillips (2015) traces the motivations, origins, and behaviors of internet trolls from 2003 through 2015, noting that trolls amplify the ugly side of mainstream behavior and often make use of overt racism—as opposed to inferential racism, which is more nuanced.

2.3 Digital Racism & Black Athletes

Research suggests that social media is not racially neutral (Kolko et al., 2000). According to van Dijk (1992), divides are byproducts of old inequalities, digital technology is intensifying inequalities, and new inequalities are appearing. Both old and new inequalities are shown to be working, and it becomes clear that digital technology has its own enabling and defining role to play (p. 7). Brock (2020) explains that “explicit online racism toward Black culture has found its most pungent, mediated expressions in comment sections and social media feeds” (p. 152).

Ash et al. (2017) conducted a content analysis of tweets surrounding Jameis Winston, an African American college football player accused of sexual assault. While Winston was ultimately cleared of the allegations, the study discovered that many of the tweets examined served to reinforce rape myths that perpetuate rape culture, while a small number of tweets challenged these problematic views. Perhaps surprisingly, race came up very infrequently in the Twitter conversation about Winston from 2017. Meanwhile, Van der Klashorts & Safarikova (2018) examined tweets about South African track athlete Caster Semenya and discovered “a deep divide in public opinion on the female athlete but also highlighted an often hidden, racial classification.” This discrepancy suggests that Black men might not experience as much racism online as Black women.

Jeong (2015) points out that while most media narratives about online harassment don't feature people of color, “the Internet is experienced completely differently by people who are visibly identifiable as a marginalized race or gender. It's a nastier, more exhausting Internet, one that gets even nastier and even more exhausting as intersections stack up” (p. 32). Crenshaw (1995) examines the legal system's history and its impact on the lives of women of color; she determined that “gender, race, and class intersect to create the particular context in which women

of color experience violence” (p. 364). Steele (2021) adds that “Black women contend with both gender and racial binaries that place them in subordinate positions” (p. 23) and “the ability to switch between objectives and audiences provides Black women a careful understanding of the interworking of both patriarchy and white supremacy” (p. 30). As a professional athlete whose image is easily found online, and as a Black woman who also identifies as queer, Sha’Carri Richardson seems to have the deck stacked against her in terms of what might be said about her in the Twitter conversation following her suspension.

Black women created close-knit online communities for themselves within the blogosphere, but these safe spaces were lost with the advent of more open social networks including Twitter, where they could be more easily discovered by the dominant group (Steele, 2021). Chaudhry (2015) examined the prevalence of racist language on Twitter and found that “...with the rise and growth of communication technology (and social media specifically), the online realm has turned into a space where racist language is used openly.” While Steele (2021) noted that signifiers including race and gender are not always immediately obvious online “unless an individual chooses to reveal them through their use of language or their avatar or profile” (p. 58), Sharma (2013) analyzed Black Twitter and how this group's racialized hashtags (known as “Blacktags”) can shed light on this networked set of Twitter users and increase the chances of their race being identifiable by others.

Farrington et al. (2015) found that social networks including Twitter are “a breeding ground for racist content and abuse” (p. 117) because the platforms facilitate anonymity, feelings of invisibility/privacy, quick response time, a lack of personal information about the recipient, and a lack of previous contact with the recipient. Phillips and Milner (2017) also corroborate that deindividuated, anonymous participation online can facilitate everything from racist language to

random acts of kindness. Farrington et al. (2015) examined racism and the idea of colorblindness—a popular argument used to deny the existence of racism—using case studies of African American National Hockey League (NHL) athletes and Asian American National Basketball Association (NBA) athletes. Based on their findings, it's highly possible the tweets surrounding Sha'Carri Richardson's absence from the 2020 Olympics contain racist content. However, other researchers suggest that Black female athletes are more accepted in certain sports over others due to long-lasting stereotypes; for example, Black female athletes are more readily accepted if they play basketball or run track versus if they row or compete in equestrian sports (Wiggins & Miller, 2003). Richardson's status as a high-performing track athlete might protect her from the worst of the vitriol.

Steele (2021) notes that given “the popularity of Black Twitter and the use of social networking sites as a mechanism to coordinate around social movements, Black internet studies have exploded” (p. 41). A 2021 study conducted by Nguyen et al. noted that many Black Lives Matter (BLM) activists used Twitter as a platform following the killings of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, and George Floyd. Their research suggests that Twitter is “a reflection of society at large. The focus is not on individual Twitter users. Rather the tweets, as a collection, represent prevailing cultural attitudes and social structures including the nature of intergroup relations as an aspect of societal organization.” The results of this study suggest that trends within a large dataset of tweets are likely a reflection of society in general.

2.4 Summary

Overall, previous research suggests that race will likely play a role in the Twitter conversation surrounding Sha'Carri Richardson's absence from the 2020 Olympics. There is evidence that Black women tend to be the subject of targeted harassment on social networks

including Twitter. Twitter facilitates harassment by offering users a place to publicly express their opinion and removing a sense of responsibility for user behavior. While Black male athletes seem to benefit from a level of protection offered to them as men, Black women do not enjoy the same protections because they must combat both patriarchy and white supremacy. Any racist language present within the tweet corpus may be indicative of overt, symbolic, inferential, or institutional racism. Perhaps most importantly, the conversations revealed within a large collection of tweets following Richardson's suspension are likely a reflection of society in general.

Chapter 3: Methods

This research involved a thematic analysis of the Twitter discourse surrounding Sha'Carri Richardson's absence from the 2020 Olympics in Tokyo after testing positive for THC and being disqualified from competition. In this chapter, the researcher describes how the dataset of relevant tweets was acquired, cleaned, and analyzed. Ethical considerations when working with Twitter data and limitations of this specific research study are also discussed.

3.1 Acquiring the Dataset

3.1.1 Initial Challenges

Initially, the research plan for this study involved analyzing tweets that were posted at the time the news of Sha'Carri Richardson's failed drug test broke in early July of 2021. The original plan was to compare Twitter discourse surrounding Sha'Carri Richardson to Twitter discourse surrounding Shelby Houlihan—a white American track and field athlete who was also suspended for a failed drug test, although Shelby's ban was related to nandrolone, an anabolic steroid, rather than THC (Armour & Schad, 2021).

However, it proved difficult to gain access to tweets from this specific time period using Twitter's application programming interface (API). While Twitter does grant API access to individuals for academic research purposes, the application for academic research access to the Twitter API for this project was denied. A Twitter reviewer did request more information prior to rendering the decision, but ultimately no explanation was given for the denial. It could be that Twitter prioritizes doctoral candidates, post-doctoral researchers, and faculty members over master's students when granting API access. It's also possible that Twitter did not want a researcher examining racist language on their platform, although other research has been conducted in this area as discussed in Chapter 2.

3.1.2 Discovery of a Public Dataset

Early challenges accessing Twitter data eventually led to the discovery of a public dataset that could be used for the purposes of this study. The George Washington University (GW) Libraries has made a collection of Twitter datasets available for academic research through their TweetSets service; one of the datasets contains 48,469,950 tweets related to the 2020 Summer Olympics hosted in Tokyo, Japan. This dataset, assembled by Laura Wrubel, includes tweets from July 19-August 11, 2021 (roughly three days before through three days after the 2020 Summer Olympic events) that were acquired from Twitter using the following filter track parameter:

```
olympics, Olympics2020, Olympics2021, TokyoOlympics, TokyoOlympics2020,  
TokyoOlympics2021, #Tokyo2020, #Tokyo2021#StrongerTogether,  
#UnitedByEmotion
```

While news of Richardson's suspension broke on July 2, 2021, this public dataset effectively demonstrates the extended aftermath.

3.1.3 Finding Relevant Tweets Within the Dataset

For the purposes of this research study, the public dataset containing over 48 million tweets needed to be winnowed down to tweets about or related to Sha'Carri Richardson. A search query was created to identify any tweets from the larger dataset that included Sha'Carri Richardson's first or last name, her Twitter handle, or the hashtag #LetShaCarriRun. The following search query was applied to the public dataset from TweetSets:

```
Sha'Carri OR ShaCarri OR Richardson OR @itskerrii OR  
#shacarririchardson OR #letshacarrirun
```

The query resulted in a dataset of 78,375 tweets. With retweets removed, the number of original tweets, quote tweets, and replies matching the query was 6,138. While retweets were

deemed redundant, quote tweets were included for the purposes of this study since it's possible they added new content to the conversation surrounding Richardson's absence from the 2020 Olympics.

3.1.4 Hydrating Dataset of Twitter IDs

When tweets are downloaded using Twitter's API, the resulting JSON file includes 35 different fields of metadata including the tweet text, timestamp, language, user verification status, etc. However, since the Twitter Terms of Service do not allow the full JSON for datasets of tweets to be publicly distributed, the dataset from GW Libraries only included the relevant Twitter IDs—unique numeric identifiers assigned to each individual tweet. This is sometimes referred to as a “dehydrated” dataset because all of the tweet metadata is missing. The dataset was then hydrated using DocNow's Hydrator—an open-source desktop application for hydrating datasets containing only Twitter IDs. The Hydrator uses the Twitter IDs to find all of the metadata associated with the individual tweets. Following the instructions as outlined by Rittenhouse et al. (2019), this tool was used to convert the set of 6,138 Twitter IDs to JSON and then to a .csv file that could be manipulated using Google Sheets.

Of the 6,138 Twitter IDs, only 5,349 tweets were able to be hydrated, resulting in a 87% hydration rate. Some loss is to be expected during the hydration process since Twitter IDs cannot be hydrated if the corresponding tweets have been deleted or if the tweets were posted by Twitter users who have since deleted their accounts.

3.2 Cleaning the Dataset

A small amount of data cleaning was necessary prior to conducting a thematic analysis of the dataset of tweets. As shown in Table 3.1, a total of 297 non-English and unrelated tweets were removed from the dataset: 181 tweets that were posted from non-English operating

systems; 111 unrelated tweets about other athletes, coaches, and commentators with the last name Richardson; and 11 tweets about Brazilian soccer player Richarlison, whose name was presumably autocorrected to Richardson and thus erroneously included in the tweet corpus. See Table 3.1 for a detailed list of removed tweets.

Table 3.1

Tweets Removed from Dataset

No. of tweets	Topic
181	Non-English operating systems
35	American baseball player Simeon Woods-Richardson
27	Australian track cyclist Matthew Richardson
12	Hockey commentator Kate Richardson-Walsh
11	Commentator Jason Richardson
11	Brazilian soccer player Richarlison
9	Commentator Dot Richardson
5	French handball player Melvyn Richardson
3	American basketball player Josh Richardson
2	Former Olympic gymnast Kate Richardson
2	Gymnastics coach Molly Richardson
1	Former English footballer Paul Richardson
1	Retired French handball player Jackson Richardson
1	English soccer player Lewis Richardson
1	Clemson swimmer Michele Richardson
1	Former University of Michigan swim coach Jim Richardson
1	New Zealand's The AM Show host Mark Richardson
1	Comedian Jon Richardson
1	Author Nick Richardson
1	City of Richardson, Texas
1	Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson (JBER)
297	Total tweets removed

After removing the non-English and unrelated tweets, the final dataset to be examined consisted of 5,041 tweets.

Lastly, a short series of find and replace queries was conducted and applied to the remaining 5,041 tweets to ensure certain special characters were presented in a readable format within the spreadsheet:

- 330 instances of & were changed to &
- 11 instances of > were changed to >
- 7 instances of < were changed to <

To keep special characters (including emoji) intact, the dataset of tweets was manipulated in Google Sheets rather than Microsoft Excel; Microsoft Excel adds an additional layer of formatting that makes it difficult to convert back to UTF-8. It was important to keep emoji intact for the purposes of this research because, as noted by McCulloch (2019), emoji replace gestures in text-based conversations that take place online and can be used to indicate tone or create nuance.

3.3 Analyzing the Dataset

This study was conducted using a six-phase thematic analysis as described by Braun and Clarke (2006). The six phases are as follows:

1. Getting familiar with the data
2. Generating initial codes
3. Searching for themes
4. Reviewing themes
5. Defining and naming themes
6. Producing the report

Two things that needed to be determined at the onset of the study were whether the thematic analysis was deductive or inductive and whether the study was being conducted at the semantic or latent level.

According to both Boyatzis (1998) and Braun and Clarke (2006), thematic analysis can either be deductive (where themes are created based on a theory or prior research) or inductive

(where themes are created based on the raw data). Boyatzis (1998) also states that thematic analysis can be conducted at one of two levels: semantic or latent. The latent level is a deeper analysis of the content that probes deeper than just the meaning of the words.

This study was initially conceived to be a theoretical deductive analysis conducted at the latent level, but due to ongoing evolution of the research questions throughout the project, this study ended up being an inductive analysis conducted at the latent level. Braun and Clarke (2006) suggest that it is permissible for the research questions to evolve as the thematic analysis progresses.

It is also important to note that this analysis was conducted within a constructionist framework. A thematic analysis conducted within a constructionist framework does not focus on the motivations of individuals, but rather attempts to understand the sociocultural contexts and structural conditions that enable the individual accounts that are provided (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

The following sections briefly describe the six phases of the thematic analysis, with the understanding that the phases were often recursive rather than linear.

3.3.1 Getting Familiar with the Data

The dataset of 5,041 tweets was saved as a spreadsheet in Google Sheets. The researcher read through the set of tweets in this format one time, checking for any unrelated tweets that may have erroneously been included and jotting down an initial list of recurring topics to consider during a more thorough review of the data. A considerable number of athlete names were mentioned more than once; these athlete names were noted so research could be conducted as to how these athletes were relevant to Sha'Carri Richardson.

After conducting this first review of the Google Sheet, the initial dataset of tweets was printed and assembled into a spiral-bound book for hand coding purposes. At this point, unnecessary data columns were removed from the spreadsheet for printing purposes (see Appendix A for a detailed list of columns that were removed). The final codebook contained just five columns (tweet timestamp, number of retweets, possibly sensitive, user, and tweet text). With an added sixth column for adding codes, the spreadsheet was legible enough for hand coding when printed in landscape orientation on 8.5 × 11 in. Letter-sized paper. The printed codebook was sorted from tweets with the highest number of retweets to tweets to the lowest number of retweets so that tweets that were the most shared and therefore had the highest share of voice on Twitter were addressed first.

3.3.2 Generating Initial Codes

Coding allows researchers to make sense of a large amount of disparate data in relation to their research questions (Elliott, 2018). For this study, the first several rounds of coding were conducted by hand. The initial code list generated by the researcher consisted of 140 codes. This number was later condensed and expanded again as larger, overarching themes were identified within the dataset.

3.3.3 Searching for Themes

Eventually each of the 5,041 tweets was assigned at least one code. As codes were assigned to individual tweets, themes began to emerge within the dataset. While some themes were easy to identify (for example, tweets unrelated to the research questions were uncovered and were categorized as “unrelated”), other themes were more subtle. During this part of the process, new codes were often added, and old codes were sometimes split or combined.

3.3.4 Reviewing Themes

As the larger themes were reviewed, new codes continued to be added and some older codes were split or combined. This part of the process also included condensing codes into a manageable number of themes.

3.3.5 Defining & Naming Themes

For this study, codes were assigned either in vivo names (using phrases from the tweets as theme names) or descriptive names (where the researcher intuitively knows what the content of the tweet is referring to). It was important that the code names be easy to remember given the large number of tweets contained within the dataset. A codebook was developed using a modified version of the elements of a good code as suggested by Boyatzis (1998). The full codebook developed for this study can be found in Appendix B.

3.3.6 Producing the Report

In this case, the findings are reported in Chapter 4—the findings section of this manuscript.

3.4 Ethical Considerations

There are several ethical considerations to account for when working with Twitter data. Research has shown that Twitter users have different perceptions of just how “public” their public tweets are; thus, it is important to publish results of Twitter data in a way that helps individuals remain as anonymous as possible (Fiesler & Proferes, 2018).

Twitter, to their credit, attempts to take an ethical position by including a clause in their terms of service that prevents large sets of Twitter data from being distributed publicly. They only allow large sets of tweet identifiers (or Twitter IDs) to be published—not the corresponding metadata—and Twitter also requires users to apply for API access to gain access to this data

(Summers, 2017). Farrington et al. (2015) states that “if the major social media platforms were placed on a continuum from the least transparent to the most transparent in terms of accessing users’ content, then Twitter would certainly be on the open end of that scale” (p. 9).

To help maintain user confidentiality, the author has attempted to avoid publishing tweets verbatim in association with Twitter usernames within the results of this study. The findings will generally be presented in aggregate. Exceptions to this will only be made when absolutely necessary.

3.5 Limitations

Like all research projects, the qualitative nature of this research meant there were a variety of limitations. The limitations of this specific study are detailed in the following sections.

3.5.1 Single Researcher

Since this research project was undertaken by a single researcher, there was no double coding of tweets during the thematic analysis portion of the study. This means that the researcher’s own bias as an English-speaking white American female likely came into play more-so than if a diverse research team consisting of multiple people had examined the tweets and arrived at a conclusion about the categorization of each one. In particular, there are a number of tweets written in Jamaican patois³ where meaning may have been misinterpreted or nuance may have been missed.

3.5.2 Tweets Lost During Hydration

As mentioned earlier, a small percentage of tweets were lost during the hydration process. Of the 6,138 Twitter IDs, 5,349 tweets were able to be hydrated. Tweets lost during the

³ While Jamaican patois is English-based, patois on its own is considered a complete language system and shared meaning of lexical items common to both English and Jamaican patois cannot be assumed (Davidson & Schwartz, 1995).

hydration process include tweets that have been deleted or tweets posted by Twitter users whose accounts have been removed (either via deletion or suspension or by switching account visibility from public to private) since the dataset was assembled.

3.5.3 Deleted Tweets

The research also uncovered a number of tweets that were deleted between when the tweets were hydrated and when the thematic analysis was conducted. It is impossible to gain additional context for deleted tweets, and as such, they may not have been correctly categorized during the thematic analysis.

3.5.4 Loss of Meaning & Context

Meaning is often lost in text-based communication; it is difficult to determine the tone of tweets to detect sarcasm and other layers of nuance that could affect the meaning of the words (McCulloch, 2019). Poe's Law also stipulates the difficulty of distinguishing irony from earnestness in public conversation online (Phillips & Milner, 2017). A loss of context also occurred because the tweets were analyzed after the fact rather than concurrently with the Olympic Games. Because of the loss of nuance and context, some tweets may have been incorrectly categorized during the thematic analysis.

3.5.5 Hand Coding

Circumstances beyond the researcher's control led to a period of five weeks without Internet access during the day. To accommodate this, the dataset of tweets was printed and assembled into a spiral-bound book, and the first several rounds of coding were conducted by hand. While this tactic enabled the researcher to gain familiarity with individual tweets and with the dataset as a whole, there was an additional opportunity for error when it came time to convert the hand coded dataset back to a digital format.

3.5.6 Missing Tweets

During the coding process, the researcher found multiple misspellings of Sha'Carri Richardson's name (both accidental and intentional). A sampling of the misspellings found within the tweet corpus can be found in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2

Misspellings of Richardson's Name Within Dataset

Misspelling	Presumed accidental or intentional
Chicory	Intentional
Kerry	Accidental
Sha'Can'tKeepUp	Intentional
Sha'cantrun	Intentional
Sha'Cara	Accidental
Sha'Carrie	Accidental
Sha'CarryGas	Intentional
Sha'ciri	Accidental
Sha'Cranberry	Intentional
Sha'kari	Accidental
Sha'nah Shackleberry	Intentional
sha'not at the olympics	Intentional
Sha'Weedi	Intentional
Shacari	Accidental
Shacberry	Intentional
Shakari	Accidental
Shakarri	Accidental
Shaqari	Accidental
Shcarri	Accidental
She Carry	Accidental
Shecarri	Accidental
Shepeteri	Intentional
ShiCarri	Accidental
Spliffcari	Intentional
Weed'carii	Intentional
Weedcari	Intentional

There were also instances where Twitter users simply referred to Sha'Carri Richardson by her initials (SR). Because the researcher's original search query did not account for all these

variable spellings of Richardson’s name, the dataset of tweets is likely not comprehensive. In addition, subtweets—passive-aggressive barbs that don't specifically name their target—or any other tweets that did not specifically mention Richardson or include a relevant hashtag were likely not collected.

3.5.7 Possible Positivity Bias Within Dataset

The search query used to generate the subset of tweets about Sha’Carri Richardson from GW Libraries’ larger public dataset about the 2020 Olympics may have resulted in a positivity bias. The query developed by the researcher included the correct spelling of Sha’Carri Richardson’s first and last names. As discussed in section 3.5.6, Richardson’s name was misspelled multiple different ways within the dataset. While the last name Richardson is relatively common, it’s possible that participants in the Twitter conversation who did not support Richardson did not bother to spell her first name correctly—or perhaps they referenced her by an unflattering nickname or did not reference her by name at all. Therefore, spelling Richardson’s name correctly in the search query may have resulted in positivity bias within the resulting dataset.

In addition, the query included the hashtag #LetShaCarriRun—which was first popularized as a way for users to express support for Richardson when her suspension was announced in early July 2021. This hashtag itself is inherently biased and may have led to a disproportionate number of tweets supporting Richardson in the resulting dataset.

3.5.8 Tweets Spanning More Than One Theme

Despite Twitter’s limit of 280 characters per tweet, there were still many tweets that contained content spanning two or more codes. Sometimes these codes seemed to fall under the

same overarching thematic umbrella and sometimes they did not. As such, some individual tweets were categorized under more than one theme.

3.5.9 Timing of Dataset

Articles announcing Richardson's suspension hit major news outlets beginning July 2, 2021; the public dataset made available by GW Libraries contains tweets beginning on July 19, 2021. It's possible that public sentiment or the conversation topics shifted during the 12 days between when news of Richardson's suspension was made public and when the tweets were collected.

Chapter 4: Findings

This chapter describes the findings of the thematic analysis conducted using a dataset consisting of 5,041 tweets related to Sha'Carri Richardson that were posted leading up to, during, and immediately after the 2020 Olympic Games occurred in Tokyo, Japan. A brief description of each major and minor theme is provided. In addition, a handful of themes that did not correspond to the research questions are also identified and described.

4.1 Major Themes

This section describes the major themes discovered during the thematic analysis of tweets related to Sha'Carri Richardson's absence from the 2020 Olympics. For the purposes of this study, major themes were defined as any theme that was coded for more than 200 times.

4.1.1 *Double Standards*

The biggest theme that emerged within the corpus was the double standards theme. Throughout the tweet corpus, many Twitter users called attention to the myriad of double standards on display at the 2020 Olympics. This theme was coded for more than 1800 times.

Most of the tweets that fell into the double standards theme called attention to white athletes who received treatment and/or a public response very different from Sha'Carri Richardson because they were allowed to be present at the 2020 Olympics in Tokyo. The white athletes mentioned most often within this theme included Alen Hadzic, Megan Rapinoe, Michael Andrew, Michael Phelps, and the entire Russian Olympic Committee (ROC) team.

4.1.1.1 Alen Hadzic. Twitter users were the iratest about the presence of fencer Alen Hadzic at the 2020 Olympics—Hadzic was coded for 702 times. Six women fencers accused Hadzic of sexual assault, including multiple Olympians who were part of Team USA. Hadzic was flown to Tokyo on a separate plane and a safety plan was developed and implemented to

prevent him from being near female teammates at the Olympics (Sacks & Segura, 2021). Many tweets expressed disgust for the accommodations that had been made to allow this white male athlete to be present in Tokyo while Richardson was suspended:

*This story makes me so angry. Protect the privileged white fencer yet punish the Black Intersex athletes for being better than everyone else plus @itskerrii for being human. Fu*k your “safety plan”, the Olympic values have been well and truly lost. @caster800m*

4.1.1.2 Megan Rapinoe. Soccer player Megan Rapinoe was also frequently mentioned throughout the tweet corpus (522 times) for promoting CBD products from her sister Rachael Rapinoe’s company, Mendi:

No shade to Rapinoe, love a queen. But the fact that Rapinoe can disclose that she uses CBD gummies in training but Sha'carri Richardson is barred from the Olympics for smoking pot is absolutely racially motivated BS

4.1.1.3 Russian Olympic Committee. The Russian Olympic Committee (ROC) was mentioned 98 times as a clear double standard when it comes to the Olympics enforcing their doping rules inequitably. Russia was banned from sending athletes to the Olympics due to previous rules violations, but athletes from Russia were allowed to compete under the ROC name:

Russia got banned from the Olympics because of a huge doping scandal, but STILL has representation in the games. But @itskerrii.... you know what nevermind. It ain't right but it's all white.

4.1.1.4 Michael Phelps. Some tweets (67) took issue with Michael Phelps serving as a commentator for a portion of the Tokyo Olympics:

Michael Phelps, a known stoner, commentating the Olympics just weeks after Shacarri was suspended is a tad tone deaf, to say the least.

4.1.1.5 Michael Andrews. An even smaller number of tweets (23) were upset about swimmer Michael Andrew being allowed to compete in the 2020 Olympics in Tokyo despite his refusal to receive the COVID-19 vaccine and publicly declining to wear a mask on several occasions:

You'd think that the @iocmedia would throw his ass out of the @Olympics for violating the #CovidRules. You know like banning @itskerrii #ShariRichardson for a little weed. Even though she lives in a state where #RecreationalPot is #Legal. Oh that's right she's a #BlackWoman

4.1.2 Sha'Carri Stirs the Pot

Sha'Carri Richardson herself engaged in the conversation during the time period of interest by posting tweets from her own Twitter account (@itskerrii). Richardson's tweets would often stir up controversy and make her a topic of conversation once again ("Richardson might not be going to the Olympics but she's def up right now !"). This theme was coded for 658 times and includes replies to, quote tweets containing, and tweets alluding to the content of nine specific tweets posted by Richardson, as described in Appendix C.

4.1.3 Oppose Richardson

A fair number of Twitter users were captured within the dataset expressing disapproval of Sha'Carri Richardson during her absence from the 2020 Olympics.

4.1.3.1 Wouldn't Have Won Anyway. The majority of tweets that fell into this theme implied that even if Richardson was present to compete, she would not have won the women's 100-meter event anyway.

Though I would've loved to see Sha'Carri in the Olympics, Jamaica would've blew her out of the water.

4.1.3.2 Jamaican Shade. Throughout the tweet corpus, Jamaicans threw a tremendous amount of shade at Sha'Carri Richardson while simultaneously supporting their own Black track athletes. Their distinctly disapproving contributions to the Twitter conversation were often in response to the tweets Richardson posted from her personal Twitter account:

Some people can only clock 10.61 with their keyboard, nah call yuh name yer @itskerrii (I'm not calling your name, you hear)

4.1.3.3 Name-Calling. Other tweets resorted to name-calling, either referring to Richardson as a bitch, crackhead, pothead, dopehead, dickhead, or calling her some insulting variation of her real name:

Weedcari Richardson didn't stand a chance.

4.1.3.4 Sit Down. Another subtheme that emerged was users expressing displeasure with Richardson's behavior, suggesting that she was "too loud" or that she needed to "sit down" or humble herself:

@itskerrii Baby, pls. We didn't even know who you was about 5 months ago. The entire Olympics was never bout you, pls, take a piece of the humble pie and sit tf down

4.1.3.5 Anti-Sha'Carri. Another set of tweets distinctly expressed dislike for Richardson but not in a way that allowed more specific codes to be applied. This subtheme includes and basic insults that could not confidently be placed within the Jamaican shade subtheme:

Looooool bro Sha'Carri is a nobody at the olympics, she's not "THAT" girl at all...

4.1.3.6 Main Character Syndrome. Some Twitter users even accused Richardson of having main character syndrome:

Sha'Carri has never been at the Olympics but talks like she holds multiple records. Main character syndrome is killing her

4.1.3.7 Quitters. Another small but interesting subtheme that emerged was the idea that Richardson intentionally disqualified herself from competition (presumably because she knew she would not win):

Sha'Carri Richardson lowkey copped out the Olympics by purposely failing her drug test and is being praised by black people

Occasionally, American gymnast Simone Biles was lumped together with Richardson and also labeled a “quitter” for prioritizing her mental health and choosing to withdraw from the team finals at the 2020 Olympics:

*Imagine being too good for the olympics that you can't participate *cough Sha'Carri, cough Simone**

Sometimes Japanese tennis player Naomi Osaka was also included in this “quitters” comparison:

@Tochinoshin33 Honestly? No judgement? Here goes. Between Sha'Carri Richardson, Naomi Osaka, and Simone Biles, I'd be PISSED if I tried out for the Olympics and lost my spot to these three "strong black women." I do not feel sorry for them in the least.

4.1.4 Can't Stop Talking About Her

A number of users posted on Twitter to comment on the fact that the public just couldn't stop talking about Richardson. One participant in the Twitter conversation stated that “Sha'Carri is bigger than the Olympics at this point.”

4.1.4.1 Hanging Onto Hope. At the beginning of the time period when the tweets were collected, some fans thought there was still hope that Sha'Carri Richardson would be included

on Team USA. While the exact dates of Richardson’s suspension meant she would definitely not be able to run the women’s 100-meter event, her suspension technically ended prior to the 4×100m relay event on August 6, 2021:

Is it possible Sha-Carri Richardson can compete in the 4-x-100-meter relay or another event? She’s served her time, 30 day suspension & can’t run the 100 meter race.

#Olympics #TrackandField #IOC.

There was also some inkling that the 2020 Olympics might be postponed again because of the COVID-19 pandemic, and therefore would take place after Richardson had served her 30-day suspension:

I'm sorry, but I kind of hope the #Olympics get delayed so #ShaCarriRichardson can get by her suspension and still go. They're on the verge of either delaying or canceling and I sure hope she takes that blessing and lesson...

This subtheme is small (the “hanging onto hope” code was applied to just 11 tweets) because these hopes were dashed when the 2020 Olympic events proceeded as planned and Team USA announced their roster and it became clear that Richardson had been left off the women’s 4×100-meter relay team.

4.1.4.2 Governing Bodies Pass the Blame. Twitter users perceived several governing bodies to be involved in the decision to not have Richardson in attendance at the 2020 Olympics: the International Olympic Committee (IOC), the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA), the U.S. Anti-Doping Agency (USADA), and Team USA. While USADA was the agency that delivered Richardson’s 30-day suspension, a number of Twitter users argued over which governing body was ultimately responsible:

Because it is not their jurisdiction. The Olympics jurisdiction was to ban sha'carri for a banned substance. She actually could've still competed in the 4x100m as it would be after her ban ended. However America decided to kick her off the team. See the jurisdiction difference ?

News headlines posted within the tweet corpus suggested that these governing bodies appeared to be passing the blame from one to the other with none wanting to take credit for Richardson's suspension:

#Olympics Begin, Blame Game Continues At Fed Commission Hearing Over Sha'Carri Richardson Suspension

4.1.4.3 Best American Hope. Plenty of tweets (149) bemoaned Richardson's absence from the Olympics because they perceived Richardson to be Team USA's best hope for winning the 100-meter event:

@itskerrii would've definitely placed in the top 3 at the Olympics in the 100m, 3rd fastest time was 10.78 and she runs a 10.8 and ppls adrenaline always runs higher on the world stage, I would've loved to see it

Many tweets that fell within this theme also expressed that Richardson's presence at the Olympics would have helped Team USA clinch gold in the women's 4×100-meter relay as well:

If Sha'Carri was on the relay , the US would've won effortlessly

4.1.4.4 Competitors Decline Comment. A number of participants in the Twitter conversation expressed outrage about a specific journalist who notably asked Jamaican sprinters their opinion on Richardson. Participants identified this action as a poor journalism technique and were displeased that this question had been posed to the Jamaican athletes in the first place;

they insisted the reporter should have asked the Jamaican athletes to comment on their own performance rather than Richardson's absence:

They had nothing to do with what happened with Sha'Carri so why even ask?????

These Twitter users were generally upset that Richardson was still being mentioned in association with the Olympics even though she was not competing:

people really need to stop mentioning sha'carri because she's not at the olympics. she's catching strays for no reason bc ppl keep bringing her ass up

4.1.4.5 Need a Rematch. After the women's 100-meter event at the 2020 Summer Olympics, from which Richardson was notably missing, many Twitter users expressed a desire for a rematch—specifically with Jamaican sprinters Elaine Thompson and/or Shelly-Ann Fraser Pryce competing in a race against Richardson. Tweets with this code fell on both sides in terms of support for Richardson; some users wished to see Richardson run against the Jamaicans to definitively know the outcome if Richardson had been able to face off against the Jamaican women in the 100-meter race:

Listen, now that the women ran the 100m, Shelly Ann, Elaine, Shericka, Sha'Carri, find Carmelita Jeter, Gail Devers, Veronica Campbell Brown IDGAF and run this final somewhere in the world. We wanna see the race. We don't need the Olympics. Is Diamond league still a thing?

Other Twitter users that fell within this subtheme wanted a rematch because they more firmly believed Richardson could have won the women's 100-meter event had she been able to compete and prove her dominance at the 2020 Olympics:

@Futbolphotos6 @MakedaShaw @itskerrii She will run at these meets in the future. She beat gabby, Jenna, javianne, teahana, aleia, and they were all at the Olympics. She's

more than capable of performing at these worlds, diamonds and the olympics. The suspension stopped her, not her lack of talent.

4.1.5 Rules Discussion

Another major theme that emerged within the dataset involved the rules surrounding drug use by Olympic athletes and the governing bodies responsible for enforcing the rules.

4.1.5.1 Rules are Rules. Twitter users who believed that Richardson’s suspension was warranted were often found stating that “rules are rules”. Over 200 tweets expressed this sentiment. Writers of these tweets did not believe an exception should have been made for Richardson even though her positive drug test occurred while she was grieving her mother’s death and marijuana usage is legal in the state of Oregon.

Some participants suggested that Olympic athletes are well aware of the rules and know how to circumvent them in order to undergo and pass the necessary testing:

*I have all the sympathy in the world for Sha'carri Richardson for losing out on the Olympics. But at the same time, how is she the *only* Olympian that doesn't know how to beat a drug test? Half those cyclists' pee looks like The Predator's blood, ffs.*

4.1.5.2 The Drug Rules are Dumb. Conversely, the most prevalent argument found among Twitter users who oppose Richardson’s suspension is that the rules surrounding marijuana usage by Olympic athletes are antiquated, illogical, or inconsistently applied. Some of these users argued that marijuana is not a performance-enhancing drug (PED) and therefore its usage should be allowed:

Marijuana isn't a performance-enhancing drug unless you're in a hot dog eating contest on Coney Island. To take away Sha'Carri Richardson's dream to compete in the

Olympics is absurd. Let's get real! The War on Drugs is a total failure. Deschedule marijuana and end this war!

Some Twitter users went as far as to suggest that marijuana actually makes athletes run slower:

I have a problem with @itskerrii not at the Olympics. Cannabis is a DEPRESSANT if anything it makes you slower. It does not enhance performance. They should only be checking for stimulants and performance enhancing drugs...Tylenol enhances my performance would I be suspended too?

A few participants in the Twitter conversation pointed out that alcohol can have similar effects but is not similarly regulated:

The Olympics shouldn't test for cannabis

'If Richardson had gotten falling-down drunk instead of ingesting weed, she'd probably have competed Saturday in the women's 100-meter final. After all, drinking is a celebrated pastime in Olympic villages.'

Others pointed out that marijuana is legal in the state where Richardson tested positive for THC (Oregon) and suggested that the Olympic rules should follow local laws regarding marijuana usage:

The #Olympics begin today, and Sha'Carri Richardson is banned from participation because she used marijuana - in a state where it's legal. Here in AZ, weed is legal, but thousands of ppl, esp BIPOC, still have criminal records for using weed.

4.1.5.3 THC v CBD. Some Twitter users engaged in discussion about the difference between two compounds found in marijuana: tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) and cannabidiol (CBD). “THC v CBD” was coded for 77 times throughout the tweet corpus.

Some tweets referred to the double standard involving Megan Rapinoe and expressed bewilderment that THC is banned but CBD is not:

Fuck the Olympics- these hoes are on Forbes for using CBD to help with performance, while Sha'Carri used THC to cope with a difficult time in her life. THC has nothing to do with enhancing performance yet she was penalized for using it? Both forms come from the same plant? Smh

4.1.5.4 Coe Revisits Rules. Several news outlets ran headlines about World Athletics president Sebastian Coe, who expressed support for the review of the rule banning Olympic athletes from using marijuana. These headlines made their way into the Twitter discussion surrounding Richardson's absence. One Twitter user went as far as to suggest that this gesture was too little too late:

Also an APOLOGY to anyone (Sha'Carri Richardson, specifically) who was penalised for the stupid rules, too, sebastian.

4.1.6 Support Richardson

Many Twitter users actively expressed support for Sha'Carri Richardson in the conversation surrounding her absence from the 2020 Olympics in Tokyo, Japan.

4.1.6.1 Defend Sha'Carri. The majority of tweets that fell under this theme were tweets defending Richardson from other Twitter users who were speaking out against her. There was some overlap here with the Jamaican shade subtheme:

@ShalamarHaynes @itskerrii Bro why are you on her dick, she can do what she wants and she don't have to go to the Olympics if she don't fucking want to. Let her be human and stay in your place, if you don't like team USA then take your black ass back to the island. Worry about your players

Some of the tweets in this subtheme specifically encouraged Richardson to ignore the “haters” or “couch athletes” who she deemed unqualified to comment on Richardson’s situation:

*@itskerrii Most of the people coming at you couldn't run 15 feet. You are a star. Ignore the haters – they WANT to get under your skin. Don't let them! #TeamUSA
#TokyoOlympics*

4.1.6.2 Pro-Sha’Carri. Of the remaining tweets expressing support for Richardson, some were general statements of admiration:

Personality Personality Personality Love love love @itskerrii #TokyoOlympics2020

A few tweets within this subtheme directly complimented Richardson’s appearance:

*That's the thing about Sha'Carri Richardson she brings FASHION to that track!
#tokyo2020 #100m #olympics #Athletics*

4.1.6.3 Blessing in Disguise. There were a fair number of tweets (39) that suggested Richardson’s absence from the 2020 Olympics in Tokyo was a blessing in disguise—primarily because of the number of COVID-19 cases among the Olympic athletes, but also because of other issues on display at the 2020 Olympics:

It may have been a blessing in disguise for Sha'Carri not to go to the Olympics. It's a COVID fest over there. Praying for the safety of everyone there.

4.1.6.4 Encourage Action. There was also a subset of tweets within this theme encouraging fans to take action to protest the treatment of Sha’Carri Richardson by signing various petitions:

Over the last several weeks, Americans have been outraged by the unfair ruling preventing one of the fastest women in the world, Sha'Carri Richardson, from competing

in the 100-meter race during the 2021 Tokyo Olympics. Sign our Petition to Stop Penalizing Cannabis

In addition, some Twitter users encouraged Richardson herself to take action by running her own race:

@itskerrii Why don't we stop crying about how we are treated, IN SOMEONE ELSE'S HOUSE? If the Olympics not treating us right, why we can't set up some events a HBCUs? Tell @kanyewest help you host your own events. Fuck the Olympics.

Another set of Twitter users present within this subtheme encouraged Richardson to sue the Olympics:

I'm not big on the litigious culture in its present state, but I'm all for Sha'carri Richardson suing the Olympics Committee and Team USA for not allowing her into this years competition. Also something something ~100 USA athletes are there unvaccinated.

4.1.6.5 Wish You Were Here. Some of the Twitter users directly expressed a desire to see Richardson compete in the 2020 Olympics and suggested that the women's 100-meter event wasn't the same without her:

By the time you finish reading this sentence, former LSU track standout Sha'Carri Richardson could have burst out the starting blocks and sprinted to the finish line in the 100 meters race at this year's Olympics. Games won't be quite the same without her

4.1.7 Capitalism/Endorsements

Another major theme that emerged within the dataset was related to capitalism and athlete endorsements. Nike, known for their continued but sometimes controversial support of female athletes, sponsored Richardson prior to her suspension and continued to sponsor Richardson despite the fact she tested positive for marijuana. Nike also produced a "Best Day

Ever” commercial featuring several athletes, including Richardson, that ran during the 2020 Olympics.

In addition to her Nike endorsement, Richardson starred in a Beats by Dre commercial used to promote the headphones as well as Kanye West’s upcoming album, Donda. The theme of the commercial was “run your own race” and featured Richardson getting ready to run; she meticulously places small earbuds in her ears before taking off at a full sprint.

The majority of Twitter users talking about the capitalism/endorsements theme were proud of Richardson for her ability to maintain and gain lucrative endorsement deals despite the negative press attention she had received in recent months:

Sha’Carri Richardson being thee talk throughout the Olympics while never stepping foot in Japan is hilarious though. Hope the endorsement deals keep pouring in for her.

However, a few Twitter users suggested that although they were happy for Richardson’s recent endorsements, it couldn’t make up for her absence from the 2020 Olympics:

pain is seeing sha’carri in commercials during the olympics and not during the olympics
</3

4.2 Minor Themes

This section discusses the minor themes discovered during the thematic analysis of tweets related to Sha’Carri Richardson’s absence from the 2020 Olympics. For the purposes of this study, minor themes were defined as any theme that was coded for 200 times or fewer.

4.2.1 Black Twitter Can’t Decide

Throughout the tweet corpus, Black Twitter seemed divided on how they should approach Sha’Carri Richardson’s absence from the 2020 Olympics.

4.2.1.1 Boycott. Over 100 tweets mentioned a boycott, but true to previous calls to boycott the Olympic Games, this topic was divisive among Black Twitter.

Some members of Black Twitter adamantly pushed for a boycott of the Olympics, often citing the treatment of Richardson as the reason for the boycott:

BOYCOTT THE OLYMPICS UNTIL MISS RICHARDSON CAN RUN! WE MUST TAKE A STAND AGAINST THE OIC DRUG NAZIS! NO ONES LIFE SHOULD BE RUINED OVER A PLANT!!

4.2.1.2 Support Black Athletes. A number of Twitter users spoke against a boycott and emphasized the need to support the other Black athletes competing in the 2020 Olympics:

Forget Sha'Carri. Can't we all just be black, proud, and happy together and for the black peoples who were dominating in the olympics

4.2.1.3 Support Black Women. Some tweets suggested that other Black female athletes competing at the 2020 Olympics are specifically deserving of fan support, particularly the support of Black Twitter:

the way yall fight tooth and nail for sha'carri like she is the only black girl in the olympics is interesting. why yall don't be hyping the other girls?

4.2.1.4 Black Olympics. A small number of tweets (9) suggested that Black athletes should host their own “Black Olympics” or form their own Olympic team so that majority white countries could stop profiting from their athletic prowess:

Can we just create the Black Olympics already? Like fuck @Olympics and their racism!
#olympics #ShaCarriRichardson

4.2.2 Ambivalence Olympics

Twitter users perceived that Richardson's suspension for marijuana use was not the only problematic situation that occurred leading up to and during the 2020 Olympics. Richardson and her suspension were often mentioned as the catalyst for several other unfortunate events that befell the 2020 Olympics. These people expressed disgust with the Olympics for a variety of reasons, often starting with the fact that the Olympic Games were moving forward while the world was still in the throes of the COVID-19 pandemic:

There's gonna be a crazy outbreak of covid at the Olympics and in the end ShaCarri Richardson will have the last laugh

In addition, tweets that fell under this theme often mentioned a number of other incidents that were perceived to be ableist (Becca Meyers being denied her personal care assistant), puritan (cardboard beds that were provided for athletes in the Olympic Village), racist (banning of swim caps for Black women's natural hair), or sexist (breastfeeding athletes not allowed to bring their infants, the Norwegian handball team uniforms, and the German gymnastics team uniforms):

it seems like the #Olympics have been in shambles from the onset! between the banning of soul caps, Sha'Carri not going, them refusing an aide for a disabled Olympian, Simone leaving, Naomi leaving...just to name a few...shit has been hectic!

The idea of karma also emerged within this theme, with some participants going so far as to refer to this series of subsequent events as the "curse of Sha'Carri":

Curse of Sha'Carri, aint shit gon go right at the Olympics this year

4.2.3 Race Related

A handful of race-related subthemes were present throughout the tweet corpus. Race certainly played a role in the Twitter conversation surrounding Richardson's absence from the 2020 Olympics.

4.2.3.1 Deny Racism. A smattering of Twitter users throughout the dataset denied that Richardson's suspension had anything to do with race.

The most common argument used for denying racism was the idea of colorblindness:

@15roro2 @marieflows @Cleo_Goodwin123 @itskerrii Bringing race into it won't take away the fact that she got disqualified for doing cannabis before a drug test which she knew she had to do, especially for the olympics...as of rn no white, black, Hispanic, Asian, or any other race is aloud to use forbidden drugs in the olympics

One Twitter user replied to another, accusing the original poster of race baiting:

'Sha'Carri Richardson watching known weed smoker Michael Phelps commentating at the Olympics when she wasn't able to compete' is an obvious race bait.

Lastly, several Twitter users involved in the conversation suggested that "to see race is racist":

@thesilentobse10 @iBaseball_1 @itskerrii What does Jamaica's issues have to do with a conversation about the Olympics and this guy incorrectly saying Jamaicans deny being black? When you occupy yourself wholeheartedly with white supremacy/race issues it's all you see.

One Twitter user even went as far as to suggest that Richardson herself is racist:

@itskerrii You are the problem not even part .Why not celebrate the sport why bring race into it . You are sickening I'm glad you were pulled !! We don't need a racist in the Olympics . One people one world !!

Overlap of the deny racism theme with the Jamaican shade theme demonstrated how implicit bias becomes so ingrained that even Jamaicans either cannot or refuse to see how white athletes might be more privileged than they are (this is, of course, makes the assumption that the person who tweeted this is Black):

@longbeachcounty Y'all pick and choose... I'm sure you're going with Richardson over Thompson-Herah or Fraser-Pryce. Also this is the Olympics who cares if people are black, white, yellow,red, etc... Only thing we care bout first and foremost a d people dem donning the black, green and gold

This is a good example of internalized oppression—which as defined by DiAngelo (2016) is “the term for accepting and acting out (often unintentionally) the constant messages that you and your group are inferior to the dominant group and thus deserving of your lower position” (p.76).

The deny racism theme also commonly overlapped with the “rules are rules” theme:
let me go back to my first comment- take illegal drugs- you are banned, period! it is and was not racial, does she thing the rules do not apply to her?

4.2.3.1 Historic Instances. Several historic instances involving other Black athletes were mentioned throughout the dataset. These athletes included Marion Jones, Florence Griffith Joyner (also known as Flo-Jo), Carmelita Jeter, and Tyson Gay.

American track and field athlete Marion Jones won five medals (three gold and two bronze) at 2000 Sydney Olympics but was later stripped of these medals after admitting in 2007

that she had used PEDs. Rumors had plagued Jones for years, especially after her husband, C. J. Hunter, pulled out of the Sydney Olympics following a positive drug test. She faced scathing media coverage, perhaps because she had publicly spoken out against PED use in the past. According to Douglas (2014), "the majority of the commentary regarded Jones alone as blameworthy, and the prevailing attitude was that of scorn and moral outrage" (p. 5).

American sprinter Tyson Gay tested positive for a banned substance (steroids) in May 2013. The United States Anti-Doping Agency (USADA) suspended him until June 23, 2014; they also stripped him and his fellow relay team members of their silver medals in the 4×100m relay from the 2012 Summer Olympics. Adidas subsequently pulled Gay's sponsorship. Notably, Richardson's major sponsor Nike did not pull their sponsorship following her positive drug test. This could be another indicator that the public largely supported Richardson and disagreed with her suspension.

Several Black female track athletes have been accused of PED use just because they significantly improved their athletic performance in a relatively short period of time. Douglas (2014) suggests that "the concern about steroid use in the United States relies on the decades old narrative of the war on drugs and the overwhelming association of drug use as a specifically Black problem" (p. 9). Florence Griffith Joyner (Flo-Jo) and Carmelita Jeter—both Black female runners subject to such speculation—were specifically mentioned within the tweet corpus.

Some Twitter users used this opportunity to defend the validity of Flo-Jo's world record, which stood for 33 years and was only recently broken by Jamaican sprinter Elaine Thompson-Herah at the 2020 Olympics:

If you think the USADA and the IOC would've allowed FloJos records to stand without making sure she wasn't a dirty runner, even after her death, then you don't know sports. Black ppl from other countries were calling ShaCarri dirty over a failed weed test. Envy breeds jealousy.

And one tweet specifically compared Carmelita Jeter to Sha'Carri Richardson:

Its crazy how everyone forgot about carmelita jeter like she wasnt already doin what sha'carri been trynna do, cus she def was whoopin every country ass in the sprints in the past couple olympics

4.2.3.2 Misogynoir. Misogynoir is a term coined by Moya Bailey in 2008 to describe the unique combination of racism and sexism experienced by Black women (Bailey, 2021).

Throughout the corpus of tweets, numerous Twitter users pointed out how the 2020 Olympics were anti-Black and misogynistic:

It's been clear from the start that proceeding w/the #Olympics in the midst of a pandemic was greedy and irresponsible, but it's also clear that the greatest toll taken—from Sha'Carri Richardson to swimmers not allowed to wear caps that fit to Simone Biles—is on Black women.

4.2.3.3 They Scared. A small but interesting set of tweets that emerged attempted to explain the reason for the misogynoir; the idea that white men are afraid of Black women having power was coded for 17 times:

thinking about it now. the shit Sha'Carri would've done in the olympics would've been drastic. they had to stop her.

Black women are at the bottom of the power structure in the U.S. (Steele, 2021, p. 19), and the idea that this might change is abhorrent to some—mainly the white men who benefit from the current structure.

4.2.3.4 War on Drugs. The war on drugs launched by U.S. President Richard Nixon in 1971 resulted in negative public sentiment of marijuana. The results of this initiative disproportionately affected Black Americans, with mandatory prison sentencing minimums leading to increased incarceration rates for this population (Morrison, 2021). Some Twitter users were quick to point out that the war on drugs remains ongoing:

Sha'Carri Richardson will no longer compete at #Tokyo2020. Her treatment shows how the war on drugs is alive and well today.

4.2.4 Absent Athletes

Richardson's name emerged in the Twitter conversation over 150 times as one of many athletes who were absent from the 2020 Olympics. Some of the other athletes mentioned were suspended for other drug-related offenses, including hormone levels (Beatrice Masilingi, Caster Semenya, Christine Mboma, Evangeline Makena, Javianne Oliver, and Maximilla Imali). Other athletes missing from the 2020 Olympics due to drug-related offenses and referenced within the tweet corpus included Blessing Okagbare (human growth hormone plus two other anti-doping charges); Jamie Kermond (cocaine); Aphiwe Dyantyi (doping, anabolic steroids and metabolites); Brianna McNeal (missed drug test), and Christian Coleman (missed drug tests). Others were absent for various reasons, such as Nneka Ogwumike, who was left off the USA women's basketball team. Coco Gauff and Sam Kendrick, who tested positive for COVID-19, were also absent. Finally, both Dina Asher-Smith and Sandi Morris missed events due to injuries and were also mentioned within the absent athletes theme.

As these various athletes' names were mentioned within the tweets, groupings of them were often mentioned together, either by sport or by reason for their absence, to prove a point about how many notable would-be Olympians were missing from the 2020 Olympics in Tokyo. Richardson's name was often mentioned among them, and the sheer number of hopeful Olympians missing from the 2020 Olympics in Tokyo could have been one reason why Richardson's name kept reemerging in the Twitter conversation.

4.2.4.1 Mental Health Trifecta. Within the absent athletes theme, a number of Twitter users drew similarities between Sha'Carri Richardson, Simone Biles, and Naomi Osaka, supporting these three Black female athletes for making their mental health a priority. There were other athletes occasionally mentioned alongside these three main athletes, including Elizabeth Cambage, Tom Dumoulin, Brooke Forde, Katie Ledecky, Simone Manuel, Sydney McLaughlin, Michael Phelps, and Serena Williams. Of these other athletes, only Serena Williams is a Black woman.

Most tweets that fell within this theme applauded these three athletes for prioritizing their mental well-being:

All these black women battling mental health right now that are in the Olympics is wicked. Simone, Sha'Carri, & even Naomi. If this doesn't open people's eyes to the importance of self healing and how imperative our mental state of mind is, I don't know what will.

Conversely, as previously discussed in section 4.1.3.7, a smaller number of tweets found within the corpus accused these female athletes of being "quitters" and not being strong enough to persevere in their respective sports:

@Tochinoshin33 Honestly? No judgement? Here goes. Between Sha'Carri Richardson, Naomi Osaka, and Simone Biles, I'd be PISSED if I tried out for the Olympics and lost my spot to these three "strong black women." I do not feel sorry for them in the least.

4.2.5 Celebrity Involvement

A handful of non-athletes contributed to the Twitter conversation surrounding Richardson. The celebrities involved in the discourse both supported and opposed Richardson. Cardi B defended Richardson when a reporter speculated that she might be using steroids. Nicki Minaj allegedly threw shade at Richardson while congratulating the Jamaican sprinters who dominated the women's 100-meter sprint. Rihanna tagged Richardson on social media and joked about missing out on the cardboard beds in the Olympic Village. Snoop Dogg hosted a segment of the Olympics. The high follower numbers of these celebrities on social media, combined with media coverage of their social media activity, meant that Richardson kept reemerging as a topic of conversation whenever she was mentioned by these various celebrities.

4.2.6 Activist Athletes

The IOC rules explicitly prohibit athletes from protesting while standing on the winners' podium. However, it seems like the rules have not been uniformly enforced across racial lines. Tommie Smith and John Carlos raised their fists on the podium at the 1968 Mexico City Games to protest poverty and lack of rights for Black citizens worldwide (Wamsley, 2002); they were asked to leave the Olympic village, but a Czechoslovakian gymnast made a visible protest on the podium the next day by turning her head to the side and was not penalized for her protest (Harrison, 2000, p. 69).

A few athletes were mentioned in the dataset for performing subtle acts of protest at the 2020 Olympics. Notably, two Black female track and field athletes visibly protested: Gwen

Berry raised her fist before performing the hammer throw and shot-putter Raven Saunders made an “X” with her crossed arms held above her head while standing on the podium after winning silver. Saunders stated that this action symbolized the “intersection of where all people who are oppressed meet” (Fadel, 2021).

In addition to the visible acts of protest by Gwen Berry and Raven Saunders, members of Team USA’s men’s epee team wore pink masks to support sexual assault victims and to protest teammate Alen Hadzic’s presence at the Olympic Games.

The activist athletes theme, while small, was interesting because Twitter users’ opinions about athletes engaging in acts of protests at the Olympic Games were extremely discordant. Most tweets that fell under this theme suggested that athletic abilities are diminished when athletes become involved in activism:

Wokeness kills an athlete's passion ,the proof of this is everywhere. Williams, Kap, Osaka, Berry, Richardson. All BLM activists/supporters, and this is off the top of my head. I bet you'll find more if you dig, or discover athletes WINNING the Olympics who aren't activists.

However, a few tweets fully supported protest by athletes and wanted to see more of this occurring and/or allowed at the Olympic Games:

*Not watching without Sha'Carri Richardson or with people kneeling.
First they ban Sha'Carri Richardson for weed, and now this. I have loved watching the Olympics in years gone by, but will be boycotting this one. You don't get to make fashionable anti-racism gestures, and then censor legitimate protest of athletes.*

4.2.7 Digging for Dirt

Based on some of the replies directed at Richardson that were found within the dataset, it appears that several Twitter users went through Richardson's old tweets looking for controversial tweets from her personal Twitter account (@itskerrii). These users then engaged in the larger Twitter conversation by replying to two older tweets of Richardson's; the content of these tweets is contained in Appendix C.

4.3 Other Themes

There were a handful of themes that emerged within the dataset that did not correspond to the research questions. These extraneous themes are described in this section.

4.3.1 Informational

Tweets that fell into this theme included text with a neutral news headline but did not express an opinion.

4.3.2 Joke

Just over 50 tweets were labeled with the "joke" code. These tweets were humorous takes on Sha'Carri Richardson's situation but did not necessarily reveal the opinions of the Twitter users writing the jokes. Thus, they were excluded from further analysis.

4.3.3 Miscellaneous

There was one code that ended up being categorized as Miscellaneous since it did not directly relate to the research questions: the death of mothers. This theme was prevalent enough that it may warrant future research in another study.

4.3.4 Promotional

This theme was used as a catch-all for 156 total tweets promoting blog posts, books, fan art, news articles, podcasts, products, and both TikTok and YouTube videos that may or may not

be directly related to Sha'Carri Richardson. Just over 40 of the tweets within this theme were coded as hashtag spam since they appear to be Twitter users making use of popular hashtags or tagging high profile Twitter accounts in hopes of having their content seen by a broader audience.

4.3.5 Unclear

There were a fair number of tweets (247) that lacked enough context to determine their meaning. To avoid inaccurately categorizing these tweets, they were labeled with the code “unclear” and excluded from further analysis.

4.3.6 Unrelated

Around 90 tweets were found to be unrelated to Sha'Carri Richardson. Many of the tweets coded as unrelated came about as part of long Twitter threads where multiple users were conversing, and the replies eventually veered off topic but still included a relevant hashtag or Twitter handle. Most of these unrelated tweets were about other track and field athletes, including Jenna Prandini (Richardson's replacement in the women's 100-meter event), Gabby Thomas, Allyson Felix, Juliet Cuthbert, Usain Bolt, Justin Gatlin, Athing Mu, Sydney McLaughlin, Trayvon Bromell (who supported Richardson by wearing her name on his spikes), Gunnar Linde (a 93-year-old steeplechase athlete), and Keni Harrison (American hurdler).

Chapter 5: Discussion

This chapter discusses and analyzes the findings of the thematic analysis as it relates to the research questions.

This study sought to answer the following research questions:

RQ1: What conversations emerged on Twitter following Sha'Carri Richardson's suspension that resulted in her missing the 2020 Olympics?

RQ2: How did race factor into the Twitter discourse surrounding Richardson's absence from the 2020 Summer Olympics in Tokyo, Japan?

RQ3: What does the recorded reaction of Twitter users to Richardson's absence from the 2020 Olympics reveal about public perception of the Olympics' anti-doping rules?

RQ4: How does Richardson's participation in the Twitter conversation embody the principles of digital Black feminism?

Following the discussion related to the research questions, several future research opportunities are highlighted.

5.1 Main Topics of Conversation

Seven major (coded for more than 200 times) and seven minor themes (coded for 200 or fewer times) were revealed within the Twitter discourse surrounding Sha'Carri Richardson's absence from the 2020 Olympics. The major and minor themes found within the Twitter discourse are outlined in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1*Themes Present Within Dataset*

Type	Theme Name
Major	Can't Stop Talking About Her
Major	Capitalism/Endorsements
Major	Double Standards
Major	Oppose Richardson
Major	Rules Discussion
Major	Sha'Carri Stirs the Pot
Major	Support Richardson
Minor	Absent Athletes
Minor	Activist Athletes
Minor	Ambivalence Olympics
Minor	Black Twitter Can't Decide
Minor	Celebrity Involvement
Minor	Digging for Dirt
Minor	Race Related

While Farrington et al. (2015) argued that Twitter's technological affordances do not facilitate well-reasoned arguments or in-depth discussion on the platform, participants in the Twitter conversation surrounding Sha'Carri Richardson's absence from the 2020 Olympics utilized the social network to make a variety of salient points in their tweets. Between two of the major themes, Double Standards and Support Richardson, the tweets collected and examined for this study were largely displeased with Sha'Carri Richardson being excluded from competing in the 2020 Olympics. This is not necessarily consistent with previous findings or treatment of former Olympians who have been found in violation of the drug rules.

There are several noteworthy historic instances when Black athletes had Olympic medals stripped after failed drug tests—several of which were directly referenced within the tweet corpus and discussed in Chapter 4—and these athletes did not garner the same level of public support as Richardson. Marion Jones faced scathing media coverage when her Olympic medals were stripped after she admitted in 2007 to using PEDs. Tyson Gay lost his Adidas sponsorship

after testing positive for steroids in 2013. While Black female track athletes like Florence Griffith Joyner (Flo-Jo) and Carmelita Jeter never failed a drug test, they demonstrate how Black women are often subject to public speculation and criticism based on their appearance and athletic performance. Throughout their careers, tennis players Venus and Serena Williams have endured body-shaming, racist criticism, and outright lies about their bodies and skills (Steele, p. 60). The fact that Richardson garnered as much public support within the tweet corpus as she did is surprising and seems to stray from past precedent.

One relevant athlete not mentioned within the dataset is Jamaican Canadian sprinter Ben Johnson, who had his world record and gold medal in the men's 100-meter event revoked during the 1988 Summer Olympics in Seoul after testing positive for anabolic steroids. He returned to Canada in disgrace. As Montague (2012) notes, "Johnson left for Seoul as a Canadian and returned Jamaica-born." Mitchell and Yeates (2000) add that Johnson lost over \$25 million in sponsorship deals, and his name became media shorthand for "drug cheat" (p. 206). He was permanently banned from the sport after another failed drug test in 1993. Based on Canada's treatment of Ben Johnson, we might ascertain that Americans would turn their back on Sha'Carri Richardson following her suspension, but the data shows more support for Richardson than expected. A key difference might be that Johnson tested positive for anabolic steroids whereas Richardson tested positive for cannabis. Both this example and the Rules Discussion theme provide some evidence that the public believes anabolic steroids are performance-enhancing, whereas opinions on cannabis are less definitive.

Online shaming can have significant offline social consequences for the targets of the shaming, as found by Crockett (2017), Keiper (2019), Millas (2016), and Oravec (2019). These consequences are typically negative, but according to the tweets contained within the

Capitalism/Endorsements theme, Richardson may have experienced positive offline social consequences because of her suspension and the subsequent Twitter conversation about her. Richardson did not lose Nike as her major sponsor; Nike extended their support to Richardson following the news of her suspension by featuring her in an ad for their latest film, “Best Day Ever”. The Nike ad was released on July 11, 2021, and the commercial ran during the 2020 Olympic events. Richardson also starred in a Beats by Dre commercial produced by Kanye West that was released on July 20, 2021. Richardson maintained her place in the public spotlight because of these advertisements, and the majority of the shaming that occurred within the dataset was actually directed at the Olympics and their seemingly inequitable enforcement of their own rules rather than at Richardson herself.

Phillips and Milner (2017) suggest that the more engagement a social media post has, the more likely it is to circulate wider and for a longer period of time. As demonstrated in the Can’t Stop Talking About Her and Celebrity Involvement themes, many high-profile Twitter users and major news outlets engaged in the Twitter conversation surrounding Sha’Carri Richardson, and therefore she may have continued to dominate the online conversation for longer than usual.

5.2 Race Present in Discourse, But No Racist Twitter Mob

Race was mentioned throughout the Twitter discourse, but not in the form of an overtly racist Twitter mob. The mentions of race were more nuanced and present throughout several of the major themes—especially the Double Standards theme involving numerous white Olympic athletes. Like early Facebook leadership as described by Kirkpatrick (2010), the inaugural International Olympic Committee (IOC) that was created in 1894 consisted of privileged white men who institutionalized racism and sexism when they defined the values and ideals of the modern Olympic Games. Nadalin (2000) concurs that “financially comfortable, middle-class

males still control sports structures...They still retain the power to write the rules of their sports. There are still many Olympic sports which have a less than democratic constitution for a start" (p. 36). The IOC continues to perpetuate the Olympic values that are the cornerstone of their committee, but they have also institutionalized racism in their organization from the beginning. The users present in the Twitter discourse are aware of this, as demonstrated in both the Double Standards and Ambivalence Olympics themes.

Chaudhry (2015) determined that racist language is used openly on Twitter. However, the number of overtly racist tweets found within the dataset beginning two weeks after Richardson's suspension was lower than expected. This suggests a lack of troll presence within the conversation, since Phillips (2015) noted that internet trolls typically make use of overt racism rather than inferential racism. While the amount of overt racism was less than expected (with only a small amount present within the Oppose Richardson theme), inferential racism was present. The most common argument used for denying the existence of racism throughout the tweet corpus was the idea of colorblindness. Colorblind racism comes from a well-known portion of Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream speech" given during the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s, when King suggested that one day he might be judged by the content of his character and not the color of his skin (DiAngelo, 2016). This is consistent with the findings of Farrington et al. (2015), which found the colorblind argument in their case studies and suggested that the colorblind argument is an example of covert or inferential racism.

Steele (2021) noted that social media users may reveal their race "through their use of language or their avatar or profile" (p. 58). Throughout the thematic analysis process, it was often possible to identify Jamaicans by their use of Jamaican patois and their liberal use of the Jamaican flag emoji within their tweet text, Twitter display names, and Twitter user bios. Steele

(2021) also alluded to Black Twitter's use of the social networking site as a way of coordinating activism, but one of the themes uncovered in the dataset (Black Twitter Can't Decide) revealed that Black Twitter could not agree on how to coordinate to effectively protest Richardson's suspension. While Richardson herself participated in the conversation using her personal Twitter account (@itskerrii), the tweets contained within the Sha'Carri Stirs the Pot theme did not demonstrate that her participation in the conversation led to any coordinated action either in support of or in opposition to Richardson. It's possible that Richardson could have led her supporters in a particular direction had she publicly tweeted about how fans could best support her; however, by tempering her involvement in the discourse, Richardson may have been engaging in the digital Black feminist practice of self-care. As Steele 2021 explains, "for Black women, self-care is a political decision to prioritize one's health, safety, and care in a space where you are under assault" (p. 69).

Online shaming and Twitter hate mobs have historically lasted for weeks or even months. When Justine Sacco was attacked by a Twitter mob for posting a racist tweet, she remained a person of interest to the media for weeks (Ronson, 2015). Zoe Quinn, the center of Gamergate and a harassment campaign instigated by Quinn's ex-boyfriend Eron Gjoni, endured online harassment that lasted for months (Jeong, 2015). Burns (2017) commented on the "digital siege on Black women and girls" following the visible online harassment of comedian Leslie Jones, who was flooded with racist and sexist abuse on Twitter related to her role in the 2016 *Ghostbusters* film remake. Jones was harassed for months between when the film trailer debuted and when the film was released. If racist attacks were directed at Sha'Carri Richardson via Twitter when her suspension was announced in early July, they appear to have died down by the time the 2020 Olympic events began two weeks later.

There are several possible explanations for why instances of overt racism did not emerge as a theme within this study. As mentioned in section 3.5.7, it's possible that the sampling strategy resulted in positivity bias within the dataset of tweets. It's also possible that overtly racist attacks happened immediately following Richardson's suspension, which was announced approximately two weeks earlier than the time period studied as discussed in section 3.5.9. Based on the discussion that occurred within the rules are rules subtheme, more overtly racist comments may have been present in the Twitter discourse if the Olympics had gone against their stated rules and Richardson had been allowed to compete at the 2020 Olympics.

5.3 Reluctance to View Marijuana as a PED

Unsurprisingly, much of the Twitter conversation surrounding Sha'Carri Richardson's absence from the 2020 Olympics circled around marijuana. Different language was used to refer to the drug in question, including marijuana, weed, cannabis, pot, and dope. Twitter users engaged in the conversation also discussed the difference between tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) and cannabidiol (CBD). Perhaps most importantly, most users who participated in the Twitter discourse do not believe that marijuana is a performance-enhancing drug (PED).

The World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) was established in 1999 to help address doping in sports and promote the Olympic ideal of "fair play". Substances are included on WADA's prohibited list as a PED if they meet any two of the three following criteria: 1) they enhance or could potentially enhance sport performance; 2) they could pose a health risk to the athlete; 3) they violate the spirit of sport (*World Anti-Doping Code 2021*, 2021). Cannabinoids (both natural and synthetic) are prohibited in all sports during competition, except for CBD. In a paper published in 2011, WADA argued that cannabinoids meet all three criteria (Huestis et al., 2011). Their rationale for the spirit of sport criteria is because athletes are seen as role models

and cannabinoids are illegal in most countries. However, the users engaged in the Twitter conversation about Richardson largely disagree with both the performance-enhancing and the spirit of sport criteria.

The history of cannabinoids being included on the Olympics' prohibited drug list is somewhat convoluted. Canadian snowboarder Ross Rebagliati managed to keep his gold medal (the first ever awarded in Olympic snowboarding) from the 1998 Olympics in Nagano after he tested positive for cannabis. The IOC attempted to revoke Rebagliati's medal, but the Court of Arbitration for Sport ruled that marijuana was not officially a banned substance (Alexander, 1998). Whereas Canada shunned Ben Johnson after his gold medal was stripped during the 1988 Olympics, Rebagliati "instantly became the Johnson alter-ego: a good-time symbol for a banned substance" (Milton, 2018). Shortly after Rebagliati was able to retain his medal, WADA was formed and cannabis was officially included on the first WADA prohibited list published in 2004 (Huestis et al., 2011, p. 1). American swimmer Michael Phelps was suspended from competition for 3 months in 2009 after photos of him smoking marijuana circulated online. Kellogg's also terminated Phelps' sponsorship. American judoka Nick Delpopolo was expelled from the 2012 Olympics in London for cannabis; he stated that he unknowingly ate something before the games that had been baked with marijuana. While WADA eventually removed CBD from the prohibited list in 2019, THC remains on the prohibited list.

In addition to the rules being relatively new and somewhat fluid, the rules have not been uniformly enforced. Many Twitter users represented in the tweet corpus pointed out a number of double standards when it comes to the Olympics' enforcement of their own rules related to PEDs. In February 2022, WADA's anti-doping rules were seemingly bent for Russian Olympic Committee (ROC) figure skater Kamila Valieva. Valieva was allowed to compete in the 2022

Winter Olympics after testing positive for trimetazidine (TMZ), a metabolic modulator included on WADA's prohibited list and that is prohibited at all times—not just in competition.

Richardson herself sounded off on Twitter when it was announced that Valieva would be allowed to compete, noting that she failed to see a difference between the two athletes' situations (see Figure 5.1).

Figure 5.1

Richardson Comments on Tweet About Kamila Valieva

The image is a screenshot of a tweet on Twitter. At the top, the user is identified as Sha'Carri Richardson (@itskerrii), with a verified account icon. The tweet text reads: "Can we get a solid answer on the difference of her situation and mines? My mother died and I can't run and was also favored to place top 3. The only difference I see is I'm a black young lady." Below this is a retweeted tweet from USA TODAY (@USATODAY), dated Feb 14. The retweeted tweet text says: "The decision to allow Kamila Valieva to continue competing at #Beijing2022 despite a failed drug test 'is just a slap in the face to all of those athletes doing it the right way,' says @cbrennansports. bit.ly/3LqLIVb". Below the text is a video player showing a man, identified as Matthieu Reeb, Director General of the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS), speaking at a press conference. The video player shows a play button icon, a duration of 2:19, and 1.8M views. The background of the video shows the Beijing 2022 Olympic logo and two water bottles on a table. At the bottom of the tweet, it says "8:03 AM · Feb 14, 2022 · Twitter for iPhone" and shows engagement statistics: 29.9K Retweets, 2,343 Quote Tweets, and 125.4K Likes.

Sha'Carri Richardson ✓
@itskerrii

Can we get a solid answer on the difference of her situation and mines? My mother died and I can't run and was also favored to place top 3. The only difference I see is I'm a black young lady.

USA TODAY ✓ @USATODAY · Feb 14
The decision to allow Kamila Valieva to continue competing at #Beijing2022 despite a failed drug test "is just a slap in the face to all of those athletes doing it the right way," says @cbrennansports. bit.ly/3LqLIVb
[Show this thread](#)

MATTHIEU REEB
DIRECTOR GENERAL, COURT OF ARBITRATION FOR SPORT (CAS)

2:19 1.8M views

8:03 AM · Feb 14, 2022 · Twitter for iPhone

29.9K Retweets **2,343** Quote Tweets **125.4K** Likes

Note. Sha'Carri Richardson retweets USA TODAY's tweet commenting on the decision to allow Kamila Valieva to compete at Beijing 2022. Tweet by @itskerrii, February 14, 2022. Screenshot by author.

5.4 Richardson Engaged in Digital Black Feminist Practices

Steele (2021) indicates that she is not interested in who identifies as a digital Black feminist, but instead in what digital Black feminism can *do* (p. 16). While there is no need to label Sha'Carri Richardson as a digital Black feminist, it is certainly possible to consider how Richardson's participation in the Twitter conversation surrounding her absence from the 2020 Olympics mirrors the practices of digital Black feminism.

Steele (2021) suggests that the safe spaces crafted by Black women within the blogosphere were lost with the advent of more open social networks including Twitter, where they could be more easily discovered by the dominant group. However, many Twitter users came to Richardson's defense when she was under attack by other participants in the Twitter conversation; in fact, the "defend Sha'Carri" code was the most common code within the Support Richardson theme. This is not to suggest that Richardson perceived Twitter to be a safe space for her to participate in the conversation; some of the tweets she posted from her personal Twitter account were likely subtweets since they often lacked context, and Richardson failed to direct some of her more scathing Twitter posts at a particular person or event.

Twitter provided a platform for Richardson to directly engage and attempt to influence the conversation about herself and her absence from the 2020 Olympics, as evidenced in the Sha'Carri Stirs the Pot theme. McNeil (2020) suggests there is no way to disrupt an existing hierarchy without outrage. While her outrage was often subtle, Richardson's tweet that posed the question, "Missing me yet?" spawned multiple media headlines, reinvigorated the support from her fans, and spurred comments from naysayers who suggested she needed to humble herself. By engaging in the Twitter conversation, Richardson pushed back against the Olympic stereotype presented by Nadalin (2000) that suggests Olympic athletes should remain silent and subdued in

order to be seen as “good losers”. As Farrington et. al (2015) suggests, “overlooking racism prevents it from being challenged and ‘turning a blind eye’ upholds white privilege and the racial status-quo" (p. 37). Relatedly, Phillips and Milner (2017) noted that members of historically underrepresented populations can use social media to attempt to disrupt the status quo and fight the offline power structure that has been recreated online. By refusing to remain silent about her suspension, Richardson is helping future generations of Black female athletes attempt to disrupt the status quo.

5.2 Future Research

One code emerged within the dataset that could not be directly tied to the research questions addressed in this specific study: death of mothers. This code was prevalent enough (coded for 93 times) that it may warrant future research, especially as it relates to the practice of engaging in self-care for digital Black feminists.

In addition, several important related events occurred after this initial dataset was collected. First, Sha’Carri Richardson returned to competition following her suspension, competing in the Prefontaine Classic on August 21, 2021. She finished in last place, while the Jamaican athletes Elaine Thompson-Herah, Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce, and Shericka Jackson repeated their top three placements from the women’s 100-meter event at the 2020 Olympics. Second, the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) announced following their September 2021 meeting that they would initiate a scientific review of the status of cannabis on their prohibited list; in the meantime, cannabis remains prohibited in competition through 2022 (*WADA Executive Committee Endorses Recommendations of Non-Compliance of Eight Anti-Doping Organizations*, 2021). Further research is needed to determine how the Twitter discourse surrounding Richardson has changed following these two notable events. Public sentiment as

expressed via Twitter may have shifted if she was no longer perceived as being at the top of her game; it would also be interesting to determine if public opinion about Richardson's suspension played a role in prompting WADA to review the cannabis rules.

Because the 2020 Summer Olympics were postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2020 Summer Olympics took place very close to the 2022 Winter Olympics (July 2021 and February 2022, respectively). Although 226 athletes represented the United States at the 2022 Winter Olympics in Beijing, as few as six identify as Black (Sullivan, 2022). While track and field events are only included in the Summer Olympics, interesting future work might include a thematic analysis of tweets related to the 2022 Winter Olympics to investigate whether there is any overlap with some of the larger themes from this study.

In February 2022, Twitter launched Safety Mode—a set of anti-harassment tools. Future work could include research to determine how Safety Mode might have affected the number of disparaging tweets directed at Richardson's personal Twitter account, particularly those accounted for in the Jamaican shade subtheme.

5.3 Conclusion

Since the era of Pierre de Coubertin and the founding of the modern Olympics, the games have always been, at least on some level, about spectacle. Sha'Carri Richardson's suspension that caused her to miss the 2020 Olympics certainly contributed to the spectacle of this iteration of the summer games and could provide a reasonable explanation for why her name kept coming back up in the Twitter conversation related to the 2020 Olympics. If the main goal of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) is to entertain the public by presenting sport as theater, then they can consider the 2020 Olympics a success. Sha'Carri Richardson's suspension made

headlines and had Twitter users talking about both Richardson and her suspension for weeks after it was announced.

However, the IOC states that the goal of the Olympic Movement is to use their global sports platform to build a better world:

The goal of the Olympic Movement is to contribute to building a peaceful and better world by educating youth through sport practiced without discrimination of any kind and in the Olympic spirit, which requires mutual understanding with a spirit of friendship, solidarity and fair play. (*Olympic Values*, 2022)

By preventing Richardson from competing in the 2020 Olympics, the IOC has failed at achieving this goal—and the public knows it. The Twitter users who participated in the conversation about Richardson’s absence from the Olympics were quick to call out the Olympics and the IOC for the myriad of double standards they perceived to be on display in Tokyo. By allowing a white male athlete accused of sexual assault by his own teammates to compete and putting special systems in place to allow him to do so, the Olympics opened themselves up to well-deserved public criticism regarding the spirit of sport. If the bodies that govern international sport—including the IOC and the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA)—truly want to support the notion of fair play, they need to consistently enforce their own rules. If WADA is going to continue to include THC on the prohibited list as a PED, they need to revisit whether it truly violates both the performance-enhancing and spirit of sport criteria.

Appendix A: Columns Removed from Dataset

Column name	Rationale for removal
coordinates	Only one tweet had lat/long coordinates attached, so there is not enough data to be useful. In addition, user locations are unrelated to this research.
hashtags	Hashtags are repeated in the tweet text; therefore, this column is duplicative. A report of the top 1,000 hashtags was downloaded directly from TweetSets when the dataset was created.
media	While hand coding the dataset, media attachments are not viewable. In addition, this research is focused on the textual content of the tweets.
urls	While hand coding the dataset, URLs cannot be clicked. A report of the top 1,000 urls was downloaded directly from TweetSets when the dataset was created.
favorite_count	This engagement metric is not relevant while evaluating the content of the tweet text.
id	This is a unique numeric value assigned to each tweet and is no longer needed since the tweets have been hydrated.
in_reply_to_screen_name	@replies are repeated in the tweet text, therefore this column is redundant.
in_reply_to_status_id in_reply_to_user_id	These two columns contain numeric values only and are not useful while hand coding.
lang	The dataset has already been cleaned to exclude non-English tweets.
place	This column only contains 146 entries, plus two other location-related columns were already removed; there's not enough location-based information to draw any overarching conclusions from the data.
quote_id	This column only contains numeric values only and is not useful while hand coding.
retweet_id retweet_screen_name	These two columns are empty since retweets were preemptively removed from the dataset.
source	Operating systems and Twitter scheduling tools used to create the tweets are irrelevant to the research questions.

Column name	Rationale for removal
tweet_url	URLs are not useful while hand coding.
user_created_at	This set of 14 user-related columns is not relevant to this analysis since the research examined the content of the tweets, not the people who wrote the tweets.
user_id	
user_default_profile_image	
user_description	
user_favourites_count	
user_followers_count	
user_friends_count	
user_listed_count	
user_location	
user_name	
user_statuses_count	
user_time_zone	
user_urls	
user_verified	

Appendix B: Codebook

Theme	Code	Description
Absent athletes	Absent athletes	General references to the large number of athletes absent for the entirety of or a portion of the 2020 Olympics.
Absent athletes	Drug-related offenses	Code applied to athletes who were disqualified for other drug-related offenses, including Blessing Okagbare, Jamie Kermond, Christian Coleman, Brianna McNeal, and Aphiwe Dyantyi.
Absent athletes	Hormone levels	Includes athletes who were disqualified based on hormone levels (Caster Semenya, Beatrice Masilingi, Christine Mboma, Evangeline Makena, Javianne Oliver, and Maximilla Imali).
Absent athletes	Injury	Code applied to athletes who were injured and therefore could not compete, including Dina Asher-Smith, Sandi Morris, and Christian Taylor.
Absent athletes	Left off team	Code applied to reference to athlete Nneka Ogwumike, who was perceived to have been left off the USA women's basketball team.
Absent athletes	Mental health trifecta	References to Simone Biles, Naomi Osaka, and Sha'Carri Richardson where Twitter users perceived these athletes prioritized their mental health over participating in the 2020 Olympics.
Absent athletes	Positive COVID test	Code applied to mentions of Olympic athletes who tested positive for COVID-19, including Coco Gauff and Sam Kendrick.
Activist athletes	Activist athletes	General mentions of multiple Olympic athletes participating in activism, including the USA fencing team members who wore pink masks to protest teammate Alen Hadzic's presence.
Activist athletes	Gwen Berry	References to track and field athlete Gwen Berry, who raised her fist before the hammer throw.
Activist athletes	Raven Saunders	References to Raven Saunders, who made an "X" with crossed arms while standing on the winners' podium.

Theme	Code	Description
Ambivalence Olympics	Ambivalence Olympics	This code name was taken from a July 2021 article written for The Cut by Claire Lampen that describes how it's difficult for viewers to get excited about Olympic Games that "have not yet escaped the shadow of the coronavirus pandemic." Tweets with this code generally express disgust with the Olympics for a variety of reasons, often starting with Richardson's suspension.
Ambivalence Olympics	Becca Meyers	This code was applied to references of perceived ableism when Paralympic swimmer Becca Meyers was denied her personal care assistant.
Ambivalence Olympics	Breastfeeding mothers	References to the Olympics' display of sexism by not allowing breastfeeding athletes to bring their infants to the games.
Ambivalence Olympics	Cardboard beds	References to the cardboard beds for athletes staying in the Olympic Village and the perceived puritanism on display at the 2020 Olympics.
Ambivalence Olympics	COVID-19	Tweets that express ambivalence or disgust about the fact the 2020 Olympics were still taking place amid a global pandemic.
Ambivalence Olympics	German gymnastics team	This code was applied to references of perceived sexism when female members of Germany's gymnastics team were criticized for wearing full-length unitards instead of bikini-cut leotards.
Ambivalence Olympics	Karma	Applied to tweets that suggest everything going wrong at the 2020 Olympics is a result of Sha'Carri Richardson's suspension. Also includes tweets that reference the "curse of Sha'Carri" or how the "ghost of Sha'Carri" has come back to haunt the Olympics.
Ambivalence Olympics	Mixed feelings	Code applied to tweets that mention mixed feelings about watching the 2020 Olympics.
Ambivalence Olympics	Norwegian handball team	This code was applied to references of perceived sexism when Norway's beach handball team was fined for wearing shorts instead of bikinis.

Theme	Code	Description
Ambivalence Olympics	Swim caps	This code was applied to references of perceived racism on display when Soul Caps—a special swim cap designed to fit over hairstyles often worn by people of color—were banned from the 2020 Olympics.
Ambivalence Olympics	USA sucks this year	Tweets that lament how the USA was performing poorly in the 2020 Olympics, leading to fan disinterest in the various events.
Black Twitter can't decide	Black Olympics	Tweets that suggest Black Americans should host their own Olympic Games.
Black Twitter can't decide	Boycott	Tweets that propose a general boycott of the 2020 Olympics or state that they are or are not boycotting the 2020 Olympics.
Black Twitter can't decide	Support Black women	Applied to tweets that suggest Black women or Black female athletes are specifically deserving of public support.
Black Twitter can't decide	Support Black athletes	Applied to tweets that suggest Black athletes competing in the 2020 Olympics deserve fan support.
Can't stop talking about her	Bandwagon fans	Tweets with this code call out Twitter users for not knowing who Richardson was prior to her suspension or claiming to be fans of Richardson's and then changing their minds about her following her suspension.
Can't stop talking about her	Best American hope	This code name is taken from a June 2021 Washington Post article written by Adam Kilgore. Written prior to Richardson's suspension, the article suggests that she is America's best hope to win the 100-meter race. Tweets with this code express the same sentiment.
Can't stop talking about her	Can't stop talking about her	Applied to tweets that generally suggest Richardson has captivated the public in such a way that they can't seem to stop mentioning her.
Can't stop talking about her	Compare stats	Tweets that speculate about alternative outcomes had Richardson been allowed to compete in the 2020 Olympics. Also includes references to all-time medal counts, medal counts from the 2020 Olympics, and

Theme	Code	Description
		comparisons involving previous track events to determine how Richardson might have fared in the women's 100-meter race.
Can't stop talking about her	Competitors decline comment	This code was applied to tweets that refer to a news reporter asking Richardson's would-be Olympic competitors how they felt about her absence.
Can't stop talking about her	Governing bodies pass blame	Includes tweets that discuss how the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA), the International Olympic Committee (IOC), and USA Track & Field (USATF) all played a role in Richardson's suspension, but none of the governing bodies wanted to take credit for Richardson not being present at the 2020 Olympics.
Can't stop talking about her	Hanging onto hope	Tweets expressing hope that Team USA will add Richardson to the roster for the 4×100m relay event or that the Olympics will be postponed and Richardson will be able to attend because her suspension will have already been served.
Can't stop talking about her	Need a rematch	This code is applied to tweets that express a desire to see Richardson race against Olympic athletes who competed in Tokyo so spectators can observe the outcome. Includes tweets where the writer expresses a desire to see Jamaican sprinters Elaine Thompson and/or Shelly-Ann Fraser Pryce in a race against Richardson.
Capitalism/endorsements	Capitalism/endorsements	Tweets with this code mention Sha'Carri Richardson continuing to make money and earn or maintain endorsements and sponsorships despite her absence from the 2020 Olympics.
Capitalism/endorsements	Kanye/Beats commercial	Code applied to tweets that mention the Beats by Dre commercial starring Richardson (in collaboration with Kanye West to promote his album Donda).
Capitalism/endorsements	Nike	References to Richardson's ongoing Nike sponsorship.

Theme	Code	Description
Celebrity involvement	Cardi B	Tweets that allude to how Cardi B supported Richardson by coming to Richardson's defense when a reporter speculated that she might be using steroids.
Celebrity involvement	Nicki Minaj	Tweets that refer to Nicki Minaj, who allegedly threw shade at Richardson while congratulating the Jamaican athletes who won the women's 100-meter race.
Celebrity involvement	Rihanna	Tweets that mention Rihanna and/or how she joked with Richardson on social media about missing out on the cardboard beds in the Olympic Village.
Celebrity involvement	Snoop Dogg	Tweets that reference Snoop Dogg and the segment he hosted during the 2020 Olympics.
Digging for dirt	I am human tweet	Replies to, quote tweets containing, and tweets that allude to the content of Richardson's tweet from her personal Twitter account (@itskerri) on the day news of her suspension broke stating that she is human.
Digging for dirt	Lil Nas X tweet	Replies to, quote tweets containing, and tweets that allude to the content of Richardson's tweet from her personal Twitter account (@itskerri) in March 2021 suggesting that Twitter users who support Lil Nas X should unfollow her.
Double standards	Alen Hadzic	Applied to tweets that comment on the perceived double standard on display by American fencer Alen Hadzic being allowed to participate in the 2020 Olympics while facing multiple sexual assault allegations.
Double standards	Double standards	Code for tweets that allude to double standards on display at the 2020 Olympics without naming specific athletes or examples. Also includes double standards that were mentioned too infrequently to warrant their own code, including Kevin Durant, Conor McGregor, and skateboarders (athletes known to smoke marijuana); Sue Bird (Team USA basketball player and Megan Rapinoe's partner); Taylor Crabb, Alexander Zverev,

Theme	Code	Description
		Nikoloz Basilashvili, and Logan Mailloux (athletes accused of sexual assault & domestic violence crimes); Boady Santavy, Klete Keller, and Ryan Lochte (athletes accused or convicted of other types of crimes); Shaun White, Katie Ledecky, and Hope Solo (former “faces of the Olympics”); Laurel Hubbard and Quinn (transgender athletes); and athletes not vaccinated against COVID-19 who were allowed to compete in the 2020 Olympics, including Cole Beasley.
Double standards	Megan Rapinoe	Code for Team USA women’s soccer player Megan Rapinoe, who openly promoted usage of CBD products to improve sports performance during the 2020 Olympics. Often mentioned in tandem with her sister, Rachael Rapinoe, who is the owner of the CBD products brand being promoted.
Double standards	Michael Andrews	Applied to tweets that reference American swimmer Michael Andrews, an unvaccinated athlete who notably refused to wear a mask while speaking to members of the press at the 2020 Olympics.
Double standards	Michael Phelps	Applied to tweets that mention the former American swimmer Michael Phelps, who served as a commentator for a portion of the 2020 Olympics and was notably suspended from competition during his career when photos of him holding a bong circulated online.
Double standards	Russia	Code for tweets that mention the unfairness of Russian athletes being allowed to compete in the 2020 Olympics under the name Russian Olympic Committee.
Miscellaneous	Death of mothers	Code for tweets that mention Richardson’s stated reason for smoking marijuana—the death of her mother. Also applied to tweets about other athletes and celebrities who struggled with the loss of their mothers, including Raven Saunders and Kanye West.

Theme	Code	Description
Oppose Richardson	Anti-Sha'Carri	Code for tweets that expressed a general dislike for Richardson or generally insulted her.
Oppose Richardson	Jamaican shade	Applied to tweets where Jamaicans are disparaging Richardson, sometimes while simultaneously supporting their own athletes.
Oppose Richardson	Main character syndrome	Applied to tweets that suggest Richardson is self-centered and/or trying to make the 2020 Olympics all about her.
Oppose Richardson	Name-calling	Tweets that refer to Sha'Carri Richardson by an unflattering name other than her own.
Oppose Richardson	Quitters	Tweets that insinuate Richardson intentionally disqualified herself from competition. Tweets with this code sometimes accuse gymnast Simone Biles and tennis player Naomi Osaka of being quitters as well.
Oppose Richardson	Sit down	Tweets that suggest Richardson is all talk and no action or that she needs to stop tweeting from her personal Twitter account. Also includes tweets that suggest that Richardson needs to humble herself or that she is "too loud".
Oppose Richardson	Wouldn't have won anyway	Tweets with this code implied that even if Richardson had been present at the 2020 Olympics in Tokyo, she would not have won the women's 100-meter event.
Other	Informational	Code for tweets that include a neutral news headline but do not express an opinion.
Other	Joke	Code applied to tweets containing humorous takes on Richardson's situation but do not necessarily reveal the writer's underlying opinion.
Other	Promotional	Tweets promoting various content including artwork, articles, books, blog posts, music, podcasts, products, TikTok videos, and YouTube videos. Code was also applied to tweets that appear to be deliberate hashtag spam.

Theme	Code	Description
Other	Unclear	Applied to tweets that don't have enough context to determine meaning and thus could not be assigned more specific codes.
Other	Unrelated	Tweets assigned this code did not directly relate to the research questions. Primarily applied to tweets about other track and field athletes. This code was also applied to a small number of political tweets about Michael Flynn, unmasked House Republicans, and Candace Owens.
Race related	Deny racism	Tweets with this code suggest that Sha'Carri Richardson's suspension was not an act of racism.
Race related	Historic instances	These tweets compare Sha'Carri Richardson's situation to historical instances that occurred with other athletes, including Jesse Owens at the "Nazi Olympics", Florence Griffith Joyner (also known as Flo-Jo), Marion Jones, Carmelita Jeter, Tyson Gay, and Michael Johnson.
Race related	Misogynoir	This code is applied to tweets that specifically call out the Olympic Games for their poor or unfair treatment of Black women.
Race related	They scared	Applied to tweets that suggest Olympic governance did not let Sha'Carri Richardson compete in the 2020 Olympics because they are afraid of a Black woman having any type of power.
Race related	War on drugs	Direct references to the war on drugs that was declared by then-President Richard Nixon in the 1970s.
Rules discussion	Coe revisits rules	Tweets that refer to World Athletics president Sebastian Coe suggesting that the rules surrounding marijuana should be revisited following Sha'Carri Richardson's disqualification.
Rules discussion	Rules are rules	Tweets that imply Sha'Carri Richardson was not present at the 2020 Olympics because she did not follow the rules. Includes tweets that imply that exceptions to the rules should not be made to accommodate Richardson's situation.

Theme	Code	Description
Rules discussion	THC v CBD	Discussion surrounding the difference between two compounds found in marijuana—tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) and cannabidiol (CBD).
Rules discussion	The drug rules are dumb	This code is assigned to tweets that suggest the Olympics’ rules related to drugs are antiquated, illogical, or applied inconsistently across the spectrum of athletes.
Sha’Carri stirs the pot	Congratulates Jamaicans tweet	Replies to, quote tweets containing, and tweets alluding to the content of Richardson’s tweet from her personal Twitter account (@itskerri) congratulating Jamaican athletes who won the women’s 100-meter race.
Sha’Carri stirs the pot	Fingers crossed tweet	Replies to, quote tweets containing, and tweets alluding to the content of Richardson’s tweet from her personal Twitter account (@itskerri) that includes a fingers crossed emoji.
Sha’Carri stirs the pot	I am human reminder tweet	Replies to, quote tweets containing, and tweets alluding to the content of Richardson’s tweet from her personal Twitter account (@itskerri) resharing a photo of Simone Biles and reminding her followers that she is human and so is Simone Biles.
Sha’Carri stirs the pot	Laughing GIF tweet	Replies to, quote tweets containing, and tweets alluding to the content of Richardson’s tweet from her personal Twitter account (@itskerri) containing an animated GIF of a bearded white male laughing.
Sha’Carri stirs the pot	Live your truth tweet	Replies to, quote tweets containing, and tweets alluding to the content of Richardson’s tweet from her personal Twitter account (@itskerri) that includes a photo of Richardson with her arms raised triumphantly in the air. She comments on how she is proud to be part of the Beats by Dre commercial and teases Kanye West’s new album.
Sha’Carri stirs the pot	Missing me yet tweet	Replies to, quote tweets containing, and tweets alluding to the content of Richardson’s tweet from her personal Twitter account (@itskerri) that posed the question, “Missing me yet?”

Theme	Code	Description
Sha'Carri stirs the pot	The fake did tweet	Replies to, quote tweets containing, and tweets alluding to the content of Richardson's tweet from her personal Twitter account (@itskerri) commenting on how she noticed some fans turned on her following her suspension, but she's not worried about it.
Sha'Carri stirs the pot	They got the right one tweet	Replies to, quote tweets containing, and tweets alluding to the content of Richardson's tweet from her personal Twitter account (@itskerri) that states they got the right one and includes a purple smiling devil emoji.
Sha'Carri stirs the pot	Unfollow me tweet	Replies to, quote tweets containing, and tweets alluding to the content of Richardson's tweet from her personal Twitter account (@itskerri) suggesting that Twitter users unfollow her if they find her tweets petty.
Support Richardson	Blessing in disguise	Tweets with this code suggest that Richardson not attending the 2020 Olympics in Tokyo was a positive outcome for various reasons.
Support Richardson	Defend Sha'Carri	Code for tweets where Twitter users defend Richardson's behavior, athletic performance, or from other commenters. Includes tweets encouraging Sha'Carri to ignore the haters and couch athletes.
Support Richardson	Encourage action	Tweets with this code referred to various petitions collecting signatures to protest Richardson's suspension, suggested Richardson should run her own 100-meter race and record her time to definitely prove how she would have performed compared to athletes present at the 2020 Olympics, or suggested that Richardson should sue the Olympics.
Support Richardson	Oppose suspension	Applied to tweets that generally disagree with Richardson's suspension.
Support Richardson	Pro-Sha'Carri	Code for tweets that express general support for Richardson. Includes tweets that admire her athletic abilities and appearance.
Support Richardson	Wish you were here	Tweets that express a general desire to see Sha'Carri Richardson compete in the track and field portion of the 2020 Olympics.

Appendix C: Relevant Tweets Posted by Sha'Carri Richardson

Theme: Digging for Dirt

Figure C.1

Lil Nas X Tweet



Note. Sha'Carri Richardson suggests that Twitter users can unfollow her if they support American rapper Lil Nas X.

Tweet by @itskerrii, March 29, 2021. Screenshot by author.

Figure C.2

I am Human Tweet



Note. Following the announcement of her 30-day suspension, Sha'Carri Richardson states that she is human. Tweet

by @itskerrii, July 1, 2021. Screenshot by author.

Theme: Sha'Carri Stirs the Pot

Figure C.3

They Got the Right One Tweet

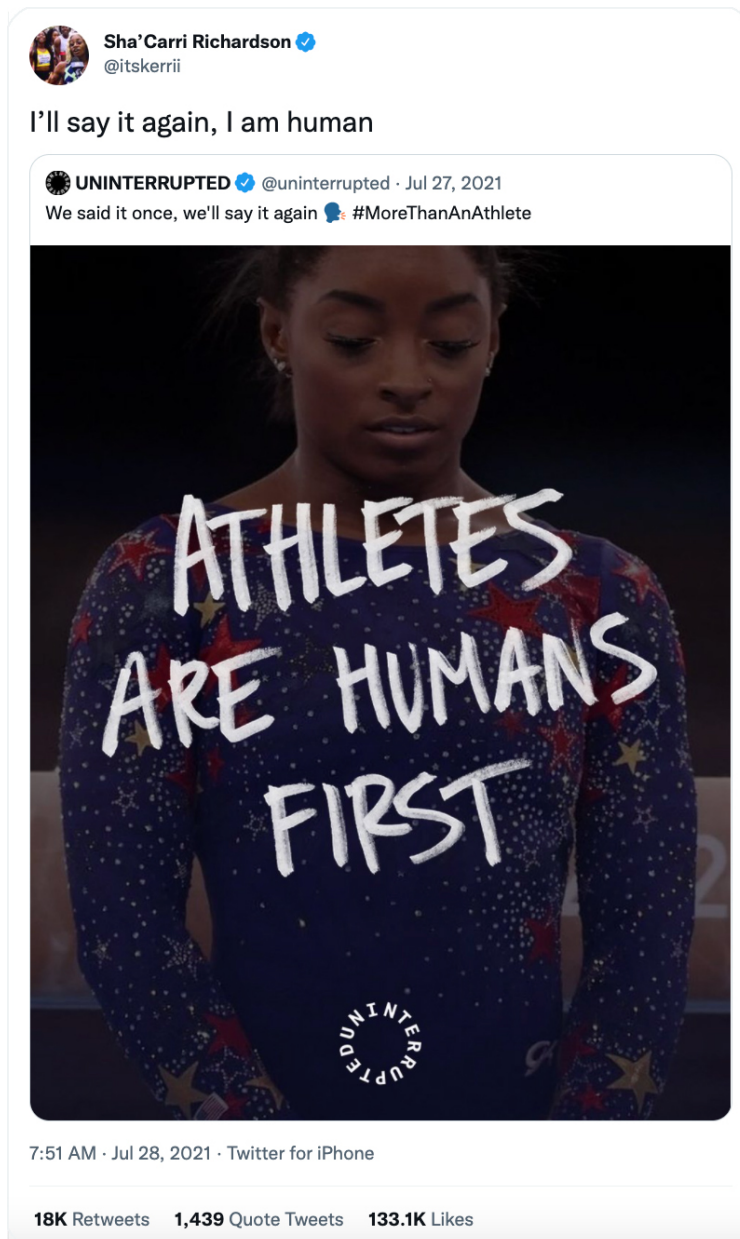


Note. Sha'Carri Richardson states (likely sarcastically) that they got the right one. She includes a purple smiling face with devil horns emoji at the end. Possibly a subtweet about Alen Hadzic; *The Guardian's* article entitled "Sha'Carri Richardson, Alen Hadzic, and Our Unending Forgiveness for White Male Athletes" was released on the same day.

Tweet by @itskerrii, July 26, 2021. Screenshot by author.

Figure C.4

I am Human Reminder Tweet



Note. Following Simone Biles' withdrawal from several gymnastics events at the 2020 Olympics, Sha'Carri Richardson quote tweets an image of Simone Biles originally posted by UNINTERRUPTED with handwritten text on top that reads, "ATHLETES ARE HUMAN FIRST." Richardson reminds her followers that she is also human. Tweet by @itskerrii, July 28, 2021. Screenshot by author.

Figure C.5

Missing Me Yet Tweet



Note. Sha'Carri Richardson asks, "Missing me yet?" Tweet by @itskerrii, July 30, 2021. Screenshot by author.

Figure C.6

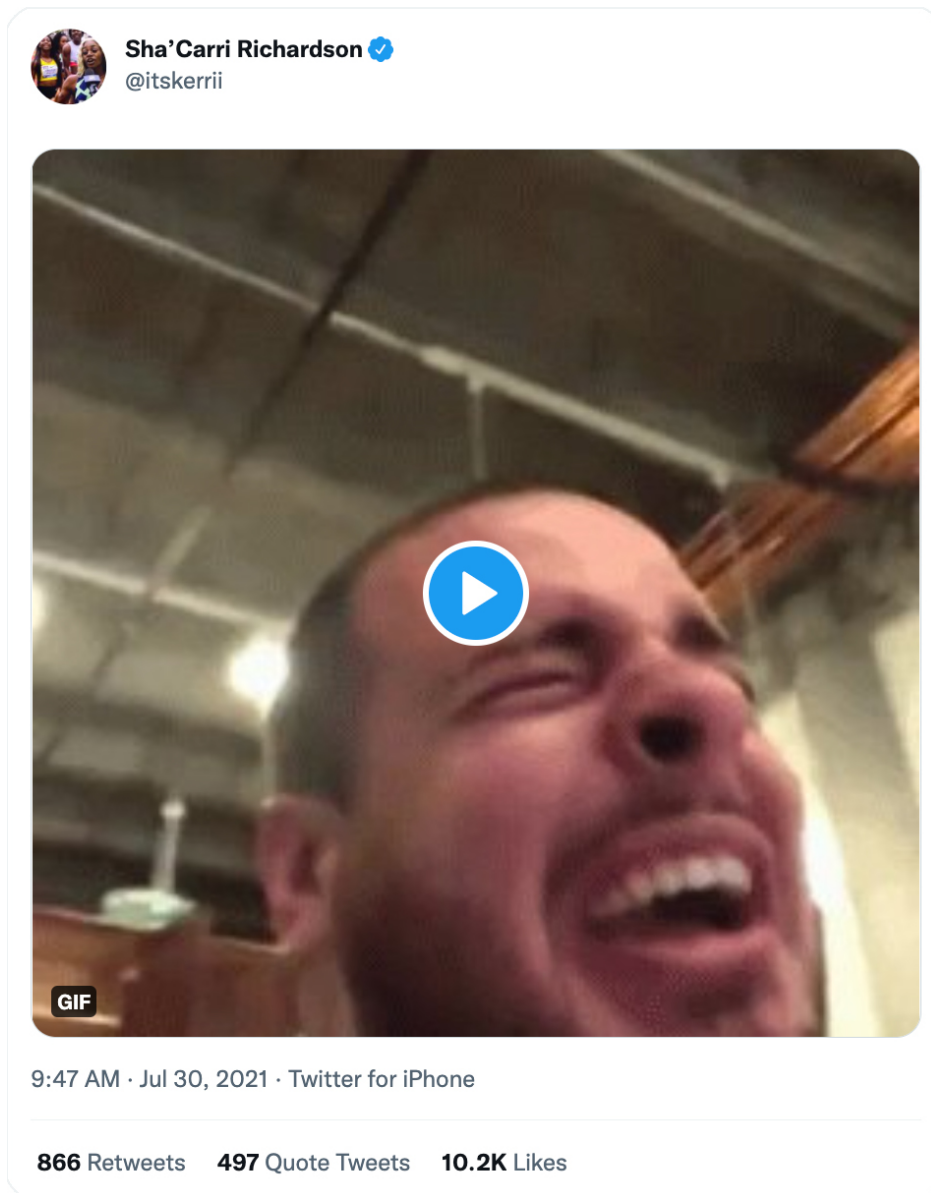
Unfollow Me Tweet



Note. Sha'Carri Richardson quote tweets a Twitter user who quoted Richardson's "Missing me yet?" tweet (shown in Figure C.5) and added that Richardson's press team should deactivate her Twitter account. Richardson suggests that Twitter users can unfollow her if they think her tweets are petty and shady. Tweet by @itskerrii, July 30, 2021. Screenshot by author.

Figure C.7

Laughing GIF Tweet



Note. Sha'Carri Richardson posts an animated GIF of a white bearded man laughing with no additional context offered. Possibly a subtweet in response to the first round of women's 100-meter heats that occurred in Tokyo on the same day. Tweet by @itskerrii, July 30, 2021. Screenshot by author.

Figure C.8

Congratulates Jamaicans Tweet



Note. Sha'Carri Richardson congratulates the Jamaican women who won the women's 100-meter race at the 2020 Olympics in a clean sweep by placing first, second, and third. Tweet by @itskerrii, July 31, 2021. Screenshot by author.

Figure C.9

Baby They Don't Care Tweet



Note. Sha'Carri Richardson quote tweets a fan named Joy who replied to a longer conversation thread defending Richardson from the backlash that ensued following her "Missing me yet?" tweet. Richardson adds that the Twitter users Joy is addressing don't care and that's okay. Tweet by @itskerrii, July 31, 2021. Screenshot by author.

Figure C.10

Fingers Crossed Tweet



Note. Sha'Carri Richardson quote tweets MS. QUEEN KEY who says that God is great and adds a fingers crossed emoji. Tweet by @itskerrii, July 31, 2021. Screenshot by author.

Figure C.11

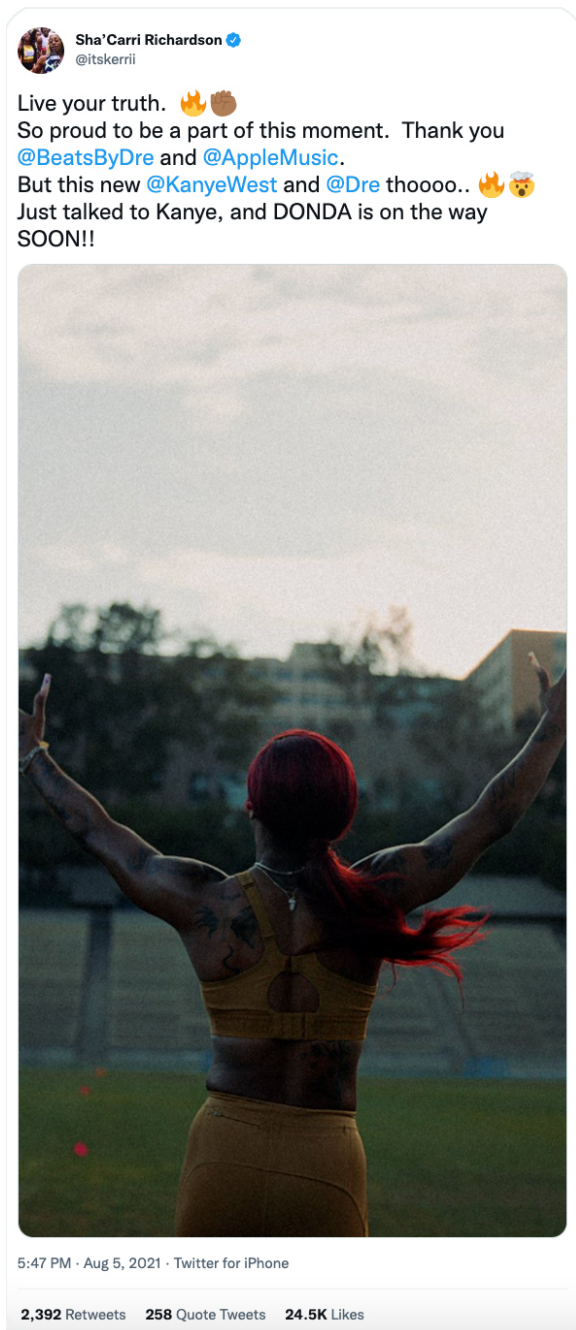
The Fake Did Tweet



Note. Sha'Carri Richardson quote tweets Tokyo Jets, who noted that some fans were quick to turn on Richardson following her suspension. Richardson comments to add that these fickle fans were fake people and she's not worried about what they think. Tweet by @itskerrii, August 1, 2021. Screenshot by author.

Figure C.12

Live Your Truth Tweet



Note. Sha'Carri Richardson posts a photo of her shot from behind with her arms raised triumphantly in the air. She comments on how she is proud to be part of the Beats by Dre commercial and adds that she just talked to Kanye West, who says his new album Donda is coming soon. Tweet by @itskerrii, August 5, 2021. Screenshot by author.

Bibliography

- Ahmed, W. (2015, July 10). Using Twitter as a data source: An overview of social media research tools (2015). *Impact of Social Sciences*.
<https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/impactofsocialsciences/2015/07/10/social-media-research-tools-overview/>
- Alexander, R. (1998, February 13). *Panel Rules Snowboarder Can Keep Gold Medal*. The Washington Post. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/sports/longterm/olympics1998/sport/snowboard/articles/medal12.htm>
- Armour, N., & Schad, T. (2021, June 17). US Olympic officials reverse course, boot banned runner Shelby Houlihan from track trials. *USA TODAY*.
<https://www.usatoday.com/story/sports/olympics/2021/06/17/shelby-houlihan-banned-trials-after-us-officials-reverse-course/7739717002/>
- Ash, E., Sanderson, J., Kumanyika, C., & Gramlich, K. (2017). “Just Goes to Show How These Hoes Try to Tear Men Down”: Investigating Twitter and Cultural Conversations on Athletic Ability, Race, and Sexual Assault. *Journal of Sports Media*, 12(1), 65–87.
<https://doi.org/10.1353/jsm.2017.0003>
- Bailey, M. (2021). *Misogynoir transformed: Black women’s digital resistance*. New York University Press.
- Bates, R. A., & LaBrecque, B. (2020). The Sociology of Shaming. *The Journal of Public and Professional Sociology*, 12(1). <https://digitalcommons.kennesaw.edu/jpps/vol12/iss1/3>
- Boyatzis, R. E. (1998). *Transforming qualitative information: Thematic analysis and code development*. Sage Publications.

- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>
- Brock, A. L. (2020). *Distributed blackness: African American cybercultures*. NYU Press.
- Burns, J. (2017, December 27). Black Women Are Besieged On Social Media, And White Apathy Damns Us All. *Forbes*.
<https://www.forbes.com/sites/janetwburns/2017/12/27/black-women-are-besieged-on-social-media-and-white-apathy-damns-us-all/>
- Chaudhry, I. (2015). #Hashtagging hate: Using Twitter to track racism online. *First Monday*.
<https://doi.org/10.5210/fm.v20i2.5450>
- Coche, R., & Tuggle, C. A. (2016). The Women’s Olympics? A Gender Analysis of NBC’s Coverage of the 2012 London Summer Games. *Electronic News*, 10(2), 121–138.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1931243116647770>
- Creedon, P. (2014). Women, Social Media, and Sport: Global Digital Communication Weaves a Web. *Television & New Media*, 15(8), 711–716.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1527476414530476>
- Crenshaw, K. (1995). Mapping the margins: Intersectionality, identity politics, and violence against women of color. In K. Crenshaw, N. Gotanda, G. Peller, & K. Thomas (Eds.), *Critical race theory: The key writings that formed the movement* (pp. 357–383). The New Press.
- Crockett, M. J. (2017). Moral outrage in the digital age. *Nature Human Behaviour*, 1(11), 769–771. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41562-017-0213-3>

- Davidson, C., & Schwartz, R. G. (1995). Semantic boundaries in the Lexicon: Examples from Jamaican Patois. *Linguistics and Education*, 7(1), 47–64. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0898-5898\(95\)90019-5](https://doi.org/10.1016/0898-5898(95)90019-5)
- DeMeyer, T. A. (2000). Honor Restored: Jim Thorpe’s Olympic Medals. In K. Schaffer & S. Smith (Eds.), *The Olympics at the millennium: Power, politics, and the games* (pp. 38–50). Rutgers University Press.
- Douglas, D. D. (2014). Forget Me . . . Not: Marion Jones and the Politics of Punishment. *Journal of Sport and Social Issues*, 38(1), 3–22. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0193723513515892>
- Elliott, V. (2018). Thinking about the Coding Process in Qualitative Data Analysis. *The Qualitative Report*. <https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2018.3560>
- Fadel, L. (2021, August 2). A U.S. Athlete Defies Olympic Podium Protest Ban Under Threat Of Sanctions. *NPR*. <https://www.npr.org/sections/tokyo-olympics-live-updates/2021/08/02/1023610861/a-u-s-athlete-defies-olympic-podium-protest-ban-under-threat-of-sanctions>
- Farrington, N., Hall, J. L., Kilvington, D., Price, J., & Saeed, A. (2015). *Sport, racism and social media* (1st edition). Routledge.
- Fiesler, C., & Proferes, N. (2018). “Participant” Perceptions of Twitter Research Ethics. *Social Media + Society*, 4(1), 205630511876336. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305118763366>
- Guttman, A. (1994). *Games and empires: Modern sports and cultural imperialism*. Columbia University Press.
- Harrison, C. K. (2000). Racing with Race at the Olympics: From Negro to Black to African American Athlete. In K. Schaffer & S. Smith (Eds.), *The Olympics at the millennium: Power, politics, and the games* (pp. 63–71). Rutgers University Press.

- Heywood, L. (2000). The Girls of Summer: Social Contexts for the “Year of the Women” at the ’96 Olympics. In K. Schaffer & S. Smith (Eds.), *The Olympics at the millennium: Power, politics, and the games* (pp. 99–116). Rutgers University Press.
- Horn, S. (1998). *Cyberville: Clicks, culture, and the creation of an online town*. Warner Books.
- Huestis, M. A., Mazzoni, I., & Rabin, O. (2011). Cannabis in Sport: Anti-Doping Perspective. *Sports Medicine*, 41(11), 949–966. <https://doi.org/10.2165/11591430-000000000-00000>
- Hyder, A. (2019, December 19). *Richardson Becomes LSU’s Second Bowerman Winner*. LSU Athletics. <https://lsusports.net/news/2019/12/19/track-field-richardson-becomes-lsus-second-bowerman-winner/>
- Jeong, S. (2015). *The Internet of garbage* (J. Eum & A. Lau, Eds.). Forbes.
- Kilgore, A. (2021, June 20). Sha’Carri Richardson is bold, brash and the best American hope in the 100 meters. *Washington Post*. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/sports/2021/06/20/shacarri-richardson-us-trials/>
- Kirkpatrick, D. (2010). *The Facebook effect: The inside story of the company that is connecting the world* (1st Simon & Schuster trade pbk. ed). Simon & Schuster Paperbacks.
- Kolko, B. E., Nakamura, L., & Rodman, G. B. (Eds.). (2000). *Race in cyberspace*. Routledge.
- Lampen, C. (2021, July 22). *The Ambivalence Olympics*. The Cut. <https://www.thecut.com/2021/07/2021-olympics-controversy-makes-the-games-hard-to-watch.html>
- Lopiano, D. A. (2000). Women’s Sports: Coming of Age in the Third Millennium. In K. Schaffer & S. Smith (Eds.), *The Olympics at the millennium: Power, politics, and the games* (pp. 117–127). Rutgers University Press.
- Losse, K. (2012). *The boy kings: A journey into the heart of the social network*. Free Press.

- MacAloon, J. J. (1981). *This great symbol: Pierre de Coubertin and the origins of the modern Olympic Games*. University of Chicago Press.
- McCulloch, G. (2019). *Because internet: Understanding the new rules of language*. Riverhead Books.
- McNeil, J. (2020). *Lurking: How a person became a user*. MCD, Farrar, Straus and Giroux.
- Millas, A. P. (2016). Forget whipping: Log in to Twitter for ignominy. *TXT*, 2016(1), 128–131.
- Milton, S. (2018, February 8). It wasn't the positive test, it was the hair. *The Hamilton Spectator*.
<https://www.thespec.com/opinion/columnists/2018/02/08/it-wasn-t-the-positive-test-it-was-the-hair.html>
- Montague, J. (2012, July 23). Hero or villain? Ben Johnson and the dirtiest race in history. *CNN*.
<https://www.cnn.com/2012/07/23/sport/olympics-2012-ben-johnson-seoul-1988-dirtiest-race/index.html>
- Morrison, A. (2021, July 23). 50-year war on drugs imprisoned millions of Black Americans. *The Associated Press*. <https://apnews.com/article/war-on-drugs-75e61c224de3a394235df80de7d70b70>
- Nadalin, C. (2000). The Olympics in Retrospect: Winners, Losers, Racism, and the Olympic Ideal. In K. Schaffer & S. Smith (Eds.), *The Olympics at the millennium: Power, politics, and the games* (pp. 19–37). Rutgers University Press.
- Nguyen, T. T., Criss, S., Michaels, E. K., Cross, R. I., Michaels, J. S., Dwivedi, P., Huang, D., Hsu, E., Mukhija, K., Nguyen, L. H., Yardi, I., Allen, A. M., Nguyen, Q. C., & Gee, G. C. (2021). Progress and push-back: How the killings of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, and George Floyd impacted public discourse on race and racism on Twitter. *SSM - Population Health*, 15, 100922. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssmph.2021.100922>

Olympic Values. (2022, January 3). International Olympic Committee.

<https://olympics.com/ioc/olympic-values>

Oravec, J. A. (2019). Online Social Shaming and the Moralistic Imagination: The Emergence of Internet-Based Performative Shaming. *Policy & Internet*, 12(3), 290–310.

<https://doi.org/10.1002/poi3.226>

Phillips, W. (2015). *This is why we can't have nice things: Mapping the relationship between online trolling and mainstream culture*. The MIT Press.

Phillips, W., & Milner, R. M. (2017). *The ambivalent Internet: Mischief, oddity, and antagonism online*. Polity Press.

Rittenhouse, B., Mi, X., & Allen, C. (2019). Beginner's Guide to Twitter Data. *Programming Historian*, 8. <https://doi.org/10.46430/phen0083>

Ronson, J. (2015). *So you've been publicly shamed*. Picador.

Sacks, B., & Segura, M. (2021, July 23). "Protected Again And Again": How A Fencer Made It To The Tokyo Olympics Despite Sexual Assault Allegations. *BuzzFeed News*.

<https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/briannasacks/olympics-fencers-safesport-abuse>

Schaffer, K., & Smith, S. (Eds.). (2000). *The Olympics at the millennium: Power, politics, and the games*. Rutgers University Press.

Schroepfer, M. (2018, April 4). An Update on Our Plans to Restrict Data Access on Facebook.

Meta. <https://about.fb.com/news/2018/04/restricting-data-access/>

Steele, C. K. (2021). *Digital Black feminism*. New York University Press.

Stroud, S. R. (2016). "Be a Bully to Beat a Bully": Twitter Ethics, Online Identity, and the Culture of Quick Revenge. In *Controversies in Digital Ethics* (pp. 264–278). Bloomsbury Press. <https://doi.org/10.5040/9781501310553>

- Sullivan, M. (2022, February 11). Team USA Is Leading a Secret Protest Movement Inside the Winter Olympics. *Rolling Stone*. <https://www.rollingstone.com/culture/culture-features/beijing-olympics-protest-team-usa-1298746/>
- Summers, E. (2017, August 21). The Catalog and the Hydrator. *Medium*. <https://news.docnow.io/the-catalog-and-the-hydrator-3299eddf21e>
- van Dijk, T. A. (1992). Discourse and the denial of racism. *Discourse & Society*, 3(1), 87–118.
- WADA Executive Committee endorses recommendations of non-compliance of eight Anti-Doping Organizations*. (2021, September 14). World Anti-Doping Agency. <https://www.wada-ama.org/en/news/wada-executive-committee-endorses-recommendations-non-compliance-eight-anti-doping>
- Wamsley, K. B. (2002). The Global Sport Monopoly: A Synopsis of 20th Century Olympic politics. *International Journal: Canada's Journal of Global Policy Analysis*, 57(3), 395–410. <https://doi.org/10.1177/002070200205700306>
- Wamsley, K. B. (2007). Womanizing Olympic Athletes: Policy and Practice during the Avery Brundage Era. In G. P. Schaus & S. R. Wenn (Eds.), *Onward to the Olympics: Historical perspectives on the Olympic Games* (pp. 273–282). Wilfrid Laurier University press.
- Wiggins, D. K., & Miller, P. B. (Eds.). (2003). *The unlevel playing field: A documentary history of the African American experience in sport*. University of Illinois Press.
- Women in the Olympic Movement*. (2021). International Olympic Committee.
- World Anti-Doping Code 2021*. (2021, January 1). World Anti-Doping Agency. https://www.wada-ama.org/sites/default/files/resources/files/2021_wada_code.pdf